

Confessions of a Process Warrior

# COMMUNITIES

JOURNAL of COOPERATIVE LIVING

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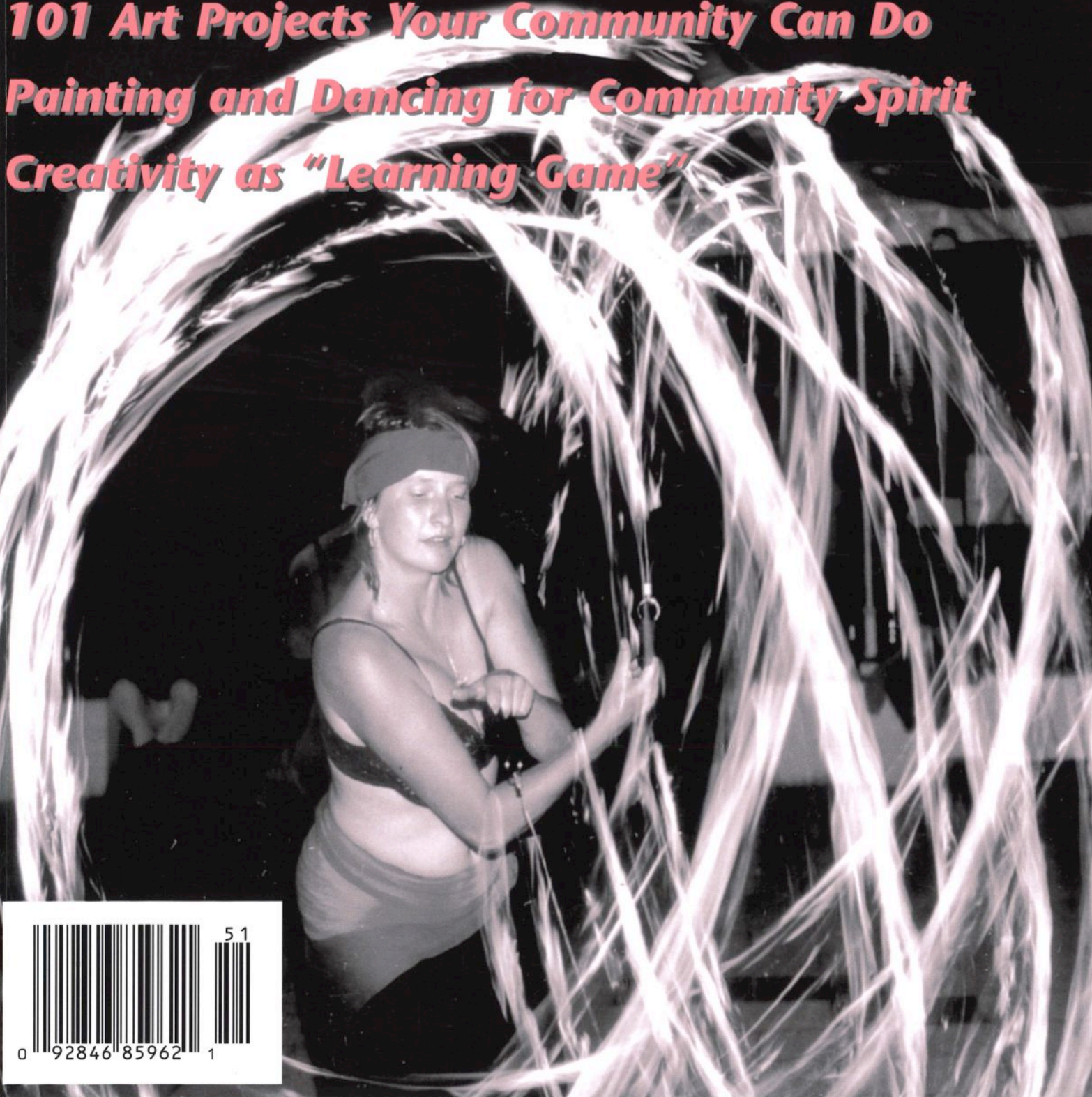
Spring 2005 (Issue #126)

## *The Arts in Community*

*101 Art Projects Your Community Can Do*

*Painting and Dancing for Community Spirit*

*Creativity as "Learning Game"*



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

**Koinonia Park** (Georgia, United States)  
We are an intentional community...

**Fairview Cooperative** (New York, United States)  
Fairview Cooperative is a...

**Huehucocoyol** (Mexico)  
Huehucocoyol is an intentional community...

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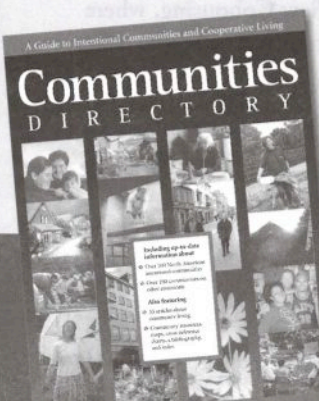
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[directory.ic.org](http://directory.ic.org) will also be the primary source for data for the next edition of the printed book, the Communities Directory, coming out in 2005. Update your information today!



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

### *The Arts in Community*

#### FRONT COVER

Fire show at ZEGG Community in Germany.

Photo: Roland Ficht.

#### BACK COVER

In the Forest Garden at Earthaven.

Photo: Susan Patrice.

**26 From the Guest Editor: We're Only Human** *Scott Horton*

**26 101 Art Projects Your Community Can Do**  
What many communities have done for artistic pleasure and to deepen their community bond. *Scott Horton and Diana Leafe Christian.*

**28 Painting and Dancing (and Singing, Acting, Sculpting) for Community Spirit**  
"Community is an attitude of being connected with ourselves, with others, and with creation," say *Bill Nickl and Barbara Stützel* of ZEGG in Germany, where members use art to build community.

**34 Of Ravens and Rules**  
At RoseWind Cohousing many people create and install art projects all around the community, to the delight of visitors. But how do RoseWind members like it? Art can be controversial! *Lynn Nadeau.*

**40 Camphill Beaver Run: Spiritual Essence and Art**

Art has a great healing power, for the individual as well as the community, observes *Else Wolf* of Camphill Beaver Run, where visual art, sculpture, music, singing, storytelling, and theater are everywhere.

**44 Creativity as "Learning Game"—our True Holidays Festival of Good Will**  
The core of creativity is to express your Self, say members of Goodenough Community, especially through practicing artistic creativity together, through what they call "learning games." Creativity is community notes *Elizabeth Jarrett-Jefferson.*

**48 Bringing the Arts to Patients (and Community to Ourselves ...)**  
Being encouraged to express the arts—even at work—can create a powerfully bonded group, declare *Eleanor K. Sommer* and *Gail K. Ellison*, who make art professionally in their work at a hospital in Florida.

**50 The Owl and the Pooh Hut**  
What happens to public art in a community run by consensus? "No consensus; no art!" observes *Franny Osman* of New View Cohousing, where one member's art project turned out quite differently than she'd planned.





## FEATURES

### 21 Learning to Screen New Members ... the Hard Way

"Let's welcome any new people who want to join us," say many new communities—until they learn better. *Don Wedd* tells all.



## COLUMNS

6 PUBLISHER'S NOTE • *Laird Schaub*  
Confessions of a Process Warrior: Looking for  
Plowshares Among the Swords

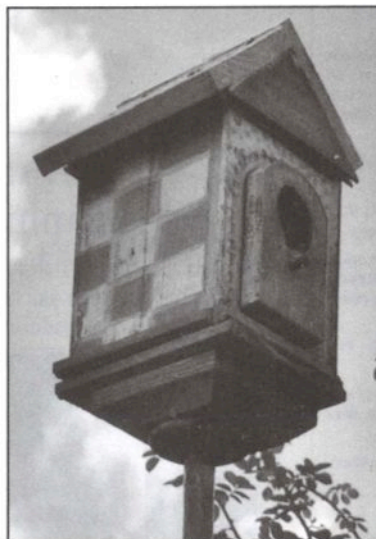
8 FEDERATION UPDATE • *Sky Blue*  
It Comes Down to Trust

12 MY TURN • *Ingrid Evjen-Elias*  
"Culture" and "Agriculture" at Sandhill Farm

14 PROCESS IN COMMUNITY • *Tree  
Bressen*  
Roles!

18 ECOVILLAGE NETWORK OF THE  
AMERICAS • *Marc Tobin*  
Design Goals for Ecovillages

76 PERIPATETIC COMMUNITARIAN •  
*Geoph Kozeny*  
The "Art" of Community



## DEPARTMENTS

4 LETTERS

60 REVIEWS

65 COMMUNITY  
CALENDAR

68 REACH



# COMMUNITIES

Journal of Cooperative Living

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## GUEST EDITOR

Scott Horton

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COMMUNITIES (ISSN 0199-9346) is published quarterly by the Fellowship for Intentional Community at Route 1, Box 156, Rutledge, MO 63563. Periodicals postage paid at Rutledge, MO, and at additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *Communities*, 138 Twin Oaks Rd., Louisa, VA 23093. Indexed in the *Alternative Press Index*.

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

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

EDITORIAL OFFICE: *Communities*, 1025 Camp Elliott Rd., Black Mountain, NC 28711, 828-669-9702; [communities@ic.org](mailto:communities@ic.org).

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

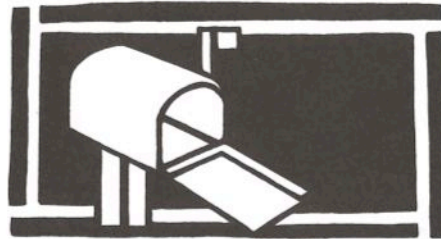
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ADVERTISING: *Communities*, 1025 Camp Elliott Rd., Black Mountain, NC 28711, 828-669-9702; [communities@ic.org](mailto:communities@ic.org).

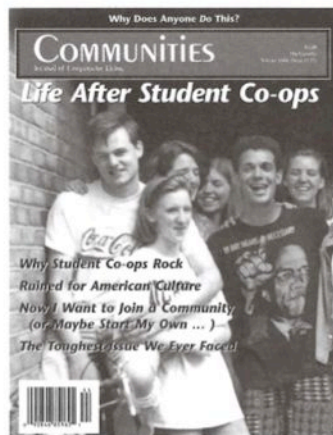
WEB SITE: [www.ic.org](http://www.ic.org).

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

# LETTERS



Send letters to *Communities* magazine, 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!

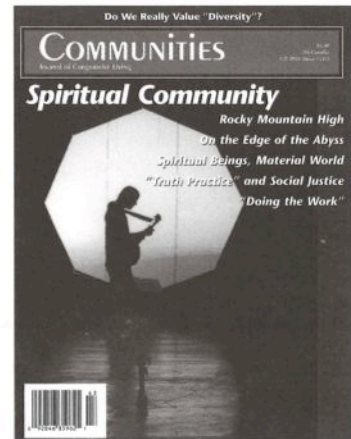


Dear *Communities*,

I am once again impressed with your work: your issue on Student Co-ops (*Win. '04*) was great. I like the way that these college students were exposed to communalism without knowing that that was going to happen.

Bill Metcalf

International Communal Studies Association  
Brisbane, Australia



## Spiritual Communities: Practicing Our Spiritual Ideals on a Daily Basis

Dear *Communities*:

I enjoyed immensely your "Spiritual Communities" issue (*Fall '04*). I've been an avid seeker of genuine spirituality since childhood and ongoing now as cofounder of a 16-year-old intentional spiritual community with 100 members. Having experienced many facets of spirituality and religion, I could appreciate editor Diana Leafe Christian's concerns in her editorial "Avoiding Spiritual Community." Like her, I abhor the "crap" that has often gone on in the name of religion, spirituality, and God, and celebrate the good work of genuine religious and spiritual groups.

I also appreciated Geoph Kozeny's "Dancing with Dogma: the Fine Line Between Religion & Spirituality" for pointing out that the former is organized and social, the latter very personal—and we need both. In my own personal spiritual journey, I have come to believe we must recognize dogma—fixed ideas and beliefs that become part of a religion—as human-made, which we must assess and adjust as our life situations shift and change. I personally

## 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](mailto:brvolunteer@aol.com)



have had to relinquish aspects of my own belief system in order to embrace revelation (personal and epochal) that continues to challenge me to constantly think, feel, and do in higher and more wise and compassionate ways.

I believe spiritual communities can provide opportunities to embrace and implement our spiritual ideals on a daily, moment-to-moment basis, rather than just occasionally. For any of us who walk a spiritual path, the challenge will always be to remain balanced in our practicality and idealism, to discern between genuine religious experience and fanaticism, to keep searching, and to wholeheartedly seek our destiny—until, one day, we actually find it.

Níánn Emerson Chase  
Aquarian Concepts Community,  
Sedona, Arizona

## Communities and the Resistance Movement

Dear *Communities*:

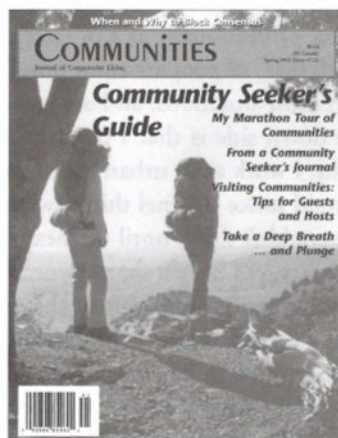
Last weekend I was at the annual National Conference on Organized Resistance at American University in Washington DC ([www.organizedresistance.org](http://www.organizedresistance.org)). I was reminded, as I usually am at this event, of how important the communities movement is. At this event there are dozens of groups doing one kind of activist work or another. As I walked around the tables of all these different groups, I got the sense that somewhere in the antioppression, antiexploitation, antipatriarchy, antiwar, antidiscrimination messages there is a vision of a better world. I also got the sense that we're all on pretty similar pages. It's frustrating how little that vision is articulated and how few groups are actively working on creating something that's moving us towards that vision. Still, the number of groups over the last few years is in fact growing, in part from the presence of communities-movement folks, and the conversation around organized resistance is shifting towards a balance of resistance and culture-creation activism.

In the midst of this conference, there were still so many people with a radical analysis fighting against the system that had no clue that the communities movement, or any other lifestyle alternatives, even exist.

It reminds me of many people in the communities movement (a predominantly white, liberal, middle-class movement) who are content to forget about the rest of the world in pursuit of a comfortable existence hauntingly reminiscent of suburban white flight. I think it's crucial

that the communities movement be actively engaged with the resistance movement, to balance the perspective of the resistance movement and to help keep the communities movement in touch with the larger sociopolitical reality that exists beyond our pseudo-utopian borders.

Sky Blue  
Twin Oaks Community  
Virginia



## Helpful Article for Visiting Communities

Dear *Communities*:

Hello. I have just ordered over a dozen back issues of *Communities*, subscribed to the magazine, ordered the *Communities Directory*, and paid for a membership. You guys have really got some amazing stuff to digest!

I am planning an ecovillage tour and depart for my first phase soon (South Asia & Israel). Along the way I will be conducting video interviews with ecovillage founders and residents.

In planning my itinerary I found Jane Gyhra's article, "My Marathon Tour of Communities" (Spr. '04, "Community Seeker's Guide" issue) very, very helpful. Thank you.

Greg Searle  
Montreal, Quebec

Thank you. Please also see "Excerpts from a Community Seeker's Journal," by Sue Stone, in the same issue.

—Editor

## Plenty Nonprofit Helps Tsunami Victims

Dear Friends of *Communities Magazine*,

Plenty, The Farm's nonprofit education and relief organization is now helping people who've suffered from the tsunami disaster in India. Plenty was started in the '70s to help people during a devastating flood in Mississippi. Next they helped people in Guatemala after their earthquake. Currently Plenty is also offering aid to the Huichol people in Mexico, building hemp houses on the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota, making solar cookers in Belize, and making quilts for people who've lost their homes in Iraq. ([www.plenty.org](http://www.plenty.org))

Plenty is working with two local Indian nongovernmental organizations: HOPE (Holistic Approach for Peoples Empowerment, <http://education.usnl.com/vrhope>) and BLESS ([www.blessngo.org](http://www.blessngo.org)). HOPE has a project to help create clothing and income by furnishing sewing machines, and another project where one can sponsor a child. BLESS helps pregnant women who've lost their husbands or family, and is purchasing and setting up equipment for three children's playgrounds.

If you'd like to help, tax-deductible donations can be sent to Plenty, PO Box 394, Summertown, TN 38483. Please indicate on your check that the money is for the India Tsunami Project. If you have a preference for how your donation is used, include a note. Unlike most charitable nonprofits, Plenty (called "plenty" because there really is plenty to go around, if we share) only uses five percent of their donations for administrative costs!

Cathy Chow  
Solborg Camphill  
Norway  
[cchow83@hotmail.com](mailto:cchow83@hotmail.com)

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*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).

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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



# Confessions of a Process Warrior: Looking for Plowshares Among the Swords

I'm a critical person.

Recently I've been taking a closer look at what that means. The good side is that I pay attention. I observe patterns, study dynamics, spend untold time in meetings, and work professionally as a process consultant. I ask questions, and am not afraid of the "dark side" of people's emotions. I'm willing to try new things, am able to find my voice in most situations, and am suspicious of relying solely on my own perspective.

The down side is that I can be relentless. Though I reside in a county without a stoplight, I work at an urban pace, coupled with near-legendary endurance—the kind that would make a camel think twice before accompanying me to a meeting if I told her she couldn't drink until the next time I took a break. And I can be fierce. A friend put it this way: I have a sharp sword, and don't flinch at blood.

My story is that I do this in the name of community and inquiry. (Others say it's more like the community inquisition.) I want to look at what's happening. I want to learn better how to live cooperatively, and I have a fire in my belly to help others get there as well—even if I have to draw my sword to do it. In short, I'm a zealot.

One of the rewards (or ironies) of process work is that the practitioner is simultaneously uncovering the group's vulnerability while revealing his own. It is at once my service path and my personal growth path. While I wouldn't have it any other way, it more or less guarantees spending time in public on the other end of the microscope, and rarely at times of my own choosing.

About a decade ago, I was working with a group in Indiana, and an observer offered me an insight which has been a guidepost for me ever since. Using the archetypes of Sovereign, Magician, Warrior, and Lover, he suggested that I'd be more effective, and more balanced, if I moved away from being so much the Warrior and more toward being the Lover. While there is some of all four types in us all, I'm convinced he was right about my particular path to becoming a better consultant ... and a better person.

Today, when I work with groups, I still bring my sword. Though it's honed and ready, I try to leave it in the scabbard more often. This requires centeredness, which, unfortunately, I don't always achieve. When I'm less mindful, the sword is in my hand in a blink, and I have to be *very* careful about gesticulations.

Over the past year, I've harvested a cornucopia of criticism, both in my work and in my personal relationships. In puzzling over why I've been blessed with this particular kind of abundance, I've speculated that I'm: 1) paying more attention to what people are telling me; 2) associating with more critical (or observant) people; or 3) just being more frequently inappropriate. It may be a combination of all three.

### COMING IN FUTURE ISSUES

#### "Cohousing: What Have We Learned?" Summer 2005.

What has the overall communities movement learned from cohousing? What have cohousers learned from other communitarians? How have the "Danish model," "developer-partner model," and "developer-driven model" evolved? What are cohousers innovating in group process? How is cohousing changing the concept of intentional community in North America?

*Communities*: [communities@ic.org](mailto:communities@ic.org); 828-669-9702.



In the past 12 months, I've lost two intimate relationships, both of which suffered from my partners' weariness (and wariness) with my observations about their engagement with me. They had trouble both with what I said and how I said it. I've come to understand that the intensity and style with which I approach intimacy tends to damage the connections upon which it is based, sabotaging the very thing I'm seeking. Turns out I was bringing the goddamn sword into the bedroom!

Six months ago I reached a point of exhaustion in a working relationship and asked someone to step out of a position requiring us to collaborate because I was despairing of turning things around and wanting to devote my organizational time elsewhere. This was not a bad or incompetent person. Just someone I didn't match up with well. That request did not land easily, and it took months to sort out.

In November, my community said goodbye to a member who'd been with us for more than five years. It's always hard to lose long-term members, and it was a bittersweet parting for me. On the one hand, I'd struggled in dynamics with this person on and off the entire time we'd lived together and I was glad of the relief from that tension. On the other hand, I had a sense of failure—here I was a process professional and unsuccessful in finding a path to a serviceable friendly relationship with this decent, well-meaning person. Humbling.

### ***In short, I'm a zealot.***

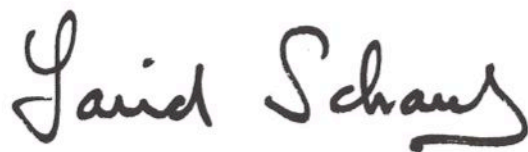
On the consultant front, I'm in the midst of the greatest challenge of my life the past 18 months—pioneering a two-year facilitation training where students gather eight times for intensive three-day weekends, spaced three months apart. As an integral part of the learning, students facilitate live meetings at the host community (hosting is rotated among the communities from which the students come), and I, as a trainer, must simultaneously teach the craft of facilitation, track the work of the students, and safeguard the product of the meetings that the students facilitate.

Sometimes it's hard to keep all the balls in the air, and the students, bless their hearts, are good about pointing it out when I drop one.

While I love my life of engagement, replete with opportunities for reflection and personal growth, there are nonetheless moments when I want a break—when I yearn for the *unexamined* life.

Deep into this past year's "growth spurt," I was therefore thankful when the Red Cross bloodmobile made a stop at our county seat. I like the feeling of doing a good deed, and thoroughly enjoy the hour or two of down time. (I can read a book for pleasure!) It had been more than a year since I'd last donated, and I was ready for the chance to kick back.

When it came time for the technician to check my vital signs, he started with my pulse. It was 68. Without comment he wrapped the blood pressure cuff around my arm, pumped it up, and read the gauges. "Hmm. 114 over 72. You have low numbers." After a reflective pause, he deadpanned, "What you need is more stress in your life." Meeting his gaze, I replied critically, "Surely you're wrong."



*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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## It Comes Down to Trust

*The Federation of Egalitarian Communities (FEC) is a mutual support organization for a number of communities in North America, including Twin Oaks, Acorn, East Wind, Sandhill Farm, Emma Goldman Finishing School, and others that value income-sharing, nonviolence, participatory decision-making, and ecological practices.*

I live in a community where group hugs and men in skirts are normal and everyone has at least heard of the concept of an “I statement” and has a theoretical understanding of consensus decision making. All of the basic needs of the members are provided for in return for labor, making money and those pesky appendages we call wallets unnecessary in the community. All buildings are public; there are almost no locks anywhere in the community. Ask a random group of members conversing in the courtyard what time it is and the best they’ll be able to tell you is the hour.

I believe most people are deeply wounded and conditioned by a society based on values and practices antithetical to life. While people who live in intentional communities seek to affirm life, simply stepping into an alternative environment does not mean we leave behind our wounding and conditioning. To thrive in an intentional community we must each seek to make an internal paradigm shift.

This is an especially poignant issue in FEC communities. Given that we’re income-sharing, and thus how much we share—and how much control over our lives we relinquish to each other—our deep-seated needs for freedom, power, and security are especially confronted. These perfectly valid needs do not have to be compromised in community, but given that mainstream America prizes them so highly in a hyper-individualized form, we are simply not equipped to deal with the level of closeness an income-sharing community requires.

When I give tours here at Twin Oaks Community, I mention that we share one

checkbook between 90 adults. “How many people would you share a checkbook with?” I ask visitors. I tell them that in our shared vehicle system we sign out vehicles in advance and have certain restrictions on their use. Less than total access to a personal vehicle is simply beyond many people. So often I’ve heard the line from visitors, “I love visiting here, but I could never live like this.”

I believe that the single most time-consuming activity of most members is dealing with the emotional impacts of our lifestyle. I don’t think this is necessarily a conscious process, but it can be identified in the ongoing background thoughts in our minds: “How will my budget proposal be received?” “I really want a certain controversial visitor to be

### FEDERATION UPDATE



BY SKY BLUE

*Sky Blue is an activist for sustainable human society working in journalism, transformative group experience, and healthy culture. He lives, works, and plays in and out of Twin Oaks Community in Virginia.*



accepted for membership.” “Why isn’t that manager letting me do the work shifts I want?” “We’re constantly inundated by guests and visitors.” “That person’s comment on my proposal seemed like a personal attack.” “I think that person isn’t following our policy.”

Certain decisions may be of no major consequence to the majority of people in the community but may stimulate great distress in some. To discourage driving when we were in what we called an “insurance crisis” a couple of years ago, we upped our personal vehicle rates from 10 cents

a mile to 20 cents. It was a big deal for the relatively small number of people who felt like they needed to get into town on their own regularly. After 9/11 one of our hammock customers asked us to make American flag hammocks. When a number of people strongly voiced an objection, we reversed an initial decision to make the hammocks. Given that home, play, and work in our lives are not separate realms as in mainstream culture, what may seem like a simple business decision can become a quality-of-life issue that can threaten our sense of security about our shared way of life.

It seems to come down to trust: Do I trust that the other people I’m living with have the community’s best interests in mind as well as theirs and mine? Especially in a large, centralized community whose population has a diverse range of priorities and values, it can be hard to maintain the personal familiarity necessary to trust the system and each other unreservedly.

At Twin Oaks, our labor system is designed to ensure that work gets done and people do their fair share. People fill out their labor sheets about the work they’ve done, which gets entered into the computerized system. At the end of each month a report of each member’s labor balance is posted in the office. We have mechanisms for contracts and formal feedback meetings when people are in the labor “hole” (they

regularly don’t work the amount of labor they owe) for an extended period. But as in any system there are ways to manipulate it; for example, by simply lying about how much work you’ve done. There is a certain amount of suspicion in the community that this is happening.

**The single most time-consuming activity is dealing with the emotional impacts of our lifestyle.**

The kind of work people get labor credit for is also an issue. We get one labor credit for each hour of work no matter what kind of work it is. While what is creditable work is to an extent determined by the community, area managers have a lot of flexibility. There is also a certain amount of suspicion that some

people are getting credit for work that doesn’t so much benefit the community as give them personal satisfaction, or which was set up out of their own personal agenda. These suspicions are sometimes well-founded. Why wouldn’t we carry with us



**Child of the Wild Wind**  
Claire Garden

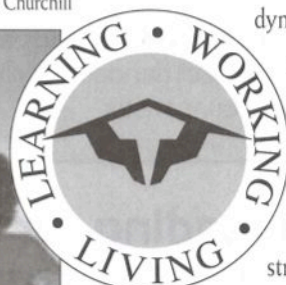
“I don’t remember ever reading a book about a community that actually felt like one. Until Claire Garden’s short novel, *Child of the Wild Wind*.”

Diana Leafe Christian  
*Communities*, Fall '04

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Winston Churchill



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

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

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our conditioning from mainstream culture to use "the system" for personal gain? But how do we deal with our mistrust and suspicion? Do we outright believe the worst of each other? Do we seek judgment and consequences for people who break community agreements affecting all of us?

I believe in valuing people over policy: giving as much attention as possible to

## **Clear agreements made honestly are key to healthy human relationships.**

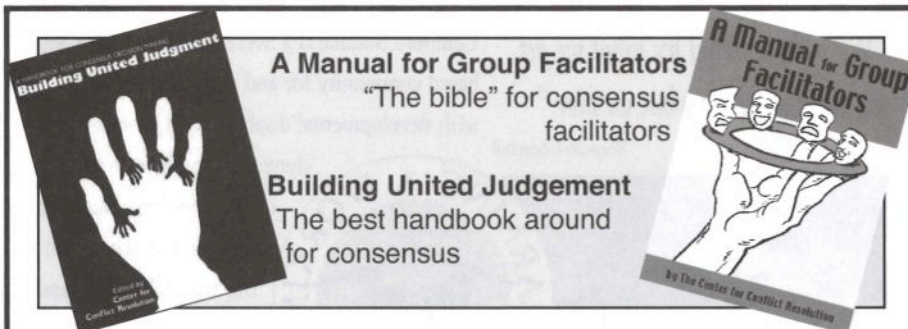
individual circumstances rather than following the letter of the law. I want to follow the spirit of our agreements, which I believe is about finding a balance between varying and potentially conflicting needs; in a word, "consensus." While Twin Oaks operates under a direct democracy with a system of managers and committees making deci-

sions for the community as a whole, the social atmosphere of the community is such that it is common for people in a decision-making position is go for as close to consensus as possible.

Clear agreements made honestly, well kept, and reevaluated regularly are key to healthy human relationships. When agreements are not alive, sacred, and reaffirmed through living each day, they become things that people tend to try to get around, use to their benefit, or use against others. If we don't focus on the relationships for which the agreements are made, we begin to dehumanize each other, seeing others and ourselves in a victim/oppressor dynamic. In doing so we perpetuate the alienation that is the fundamental cause of the mainstream's homicidal and suicidal tendencies. It is imperative that each of us seek to identify our patterns of mistrust, domination, and exploitation and seek to override these patterns through self-reflection and direct communication.

All the tricks of the trade in consensus facilitation will ultimately be undermined if the individuals engaged are not approaching it with curiosity, compassion, and creativity. This is frightening because it invites conflict, which can seem to threaten our ability to get our needs met. Rather than using an approach based on moral authority or self-righteousness, I advocate seeking understanding with as broad a perspective as possible.

We've set our intentions. Twin Oaks' Bylaws refers to a society based on "cooperation, sharing, and equality ... which strives to treat all people in a kind, gentle, honest, and fair manner, without violence or competition [and which] strives to eliminate the attitudes and results of sexism, racism, ageism, and competitiveness." But again, anyone in cooperative or communal groups knows that violence, competition, and prejudice still manifest. I want to see groups of people coming together out of a shared personal commitment to countering these characteristics. This commitment, made not to the community but to oneself out of a personal sense of justice and morality and a willingness to be in dialogue about the manifestation and curbing of unhealthy societal tendencies, is, I believe, the true basis of a better world. Ω



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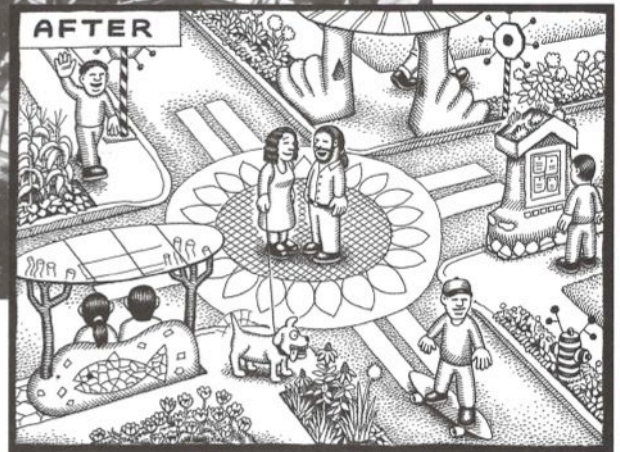
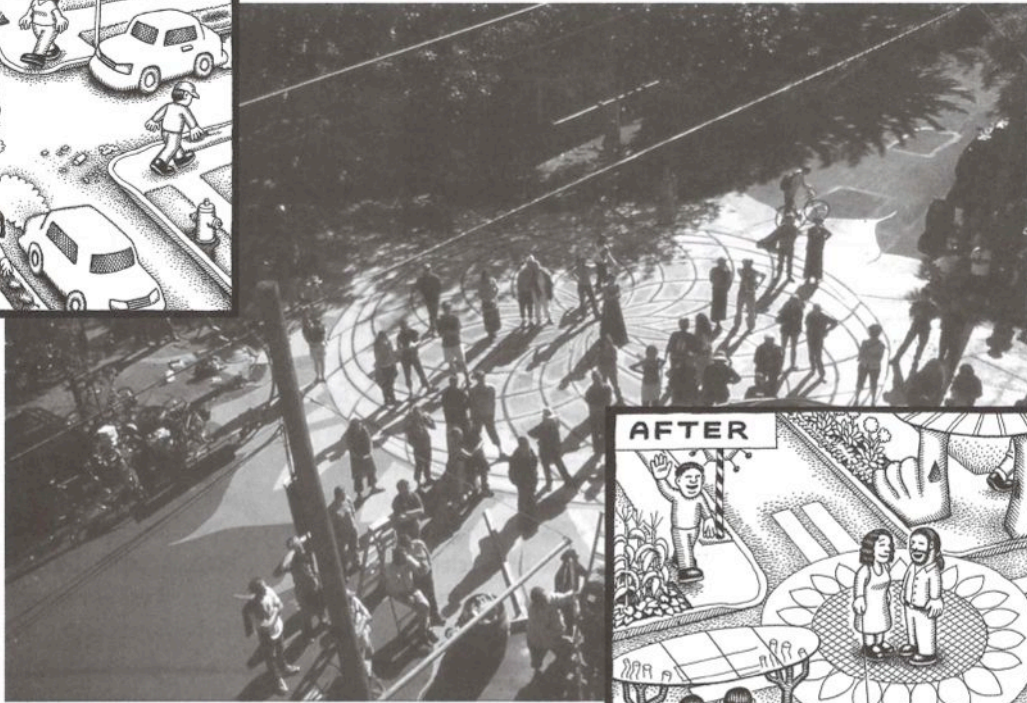
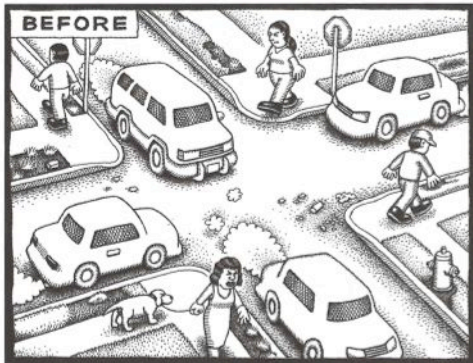
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## “Culture” and “Agriculture” at Sandhill Farm

I cried and laughed during my check-in at the community meeting today, an outburst not all that unusual since my arrival at Sandhill Farm here in northeast Missouri. I came here from California to ask questions and to find answers about agriculture in the Midwest, but have found that concerns about farming are inseparable from questions of community. As I struggled to articulate my whirlwind of emotion, my eyes fell on a cardboard box of sorghum jars to be labeled. I was struck by how the contents of that box were a symbol of what was moving me so deeply.

Sorghum was once widely grown in the Midwest but has fallen out of favor among conventional farmers.

Since sorghum cane cannot be easily machine-harvested or dependably crystallized for transport, it didn't fit well in the march towards industrialized agriculture. But here at Sandhill, a family-farm style intentional community with four full-time members and six-plus interns, sugar sorghum is more than just a commodity to be pumped from a machine; it is integral to our daily lives, representing this community's labor and love. Now I understand what an organic cattle farmer I met in Kansas meant when she called her hot dogs “soul sticks” into which she poured her sweat and tears.

It seems fitting to be labeling jars of our “soul juice” at the weekly meetings. Here, we bottle sweetness for sale. But how can

we jar the camaraderie of singing and cutting cane with friends, the thrill of lying face up to the blue sky on a wagonload of cane, or the fresh splash of juice gurgling from the mill? How can we jar the care Kris put into renovating an old carousel boiler to make the sorghum cooking process more fuel efficient? How can we jar the time Stan spends carefully watching the sorghum juice as it boils?

No, jarring such intangibles is impossible, especially the raw materials that were not so sweet at the start of the process. At the check-in meeting, Yarrow shared the pain of a broken relationship that had drawn him to Sandhill for sorghum season. Matthew

has found refuge here from what he sees as a corporate world systematically producing drones. Megan has found stability after years of travelling. Michael is dealing with his hurt arm, and Katie suffers from an injured back. Here at Sandhill Farm, 10 human beings, until recently many of whom were strangers to each other, have found a space of peace and mutual support ... a makeshift family.

Here, we process each other's happiness and sorrow and turn it into something sticky and sweet.

That's why I cried at check-in today. I have glimpsed what agriculture should be and could be. In his book *Unsettling of America*, Wendell Berry muses on “cult,” the root of the words “agriculture” and “culture”— which in Latin means “to



*Ingrid Evjen-Elias interned for two and a half months at Sandhill Farm in rural northeastern Missouri. In December 2004, she returned to her native Oakland, California, where she intends to grow food in the city.*



revolve” or “to dwell.” Can we re-envision such an agriculture, one in which people really dwell on a piece of land, seeking to know it and to nurture it as it nurtures them ... one in which people’s lives and the life of the land revolve around each

***That’s why I cried at check-in today. I have glimpsed what agriculture should be and could be.***

other? Here in the Midwest, amid deserts of corn and soybean monoculture, such a vision is sorely needed. It is needed throughout the industrialized world. Intentional communities, be they inner city or rural, are places that can manifest the connections between people, the food they eat, and the land they live on. Sandhill Farm is one community putting the culture back into agriculture. Ω

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## Roles!

### Are we really the roles we play in community?

**R**oles. I don't mean characters in a play, but the parts we play in the drama of our lives, the multiple parts or self-identities we each play all the time.

Roles are being played out within us and around us all the time, but we don't usually think about them. Most of the time we are so caught up in our own roles and other people's roles, we're no more aware of them than we are of breathing. Taking time to notice what roles we and the people around us in community are playing can bring more awareness and more peace into our individual lives and the lives of the groups we live in.

Oftentimes when we are frustrated with another community member we'll say something like, "Jack is always so difficult (or "temperamental" or "uptight" or "passive-aggressive" or ...)." In that moment, we are taking the vast complexity of Jack and reducing him down to one way of being. We forget that someone who plays a particular role in one group can play the opposite role in another. For example, in your role as community accountant you might be seen as linear and rational, but when you go home to a family gathering your relatives might see you as being flaky because you live an alternative lifestyle.

Most people tend to interpret someone else's actions as due to their personality. We may make sense of their behavior by saying it's because they are a particular type on the Myers-Briggs test, or the Enneagram, or any other number of personality categorization systems.

But the reality is that roles or self-identities emerge at the intersection of individuality and groupness. Roles are an expression of individual psychology, yes, but they are equally an expression of a particular group's culture, needs, and timing. A role occurs

in the mix between the various identities we carry in ourselves, and the labels others place on us, and the social categories we all move in such as race, age, social class, etc.

If you interpret someone's behavior as solely an expression of who that person is—their personality—without taking into account their place in the group, then you have very few options if you

don't like their behavior. You can put up with it; you can leave; you can try to get them to leave; or you can hope they change. (But how likely is that?)

However, if you enlarge your perspective to include the group aspects of that person's role, suddenly you have more

### PROCESS IN COMMUNITY



BY TREE BRESSEN

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



options. You might temporarily occupy someone else's role to see what it's like and to shift the group energy (say, by trading viewpoints during a controversial meeting, each person spending 20 minutes arguing for the "other" side). You can give that person support for their role so that they won't have to hold it so strongly (for example, assigning a second detail-oriented person, perhaps one with stronger communication skills, to work on the same committee). You can share your awareness of the co-created group dynamics with others so that everyone has an opportunity to create a shift. Your particular response will vary according to the situation, but the key is that having more awareness of roles or identities and learning to work with them in communities or other group situations takes some of the pressure off, reduces the amount of blaming, and allows for more paths to harmony.

Roles are co-created by everyone involved—and this is all the more important to recognize during sticky situations. When you find yourself feeling frustrated with a particular community member, how often do you reflect on how you and others are co-creating the troubling dynamic?

Some years back, my co-op had a member who took on the role of "abused victim." She would get upset and yell; she would say one thing and soon after the opposite; she complained about how unsupported she felt here after we'd put more effort into helping her than we ever had any other member. She complained of constant victimization, while being higher-impact than anyone else. These behaviors went on for some months, until at some point other members finally had enough, and they started being up front with her, speaking kindly but openly of the impact she was having on them, instead of being "nice" and shielding her from the effects. Lo and behold, within a few days she gave notice to move out. My housemates had changed

her role, refusing to treat her as a victim any longer.

While at times it might be appropriate for someone to move on, you need to be careful about assuming that will solve your problems. In the popular *Communities* magazine article "Community Member as Lightning Rod" (*Spr 2000*, #106), communitarian Harvey Baker points out that once a supposed "problem person" backs off or leaves, typically someone else emerges as the new problem person.

This is because roles are flexible. If the group needs a scapegoat, they will surely find one. And if members are disowning their own shadow sides, projecting their experiences of anger, sadness, or victimization onto another person, then these kinds of problems will keep emerging, until people are ready to

take on being fully human and owning all the parts of themselves.

**My  
housemates  
had changed  
her role,  
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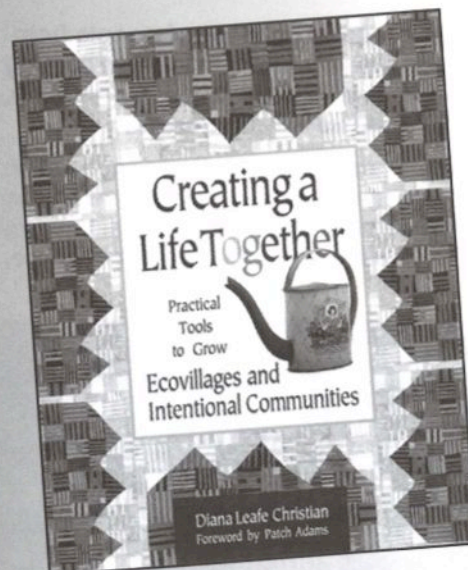
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And there are positive aspects of roles being flexible, too, such as when a member known for the role of “responsible worker” leaves the community and others step up to take initiative and fill in that role.

All roles have value. Someone in the community is going to play the role of the most detail-oriented person, and someone else is going to play the role of the let’s-

**Roles are flexible. If  
the group needs a  
scapegoat, they will  
surely find one.**

get-it-done-already type. Someone will play the role of being comfortable with taking big risks, and someone else will play the role of being cautious. Someone is going to need structure to feel safe, and someone is going to need freedom from structure to feel safe. The most effective groups find ways to use this diversity constructively, creating a middle way of balance (and a sense of timing and rhythm) that is healthier for the group’s long-term well-being than either extreme would be.

Another useful principle in understanding how roles operate is “salience.” Salience is the idea that we tend to identify with whichever role is under the most stress in the group at a given time. At a community meeting, we might think we are speaking to the role that we all share in common as members of that community; but if another part of one’s identity is under stress for a particular group member, then that’s where that person’s attention will be focused, and they will tend to react on that basis.

Many different kinds of roles or identities exist. Organizational roles refer to your place in group structures, for example maintenance honcho, steering committee member, or garden volunteer. Family system roles occur when someone acts as mother, father, or troubled child. (These roles are not necessarily prescribed by gender; for example, some women, myself included, often played the “father” role in communities, being the one to hold up standards and keep things on track.) Group dynamic roles include people fulfilling task-oriented func-



tions (get the work done) or relationship-oriented functions (stay connected with each other). And there are many other kinds of roles.

When roles become overly fixed, out of balance, or in some other way unhealthy, you can reexamine them to see what changes might be necessary. The key is usually for all involved to understand each other more, to fully hear each other, to walk a mile in each other's shoes. This leads to either a shift in roles, or more appreciation, honor, and comfort with existing roles.

A few exercises for this purpose.

#### FOUR CORNERS:

Put a sign for one category (Meaning, Structure, Caring, Action) in each corner of the room.

Invite group members to self-select into one of these categories for the purpose of a short conversation. Ask the group, When the going gets tough in a group setting, do you seek:

1. *Meaning:* Why are we doing this, what's the point?
2. *Structure:* What are the steps? What's the time limit? Who's in charge?
3. *Caring:* Everyone needs to feel OK.
4. *Action:* Let's do something! Let's try it out.

Ask group members to go to whichever corner they most identify with, and talk with others gathered there for about 15 minutes. Suggested focus questions include: "What led you to come to this corner, what do you tend to do or resort to at those times?" "What do you need from the group then?" "What gifts do you offer to the group?"

At the end of that time, invite a report back from each corner to the full group, followed by general discussion. (*Thanks to Craig Freshley.*)

#### "WHO AM I?" STICKY NOTES: FISHBOWL VERSION

Write a selection of group roles onto small sticky notes, such as "leader," "confused," "expert," "angry," "ignore me," etc.

Ask for four to five volunteers to sit in a "fishbowl" (smaller dialogue in the center while the larger group quietly witnesses from an outer circle). Put one sticky note

on each person's forehead *without that person seeing what's written on the note*. Ask the participants to treat each other according to the roles they see on the notes, and assign the group a topic to discuss. (Note: these aren't roles the person usually plays.) Pause the game after a little while and ask the participants, before they look at their own sticky notes, how they felt they were being treated. Then let them see what it says on the notes, and segue from there into a general discussion with the whole group on how we label people, how that affects how we speak and listen with them, and so on. (*Thanks to José Acevedo.*)

#### "WHO AM I?" STICKY NOTES: COCKTAIL PARTY VERSION

In this variation, every person in the group gets a label on their forehead that they can't see, and they mill around as at a cocktail party. Sample labels might include: "Goes on and on endlessly," "Volatile temper," "Quietest member," "Annoying member," "Conflict avoider," etc. (Again, these aren't roles the person usually plays.) Let the interaction happen for a little while, then stop for whole group discussion. (*Thanks to Shari Leach.*)

#### ROLES IN SCENARIOS

Write a few role descriptions on index cards, such as "pro-whatever," "anti-whatever," "devil's advocate," "tired of the issue," and "hates conflict."

Choose a classic or current community debate, such as the pet policy, food preferences, or how to get the work done (or managed).

Give out cards to a few people. Invite others to take whatever role they want, encouraging people to try out a role that's different from their usual one on that issue. Have the discussion and see what happens. Save time for debriefing afterward.

After doing any form of role-playing, it's important to "de-role" so that people can fully let go of being in that role and of any negative energy they might have picked up from playing it. De-roling consists of reminding people who they really are, perhaps engaging in some ritual motion to let go of the other identity. Ω

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## Design Goals for Ecovillages

About a year and a half ago, I moved from Eugene, Oregon, to Lost Valley Educational Center. In addition to my work for the Lost Valley community, I spent much of my time working on my final paper for the Master's program in Community and Regional Planning at the University of Oregon. I wrote about how to prioritize design goals for creating sustainable communities, focusing on two questions:

- How do we know what is really environmentally sustainable in community design?
- What design techniques will yield the greatest environmental good?

At Lost Valley, I see that while we may want to do everything that seems "sustainable," we have limited resources of money, time, and energy and need to prioritize our efforts.

Thankfully, one of my advisors and fellow community members, Peter Reppe, introduced me to *The Consumer's Guide*

to *Effective Environmental Choices: Practical Advice from the Union of Concerned Scientists*, by Michael Brower and Leon Warren (Three Rivers Press: New York, 1999). Brower and Warren analyzed how the actions of the average United States citizen damage the global environment in different ways.

Their findings had a huge significance for me. Of seven major kinds of damage to the environment, three activities people

are involved in daily—transportation, food (agriculture), and household operations (heating, cooling, and electricity use)—do the most environmental damage.

For example, the total damaging effects of each household's activities in these three areas result in 79% of the greenhouse gases that cause global warming, 80% of toxic air pollution, and 86% of habitat damaged by water use. Thus, if most households changed what

they do in terms of driving and traveling, food choices, and operating their homes, we could greatly reduce global warming and other destructive trends.

### ECOVILLAGE NETWORK OF THE AMERICAS



BY MARC TOBIN

*Marc Tobin holds a Master's degree in Community and Regional Planning, and is author of "Linking Ecological Accounting to Design Guidelines for Environmentally Sustainable Developments. Terminal Project," unpublished Masters Thesis, University of Oregon. 2004. He coordinates the Ecovillage and Permaculture Certificate Program ([www.lostvalley.org](http://www.lostvalley.org)) at Lost Valley Educational Center in Dexter, Oregon. [marc@lostvalley.org](mailto:marc@lostvalley.org).*



**Percentage of various forms of environmental degradation caused by transportation, food growing, and household operations**

	Global Warming		Air Pollution		Water Pollution		Habitat Alteration	
	Greenhouse	Common	Toxic	Common	Toxic	Water	Land	
	Gases	Sources	Sources	Sources	Sources	Use	Use	
Transportation	32	28	51	7	23	2	15	
Food	12	17	9	38	22	73	46	
Household	35	32	20	21	14	11	4	
<b>Total</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>65</b>	

Here are more details from Brower and Warren's "Table 1 Environmental Impacts Per Household" (pg. 50).

Even with a degree in environmental studies and years working in environmental organizations, I had little understanding of how daily life choices contribute to our deteriorating environment. This should be basic knowledge for environmental activists!

The Union of Concern Scientists' findings also demonstrated that seven areas account for the vast majority of environmental damage in the U.S. via global warming, air and water pollution, and habitat alteration.

- Cars and light trucks
- Nonorganic meat and poultry
- Nonorganic fruits, vegetables, and grains
- Home heating, hot water, and air conditioning
- Household appliances and lighting
- Home construction
- Household water and sewage (pg. 50)

After I realized the significance of this information, I created the following prioritized list of design goals for sustainable communities. I reviewed ecological design literature, conducted interviews with professionals, and drew on my own knowledge for the accompanying suggestions on how to achieve each goal. Here's what I came up with.

**ELEVEN DESIGN GOALS FOR ECOVILLAGES**

**Goal 1: Reduce automobile driving**

Include a full range of services and mix of housing and job opportunities within

a quarter-mile walking radius, which has been shown to be the distance within which people will walk or bicycle.

Design for pedestrians, bicycles, and public transportation. Use a cohousing, Village Homes, or Radburn approach (shared, car-free interior spaces) or New Urbanism

**Goal 2: Reduce consumption of nonorganic meats**

Design space efficient, organic, "closed-loop" production of protein sources such as eggs, vegetable proteins, dairy, or meat, either on-site or within easy walking distance.

Facilitate easy access to organic protein sources (proximity to natural food store, co-op, or CSA)

**Goal 3: Reduce consumption of nonorganic fruits, vegetables, and grains**

Design for on-site, space efficient, organic "closed loop" production of fruits, vegetables, and grains. Replace decorative landscaping with edible landscaping. Use water-saving techniques for food production. Facilitate easy access to organic food sources

**Goal 4: Reduce fossil fuel use for space heating**

Reduce demand through building/retrofitting for smaller and more heat-efficient buildings. Design landscaping to reduce heating requirements. Maximize solar access and solar gain in street layout and building design.

**Goal 5: Reduce fossil fuel use for hot water**

Use efficient appliances, heat recovery systems, and solar water heating.

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**Goal 7: Reduce fossil fuel air conditioning**

Design landscaping to lessen cooling load (i.e., plant deciduous trees on south-western side of building). Design landscaping to create a cooler microclimate. Use light-colored roofing materials. Use heat barriers and ventilation in attics and roofs. Use natural ventilation systems.

**Goal 8: Reduce energy demand from household appliances**

Install only energy efficient appliances (Energy Star or better). Design kitchens to take advantage of natural, outdoor, or ground cooling for refrigerators. When more efficient, share use of appliances

**Goal 9: Reduce energy demand from lighting**

Use energy efficient light fixtures and bulbs. Orient streets, building layout, and building design for solar daylighting. Use timers and motion sensors on lights.

**Goal 10: Reduce impacts of home construction**

Position and cluster housing on the site in ways that preserve the maximum amount of connected habitat. Build housing with efficient use of space and more than one story to minimize building footprint. Minimize disturbance to the site during construction.

Use materials that have low embedded energy (including the energy required for transportation), and are nontoxic in production and use.

**Goal 11: Decrease impacts of sewage treatment**

Separate industrial contaminants from biological wastes and recycle industrial contaminants back into industrial uses. Reuse greywater for landscaping or on-site food production. Use composting toilets or on-site or neighborhood scale biological treatment systems for human waste. Keep rainwater runoff out of municipal sewage system through on-site infiltration or catchment.

Many environmental impacts can't be resolved simply by these design methods, however. For example, raising the CAF (Corporate Average Fuel Efficiency) standards of automobiles—which would require a national legislative action—could have a huge effect on the impact of transportation. In agriculture, more stringent state and federal regulations for large animal farms could have at least as great an impact as on-site food production in a community. It appears that to create the most benefit, we must design sustainable communities *and* work towards large-scale policy change.

I also found a striking lack of performance data in ecological design literature. I hope that more designers (including ecovillage designers!) will track the environmental performance of their projects so that we can better understand how well a given design recommendation meets its stated goals.

Finally, I hope that these design goals can help people to create truly sustainable intentional communities and ecovillages. Ω



# Learning to Screen New Members ...



*Sophia Community now has a clear membership process. Photo was taken after John left the group.  
(Left to right) Njeru, Lisa (with Julia), author Don Wedd, Becky, Anya, and Ben.*

In its 11th year, our small urban community in Chicago faced the painful choice of either expelling one of our members or disbanding altogether. We had no procedure in place for asking someone to leave. We made decisions by consensus, and the person didn't want to go.

## How had this happened?

Sophia Community was formed in 1993 by four young women who had all spent a

## the Hard Way

year doing volunteer work in inner city Chicago neighborhoods and living with Catholic nuns. Inspired by the sisters' life and ministry, but not choosing the vowed life, they instead created their own form of community. The founders' vision statement, written at the beginning of their second year, proved to be robust, and still guides the community's direction. Some key values:



- *Simple Living.* We share chores, community space, and household furniture; have a common household fund; and eat mostly organic food.
- *Presence to each other.* We're committed to our relationships with each other, shared meals, and celebrations.
- *Social Justice.* Most of us are theology students or work in social service.
- *Spirituality.* Our spirituality is diverse, however, we share spiritual practices together twice weekly.
- *Hospitality.* We run a small guest business for travelers and invite friends and guests to dinner once a week.

For the first three years, every new member came after living for a year with the nuns and was known to other members through mutual friends. I established the first break in this pattern when I married Lisa, one of the founders. After a year living away from the community, we moved back into the community. Despite becoming the first male in the community (and necessitating the rewording of the vision statement from “we

are women of faith”), the community’s “screening” process consisted of asking Lisa and me questions over dinner, mostly wondering how a couple would relate to the community.

Once the community had accepted me, its next new member was also a man, whom I’ll call John, whom one member knew already, our first African-American member. The next person showing an interest in the community, Brian, was a complete stranger, a theology student from out of town. Since no one knew him at all, someone suggested that he first send a written bio to give us a sense of who he was. After we read it, we invited him to dinner for an informal introduction to the community. Over dinner we interviewed the potential new member and community

members asked whatever they thought was significant, and he found out more about the community’s expectations. After that, our recruitment procedure routinely include a biographical statement and dinner with a formal interview. When one candidate lived too far away to come to dinner, we interviewed her by phone.

***We made decisions  
by consensus, and  
the person didn't  
want to go.***



*Sophia members value simple living, their relationships with one another, social justice, spirituality, and hospitality.*



We originally occupied two floors of an apartment building, but four years ago moved to a large old house owned by the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers). The people in this particular Quaker Meeting no longer had the energy to manage its residential program, with two employees and several residents. Our community offered to manage the building and its guest business without employees, in return for living in the house. The Quakers accepted our offer. However, several of the current residents of the house wanted to continue living in the house, so they applied for membership in our community.

This was our first real membership challenge. We knew enough about these people to suspect that they would not do well in our community, but we felt we couldn't just reject them out of hand. We asked for their bios and interviewed them using a list of questions that someone typed up so we would be consistent (and once it was typed up, it seemed so official we kept using it). We added a new requirement: references from people with whom they had lived in community. After we called their references, we were convinced they not would fit in with our culture, and we rejected them—the first time we had rejected any applicants.

While at least one community member had moved out every year, others had stayed on for several years, and we started to talk about how we individually handled conflict. We learned that the women tended towards wanting to avoid conflict, so rejecting candidates, or even choosing one from among several candidates, was difficult for them.

At the beginning of each year, we commit to staying in community for another year. Some members have stayed from six to ten years; while others find that the community is not what they expected and leave after their first year.

What happens when we accept a member who doesn't fit in, but who can't see that himself, and stays? After three years, interpersonal conflicts between John and one of our members whom I'll call Sue were so difficult we invited in a facilitator. At the end of the two-hour session, the facilitator left us with the statement from John, "I'm Black and I feel excluded!"

While the question of whether we were scapegoating him arose, our only practical response was to suggest couples counseling for John and Sue, even though they weren't a romantic couple. That didn't take place, and Sue moved out after another year.

***The conflict boiled  
out of control,  
engulfing both old  
community members  
and new ones.***



But Sue's leaving didn't solve anything, soon other community members were having angry outbursts towards John. We tried extended family therapy over a six-month period. After a few sessions in which people became increasingly honest about their feelings, we decided to clarify our community expectations. What were our agreed-upon commitments and rules for living together?

We then formed this into a Covenant Statement, which all community members signed during a ritual. Now that the rules were clear, we hoped the conflict would abate.

No such luck. Within a few months, the conflict boiled out of control, engulfing both old community members and new ones. This time, John selected a conflict mediator and two support people, and the community met for four long, emotional, and painful evenings. What emerged were two different kinds of expectations about what was central to our community: keeping our agreements, or relating to each other harmoniously in spite of broken agreements. It also became clear that the community would not continue unless John left. We were exhausted by the conflict, unable to hold productive community meetings, and unwilling to invite new members. Some members felt like leaving immediately to escape "community hell."



To complicate the situation, John had his own deep issues around being homeless, and at that point had been unemployed for several months. He did not want to move out, but feared we would summarily eject him. A day after our final inconclusive mediation session, we went on our community retreat, during which John agreed to leave the community at the end of the year (four months away). This was a huge relief for us all. For me, it seemed that “a way had opened” as our Quaker friends had suggested it would, which released lots of pent-up energy and hope.

With much loving support from our Quaker landlords, John did move out at the end of the year. Since then, we have taken in several new members who have not been affected by that long struggle. As a result of our experience, we introduced a six-month Provisional Membership period for new members, during which time they cannot block consensus decision-making (which includes membership decisions) and must apply for full membership after that period. This gives the community the power to reject someone who seems to be unsuitable, or to leave him or her in the Provisional Membership status for another year if there is still doubt. We’ve also developed a list of criteria to help potential members see whether

our community is right for them. (The inspiration for this came from reading *Creating a Life Together*, written by Diana Leafe Christian, the editor of this magazine.)

We also developed a community manual for candidates to read before we interview them. The manual contains our vision statement, our community covenant, a list of chores and duties, and a copy of our lease agreement. For the first time, we required new members to pay their security deposit within two weeks of being accepted, as an indicator of their commitment and solvency.

In our 12th year, as the result of trial and error and responding to circumstances, our recruitment process has this shape:

1. Visit the community for dinner, and check each other out.
2. Submit a bio or personal statement so we get a flavor of your life.
3. Be interviewed by the community.
4. Read through our mission statement, our community guidelines, the chores and duties, so you know what you are taking on.
5. Provide references (former roommates, community members, people who like you).
6. If offered a place in the community, pay the security deposit.



### Sophia Community's Membership Requirements

Our recruitment materials now state that in 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 two years work experience
- Are friendly

—D. W.

As we begin the new year, I feel hopeful with the fresh energy of the new members. Within a week of moving in, some were redecorating the house and cleaning all the cabinets. We’ve held a long business meeting to deal with an accumulation of decisions deferred over summer, and started planning our first weekend retreat. I know that the friction of living together will raise differences and conflicts that we didn’t expect when we interviewed each other, but I feel that these can be productive and may even bring us closer, rather than trap us in a cycle of decreasing life.

*Sophia Community now consists of four men and three women aged 25–50, and the author’s three-year old daughter, with an ethnic and cultural mix including Irish, Australian, Kenyan, African-American, and European-American.*

*Don Wedd lived for 20 years in a Catholic religious order in Australia, in a graduate student community in New York, and now, in Sophia community with his partner Lisa and his daughter Julia.*



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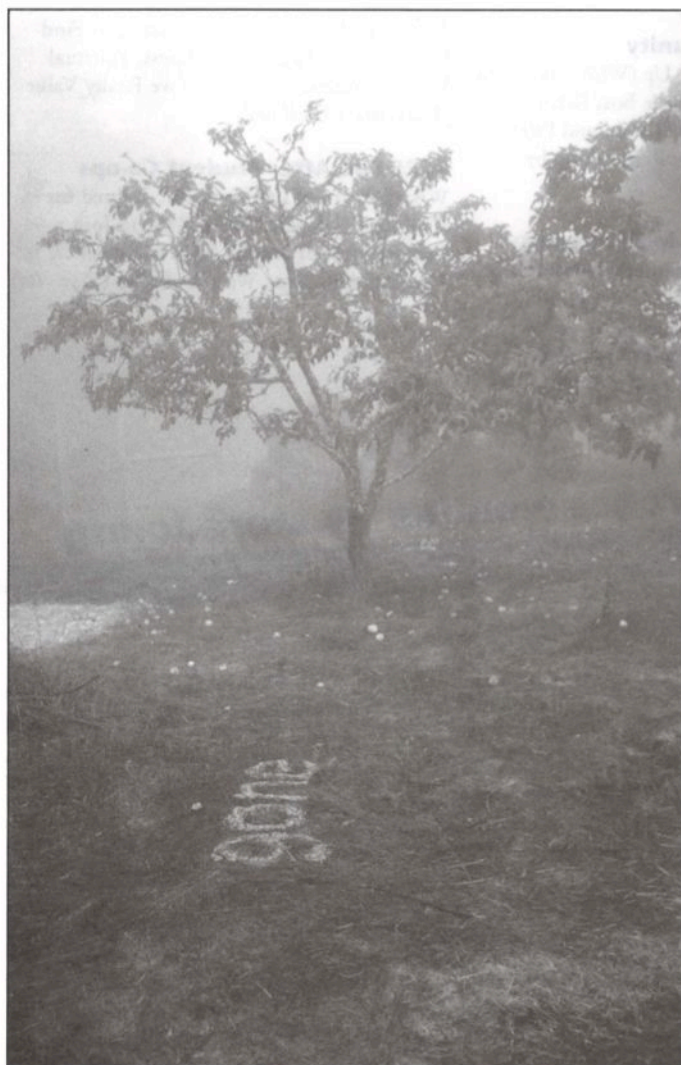
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#126



# We're Only Human

**A**nthropologists will tell you that making art and living in community are two key factors that define civilization. They go hand in hand. We as a species began to do both at roughly the same time, tens of thousands of years ago. Making art and living together are among the most recent steps in our evolution and are what make us human. We have made some pretty impressive technological advances in the past 30,000 years, I'll admit. Think about this though: not everyone can build a space shuttle or a laptop, but we can all make art and live together (except, perhaps, for that one neighbor who always seems to block process and decision making).



A short walk from my house are some rock paintings made by the Cahuilla People, who have lived in and around the San Jacinto and Santa Rosa Mountains of Southern California for about 3,500 years. To find them, you have to scramble down to the paintings from the road above through a little rock doorway and down some boulder steps, or climb up a very steep and rocky creek bank from below. The paintings are a long, horizontal line of simple diamond patterns in red paint on the face of a massive granite boulder that faces across the valley to Tahquitz Rock, the most prominent geological feature in the area. Tahquitz Rock can be seen from more than 50 miles away. Clearly, the pictographs have always held a special place, set off by their isolation and location.

Members of the Cahuilla tribes say that the artwork was a traditional part of coming-of-age ceremonies for girls. The young women traveled a long way up the mountain from the valleys below with elders and their peers to add their diamond or "X" to the design as they became women. The pictographs were made cumulatively over time and with contributions from many women over many generations. To the Cahuilla, these paintings truly are magical because they physically embody the collective intentions of the people, linking past, present, and future without delineation.

What strikes me most as a contemporary viewer of the Cahuilla paintings is their staggering beauty and the fact that they exist at all. Here, in the middle of a forest valley over 5,000 feet high, an ancient community set aside place and time, year after year, to create—together—a lasting symbol of itself and its values.

I suppose we could speculate about the process the Cahuilla underwent. Perhaps not everyone in the tribe wanted diamond patterns. Maybe someone wanted paisleys instead. It could have been that the men wanted red as their color and the women had to threaten to withhold acorn meal to get their way. I'm fairly certain that at least one Cahuilla must have wanted the paintings to be closer to the village, not such an arduous journey away.

*In one of his ongoing series of works, Guest Editor Scott Horton's piece, "Home," was installed in 2004 at OceanSong Nature Preserve in Sonoma County, California. Over time, the seeds are eaten or taken away by birds and small animals, the artwork itself being "destroyed" ("gone") in the process of fulfilling its purpose. Some seeds provide an immediate source of food; others will be dispersed to sprout and grow far afield, providing habitat and forage in the future.*





The point is that despite any difficulties involved in the creation of the pictographs, here they are, thousands of years later, testimony to community and the integral power of art.

Today, throughout the world, intentional communities (probably including yours) are leading the way in returning art to whom it belongs—everyone! Art is much more than something that an "expert" makes and that we spend a lot of money to buy at a gallery and hang on our wall. Likewise, community does not simply manifest when we buy a house in a development with a wall and a gate.

**To find the paintings, you have to scramble down from the road above through a little rock doorway and down some boulder steps.**

As you will see in this issue, communities are envisioning, empowering, defining, and celebrating themselves through art. Sometimes it is art made collaboratively, but often it is through placing community value on art that individuals make or leaving open space and time to honor and nurture art.

Whatever the case, I hope you and your community will be inspired to actively and joyously pursue being human by making art and living together.

*Guest Editor Scott Horton is an eco-artist and permaculturist who lives in the San Jacinto Mountains of Southern California. His outdoor installations create and restore habitat while calling people's attention to the natural world in unusual ways. He uses materials including seeds, soil, stone, and plants in collaboration with animals that naturally interact with his installations causing them to develop and change over time. He was a 2003–2004 Artist-in-Residence at Caldera Art and Ecology Center in Oregon, and is currently working on a series of paintings using honey and smoke on natural fibers. He has taught permaculture and natural building to people from preschool students and MBA students at UC Berkeley and at The Ecovillage Training Center at The Farm, the Permaculture Institute of Northern California, Portland Community Colleges, and in California, New Mexico, and Mexico. LaSemillaBesada@hotmail.com.*

*Ancient Cahuilla pictographs near Scott Horton's home occupy a ten-by-three foot space on a granite boulder 30 feet in diameter. Generations of young women collectively and cumulatively made the paintings over many years as part of coming-of-age rites. The pictographs are made up of dozens of red X's connected to form chains of diamond patterns.*



# 101 Art Projects Your Community Can Do

BY SCOTT HORTON AND DIANA LEAFE CHRISTIAN

1. Open community meetings with storytelling, like folks do at Mariposa Grove in Oakland.
2. Honor the growth of community children through a height-measuring ritual and art project every New Years'.
3. Invite a dance-experienced community member or outside dance teacher to offer waltz lessons, then waltz around the dining room to the tunes of Strauss.
4. With the help of invited teachers, learn the samba, rumba, cha-cha, or other Latin dances; Appalachian clogging, '40s swing, or '50s bebop, and hold community cotillions, barn dances, or sock hops.
5. Using melodies from favorite songs, write new songs with lyrics that embody your community's history, values, and mission.
6. Match up the arts and crafts that various community members can teach with those that other members want to learn, from knitting to whittling. Show the results in a special "crafts fair" exhibit.



BY BILL NICKL AND BARBARA STÜTZEL

# PAINTING AND DANCING (& SINGING, ACTING, SCULPTING) FOR COMMUNITY SPIRIT

How artists and nonartists at ZEGG build trust and delight through art



ROLAND FICHT, ZEGG





ROLAND FICHT, ZEGG

It's after midnight, and the huge sheets of white paper on the floor of the assembly hall are gradually filled with ideas and images. A bottle of wine is uncorked, three musicians improvise, a dancer joins them. Inspired by the music and movement, our paint brushes vibrate with rhythm. It's Art Night at ZEGG.

Eighty of us live and work together at ZEGG community (Center for Experimental Culture Design) in Belzig, Germany, near Berlin. To fulfill our vision of a culture characterized by cooperation, trust, and love, we experiment with various forms of communication and interpersonal transparency.



ROLAND FICHT, ZEGG

7. Paint constellations or clouds on ceilings of common spaces.



8. Convert bare wall space in the community dining room to "gallery space," exhibiting art works loved or made by members, like Great Oaks Cohousing in Ann Arbor.

9. Also use as "gallery space" doors, hallways, kitchen cupboard doors, even the insides of bathroom stall doors.

10. Sponsor an "artist in residence" to work with members to envision and create permanent art that is meaningful to the community's vision, values, or goals.

11. Ask a community artist to design and paint your community's entrance sign, perhaps adding an attractive symbol or logo.

12. Do the same with directional signs such as "Parking," "Dining Room," and "Showers"—all opportunities for artistic expression.



13. With instruments nearby, allow time after dinner to encourage musician members to spontaneously pick up a guitar or a drum and make after-dinner music.

14. Set aside space specifically dedicated to making music, perhaps even to record CDs, like the music studio at Zendik Arts Community in West Virginia.





ROLAND FICHT, ZEGG

While we are not specifically a community of artists, art plays an important role. Only a few of us make a living exclusively from creative products; most of us also have other jobs, as for example working in ZEGG's conference business. Nevertheless, many of us paint, sculpt, work with metal, or create railings and facades. Others are involved in arts and crafts, pottery, photography, and multimedia performances. People are often the art "medium"—singer-songwriters, choir members, rock musicians, dancers, actor-playwrights.

We want to tell you how art and creativity help us create "communal energy" or "community spirit" at ZEGG, because for us community is, first of all, an attitude—the attitude of being connected with ourselves, with others, and with creation.

### "When I paint . . ."

Art, music, dance, and theater are sources of joy for us. Being totally oblivious to the world during the creative process is a training ground for, and a foretaste of, how each of us can live creatively in the moment.

"Art anticipates the life we dream of—intensive and present, spontaneous and straight from the heart," says painter Bill Nickl. "For me, painting and loving belong together for various reasons. You paint what you love, and by doing this you awake feelings of love that have been hidden.

"When I paint I can see how life and love and creation evolve. Thus, art does not end at the atelier's door. For me, it is a matter of ensuring that art continues to remain part of my daily life, of making life a work of art. This means giving back to life splendor, meaning, and dignity. When I absorb in enjoying the moment and dedicate myself to the creative power of life, then it is more likely that I am prepared to abandon rigid concepts which perhaps were once made out of fear but which are no longer useful.

"The creative process is our training ground—life invites us to create it consciously in the same way we create a work of art. Every minute of our lives is unique and created by us. Art can show us the way and support us but still it is more than a preliminary exercise: it stands on its own."

### Connecting with Each Other

Apart from its importance for our own inner presence, art is a way of connecting with other people. We use art to express ourselves—in more ways and often more essentially than by normal conversation. For example, we often use theater, music, and dance to transform personal topics into performances. In doing so, we jointly create inner and outer images for what moves us and for all we want to achieve. This includes evening events with spontaneous improvisational theater as well as plays that represent our critical analysis of the times.





ROLAND FICHT, ZEGG

Creative events support us in getting to know new aspects of each other. We use art to communicate aspects of ourselves in ways not normally available in daily life.

Emotions, for example, can be communicated much more easily when using a theatrically exaggerated form. When someone uses theater this way, the rest of us can understand someone's experience better because we dissociate more easily from the emotion and aren't so caught up in it. We again and again create spaces that enable us to express and perceive each other's feelings through theater. We call this way of communicating our inner processes to others "self-projection."

We also use visual arts for this. Picasso said, "I don't say everything, but I paint everything." So we use the Australian technique of dot paintings, for example, to express ourselves individually as we create a common work of art. We gather together and everyone creates his or her own dot painting, then we combine them in one common



ROLAND FICHT, ZEGG

15. Set up a studio for painters and other visual artists, as at Twin Oaks in Virginia and ZEGG Community in Germany.

16. Plant a kitchen herb garden, a scent garden, a butterfly garden, or any kind of theme garden, as at Sirius Community in Massachusetts.

17. Gather plant materials such as flowers, greens, seed pods, etc. and wildcraft seasonal decorations such as solstice and equinox wreaths, dried spring bouquets, garlands, etc.

18. Gather and dry good-smelling herbs and flower petals and make sachets, soap, or skin-care products for community members.

19. Wildcraft or grow basketry plants—those with pliable stems or long, thin sturdy leaves—and make baskets.

20. Create a mobile for your community dining room with seeds, seed pods, shells, and odd bits of driftwood.



21. Cut out plywood silhouettes of sea creatures like dolphins, whales, or flying fish and plant them so they leap out of the grass in your community commons, like RoseWind Cohousing in Washington.

22. Hold a poetry evening with people reading or performing their favorite poems, including their own.

23. Create a permanent space for theater productions, like the combination dining room/theater at Huehucoyotl Ecovillage in Mexico.





ROLAND FICHT, ZEGG



ROLAND FICHT, ZEGG





ROLAND FICHT, ZEGG

work of art, blurring their edges with more color “dots.” Painting together like this stimulates a high level of creative energy.

Music and singing are equally important to us. We often sing together: usually simple songs from various cultures. A song in the right moment can change the energy of a heated discussion and make open our hearts to better listen and understand each other.

Art also helps us connect more easily with people in the surrounding towns and villages. We present ourselves and our works to the public in concerts and performances; painting exhibitions; and dance, theater, or choir performances for children and young people. So we help to reduce fears of the unknown which can arise when a large community with innovative ideas like ours exists in a small town like Belzig.

If we stay in a creative space like this for a longer time, not just a painting or a musical performance emerges. Creativity spreads from the easel or the instrument and pervades communication, cooking, childcare—everything we do here.

At such times the mind becomes more easy-going, it sings and rejoices like a young bird, it soars and does somersaults, it departs from paths that are all too linear. It is no longer the daily work, but the creative act and its consequences that become important.

Art connects us with and allows us to experience the creative power of the universe. At the beginning of an art project, we aimlessly follow the inspiration until the image (the writing, the song, the movement) appears. Conscious work to refine and complete it then begins. We permanently create new art pieces and thus take part in the process of creation.

*Barbara Stützel, a psychologist, actress, and singer who has lived at ZEGG for three years, looks for ways to combine creativity, community life, and healing through conferences and seminars and her own creative experiments.*

*Bill Nickl, an artist and manager of the ZEGG conference center who has lived in the community since 1991, studies the vital powers of painting, meditating, long-distance running, and living daily life.*

*You'll find more artists and their works on the ZEGG website: [www.zegg.de](http://www.zegg.de).*

24. Dedicate a room with a wooden floor and plenty of space as an ongoing or sometime dance studio. Put up wall-length mirrors and a CD player. Martha Graham, move over!

25. Armed with *Swan Lake*, *The Nutcracker*, and beginning ballet videos, leap and plié around the room. Guaranteed aerobic!

26. Or with Irish and Scottish dance instructional videos and plenty of Gaelic jigs and bagpipe tunes, create your own home-grown Riverdance troupe. Double aerobic!

27. Or with African dance instructional videos and plenty of polyrhythmic drum music (or live drumming), create your own exuberant African dance numbers. Triple aerobic!



28. Make artistic or fanciful birdhouses to create habitat for and welcome more birdsong to your community, like RoseWind Cohousing.

29. Hold an All Species Ball, wearing costumes representing different animals, birds, fish, and insects in your bioregion (or from across the planet).

30. Show your true colors. Paint your faces (take photos!) or do whole-body painting and hold a parade, like ZEGG Community in Germany.

31. Write your community's history as an epic poem, If you put it in some iambic pentameter, or rhyme it now and then, great. Homer's got nothing on you!



# OF RAVENS AND RULES

BY LYNN NADEAU



DARREN T. MCMANUS



Metal coyotes in the daisies, plywood swimmers diving under the lawn, and a pump house sporting an eight-foot octopus. What's going on? A lot more than meets the eye. Here at RoseWind Cohousing in Port Townsend, Washington, art in our common areas is both a delight and a bone of contention.



Porch mural detail.

32. Take a well-known poem with lots of rhythm, such as Poe's *The Raven* or Longfellow's *Hiawatha*, and keeping the rhythm and meter, change the words to honor community history or features of its land.
33. Re-use materials from your recycling program, or salvage yard, to craft works of art. Doesn't that old rusty whatever-it-is look a little like a penguin?
34. Craft a labyrinth of well-placed stones, perhaps in a dappled forest glen, like Earthaven Ecovillage in North Carolina or in the garden, as at Camphill Beaver Run in Pennsylvania.
35. Sing songs, including circle songs and rounds, before meals and community meetings, as at Songaia Cohousing in Washington.



36. Organize a group to get together regularly to sing harmonies and rounds, like Twin Oaks.
37. With multiple copies of *Rise Up Singing*, get together regularly to sing old standbys, from campfire songs to blues to '60s folk tunes.
38. Do the same with favorite songs in Broadway musicals, from *Oklahoma* and *Sound of Music* to *Cats* and *The Lion King*.
39. Collect percussion instruments, from drums and rattles to cowbells and African thumb pianos, and keep them in common space to stimulate drumming and jamming any time people feel like it.



Pets? Parenting? Pesticides? None of these are big issues here. But just mention our guerrilla art happenings and you'll spark a hot debate. To outsiders, RoseWind seems very artistic. Visitors invariably comment on how creative, unique, and interesting our common spaces are. "I was struck by the amount of creativity, beauty, commitment, and intention that has obviously gone into envisioning, creating and maintaining RoseWind," wrote Carolyn, a visitor from Seattle. "The Common House is quite magical. The main impression one gets is that no corners were cut, no effort was spared, and tons of artistic inspiration were poured into every detail of the building . . . The energy flows through the building in a way that uplifts the spirit to a place of pure delight."

On the front porch of our Common House rustic tree trunks form columns, polished granite tiles line window sills, and the railings at the north end have whimsical cut-outs in the vertical slats—even recognizable silhouettes of certain residents.

The big triangular mural up under the porch gable includes a photo collage of RoseWind members standing in our central field, surrounded by a painting of our homes and land, the deer and coyotes, and parts of our historic Victorian seaport town, along

with the surrounding waters, boats, and marine life. A lead artist and half a dozen other members collaborated to produce this unique portrait of RoseWind and its surroundings.

Step inside the front hall of the Common House and you're greeted with bright yellow benches with hand-painted red flowers, in an entrance hall of warm orange with the imprints of cedar boughs pressed into the plaster. The Rastrablock building material and Structolite plaster are shaped into arches, niches, and other special features. One member crafted handsome wooden coat racks with wood from his old orchard. A surprising little "cat door" (actually a well-used shortcut to the kids' room) is edged with tiny hand prints in the wall plaster. Another member's graceful *ikebana* flower arrangements appear in a spotlighted niche.

On either side of the hearth in the dining room, green, blue, and amber bottle ends embedded through the walls glow with light from outdoors. One bathroom has a rotating display of a member's quilted fiber-art hangings; the other has a bright and entertaining mural, "The Secret Life of Birds." The children, too, have embellished the Common House, with paintings on the cupboards in the playroom.

*A plywood frog dangles a leg over RoseWind's gate.*



*Pumphouse mosaics were an early group project.*



Out on the grassy commons, you never know what you'll see. First a fishy tail appeared as if diving below the lawn. Soon it was joined by a dolphin fin, and then more fins. Then whole dolphins started "breaking the surface," even leaping clear of the grass. Each day we look to see what's going to appear, or disappear, next.

A troupe of itinerant pink flamingoes entertained us a few years ago, standing guard over a newly seeded lawn, then mysteriously migrating over to peer into the common house windows. After inspiring one member to write a Shakespearian-style sonnet about them, they then appeared on people's front doors on May Day, delivering poems and flowers.

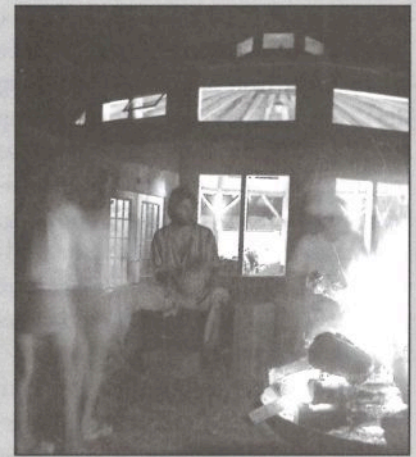
Although all this participation and diversity may sound idyllic, we've learned nothing that involves 40 people is simple. An essential challenge of community living is balancing the desires of individuals and the needs of the whole group. A tension

arises between structure and spontaneity. Structure provides value in having guidelines, within which people can "freely" exercise their creativity and impulses, in ways less likely to upset others. Spontaneity says, "That's not free enough," and wants minimal rules, calling for "trust" and more openness to the unknown. At RoseWind, a major place this pops up is around the issue of art in the common spaces. Why

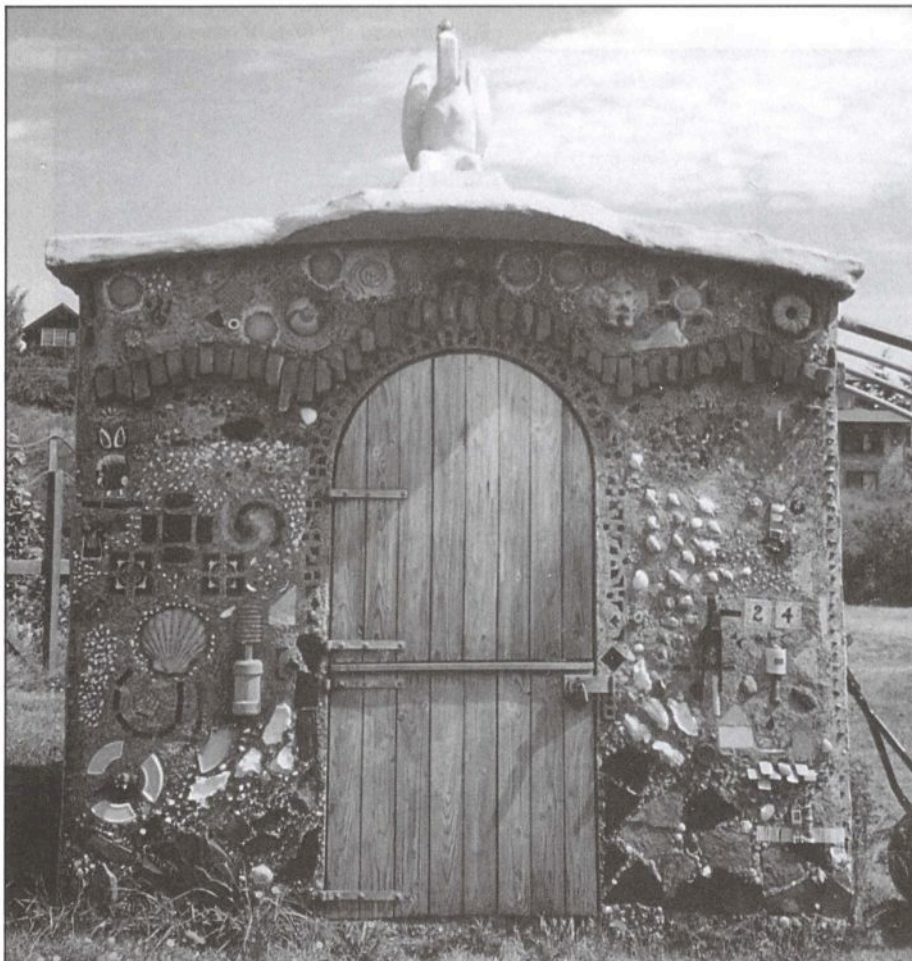
**Pets? Parenting? Pesticides? None of these are big issues here**

might this be so?

We are not a cohousing community especially for artists. True, Port Townsend is an "artsy" town, with many music and theater productions, writers' and painters' groups, open mikes, dances, markets, and fairs. So it's not too surprising, for example, that a crew-cut young RoseWind fellow who races giant mud trucks and has a job running heavy equipment also works alongside his wife crafting delicate glass beads. Port Townsend is full of people who work



40. Make it easy to drum around the campfire anytime. Set up a ring with rocks and buckets of water near a stack of weather-protected kindling and logs near an indoor storage space for drums. Let 'er rip!
41. Create a community patchwork quilt for your dining room wall, with each member contributing a different patch. Use pieces of favorite old worn-out shirts, fabric paint, sequins, embroidery.
42. Decorate walls and floors of community spaces with mosaics. Perhaps with a lead artist and community helpers, use pieces of broken glass, tile, broken plates or cups, colored stones, anything colored or sparkly to create your own designs.
43. Or use tile. With the help of a paint-your-own ceramics shop, decorate ceramic tiles with images or words. After they're fired put the tiles together to create a tiled hallway or wall.
44. With the help of a potter, a pottery studio, or at a paint-your-own-ceramics shop, make your own plates and platters for the community dining room. Then eat off the art!
45. Dip and color your own candles (perhaps with wax from your own beehives) and light them at every dinner, as in Camphill communities.



The completed pumphouse.



conventional jobs during the week and also write poetry, play guitar, or dress up as Dust Bunnies for the local All-Species Ball.

Most RoseWind members, including those who are keen to exhibit in the Common House and along the paths, have their principal training and experience in other fields such as teaching, carpentry, counseling, business, computers, farming, cooking, medical work, kayak design, or midwifery. At the same time, a number have taken Artist's Way workshops or other classes in awakening creativity.

Others in the community are like many in this eclectic small town—interested in being more imaginative and less conventional than the mainstream. Port Townsend has vigorously resisted the incursion of WalMarts and RiteAids and Hollywood Video in favor of our home-grown local businesses. Seasonal parades and dances are a feast of creative costuming. Our colorful Kinetic Skulpture races bring out zany contraptions built of old bikes, Styrofoam, glitter, and fantasy. The grand prize is given to the vehicle that finishes in the exact middle of the pack!

Individual houses at RoseWind and around town sport driftwood railings, carvings on the rafter tails, mosaics on the walls,

and other imaginative details. It's a statement of individuality, a setting apart from look-alike buildings and décor, a chance to indulge in whimsy or oddity. One might call it a political act.

So here we have a bunch of people with ordinary occupations, some with artistic hobbies which are becoming a significant part of their self-expression. In addition, there are people who want to step outside the usual as a statement of freedom from conventionality. Others don't "make" art, but either cheer it on or wonder if their own artistic taste can be accommodated as well.

Consensus decision making works great for a pet policy or annual budget, but how do we deal with differing preferences for the look of our common spaces? We've wrestled for years with matters of taste. In decorating our Common House, we ended up delegating decisions, with individuals or small groups responsible for paint colors, furniture, and finish details.

In earlier years, such as when we did the mosaics for our pump house, whoever showed up got to participate in on-the-spot planning. Some art on the commons just happened, with various grumblings and appreciations and opinions.

*The author at a ceremony during Common House construction.*



*Rare dry-land sightings of marine mammals.*





Sheet-metal coyote made by a group of RoseWind members.



A more dramatic response happened when a creative volunteer carpenter working on the front of the common house porch proudly added a large black raven with crystal eyes, along with bright blue boards, and white leaping salmon. All hell broke loose!

Reactions ranged from "How dare you?" to "That's *fabulous!*" The carpenter was fine with taking it down if there was no consensus to keep it, but then others insisted they wouldn't allow it to come down. Hearing of plans to remove it, one fellow stated, "I find this decision much more offensive than an artist's spontaneous gift to the community, and I recoil at the idea of art by committee!"

Haiku was composed: *Ghost Salmon now gone / Where have they exiled you / And will you return?* And a mythic story was made up and circulated that ended with Raven "journeying as a messenger between

the peoples who had separated themselves into opposing groups. Raven flew to a very high and prominent place ... to remind the quarreling people of all the good things that life and the Earth has bestowed, now a symbol to all to respect and care for one another ...." (We have writers here too.)

Reactions were not all creative, however. Our struggle with such issues has at times degenerated into name-calling, and people of varying opinions feeling personally attacked. People who didn't like a particular piece of art were labelled as being against art, against color, fearful, or being critics, cops, or other authority figures. Flaming emails were broadcast, and people found themselves in opposing camps, which is really rare here.

We've been glad to have good facilitators and some tried-and-true process tools.

*continued on page 58*

**Just mention our guerrilla art and you'll spark a hot debate.**

46. Make your own wooden candle holders and napkin rings and use them at every meal, like Camphill communities.
47. Sew or embroider a different cloth napkin for each member, each with its own distinctive color and pattern, so people can store them in the dining room and reuse them until they need washing. Practical art that saves trees!
48. Make your own heirloom signature tablecloths, by drawing or doodling designs to commemorate community landmarks or events. Embroider or use fabric paint to make these drawings permanent. The content of these tablecloths can expand over time, documenting memories, comings and goings, guests, etc.
49. Design and build your community dining room with unique and beautiful architecture so it will serve as a visual symbol for your community, such as at Findhorn in Scotland and Huehucoyotl in Mexico.



50. Take a chain saw or a set of wood chisels to a tree stump to create a goddess, totem pole, or other forest creature, like New View Cohousing in Massachusetts.
51. Design and install interpretive signs throughout the landscape that explain ecological, spiritual, community-historic, or other important or interesting aspects of your gardens, buildings, or sustainable systems, as they do at Ecovillage Training Center at The Farm.
52. Publish a community literary magazine (or newsletter) with submissions of poetry, fiction, and nonfiction from members, including kids.



# Camphill Beaver Run: Spiritual Essence and Art



**I**f you visit Beaver Run—a Camphill Community for children with developmental disabilities in rural Pennsylvania—you will notice the unusual architecture right away. “Why are there no right angles?” you might ask. Well, our buildings are supposed to be people-centered, and we don’t think people look like they belong in square boxes!

You’ll find some sculptures; for example, the one outside the schoolhouse which resembles the bones in the inner ear. Our teachers had been using the arts to study the senses. Everyone created models of the inner ear bones and two models were chosen to be translated into larger dimensions. The children love to play in and around the inner ear sculpture, and it has become a symbol of the central power of art in education.

You’ll also find a large labyrinth, which we created with stones and sand and mulch last May during a festive gathering with other Camphill communities.

*As at all Camphill Communities, art and celebration are woven into the fabric of daily life, for example, in their annual May Day festival.*





Adults and children alike built their community labyrinth.

You may notice that the walls of the schoolhouse don't have a flat painted surface but a rather translucent quality, from a painting technique called *lazuring*. Giving a more living impression of color, this technique adds on color in many thin layers. A group of us worked on this together in the summer. You'll also find murals and paintings by individual artist-members. Visitors often notice the stained glass windows in the large assembly room that illustrate Rudolf Steiner's story, "The Child of Light," as well as the many special pictures that we change to accompany the seasons and festivals of the year.



Enjoying one of the outdoor "ear bone" sculptures

53. Or begin (or acquire) a magazine which you publish regularly to readers outside your community, like *Talking Leaves* magazine at Lost Valley Educational Center in Oregon.



54. Create your own prayer flags, like Lama Foundation in New Mexico.

55. Hold an annual "Earth Art" festival of sculptures, bas reliefs, and other *objects d'art* with only natural materials that will deteriorate over time, perhaps inspired by Andrew Goldsworthy photos. Use sand, snow, earth, twigs, branches, leaves, acorns, seed pods, feathers, and/or flowers. The gradual deterioration through sun, wind, and temperature becomes part of the show.

56. Create permanent monolithic art on your site, for example, embedding long boulders vertically in the soil to create your own small "Stonehenge" (perhaps marking the locations of sunrise at solstices and equinoxes as the ancients did), or digging trenches and building swales to create your own small "Great Serpent Mound."

57. With paint, decals, ancient recycled hood ornaments, antlers, and other found art, decorate community vehicles and create your own fleet of art cars. Or buy a community shuttle van and a fleet of bicycles. Paint murals on the van walls, and the bikes bright colors (perhaps adding ribbons streaming from the handlebars). Ride like the wind!

58. Hold a Human-Powered Vehicles Parade, with decorated and beribboned bicycles, tricycles, unicycles, skateboards, in-line skates, wheelbarrows, garden carts, or even hand trucks.



Music is the main goddess of the arts at Beaver Run, and it's usually live. The morning begins with a tune on a recorder or other wind instrument to wake everyone in each of our residential houses. We sing together at morning and evening circle time as well as before every meal, with seasonal songs during the many festivals we celebrate during the year. As I am writing this article in November, we sing songs for the festival of St. Martin, which speaks of bringing the light and warmth of human compassion into the cold and dark of the oncoming winter. We also enjoy weekly concerts in which the children learn to listen and appreciate live music and where community residents and invited guests share their talents. We are fortunate to have Christof Andreas Lindenberg living amongst us, a composer who creates new works for many occasions. The older children enjoy times to sing popular songs with their friends, as sing-alongs with guitars or open-mike style. We set up orchestras in which each member contributes to the whole, even if with only one tone on a bell. The day ends for the children with music played on a



Community children perform in the Parsifal Pageant.

**A lack of art usually is a sign of stress and general fatigue. Creative involvement seems to create energy and well-being.**

lyre, a very gentle sound that helps the transition to sleep.

Storytelling and poetry also belong to this special evening time, as well as to the celebration of festivals. We often enhance storytelling with puppet shows, acting out aspects of the story, or mime. We also dance. We are blessed to have *eurythmy*, a special movement art form created by Rudolf Steiner, both for us to all do together, as well as to watch in professional performances. We know all these arts help to lighten the sometimes arduous experience of daily life. How often do we say that we work too much?

The most amazing art experiences in our community, however, are the pageants. Preparations go on for a week or more until we can all witness a home-grown production of *The Magic Flute* or a Russian fairy tale. Here all the arts come together in what Steiner called a *Gesamt Kunstwerk* (a total work of art). Finding the right role for a child with special needs can have a transformative effect on his or her life as well as for those who witness the performance.

Carlo Pietzner, who is considered the founder of Camphill communities in North America, was an artist as well as a Camphill curative educator. He instituted an annual arts week to break up the winter doldrums. All meetings and other regular activities were canceled so everyone could immerse themselves in art for that week, whatever the subject. Perhaps this is one reason the arts enjoy a special place in our particular community.

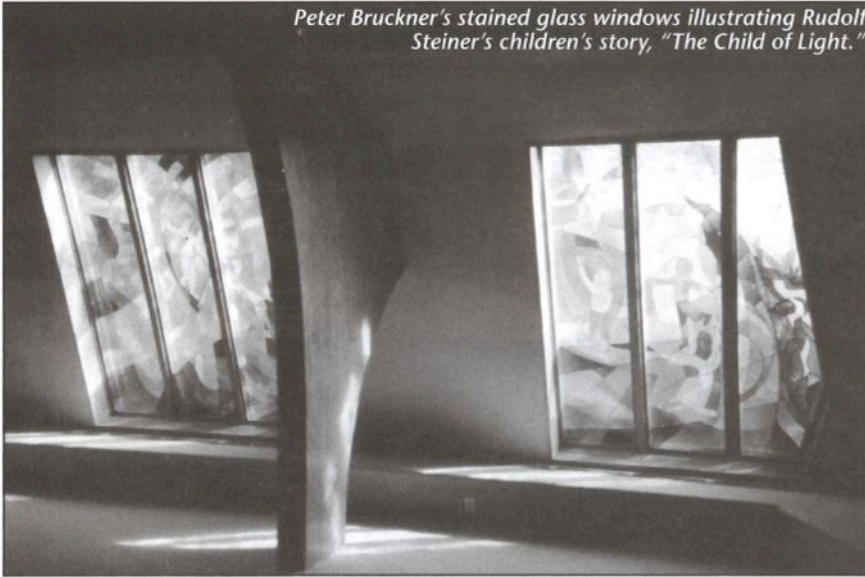
The arts are always like an endangered species, not just in public education but also in intentional communities. How do you find time to really

Everyone is encouraged to play an instrument.





Peter Bruckner's stained glass windows illustrating Rudolf Steiner's children's story, "The Child of Light."



practice your art with all the pressures of daily work? Does the community appreciate the individual artist and is it willing to support him or her? Also the artist needs to be in touch with what is "alive" in the community. Not doing so can lead to conflict as people become dissociated from what is really going on beneath the surface. Art helps us to be present in our community.

Common artistic events in community do not just happen without some individual initiative and preparation, both inwardly and outwardly. For a pageant production, for example, usually one person has to sit down and write the words or choreograph how everyone will move, which songs will be sung, etc. I have found that whenever you take artistic initiative in community, you risk hurting people's feelings if they are not chosen for a part, or if their art project is not chosen for display. But that is still better than not creating art for of fear of stepping on toes.

**Community life itself is an art, an art related to the first art of architecture. Like architecture, it is also an art of building.**

It is not always easy to protect the arts in community. It seems easy to forget what the arts offer us. Art has a great healing power, for the individual as well as the community. Art can help us to better understand our lives. Art can help serve spiritual expression in religious services, festivals, and daily life. Art can bring us together socially through our feelings in a way that merely talking in meetings cannot.

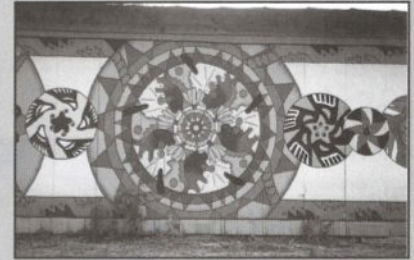
We can also apply the attitude and care that we give to our personal artistic expression to all we do in daily life—to preparing our food, choosing our clothing, arranging our environment, and doing even the most seemingly mundane activities.

Look at the whole of art in a community. I would want to say, "Art permeates all of life," but that is not quite true because the presence of art changes over the course of time. Rather, art constitutes a kind of gauge for the health of the community. A lack of art in community usually is a sign of stress and general fatigue! Creative involvement in art seems to create energy and well-being.

I believe community life itself is an art, an art related to the first art of architecture. Like architecture, community life is also an art of building. This is the social art and its medium is human beings. We who live in communities are both the material for this art and the artists as well!

*Else Wolf has lived in Camphill Beaver Run for the last 30 years.*

59. Make it a race, perhaps with a prize for whoever comes in smack in the middle, like they do at the annual "Kinetic Skulpture Race" at RoseWind Cohousing.



60. Get a summer "art intern" to create an attractive mural on the back of an otherwise bare community building, like at Dancing Rabbit in Missouri.

61. Create a mural on the flat ends of an elevated community gas tank, using symbols of international oil politics, like Ecovillage Training Center at The Farm.

62. Stage an Art Happening: "The Vegetable Car." Acquire a no-longer running '60s-era convertible and park it in the garden. Drill small holes in the floor and cover the floor with rocks and gravel. Fill the car with soil up to its door tops. Plant it with vegetables, herbs, and flowers. Mulch heavily, water regularly. When the plants come up, invite friends and neighbors over and contemplate the future of transportation. Harvest when ready.

63. Hold a "Council of All Beings" to honor the animals in your bioregion, with members dressing up as different four-legged, flying, swimming, and crawling ones, each creature speaking for the needs of and from the perspectives of each species. Include the kids!

64. Schedule a "Day of the Trees" ceremony and collectively celebrate these ancestors of your bioregion. Visit an example of each major tree species on your site, tie a ribbon around it, and thank it for all the gifts that species brings you. This is a great opportunity to learn more about the natural history of your area.



# Creativity as "Learning Game" Our True Holidays Festival of Good Will

BY ELIZABETH JARRETT-JEFFERSON



• 'd like to tell you how the Goodenough Community (also  
• known as the American Association for the Furtherance of  
• Community) practices the idea that creativity *is* community.



We recently celebrated our 35th anniversary as a multi-residential community (some live in shared households; most live in their own homes) in the Greater Seattle area. Our core membership is approximately 35 people with another 70–100 associates, members, and friends. Our Community Center is located in the Mount Baker area of Seattle, and our 65-acre rural retreat facility, Sahale Learning Center, is situated on the Tahuya River near the Olympic Mountains.

I've been an active member since 1981 when the community formally organized. Over the years, I have been a formal member of our governing bodies, including years in the role of Art Expressor on the leadership council. Creativity and creativity-in-living has been one of our community's most hallowed treasures.

In fact, we believe that the core of creativity is to express your Self, especially through visual art, music, movement and dance, play, and ritual, including what we call "learning games" (intentional processes created to enable specific outcomes). We expressed all of these arts a few months ago in a learning game we call our True Holidays Festival, which we celebrate every December as a way to unify our community and reach out to others in the area.

### ***Creativity can move us away from stress and negativity and toward excitement and anticipation.***

We commemorate the holiday season by encouraging ourselves, our families, and our friends to return to the true spirit of the season through creativity. We believe that intentionally choosing creativity can move us away from stress, negativity, and the commercialism of the holiday season, and move us toward excitement, anticipation, relationship, and good will. We want to create the kind of holiday experience many of us long for.

We're not necessarily trying to make something nice or do something special. Rather, we're trying to use this celebration as another opportunity to express the practice of being intentionally creative. Using creativity in a learning game involves sanity (thinking about something), being proactive (not succumbing to discouragement), and maturity (taking charge of how things happen).

The theme of our True Holidays event this year was "good will." So, for our "True Holidays Festival of Good Will," we outwardly behaved as if we were preparing for a party. Inwardly, we intentionally built energy, good will, and relationship with others as we planned and produced the event.

65. Create small sculptures out of translucent materials that double as outdoor lighting fixtures. Use them to light your pathways and building entrances at night.



66. Make a musical sculpture out of used propane gas cylinders of various sizes, cut to various lengths and hung upside down by chains under a beam, like Earthaven. Use sturdy pieces of wood to "play" the cylinders vigorously as you walk by. Melodic and aerobic.

67. Costume Night. Gather up clean but no-longer-wearable old clothes, and use them to create fantastical costumes. Use beads, feathers, ribbons, sequins, buttons, colored paper, found objects—you name it. Hold a Fashion Parade and take pictures.

68. Later tear the old clothes into strips and make rag-coil rugs to use in common areas. (Remove the sequins and feathers first!) Each time you walk across the rug you'll remember the fun you had at Costume Night.

69. Hat Night. Collect old hats, caps, and bonnets from members' closets and thrift stores. Pile them on the floor with supplies of fabric paint, beads, feathers, jewelry ribbons, etc., and have at it—each making the beautiful, comical, or fantastical hat of your dreams. Wear them and smile. Get photos!

70. Set up a Poetry Mailbox in a common space, providing paper and pencils in the mailbox so people can read, write, and share favorite poems, or poems written on the spot, with passersby.





For Goodenough Community members, art and creativity are central to well-being.

We did this by identifying how each of our members could express their own unique gifts and inviting them to contribute their unique creativity to the process. For example, some of our members with good writing or visual-art skills created the invitation with images and words of good will. Others were asked to identify and present quotes on good will. They identified approximately 150 quotes—from the Buddha to Franklin D. Roosevelt. We printed them up on especially nice paper that we rolled into scrolls and tied with a festive ribbon to hand out to guests. Other members with skills in the visual arts enlarged some of the quotes to poster size and presented them as public art during the event.

Several weeks prior to the event, members were asked to give some thought to considering a personal *object d'art* that they might donate to the auction, which we decided to call “Sacred Objects on the Move.” Members were asked to write a brief description of their object and what it meant to them. We featured photos of their objects and their descriptions in the *Village View*, our weekly internal newsletter. By the time of the event, so much energy and enthusiasm had been built through this process that we had to

allocate extra space in the festival hall for the tables holding the auction items. We also invited a community member skilled in speaking publicly with humor and good energy to bring her unique creativity as an auctioneer.

**We spread good will  
systematically and  
quickly—relationship  
by relationship,  
invitation by  
invitation, kindness  
by kindness.**

Members whose unique gifts lay in expressing our community’s vision in words, and a member whose photographic skills and eye for beauty are legendary in our group created 10 story boards of words and images. These were enlarged and mounted on large foam-core panels on the walls of the festival hall, below which were beautifully prepared tables with literature about our community.

Still other members with talents in baking planned and created sweet and savory items for the evening’s Café; and those with decorating skills planned its decor, layout, and display.

People whose special form of creativity lay in outreach and connecting with others became greeters for the event, with the job to make sure each guest was welcomed, oriented, and guided to the name-tag table. The name-tag table provided colored markers and holiday stickers to encourage guests to creatively embellish their name tags.



Joe Crookston, a local musician, songwriter, and music publisher, encouraged other musicians to perform for the party, including the Slaphappys, a new quartet of young men (one the son of one of our members). Another member, an experienced stage manager, was invited to manage lighting and the physical set-up for the party. She also served as DJ for the event playing dance music after the musical performances to help the group energy transition from listening to dancing.



Through the True Holidays Festival, Goodenough Community members deepen their connection to each other

After the party, we continued to focus creativity intentionally in the process of carefully cleaning and restoring the hall to its original condition. “It was so fun to see the energy and enthusiasm that you have in working together—even in cleaning up,” commented the partner of one of our members.

I hope this description demonstrates how we spread good will systematically and quickly—relationship by relationship, invitation by invitation, kindness by kindness. It was all part of what we call the “game design.”

**A loving and trusting environment is crucial for the Self to be present—one cannot be creative if fearful.**

I have left the people who designed True Holidays Festival Game until last: our community’s founders, John and Colette Hoff. They held, sometimes invisibly but certainly steadfastly, the game—the creative process—of drawing out the Creative Self in others. From them, I have learned that a loving and trusting environment is crucial for the Self to be present—one cannot be creative if fearful. In our community they have consistently played the Game of the Greater Good, envisioning a better world and working tirelessly toward it, inspiring and drawing out Self in others, whose life’s work is creativity and whose lifeblood is relationship. Many of us have joined them in this work of being intentionally creative. I hope our story inspires you. We invite you to join us in learning more about this good, creative work.

*Elizabeth Jarrett-Jefferson is married, the mother of two adult sons, and is employed by the University of Washington School of Medicine. She has been an active member of the Goodenough Community for almost 25 years.*

*For more information about the Goodenough Community: [www.aboutcommunity.org](http://www.aboutcommunity.org).*

71. Add a pile of tiny smooth polished black pebbles (available from a florist supplier) to the flat top of a tree stump. Write one word on each pebble with white exterior paint and a fine-haired art brush. Use nouns, verbs, adverbs, adjectives, and a few connector words like “a,” “and,” and “the.” Arrange a small poem or haiku with the pebbles. Each person who passes by can arrange a new poem.

72. Write short poems, a stanza from a longer poem, or haiku with exterior paint and a fine-haired art brush on clean, smooth stones ranging in size from coconuts to watermelons. Half-bury the stones in the ground, poetry side up, along your paths and walkways or by building entrances, with low ground cover plants, so people can discover poetry emerging from the ground.



73. Hold a jack-o-lantern-carving contest every Halloween, with prizes for the scariest and most beautiful.

74. Design and install a fountain in an outdoor space.

75. Make your own sculpted water conduit bowls, and set them up where water falls from one level to another to create your own “Flow Form”-style water art. Or purchase real Flow Forms from the manufacturer (perhaps the less expensive agricultural-grade forms) to create beauty and clean the water to your community swimming pond, as at Twin Oaks.

76. Make your own wind chimes on community building porches, using sea shells, bamboo, hollow wooden pipes, or stainless steel cylinders.





# Bringing the Arts to Patients (and Community to Ourselves ...)

The primary focus of our Arts in Medicine program (AIM) at Shands hospital in Gainesville, Florida is to bring the arts—music, dance, theater, writing, and visual arts—to patients at this university-related medical center with patients from all over the southeast. Fortunately for us, however the sense of community in our work environment spills over into the personal lives of staff and volunteers.

Although we do not share community in the sense of habitat, we surely share the spirit and camaraderie of community. We spend so much time together, both at the hospital and supporting each other in a variety of social and artistic endeavors, that by all definitions, except that our houses are scattered throughout the county and beyond, we might as well be considered an intentional community.

When an AIM staff member or volunteer gets sick or suffers any loss, our community springs to life: home-cooked food is delivered, dogs are walked, aging parents or spouses are cared for—no questions asked. When anyone in the extended community dies, a memorial service materializes. Births, weddings, and all forms of anniversaries are feted with good food and good company. Every holiday is a time for celebration, including Tibetan New Year. Short of funds? No problem, cash finds its way to the person in an anonymous envelope.

Even clothing doesn't sit still in the AIM community. Every few months, dresses, shirts, sweaters, and jackets are commingled and shared in a convivial evening of fashionable artistry. Those who attend can bring an entire closet, or nothing. (Whatever is left over is delivered to charity.)



Someone observed that AIM is like a commune whose members don't live together. In his experience, co-workers support each other in a more arm's length and reserved manner. "How," he wondered, "did AIM get to be this way?"

We decided to consider that question and to share our responses with *Communities* readers in an effort to help encourage the building of community in ways that surpass cohabitation.

1. The community gathers weekly for communication. Called "artists' rounds," meetings always include "checking in." Sometimes these check-ins focus on challenges of the job, but often they pertain to family members, the ups and downs of daily life, self-doubts, new adventures, and, sometimes, recent dreams or artistic creations. Following check-in, artists share patient stories (adhering to strict guidelines of confidentiality). Working with ill and sometimes dying patients is an emotional challenge that requires regular support and attention. If an artist is in crisis, the focus may shift from the weekly business to support for this person. Weekly rounds support the concept of community at its deepest level.

Artist and musician Nancy Lasseter shares that "rounds offer the honor of listening deeply to other artists sharing insights and disappointments and fears and delight. It offers me a reminder each Thursday morning that I am not alone, that I am not the only one who feels what I feel, and that I am in a community that accepts who I am and supports the work I do with myself, my family, one another, and our patients and caregivers at Shands."

"I remember how incredible our work is, I am amazed by what I hear, and I see

**"We're here because we wanted to bring our arts out of the studio, off of the stage, and into community,"**



it all reflecting back in the eyes of the beautiful artists around the table. I receive these gifts with gratitude, feeling charged, open, and ready to do whatever it is I'm supposed to be doing next," Nancy says.

2. The structure of the AIM program encourages cooperation, an essential ingredient in community building. "I appreciate the difference from other organizations in which I've worked," says Gail Ellison, AIM's writer in residence. "The talking-circle model replaces the strict hierarchical organizational chart. We cooperate instead of competing. Even with grant funds, it's not 'I wrote this so the money is mine.'

Rather, we divide grant funds among a number of people—simple math. And the sharing starts even before that: my email inbox contains links to Calls for Proposals and funding guidelines from foundations—all sent to me by colleagues who may be eligible for the same funds. Now that would be weird in some organizations."

3. Community members are flexible and eager to participate in tasks outside their fields of specialization. It is not unusual to hear a writer singing or see a dancer painting. Tiresome and repetitive tasks (stuffing envelopes, filling paint pots, or gluing mosaics) are done by all, often in groups so that conversation and merriment can make the work go faster. Although artists go their separate ways for bedside patient visits one on one, they are always ready to help each other with projects

and join together for music, dance, art, and storytelling.

"I think that art makes connections, a.k.a., community," says dancer Rusti



77. Create stained glass windows for your community building, like Camphill Beaver Run. (Consider faux stained glass with glass paint from an arts and crafts store.)

78. Learn the technique of painting on silk from an arts and crafts or fabric store and create vivid silk curtains or pillows for community buildings.

79. Photo document community events and create a series of scrapbooks of community history, perhaps with a summer "archivist intern," as Dancing Rabbit did.

80. Create an interactive online community blog (web log) with narrative and images.

81. Set up an altar in community common space, with each member contributing something of meaning and value—a poem, a pretty stone, an unusual piece of driftwood, photos, etc.

82. Build musical instruments from plans downloaded from the Internet. Dulcimers, drums, and other percussion instruments are fun to build and easy to play.

83. Collect favorite community recipes for a community cookbook and consider publishing it, like the *Findhorn Cookbook* and the many vegetarian cookbooks from The Farm.

84. Create a board game based on community values, like "The Transformation Game," created by two Findhorn members.

*continued on page 56*



# The Owl and the

# and the the





# Pooh Hut

Look closely at the photograph (pg. 52) of the entrance to New View Cohousing community in Acton, Massachusetts. You'll see a curved road leading into our neighborhood, stone benches, and a young maple tree. The rise in the snow to the right of the young maple is the base of the stump of an old maple we had to cut down. But you don't see a charming tiny hut in the photo, and therein lies this tale.

This is a story of art dreamed up and lost—a tale of two sculptures: a small hut that never materialized, and a stately owl.

One of the morals of the story I first learned from my friend Marion. Marion led a successful grassroots effort in the 1960s to transform the Nashua River in Massachusetts and New Hampshire from polluted muck to sparkling splendor. At one point, she sat waiting to speak at a public meeting with Secretary of Interior Udall, Senator Kennedy, Governor Volpe, and Lt. Governor Elliot Richardson. She nervously jotted down on a pad of paper what she was going to ask for. She wrote "Boating," "Fishing," "Swimming." She crossed out "Swimming." She wanted to be credible. The river was so grossly polluted that few could imagine it swimmable. She put "Swimming" in again. She crossed it out. Lt. Governor Richardson, sitting next to her, leaned over and whispered, *"Ask for swimming. If you don't ask for what you want, you'll never get it,"* And Marion got it. Now people swim and enjoying canoeing and boating in the clean Nashua River.

BY FRANNY OSMAN

85. Create a comic strip based on community values and aspirations, like Kerista Community in San Francisco in the '70s.

86. With a video camera, produce a periodic community news magazine or talk-show.

87. Learn improvisational acting techniques from local actors and directors, and start your own community's improvisational theater group.



88. With a lead artist and helpers, create a mural depicting scenes important to your community's location or history on the gable end of a community building, as at RoseWind Cohousing.

89. Create a Fall Equinox Wish Tree. Insert a small bare "tree-shaped" limb with branches and twigs vertically into in a large plant pot filled with stones. Each person writes wishes for the coming season on large leaf-shaped cutouts in gold and silver foil and ties each of these "leaves" onto the tree. (At your Winter Solstice Celebration, burn it in a bright blaze, letting the smoke of your wishes rise into the night.)

90. Staple cotton or linen fabric over stretcher frames from an artist supply store. Paint the fabric with a base and with fabric paint, create paintings in each frame. Fill the back side of each frame with cotton batting and hang each fabric painting on dining room walls for color, art, and sound absorption for a quieter dining experience, as at Sharingwood Cohousing in Washington.





*There's no Owl (or Pooh Hut) at the Entrance to New View Cohousing*

The Owl peers out of the weeds a few hundred feet uphill from the entrance to our community. It has a heavy tree-stump body, yellow eyes, and wings of beige and light blue. It is simple, symmetrical, and looks almost Native American in design. If you look hard enough, you will see the owl's little victim; nay, pet; nay, friend (the artist insists), clutched in rusted steel talons made by a local welder: a carved wooden mouse about two feet long.

The owl stump is the remains of an ancient maple that dominated the entrance when we first built New View. That precious maple was dying, and had to be cut down so kids wouldn't get hit by falling branches while waiting at the bus stop. Contractor neighbor Sal made the first attempt of the stump-to-art transformation. He requested that an eight-foot stump be left so he could make something of it (Figure 1). His plan: a throne. Sal set to work with his chainsaw. Weeks later, the stump remained, a hole carved out of the back, because he got busy and didn't finish. The stump became a favorite for kids waiting for the school bus. They stood on it, feet in the unfinished hole, holding on to the back. They climbed onto the top.

I had seen a Winnie-the-Pooh hut made from a similar wide tree stump in Cambridge. It had a peaked gable roof over the top, little windows into a tiny room within the roots, and a sign that

said Pooh would be back soon. The hut was magical for adults and children. I wanted something like that at the entrance to our community. I sent out emails, inquired with the landscape committee, acquired permission to pursue a Pooh-style hut at the bus stop. I enlisted the help of my sculptor friend, Kristin, who lived across town.

Coincidentally, the Acton-Boxborough Cultural Council called for grant applications for art that would benefit the town. Even though the hut would be on private New View land, the entrance is on a well-traveled main road, so the public could

enjoy the transformed stump as much as we would. I stayed up very late one night, finishing my Council application for grant money to saw the stump a little lower, install a roof, carve a secret cabinet in the back by only slightly widening Sal's hole, create a fake window and door in the front, and arrange for little gnomes to leave notes in the cabinet for children of all ages to happen upon. Kristin would help.

I included photographs of her sculptures in the application, including a granite tree trunk in a park in Boston. I submitted the hut plans (Figure 2).

The stump hut was different from most of the concerts and exhibitions the Council usually supports through art grants. I learned later that most of the reviewers really liked the hut idea. They

***The Lt. Governor leaned over and whispered, "Ask for swimming."***



turned it down, though, because they worried that cars would slow down to look at the hut and crash into each other and the Council would be liable. *Oy vey.*

Kristin and I marched on, undeterred. Photographs of African huts inspired us to change to a round roof plan. We hired Charlie at Axebrothers Tree Service to saw off the top two feet of the eight-foot stump and to carve the top of the remaining stump into a cone shape. Our vision was to thatch the roof with Phragmites reeds, an invasive plant that I would pick from local marshes. I collected Phragmites and they hung out in front of my basement door for the winter.

The now pencil-shaped stump also hung out all winter and created a stir on the high school bus. We became known as the neighborhood with the phallus. Around that time someone heard a teacher refer to our cohousing community as a “commune,”

and some teenagers called us “Moonies,” in part referring to our street’s name, Half Moon Hill. Though they spoke lightly, it worried some of us who cherish good relations with the town. And, of course, we are far from either commune or Asian religious organization.

Despite our best intentions, we were now “the commune with the phallus.” Neighbor Mary, an artist, reminded us that phalluses are a fixture in art. But other neighbors requested the “phallus” be altered. Charlie from Axebrothers suggested we put a clear plastic bag on top. I installed the reeds on the

pointed top and they didn’t look very good. So I hired Charlie to chop off the stump’s cone-shaped tip. Kristin and I then set to work designing and building a roof frame, with a log in the middle and two-by-fours radiating downward.

We worked in Kristin’s basement with only hand tools, her specialty. When we finally hoisted the cone-shaped roof onto the stump, the result was disappointing and still looked phallic. Kristin crossed Central Street, stared back at the stump, and came up with a new plan. “I see an animal,” she said. “I see an owl more than a hut here.”

That was the turning point. However much I like Kristin’s art, I wish I had said, “Sorry, I have a dream, I am going to make this happen.” I could have asked Charlie to carve the secret cabinet just as I pictured it. I could have asked lawyer and former carpenter David, whose house is closest to the entrance, to build the two-sided roof I had originally imagined, and the cabinet

door. Those requests for help would have been my “asking for swimming.” I was tired. Instead of asserting myself, I agreed that Kristin could turn the stump into an owl.

After a few emails and Common House dinner conversations about the new plan, Kristin and I set to work designing the owl. The details of the owl’s construction evade me now, most likely because I did not “own” the project as I had the Pooh hut. Kristin carried us along. I became an ambassador between artist and neighborhood. When the landscape committee chair requested that I rake up sawdust that had collected around the stump, I did so. I displayed photographs of Kristin’s previous sculptures for interested neighbors to see. I drew a picture of the proposed owl. Kristin chose the colors and managed to glue and saw the wood (always with hand tools) for the heavy wings. She also found a flat iron bar at a welder’s shop with which we would attach the wings to the stump and asked that welder to bend some steel bars into talons.

On installation day, a warm summer day in 2000, we sawed and chiseled out slots into which we would insert the wings, and we used a hand auger I had bought at a yard

91. When you’re cobbing or plastering community building walls, press cob bas relief sculptures into the wall—of animals, flowers, leaves, or other designs—and plaster over it, like the chicken coop wall at Sandhill Farm in Missouri.



92. Cut out wooden-plank silhouettes of community members’ faces and use as banisters on porch railings, like RoseWind Cohousing.

93. Create a cob bench or kiosk for bulletin boards, a telephone booth, etc., decorated with pebbles, shells, bits of tile and ceramic, bas relief sculptures, like O.U.R. Ecovillage in British Columbia.

94. Use Arnie Mindell’s “Process Work” role-playing exercises to illuminate various roles different community members play at different times. Use acting skills to exaggerate a role that you often assume. Then switch, playing a role that you rarely take on.

95. Create Bioregional ceiling art. Draw a huge circle on your dining room ceiling and divide it into 12 pie-slice-shaped segments. Fill each segment with images of the plants in flower, animals and birds most likely to be seen, fish most likely to be caught, and meteor showers most likely to be seen in each month of the year. Everyone lay on the floor, look up, and enjoy your own Sistine Chapel.

96. Or create the same extravaganza on your dining room floor. Get out your best African or Latin music and “dance” the animals and plants in each segment as you move around the room with the seasons.

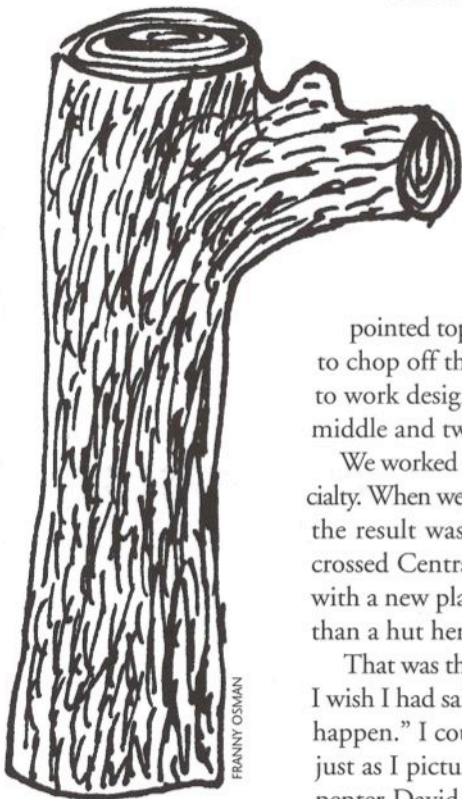


Figure 1:  
The original stump.



sale to drill holes in the top of the stump for the iron bar. As Kristin chiseled the round owl eyes, a passing motorist waved a thumbs-up and another stopped to say she had been watching the slow transformation of the stump with interest. Neighbor Bob wheeled out some gas-powered something-or-other from his garage. I don't recall what power tool he brought to help us, but even Kristin enjoyed the advantage. However, the aesthetic feel of the hand tools, and my pride and amazement at shortening the half-inch steel of the talons with a simple hacksaw, dominate my memory. Kristin and her daughter painted the yellow eyes and the subtle blue and beige wings. We drilled a hole in the mouse for a rope tail, which Kristin carefully frayed and attached. Frayed-rope ears completed the magnificent bird.

Now that the owl was done, it was time for the comments to begin, mostly by email. A vegetarian can't stand looking at the poor little mouse; if we take the mouse away, the owl can stay. A teenage girl is so embarrassed by the sculpture she won't take the bus to high school if the owl is still there when school starts. Another neighbor doesn't want us to be known as the "owl neighborhood" Yet another absolutely loved the hut idea and is hesitant to let it go. Where was everybody when the proposal was circulating? Some were on summer vacation,

some "just didn't realize." Of course, there are many who didn't mind the sculpture, and many others who loved it. But it's the ones who are upset who have to be reckoned with. Someone suggested creating a whole sculpture garden at the front entrance so the owl wouldn't loom so large. Someone else worried about vandalism of such sculptures. That very week, in fact, the owl was vandalized—its ears burnt and the beak scratched—and we never did find out who did it. Kristin repaired the damage.

What happens to public art in a community run by consensus? No consensus; no art! You end up with vanilla architecture, subdued colors, inoffensive and boring lines. We could not reach consensus to keep the owl as it was. The parents of the embarrassed teen called an emergency owl meeting (I'm not kidding) where we discussed a proposal to move the sculpture uphill to a location out of sight of the main road so the daughter could face her peers. The teenager presented her

own case. Adults tried to empathize with being young and embarrassed. Once we agreed to move the owl, we had to agree on a location, of course. We chose a spot across from our middle parking lot.

Then I had to meekly tell Kristin what was happening. She is a practical, do-it-yourself farmer type with a little homestead

***Despite our best intentions, we were now "the commune with the phallus."***

*Author Franny Osman.*





## What happens to public art in a community run by consensus?

### No consensus; no art!

near the train station in Acton. As I write, she's putting the finishing touches on a straw-bale goat barn in her yard for which she didn't have to ask anyone to agree by consensus.

"There are some animal-lovers and some high school kids who can't abide the owl at the bus stop," I told Kristin. I also had to ask Charlie from Axebrothers to return. He showed up with his giant flatbed truck with the claw, usually used for picking up lumber and transporting it. This time, he sawed the stump off at the base and grabbed the entire six-foot stump of the ancient tree that belonged right there at the entrance, and moved it up the hill. To this day, Charlie refers to the "Owl Movement."

And here, four years later, the meat-eating (or mouse-protecting) owl still stares at us consensus-loving cohousers as we emerge from the parking lot in our Toyota Priuses. One time the mouse escaped from the talons and spent a summer in the safety of the Common House porch. Once or twice volunteers have repaired drooping wings, which had been vandalized yet again or suffered from the weather. One day I chatted with the former carpenter I had never asked to make the hut roof for me. He shrugged and said he would have been happy to make a roof. Then he added, "Haven't you learned yet that it's impossible to make art by consensus?"

*Franny Osman lives with her husband and three children in New View Cohousing in Acton, Massachusetts. She directs plays in the common house, with a little old-fashioned direction and a lot of "art by consensus." Frannyola@aol.com*

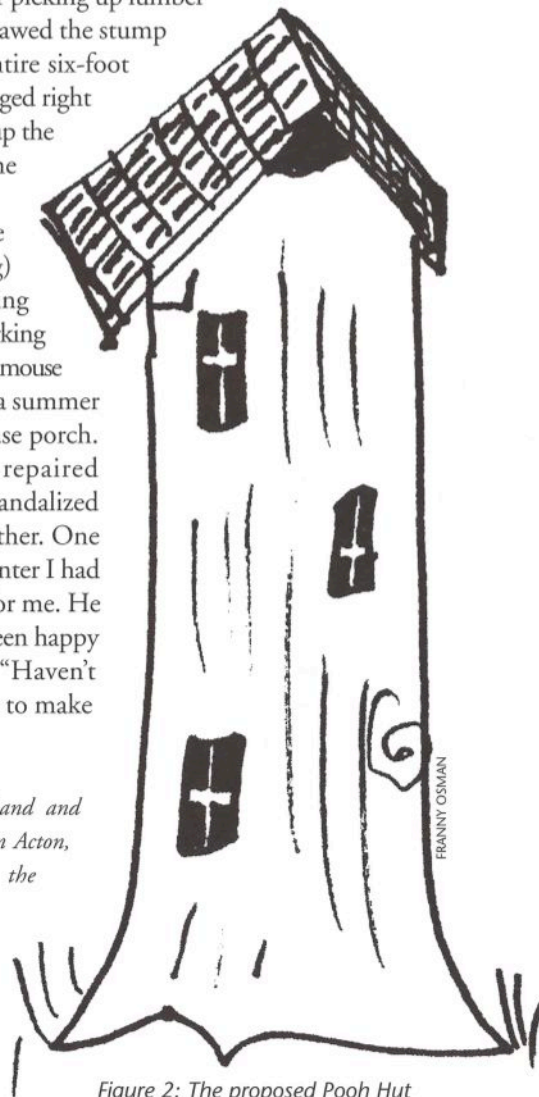


Figure 2: The proposed Pooh Hut



97. Delight your children and educate your local building department about the viability of natural building methods by building a miniature cob or straw-clay building in your garden, complete with earth-bag foundation, earth-plastered floor, and living roof, like O.U.R. Ecovillage.

98. Write and present your own plays or musicals, complete with costumes and painted scenery, that embody your community's central values and goals—a great way to get musicians, actors, writers, dancers and visual artists to all work together. There's literally something for everyone to do.

99. Produce a puppet show, as members did at Mariposa Grove, making the puppets, writing the script, and building the stage.

100. Write and produce take-offs on popular Broadway plays or musicals that reflect or even spoof community history, events, or themes, like Twin Oaks did with *Willy Wonka and the Tofu Factory* and *Little Hammock Shop of Horrors*.

101. Stage an over-the-top Gilbert and Sullivan-style operetta, with community-specific lyrics and people spoofing soaring arias and florid opera style—even if no one can really hit those notes. Ham it up!

Remember, art and creativity can be found—and created—in every act we do in community.

*Scott Horton is an artist and permaculture teacher whose art projects incorporate seeds, soil, stone, and plants, and currently, a series of paintings using honey and smoke on natural fibers. Diana Leaf Christian, editor of Communities magazine and author of *Creating a Life Together: Practical Tools to Grow Ecovillages and Intentional Communities* (New Society Publishers, 2003), is writing a musical spoof, "Dorothy and the Wizard of Eco."*



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## Bringing Arts to Patients

*continued from page 49*

Brandman. "We create a community of healing among ourselves, patients, families, and caregivers."

This model is contagious throughout the hospital. A workshop in a waiting area brings together patients, families, visitors, and staff, all of whom discover that they are artists who can paint, move, sing, or act. Nurses, doctors, and patients are encouraged to express themselves through art, to redefine their own concepts of creativity and to use that creativity to enhance the healing process and participate in the creative community.

It also helps that many of the artists share an underlying desire to find a balance for their solitude and independence. "We're here because we wanted to bring our arts out of the studio, off of the stage, and into community," shares Jill Sonke, dancer in residence.

4. Members of the community join together to overcome some less-than-ideal working conditions. Music, dance, the-

ater, writing, and visual arts are professions that typically require generous private space for creativity and contemplation. The strength of the camaraderie among artists and the focus on the mission of the group allow this diverse group of artists to work out of two tiny offices and a few storage closets in the sprawling Shands complex that sits adjacent to the campus of the University of Florida.

5. Although as in all communities, members come and go, AIM has a core group of artists who have been working together for more than ten years.

Trust has been engendered and loyalty fostered beyond the limits of the hospital. The intertwining of private and professional lives apparently

makes it difficult to leave the community! And AIM is also a warm and welcoming place for new members.

6. The community shares a mission and an understanding that transcends differences in background and culture. "We share a common language during the process of doing art together," says painter Mary-Lisa. Group art projects are one of Mary-Lisa's specialties—a way for hospital staff, patients, and families to experience healing art together.

7. Many of the artists who work and volunteer through AIM have experienced their own health challenges and know personally how art and community can be important components of the healing process. The AIM artists trust that they can rely on the network that has been created and maintained. Paula Patterson, dramatist in residence, experienced this safety net when her husband had cancer surgery. "For a month and a half, I didn't have to think about what to feed the family. And in feeding our bodies, they also fed my soul."

Madeline Austin had a similar experience when her daughter died. "This has become my family support system. When my daughter died, my first call was to the angels in my life, the AIM artists, who would hold me."

**"I am not the  
only one who  
feels what I feel."**

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In less challenging times, the community also works well for people who live alone. AIM artists always have someone to hold the other end of a long ladder or trade a ride to the airport or easily find a willing friend to watch the cat for a weekend.

Even with so much glue holding the community together, we do find challenges to the bonds. Because of the caring and giving nature of the AIM community, "there's a real need to remember to care for yourself," cautions Mary-Lisa. "You're constantly caring for other peoples' emotional needs—both patients and the friends you work with." Burnout is not an uncommon result, and AIM supports artists through all their phases of exhaustion by giving them "space" and not ostracizing them from the community because they have a need to be separate and alone for a time.

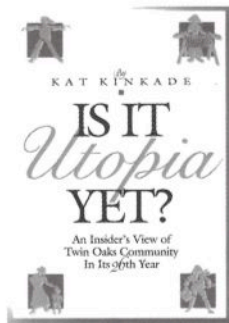
**Trust has been engendered and loyalty fostered beyond the limits of the hospital.**

The AIM community without walls functions as a spiritual community and as family, sharing life's milestones. In the words of musician Cathy DeWitt, "We share a personal, emotional working experience that is meaningful for all of us. We share a feeling of being blessed and lucky to be working with each other."

"I don't have separate work friends and play friends," she continues, "AIM is both. We're much more than colleagues—we are a community."

*Editor and writer Ellie Sommer, a volunteer with the Shands Arts in Medicine program, lives in a loosely formed community of neighbors who came together to preserve a large piece of land north of Payne's Prairie just outside Gainesville, Florida.*

*Gail K. Ellison, PhD, a writer-in-residence with Shands Arts in Medicine, also teaches reflective writing in the University of Florida College of Medicine. She is currently finishing a book on the house as symbol in dreams.*



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

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

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## OF RAVENS AND RULES

*continued from page 39*

Yet there have been hurt feelings. One of our more prolific contributors of artwork has spoken of feeling “A sense of exhaustion and defeat, beaten down by discussion.” First feeling agitated and angry, then depressed and worn out, this member is now disinclined to make further offerings of commons art. In time, it will probably pass, but we’d all be happier if it had never come to this.

Currently we’re evolving guidelines to avoid such emotional intensity and make peace between members who love to embellish the commons with their wooden or metal creations, and those who don’t always care for what they see there.

**Reactions ranged from “How dare you?” to “That’s fabulous!”**

A recent discussion explored people’s underlying fears. On one end of the spectrum were members who felt proud of their new-found ability to create works of art, and felt vulnerable to criticism. They explained that any guidelines or process for regulating art in the common spaces could make them feel “policed,” or “stymied and stifled.” Art wants to be unfettered, provocative at times, free.

Other art advocates included those who feared that our common spaces would be barren, bland, institutional beige, or sterile. As one member put it, “I find ‘neutral’ to be just as offensive as some of you find ‘vivid’! I can understand that having something bold, colorful, whimsical can offend some folks: why can’t they seem to accept that *not* having these things offends *me*?”


At the other end of the spectrum were those who feared tacky clutter, valued clear open spaces, and worried that without some rules and guidelines we’d end up again with upsets, grudges, and taking sides when some people didn’t like what appeared.

Philosophically, we looked at the concept of shared spaces. If the common house

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is an extension of our living rooms, and the commons an extension of our yards, does that mean we therefore can do what we like there, since it is ours? Or does it mean that we have to constrain what we do, because it also belongs to others? Points of view ranged from "This is my property; what right do you have to put your stuff on it?" to seeing the joint spaces as places where we could celebrate our diversity, show our trust for each other, and broaden our horizons.

After several group discussions, we created a proposal "to encourage, share and enjoy member art at RoseWind while maintaining harmony among those with differing preferences." (If an art project goes up that causes serious concerns regarding safety or appropriateness, rather than artistic value, facilitation can be called upon to mediate. This hasn't been needed though.) A time window is being proposed for commons art: anyone can install almost anything for a certain number of months, by the end of which they'd take it down, or need group agreement to leave it longer. Debate and word-smithing continue.

***Maybe some day I'll  
get used to the weird  
concrete critter on  
top of the tool shed.***

Time will tell whether this proposal gets adopted, and—like everything else in group process—it will surely evolve over time.

Maybe some day I'll get used to the weird concrete critter on top of the tool shed. In the meantime, gaily-painted bird-houses perch on poles; the plywood dolphins have been disappearing since the advent of a plywood shark; and a grinning frog dangles a leg lazily over our garden gate.

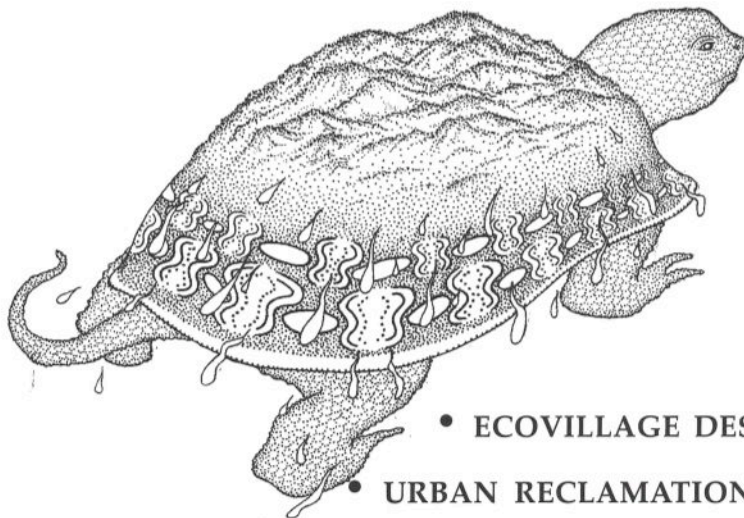
*Lynn Nadeau has been part of RoseWind for 15 years. [www.RoseWind.org](http://www.RoseWind.org).*

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

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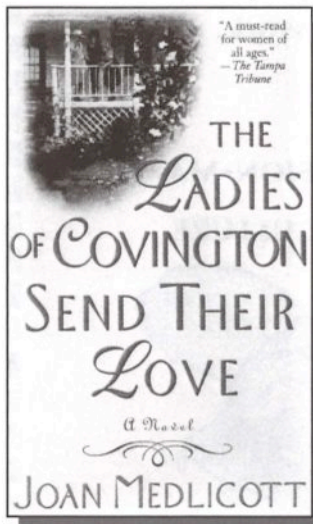




## Art About Community:

When Novelists Take on Community Living ...

*Two fiction authors and one journal writer offer us tales of community living so wildly different from each other that probably only readers who've lived in community will recognize these tales as related. But related they are, and packed with lessons and entertainment for book lovers. (If your favorite novel set in community isn't listed here, please write us at communities@ic.org.)*



***The Ladies of Covington Send Their Love***  
by Joan Medlicott

St. Martin's Press, 2000  
Pb, 370 pp., \$6.99

This is series of highly successful fiction works about three single women in their 60s sharing their lives as housemates. Written by Joan Medlicott, the novels include *The Ladies of*

*Covington Send Their Love*, *The Gardens of Covington* (St. Martin's Press, 2001), *From the Heart of Covington* (St. Martin's Press, 2002), and *The Spirit of Covington* (Pocket Books/Simon & Schuster, 2004) (I haven't yet read *At Home in Covington*, Atria Books, 2004.)

The Covington novels are well-observed and, in my opinion, realistic stories of what happens when people are learning what works and what doesn't in living together. The three main characters, who don't know each other well in the first novel, stumble over many of the same conflicts and community issues we all do. One is loving and nurturing but often timid; she sometimes annoys the others with her frequent inability to speak up for herself. Another is no-nonsense and competent, but uncomfortable with emotional self-expression; she sometimes grates on the others with her brusque reactions. The third is sophisticated, artistically sensitive, and given to the occasional out-of-body experience. But she's ungrounded

and remote, and often wears the others with her flighty self-centeredness.

Readers observe, through each story, and the ongoing series of books, the Covington ladies becoming wiser about the nuances of living well with others in community. We see the first woman slowly building confidence, the second becoming more comfortable with emotional expression, and the third growing more considerate and able to connect with others.

***"How can I create a shared household like the Covington ladies have?"***

Set in contemporary times in a fictional town in the mountains of western North Carolina, the characters learn to cooperate and share expenses as well as to create a wider community of new friends and even some of their grown

children from other parts of the country. We meet the ladies' love interests and would-be love interests (including kindly yet patriarchal as well as predatory men), their grown children and their particular struggles, their grandchildren, and their new friends and neighbors, many of whom were initially suspicious of these nonsouthern people who "aren't from around here." We meet several remarkable rural Appalachian mountain people, who also ring true. "Community" is the real protagonist of the Covington novels.

I think the Covington characters seem so real and familiar because author Joan Medlicott, a psychologist, has conducted research on the issues facing older women, and is thus well-versed in women's (and everyone's) personal and interpersonal issues. She also lives in the heart of the southern Appalachian mountains she writes about.

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### Herrnhut

AUSTRALIA'S FIRST UTOPIAN COMMUNE  
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.

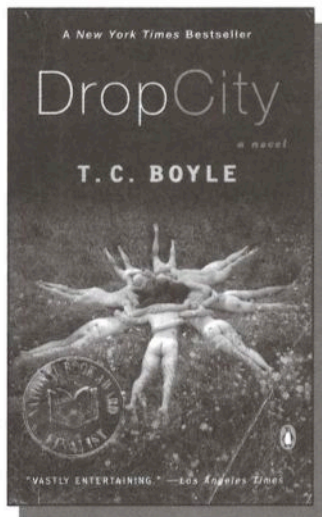
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I thoroughly enjoyed these novels and am grateful for this positive, yet true-to-life, picture of shared, cooperative living. At last—popular trade paperbacks about community that get it right!

And I'm not the only one who thinks so. The Covington ladies have garnered a loyal following. The books are cited in various literary articles as examples of the new and rapidly growing market for women readers over 40. And Joan Medlicott gets stacks of fan mail: she has obviously tapped the motherlode of the yearning for community. Many of the women who write her are saying, essentially, "I love the idea of living with other women my age in a shared household, but where can I meet women who also want this, and how can we do it? How can I create a shared household like the Covington ladies have?"



## Drop City

By T. C., Boyle

Penguin Books, 2003  
Pb, 497 pp., \$14.00

I sped through the pages of *Drop City* with fascination and embarrassment, wincing and grimacing on nearly every page. Set in 1970, it's not about the *real* Drop City, a famous commune back in the days in southern Colorado, but a fictional account of a busload of hippie communards from California establishing a new community adjacent to outlaw rednecks and serious homesteaders in the Alaskan wilderness. Sort of *Alice in Wonderland* meets *Northern Exposure* meets *Deliverance*.

Why was I embarrassed? What if someone reads this book, I thought, and believes this

unflattering description of community? Oops, too late—*Drop City* was a *New York Times* bestseller, and its author, T. C. Boyle, a famous author, no less. Egads! Hundreds of thousands have already read the book. What must they think of intentional communities?

It's not that the story isn't accurate. It is. Only it's not accurate about communities *now*. It's accurate about communities *then*. Or at least the more dysfunctional variety. And it's dead on. Communities movement activists in the Fellowship for Intentional Community are trying to show *Communities* readers that intentional communities are appealing, healthy, wholesome environments in which to raise children and to grow older. That they're great places to learn about cooperation, shared resources, and sustainable living. Where responsible people pay taxes, fix their roofs, and take out the trash. We're trying to *disabuse* readers of the notion that communitarians are stoned-out slackers in tie-die spouting spiritual platitudes while ripping off supermarkets and shouting "Death to the Pigs." And so here's this *New York Times* bestseller showing commune members doing just that!

Five characters narrate the story—three with flowers in their hair and two with rifles in their backpacks. The former dance, sing, make love, and take any drug that moves. The latter hunt, fish, make love, and get blotto drunk. The latter want to have children; the former want to *be* children. Consider lazing around in a temperate climate with a grocery store down the street, then consider homesteading in the sub-zero Alaskan wilder-

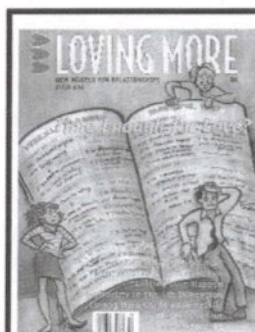
ness. So how can these perpetually stoned scrounglings make it north of the Arctic Circle? How can spacey prolonged adolescents who mooch off others learn to keep

warm and dry, hunt (hunt!) their food, and get through eight winter months of perpetual darkness at 40° to 60° below? And what happens when they meet the disciplined, multiskilled homesteaders next door? And when the bad guys—one who

seems merely weaseling at first; the other a sociopath who does the unthinkable because it's fun—begin preying in small ways and horrific ways on the characters you come to care about?

The writing is dazzlingly good. If you love words, prepare to feast. And prepare for characters so real you think you know them. The 1970s commune scene is realistically portrayed, with details even—references to the real Drop City and Morningstar Ranch; allusions to Kerista Commune in San Francisco back in the days; a realistic description of Sonoma county bulldozing the commune's substandard housing, like they really did in the 1970s at Wheeler Ranch. And accurate, detailed replay of those good old bad old days. Hippie women who bond over cooking. The men who compete over coolness, women, and how wasted they can get. Bliss and peace and sunlight sparkling on water, peace and love, man. The nerdy/lonely landlord-cum-guru who opens his property to any and all comers and bankrolls all the food and weed in exchange for attention and friendship. "Uptight" bossy members who try to organize things. The wide-open door policy. The tension between those who want people to contribute and work and those who want

## Sort of Alice in Wonderland meets Northern Exposure meets Deliverance.



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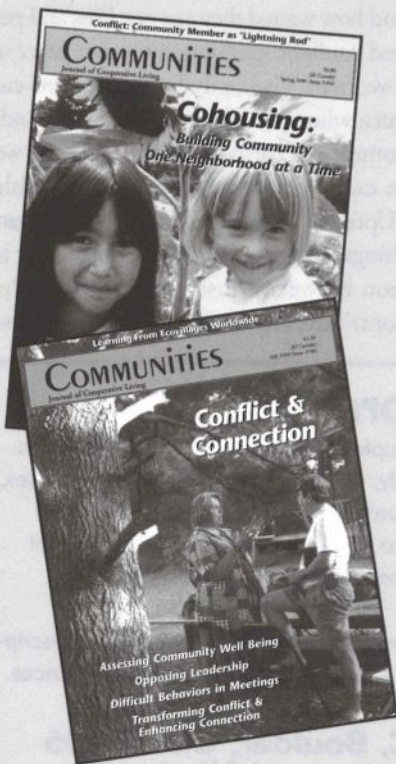
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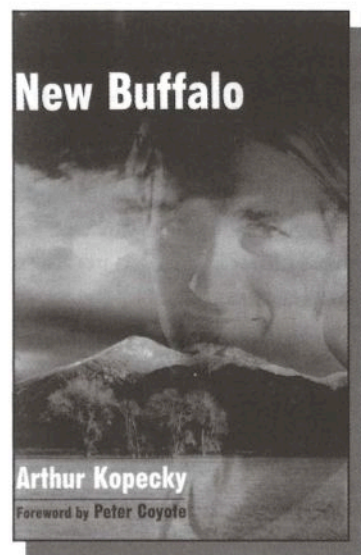
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everyone to have everything for free, regardless. The sexism, so subtle and smothered with countercultural platitudes that the women barely notice their men see them mostly as sex- and meal-preparing objects. The truly good-hearted and competent living check-by-jowl with the irascible and slothful

## How can these perpetually stoned scrounglings make it north of the Arctic Circle?

I'm only half-joking to say I fear that the thousands who've read *Drop City* will believe the media-whipped perception that an intentional community is a drugged-out irresponsibility zone. But it's so good I want you to read it anyway. But you'll know this was *then*, right? Please do read and enjoy *Drop City*. Just don't loan it to your parents and friends, OK?



## New Buffalo: Journals from a Taos Commune

By Arthur Kopecky  
Foreword by Peter Coyote

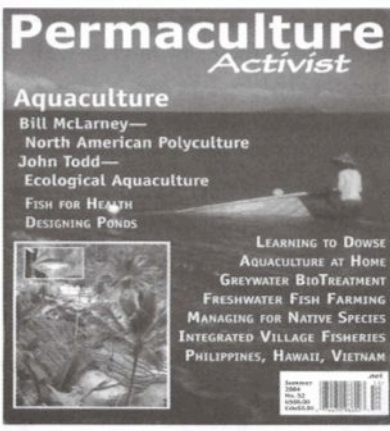
University of New Mexico Press, 2004.  
Hb, 294 pp., \$25.00

I was delighted by the Covington ladies and compelled by *Drop City*, but *New Buffalo: Journals from a Taos Commune* won my heart. This true-life story by communitarian and journal-writer Arthur "Arty" Kopecky consists of diary entries—a few days to a few weeks apart for seven years—about life in this famous 1970s commune. While chronicling the same era and the same kinds of people as *Drop City*, *New Buffalo* describes a place several notches more functional than its fictional counterpart.

Yet there are similarities. The New Buffalo property was also owned by a wealthy man who believed in communes, and everyone was welcome. This was a time when we believed that with enough love, freedom, hospitality, food, and sex, drugs, and rock 'n roll, we didn't need rules or agreements. It would all work out somehow. We would offer unstinting hospitality at no charge to the world; this is *how* we were changing the world.

Thus New Buffalo—the real-life prototype for the commune in the movie *Easy Rider*—had a total open-door policy. Any freak from anywhere could visit, stay for dinner, crash in someone's room, and end up living there for weeks or for years. The population fluctuated widely; turnover

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was high. There were usually more men than women. People milked goats, collected eggs, raised children, mud-plastered the walls, gathered wood, and conducted the peyote ceremony. There was no criteria for joining, and no joining fee. No monthly dues: anyone could donate any amount any time, or not. No labor requirements. People who contributed money and labor supported those who didn't. No one had any ownership in the land, although a few long-term residents would occasionally be elected to the land's governing board of directors. Decisions weren't made by consensus or voting, but rather a kind of amorphous vibe-grok among folks there at the time. They enjoyed well-prepared food, freely offered herb, and great dance parties. Men and women coupled and uncoupled casually, though not without heartbreak

**No criteria for joining and no joining fee. No monthly dues. No labor requirements.**

sometimes. New Buffalo residents drove long distances to trade goods and labor with friends in the network of northern New Mexico/Southern Colorado communes. They did the same with their rural neighbors, whether Land Grant-Spanish or Taos and Zuni people from the local pueblos. These white kids from the city learned to build with adobe, eat chiles and tortillas, make jewelry of silver and turquoise.

Why did I love this book so much? While dismayed by the lack of structure and discipline (but what commune had either in those days?), I was touched by the kindness and heart of Arty Kopecky's perspective. He reported the daily events of work projects and human interactions matter-of-factly. He was proud of the commune's ongoing generosity and frequent good will. He admired his fellow residents and was grateful for their labor or financial contributions. He was approving, encouraging. He believed

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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:

- A brief history of 2500 yrs of shared living
- 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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—Communal Studies Association, Oct 2003

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**Ordinary people doing extraordinary things.**



New Buffalo would beneficially impact its visitors, and had hope that it and other communes like it would make a difference in our society. When he was disappointed in someone he noted it philosophically. In print, anyway, while he might observe someone's difficulties or shortcomings, he never made them wrong.

And while *New Buffalo* doesn't read like a novel—it has no plot, and the people arrive and depart so much it's hard to keep them straight—the book does offer the theme of growth and hope. When the author arrived in 1971, the place had barely heated half-finished adobe buildings and leaky roofs, on acres of high desert land which was frigid in winter, parched in summer, and muddy and impassable when it rained. But over seven years the walls got plastered and roofs fixed. Its residents learned to build a greenhouse, water their acres from a local irrigation ditch, plant vegetables and animal pasturage, and raise dairy cows and cattle. They finally raised

and grew and traded for most of their own food and had enough to last the winter.

The first book in a series of two, *New Buffalo* ends in 1976, at a high point in the commune's physical development. But by this time tension was building between

**They enjoyed well-prepared food, freely offered herb, and great dance parties.**

those who did all the agricultural work and those who spent most of their time fasting, praying, and making drums. Some saw New Buffalo's purpose as primarily spiritual, with attention to physical matters only when needed. Others saw its purpose as agricultural, with growing food *being* their spiritual practice. And because there

were no agreements or vision/purpose statements to fall back on to resolve the dilemma, the group floundered in conflict. The classic dilemma, no?

The Epilogue notes that in the next volume of Arty Kopecky's journal, the conflict escalates and in 1979 he and his new family depart the commune "under rather dramatic circumstances." From other reading I learned that tension between the two camps got so heated that *everyone* left New Buffalo, and the current owners of the property operate it as a bed and breakfast. I'd love to stay there some day, so I can see where the author and his pioneering compadres learned hard lessons of community, for a few years anyway, so long ago.

*Diana Leafé Christian, editor of Communities magazine, is author of Creating a Life Together: Practical Tools to Grow Ecovillages and Intentional Communities (New Society Publishers). She lives at Earthaven Ecovillage in North Carolina.*

## Other Favorite Novels about Community

In a genre we might call sociological/sustainability science fiction, *Ecotopia* (Ernest Callenbach, Bantam, 1975–1990), and *The Fifth Sacred Thing* (Starhawk, Bantam, 1994) describe ecologically sustainable lifestyles in the near future. *The Fifth Sacred Thing* is set in the greater San Francisco Bay Area; *Ecotopia*, in Washington, Oregon, and northern California, which have succeeded from the union to become the new nation of Ecotopia. Neither novel describes an intentional community per se, but the sense of community spirit, cooperation, and shared values exhibited by the characters sure seems like community to me.

Residents of *Ecotopia* live in small group households in the city and sister households in the country. They're into passive solar, light rail, renewable energy, publicly owned bicycles, sustainable forestry, and ritualized tribal war games to channel aggression. Starhawk's San Franciscans are into shared group households, multicultural and multiracial culture, spiritual practices, consensus decision making, and spiritual/holistic healing. Both are contrasted with the unecological mainstream culture beyond their borders, and in both novels, the ecoactivists come out the heroes.

In *Walden Two* (Pearson Education Publishing, 1991), B.F. Skinner shows how the science of Behaviorism can be used to induce socially desirable ways of interacting. In the 1960s and 1970s its ideas were influential enough to inspire several well-known and by now long-lived communities, including Twin Oaks, Los Horcones, and East Wind. The latter com-

munity, in fact, was part of the inspiration for Claire Garden's fictional Wild Wind community in her novel *Child of the Wild Wind* (Electronic e-book publishing, 2003), a coming-of-age story set in two contemporary communities, reviewed in our Fall 2004 issue.

Early chapters of *The Dispossessed* (Harper Collins, 1991) by renowned science fiction writer Ursula K. Le Guin, describe the communal income-sharing society the protagonist grew up in, recalled as he journeys to visit the mainstream society from which his culture succeeded. His communal society is rather extreme in its desire to make everyone equal. For example, the society, not individuals, own most physical possessions, even bedspreads; and newborn's two-syllable names are chosen for them by a combination of a finite number of randomly selected syllables. This society also has the kinds of power imbalances such communities aren't supposed to have, such as some members wielding undue influence because they're "more central" than others.

*Woman on the Edge of Time* (Marge Piercy, Random House, 1977). Set in a mental hospital in contemporary New York and a village-scale community in New England of the future, the time-traveling Latina protagonist contrasts the contemporary welfare and mental health systems with this rural/decentralized, multicultural, multiracial future culture—where 13 year olds undertake ritual vision quests, marriages are in threesomes, infants are raised and nursed by men, and everyone's got great process and communication skills. Let's go there! —D.L.C.



# COMMUNITY CALENDAR



## Apr 1-3 • Sirius Community Experience Weekend

Sirius Community, Shutesbury, MA. Two-day immersion in Sirius community life: shared meals, work parties, meditation, community meetings, and more. [www.siriuscommunity.org](http://www.siriuscommunity.org); [sirius@siriuscommunity.org](mailto:sirius@siriuscommunity.org); 413-259-1251.

## Apr 8-11 • Heart of Now: The Basics

Lost Valley Educational Center, Dexter, OR. (Formerly "Naka-Ima.") Part one of experiential workshop about realizing your vision and facing and dissolving the obstacles in the way of being fully and authentically yourself. Through the practice of honesty, in the context of supportive and loving community, we will explore how to be alive, in the moment, and deeply connected with others. Donation, incl. lodging, meals. \$50 registration deposit, suggested additional contribution \$300-\$650. [www.lostvalley.org](http://www.lostvalley.org); [info@lostvalley.org](mailto:info@lostvalley.org); 541-937-3351, #109.

## Apr 9-10, May 14-15, Jun 4-5, Jul 30-31, Aug 20-21 • Permaculture Fundamentals: Five Weekends

Earthaven Learning Center, Black Mountain, NC. Patricia Allison. Part I of Permaculture Design Course: Cultural and social aspects of permaculture, hands-on garden work, pond making, natural building, graywater systems, erosion control, rock work, dances, circles, campfires. \$75, incl. food, camping. Indoor lodging also available. [www.earthavenlearningcenter.org](http://www.earthavenlearningcenter.org); [info@earthavenlearningcenter.org](mailto:info@earthavenlearningcenter.org); 838-664-9935.

## Apr 15-17 • The Farm Experience Weekend

The Farm, Summertown, TN. Learn firsthand about life in community. Community dinner, Farm history slide show/Q&A; yoga; community tour; work party; rock and roll benefit boogie; and nature walk. Workshops available on vegetarian cooking, midwifery, strawbale homes (tour), home-based businesses, community & global sustainability, and more. Camping, all meals (other accommodations avail. at additional cost). [www.thefarm.org](http://www.thefarm.org); [Vickie@thefarmcommunity.com](mailto:Vickie@thefarmcommunity.com).

## Apr 16 • Site Design: The Art of Placing Your Home in the Landscape Naturally

Earthaven Learning Center, Black Mountain, NC. Chuck Marsh \$55-\$85. [www.earthavenlearningcenter.org](http://www.earthavenlearningcenter.org); [info@earthavenlearningcenter.org](mailto:info@earthavenlearningcenter.org); 838-664-9935.

## Apr 17 • Creating Living Spaces; A Pattern Language for Building Design

Earthaven Learning Center, Black Mountain, NC. Paul Caron \$55-\$85. [www.earthavenlearningcenter.org](http://www.earthavenlearningcenter.org); [info@earthavenlearningcenter.org](mailto:info@earthavenlearningcenter.org); 838-664-9935.

## Apr 21-25: Heart of Now 2

Lost Valley Educational Center, Dexter, OR. (Formerly "Naka-Ima.") Part two of experiential workshop about realizing your vision and facing and dissolving the obstacles in the way of being fully and authentically yourself. Donation, incl. lodging, meals. [www.lostvalley.org](http://www.lostvalley.org); [info@lostvalley.org](mailto:info@lostvalley.org); 541-937-3351, #109.

## Apr 24-May 27 • Ecovillage Apprenticeships: Permaculture, Natural Building, Ecovillage Living

Ecovillage Training Center at The Farm, Summertown, TN. Organic food production, natural building, sustainable design systems. Constructed wetlands; cob visitors center; cob/strawbale/earth-bag sauna roundhouse, more. \$300/wk, incl. board, lodging, all courses. [www.thefarm.org](http://www.thefarm.org); [ecovillage@thefarm.org](mailto:ecovillage@thefarm.org); 931-964-4324.

## May 4-7 • Soar Installers Workshop

Ecovillage Training Center at The Farm, Summertown, TN. Ed Eaton. \$490, incl. food, lodging; \$350, no accommodations. [www.thefarm.org](http://www.thefarm.org); [ecovillage@thefarm.org](mailto:ecovillage@thefarm.org); 931-964-4324.

## May 6-9 • Heart of Now: The Basics

Lost Valley Educational Center, Dexter, OR. (Formerly "Naka-Ima.") See Apr 8-11.

## May 13-15 • Fellowship for Intentional Community (FIC) Spring Organizational Meeting

Ecovillage at Ithaca, Ithaca, NY. Planning, policies, reports, consensus decision making by FIC board members, staff, and volunteers. FIC publishes *Communities* magazine, *Communities Directory*, distributes *Visions of Utopia* video, and operates ic.org website and Community Bookshelf mail-order book service. Public invited. [jemy@ic.org](mailto:jemy@ic.org).

## May 16-Sep 2 • Permaculture Design & Organic Food Production Skill Builder

O.U.R. Ecovillage, Vancouver Island, Canada. Tyrone LaFay, Katie Nixon, David Holmgren. Permaculture design, site evaluation, soil analysis, biodynamics, French intensive, no-till agriculture, some animal husbandry, and

community building. [www.ourecovillage.org](http://www.ourecovillage.org); [our@pacificcoast.net](mailto:our@pacificcoast.net); 250-743-3067.

## May 19-22 • Second Journey Regional Visioning Council 2005

Second Journey, Sherburne, NY. Conversation among architects, developers, educators, healthcare professionals, writers, visionaries, and elders about creating meaningful community in later life. What makes a "great place" in which to grow old? How can elders' wisdom be invested back into the community? [www.secondjourney.org](http://www.secondjourney.org); [secondJourney@att.net](mailto:secondJourney@att.net); 919-403-0432.

## May 20-22 • Starting and Sustaining Intentional Communities

Occidental Arts & Ecology Center (Oaec), Occidental, CA. Dave Henson, Adam Wolpert. Establishing a land-based intentional community—finding/financing land; advantages/disadvantages of various legal structures f/holding land; decision-making processes; finding like-minded people; financial organization; legal and insurance issues and costs; dealing w/zoning and regulations; long-term planning. Community tour. \$425/\$375 incl. meals, lodging. [www.oaec.org](http://www.oaec.org); [oaec@oaec.org](mailto:oaec@oaec.org); 707-874-1557.

## May 20-23 • Mud Brick Workshop

Ecovillage Training Center at The Farm, Summertown, TN. Matthew English. Using a CINVA ram to make bricks: adobe, supercob, papercrete. \$195, incl. meals, lodging. [www.thefarm.org](http://www.thefarm.org); [ecovillage@thefarm.org](mailto:ecovillage@thefarm.org); 931-964-3424.

## Jun 1-29 • Ecovillage Apprenticeships: Permaculture, Natural Building, Ecovillage Living

Ecovillage Training Center at The Farm, Summertown, TN. See Apr 24-May 27.

## Jun 4 • Introduction to Permaculture

Earthaven Learning Center, Black Mountain, NC. Chuck Marsh. \$55-\$85. [www.earthavenlearningcenter.org](http://www.earthavenlearningcenter.org); [info@earthavenlearningcenter.org](mailto:info@earthavenlearningcenter.org); 838-664-9935.

## Jun 5 • Introduction to Earthen Building

Earthaven Learning Center, Black Mountain, NC. Mollie Curry. Cob strawbale, slip-straw, earthen plasters, timber framing, and their use in Earthaven's innovative natural buildings. \$55-\$85. [www.earthavenlearningcenter.org](http://www.earthavenlearningcenter.org); [info@earthavenlearningcenter.org](mailto:info@earthavenlearningcenter.org); 838-664-9935.

## Northwest Intentional Communities Association



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**Jun 6–Jul 29 • Natural Building in Community**

**Emerald Earth, Boonville, CA.** Michael G. Smith, Darryl Berlin, guests. Strawbale, cob, straw-clay, round pole framing, natural plasters and paints, adobe floors, alternative foundations, passive solar design, home power generation, and more. For owner-builders and people pursuing careers in natural building. \$2,800, incl. camping, meals.

*www.emeraldearth.org;*  
*workshops@emeraldearth.org; 707-895-3302.*

**Jun 10–July 31 • Women's Internship in Natural Health & Earth Living**

**Earthaven Learning Center, Black Mountain, NC.** Two-month internship incl. courses: Permaculture, Herbal Medicine, Women's Mysteries, Earthaven Experience, Consensus, Sacred Sexuality for Women, Bioregional Congress, Fertility Awareness, Nourishing Traditions, & Building w/Earth & Straw. Cornina Wood, Patricia Allison, Sheri Winston, Arjuna da Silva, Mollie Curry: \$2,400, incl. camping, meals. Indoor lodging also available.

*www.earthavenlearningcenter.org;*  
*info@earthavenlearningcenter.org; 838-664-9935.*

**Jun 17–19 • Bamboo Cultivation & Construction**

**Ecovillage Training Center at The Farm, Summertown, TN.** Will Bates. Growing bamboo, joinery & design, visit local nurseries. \$195, incl. meals, lodging. *www.thefarm.org;*  
*ecovillage@thefarm.org; 931-964-4324.*

**Jun 18–19 • Deep Democracy & Consensus**

**Earthaven Learning Center, Black Mountain, NC.** Arjuna da Silva. Fundamentals of using consensus decision making, facilitating meetings, agenda planning, creating proposals. \$157, incl. food, camping. Indoor lodging also available. *www.earthavenlearningcenter.org;*  
*info@earthavenlearningcenter.org; 838-664-9935.*

**Jun 20–Aug 13 • Ecovillage and Permaculture Certificate Program: Integrating Land, Building, and Social Sustainability**

**Lost Valley Educational Center, Dexter, OR.** Joshua Smith, Diana Leafe Christian, Mark Lakeman, Toby Hemenway, Jude Hobbs, Rob Bolman, Tree Bressen, & others. Two-month residential hands-on, experiential course in creating ecovillages and sustainable communities. Permaculture design certificate course (organic gardening, eco-building, eco-forestry, appropriate technology, community site design), interpersonal communication, organizational and financial issues in community, Lost Valley's personal growth workshops. *www.lostvalley.org;*  
*sustainability@lostvalley.org; 541-937-3351.*

**Jun 20–Aug 27 • Natural Building Skill Builder**

**O.U.R. Ecovillage, Vancouver Island, Canada.** Elke Cole (Cobworks), Eckhard Beuchel, Tracey Calvert. Strawbale, cob natural plasters, earthen floors, stonework, timber-framing design skills, & community building. *www.oureecovillage.org;*  
*our@pacificcoast.net; 250-743-3067.*

**Jun 21 • New Buffalo Reunion**

**New Buffalo Center, Arroyo Hondo, NM.** Arty Kopecky. A gathering and reunion 10 miles

north of Taos. Family and friends of New Buffalo and those wanting to further Intentional Communities and the Aquarian Spirit are invited. *artsankopecky@msn.com.*

**Jun 25–26 • The Earthaven Experience; A Guided Exploration of Community Life**

**Earthaven Learning Center, Black Mountain, NC.** Earthaven tour, ecovillage slide show, community meals, panel presentation with community members, work project with community members, monthly Council meeting, Coffeehouse evening with entertainment. \$175, incl. food, camping. Indoor lodging also available. *www.earthavenlearningcenter.org;*  
*info@earthavenlearningcenter.org; 838-664-9935.*

**Jul 8–10 • EarthSpirit Rising: Ecology, Spirituality and Community**

**Xavier University, Cincinnati, OH.** Cultivating Connections and IMAGO, sponsors. Matthew Fox, Winona LaDuke, Frances Moore Lappé, Miriam Therse MacGillis, John Seed, Maldoma Somé, Diana Leafe Christian, Paula Gonzales. Explore connections between ecology and spirituality through the lens of community, via education, politics, religion, food, ritual, and cosmology. *EarthSpiritRising.org;*  
*llawarre@imagoearth.org; 513-921-5124.*

**Jul 8–13 • Living on Earth**

**Easton Mountain Retreat Center, Greenwich, NY.** Tom Yeomans, Director of Concord Institute. Program integrates spiritual psychology and environmental activism. *www.eastonmountain.com;*  
*info@eastonmountain.com; 800-553-8235; 518-692-8023.*

**Jul 8–17 • Network for a New Culture Summer Camp East**

**Near Hancock, MD.** New Culture Intensive: An Extended Journey into Love, Community, and Transformation. Building sustainable, nonviolent culture through intimacy, personal growth, emotional transparency, radical honesty, equality, compassion, sexual freedom, and community. \$495–\$895, incl. camping, meals. *www.cfnc.us; sc05e@cfnc.us; 800-763-8136.*

**Jul 9–17 • Ninth Continental Bioregional Congress**

**Earthaven Ecovillage, Black Mountain, NC.** Deepen your bioregional skills for living full democracy. Join participants from Canada, the U.S., & Mexico to catalyze social and ecological change. We will create a ceremonial village in a way that models healthy human habitation for the whole planet. \$300, incl. camping, meals. *www.earthavenlearningcenter.org;*  
*info@earthavenlearningcenter.org; 838-664-9935.*

**Jul 10–Aug 5 • Ecovillage Apprenticeships: Permaculture, Natural Building, Ecovillage Living**

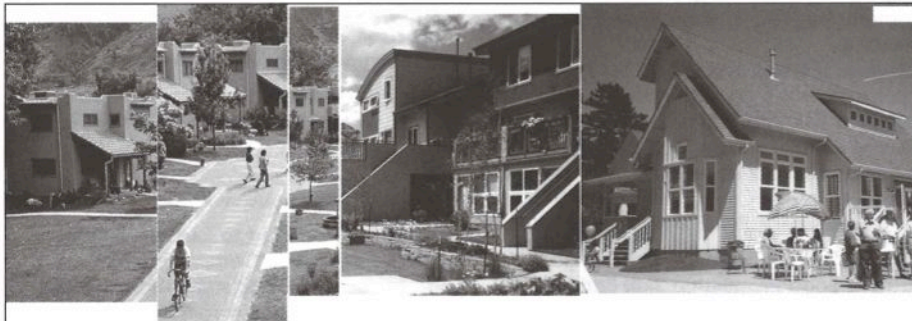
**Ecovillage Training Center at The Farm, Summertown, TN.** See Apr 24–May 27.

**Jul 10–23 • Permaculture Design Certificate Course & Cultural Immersion**

**EcoLogical Solutions, Chiang Mai, Thailand.** Max Lindegger, Lloyd Williams. *www.ecologicalsolutions.com.au;*  
*info@ecologicalsolutions.com.au; +61-07-549-4741.*

**Jul 15–18 • Heart of Now: The Basics**

**Lost Valley Educational Center, Dexter, OR.** (Formerly "Naka-lma.") See Apr 8–11.



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**Jul 18-Aug 7 • Permaculture Design Course**  
Bullock's Farm, Orcas Island, WA. Douglas Bullock, John Valenzuela, Toby Hemenway, Sam Bullock, Fungi Perfecti. Three-week certificate design course on 25-year-old permaculture homestead. Design methodologies, observations skills, whole-systems design, annual and perennial food, energy/water/waste management, appropriate construction, plant propagation and culture, outdoor mushroom cultivation, herbs & natural fiber use. \$1,500 (\$1,400 if paid by 6/1). [Permacultureportal.com](http://Permacultureportal.com); [permaculture.sam@gmail.com](mailto:permaculture.sam@gmail.com); 360-376-2773.

**Jul 22-30 • Village Design and Permaculture Practicum**  
Ecovillage Training Center at The Farm, Summertown, TN. Albert Bates, Diana Leaf Christian, Gwynelle Dismukes, Scott Horton, Greg Ramsey. Part two of full permaculture design certification course. Sustainable ecovillage design (site selection, master planning, pattern design); consensus & conflict resolution, process skills, finding & financing land, community economics, best practices; ecology, energy, & resource conservation, economics of sustainability. \$800 incl. meals, lodging. [www.thefarm.org](http://www.thefarm.org); [ecovillage@thefarm.org](mailto:ecovillage@thefarm.org); 931-964-4324.

**Jul 22-30 • Building with Earth and Straw**  
Earthen Learning Center, Black Mountain, NC. Mollie Curry. \$675, incl. food, camping. Indoor lodging also available. [www.earthenlearningcenter.org](http://www.earthenlearningcenter.org); [info@earthenlearningcenter.org](mailto:info@earthenlearningcenter.org); 838-664-9935.

**Jul 22-Aug 7 • ZEGG Summercamp 2005**  
ZEGG Community (Centre for Experimental Culture Design), Belzig, Germany. Participants will work on personal and political visions and practical experience of cooperation and trust. Weekends: ZEGG speakers and invited guests present insights into ZEGG's community research. Weekdays: intensive groups to create temporary community, incl. morning attunement, men's and women's spaces, sharing circle/plenary, evening cultural activities (music, dance, theatre), and Children's Camp. [www.zegg.de](http://www.zegg.de); [empfang@zegg.de](mailto:empfang@zegg.de); +49-33841-595-10.

**Jul 23 • Sustainable Forestry**  
Occidental Arts & Ecology Center (OAEC), Occidental, CA. Tim Metz, Brock Dolman, Carol Niekirk. Scale-appropriate timber harvesting; nontimber forest products; stand thinning; fuel load management; forest health; wildlife habitat enhancement, road and upland erosion control; restoration. \$110/\$95 w/ advance registration. [www.oaec.org](http://www.oaec.org); [oaec@oaec.org](mailto:oaec@oaec.org); 707-874-1557.

**Jul 23-29 • Earth Spirit Camp**  
Easton Mountain Retreat Center, Greenwich, NY. Join us for a week in community with others interested in living in a more connected sustainable way. A wide range of workshops, spiritual practices, and group events, some serious, some playful, shared meals, dancing, music, group process, organic gardening, solar energy, cob construction, environmental art. [www.eastonmountain.com](http://www.eastonmountain.com); [info@eastonmountain.com](mailto:info@eastonmountain.com); 800-553-8235; 518-692-8023.

**Aug 4-7 • Second Journey Regional Visioning Council 2005**  
Second Journey, San Rafael, CA. *See May 19-22.*

**Aug 6-20 • Network for a New Culture Summer Camp West**  
Southern OR. New Culture Intensive: An Extended Journey into Love, Community, and Transformation. Building sustainable, non-violent culture through intimacy, personal growth, emotional transparency, radical honesty, equality, compassion, sexual freedom, and community. \$495-\$995, incl. camping, meals. [www.nfnc.org/sc](http://www.nfnc.org/sc); [sc05w@nfnc.org](mailto:sc05w@nfnc.org); 800-624-8445.

**Aug 12-15 • Heart of Now: The Basics**  
Lost Valley Educational Center, Dexter, OR. (Formerly "Naka-Ima.") *See Apr 8-11.*

**Aug 12-20 • Permaculture Fundamentals: Week-Long Program**  
Earthen Learning Center, Black Mountain, NC. Peter Bane, Chuck Marsh. Part I of Permaculture Design Course. Cultural and social aspects of permaculture, hands-on garden and orchard work, pond making, natural building, graywater systems, erosion control, rock work, dances, circles, campfires. \$675, incl. food, camping. Indoor lodging also available. [www.earthenlearningcenter.org](http://www.earthenlearningcenter.org); [info@earthenlearningcenter.org](mailto:info@earthenlearningcenter.org); 838-664-9935.

**Aug 12-Oct 2 • Internship in Ecovillage Living & Permaculture Design**  
Earthen Learning Center, Black Mountain, NC. Two-month internship incl. courses: two-part Permaculture Design Certification, Earthen Experience, Edible and Medicinal

Plants, Starting a Successful Ecovillage, Earthen Plaster & Paints, Ecovillage Planning & Design. Peter Bane, Chuck Marsh, Mollie Curry, Greg Ramsey, Diana Leaf Christian. \$2,400, incl. camping, meals. Indoor lodging also available. [www.earthenlearningcenter.org](http://www.earthenlearningcenter.org); [info@earthenlearningcenter.org](mailto:info@earthenlearningcenter.org); 838-664-9935.

**Aug 19-21 • Twin Oaks Communities Conference**  
Twin Oaks, Louisa, VA. Workshops, community building, and fun. Ecovillages, communes co-ops, cohousing, intentional relationships, group decision making, living sustainably. \$85 sl. sc., incl. camping, meals. *Communities Conference, 138 Twin Oaks Rd., Louisa, VA 23093; 540-894-5126; conference@twin Oaks.org.*

**Aug 25-29 • Heart of Now 2**  
Lost Valley Educational Center, Dexter, OR. (Formerly "Naka-Ima.") *See Apr 21-25.*

**Aug 27-28 • The Earthen Experience: A Guided Exploration of Community Life**  
Earthen Learning Center, Black Mountain, NC. *See Jun 25-26.*

**Sep 9-11 • Starting a Successful Ecovillage or Intentional Community**  
Earthen Learning Center, Black Mountain, NC. Diana Leaf Christian. Overview costs & time-frames, vision documents, decision making, finding/financing land, legal structures, financial organization, process & community. Earthen tour. \$250, incl. food, camping. Indoor lodging also available. [www.earthenlearningcenter.org](http://www.earthenlearningcenter.org); [info@earthenlearningcenter.org](mailto:info@earthenlearningcenter.org); 838-664-9935.

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# Reach



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

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

The special Reach rate is only \$0.25 per word (up to 100 words, \$0.50 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: \$0.23 per word for two times and \$0.20 per word for four times. If you are an FIC member, take off an additional five percent.

Please make check or money order payable to Communities, and send it, plus your ad copy, word count, number of insertions and category to: Patricia Greene, POB 324, W. Chesterfield, NH 03466; phone and fax, 603-256-8329, email: patricia@ic.org (If you email an ad, please include your mailing address, phone number and be sure to send off the check at the same time.)

Intentional communities listing in the Reach section are invited to also visit our online Communities Directory at <http://directory.ic.org>. Listing on our web site is free and data from the site is used to produce our print version of the Communities Directory, with a new edition coming out annually. Contact: [directory@ic.org](mailto:directory@ic.org) or 540-894-5798 for more information on being listed in the Communities Directory.

## COMMUNITIES WITH OPENINGS

**AQUARIAN CONCEPTS COMMUNITY, Sedona, Arizona.** Founded by Gabriel of Sedona and Niann Emerson Chase in 1989. Currently 100 adults and children. International members. Global change work for Destiny Reservists in Divine Administration. God-centered community based on teachings of *The URANTIA Book* and Continuing Fifth Epochal Revelation *The Cosmic Family Volumes* as received by Gabriel of Sedona. Organic gardens. Starseed Schools of Melchizedek, Global Change Music record label, CosmoArt, CosmoTheater, and audio and video productions. Light construction, stone masonry, landscaping, cleaning and maintenance. Serious spiritual commitment required. POB 3946, Sedona, AZ 86340; 928-204-1206; [info@aquarianconceptscommunity.org](mailto:info@aquarianconceptscommunity.org); [www.aquarianconceptscommunity.org](http://www.aquarianconceptscommunity.org); [www.globallchangemusic.org](http://www.globallchangemusic.org)

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

**BREITENBUSH HOT SPRINGS, Detroit, Oregon.**

We are an intentional community set up as a worker-owned cooperative. We support ourselves by running a retreat and conference center. The work and business ethic is one of stewardship and service. We are located in the Oregon Cascade Mountains next to one of the last remaining old-growth rainforests. We have several hot tubs and natural hot spring pools and a steam sauna. We are on the Breitenbush River, which provides us with the means to generate our hydroelectric power, and all of our building are heated geothermally. Currently there are approximately 50 community members year round, with an additional 30 seasonal workers in the summer. We are looking for community-minded, hard working individuals in the areas of house-keeping, kitchen maintenance, construction, office, childcare, marketing and massage (Oregon LMT required). We provide modest housing and a wide variety of benefits to our staff. Our mission is to provide a safe and potent environment for social and personal growth. Send inquiries to: Personnel, Breitenbush Hot Springs, POB 578, Detroit, OR 97342; 503-854-3320-1, ext. 216.

**CAMPBILL VILLAGE MINNESOTA, Sauk Centre, Minnesota.**

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



**DANCING RABBIT, Rutledge, Missouri.** We are actively seeking new members to join us in creating our vibrant home and sustainability demonstration project. We are building our homes with earth-friendly materials on our 280 beautiful, rolling acres in northeast Missouri. We live, work and play together; with cooperation and feminism as basic principles. We grow much of our food and share delicious organic meals together every day. We make our decisions by consensus. If you're looking for a nurturing home where you can live more sustainability and make a difference in the world, come visit us. Help make our ecovillage grow! *One-CM Dancing Rabbit Lane, Rutledge, MO 63563; 660-883-5511; dancingrabbit@ic.org; www.dancingrabbit.org*

**EARTHAVEN, Blue Ridge Mountains, North Carolina.** Developing permaculture-based, off-grid community on 325 forested acres 45 minutes from culture-rich Asheville. Streams, ponds and gardens. Consensus decisions. Self-financed. Microhydro and solar power, composting toilets, constructed wetlands. Beautiful passive solar natural buildings. Council Hall, kitchen/dining room, trading post, cabins, multi-family dwellings, homes under construction. 40+ onsite members include permaculture professionals, artists, woodworkers, sustainable loggers, builders, farmers, parents, engineers, and entrepreneurs in Forestry Coop, Red Moon Herbs, Imani Farm, Permaculture Activist magazine, business consulting, Culture's Edge permaculture workshops.

Multigenerational, children welcome. *www.earthaven.org*; Send \$15 for Information Pack (including video): *info@earthaven.org*; 1125 Camp Elliott Road, Black Mountain, NC 28711; 828-669-3937.

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

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

**FELLOWSHIP COMMUNITY, Spring Valley, New York.** We seek co-workers. Located 30

minutes north of NYC, we are an intergenerational community founded in 1966, centered around the care of the elderly. Now numbering about 150 elderly, co-workers and children, we grow our own fruit and vegetables biodynamically. All ages work together in our practical work activities. They include a candle shop, metal shop, wood shop, weavery/handwork group, greenhouse, publishing press, bakery, outlet store and medical practice. The spiritual science (anthroposophy) of Rudolf Steiner is the basis for our work. There is a Waldorf School and several other anthroposophical initiatives nearby. Our lifestyle is an intense social/cultural commitment to the future of mankind. Check out our web site at *www.FellowshipCommunity.org* If you are interested in co-working or need additional info, please contact our office at 845-356-8494; or write to: *Ann Scharff, c/o The Executive Circle at 241 Hungry Hollow Rd., Spring Valley, NY 10977; rsffoffice@fellowshipcommunity.org*

**HEI WA HOUSE, Ann Arbor, Michigan.** We are looking for new members! Located in two adjacent houses near downtown Ann Arbor, Hei Wa is an independent co-operative housing community devoted to ecological and social justice. Both houses are vegetarian with ties to community-supported agriculture. We are easily accessible by public transit. Premises include parking, storage and workshop space, and a sauna. We are seeking community members who are interested in building and sustaining an urban, small-scale co-operative in a medium-

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**SHIVALILA COMMUNITY, Paho, 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: [shivaila@aol.com](mailto:shivaila@aol.com); or RR2 #3315, Paho, HI 96778.

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

**WILD ROOTS, Western North Carolina.** A 30-acre radical homestead and primitive lifeway community adjacent to National Forest, 45

minutes drive from Asheville, NC. Looking for long-term members and open to visitors and workshop participants interested in experiential learning. [wildrootsnc@ziplip.com](mailto:wildrootsnc@ziplip.com) or 866-460-2945.

## COMMUNITY HOUSES AND PROPERTY FOR SALE OR RENT

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## COMMUNITIES FORMING

**COMMUNITY, Possibly Near Boulder, Colorado.** Mature adults seeking others to form spiritual, non-denominational, semi-rural western community. Contact: [Moonwolf.lightascolor@frontier.net](mailto:Moonwolf.lightascolor@frontier.net)


**KAKWA ECOVILLAGE, McBride, British Columbia.** Forming community seeking young families, families with children and committed

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**NAMASTE GREENFIRE COHOUSING, Center Barntstead, New Hampshire.** Intentional Cohousing Community, nature sanctuary, permaculture, activism. Loving more relationships. Real investments. NGC, POB 31, Center Barntstead, NH 03225; 603-776-7776; [nhamaste@yahoo.com](mailto:nhamaste@yahoo.com)

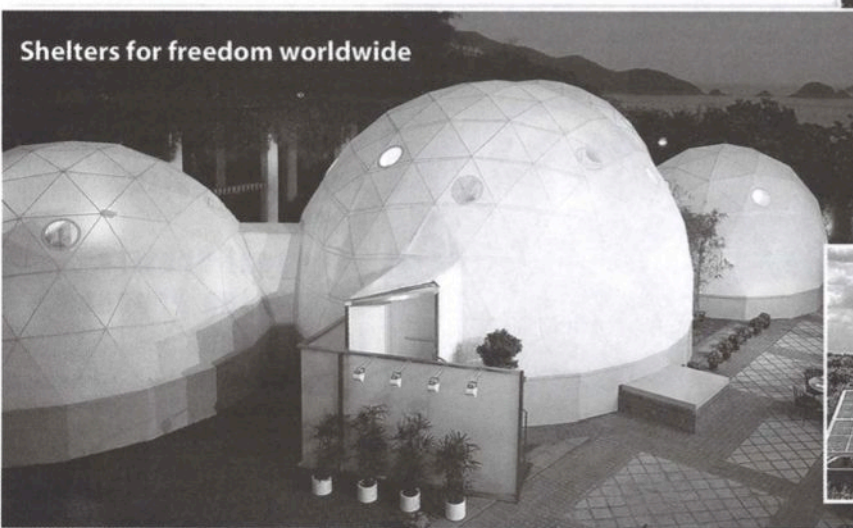
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**RURAL COOPERATIVE COMMUNITY, USA.** My husband and I are currently in Hawthorne, Florida with assets to invest into community. We've




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**WHITE OAK FARM, Williams, Oregon.** Openings for community members on non-profit farm and education center. [info@whiteoakfarmcsa.org](mailto:info@whiteoakfarmcsa.org)

**WHITE HAWK ECOLOGICAL VILLAGE, near Ithaca, New York.** Our vision embraces principles of ecological living, simplicity and diversity. We will express this through building affordable natural homes, developing land-based livings, farming and alternative schooling. [www.whitehawk.org](http://www.whitehawk.org) Contact Henry at [beauty77@lightlink.com](mailto:beauty77@lightlink.com) or 607-273-5879; Heather at [hbmccarty@msn.com](mailto:hbmccarty@msn.com)

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## CONSULTANTS

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## INTERNS AND RESIDENCIES

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**HEATHCOTE COMMUNITY, Freeland, Maryland.** Internship in natural building and sustainable community living. April to November 2005. Minimum one-month commitment. Gain experience in construction and natural building techniques, including strawbale, cob, natural plaster, earthen floor and natural paint. Interns will work 40 hours per week on our new strawbale residence in exchange for room and full tuition to our natural building workshops. In addition interns will be integrated into community life and participate in our food coop. For more information see our web site [www.heathcote.org](http://www.heathcote.org) or contact *Heathcote Community*, 21300 Heathcote Rd., Freeland, MD 21053; call 410-343-3478; email: [info@heathcote.org](mailto:info@heathcote.org)

**KAKWA ECOVILLAGE, McBride, British Columbia.** We seek intern(s) to manage our organic vegetable garden, where we grow food for our resident community, visitors and workshop guests. Other tasks are likely to include light construction, occasional housekeeping and workshop support. Flexibility, self-starting and industriousness are desired qualities. May 1-Oct. 1. Minimum stay 30 days. Room, board and workshop atten-

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**SANDHILL FARM, Rutledge, Missouri.** Internships in Sustainable Community Living. April 1 to November 1, 2004. Gain experience in organic farming, food processing, tempeh production, homestead maintenance and construction skills, consensus decision making, group and interpersonal process. Learning is informal and hands-on. Come for six weeks or longer. More information about the Sandhill Farm Intentional Community and applying for an internship: [www.thefec.org](http://www.thefec.org) reach@thefec.org 417-679-4682; interns@sandhillfarm.org; [www.sandhillfarm.org](http://www.sandhillfarm.org)

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

## PEOPLE LOOKING

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## PUBLICATIONS, BOOKS, WEB SITES

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**NEW SOLUTIONS: THE COMMUNITY SOLUTIONS REPORT** contains original research on a variety of issues relative to living in a post-oil society. Recent issues include "Cuba: Life After Oil," reporting on Cuba's creative response to the loss of oil and food subsidies when the USSR collapsed in early 1990: "Com-

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**603-256-8329; [patricia@ic.org](mailto:patricia@ic.org)**



munity Resurgence and Oil Depletion," an in depth report on the second annual meeting of the Association for the Study of Peak Oil (ASPO) in France, 2003; and "Report from Germany: The Third International Meeting on Peak Oil and Gas," covering the 2004 ASPO meeting and giving an in depth explanation of hydrogen. Upcoming issues will cover "The First US Conference on Peak Oil and Community Solutions," held November 2004, a detailed look at alternative energy, and ASPO 2005. New Solutions is published by Community Service, Inc. (CSI), under its new program "The Community Solution." CSI, a non-profit organization founded in 1940 to promote small local community, is the original founder of the FIC. Yearly subscription/membership is \$25. For a free sample of New Solutions, write or call POB 243, Yellow Springs, OH 45387, 937-767-2161; [info@communitysolution.org](mailto:info@communitysolution.org), or read them online at [www.communitysolution.org](http://www.communitysolution.org)

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

**WHY PAY RENT OR MAKE MORTGAGE PAYMENTS, when you can live rent free?** The Caretaker Gazette contains property caretaking/housesitting openings, advice and information for property caretakers, housesitters and landowners. Pub-

lished since 1983. Subscribers receive 800+ property caretaking opportunities each year, worldwide. Some estate management positions start at \$50,000/yr., plus benefits. Subscriptions: \$29/yr. *The Caretaker Gazette*, Box 540-I, River Falls, WI 54022; 715-426-5500; [www.caretaker.org](http://www.caretaker.org)

## RESOURCES

**FEDERATION OF EGALITARIAN COMMUNITIES (FEC). LIVE YOUR VALUES, LEARN NEW SKILLS.** For 25 years, the FEC has welcomed new members to our groups based on cooperation, ecology, fairness, and nonviolence. No joining fees required, just a willingness to join in the work. We share income from a variety of cottage industries. For more information: [www.thefec.org](http://www.thefec.org); [fec@ic.org](mailto:fec@ic.org); 417-679-4682; or send \$3 to FEC, HC-3, Box 3370-CM00, Tecumseh, MO 65760.

## RETREATS AND CLASSES

**CREATIVITY ENCAMPMENT.** Rocky Mountain Visual Arts Retreat offers Creative Release Program June 19-25. Nature and Culture in forest community for week of Arts and Enlightened Fun. \$350. Free camping. Work-study available. [lightascolor@frontier.net](mailto:lightascolor@frontier.net) 970-264-6250.

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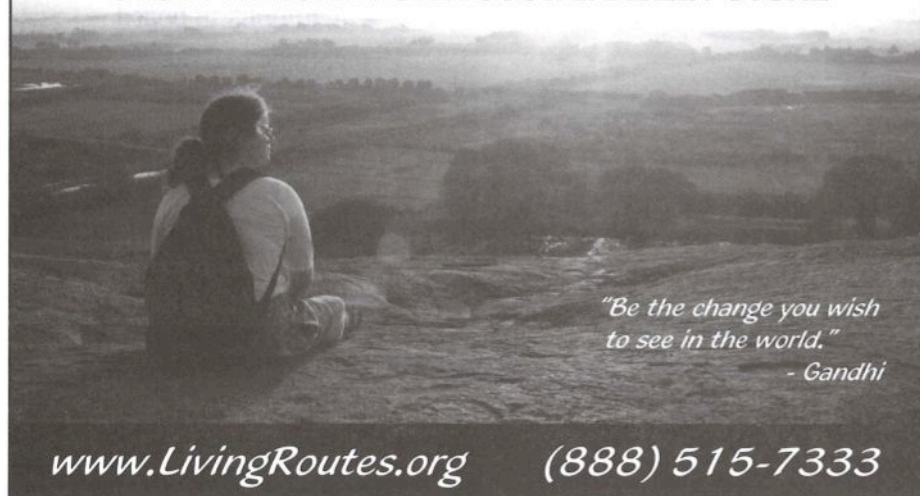
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- hosts gatherings and events about community.
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## PERIPATETIC COMMUNITARIAN

(continued from p. 76)

In the end, the big question isn't whether or not a community is doing everything right, but whether its members feel that it's headed in the right direction, has the ability to hear feedback about what's not working, is flexible in coming up with creative new initiatives, and provides a sense of forward progress. Keeping all that in perspective, and the various activities and initiatives in balance, is definitely an art. And the key to mastering any art: practice, practice, and more practice. So grab your canvas, your pigments, your brush, your imagination ... and paint more community into your life. ☺

*Geoph Kozeny has lived in various kinds of communities for 31 years, and has been on the road for 16 years visiting communities—asking about their visions and realities, taking photos, and in general exploring what makes them tick. Presently, he is editing part two of a video documentary on intentional communities, aspiring to convey the vision and passion that drives the movement, and tell stories about what works.*



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## The “Art” of Community

When the FIC named its conference series “The Art of Community,” it wasn’t a public relations ploy. That simple phrase conveys the essence—and the biggest challenge—of building and sustaining intentional communities. It’s an art.

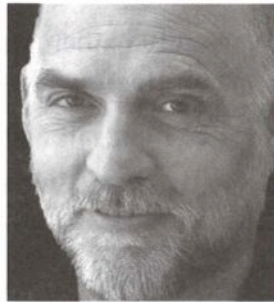
Sure, a “Science of Community” is also involved. However, relying on a scientific approach to community—with a solid set of technical skills; theories about relationships, psychology, economics, and decision making; access to a wide array of resources; and an orderly list of “how to” steps—isn’t what will ultimately make or break a community ... although the presence of those assets will greatly increase the odds of success.

Living in community is analogous to other artistic pursuits such as ballet, writing poetry, or painting with watercolors. A practitioner can study the “science” of those disciplines, learning all the various styles and techniques, and then practice for a lifetime. Yet, in the end, the final result is going to depend on how and when a particular technique is used, how the parts are woven together, and the degree to which the artist communicates meaning from deep within. The science provides the foundation, the art is in how it’s applied.

I’ve run across many communities built upon long and impressive lists of values, goals, and agreements, worked out in great detail. If you were to rely solely on the reading of their websites and other written materials, you’d think they’d pretty much achieved Utopia on Earth, or were at least headed in that direction and probably making good progress. Yet if you were to visit them and stay long enough to see beyond the introductory tour and initial first impressions, you would probably spot many contrasting realities: Areas in which they were living out their vision, and other important areas where there was considerable room for improvement.

Given the likelihood that there’s always going to be a gap between our glorious hopes for the future and our current ability

to live up to our own ideals, there are four aspects of community living that can serve as vital signs for the health of any group: vision, leadership, accomplishments, and morale. An accurate assessment of those areas can be a useful tool for predicting whether a community is going to thrive or wither.



BY GEOPH KOZENY

**Folks can go  
on faith for  
only so long.**

**Vision:** Communities that thrive tend to have a clearly articulated common purpose, especially those accompanied by a logical plan for implementation. Visions are usually more effective when written down, and flexibility and adaptability of the community’s vision greatly increase the probability of success.

**Leadership:** Some groups rely on a founder or other inspiring individual to articulate and reaffirm the vision, some have a leadership core group, and others are thoroughly decentralized. Many groups have a combination of those structures. What is essential is that someone keep the vision in focus and the community members plugged in—so that the everyday work has meaning in the context of manifesting the vision.

**Accomplishments:** Folks can go on faith for only so long. Eventually community members need concrete, measurable signs of progress or they will start to question the sincerity of the vision or the validity of the community’s priorities. A sense of forward movement is a great catalyst for bringing about even more effort toward the common purpose.

**Morale:** If community members are participating with a strong sense of enthusiasm, it’s a likely sign that vision, leadership, and accomplishments are being adequately covered. A strong sense of cooperation and community spirit is a good predictor of a community’s effectiveness and longevity

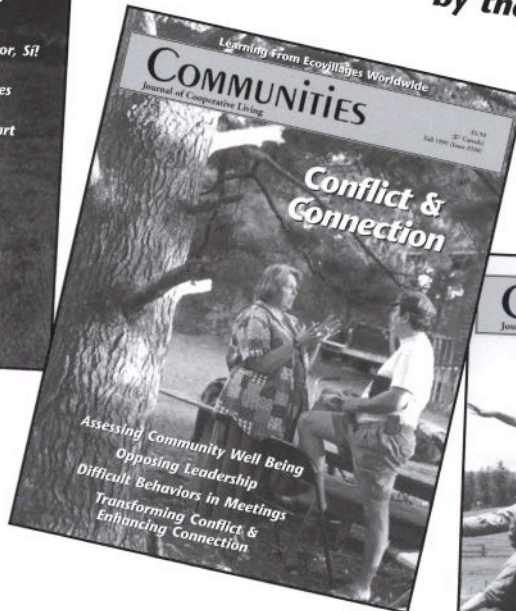
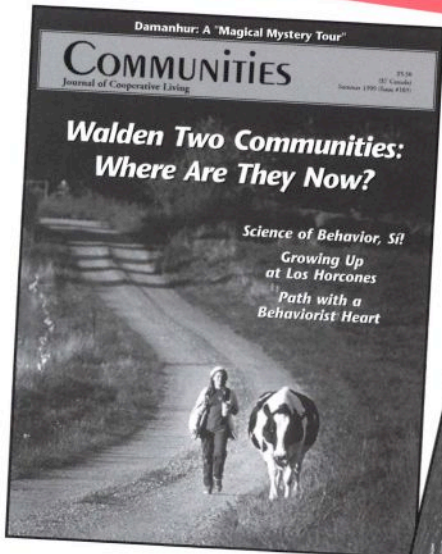
(continued on p. 75)



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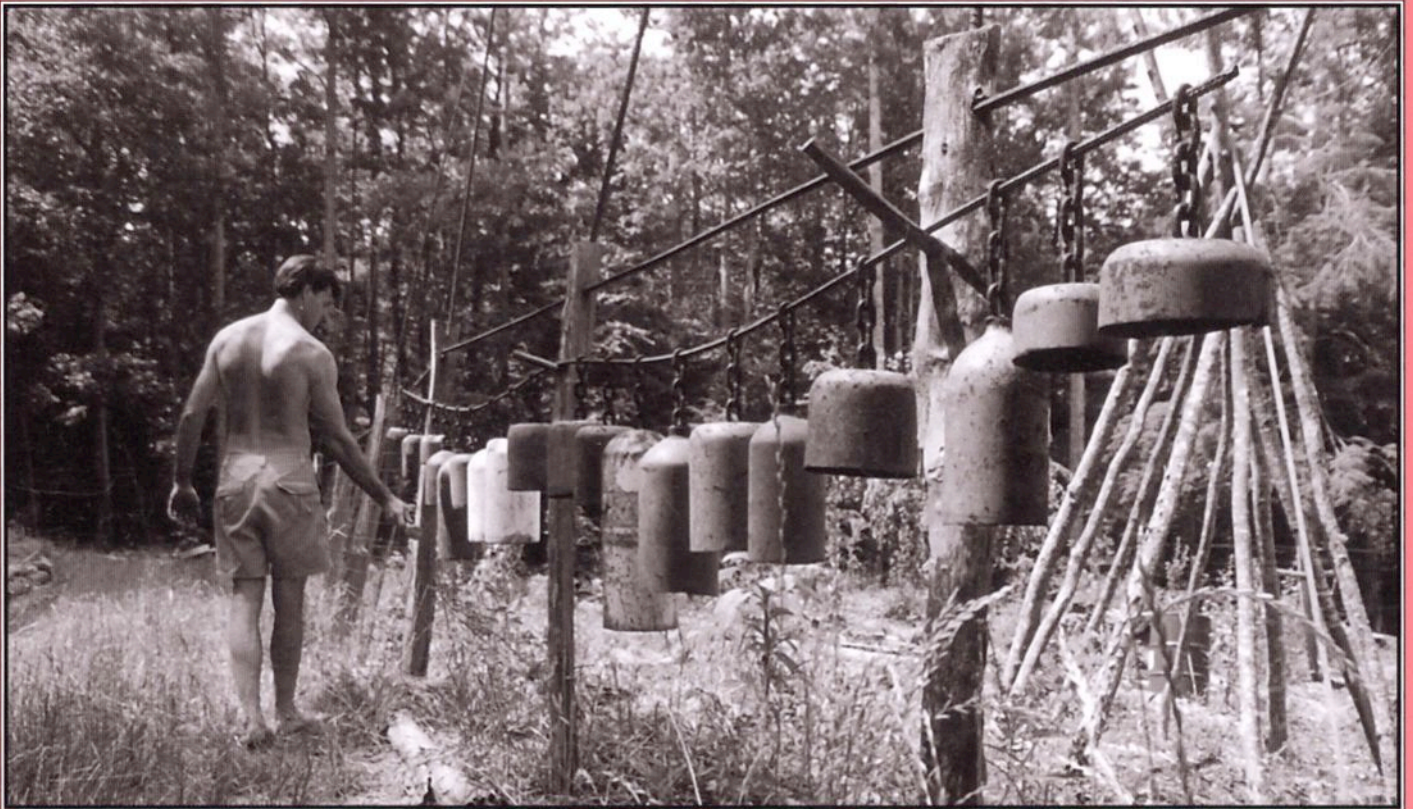
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