

The Overly Powerful Community Member

COMMUNITIES

JOURNAL of COOPERATIVE LIVING

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Summer 2006 (Issue #131)

How Can We Help?

The Farm: Food & Water for Katrina Victims

Kibbutz Lotan: Teaching Natural Building to Our Arab Neighbors

OAEC: Heirloom Gardens, Clean Water, and No GMOs

Intern in an Ecovillage

Creating Community Where You Live: Start Your Own "EcoHood"

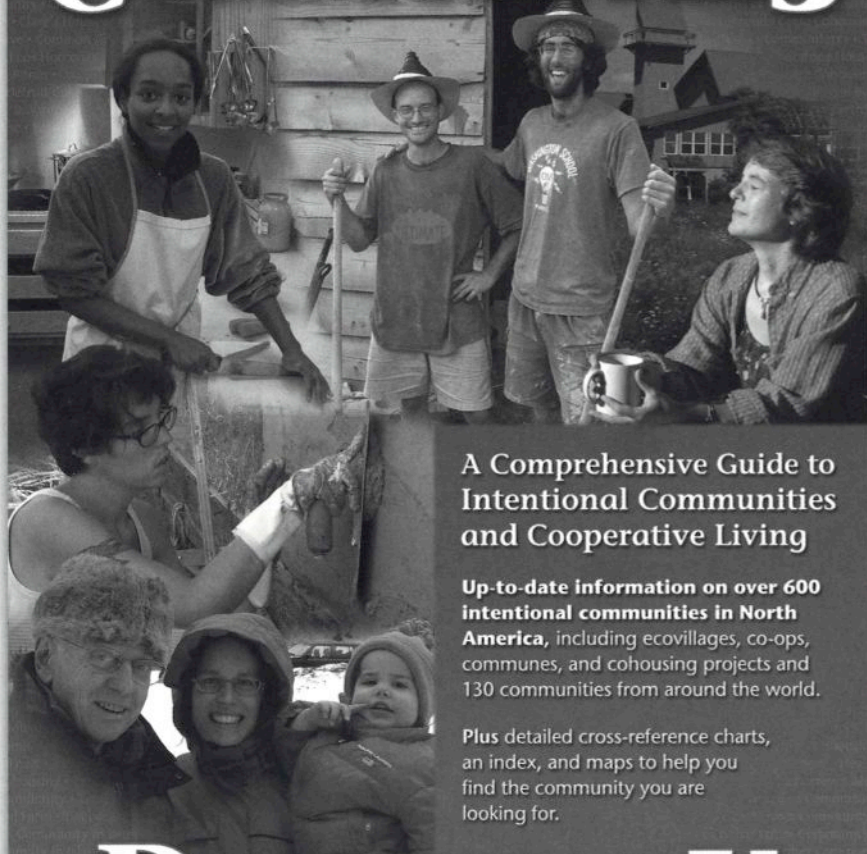


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NEW EDITION – UPDATED FOR 2005

COMMUNITIES



A Comprehensive Guide to Intentional Communities and Cooperative Living

Up-to-date information on over 600 intentional communities in North America, including ecovillages, co-ops, communes, and cohousing projects and 130 communities from around the world.

Plus detailed cross-reference charts, an index, and maps to help you find the community you are looking for.

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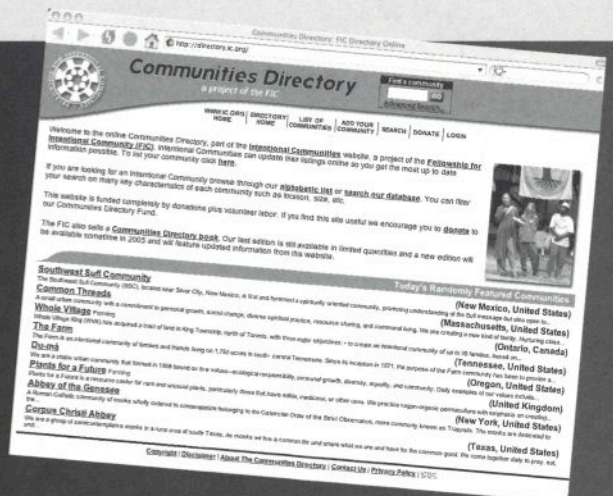
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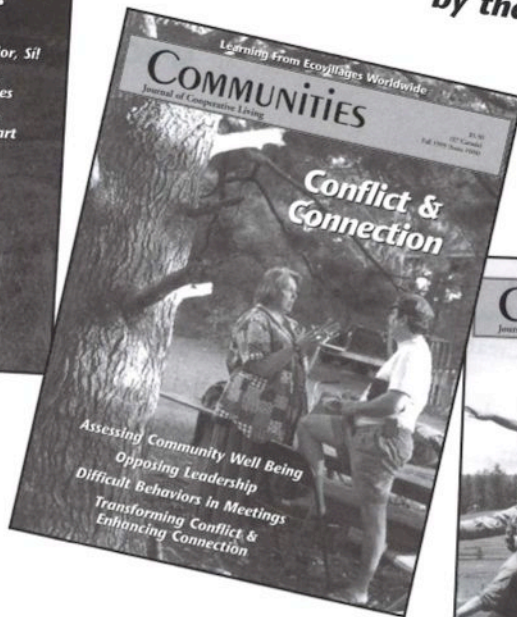
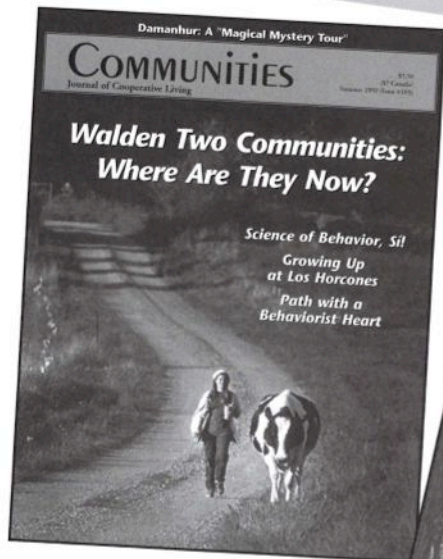
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COMMUNITIES

JOURNAL of COOPERATIVE LIVING

FRONT COVER

Andy Bosley (left) and Joe Dofflemeyer of Earthaven Ecovillage, North Carolina, grow vegetables for the community in their BioDynamic CSA Farm.

Photo: Susan Patrice

BACK COVER

Arabs and Jews learning natural building techniques—and getting to know each other—as a service project of Kibbutz Lotan in Israel.

Photo: Michael Livni.

ARTICLES

16 Prescott's "EcoHood"

Susan DeFreitas describes how a young ecological activist helped create "virtual community" in his urban neighborhood.

- How to Start a Potential EcoHood
- Resources for Creating an EcoHood

20 Start a Neighborhood Newsletter

Help organize your neighborhood—by starting a newsletter, organizing a roster of neighbors or an email network, building a community bulletin board.



22 Intern at an Ecovillage

You can have fun, learn new community skills, and "try before you buy."

25 The Overly Powerful Community Member

How to deal with the person who always gets her way in meetings, by experienced process and communication consultants *Caroline Estes, Bea Briggs, Tree Bressen, and Laird Schaub*.

29 When Oprah or Geraldo Call . . .

What happens when the media uses intentional community for consumer entertainment? How Dancing Rabbit and East Wind fared at the hands of national media. *Darin Fenger*.

- Managing the Media: A Journalist's Advice

SPECIAL FEATURE

Good Works in Community

34 Seven Months in the Gulf

How members of The Farm community responded to Katrina victims in Louisiana and Mississippi—and what they learned about the human spirit. *Ralph McAtee*.

- "How Can We Help?" The Farm's Plenty Organization—Peter Schweitzer

42 Building Bridges of Clay, Mud, and Straw

How Kibbutz Lotan's pioneering program in natural building brings Jews and Arabs together for cultural exchange and new understanding. *Michael Livni, Mark Naveh, Alex Cicelsky*.

- Good Works and Traditional Jewish Culture
- About Kibbutz Lotan

46 I Can Do It Because I Live in Community

Bright Morning Star's members are active in peace and social justice issues—which they can do more easily through mutual support. *Rosy Betz-Zall*.

48 Communities That Serve Others . . . and Love Doing It

Darin Fenger interviews Jesus People USA in Chicago; Magic, Inc., in Palo Alto, California; and Koinonia Partners in rural Georgia.

- On the Web

53 It Shows Our Neighbors We Want to Contribute

Alyson Ewald looks at local service projects undertaken by members of Sandhill Farm, Dancing Rabbit, and Red Earth Farms in northeastern Missouri.

54 Heirloom Gardens, Clean Water, and No GMOs

How the environmental activist Sowing Circle community manages multiple successful projects through its nonprofit Occidental Arts and Ecology Center (OAEC)—from teaching school children organic gardening to taking on agri-biz. *Phil Tymon, Brock Dolman, Adam Wolpert, Dave Henson.*

- Awards for OAEC/Sowing Circle Members
- OAEC Values



DAVE HENSON

COLUMNS

6 PUBLISHER'S NOTE • Laird Schaub
The Shipping News: While We're Still Pumping Out Red Ink, There's a Sea Change Coming

8 COHOUSING LIFE • Sonja Ericksson
Project Linus Made us a "Close-Knit" Group . . .

11 FEDERATION UPDATE • Parke Burgess
Governing Ourselves Democratically

13 ECOVILLAGE NETWORK OF THE AMERICAS • Andy Langford
Gaia University Launched at Last

80 PERIPATETIC COMMUNITARIAN • Geoph Kozeny
Good Works: Walking the Talk

DEPARTMENTS

4 LETTERS

59 REVIEWS

67 CALENDAR

70 REACH

COMMUNITIES

Journal of Cooperative Living

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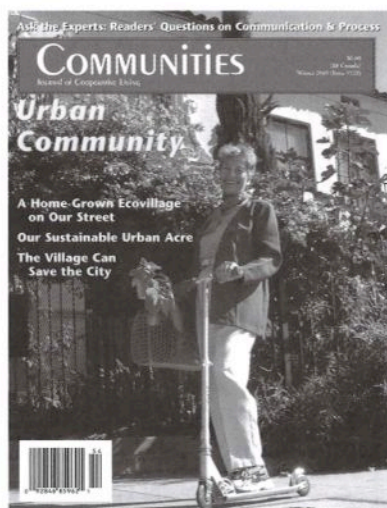
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LETTERS



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



Urban Communities (Winter '05 issue)

Communities:

A brief correction to the first line of Laird Schaub's "Publisher's Note" on housing Cooperatives in the Winter '05 issue. Curly was not the one who went to Kansas City in the musical *Oklahoma*. It was Ado Annie's boyfriend, Will Parker.

Eric Levinson

Hello *Communities* magazine,

It's been years since I've bought your magazine. Your Winter '05 issue is nicely done, though; I'm glad I sprung for it. It's good to catch up a little on the rest of the communities/cohousing movement; glad to hear it's still going strong.

Stan Hildebrand's "Looking Back: 25 Years at Sandhill Farm" resonated for me. I've survived seven years now at Padanaram community in Indiana. Before that, I lived 15 years at Stelle community in Illinois.

Padanaram has changed so much—and listening to the long-timers here, change is nothing new. This morning at the coffee shop/community center, my friend Randy was telling a story about leaving as a young man in 1980 to join the Air Force, and returning to culture shock over the changes in just ten years, the town moving from no television, not even radios, to everyone with a satellite sticking off their room somewhere.

At Padanaram we're still somewhat of a mission in the country, but to be taken in as member you probably have to be related to someone here. We used to take in just about anyone who was willing to try to do a little work, here or at the sawmill in Bloomington. (We even used to get the hopeless cases from other intentional communities.) But now the sawmill has not run for two years; in fact, it hasn't run consistently for five or six. Nothing new—sawmills all over have been forced to shut down, for dozens of reasons, including capital costs, high taxes and workmen's comp, steeply fluctuating markets, on and on. We have been forced to diversify our income sources and it's been on the whole a healthy, ongoing revolution. Members have begun many new businesses, small and large. Many of us have found our way into managerial positions in the outer world.

We still have about 150 members here, with another few hundred "graduates," relatives, and those forced to move away for one circumstance or other, in the surrounding area. Padanaram's school is closed but our 70 kids have revolutionized the local public school. A number of them have become valedictorians and salutatorians, and we have several college students and graduates in our extended family. Many of course have stayed with forestry, but a large number are studying psychology. I wonder why? Our little joke.

Alex Simack

Padanaram Community
Bloomington, Indiana

More Good Works in Communities

Dear *Communities:*

In response to your request for articles on good works in communities, I would say that a majority of the members at Takoma Village Cohousing work long hours for nonprofit service organizations here in Washington D.C.—one

reason they don't do much volunteer work outside of their jobs. It's common for our people to come home from work at 8:00 or 9:00 or 10:00 at night!

Sharon Villines
Takoma Village Cohousing
Washington, D.C.

Dear *Communities*:

Greetings! In response to your questions about service in communities, here's an overview of how we at Tierra Nueva Cohousing in California walk our talk. We spent a whole year meeting with other neighborhoods surrounding our local farm field, documented the illnesses caused by pesticide drift, worked within the system to change the farm to a pesticide-free community supported agriculture farm. Every Friday now, we walk through the fields, pick up our share baskets and enjoy unbelievably delicious fruit and veggies and flowers.

We also have a food drive collection every holiday season, nine years now, which we deliver to our local harvest basket/food bank. We host political gatherings and debates in our Common House, lead peace marches in the surrounding towns and serve on several advisory boards for the local government.

Individually, one of our families here delivers Meals on Wheels once a week to seven or eight homebound seniors in town, hosts foreign exchange students, and works with local chapters of NOW, CodePink, Green Party, Empty Bowls (Food Bank), Earth Day coalitions, and probably many more I can't remember.

Patty Mara Gourley
Tierra Nueva Cohousing,
Oceano, California

Dear *Communities*:

Regarding your issue about good works in communities, this year at Rosewind Cohousing we had our Second Annual New Year's Day fundraising brunch. It's said to be a Southern tradition to eat "poor people's food" on New Year's Day to ensure prosperity in the coming year. We served black-eyed peas and rice, cornbread, and cooked greens, and cookies. The public was invited, with a suggested donation of \$10, though many put in more.

The first year, our New Year's Day brunch was a fundraiser for one of our families who had been hit with huge medical bills. It was such a success that we repeated it in January

2006, to publicize and raise money for our local Katrina-relief project, the Port Townsend-Bay St. Louis Sister City Project. Representatives from Bay St. Louis were in town and joined us, speaking briefly to the whole group, and were available for interaction all morning. Our kid room was converted into a place to meet with them, sign a big card, and get more information. The information displays continued in our rec room, with sign-up posters for local committees, and a video showing the devastation and relief efforts. Local people who had been to Bay St. Louis and returned, and others from the project, were also on hand.

In each case, thousands of dollars were raised, and RoseWind members enjoyed working together and supporting a good cause.

Lynn Nadeau
Rosewind Cohousing
Port Townsend, Washington

What Do We Mean by "Sustainability"?

Dear *Communities*,

I have a few comments about the letter from T McClure, "Emphasize Sustainability first, Cooperation second," in your Winter '05 issue. It is obvious to me that "sustainability," a vague and highly co-opted concept to begin with, is not in fact or practice separable from "cooperation." For example, allegedly "sustainable" ecosystems (any living systems, in fact) appear to be primarily cooperative systems. I am certainly not alone in suggesting that whatever "sustainability" they evidence is largely due to considerable cooperative activity among their elements. Meanwhile, much of the "unsustainability" I observe in our dominant cultures appears to stem primarily from a lack of cooperation and collaboration, a lack of community.

If by "sustainability," McClure means tools, techniques, methods, and technologies in the purely material world, then it would definitely be a mistake to make those *more* important than human relationships, cooperative or otherwise. It is our relationships and interactions with ourselves and others that determine how any such tools, techniques, methods, and technologies are actually applied—and what the consequences of those applications are—for "sustainability" and all else.

Empirical evidence of this is all around us. We have more than adequate tools, techniques,

methods, and technologies to increase our "sustainability." What we do not appear to have enough of is the human cooperative skills and abilities to actually use them to do so.

I think "cooperative living" is a very important experience to be promoting, publishing about, and focusing on, in all its various forms. It is among the most neglected, seldom-considered, and seldom-practiced skills in our dominant cultures. It is also one of the most essential skills for "sustainability."

My basic operating thesis is that sooner or later it all comes down to human relationships. The focus by *Communities* on this foundation of all our successes and failures, of all our increases or decreases in "sustainability," is one of the magazine's best and strongest points.

Please just don't lose (or abandon) your unique and invaluable focus on humans learning to commune with one another.

John Shinerer
Hawaii

Dear *Communities*:

I have to disagree to some extent with the letter in the Winter 2005 issue suggesting that "sustainability" take precedence over cooperative movements. First of all, the word sustainability has lost much of its meaning over the last 20 years. On the one hand we have Dow Chemical and the World Bank claiming to be sustainable, and on the other the trend towards green consumerism seems to suggest that "sustainability" is a product that can be purchased by the affluent while basic paradigms about how we live remain unchallenged. In a future with less cheap energy it seems that cooperation among people, and shifting towards more autonomous and self-reliant communities will be extremely important. "Sustainability" can be a valuable concept as well, but I don't believe it should be viewed as an end in itself. It needs to be carefully balanced with the concept of social justice regarding race, class, gender, equality, and how power is distributed. If the emerging sustainability movements want to be viewed as relevant by larger segments of the population, they will need to start asking some basic questions about who can participate and on what terms. Otherwise I'm afraid that many people will dismiss "sustainability" as simply a lifestyle choice by those who are wealthy enough to buy it.

Brad Johnson
Baltimore, Maryland

Communities Editorial Policy

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

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

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

Our aim is to be as balanced in our reporting as possible, and whenever we print an article critical of a particular community, we invite that community to respond with its own perspective.

Submissions Policy

To submit an article, please first request the Writer's Guidelines: *Communities*, 1025 Camp Elliott Rd., Black Mountain, NC 28711, 828-669-9702; communities@ic.org.

Advertising Policy

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

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

Patricia Greene, Advertising Manager,
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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



The Shipping News

While We're Still Pumping Out Red Ink, There's a Sea Change Coming

It's time for our annual look at the numbers. As you can see from the 2005 Financial Statement below, the most important number is the one at the bottom, which shows that this magazine lost over \$13,000 in 2005 (ouch!), Which is the same result we had last year (double ouch!).

Diving into the details, we experienced some shifts from 2004 in certain categories—subscription income was down 14 percent; ad revenue was up 18 percent. We also did some marketing initiatives last year, which were paid for by an earmarked donation. On the whole, income was up a modest 3.6 percent, yet this gain was substantially eroded by a 2.2 percent bump in total expenses. It's hard to make a dent in a five-digit deficit with changes this small.

If you'll recall from a year ago, we announced the launch of a two-year campaign to overhaul *Communities'* design and marketing. Half way through our remodeling, the numbers are still a mess. Yet we've already accomplished a lot and we're hopeful that everyone's going to like where we end up. In the last year we've:

- Switched to four-color covers.
- Placed a continuous two-year ad in *Utne Reader*.
- Upgraded our interior paper stock to something that will do our photos more justice.
- Conducted a subscription campaign this spring.
- Started paying for photos used on the cover, and for assigned pictures to accompany stories.

Here's what we have queued up for the months ahead:

- Hire a Photo and Illustration Editor to oversee the procurement and quality of graphic images.
- Completely redesign the logotype and front cover (it'll debut in the fall issue).
- Conduct a phone survey and promo mailing to natural food stores and independent bookstores (we know these are places our readers frequent).
- Create a website devoted exclusively to this magazine.

COMING IN FUTURE ISSUES

"Will You Live Your Elder Years in Community?" Fall 2006

Do elders enjoy and benefit from living in community? Do older people want their own "senior communities" or multi-generational communities? What is an "elder rich" community? How is the new trend, "Elder Cohousing," faring in Denmark and North America?

Communities; communities@ic.org; 828-669-9702.

- Establish a web-based Photo Archive where contributors can upload images and we can sort them by type for easy access (see the sidebar on page 12 if you're interested in making a contribution).
- Hire a *Communities* Business Manager to actively manage distributor accounts and monitor the success of promotions.
- Start binding tear-out subscription cards in each issue.

This past March we held our first-ever *Communities* summit, where most of the crew holed up for three days to discuss the magazine's mission, design, marketing, and website objectives. This was especially valuable in that several people are filling new or redefined roles, and easy email access is not the same thing as being in the same room. It was an invaluable opportunity for everyone to synchronize their gyroscopes.

Most importantly, we took advantage of this rare face-to-face meeting to chart a new course for the magazine. Heretofore, our mission has been to chronicle the experience and inspiration of intentional communities. Now, in addition to our traditional mission, we'll be offering an increasing number of stories about how the lessons of cooperative living can be readily applied to people looking for a greater sense of community where they are. We've come to appreciate that the population living in intentional communities is relatively small (perhaps 100,000 in the US), yet the desire for more community in one's life is quite large. From now on we'll also be writing for those community-hungry people who will probably never start or join an intentional community. It's our job to help get the word out about community building everywhere.

We have a great team, and we're optimistic about turning about the magazine's fortunes. Come back in a year, when we expect to have completed our refitting and be under full sail. With a fair wind, both the magazine and the numbers should be looking shipshape by then.

Laird Schaub

Communities Magazine 2005 Financial Statement

Expenses

Printing	\$17,883
Office overhead	4,543
Production labor	24,689
Fulfillment	10,957
Office expenses (postage, phone, copying)	2,095
Marketing	1,685
Total Expenses	61,852

Income

Subscriptions	\$22,612
Single issues	855
Back issues	2,582
Distributor sales	4,718
Advertising	14,871
Royalties	658
Donations	2,063
Total Income	48,359
Net Profit (Loss)	(\$13,493)

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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Geoph Kozeny

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Jeff Grossberg

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*Diana Christian, Elke Lerman,
Martin Klaif, Judy Morris*

**Conflict: Fight, Flight, or
Opportunity?**
Laird Sandhill

**Consensus: Decisions That
Bring People Together**
Caroline Estes

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

**Building a Business While
Building Community**
*Carol Carlson, Lois Arkin, Harvey
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Project Linus Made Us a "Close-Knit" Group . . .

In January, 2006, a dozen of us at Oak Creek Commons Cohousing, in Paso Robles, California, met regularly to create a blanket for Project Linus, a non-profit that gives away new handmade blankets to children who are seriously ill, traumatized, or otherwise in need. Karen Loucks, the project's founder, read a quote by a child who had undergone chemotherapy who said her security blanket had helped her get through it. Loucks decided to provide homemade blankets to a children's cancer center. Her efforts were publicized, and chapters of Project Linus were formed across the country. Since then over a million blankets have been donated to children's hospitals and to organizations such as the Red Cross and CASA (Court-Appointed Special Advocates).

Our blanket-making was initiated by Terri, a member who works on a team project each quarter for a year-long educational training. At our first organizing meeting in January, we decided to create a blanket consisting of 12 knitted squares—one knitted by each of us—that would be sewn together. Terri had never knitted or cro-

cheted anything before; Mary was also a beginner. Norma, Sue, and Pam had not knitted in many years and needed to refresh their skills.

Maggie, an accomplished watercolor artist, volunteered to buy yarn and decide on a pattern. She and Terri selected skeins of multicolored yarn along with matching

colors of lavender, yellow, and blue. Our goal was to finish the blanket in time to unveil at the community's Valentine's Day dinner and for Terri to take to her next team meeting in Chicago.

Maggie and Tyn, who at 95 is our eldest resident, emerged as expert knitters. They taught beginners and helped those of us who dropped stitches or who didn't remember how to cast on and off or how to purl.

When someone had trouble with the pattern, Tyn stepped in and completed their squares.

Tyn told me she joined the project to teach people who didn't know how to knit and because she enjoys crafts. Norma was motivated by the encouragement she received from Tyn and Maggie, who told her to keep going and not to worry about mistakes.



Sonja Eriksson joined Oak Creek Commons in Paso Robles, California, in 2000 and has lived there with her husband since the community was built in 2004.



PHILIP WESTERGAARD

Evelena "Tyn" Boles (Rosalie's 95 year old Mom) and Rosalie Westergaard.

Norma appreciated the attitude that whatever you did was fine. "It was done in the spirit of community."

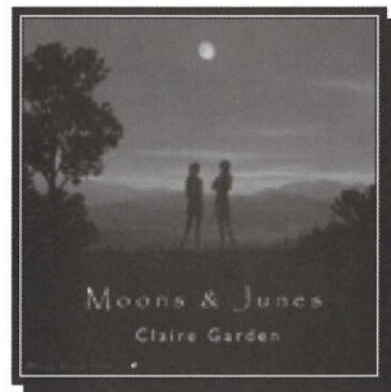
I was worried that my square would turn out to be too small, but actually it was too big! I couldn't bear to rip up my beautiful blue square and start over, so I bought more yarn and made eight more squares for another blanket. We never figured out why my first square was larger; perhaps it was the knitting style I learned as a child in Sweden.

The most compelling reason the majority of our group joined Project Linus was the desire to work on a project together, especially one that would benefit children. For Pam, it was a chance to connect with people she wanted to get to know better, and also it gave her a creative outlet. An added benefit was to work on something you give away to people who'll benefit from it.

Our blanket was much admired when we revealed it at the Valentine's Day dinner.

A few days before Valentine's Day, Tyn, Rosalie, and Maggie laid out all the finished squares on a dining room table in the Common House. I joined them because I wanted to contribute at least a few stitches to the community blanket. The knitters were not told that the squares had to be a certain size—and they weren't! We stretched the smaller and oddly shaped squares and did our best to make them fit before we sewed them together.

Maggie had wanted people to be able to choose the color they liked, so she didn't figure out in advance how many squares of each color we should make. This made it challenging to arrange the squares into a pattern, but Rosalie had fun arranging them anyway. Later, Maggie added borders to the squares, which created a more uniform look. Our blanket was much admired when we revealed it at the Valentine's Day dinner.



If you liked Claire Garden's *Child of the Wild Wind*, you'll want to read *Moons and Junes*, set at the same commune.

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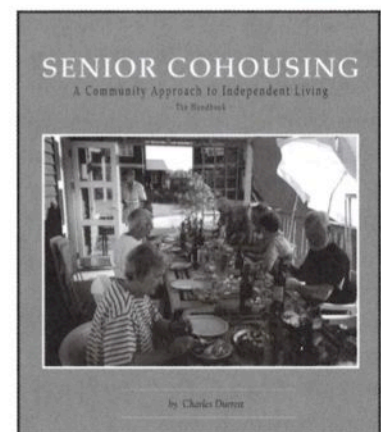
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Rosalie and I were struck by how creating the blanket together symbolizes certain aspects of cohousing. We didn't have an exact plan for how the squares would be arranged, but we worked it out. We figured out a way to include all the sizes, colors, and shapes, where the whole became

Rosalie and I were struck by how creating the blanket together symbolizes certain aspects of cohousing.

more beautiful than its individual parts. Experienced knitters helped the beginners, and when someone was not able to complete the project, another person took over. Above all, the project brought us closer as a group. Our eclectic blanket was made with love and will surely delight the child who receives it.



Senior Cohousing: A Community Approach to Independent Living. The Handbook. by Charles Durrett, Habitat Press, 2005.

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Governing Ourselves Democratically

In the magazine's continuing series on the seven core principles of the Federation of Egalitarian Communities (FEC), I will here focus on our value around democratic governance. According to our Bylaws, all FEC communities use a form of decision-making in which "members have an equal opportunity to participate, either through consensus, direct vote, or right of appeal or overrule." This principle reflects the political dimension of our egalitarianism, the aspiration to realize an equality of power.

Different FEC communities have evolved different ways of sharing decision making power. The two largest FEC communities, East Wind and Twin Oaks, have developed systems where all members have equal access to powerful roles within the community, such as the Planners at Twin Oaks, even while there is a wide range of degrees to which different members participate in community decisions. At East Wind, for example, community-wide meetings are relatively rare and seldom attended by everyone.

In the smaller FEC communities, where it's much easier to assemble everyone together, community meetings tend to be a regular feature of life, and everyone is expected to participate whenever possible. In most cases, the smaller communities practice some form of consensus. The delegates from each community that serve as the active body that makes policy and sets budgets for the FEC also operates on a consensus model.

These structures enable FEC communities to avoid some of the most obvious abuses of power that might otherwise intrude, but by no means do these structures insulate our communities from all problematic power dynamics. While we tend to measure power in units of "votes," by which I mean decision-making rights, we often overlook differences in the persuasive capacity to win those rights in the first place. People who are persuasive tend to have more power than those who aren't. Some are more persuasive because they're more articulate or charming; others because they have greater



Parke Burgess lives at the Emma Goldman Finishing School in Seattle (www.efgs.org), and is Secretary of the FEC.

This is the fourth of seven principles guiding the Federation of Egalitarian Communities (FEC), a network of communal groups in North America valuing nonviolence, egalitarianism, and participatory decision-making. FEC communities include East Wind, Sandhill Farm, Twin Oaks, Skyhouse, Acorn, and the Emma Goldman Finishing School. For a complete list of FEC principles, see the FEC's website: www.thefec.org.

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seniority; still others perhaps because they're more savvy—they know who to talk to outside of the meeting, how to approach them to secure their support, and so on.

Consensus process, for example, does nothing by itself to mitigate these kinds of inequalities. Though everyone has a theoretically equal right to influence decisions, some exercise that right more aggressively or more skillfully than others. Some people apply their influence in the short term, others exert their power more slowly, prevailing over longer terms. Some actively and consciously wield their power, others do it passively or unconsciously. In the wide diversity of personal styles that will be represented in any community, a complex blend of these different qualities is bound to emerge.

Ironically, all the decision-making structures found in the FEC reward some personal styles and penalize others. At the Emma Goldman Finishing School where I live, for example, we practice consensus. Being persistent and articulate in our weekly meetings pays high dividends here. If you're

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Professional photographer Susan Patrice is setting up a web-based Photo Archive for the purpose of creating a pool of good images for *Communities* and other FIC publications. If either you or your acquaintances are interested in having images considered for publication, we'd like to talk with you. Please contact Susan for guidelines about what we're looking for and how to submit them. In general, illustrations should be original art, and photographs should either be 35 mm negatives or digital images taken with a six megapixel camera or better. Susan Patrice: susan@ic.org; 912-272-6353.

People who are persuasive tend to have more power than those who aren't.

more reserved, less quick to form an opinion, or less comfortable articulating yourself in a group setting, you're likely to experience a sense of disempowerment.

Thus, it is not enough to rely on formal decision-making structures to maintain an equality of power, even in smaller communities. Being part of the FEC entails a further commitment to identify more subtle abuses of power, name them, and seek to ameliorate them. I presume this effort goes on in intentional communities everywhere, but in the FEC our commitment to an equality of power is explicit. In the FEC we have, in effect, a covenant to recognize power in all its shifty guises, both as others use it and as we ourselves do, and

to address it openly and honestly whenever it's being used to promote inequality of any kind.

Addressing the abuse of power represents, I think, the most important work we do in community. Our own personal relationship to power runs very deep. Those who have done a lot of personal work have come to understand both the frequency and intricacy with which power dynamics govern our behavior. Even armed with this understanding, it's difficult to remain present to our own ways of abusing power. However, not everyone in community has done this personal work, and certainly not everyone is equally skillful in managing their own power issues. This inequality of self-knowledge and skill may represent the most challenging of all inequalities of power found in community and the world at large. Community affords the experimental ground upon which we can wrestle with this issue in a deep and honest way. Happily, the communities movement abounds with inspirational stories and models related to this theme—along with myriad cautionary tales. But we must go much further. That better world toward which we all strive only becomes possible, I believe, when we have become much more skillful in recognizing and restraining our own abuses of power.

Gaia University Launched at Last

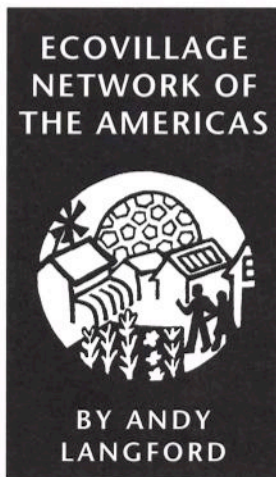
The notion of a university for the permaculture and ecovillage movements first crossed my desk in the late 1980s. A group of housing activists in Birmingham, England, opened their own anarchist community college, "Gaia University," created in the image of the experimental University without Walls organization in New York and other projects during decades of progressive educational thinking worldwide. The Birmingham-based Gaia University was not interested in either accreditation with the authorities or in formal quality-assurance methods. Classes were self-organised, radical, informal, and eclectic. A primary focus was the vegan diet.

I was volunteering as the coordinator of the embryonic Permaculture Association of Britain at the time, and we were working on developing the capacity to offer the permaculture design course at home. This major task and the vegan imperative precluded our involvement with Birmingham's Gaia University, although we cheered on from the sidelines. This

organization soon morphed into Radical Routes, the well-respected and successful UK-wide co-op that serves other member co-ops in financial and legal ways.

Radical Routes continued well into the late 1990s. Meanwhile, since 1993, along with my fellow UK permaculture teachers, I had opened our own pathway to qualifications through the creation of the Permaculture Diploma WorkNet.

This pathway approach was designed using permaculture principles, primarily direct observation (in this case, of people completing the 72-hour permaculture design course), who subsequently went on to work in the permaculture field and make a difference. Clear patterns of behaviour were evident—these permaculture design course graduates knew the power of their own ignorance, knew how much they didn't know, and were often healthily skeptical about the theory presented in permaculture design courses. They consequently designed for themselves a series of experiences in which they could both test the theory and develop their own



Andy Langford, 57, is a long-term action learner whose life shift started in the 1970s after a technical career in industry. After a ten-year spell as a workshop shoemaker he became the pioneer permaculture teacher in Britain in the 1990s. He describes himself as "willing to risk all cheerfully."

www.gaiauniversity.org; info@gaiauniversity.org.

Note: We preserve the spelling of our Commonwealth authors.

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learning. Further, whilst they might start out following up one particular field of thinking, say, soil building, they had the flexibility to shift to another, for example, land ownership reform, if that's what their project circumstances indicated was appropriate.

I had had exposure to this vital, alive, serendipitous, serpentine, emergent, project-based approach to learning, first during my Masters studies in the 1970s, and secondly as an initiator of an artisan-scale shoemaking workshop in my home town through the 1980s. So I recognised, with some excitement, this style of learning we permaculture designers undertook as we travelled through our ignorance. At the time this style of learning was called action research; these days we prefer to call it action learning. This kind of self-directed

at Findhorn, Scotland, in May 2004, some six years later, the GEN focus had shifted to creating an approved ecovillage training program called Gaia Education. It was somewhat similar in concept to the permaculture design course, but consciously wider in scope, to include social communications and spirituality as well as ecological sustainability.

The preferred strategy for accreditation for this ecovillage training was to seek to embed it as a module or semester program in degree programs at mainstream universities. Whilst Gaia Education was alive and very, very well, a functioning version of Gaia University was still on the back-burner.

It was at the Findhorn ecovillage educators meeting in 2004 where I met Liora Adler. I was in attendance to present the Per-

***We were looking to leverage our respective
30 years' experiences pioneering the
ecovillage and permaculture movements for
the best possible effects.***

action learning is the basis of the international Diploma WorkNet process I helped design and manage, now 12 years old, which supports apprentice permaculture designers who wish to gain that essential field experience before gaining their full credentials.

Whilst we permaculture folk had our attention on developing our self-accredited action learning systems, the new kid on the block, the Global Ecovillage Network (GEN), at its five-year strategy meeting in Thy, Denmark, in 1998, decided to develop another version of Gaia University. The Birmingham experiments were still in existence, although by then at a reduced level, and, whilst the GEN decision created some ripples, no resistance was forthcoming. Indeed the first Gaia U originators felt relieved that a better-resourced player was now taking up the challenge. GEN had the financial and energetic backing of the Gaia Trust in Denmark and, for a while, it looked as if the Gaia U project would accelerate into fully featured existence.

However, by the time of a Gaia Trust-sponsored gathering of ecovillage trainers

permaculture Diploma WorkNet as a possible accreditation context for Gaia Education's proposed Ecovillage Training. Liora was there to contribute her long-term ecovillage activist and facilitators experience to the possible curriculum. (Liora is cofounder of Huehuecoyotl Ecovillage in Mexico, a Council member of the Ecovillage Network of the Americas (ENA), a GEN Board member, and former co-leader of La Caravana mobile ecovillage in South America.)

Both Liora and I were looking to leverage our respective 30 years' experience pioneering the ecovillage and permaculture movements for the best possible effects. These included: to generate the flow of much-needed funds into the movements through attracting fee-paying degree students; to upgrade the teaching and earning potential of our talented teachers; to enable our capable designers to gain access, through accreditation, to policy arenas and government contracts; and to increase the number of active designers in the field.

At this educators' meeting the seeds for the third version of Gaia U were sown, in

a sparky, energetic break-out group where Karl Steyaert, Liora, and I began to explore the potential of a formally accredited, worldwide, all-movement, degree-level version of the Diploma WorkNet.

We began to envision the stunning possibilities that would arise when our converging movements in permaculture, intentional communities, ecovillages, bioregionalism, natural health and well-being, social communications and governance, ethical investment, indigenous cultures, land rights, peace activism, and so on, came to imagine themselves as a coherent whole, a consciously developing learning organization consisting of autonomous organisms confederated and linked through the liberating protocols of a global, distributed, university-like campus. "Linking through learning" became our motto.

It took some persuading, I can tell you, before I was ready to risk the same discouraging experience elsewhere.

We have the faculty for sure and, collectively, the deep experience of at least some of the personal and community transformations required of mainstream societies all over the world as oil peaks, climate changes, population doubles, soil erodes, water dries up, toxins accumulate, conflict escalates, species die ...

This is our time, we concluded, to "go forward, without haste but without stopping," as South American ecovillager Enrique Hidalgo says. Time put flesh on the bones of the Gaia University concept that has been fomenting in these linked movements for the last 15 years.

Liora and I met twice more over the next six months before making a commitment to go forward with such a huge undertaking. Not everyone we asked in the movements was convinced or ready—although many were. It looked as if the response would be mixed. We searched our souls repeatedly before setting out on what looked as if it might be rough terrain. Once again we both experienced that familiar, out-on-the-edge pioneer's dilemma—should we step out of our comfort zones and risk

excommunication? Or bury our dreams and offend no one but ourselves?

By September 2004, we had decided to at least search for accreditation in the US, where, we imagined, the accreditation climate was likely to be more entrepreneurial and flexible than in England. Liora did some in-depth preliminary research in the States and then came back to England to see how I was doing.

I had several years of frustration arising from repeated attempts to have the action-learning Permaculture Diploma formally accredited in the UK. I'd just get the cup to my lips and then, damn and blast, either the agency would seek to turn the program into a denatured, retrograde facsimile of mainstream higher education or my institutional partners would get cold feet. It took some persuading, I can tell you, before

I was ready to risk the same discouraging experience elsewhere.

Liora's encouragements won through and I resigned from my ecovillage in England, said goodbye to my flock of Jacob's sheep, and took my first transatlantic flight ever, arriving in Boulder, Colorado, in time for the Sustainable Resources Conference convened by Steve Troy.

Steve, bless his heart, was generously hospitable and lent us his office for essential communications. It was here that Liora coaxed me to look at the website of the US-based Distance Education and Training Council, a possible accrediting agency for us, to see who else was on their approved list.

So I am scanning their site: "Well, what do you know; here's an outfit called Revans University!"

"What university?" asks Liora.

"Revans University!" says I. "Don't you know Reg Revans was the pioneer of action learning in the organizational field in the UK in the 60's? Here is an entire University devoted to action learning."

(continued on p. 66)

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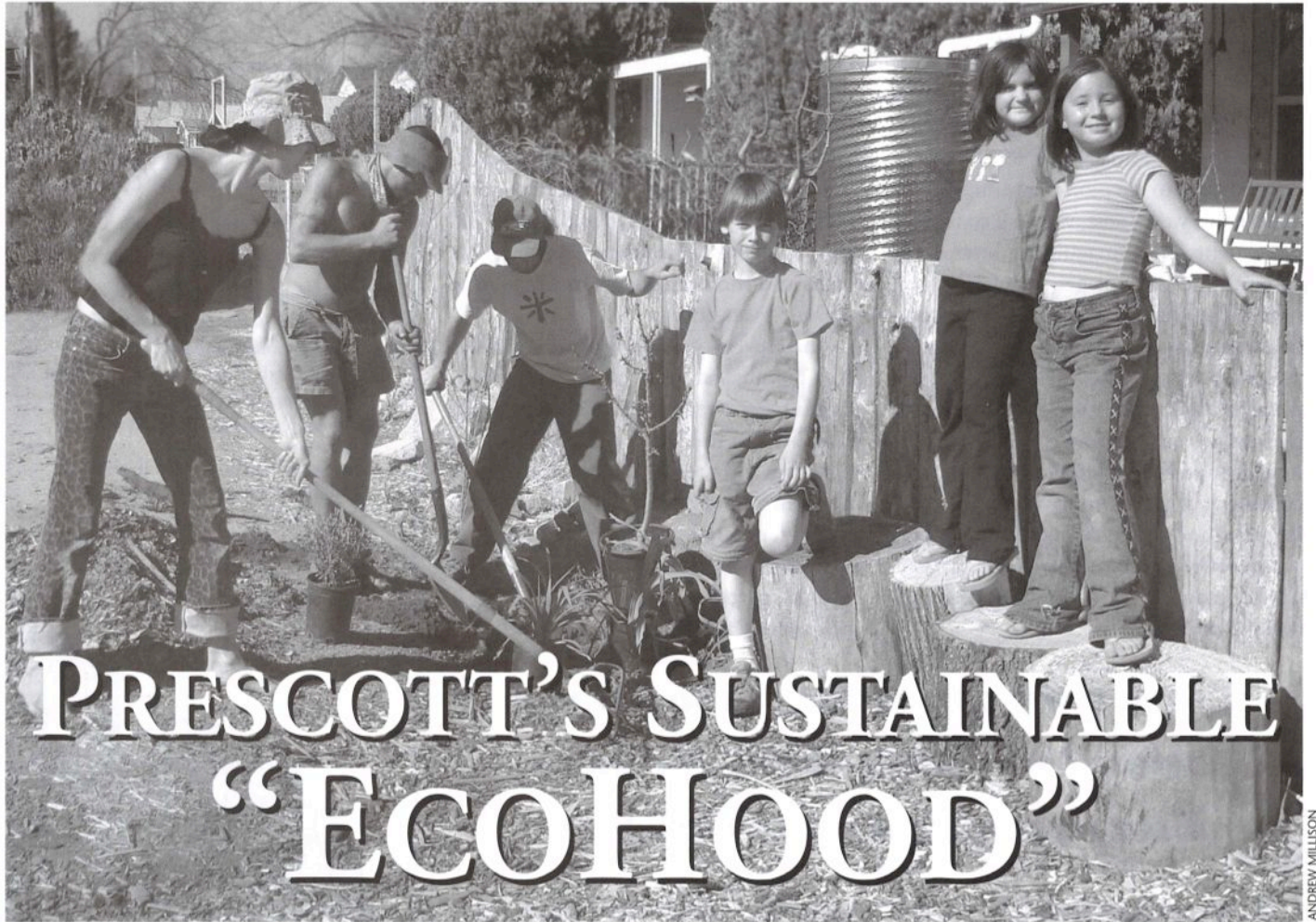
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ANDREW MILLISON

EcoHood neighbors Rissa Seifel, Thomas Arnold and Andrew Millison dig holes for roadside plantings while William Huges, Myana Millison and Aja Swafford look on.

“EcoHood”— permaculture retrofit of a mid- to low-income neighborhood with a high potential for ecological sustainability.

BY SUSAN DEFREITAS

I remember how much I enjoyed coming home to the Lincoln-Dameron neighborhood as a college student, riding a bike beneath the huge cottonwoods and splashing through the creek that floods the main access to this part of Prescott, Arizona, during monsoon season and winter storms. This mid- to low-income neighborhood encompasses roughly two blocks, two apartment buildings, and 30 houses. Walking down the street on a summer day, you’ll see residents living in small wood-frame, stucco houses, most built in the 1930s, their large yards shaded by cottonwoods, along with fruit trees, and flowers. You might hear the amplified roar of “The World’s Oldest Rodeo” to the west, intermingled with Mexican ranchero music and top-forty hip-hop piped in from car speakers and stereos. Kids ride bikes in the streets; motorists defer. Hispanic teenagers throw impromptu parties centered around their cars and trucks. Mothers stand

talking across fences with babes balanced expertly on hips. Seniors move slowly about yard or garden projects with no obvious urgency. The aromas of hamburgers mix with those of enchiladas and stir-fry in the high desert air.

“When there was an opportunity to move back to the neighborhood, I jumped at the chance.”

This place struck me then as it strikes me now: an unpretentious, diverse neighborhood where folks aren’t afraid to tell it like it is. It’s the section of town where dreadlocked students fly Tibetan prayer flags from front porches and Hispanic grandmothers plant artificial flowers in the front yard. Where you can spot the closest McDonalds from the vantage point of a backyard chicken coop. It’s where the Tamale Lady comes to sell her hot tamales on regular trips up from Mexico. And it’s

where the seeds of Prescott’s sustainability movement have lately fallen on fertile ground. Fifty percent Hispanic/Native American, and home to a significant number of retirees and college stu-

dents, it's now also home to six graywater systems, five rainwater cisterns, five organic gardens, 25 heirloom fruit trees, three ducks, two turkeys, and (at last count), 66 chickens.

My friend Andrew Millison is helping to spearhead this community sustainability initiative in this neighborhood that's become increasingly known as "the EcoHood." I wasn't aware of Andrew's work on Dameron Street and the EcoHood until I came over one day and found him across the street helping his neighbor install a new graywater irrigation system in her backyard. As I got the tour of the place and the run down on other projects in progress throughout the neighborhood, a picture

From an ecological point of view, Lincoln-Dameron truly is the wealthiest neighborhood in town.

began to emerge. Here was the sustainable community we'd all been talking about for so long, and it wasn't out on some remote tract of land. It was growing—literally—out of peoples' backyards, right here in the low-rent section of town.

Andrew has an extensive background in permaculture, an undergraduate degree in Ecological Design and Sustainability, a Master's in Horticultural Preservation, and two years managing the organic farm at Paolo Soleri's Arcosanti Urban Laboratory in Dewey, Arizona. He has taught permaculture at Prescott College for the Liberal Arts and the Environment since 2001.

Andrew had been a Dameron Street resident on and off for the past eight years and always had the idea that the area would be prime location for an urban ecovillage. "But I still had this



Andrew Millison catches water off his rooftop via PVC pipe from his raingutter to his front yard cistern.



Andrew Millison's EcoHood house – complete with rainwater cistern, salvaged wood fence, and Tibetan prayer flags.

idea of a community out on the land somewhere," he told me. Living at Arcosanti had shown him the challenges involved with a traditional "back to the land" scenario. But it wasn't until he purchased a home 20 miles outside of Prescott that the concept for the EcoHood began to emerge.

"Here I was," Andrew said with a grin, "burning up a quarter to half tank of gas every day, getting introduced to the reality of Peak Oil through the work of David Holmgren." At the same time, three ecologically-minded friends moved to the Lincoln-Dameron district with the intention of getting more community-oriented and sustainable. "I could see the vision I'd had was starting to manifest," he said. "When there was an opportunity to move back to the neighborhood, I jumped at the chance."

Since that time, the EcoHood has grown to encompass seven area households. While Andrew has contributed expertise in areas such as graywater systems, rainwater catchment, and permaculture design, the process has unfolded organically, with neighbors swapping skills, information, tools, and, at times, even childcare, chickens, and compost.

Watching the EcoHood take shape has been an amazing process, and one of the most inspiring aspects has been simply the way life in this emerging ecovillage has helped to transform its residents' concepts of space. By modern standards, the houses in the Lincoln-Dameron district would be considered small: 750 to 1000 sq. ft. on average. But those who live in the area obviously don't feel limited by conventional standards of space. The other day, for example, Andrew and I had a meeting planned at his house on Dameron. In a regular neighborhood, we would have had no choice but to compete with the decibel level of a DVD his daughter was watching in the next room. But in the EcoHood, an alternate solution existed. "Hey," said Andrew, "Why don't we move across the street?"

Across the street, Leigh, a mutual friend and sometime EcoHood resident, was sitting with her baby in the living room of

How To Spot A Potential EcoHood

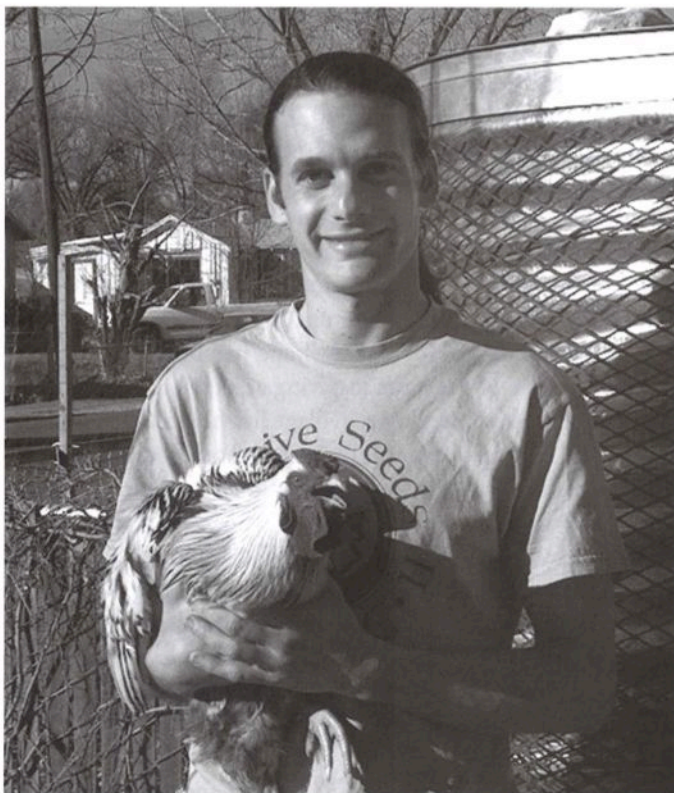
First, identify an area in your city or town with existing ecological resources. These resources will vary from region to region—in the Southwest, for example, shade, topsoil, and water are important, while in the Northwest, being outside the floodplain and having access to seasonal sun might be deciding factors. Ecological resources are any and all conditions that increase the potential for sustainability in the neighborhood.

Next, ask yourself the following questions:

1. Could my eco-minded friends afford to move here?
2. Is this neighborhood within walking or biking distance from town/grocery/school/work?
3. What is the culture of the neighborhood? Would it be receptive to the concept of an EcoHood?
4. Does the area have an existing Homeowner's Association? Would the visual and structural changes involved in an EcoHood (i.e., rainwater cisterns, solar panels) be acceptable under its terms?
5. Is this a place I (and my community) would like to call home?

If you answered 'yes' to all of these questions, you may have identified the next EcoHood —yours.

—S. D.



Andrew Millison beside his front yard rainwater cistern, holding Soft Crow, his rooster.

SUSAN DEFREITAS

one of Andrew's neighbors, who was at work. When she found out what we were up to, Leigh smiled and said, "Hey, no problem." She took her baby and walked across the street to watch the DVD with his daughter —while Andrew and I conducted our meeting in his neighbor's living room.

Both the intangible and tangible aspects of the EcoHood seem to have caught the attention of at least some neighbors not directly involved with the project. The response has been, for the most part, either neutral or positive, says Andrew. He relates how his next door neighbor has commented on how friendly everyone is, how great it is that people in the area like to garden and "be outdoors." On the other hand, an elderly woman who's lived on Dameron for the past 35 years has been known to place calls to city officials regarding the legality of her neighbors' roosters and unsightly piles of woodchips.

The EcoHood model doesn't require a large initial investment on the part of its participants or a shift from mainstream models of family and homeownership.

One of the great strengths of Prescott's EcoHood is its diversity. While all the neighbors involved in the project have shared values, they've tended to approach the problem of sustainability from different angles.

Marcee Keller, one of the friends whose move to the EcoHood helped to spur Andrew's return, is building the infrastructure for increased sustainability in her household one piece at a time. The small artist's studio she's constructing in her backyard will be built with energy efficient, structurally insulated panels made without wood and with an R-value of 30. "I'm going to install an on-demand water heater, a metal roof to catch rain water, cisterns, and a graywater system to water plants from the clothes washer and shower," she explained. "Andrew and I will take down the fence between our backyards so we can share a garden, compost pile, common water system, children's play areas, and chickens."

Thomas Arnold and Jesse Pursely have tended to approach sustainability more from the angle of voluntary simplicity. "Before I moved to the EcoHood I'd been living off the grid in a teepee out in the mountains about 25 miles out of town," said Thomas. He now lives in the same teepee in the backyard of his longtime friend Jesse Pursley, an arrangement that's actually been approved by the City of Prescott. The three young residents of this property, Thomas, Jesse, and Jesse's girlfriend Kim, have made the radical decision not to drive or even ride in cars powered by fossil fuels. For that reason, the proximity of the EcoHood to downtown Prescott was the deciding factor in Jesse's purchase of a home there. While the household has a solar panel

for the occasional session on a computer or use of an electric razor, these are people who normally do not consume electricity. A backyard well supplies water for drinking, bathing, and household chores. Likewise, wood heat has replaced natural gas in their household.

Despite the diversity of lifestyle and opinion in the neighborhood (or perhaps because of it) Prescott's EcoHood seems to be gaining ground. Last year, the local ECOSA Institute (a training program for sustainable architecture and design) purchased a plot of land in the area slated for development as green student housing. In the summer of 2006, ECOSA's permaculture design certification course, taught by Andrew and Brad Lancaster of Tucson, will center around designs for public space in the neighborhood as a whole. A presentation on the EcoHood last year at a local satellite of the Bioneers Conference succeeded in attracting the attention of two investors instrumental in a number of Phoenix-based permaculture developments; plans are now in the works for a permaculture apartment/condo complex centered around community gardens and supported by graywater, rainwater, and solar energy systems.

All of which would probably be baffling to a real estate agent assessing the area, traditionally known as Prescott's "barrio." But while the EcoHood would hardly top the charts of the booming local real estate market, Andrew maintains that—from an ecological point of view—Lincoln-Dameron truly is the wealthiest neighborhood in town.

"These ritzy new houses up on the hills," he told me, "are situated high off the water table on solid rock. They're exposed to wind and wildfire, isolated from town, and they're huge—which means they're costly to heat and cool." The EcoHood, on the other hand, has water at 12 to 20 ft. (with old wells situated throughout the neighborhood), sits on an average eight feet of topsoil and is sheltered from wind by the surrounding topography as well as large, established cottonwood trees. The more modest size of the older homes also makes them accessible to a green retrofit.

"The native people of this area lived around the floodplains of the creeks," Andrew explained. "When the settlers arrived, they did too. In a lot of Western towns like Prescott, it's a similar scenario; the area was settled around some type of fertile pocket. Which means that some of the oldest and most affordable neighborhoods also have the greatest potential for sustainability."

The biggest hurdle faced by Andrew and his eco-minded neighbors? "Pollution," he said. "It goes along with the fact that we're not out on pristine land. We're downstream from the K-Mart parking lot—and wherever you dig around here, you find garbage. Bioremediation is a key challenge."

Still, Andrew maintains that the advantages of the EcoHood model of community sustainability are far-reaching and fundamental. "By working in a mid- to low-income neighborhood,



Founding EcoHood member and home co-owner Peg Millet.

ANDREW MILLISON

you make the concept accessible. By working within the existing human footprint, you preserve wilderness, cut down on fuel consumption, and give yourself access to the waste stream of the city for recycled materials." Additionally, the EcoHood model doesn't require a large initial investment on the part of its participants or a shift from mainstream models of family and homeownership. "Really," says Andrew, "the concept is about bringing traditionally rural values like self-reliance, respect for the land, and community into the city."

As for those of us in Prescott, there's a mailing that goes out to a list of interested parties whenever a house in the EcoHood hits the market. Guess what? I'm on it.

Susan DeFreitas is a writer and poet with a passion for sustainability and community. She has lived in the high desert of Prescott, Arizona, since 1996. Prescott's EcoHood: www.millisonecological.com

Resources for Creating an EcoHood

- *Permaculture: Principles and Pathways Beyond Sustainability*, David Holmgren, (Holmgren Design Services, 2002).
- *Superbia: 31 Ways to Create Sustainable Neighborhoods*, Dan Chiras, Dave Wann (New Society Publishers, 2004).
- *Permaculture Activist* magazine, Winter 2005-06 Issue, "Urban Permaculture." pcactivist@mindspring.com.
- *Communities* magazine, Winter 2005, "Urban Communities." store.ic.org.
- Portland City Repair Project. www.cityrepair.org.

—S. D.



Paul Schwartzkopf and Rachel Shattman create a newsletter for the Metropolitan neighborhood in Savannah, Georgia.

START A NEIGHBORHOOD NEWSLETTER . . .

BY DAN CHIRAS AND DAVE WANN

Knowing who your neighbors are and where they live is a fundamental step in creating community in your neighborhood. A good first project is a community newsletter. It wouldn't need to be fancy, just a monthly neighborhood newsletter that anyone can submit news to for any reason. Whether you want to advertise your need for help on a household repair project, borrow a tool, tell friends and neighbors about an upcoming vacation, or announce that your teenager is looking for baby-sitting opportunities, the newsletter is your voice. It's also a forum for political announcements, where you can alert neighbors to upcoming meetings sponsored by the

planning department in your town that they might find instructive. It could be a place for promoting school productions or selling used furniture. In addition, the newsletter is a way to keep track of exciting events in your lives and to share important happenings in your lives.

The *Villager*, the quarterly newsletter of Harmony Village Cohousing in Golden, Colorado, has now profiled all 27 households; neighbors learned that Kenny and Nancy met on a mountaintop, and that Rick once saved somebody from drowning. An entire issue of the newsletter was a memorial to the late Macon Cowles, the neighborhood's elder statesman.

A neighborhood organizer can also create a community roster: a list of names, phone numbers, and email addresses for easy access. A roster can be handed out to each neighbor and posted on a community bulletin board. The idea of roster—a way neighbors can contact one another—can be expanded to a neighborhood email network. Harmony Village's email network has been extremely valuable as a support system. If you need a job, have a car for sale, or want to comment on a community activity, this is the place to do it.

Starting a newsletter, roster, or neighborhood email network is easy. The first step is to go door-to-door with a clipboard getting telephone numbers, street addresses, and email addresses, which you can write up, print out, and give, and email, to each neighbor. Then suggest that someone in the neighborhood—a writer or editor, maybe—compile paragraph-long biographies of each neighbor on the block. Sponsor a potluck in a neighbor's yard and see if people can correctly guess which person fits which biography. You may find that the city or town you live in will print and mail out newsletters free of charge!

Another way to connect a neighborhood is a community bulletin board, which provides a location for people to post announcements or alert neighbors of important events. Ads for used furniture, electronic equipment, musical instruments, music lessons, and used cars would soon fill the board. You might find residents of neighboring streets combing the ads for treasures. The Kinney Run Neighborhood Association in Golden, Colorado, for example, built a durable, glass-encased bulletin board where residents can post news and notices, helping neighbors stay abreast of important activities such as proposed zoning changes and potluck dinners. Neighbors in Portland's Sunnyside neighborhood have done the same, helped by the City Repair Project. At Harmony Village, a laminated map on a bulletin board shows neighbors and visitors who lives where. It wouldn't take long for a couple of neighbors to build a wooden bulletin board to place in a central neighborhood location, perhaps near a group of mailboxes, protected from rain and snow by a roof overhang and perhaps a glass door.

There are as many ways to network as there are people in the world. Fortunately, community is hardwired into the human psyche, and first steps always lead somewhere.

Excerpted and adapted with permission from Superbia! 31 Ways to Create Sustainable Neighborhoods. (New Society Publishers, 2003) by Dan Chiras and Dave Wann. New Society Publishers: 800-567-6772; www.newsociety.com.

Dan Chiras is the author of more 20 books, many on sustainability, renewable energy, or home construction, and a contributing editor to Mother Earth News. Dave Wann has produced six video and TV programs on community, and is author of Reinventing Community: Stories from the Walkways of Cohousing (Fulcrum, 2005), and co-author of Affluenza: the All-Consuming Epidemic. Dan and Dave both live in Colorado.





INTERN AT AN ECOVILLAGE!

Or . . . rural homesteading community,
sustainability education center, ecospiritual community . . .

BY DIANA LEAFE CHRISTIAN

If you're looking to join an ecovillage or other kind of intentional community, you can "try before you buy," by becoming an intern for a few weeks to a few months at various communities. You can do this to try on that specific community, or to simply get a sense of communities in general. At the very least, you'll have fun, meet new people, and perhaps learn new skills, from organic gardening to natural building, conflict resolution, or cooking for 30.

Communities use different terms for temporary residents who live in the community for awhile in exchange for room and board: "intern," "apprentice," "work exchanger," "work-trade resident," and so on. The terms aren't standard, so you'll have to find out what the communities you're interested in mean by whatever they call this role.

In terms of the value exchanged, in some communities no money changes hands: labor is traded for room and board. In others, the temporary resident pays a small fee. When personal instruction and on-site workshops are included, you pay a much larger fee for education plus room and board. In some communities the worker receives room, board, and a small stipend.

The amount of time as an intern varies from a few weeks to a few months, depending on the community's needs. Interns get days off; some communities offer vacation time as well, depending on the length of stay.

In some communities interns do many different jobs and projects; in others, they have a specific role: garden intern, natural building conference center intern, childcare intern, and so on.

Interns are often expected to stay in their own tents, or sometimes in rustic dorm-style or individual cabin accommodations, depending on length of stay. Most communities offer vegetarian meals.

What are communities looking for? People who are “flexible, energetic, comfortable in groups of people, and able to manage a broad diversity of challenges at once” (OAEC), people who have “self-motivation, good communication skills, and the ability to work independently” (Sandhill Farm), “an eagerness to learn, and to work hard” (Emerald Earth Sanctuary).

Some communities require potential interns to fill out a questionnaire and send it in, or write a letter about themselves, followed by one or more telephone interviews. Some require work and personal references and/or in-person visits, and/or one- or two-week trial periods followed by a review.

Do interns, work exchangers, and so on ever join the communities they visit? They do! Temporary intern residency is one way community seekers can check out communities and vice-versa.

In order to show the range of intern programs at different communities in North America, I spent several hours in the “Communities Directory” pages of the website of the Fellowship for Intentional Community (www.ic.org), publishers of this magazine. I selected for rural communities which are not cohousing, have been in existence for awhile, are several years old, and had more than just a few members—as I thought such communities might be likely to have intern programs. Of the communities that came up in this search, I then chose those with websites. (I believe communities with no websites also may have interns; you’d just have to email them to ask.) Then I browsed the websites of these communities looking for sections called “Interns,” “Apprentices,” “Work Exchangers,” or “How to Get Involved.”

Here’s a sampling of what I learned during my brief online research. I’ve grouped them by payment: you pay them, they pay you, and no money changes hands.

You pay the community:

Lāʻahea Ecovillage – Work Exchange Programs. Pahoehoe, Hawaii. Rural ecovillage and permaculture training center. 14 hours/week. Pay for costs of food, utility use, incidentals. Sustainable food/fiber

production (tropical fruit orchards, vegetable gardens, greenhouses, animal systems, coconut tree climbing and harvesting, bamboo and other timber crops, natural building structures, food preparation; possibly biodiesel/veggie oil fuel projects, landscape design, solar energy, or other projects. Participate in community meetings, ZEGG-style Forum, Nonviolent Communication, Re-evaluation co-counseling, yoga, etc.

www.permaculture-hawaii.com; info@permaculture-hawaii.com.

Ecovillage Training Center at The Farm – Apprenticeship Programs. Summertown, Tennessee. Sustainability education and training center. Four month-long sessions, learning aspects of (depending on which month) organic gardening, natural

building, fundamentals of permaculture and ecovillage design, ecology, energy and resource conservation, social and community skills. Staff instructors, workshops with guest instructors, field trips. \$300/week.

www.thefarm.org; ecovillage@thefarm.org; 831-964-4324.

Emerald Earth Sanctuary – Work Trade Program. Boonville, California. Small rural ecovillage in California coastal mountains. May-October, 2-month minimum. 25 hours/week. \$75/month. Natural building, organic gardening, maintenance, cooking, cleaning.

www.emeraldearth.org; workshops@emeraldearth.org; 707-972-3096.

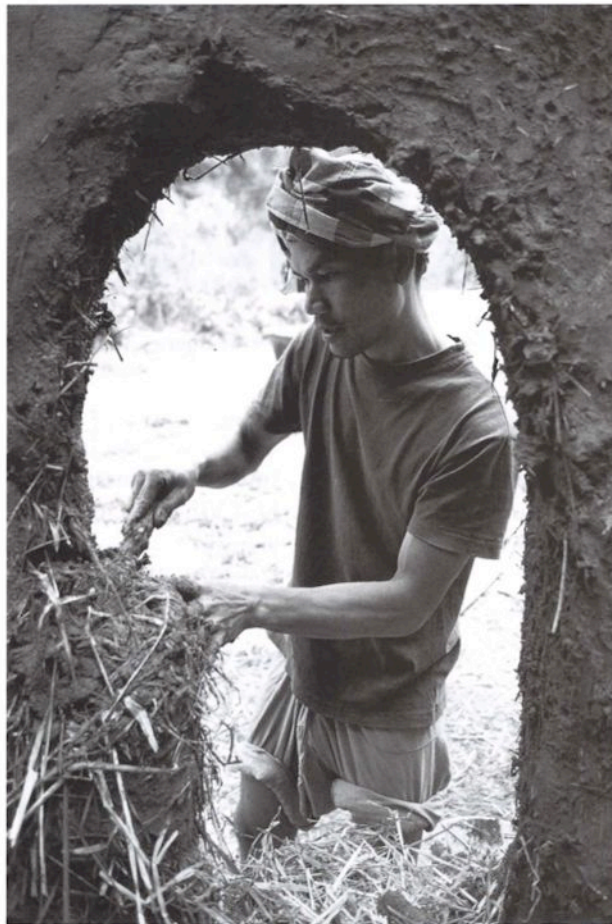
Lama Foundation – Summer Stewardship Program. Taos, New Mexico. Spiritual retreat and conference center. Specific weeks in May through September; minimum two weeks. \$12-\$22 per day; \$300-\$600 per month. 30 hours/week.

Participate in morning meditations, weekly men’s or women’s lodges, Thursday night Zikr, Friday night Shabbat, yoga, drumming, poetry reading, contact improv, and other art, spiritual, and emotional healing practices.

www.lamafoundation.org; info@lamafoundation.org; 505-586-1269.

Occidental Arts & Ecology Center (OAEC) – Internship Programs. Western Sonoma County, California. Intentional community and nonprofit educational institute working in ecology, horticulture, the arts, and social justice activism. 12, 9, 10, and 6-month gardening, administrative, and maintenance internships. \$85/month. 25 hours/wk.

www.oaec.org; info@oaec.org; 707-874-2441.



Sirius Community – Spiritual Living Apprenticeships. Western Massachusetts. Spiritual community with a mission to “demonstrate spiritual principles based on respect for the individual and cooperation with nature.” Two months: April-December. \$350/month. 35 hours/week (sustainable building, organic gardening, retreat center operations).

www.siriuscommunity.org; info@siriuscommunity.org; 413-259-1251.

Dreamtime Village – Internship Programs. La Farge, Wisconsin. A rural community whose members focus on permaculture, art, media, and sustainable living. 20+/hours week. \$170/month. Permaculture Interns, Media Interns, Construction Interns.

www.dreamtimevillage.org; dvt@mwt.net; 608-625-4619.

Heathcote Community – Internship Programs. Freeland, Maryland. A rural community land trust where friends and family live sustainably. Natural Building & Sustainable Community Living Internship; Gardening Internship. For both internships, 30 hours/week for room & board. Sustainable Community Living Internship; Homeschooling Internship. For both internships, 20/hours week; room; \$150/month for food. www.heathcote.org; info@heathcote.org; 410-343-DIRT.

The community pays you:

Sandhill Farm – Internships. Northeastern Missouri. Rural income-sharing organic farming community. April 15-November 1; 6 week minimum. \$50/month stipend provided. Organic gardening/food production, tempeh production, homestead maintenance, new construction.

www.sandhillfarm.org; info@sandhillfarm.org; 660-883-5543.

No money exchanged:

Earthaven Ecovillage – Work Exchange Program. Black Mountain, North Carolina. Large rural ecovillage in Blue Ridge Mountains. 24 hours/week for room & board: 20 hours for individual community members on their homesites (duties could include gardening, animal husbandry, construction, natural building,

cooking, cleaning, childcare, errands), and 4 hours for Earthaven (duties could include natural building, general labor, cooking, cleaning).

www.earthaven.org; info@earthaven.org; 828-669-3937.



KLEWORKS

Loftstead Farm – Internships. Kootenay Mountains, British Columbia. Biodynamic CSA farm, forestry project, and holistic retirement lodge and spa. 6 and 12 months. 44 hours/week. Internships in Animal Husbandry, Basic Farm Work, Greenhouse, and Basic Outdoor Garden Work. Instruction in Bio-Dynamic Agriculture.

www.mypage.direct.ca/loftstedfarm; loftstedfarm@look.ca; 250-353-7448.

Lost Valley Educational Center – Staff Intern Positions. Dexter, Oregon. Sustainability and personal growth education and conference center near Eugene. 30 hours/week for room & board. Minimum two-months. Companion for Special-needs Child. Children’s Program Intern, Events Team Intern, Organic Gardening Intern, Service & Sacred Space Intern, Sustainable Building & Maintenance Intern, Vegetarian Cooking & Kitchen Management Intern. Lost Valley also offers a two-month educational residency program in summer and fall—the “Ecovillage and Permaculture Certificate Program”—with hands on training and workshops lead by on-site and guest instructors.

www.lostvalley.org; intern@lostvalley.org; 541-937-3351 x102.



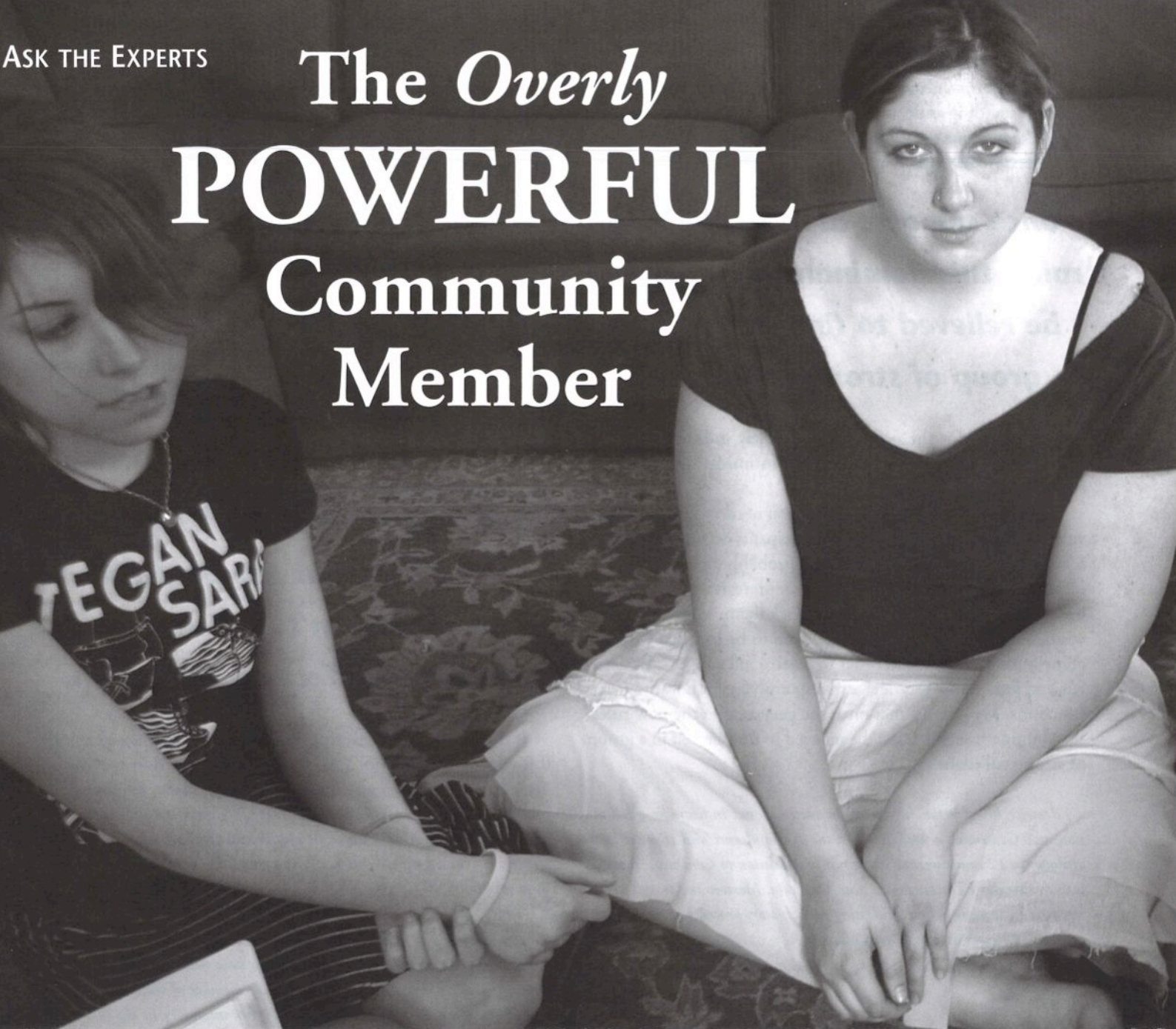
KLEWORKS

Wind Spirit Community: Seasonal Intern Program. Winkleman, Arizona. Ten-year-old rural community near Tuscon. Three seasonal internships involve working with the community’s fruit and nut trees. Spring Internship: February–May; Summer Internship: June–September; Fall/Winter Internship: October–January.

www.windspiritcommunity.org; info@windspiritcommunity.org; 520-622-2842.

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

The Overly POWERFUL Community Member



Q. *A person with a very powerful presence asserts her views in such a way that the supposed consensus of the group is really just her agenda. The rest of us feel dissatisfied much of the time with “group” decisions, although the powerful member is so skilled at getting her way that sometimes we don’t realize until after the fact what has happened. What can we do?*

—Name withheld by request

Beatrice Briggs responds:



Assuming that the person in question is neither the boss, the founder, nor the principal funder of the group, but rather one among equals, the solution lies in you and the other members. The rest of you need to learn from this woman’s example and become a bit more powerful yourselves. The following measures could help.

1. **Stronger meeting facilitation.** As custodian of the group’s process, the facilitator should ensure that discussion is equitable, that all opinions are heard, and that decisions are not “rail-roaded” through. If you lack experienced, effective facilitators, get some training—and/or hire an external facilitator for several meetings to get the group back on track.

2. *More formal decision-making process.* Clarify the difference between standing aside, blocking, and giving one's consent, and then take the time to present all of these options at the moment a decision is to be made. This step usually flushes out lack of enthu-

Once she gets used to the new rules, this dominant member will be relieved to find herself in a group of strong colleagues.

siastic support for the proposal and clearly indicates whether there is consensus—or just winning by intimidation, apathy, or exhaustion.

3. *Self-empowerment.* The rest of you need to find your own voices. Consensus cannot work if participants do not speak up—forcefully, if necessary. This woman probably believes that her ideas are good ones and serve the best interests of the group. If her proposals are truly off the mark, block them. More likely, they contain some useful elements that need to be blended with the contributions of others in order to receive full support. Be clear, fair, and firm as you assume shared responsibility for how the group functions. My guess is that once she gets used to the new rules, this dominant member will be relieved to find herself in a group of strong colleagues.

Beatrice Briggs is the director of the International Institute for Facilitation and Consensus, a professional team of consultants and trainers with affiliates in 12 countries, and author of Introduction to Consensus. Beatrice lives in Ecovillage Huehucoyotl, near Tepoztlán, Mexico, and travels extensively giving workshops and facilitating participatory processes in English and Spanish. bbriggs@iifac.org; www.iifac.org.



Tree Bressen responds:

i recommend a three-step approach, depending where in the sequence of decision-making the group is.

First, near the beginning of an item, shift formats in order to equalize airtime and reduce the chance that one person's views will dominate. For example, after an issue is introduced, start out discussing it in pairs, then move to fours, then share highlights in the full group. Or if your group is small enough, do several go-rounds around the circle (where each person has a turn to share) to replace a bunch of open discussion. Or have individuals do a silent writing exercise as the first step in considering a proposal—if people follow this by censoring their real feelings during discussion, at least they should be aware of that choice in the moment.

i'm guessing that the way this dynamic plays out is that in the middle of the discussion the person frames the discussion in

what is ostensibly a group summary but that you think is biased toward her own views. So the second thing you can do is to listen carefully and intervene when you see this happening, either by requesting the person to own their feelings (e.g., "Can you please use 'i' statements?") or by offering up another group summary that you think more accurately reflects the weight of the meeting. An easy route to initiating group summaries is to volunteer to facilitate the meeting, but really anyone in the room can help summarize as a service to the group.

Third, if you are near what appears to be a concluding decision point on an item, then i recommend adding a new ritual to your process: Take a long moment of silence for each person to check in with themselves about whether this decision genuinely reflects the will of the group and is the best match available for all the needs present. Sit with it, and then encourage anyone with concerns to speak up. Or, if you need more time, carry the decision over to the next meeting and during the interval check in with each other about your feelings on the proposal.

It is likely that the powerful person doesn't realize she's having this effect on the group.

It is likely that the powerful person doesn't realize she's having this effect on the group. You could talk the situation over with her and enlist her as an ally in generating ideas for changes. However, i don't recommend looking to her to solve it, since that just continues the same power dynamic you are concerned about. It's really up to you and the rest of the group to empower yourselves.

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 is a founding member of Walnut St. Co-op in Eugene, Oregon, which celebrated its fifth anniversary in the fall. Her website, www.treegroup.info, offers free tools and resources. tree@ic.org.

(Tree notes that she uses lower-case 'i' in her articles "as an expression of egalitarian values.")



Laird Schaub responds:

Several things may be in play here, any combination of which may be contributing to this dynamic. Let me walk through them one at a time. For convenience, let's call this very powerful person "Jessie."

Before getting into specifics however, i want to point out that this dynamic is created by everyone, not just by Jessie. Jessie is speaking up a lot (or at least strongly), and others are choosing not to speak (or are speaking ineffectively). Both are needed to create this scenario, and none of my analysis



will assume that Jessie is acting from ill intent. Remember, if meetings aren't working well, it is everyone's responsibility to make them better.

Groups often develop a norm of expecting topics to be accompanied by a proposal (potential solution) with the idea that this will force issues to be well focused before they take up everyone's time. While the idea of insisting that topics be well focused is a good one, it can often be a trap to begin with proposals, as substantial work can be invested in developing the proposal before all the factors have been identified. If Jessie has put time into the proposal (either prior to the meeting or early in the discussion), this can skew the entire conversation, forcing people to respond to her framework and her ideas prematurely.

To be fair, if the group expects proposals to come early in the consideration, Jessie may only be doing her best to help the group out and may be surprised to learn that people feel her persuasive voice is stifling the conversation. What will help is developing the habit of resisting potential solutions until you're confident that you've flushed out all the factors that a good solution needs to take into account.

Then, when it comes time for problem solving, you can ask each contributor—Jessie included—how their idea incorporates all the factors. Either Jessie's contributions will meet this test (in which case you don't have a problem and your consensus will be real), or it should be easier to spot the ways in which Jessie's ideas, however persuasively presented, fall short of the mark.

In all likelihood this dynamic shows up most strongly in open discussion, which is typically the way most groups chew on things. If that's the case, you might try slowing things down for the purpose of ensuring that each person has a decent chance to

get their voice heard early. Probably the simplest thing is to start with a go-round where everyone is given one chance to speak before anyone speaks twice. This protects air time for people who are slower to formulate their thoughts, find it awkward to muscle into a spirited conversation (which may be the only kind that Jessie ever has), or are otherwise shy about speaking in front of the whole group.

As was pointed out above, it works best if the introductory go-round focuses on factors that need to be taken into account and leaves potential solutions until after that step has been completed (when you're surer what the solution needs to take into account).

If the go-round format is not sufficient to meet the challenge, try stronger medicine, such as starting the discussion by having small groups figure out the factors and then sharing the results (Jessie, after all, can only be in one small group). Or you might have everyone take 5-10 minutes to write down what they think the factors are before anything is shared out loud.

All of these format choices tend to be slower than open discussion, yet they should help enormously with uneven participation and the tendency of a vocal and silver-tongued few to dominate the many.

Is Jessie aware of her tendency to dominate the conversation, and, if so, is she willing to work on it? If she is, invite the whole group to discuss the dynamic, working from the premise that everyone is contributing to something that no one wants. After hearing how everyone experiences this phenomenon (so that it is accurately described and the tensions have been cleared), people can share what they're willing to do differently. For example, Jessie can look at how she can slow down, or contribute in a manner that is less intimidating; everyone

This dynamic is created by everyone, not just by this person. She is speaking up a lot (or at least strongly), and others are choosing not to speak (or are speaking ineffectively).



else can look at how they can be more courageous about speaking up, especially when they disagree with what others are advocating, or are unsure of their response.

If Jessie does not acknowledge the issue, or is unwilling to have it be the focus of a group conversation, you can still fall back on the techniques outlined above, based on a desire to try things that might help equalize participation, which, hopefully, is a principle that even Jessie can support.

Laird Schaub, a member of Sandhill Farm community in Missouri, has been doing consulting work on group process since 1987. A longtime activist in community networking, he has lived in community since 1974 and involved with the Fellowship for Intentional Community (FIC) since 1986; he is currently its Executive Secretary. laird@ic.org; 660-883-5545.



Caroline Estes responds:

I'd like to respond to the question, where are the other people's agendas and how are their agendas created? If agendas are well crafted and people feel OK about putting items over for a later agenda, it gives time for an item to be "seasoned," and everyone has time to think about

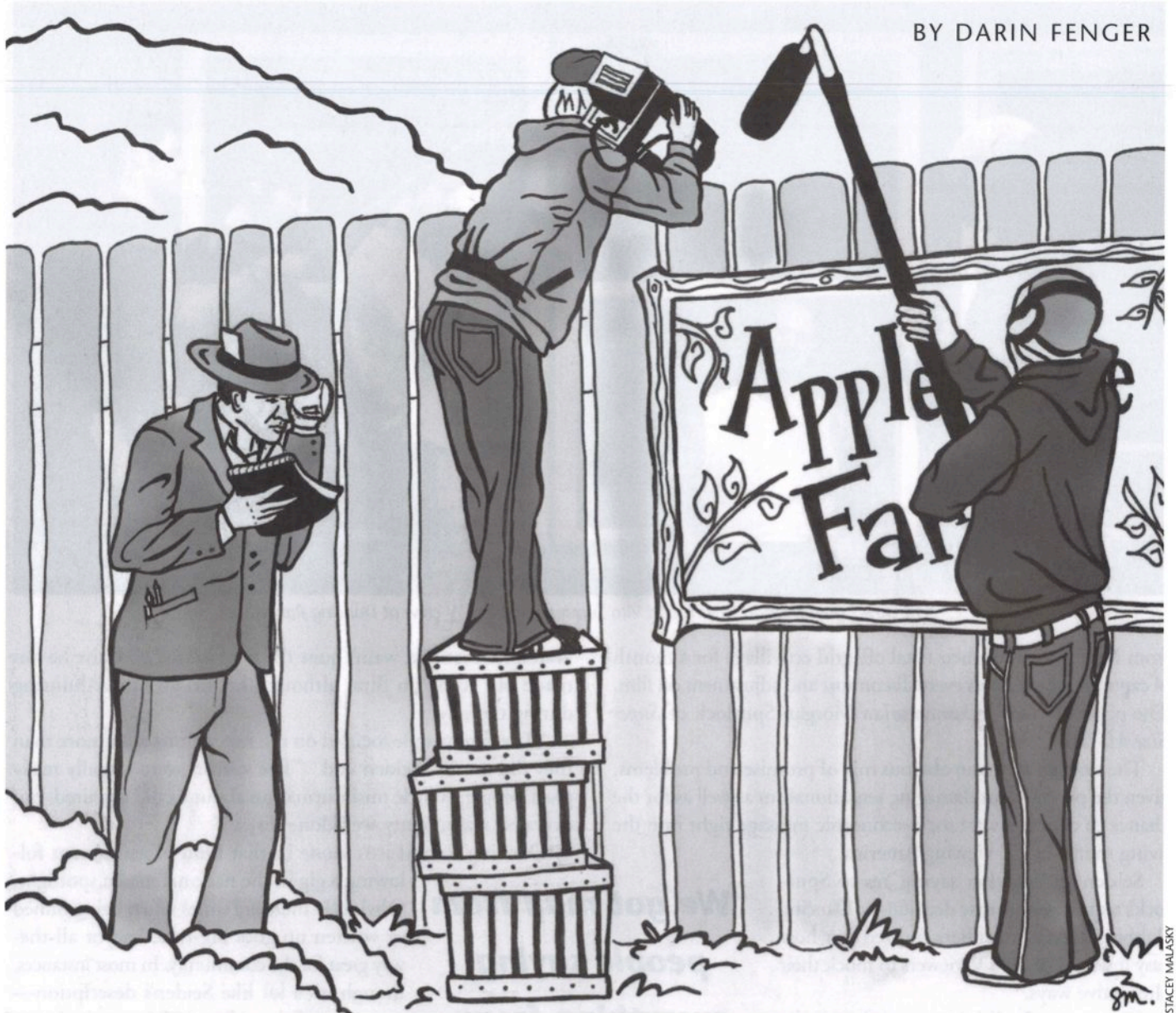
potential decisions without being rushed to decide. This is particularly important when policy decisions or large-impact decisions are being considered.

As to this person's "powerful presence"—has anyone spoken to her about her undue influence? Is there a group meeting where everyone can address this discomfort? It is important that this dynamic not continue unrecognized.

When it comes time for problem solving, you can ask each contributor—this person included—how their idea incorporates all the factors.

Caroline Estes, cofounder of Alpha Farm community in Oregon and Alpha Institute, which teaches consensus and offers facilitation services, has been teaching and facilitating consensus for more than 40 years. Caroline has taught consensus to most intentional community-based facilitators in North America (including the three facilitators in this article), and works with Hewlett-Packard, University of Massachusetts, U.S. Green Party, and the Association of Waldorf Schools of North America, and many other organizations. db@peak.net.

What burning questions about conflict in community would you ask an experienced process and communications consultant? Send them to communities@ic.org, or *Communities*, 1025 Camp Elliott Rd., Black Mountain, NC 28711. Thank you!



STACEY MALASKY

WHEN Oprah *or* Geraldo CALL . . .

What will happen when
the media turns its eye on
your community?

Most families don't suddenly drop vacation plans to visit Disneyland for a chance to stay in an ecovillage. Amy Seiden at Dancing Rabbit Ecovillage didn't believe it at first either, when she got an email from a family who wanted to visit her Missouri community instead of the famous Florida amusement park. But then Seiden was more than kinda busy at the moment, having been tasked with answering the mail coming into Dancing Rabbit's website, which was under a friendly siege of interest at the moment.

"We had to get expanded bandwidth from our website provider," Seiden said, not hiding the amusement in her voice. "There were so many people visiting our website. It was fantastic."

The uncustomary explosion of interest in Dancing Rabbit came after its history, community members, lifestyle, and message for the outside world were thrown into the international spotlight, all thanks to an unexpected bedfellow—reality TV.

Dancing Rabbit was the exotic venue of choice when the TV show "30 Days" dumped a relatively mainstream man and woman



TONY SIRNA

"30 Days" guests Johari Jenkins and Vito Summa, and the TV crew at Dancing Rabbit.

from New York into their rural off-grid ecovillage for a month of capturing the couple's every discomfort and adjustment on film. The producer was documentarian Morgan Spurlock of *Super Size Me* fame.

The venture posed an obvious mix of promise and problems, given the potential for damaging sensationalism as well as for the chance to deliver a vital socio-economic message right into the living rooms of TV-viewing America.

Seiden stresses that saying Yes to Spurlock's request was no easy decision for Dancing Rabbit, as many members realized just how easy it would be for TV viewers to mock their alternative ways.

"Some people didn't want to invite the media because they thought they would make us look bad," she said, "but there were also people who thought any publicity was good publicity."

In the end, the community gave the project a green light, and went all out to put its best foot forward as the New Yorkers moved in for a month, and the live-in film crew followed them day and night. The program was filmed in May of 2005 and ran two months later in July, 2005.

Seiden said that the general view at Dancing Rabbit was that they probably made the right choice.

"It really could have been horrific. The film crew could have made us look like freaks and put out all sorts of misinformation," she said. "Overall, people here were very happy with the outcome."

Interestingly, the producer used creative fact-twisting on the show's two subjects rather than on the community. The male

visitor, for example, wasn't quite the meat-crazed obsessive he was made out to be on film, although he did go rabbit-hunting during the stay.

"The film people focused on the two visitors a lot more than they did on us," Seiden said. "The visitors were actually really great people. A little misinformation about us did get aired, but overall it was a pretty well-done show."

Dancing Rabbit isn't alone in that kind of assessment following a gig in the national media spotlight. Obviously there are times when being filmed or written up goes big-time bad or all-the-way great for the community. In most instances, though it's a lot like Seiden's description—pretty much harmless and not as bad as it could have been.

And don't forget how the exposure increased the number of people visiting their website.

"We got mail from people saying everything from, 'You guys are doing awesome work,' to 'You changed my life.' Overall the support was overwhelming and I think that made everyone feel good. It was nice to reach a larger audience than we normally do and

maybe make a difference."

One thing that probably worked in Dancing Rabbit's favor was the fact that they checked out the producer and his past work ahead of time. They found out he was a pretty okay guy and went for it. But that kind of insurance doesn't always work, though, as folks at Missouri's East Wind community may be quick to say. In their case the media source seemed almost beyond question.

"We got mail from people saying everything from, 'You guys are doing awesome work,' to 'You changed my life'."

"Heck, it was *National Geographic*," said East Wind member Deborah Slavin. "Most folks here were excited and into it. 'Oh boy! We're going to be famous. A national magazine wants to write about us!' We were flattered," Slavin said. "Only a few folks (like myself) thought it was a bad idea."

The piece came out in the August edition of *National Geographic* bearing a pretty foreboding title: "Not Quite Utopia." The writer pointed out how much he liked the laid-back environment, much of which reminded him of his college days somehow. But he was also quick to call East Wind an experiment in failure.

Residents didn't appreciate being described as "washed up, a throwback, a failure, a bunch of folks living in disillusionment behind a lost dream."

"They haven't figured out a better way to live," writer Alan Mairson wrote in a "field notes" segment published on-line. "In fact, East Winders are muddling along with their problems, individual ones and communal ones, just like the rest of us."

Residents also didn't appreciate being described as "washed up, a throwback, a failure, a bunch of folks living in disillusionment behind a lost dream."

Slavin said quite a few residents felt the writer left East Wind without fully understanding the "big picture" of what the community was doing.

"I feel some of his responses were the result of the kind of unrealistic expectations that any normal American middle-class person would have about us, given what they could possibly see or hear in a week's visit," she said.

"Of course he didn't get it. But still, that was the expectation, reasonable or not. Others still think the article was okay, including some of East Wind's friends and neighbors."

Also, unlike the "30 Days" experience at Dancing Rabbit, East Wind residents insist that *National Geographic* got a whopping herd of facts completely wrong.

"There were lots of errors, from wrong facts (even simple ones like my age) to misquotes and out-of-context quotes, too," Slavin said. "There were a lot of folks who were afraid their parents would think worse, not better, of East Wind after reading the article."

One thing that really irked some residents was how the magazine built the article's layout around a photo of a nude resident.

Despite the message that that photo could send readers, this was the only example of nudity magazine visitors saw during their stay.

Also differing from Dancing Rabbit's experience was the outside-world reaction to East Wind's day in the sun. Instead of emails of congratulations from like-minded folks everywhere, East Wind mostly heard from men behind bars.

"And now there are a zillion prisoners who know where we live and are very attracted to our free lifestyle?" Slavin said. "It was very depressing reading all those letters."

Then there are the folks that showed up at East Wind's door, almost immediately. They included:

- Someone claiming to be a victim of Hurricane Katrina who turned out to be "a lying scammer."
- A couple with a child who, because they weren't allowed to move into the community on the spot, shouted to the person in the front office, "You are the nastiest people we've ever met!"
- An elderly man who left a phone message that he would be arriving in two days. When residents called back they got a receptionist at a nursing home who explained, "He won't be leaving here any time soon. Gee, we're sorry."
- A 17-year-old Mormon runaway who had used all of his mission money to travel to East Wind, including a \$700 on cab fare from Kansas City.

"We just all wanted to cry, of course; it was so sad," Slavin said. "Of course we couldn't harbor a minor. . ."

But there is a bright side: community residents like Slavin can now offer valuable advice to intentional communities interested in welcoming journalists onto their land. In the end, Slavin said she certainly wouldn't automatically discourage communities from working with the media, but she surely does advise that

they do everything possible to insure an experience balanced with integrity and fairness.

"Certainly don't trust that you have any control. The *National Geographic* editor who ultimately published the article was not at all into corrections or changes," she said.



Cameraman Bob, Dancing Rabbit member Cecil Sheib, and sound man George.

Also, limit the visitors' contact with members. "We let them talk to anyone about anything," Slavin said. "To them, a comment from a disgruntled member, a two-week resident, or a 17-year-old member seemed to all carry the same weight as the opinion of a committed member who'd been here for years."

She added that community members shouldn't forget, either, that the reporter is there to do a job.

"I think (the reporter and photographer) did have a good time and enjoyed their stay, but folks here didn't separate the journalists' personal experience from their job," she said, "which is not to tell the truth, but to sell magazines."

Seiden, back at Dancing Rabbit, said she was glad that she and other community members did their homework first.

"I'm glad we at least looked into what Morgan Spurlock had done before and found out what his leanings tend to be," she said. "But really, since this was our first time, I'm not sure if we did a good job or just an okay job. I think we just did everything in our power to make it work out."

And knowing that last fact can mean a lot.

Besides, the outcome was thankfully pretty darn positive for Dancing Rabbit—even if that family who had planned to visit Disneyland hasn't showed up for their vacation yet.

Darin Fenger is a newspaper reporter living in southern Arizona who visits intentional communities whenever he can. So far Starland Retreat Center and Wind Spirit Community are his favorites. Read Darin's story on the Children of Light community in Arizona by doing a search on www.yumasun.com.

Managing the Media: A Journalist's Advice

Being a newspaper reporter myself and a student of the intentional communities movement, I'd like to offer up a few words of advice for communities thinking about working with mainstream media.

Reaching out to the media is something I believe in, too. What a powerful way to share a valuable message. In fact I may have never gotten into this movement if it hadn't been for an article by The Associated Press about the Arcosanti project north of Phoenix. I read that article, got interested, found www.ic.org, and everything grew from there—including me.

Here are a few pointers that may help your experience be not only a fair one, but hopefully, an enjoyable one, too.

Before doing anything:

- Do your homework. Don't just hope that this journalist is a good professional with good intentions. Check out work the reporter has already done and ask yourself if it sounds fair and ethically crafted. Also, does this person seem at all suited, based on their track record, to tackle this kind of subject? Don't hesitate to call someone the reporter has written about in the past as a reference.

- Ask the reporter why they want to showcase your community. Ask about the angle they plan to take, the goals they have in mind for the project. If they can't answer these questions quickly and firmly, then there might be good reason to suspect something.

Once the process begins:

- First off, never be afraid to slam on the brakes—at any point.

If you begin to feel uneasy with the a reporter's approach or the direction the project is taking—even far into the process—feel comfortable in knowing that it's your right to gently but firmly refuse to continue until your concerns are addressed. The reporter, as a professional, is charged with making this experi-

ence not only an accurate and ethical exchange, but a smooth and hopefully enjoyable experience as well. Just remember that you are the doing the media a favor in this situation. In most cases the reporter—especially if they have already invested time into the project—needs this work far more than you need the publicity.

- Always meet the reporter in person before taking them to your community. This sends the clear message that entrance to your private (and protected) sphere must be earned. Don't worry about this move looking rude or paranoid. This set-up actually works in the reporter's favor, too. That's because an off-site meeting gives you the chance to lay down the foundational information far from the exotic distractions of community.

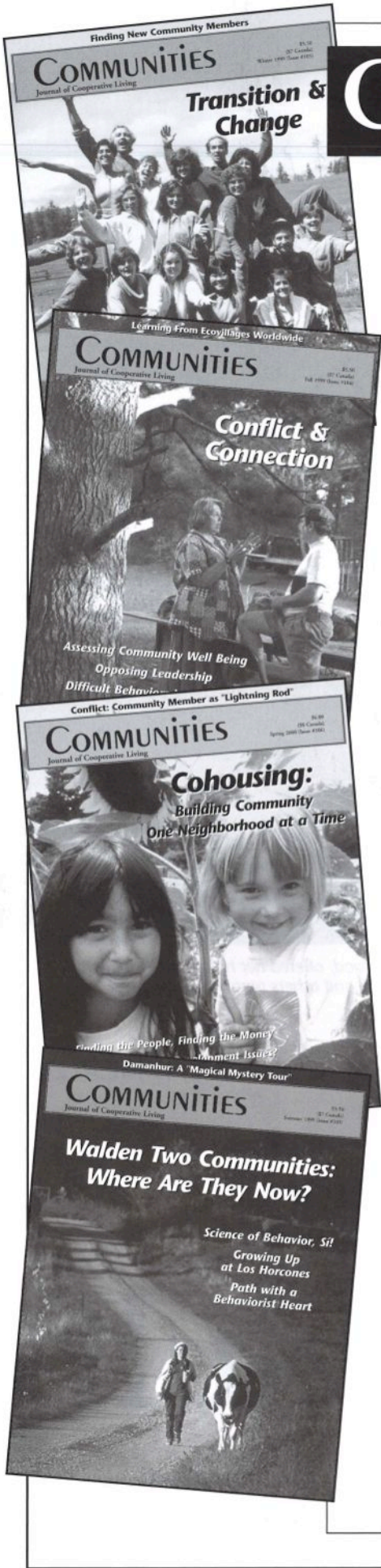
- Don't just help the reporter see and hear things. Invite them take part in *doing* as many activities in your community as possible. Not only will this lead to more possible adjectives and descriptors for your news friend, but we all know that playing and working together builds fabulous bridges.

- Never say anything "off the record." Why say anything that you wouldn't want to appear in print anyway? This person is not your friend; he or she is a journalist doing their job.

- Manage who the journalist talks to in your community, but try to not hover too much or appear to be micro-managing. Hovering and micro-managing are good ways to get on a reporter's nerves and kill any good will pretty quickly.

- Don't forget to have fun. Trust me. It will translate into the coverage and look good. Plus, a reporter coming to your home is the worst time to forget the true spirit of community anyway! So enjoy.

—D.F.



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#131



Momma D. (right), one of the few residents who stayed in New Orleans during the hurricanes and flood, offered her home as a refuge for returning evacuees. The unidentified volunteer (left), was one of many who helped Momma D. and others repair their homes.

BY RALPH MCATEE

7 Months in the Gulf

**How Farm members responded to Katrina victims . . .
with water, food, and a kind word**

In the eye of the storm called Hurricane Katrina, winds were moving well over 150 miles per hour when they struck land. Watching this unfold on the TV was both horrific and spell-binding. I felt guilty watching the devastation, yet couldn't take my eyes off of it. I didn't know at the time that within the week, I would be walking on the streets of New Orleans and searching for people in need of water and food.

I am a member of The Farm in Summertown, Tennessee, a nonviolent community of mostly vegetarians trying to change the world one day and one event at a time. This disaster would call many of us into action, but it started with a man named Gary McLaughlin. If anyone says that "one person cannot make a difference," they should meet Gary. During the weeks after the disaster, I met several people who convinced me that exceptional help in times of desperate need often starts with just one person, and they become the catalyst for what happens after that.

Gary McLaughlin was once a member of our community but he hasn't lived anywhere near Tennessee for many years. He was watching the same disaster hitting thousands of people in the gulf states, primarily Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama,

I didn't know that within the week, I would be walking on the streets of New Orleans and searching for people in need of water and food.

and in the first seven hours just after the storm he knew he couldn't watch any more and needed to act. He called our Plenty International office here at the Farm and asked when we were going to "send the busses" down to help out." Plenty is our 31-year-old community-based relief organization. We're dedicated to helping specifically in the areas of greatest need and have worked in areas ranging from Central America to the South Bronx. After we told Gary we no longer had a fleet of buses, he decided to buy one himself and be the first driver and volunteer. Using his credit card, and encouraged by the generosity of many others, he made the first run down to Louisiana, stopping at The Farm long enough to load up the supplies of food and bottled water we had gathered, and pick up Josh, a young volunteer. Within a few days Gary had not only delivered a couple tons of supplies, but he had also made it into the airport in New Orleans and had rescued several families from the quagmire. He made it back up to The Farm to re-supply and grab some more help, and by then we had gathered a couple more tons of food and water, along with cleaning supplies and everyday necessities—and lots more volunteers. I worked as a mechanic at our Motor Pool back in our communal days and can drive trucks and buses as well as keep them running. A couple of weeks earlier my wife Colleen told me I would be going to help out (how do women know these

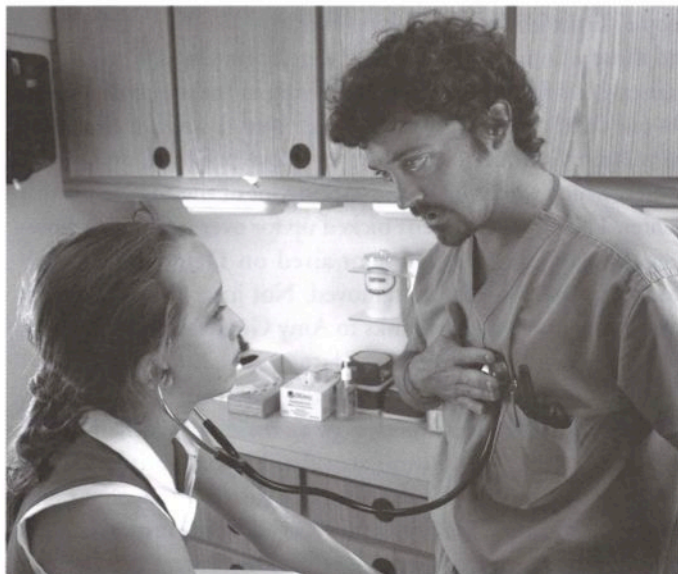


Gary McLaughlin (above) persuades the National Guard to let us in. The Common Ground Clinic (below).

LENORE NORRGAARD

things?) and we wound up with a crew of six for the next relief trip. It was also interesting that just three of us actually lived on the Farm, and the other three were visitors just passing through. That scenario was a curious parallel to how things used to happen on what we now call the "Old Farm," the commune. In those days, a rescue crew would often be made up of a few Farm members who recruited visitors to help out. Our relief work after Hurricanes Katrina and Rita was just one of many experiences that took me back to the "good old days."

Seven days after Katrina made landfall, we were unpacking and repacking supplies into our new Plenty bus, and Gary was still with us. We wanted to take supplies into New Orleans, and our biggest hurdle became the checkpoints manned by the Army and National Guard units. Armed guards were turning people back, telling them a state of Martial Law had been declared because it was unsafe, and no one was allowed in. In the old days Plenty was able to get through military checkpoints in Central America, so why should we let them stop us here? We had



SCOTT BRALEY



BRANDON LERDA



SCOTT BRALEY

Clearing out a flooded house (left), involved shoveling out mud and hosing down the inside: (left to right) Bob Gordon, Chris, Ruth Reeves, Berrian Eno-VanFleet. Malik Rahim's tarp-covered driveway (right) offered needed supplies for returning evacuees.

letters of authorization, and we were carrying supplies, food, and water. I think we also had some compassionate National Guardsmen looking at our mission and allowing us to gain access to a situation that they themselves saw as desperate. The friends we met up with in New Orleans, working for the Veterans for Peace organization, helped us get oriented in that area and went with us into the city. We gained access day after day, bringing supplies into New Orleans and also delivering some hope to residents who saw very little to lift their spirits in those early days.

One delivery that stands out was a busload of goods we took into Algiers, a section of the city just across the river from the downtown area. Malik Rahim is a New Orleans community activist who had decided to stay and help those in the Algiers area who were having a hard time helping themselves. Armed vigilantes were driving through this neighborhood, taking potshots at Black people. Intimidation was taking over, and those who might have stayed were beginning to leave. Over a dozen dead Black people were still lying in the streets of Algiers. On our third trip into town, Malik showed us and the film crew from Amy Goodman's Democracy Now program one of the bodies, which was lying in the parking lot of the Algiers Health Center. These bodies weren't picked up for over two weeks, however the day after this segment aired on Democracy Now's broadcast, the bodies were removed. Not just a coincidence, it would seem, and we give thanks to Amy Goodman and her film crew for getting the word out so fast.

Malik Rahim's back yard was the beginning of Common Ground Collective (www.commongroundrelief.org), and his garage became the first distribution area for that community. What started with a few people running one distribution center and one free clinic has today become over 500 community activists and volunteers, running five distribution centers in different

areas of town and three free medical clinics. Yes, free medicine here in the U.S.A., in New Orleans, caring for the sick and poor who would have perished after the storm if not for their help. True heroes are those who do these things for the people and not for the recognition, and I've met many true heroes volunteering with Common Ground. Other relief volunteers stayed and

started their own nonprofits and are still doing relief work in the Gulf Area.

This grass-roots development of relief organizations has done the work of catching those New Orleans residents who were falling through the cracks of the government-controlled agencies that were failing to provide needed help. I'm not saying that the government didn't help, but the enormity of the disaster was compounded by an equally enormous disconnect in the upper ranks of the federal and local government's own rescue operations. (I will provide website URLs below for many of those who stayed and helped,

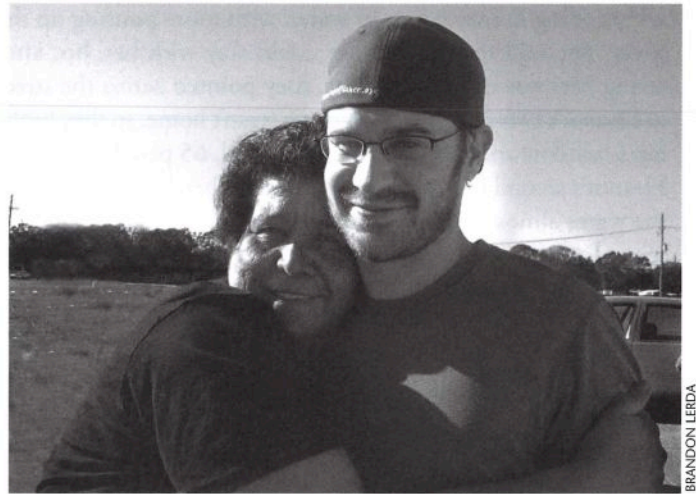
and I thank them from the bottom of my heart.) We were happy to be a part of these early supply lines, and I've been told recently by New Orleans residents that they made all the difference. The common theme among those whom we found needing the most help was that they were hurting well before the storm struck. The disaster just pointed a huge spotlight onto the problem and brought media attention. While much of the media has left, the problems still exist, and they will exist until we decide to solve them.

In the nearly seven months since Hurricane Katrina first made landfall, on August 30, 2005, things have changed a lot for some people and in some neighborhoods. In other areas, some things don't seem to have changed much at all. I'd like to describe our latest trip to the Gulf, and try to highlight which needs are the greatest.

I am a member of The Farm in Tennessee, a nonviolent community of mostly vegetarians trying to change the world one day and one event at a time.



PAUL CASKIN



BRANDON LEIDA

Plenty nurse Elaine Langley and Monica (left) check blood pressure of a Biloxi resident. Volunteers came from all over the country (right).

Monday morning, March 13, we gathered our camping supplies and food, along with a van-load of food and supplies, and began our trip to Louisiana and Mississippi. Our gang included Farm members Elaine Langley, Joel Kachinsky, Kara French, Phil Schweitzer, Douglas Stevenson, and myself. We were going to cover much of the area we had already been supplying before, along with photo-documenting our work with the help of Phil and Douglas. Our friends Jeffrey Keating and Gordon Soderberg were already in Mobile for the Veterans Gulf March (www.vetgulfmarch.org), and would provide coverage of that event along with meeting us in New Orleans for the final days. This was the first time we had set out not only to give out some supplies and continue the work of disaster relief, but also to try to publicize the disasters of the Gulf alongside the war in Iraq. The fact that the Iraq Vets Against the War, the Veterans for Peace, Cindy Sheehan, and the GoldStar Families for Peace were all going to be there made this a large peace march and gathering of anti-war activists.

Our caravan arrived in the Bayou Liberty camp (www.bayoulibertyrelief.org) in Slidell, Louisiana, right at dusk. Niki, whom we met in the early days of the relief work, was our host, and she's been an angel. She allows folks to stay at her camp and then work in whatever area they choose. People from Common Ground collective come there for a break out of the city, and people flow through as they go back and forth from their relief work to their homes. We quickly set up some tents and were treated to a nice hot veggie dinner.

We spent our first day (Tuesday) in Biloxi, Mississippi. Elaine Langley, who is an RN, has been taking that city on as a personal project, and she is well-known and loved wherever she has set foot. Here in Biloxi it is six months since Katrina, but not that much has changed for many of these people. I talked with one woman on a porch in the neighborhood where we gave out some food boxes, and she told me that the "little things" kept her

going, and seeing us giving out food and talking to people about their needs had her in tears. She talked about how hard it was to go to bed at night, knowing she would awake to the same situation in the morning. Our help there is precious, yet obviously a small drop in the bucket. Another man we met in a different Biloxi neighborhood had stayed through the storm, riding it out in his house that he had built eight feet above ground level after Hurricane Camille. He said that when he saw the neighboring homes flood, he got nervous. His house stood tall during the first eight feet of water, and he took photos of the rooftops of other houses starting to disappear. He saw that his stairway outside was disappearing under the flood, and it didn't take long for the water to come into his home. Finally, he was chest-deep in the water, standing on a chair in his kitchen, still snapping pictures. He showed us the photos—in one, his dog is on the couch, floating in about six feet of water in the living room.

Pass Christian was our stop the second day, and it was the hardest-hit Mississippi area I think I've seen. Almost every house on the first few streets near the gulf shore was demolished, and the town was in the process of bulldozing about 80 percent of some neighborhoods. We delivered our bulk food supplies to a distribution center, A Walk in The Park, run by two sweet angels named Eleanor and Marlene. These two were good friends before the storm and immediately started a center where the townspeople could get needed food, water, and supplies. Imagine yourself living in a small town where the closest 10 stores near you have suddenly closed, gas prices have more than doubled, and you can't get the food, water, and other supplies you need to get through each day. These two made that happen in Pass Christian, and they will continue until, they say, "all the needs have been met." Eleanor's neighbor told us that during the flood, around a dozen people ran up the street towards her house, which is directly across the street. She went outside to meet them and found her-

***If anyone says that
"one person cannot
make a difference,"
they should
meet Gary.***

self standing in over a foot of water, with more pouring up the street. She told the people they could stay with her, but after seeing hers was only a one-story, they pointed across the street to Eleanor's two-story house. Eleanor wasn't home, so they broke out a window and all ran upstairs. In total, 65 people stayed on Eleanor's second floor during the storm. They had a scare when the water almost made it up into the second floor, and they were considering breaking into the attic when the water finally stopped rising.

The next few hours we talked with some folks from AmeriCorps who were running a free day care center and trying to keep their tent city going. After giving out a few quilts from the More than Warmth group for babies at the day care (Thanks, Judy!), Elaine Langley, Phil Schweitzer, and Douglas Stevenson headed to Ocean Springs, Mississippi, to meet Jeffrey Keating and the marchers against the war, and I left for New Orleans. These first two days were full and exhausting, but so much more was still to come.

That evening (Wednesday), I picked up Joel Kachinsky at St. Mary's church and convent in New Orleans which was housing up to 500 student volunteers from all over the country, and we

stayed for dinner. The meals were served in shifts, with salad and vegetarian options, and hand-washing stations at the beginning of the serving line. Common Ground had done great cleanup in the neighborhood, and a local pastor donated the use of the dorm rooms in return for their help.

After spending the night in Slidell we drove back to New Orleans Thursday morning. We were looking for Common Ground's large distribution center when we saw three young students, Common Ground volunteers, walking down the street. We were seeing a lot of this in the devastated areas of town, college-age men and women walking or biking down the streets, eager to help, and a contrast to the dreariness all around us. The relief network based in college campuses is obviously strong.

We were told of a large "action" going down that day, over at Martin Luther King Middle School and Library. The school wasn't damaged other than

debris and some water damage during the hurricane, and the state had taken the school from the city's jurisdiction. We also found out that the city school system was bankrupt before the storm ever made landfall. We spent the rest of the afternoon

In the old days Plenty was able to get through military checkpoints in Central America, so why should we let the National Guard stop us here?



A Biloxi resident receives a box of food supplies.

documenting the cleaning of the school by volunteers from Common Ground, and the former principal and some teachers brought by refreshments for the young folks working. New Orleans police officers stood by and observed, but no arrests were made for what was considered "trespassing" by authorities. This was one of those moments that could have been right out of the movement in the late '60s. Nonviolent civil disobedience to affect great change seemed entirely justified in a city that, according to recent studies, has a 39 percent illiteracy rate. With problems like that, it's astounding that these education centers are left standing empty while we send billions of dollars overseas.

We left the city that day with mixed emotions. We had also heard from some folks who knew us just how much they appreciated Plenty's help in the early days after the storm. I was thanked again and again for bringing buses with supplies into town when it was locked down behind the National Guard checkpoints. That part felt great.

Friday we set out for New Orleans again, this time to meet with some of the volunteers and find Emergency Communities, a relief organization that fed 1500 or more volunteers

She told me that the "little things" kept her going, and seeing us giving out food and talking to people about their needs had her in tears.

per day out of a kitchen in St. Bernard's Parish. After seeing it and a few more of the distribution centers, we heard of a place called Project H.O.P.E. that runs a home repair, distribution center, kitchen, and propane exchange service for the elderly. We met with a young woman named Isabel who helps coordinate the center. She explained that they are going to try and turn the Project H.O.P.E. over to the community after it's well established, and it has been going since around mid-January. The care of the elderly by these young volunteers really struck me, and I asked some of the local residents who were shopping in the clothing tent how they felt about this organization. The comments were glowing, and several of these elderly residents stated that the only way they could exist here with no stores being open was through the generosity of these donated items and a center to keep them. It was inspiring and encouraging for us to witness this awesome work by this generation that is sometimes characterized as "lost."

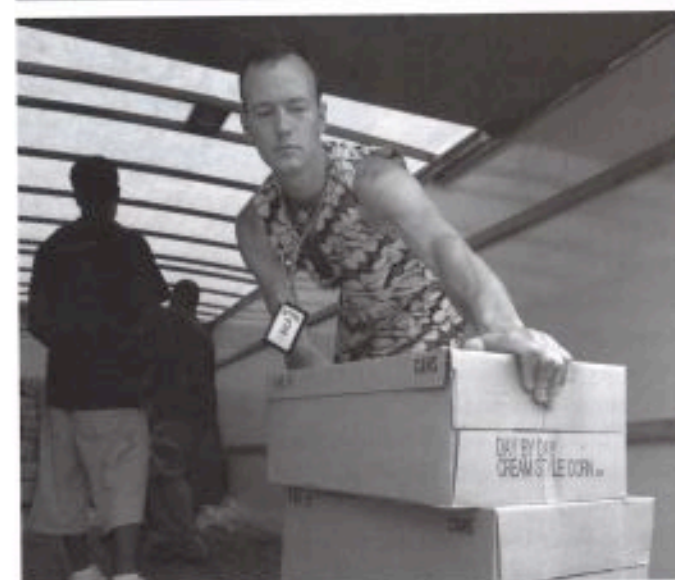
As we headed out of town we saw a large dome with a sign proclaiming "Emergency Communities." We walked into the dome and saw it was a complete dining room full of people having lunch while a small band, the Washboard Chaz Blues



SCOTT BAILEY



BRANDON LERDA



SCOTT BAILEY

Staffed entirely by volunteers, funded by donations, and located at a Moslem mosque, the Common Ground clinic served hundreds of people in the weeks before any official aid appeared (top). Buckets of vegetables ready for pickup. (middle). Boxes of donated food are unloaded from a truck at Common Ground (below).

Trio, played great Cajun and Zydeco music. We got into line and had lunch, then met with Valisa, one of their main organizers. She showed us around and explained that they were now a functioning not-for-profit that would be here “until they were no longer needed.” We drove back to Slidell to meet up with the peace marchers, who had been heading our way since they left Mobile on Monday.

The Vet Gulf March was in full swing by the time the marchers rolled into Slidell, and they had a short press conference before heading to the Bayou Liberty camp. We were honored to celebrate with them that night at a gumbo feast, with gator, sausage, and chicken gumbo along with the always-needed vegetarian portions. All were delicious and all were gone by the next day. I think the two kegs of brew helped wash the goodies down, and in my case helped cool the heat from the gumbo. A good local mix of musicians played into the night, and the marchers had enough energy to dance it up for a few hours. That night’s sleep was a welcome respite, and some good drumming was heard coming from the 20-foot tepee set up right next to the bayou, along with a lot of laughter. It felt good to fall asleep to those sounds after all we had seen the previous four days.

Saturday we got an early start so that we could get back down to the Louisiana bayou area, around Dulac and Chauvin, to see how the tribal communities were doing. Plenty volunteers Dr. Robin Rose and her husband, Brandon Lerda, had spent a few weeks in that area right after the storm doing medical aid and helping with construction and roofing crews. I think Dr. Robin had given out a record number of tetanus shots and other vaccines to those survivors. It’s hard to say how many would have become ill or worse without this medicine. We met with Ronald and Cheryl Courteaux of the Biloxi Chitimacha Indian Nation, and saw their home where they were hosting Four Directions relief volunteers. (www.eswn.org) The small shrimping town of Dulac, like several in the area, sits right on the bayou waterway. When Hurricane Katrina went through Louisiana, wind and storm damage occurred in this area, but since the prevailing winds were from the north, there wasn’t

much flooding. Then when Hurricane Rita made landfall west of this area, and the prevailing winds were from the south, it pushed tremendous amounts of water inland. With the destruction of the barrier reefs and the creation of large cross-canals in the bayou waterways to accommodate oil tankers, there was nothing to stop the storm surge. The people here now suffer somewhat the same plight as those in New Orleans. Times were already very hard before the storm, the faltering economy was taking its toll, and the wind, rains, and flood of these hurricanes was so much more destructive than anyone could have imagined.

We saw cleaning and repairs being made but not on the level of other towns we had visited. Small changes were taking place day by day, but overall the place had the same look and feel of almost seven months ago. Despair would be an understatement and the people were coping in a fierce way with their surroundings. People like Ronald and Cheryl were doing a superhuman job, along with the other tribal leaders, of keeping their communities moving in a positive direction. Funds were not coming in like before, when the hurricanes were front-page news, and some funding didn’t make it here at all. The Chitimacha Nation’s website contains some pictures of the continuing restoration from the hurricanes. (www.biloxi-chitimacha.com)

We left with contact numbers, and some of our volunteers, such as Dr. Rose and Peter Schweitzer, Plenty’s

director, have kept communication lines open. We will try and stay the course for the long haul, and I’m sure our group of friends and contacts in this struggle will grow.



Plenty volunteers rain-proofed the roof of an elderly neighbor.

PAUL GASPIN

Ralph McAtee, who joined the Farm community in 1976, has been an Emergency Medical Technician working with the Farm midwives, and a Paramedic with the Nashville Fire Department, where he is now a District Chief. He has worked as a Plenty volunteer in the South Bronx with the ambulance center, and has volunteered to work with Plenty in Louisiana since Hurricane Katrina struck, making five different trips to the Gulf region to deliver food and supplies.



“How Can We Help?”

The Farm’s Plenty Organization

BY PETER SCHWEITZER

Plenty was created by an intentional community, the Farm in Summertown, Tennessee, in 1974. At that time, when the Farm was just three years old, its population was around 500 people, a mixture of mostly “twenty-somethings” and a few dozen kids. We were just beginning to learn the skills that we would need to survive on our 1750 acres of Tennessee woodlands—farming, construction, plumbing, primary health care, midwifery, wireless communications, and, perhaps most importantly, and conflict resolution, which we called “getting straight with each other.”

We had no experience with relief and development work, so we started out just giving away food surpluses from our farming operations in some of the poorer neighborhoods in surrounding towns. If we heard about a tornado or other natural disaster within a day’s school bus drive, we would send out a bus with a crew of volunteers to help with clean-up. When our ham radio operators started picking up news of a huge earthquake in Guatemala in early February 1976, we felt compelled to go down and see if there was any way we could help. By the following year we had more than 50 volunteers on the ground, rebuilding houses and schools, operating a clinic, and, responding to their request, teaching Mayan Indians how to grow and prepare foods from soybeans.

During four years in Guatemala the young Farm Plenty volunteers learned some important lessons:

- Indigenous peoples such as the Mayans tend to be the poorest and most oppressed people on Earth, yet possess the most ancient traditions and richest cultures.
- As young hippies living collectively, we felt closer to the Mayans than to the greater society of our own American consumer culture, politically, socially, and spiritually.
- We realized that these folks were living on the edge before the earthquake and that perhaps the most important role for us as a hippie NGO was to form alliances with the Indigenous peoples of the Earth in the greater, multi-generational struggle to “Save the World.”

“I haven’t seen white people like you since the Sixties.”

Since that time, Plenty has fielded projects such as a free ambulance service in the South Bronx, a clinic for Central American refugees in Washington, D.C., an organic gardens project at the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota, a school gardens project in southern Belize, a nutrition enhancement project with the Huichol Indians of Mexico, and a rainforest protection project with the Carib Indians of Dominica.

Throughout our history, it has been our roots in community that have grounded and guided our work with other communities. One of the things we are seeing in the Gulf after Katrina is the virtual instant community building that has occurred, both among survivors who have banded together to help each other cope and rebuild their lives, and among the armies of highly motivated grassroots citizen volunteers who have created brand new functional volunteer organizations virtually overnight and who are doing the most effective and efficient work on the ground, in contrast to the mega relief agencies and

federal government. One of the phrases we have heard over and over is, “It’s just like the old days,” only now you’ve got graying hippies and peace and justice folks working shoulder-to-shoulder with a new generation of young, idealistic, high-energy and very politically and spiritually sophisticated volunteers. As one African-American elder and activist resident of New Orleans remarked to the Plenty volunteers who were delivering food and water to his neighborhood right after the storm, “I haven’t seen white people like you since the Sixties.” There’s something happening here, and we’re not completely sure what it is, but it definitely looks like the revolution is alive and well.

Peter Schweitzer, who lives at the Farm in Tennessee, has been Director of the Plenty Organization since 1974, and Executive Director, since 1984. Plenty has offices at The Farm, as well as Salinas, California; Austin, Texas; and Punta Gorda, Belize.



CENTER FOR CREATIVE ECOLOGY, KIBBUTZ LOTAN

Mike (left) from Kibbutz Lotan, shows Bedouin villagers at Wadi el N'aam how to mix earthen plaster for the new clinic.

Building Bridges of Clay, Mud & Straw

Jews and Arabs learn natural building in the desert . . . and much more

Kibbutz Lotan consists of 50 adults and 60 children living on 143 acres in the fragile desert ecosystem in the far south of Israel, 30 miles north of Eilat. In the last few years one of our community's service projects has been to train Israeli Bedouin Arabs in natural building techniques. We have also, when political conditions permitted, hosted natural building seminars for Jewish and Arab youth, including Palestinian and Jordanian teenagers.

Ecological sustainability is the central theme of both programs. We live in a tough neighborhood here in the Middle East, and for us, sustainability has a double meaning. The first meaning of sustainability is to utilize the Earth's local resources in such a way that future generations will have quality of life. The second is to develop outlooks and ways of life which will enable

BY MICHAEL LIVNI,
WITH MARK NAVEH
AND ALEX CICELSKY

all people of the region to live together without violence—and even, hopefully, in peace and harmony.

Our medium for introducing the double message of sustainability is alternative building, using strawbale building, earthen plasters, and various industrial wastes such as plastics, tires, and tin cans. An additional important theme is conserving water—since water is a key resource in our area.

We cooperate with two other non-government organizations (NGOs) in these projects. One is Bustan, a partnership of Jewish and Arab eco-builders, architects, academics, and farmers who promote social and environmental justice in Israel/Palestine, with whom we teach local Bedouin villagers natural building skills (www.bustan.org). The other is Friends of the Earth of the Middle East, which brings together Jordanian, Palestinian, and

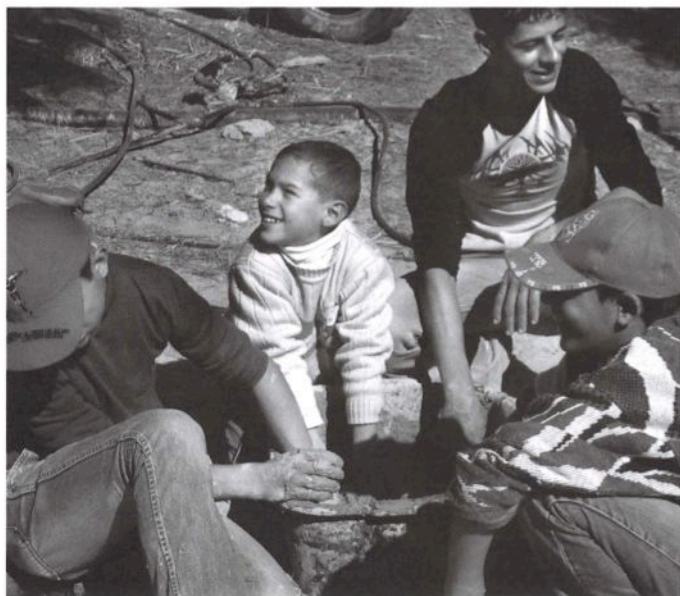
Israeli environmentalists, with whom we host Jewish and Arab youth seminars (www.foeme.org).

The Bedouin way of life, like all forms of life in the desert, has traditionally consisted of a sparse population with a subsistence economy living over a large area. The impact of modern life in the Middle East has threatened traditional Bedouin culture throughout the region, especially in Israel. Proactive Israeli government public health measures have created a population explosion among the Bedouin, and modern Israeli agriculture has expanded into the desert. And while the Israeli government has build townships for the Bedouin, their culture is not readily adaptable to this way of life. Some Bedouin have established

We live in a tough neighborhood here in the Middle East, and for us, sustainability has a double meaning.

alternative villages more suited to their traditional values, however, and these are often located in marginal and polluted areas, where the government cannot or will not supply them with any necessary infrastructure, such as housing or access to water, electric power, or facilities for medical care in their locality.

Working with Bustan, we have held a series of “Building with Earth” workshops on our kibbutz for the Bedouin of the Wadi el Na’am, a village not recognized by the Israeli government, and which is situated in a polluted area south of Beersheba in the northern Negev desert. These seminars take place in the context of a supportive Jewish community—and the kibbutz experience is an eye-opener for the Bedouin. The learning seminars here are a first step. Bustan offers the next step, by helping the Bedouin identify their needs. In this case, members of Wadi el Na’am felt they needed a clinic in the village. Kibbutz Lotan



CENTER FOR CREATIVE ECOLOGY, KIBBUTZ LOTAN

Arab and Jewish schoolboys mix earthen plaster at Lotan's Friends of the Earth workshop.

Good Works and Traditional Jewish Culture

In some contemporary Jewish thought the idea of Good Works straddles two different concepts which, ideally, complement each other: *G'milut Hassadim* (acts of grace) and *Tikkun Olam* (world mending and transformation).

G'milut Hassadim is understood to mean an act of loving kindness without expectation of material advantage or recompense. We are to engage in acts of loving kindness to the other because, like each and every one of us, the “other” is created in the Divine Image. “And God said: We will make the human in Our Person and Our Image...” (Genesis 1:26).

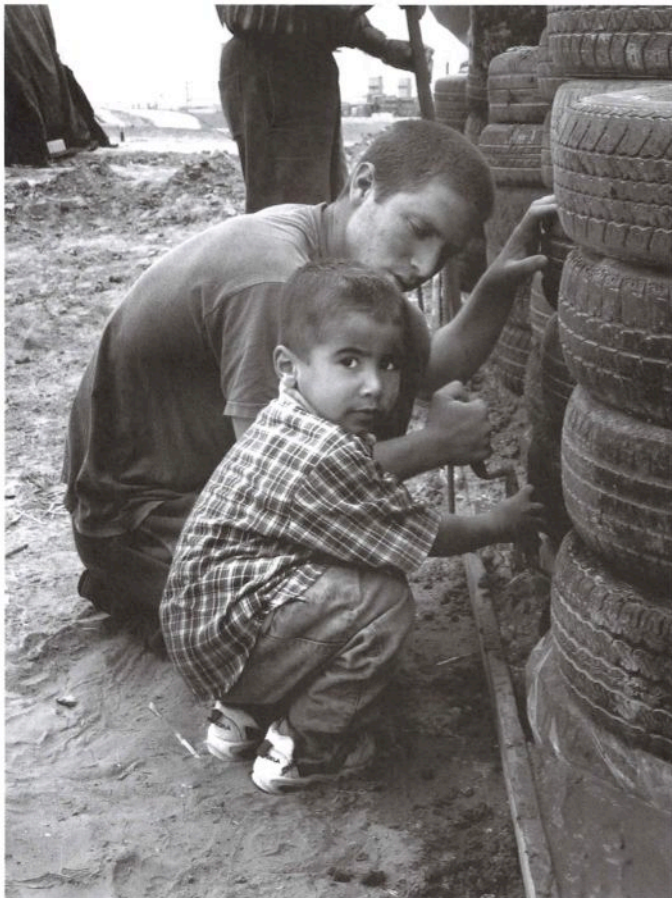
Tikkun Olam involves an ongoing process of *transforming* the world (the Divine Creation) into an ever more perfect (Divine) state. The idea relates to the prophetic ideal of social justice and the rejection of false gods (e.g. the worship of material wealth). This is an infinite task by which humankind is partner in the continuing project of Creation. “It is not for you to finish the task, nor are you free to desist from it” (Ethics from Sinai, 2:21).

instructors worked with village members and other Jewish volunteers to build a clinic of strawbales and earthen plaster. Solar panels supply the clinic's power.

The overall aim of the project was not only to help Wadi el Na'am meet a specific need, but also to provide them with the know-how to build similar structures they might desire in the future. In all such workshops, participants must bring buckets of earth from their home locality. Thus they learn the right mix of sand and straw for making mud bricks and earth plaster with their own local earth materials.

Working with the residents of Wadi el Na'am has been especially challenging because of the ambivalence of the Bedouin towards their situation. Many are unemployed and subsist on welfare payments. They do not do not want to move to a township in the first place, as they feel it will be destructive to their values and traditions. They do not really want to stay where they are, yet they fear any alternative may be worse. Bustan also helps Bedouin in villages like this lobby the local government for municipal recognition within a non-township framework, so that their settlement and others like them will be eligible for the usual government assistance to recognized municipalities.

Last year, with Friends of the Earth of the Middle East, we held two seminars on Kibbutz Lotan, the first with 30 teenaged boys aged 13 to 17, both from Jewish and Arab schools in Israel and schools in Jordan and Palestine. The program began in the afternoon after their arrival on Lotan. We organized get-to-know-you activities and games on the soccer field. The official language was English. The Israeli Arabs frequently had to bridge to the Palestinian and Jordanian youth, whose knowledge of



CENTER FOR CREATIVE ECOLOGY, KIBBUTZ LOTAN

A Lotan volunteer teaches one of the Wadi el Na'am children how to plaster.

English was rudimentary. The Israeli Arab youth were also central in bridging the cultural gap, thus reassuring the Jordanians and Palestinians in a social situation totally foreign to them.

On the first night we held an outdoor supper in Lotan's Center for Creative Ecology. In the evening there was a role-playing game focusing on allocating resources—in this case, water. The next morning the boys collected suitable waste from Lotan's "treasure trove" of bottles, cans, and used tires, and working in mixed groups of Jews and Arabs to build benches of

One of our community's service projects has been to train Israeli Bedouin Arabs in natural building techniques.

tires stuffed with waste materials and covered with earthen plaster. In the afternoon we swam in the pool, followed by another session of relaxed learning activity. That night we took a walk to a dune in the desert and a discussion of the human impact on the desert ecosystem. On the last morning we met in Lotan's organic garden and dealt with composting methods and water-thrifty irrigation techniques. By the time of the farewell session and the feedback circle, it was clear that all had become friends. The

participants said they had enjoyed the seminar and learned from it. "This was the first time I had any real contact with Arab people," said one Jewish youth. Other comments: "Our time together really changed my opinions"; "I can't wait to get back and start on our own projects"; "I hope our connections will remain."

We held a second, similar program with Israeli and Jordanian youth. Although this program was also moderately successful, the absence of Israeli Arab youth to bridge the language gap was sorely felt.

In the context of the tensions in the Middle East, one of the few areas in which Arabs and Jews have a common interest is ecological sustainability in a small land holy to both peoples. How small? The combined area of Israel/Palestine is some 10,000 square miles—the size of New Hampshire or Vermont.

"This was the first time I had any real contact with Arab people."

Unfortunately, however, we have not been able to involve young Arab and Bedouin women in these projects. Kibbutz Lotan is highly egalitarian in its approach to gender equality, so this is extremely troubling to us. Multiple wives are still the norm in much of Bedouin society. The challenges for women in Islamic society (from our point of view), are well known. We did, however, host a one-day seminar for Grade 10 students of a Bedouin village school in which both boys and girls participated.

Another downside is the "ad hoc" nature of our outreach efforts. Current conditions, political and financial, preclude our establishing a systematic program with real follow-up and follow-through. So we "cast our bread upon the waters." Indeed, in the case of the youth project involving Palestinians and Jordanians, we were requested to keep their participation low-profile, with no mention of specific localities of origin and no photographs that would identify any participants.

Unfortunately, instances of this kind of cross-cultural educational outreach by a Jewish community are relatively uncommon in Israel. Such projects require willingness and trust on behalf of the surrounding society of both Arabs and Jews.

A prominent sign in Lotan's Center for Creative Ecology, with a quotation from ancient Talmudic Rabbinic writings, summarizes the universal message of sustainability for Arabs and Israelis of any religion: Jewish, Christian, or Muslim (please forgive the gender bias and anthropocentric orientation): "When the Holy One, Blessed be He, created the first Man, He took him to all the trees of the Garden of Eden, and told him: See my works, how handsome and fine they are: everything I have created, for you I created. Make sure not to despoil and destroy My world, because what you spoil there will be no one to repair after you."

Do such modest efforts as our have a real impact on the inferno of hate and conflict that characterizes our region? An ancient Jewish tale tells us that the entire world stands constantly on the scales. Each one of us, and every action of each and everyone of us, can tip the balance—and every hour is an hour of decision.

Michael Livni grew up in Vancouver, B.C. and has an M.D. from U.B.C.. He has lived in Israel for 43 years and at Kibbutz Lotan since 1986, where he has been active in establishing ecotourism on Kibbutz Lotan.

Alex Cicelski, who grew up in Rye, New York, is a founding member of Kibbutz Lotan. He is planning manager of the kibbutz and an expert in alternative building methods.

Mark Naveh grew up in Australia and studied marine biology and ecology. He has been on Lotan since 1986, and currently heads environmental education in Lotan's Center for Creative Ecology.



One of Kibbutz Lotan's natural buildings.

CENTER FOR CREATIVE ECOLOGY, KIBBUTZ LOTAN

About Kibbutz Lotan

Of the 265 kibbutzim in Israel today, Kibbutz Lotan has a unique combination of four characteristics.

1. **Kibbutz Lotan is collective** (income-sharing), not privatized. Nowadays only 25 percent of Israeli Kibbutzim remain collective. In the last 20 years, many have become either partially or wholly privatized—meaning that members receive differential salaries and buy goods and services available in the kibbutz, and many own their own independent businesses. Because we are a collective, Kibbutz Lotan can mobilize some of its very modest collective resources to help others (*For a detailed discussion of the “Kibbutz movement in Historical Perspective” see www.chavruta.org.il, ICSA Lectures 2004*).

2. **We are a non-coercive religious kibbutz** associated with the Israel Movement for Progressive Judaism (Reform Judaism). In Israel, Reform Judaism strives to integrate the idea of the Jewish state with democracy. This means equal rights and equal opportunity for all minority groups. It is the social and religious orientation of Kibbutz Lotan that leads to our commitment to helping others and social justice based on the prophetic ideals of Judaism. In this context, we believe that all humans are created in the Divine Image. We also see the ideal of peace, *Shalom*, as an ultimate religious value. “By three things does the world endure: by truth, justice and peace” (Ethics from Sinai 1:18).

3. **We're affiliated with Global Ecovillage Network (GEN)**, which expresses our commitment to sustainability. We strive to “till the earth and to preserve it” (Genesis 2:15). Our commitment to sustainability is not merely utilitarian: i.e., sustainability for the sake of our future and that of our children. We try to see “leaving a light footprint” as a religious value per se, relating to our responsible stewardship of Creation in the Holy Land.

4. **Our Vision Statement embodies our outlook in a strategic program of action.** “Where there is no vision, the people become unruly” (Proverbs 29:18). Founded in 1983, we are now 110 residents (60 being children). Another 25 residents rent houses here and buy community services but do not necessarily have a commitment to the intentional aspects of the community. We average one inch of rain per year. All the settlements in this area pump fossil water—ultimately a nonrenewing resource.

We are dependent on economic activities within the kibbutz, which in some cases constitute a compromise with our ecological values. We have not yet found ways to survive economically, educate our children, and provide a degree of self-fulfillment for our members without compromises. We have some hired foreign labor. We have a dairy operation that presents an ongoing ecological challenge.

Kibbutz Lotan is not wealthy—indeed we have yet to reach the minimum threshold to pay income tax, and ecotourism is still marginal in our economy. In the eight years since we focusing on the link between Judaism and ecology, we have developed a small organic garden utilizing principles of permaculture, and, more significantly, developed expertise in alternative building methods. In addition, because we are on the main flyway of migratory birds between Europe and Africa, many of our projects relate to enriching biotopes for the birds and developing facilities for birdwatchers. www.kibbutzlotan.com.



Seattle's "Raging Grannies" singing group.

I CAN DO IT

Because I Live in

COMMUNITY

“Hey, Rosy,” Mary said as I entered the dining room at our small urban community, Bright Morning Star. “You’re on the front page!” Right above the fold of the *Seattle Post Intelligencer* was a report that the National Security Administration had been spying on four of the groups that I’ve been active with—I felt like both laughing uproariously and shaking with fear. Later that day Mary said, “When I went to the office, people congratulated me for having a housemate who is under surveillance. I felt like a celebrity!” I credit both my life in community and

my active nonviolence and compassionate-listening training as creating in me the ability to respond to the front page news without angst.

BY ROSY
BETZ-ZALL

This very direct and heartwarming support happens almost every day at Bright Morning Star. We expect all of our members to take part in social service or social justice activities; political action is just one of many ways we serve the wider community. The life-enhancing involvements of our seven adult members are almost too many to list. Here are a few: cooking at a local soup kitchen,

creating vegan recipes for homeless teens, acting in political street theater, developing a library service for local environmental organizations, serving on the board of the local environmental justice group, New Society Trainers, offering mediation, and finally, participating in a very relaxed and relaxing community sing-along each month.

Bright Morning Star was founded in 1979 as part of the Life Center, a Philadelphia community of cooperatives. The Life Center focused on training activists in nonviolence and organizing skills. When seven of us moved to Seattle in 1985, we brought that activist focus with us. Since then, we have sought new members who are active in social justice work, which includes raising children. We have a weighty process for finding our new folks. Our telephone questions include “Can you describe a

conflict you had and how you dealt with it?” and “What change would you most like to see in the world?” Then we interview people two or more times before inviting them to try membership in our community.

In my own pursuit of waging peace and have fun while doing so, I joined the Seattle Raging Grannies as they were being formed. Because I sing opera and teach voice, I’ve become the de facto music director. The Raging Grannies show how cultural work can really disturb our opponents! I also help coordinate booking of quality musical talent at public schools where the school music education isn’t offered and the median income is very low, as well as singing with the children myself as an artist in residence.

Sharing cooking, shopping, and clean-up chores gives each of us additional time for community involvement. However, I have to confess I often try to accomplish too much outside Bright Morning Star. That and the need for quiet outdoor recreation leads me to give short shrift to relaxed conversations and eco-flux games.

Living in community has given me a lot of practice in dealing with conflict. You can count on any household needing to deal with the usual prosaic conflicts: whose dishes were left in the sink. But there are also deeper heart conflicts such as seeking a balanced place to care for each other around mental health issues.

Over time I listened to the calling in me to become a professional mediator. Two of my strong and independent-minded women housemates had a conflict over child-rearing styles that had many emotional layers to get through. I felt greatly privileged to help them work out some of their issues.

In some ways this is an opportunity to apply the skills and attitudes I’ve learned in nonviolence—not to overcome or conquer, but to include and befriend those with whom I may disagree.

We hold up this high ideal, but it’s hard to live up to. Today a housemate had very responsibly arranged for a potential new housemate to drop by to check out our community. But my not wanting to deal with a new person interfered with my ability to just say “yes.” I wanted my housemate to first explain his request before I considered it. I wish I could always act from a place of non-judgmental positive curiosity about what other people feel, need, and think.

However, despite knowing I still need to learn a lot, if an agent from the National Security Agency ever comes to call, I’ll greet them with a

pot of tea and ask them the same questions we ask prospective community members. What is the change you would most like to see in the world?



The author, Rosy Betz-Zall.

We expect all of our members to take part in social service or social justice activities; political action is just one of many ways we serve the wider community.

Rosy Betz-Zall is a member of Bright Morning Star community in Seattle, which she helped co-found with her husband Jonathan in 1985.



LYDA JACKSON

Jesus People USA member Trier washes dishes at the group's neighborhood soup kitchen in downtown Chicago during his evening dishwashing shift.

Communities That Serve Others . . . and **LOVE** Doing It

BY DARIN FENGER

When the police burst into the dining hall at Jesus People USA one night in 1979, residents of the Chicago community had to swear they weren't running a soup kitchen without a permit.

They were just sharing their supper with a few friends—all 120 of them.

"We called it our dinner guest program," longtime resident Lyda Jackson said with pride. "But we never set out to start a soup kitchen—or a shelter! All of it really just came to us, just hap-

pened organically. People just started dropping folks on our doorstep."

Today Jesus People USA, a community born out of the so-called Jesus Freak movement, hasn't just carved a solid, storied living space out of a rough neighborhood up the street from Wrigley Field. The whopping 400-some residents have also built a small empire of programs tasked with giving love citywide to their brothers and sisters in need.

Just a few of their programs include a senior housing building, interim housing for families, a shelter for single women and after-school programs for kids offering everything from sports to tutoring. And yes, they still have the Dinner Guest Program, which feeds 150-200 people one day a week.

But don't expect residents to spout lofty reasons for giving. To Jackson their basic motivation is simple. They just want to put their Christian beliefs into honest action at a much-needed, basic level. That started when residents in the early days realized, when they were out in the streets taking their message to people, that it wasn't just souls that were hungry—bellies were, too. They realized that before a person's spiritual salvation could be had, their physical body had to be saved first.

Jackson explained how those early founders, who were originally looking to find themselves, ended up at their answer by beginning to look after everyone else.

"At that time we were young kids in the 1970s looking for deeper meaning in our lives and looking for ways to be living out our faith," Jackson said. "We have taken the commandments of Christ very seriously, especially where he talks about social justice issues. Where the Bible tells us to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and visit the prisoner, I like to think that these are those people."

We never set out to start a soup kitchen—or a shelter. All of it really just came to us, just happened organically.

Just like Jesus People USA countless other intentional communities around the nation are actively—and often joyously—bucking that old stereotype of seclusion from the outside world. In these community's cases, they're very much a part of that world—healing it, nourishing it, and just plain cleaning it up.

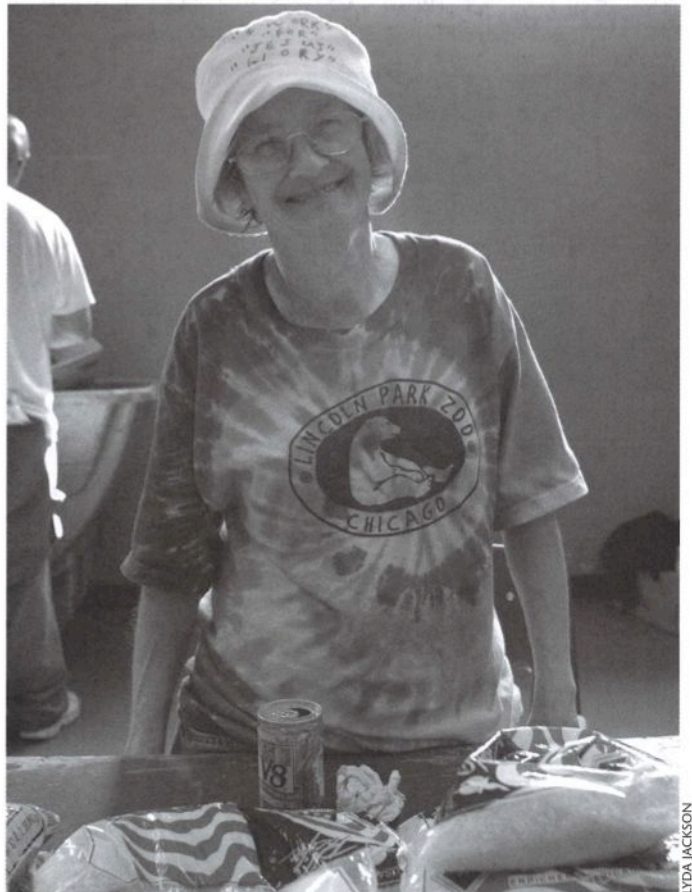
Some communities got into service in other ways. Motivated by the desire to help, places like Magic, Inc. in Palo Alto, California, invented their entire way of life around the concept of residents giving not to just to each other, but to neighbors, strangers, and the planet itself.

David Schrom, a co-founder at Magic, said that the first residents made an honest assessment of their needs and realized that those requirements included a comfortable urban living space where benefits would include healthy food and modern appliances.

"We wanted to admit that those things are important to us," Schrom explained. "But we wanted them both for ourselves and others. We feel making a difference in our lives comes not just when we get these things ourselves, but in working to make them available for everybody."



KOINONIA



LYDA JACKSON

Kathleen Monts (above) helps Shaquandra Barner and Adrianna Lincoln plant flowers outside Koinonia Community Outreach Center. Bonnie Tubbs, Jesus People USA's longtime neighbor, friend, and volunteer (below).



MAGIC



SCOTT STAHNKE

Magic member Heather Lukas (above) transports native plant species for transplanting around storm water retention basin. Jesus People USA notes that families with children represent the fastest-growing population of homeless people (below).

Such service isn't just dedication, though. It's also a path to happiness for Magic residents, with wholeness coming from that solid alignment between action and their truest values.

"The people who have come together as Magic share a common understanding that our satisfaction may depend more on others' enjoying things that are high on our lists of goods (for example, protection from violence at the hands of other people, nutritious food, clean air and water, decent housing)," he said, "than from our enjoying things lower on our lists (for example, fancy food, new clothing, expensive furnishings)."

That is why residents at Magic, since its founding in 1976, have taught life planning workshops and given seminars on topics ranging from science and value to habitat stewardship. They even have a major outreach program dedicated to awareness of sleep apnea. Residents also teach mediation, yoga, and swimming, as well as salvage thousands of fruit trees each year and teach young people how to plant them.

"Over time our central value has become loving, but ours is a process of continuing discovery," he said. "We act as we do and explain it when asked without pretending that it is 'good' or 'right' or that other ways are 'bad' or 'wrong' in any absolute sense. Rather, we're engaged in a process of trial and evaluation."

Magic residents have actually found that in addition to enriching residents' lives and bringing them closer together,

Service isn't just dedication, for Magic residents. It's also a path to happiness.

social service to their neighborhood and city also serves another vital function. It gives the entire community purpose, which immediately lends itself toward stability.

Schrom said that before he and his fellow founders opened Magic, they first sought out wisdom from existing communities. They read, asked questions of leaders around the nation, and studied communities that flourished and those that floundered. During that quest they came across important academic works from a Harvard professor who had studied the connection between social service and a community's chances for survival. The author was Dr. Rosabeth Moss Kanter and her book is *Commitment and Community: Communes and Utopias in Sociological Perspective*.

"She said that communities endure," Schrom said, "when they have a charismatic leader, are affiliated with a significant, long-standing tradition, or when they come up with some purpose that goes beyond the narrow confines of their membership. Since those other ways did not apply, our only choice was to become committed to something bigger than ourselves."

But don't expect Magic residents to confuse service with suffering. Schrom stressed how those who give are helping no one if they become trapped into thinking that giving only counts if



Taking a break from roofing and painting a neighbor's house, are (left to right) Koinonia member J. Reilly, "alternative spring break" students from the University of Virginia, and Arlen Daleske, a pastor on a service sabbatical at Koinonia.

it hurts. Schrom said he sees such a delusion as a serious threat to a community's most precious commodity—the human spirit.

"No martyrs here, please!" he said, chuckling softly. "The focus shouldn't just be for the good of the other, but for the common good. I'm part of this world, too, and it's not common good if I'm miserable and everyone's thinking 'Oh, what a great guy'."

"If you call us 'servants,' we take it as a compliment."

He added that a resident who's become misguided in their giving only stands the very real threat of burning themselves out, leaving a good cause and a community with one less caring heart.

Some intentional communities, though, aren't born out of struggle but there sure is struggle all the same. Koinonia, a small Christian farming community in Georgia, brought the races together in the early 1940s to live, work, pray, and strive for peace together. But that progressive way of life brought them some pretty harsh outcomes, including "boycotts, threats, sabotage, and bullets."

"Needless to say, Koinonia's antimilitarism, interracialism, and perceived 'Communism' got our southwest Georgia community in a lot of trouble for years—especially the mid-1960s," said Ann Karp, a current resident of the 20-person community. "Now, though we are no longer openly persecuted, these values are still central to our existence, and we still seek to serve each other and our neighbors. If you called us 'servants,' we'd take it as a compliment."

Today Koinonia's ministries include an outreach center serving everyone from youth to elders, a neighborhood program welcoming

people to join the community in "fellowship, work, service, prayer and study."

Koinonia also hosts a multitude of workshops and seminars, but its most famous offering is its Heart-to-Heart Home Repair Ministry, a program rooted in Koinonia's heritage as the birthplace of the now-famous Habitat for Humanity movement.

"Koinonia (was created) to follow Jesus' teachings as did the early churches described in the Acts of the Apostles. So service is central to our very existence. It is synonymous to being a good neighbor, which is one of the ways we live out our faith," Karp explained. "One of our founding members, Clarence Jordan, translated the gospels into the language and context of the Jim Crow South, where this farm was born. In the gospels, Clarence saw Jesus preaching and teaching three primary values: peace-

On the Web

Check out how Jesus People USA earn their much-needed funds by doing everything from making T-shirts for bands to recording their music: www.jpusa.org.

Learn more about Magic, Inc's unique philosophy, "value science": www.ecomagic.org.

Read how Koinonia's peace efforts have even entailed trips to the Middle East to learn more about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict: koinoniapartners.org.

—D.F.



MAGIC

making, brotherhood (and sisterhood), and sharing according to need, not greed. Each of these values implies service.”

The community’s help is readily accepted by its neighbors, too, with the problem of intentional communities often being misunderstood or perceived as different or strange never being an issue—thanks to its service.

“Koinonia has been woven into the greater community since its inception. We have never sought to isolate ourselves, and we

try not to build walls,” Karp said. “We know that our values are unfortunately not often embraced by the mainstream, but we try not to look at our situation as an us-them relationship.”

To residents, that blend of giving and humility is a must. “From the beginning, Koinonians understood that we have no monopoly on knowledge and assistance.” She shared the story of Clarence Johnson, who longed to help lift impoverished sharecroppers from their cycle of debt but had no practical farming experience.

“But his neighbors did. So every morning, he’d climb onto the roof to see what they were doing. If they were plowing, he plowed. If they were planting, he planted. The sharing was

**To Koinonia residents,
that blend of giving and
humility is a must.**

mutual,” she said. “When we remain aware of this dynamic, our service is much more humble and less in danger of becoming paternalistic.”

The Koinonia resident stressed, too, that the gifts that come from service are truly not one-sided, either. “It fuels our own souls just as much as it helps others. Love is its own reward,” she said.

Karp offered a few words of encouragement for intentional communities that don’t incorporate service into their vision but are interested in the thought and just may be need a bit of encouragement.

“But even if you are initially skittish or uninspired by the prospect . . . I urge you to try it out. Start small. Give blood. Help out at the animal shelter,” she said. “Join others’ service projects. You don’t have to organize it yourself right in the beginning. It really can be addictive in the best sense of the word.”

Darin Fenger is a newspaper reporter living in southern Arizona.



Dawn Betenbough-Stoner, Kathleen Monts, and Victoria Higham (left) decorate the Koinonia Community Outreach Center. Clothing, books, and household items are available to local residents at Jesus People USA’s Free Store (right).



KOINONIA/SCOTT STAHNKE



Members of Red Earth Farms community in Missouri.

On the first weekend of each summer month, thousands of antique dealers, bargain hunters, and other curious folk from across the Midwest converge on a rolling hilltop outside Rutledge, Missouri, for Johnsons' Hillbilly Flea Market, or as it's affectionately known by locals, "the dog and gun show."

Here one can purchase antique crocks in perfect condition, old farm implements, inscrutable kitchen tools, bicycles, ducks, chickens, and, yes, guns and dogs. Since it's illegal to auction off a dog, you'll hear the auctioneers say things like, "Sellin' this fine collar, attached to a two-year-old female redbone coonhound . . ."

Amid the off-road vehicles negotiating the dusty paths among the stalls, you may spy a few familiar-looking people walking toward the main auction house, perhaps pushing a bike or pulling a hand cart. As you get closer, you recognize people from Dancing Rabbit Ecovillage and Red Earth Farms, two adjacent local intentional communities. But they're not buying anything today—at least, not yet. They're on their way to flip burgers and sell hot dogs as a benefit for the Rutledge School Restoration Society. And they can be counted on not to sample the wares, as most of them are vegetarian.

Offering service to needy local projects is not part of the overt mission of Dancing Rabbit, Red Earth Farms, or 32-year-old Sandhill Farm, three miles down the road. But members of all three communities regularly contribute their time to worthy causes in the Rutledge area. Why?

"Service is part of who we are," says Gigi Wahba of Sandhill. "It's one way to be visible to our neighbors and do outreach

in the greater community. It shows our neighbors that we want to contribute." Sandhill members have served on the local agricultural extension council, participated in the master gardener program, and spoken to high school and college sociology and agriculture classes, as well as offering regular neighborly services such as giving blood, cleaning a section of the highway, and rescuing wayward swarms of bees.

"I like to help my friends and neighbors when I can," says Thomas Kortkamp of Dancing Rabbit, a frequent contributor to the repair effort on the historic school building, and also a benefit burger-flipper at the flea market.

Dancing Rabbit hosts high school and college classes every spring and fall, introducing them to ecological concepts and demonstrating sustainable living skills. Members of Dancing Rabbit have served as president of the volunteer fire department,

gone door-to-door to raise money for the American Cancer Society, brought food to sick neighbors, organized kids' games and performed music at the Rutledge Fall Festival, walked in the Relay for Life, and sung songs for residents of the local nursing home, among numerous other activities.

Red Earth Farms is the newest community in Rutledge, co-founded last year in part by former members of Dancing Rabbit and Sandhill, which is dedicated to understanding and implementing sustainable rural living. No doubt you'll see them, too, among the gang behind the refreshment counter at the next dog and gun show.

Alyson Ewald is a board member of Dancing Rabbit Ecovillage in Missouri, and cofounder of Red Earth Farms, a new community right next door.

It Shows Our Neighbors We Want to Contribute

BY ALYSON EWALD

Heirloom GARDENS, Clean WATER, & No GMOs



A fungus identification lesson in the kitchen at Sowing Circle/OAEC . . . always a good idea before munching.

If you visualize rounded hills of golden grass crowned by groves of spreading gray-green oaks, seasonal streams, and dense stands of redwoods in the moist valleys, you'll have the setting for Sowing Circle and Occidental Arts and Ecology Center (OAEC) in rural western Sonoma County, California. Sowing Circle is an 80-acre intentional community. OAEC—an educational organization offering workshops and environmental advocacy programs—is its associated nonprofit.

In 1974, the nonprofit Farallones Institute purchased 80 acres just outside Occidental, California, to serve as a model demonstration site for and to hold workshops in various aspects of sustainable rural living. They built teaching and living facilities, including a dozen vault-roofed redwood passive solar cabins, and created the now famous four-acre organic “Mother Garden”—one of the first certified organic gardens and heirloom seed-saving projects in California. In 1990 Farallones ceased operations and was taken over by a private foundation.

A group of seven environmental and social justice activists had been seeking just such a property for their planned intentional

BY PHILIP TYMON,
WITH BROCK DOLMAN,
ADAM WOLPERT, AND
DAVE HENSON

community, and in 1994 purchased the property and founded Sowing Circle. As a condition of purchase from The Center for Seven Generations, the nonprofit project stewarding the property at the time, the Mother Garden was placed in a conservation easement through the Sonoma Land Trust, which ensures that the garden will forever be preserved as an organic garden. This was the first such organic easement in the United States. The community founders created a separate, nonprofit

organization, Occidental Arts and Ecology Center, to offer courses and training in ecology and sustainable living, the visual arts, and social justice activism.

Occidental Arts and Ecology Center leases part of Sowing Circle's property, and the two organizations share the land. Today the Sowing Circle community has grown to a dozen adult members, four children, and a dozen temporary nonmember residents. About half of the adults work at OAEC either full- or part-time. The others pursue occupations not directly related to OAEC, though the Sowing Circle, as a whole, provides labor and financial support to OAEC.

Over the last dozen years Occidental Arts and Ecology Center has offered workshops in natural building, sustainable forestry, watershed management, carpentry for women, organic gardening, bee-keeping, seed-saving, cooking, food preservation, and, of course, permaculture design. In fact, we've offered the two-week Permaculture Design Course twice annually since 1995. OAEC is the only permaculture site in California to have held this course continuously for the past eleven years, or a total of 24 two-week courses to date—a fact our permaculture designer Brock Dolman is very proud of. OAEC's arts program has offered landscape and studio painting, art in the garden, and sculpture with natural materials. Two of our founders, Dave Henson and Adam Wolpert, offer workshops titled "Starting and Sustaining Intentional Communities," based on their knowledge of legal, financial, property, and process aspects of community, and their experiences founding Sowing Circle/OAEC.

But where we really believe we're making a difference, and what we're most proud of, is our environmental ethics and activist programs. Here is what we've accomplished since 1995:

- **Activist Training Workshops and Seminars.** These have included "Rethinking the Corporation, Rethinking Democracy" which were co-sponsored by the Program on Corporations, Law and Democracy (POCLAD)—which Dave Henson helped to found. As time went on, OAEC's activist interest has focused on ecological agriculture and sustainable food systems.

- **No Spray Action Network.** In 2001 California agriculture officials declared that counties must develop mandatory programs to spray pesticides on public and private property to combat the threat of an insect that kills grapevines. Such spraying not only threatened organic farms and gardens, but also threatened to expose school children, the environment, and the public in general to heavy doses of pesticides. OAEC was the lead organization in forming the No Spray Action Network—a grassroots movement to stop this forced spraying. OAEC and the Network organized thousands of local citizens, many into affinity groups trained to do non-violent disobedience to stop any forced spraying of private or public land. OAEC and the Network won a landmark agreement with the State and

County that rejected any forced spraying and replaced that with organic and least toxic alternatives to respond to the potentially invasive insect.

- **GE-Free Sonoma County.** Since 1998, OAEC has been working on the problem of genetically engineered (GE) crops. The federal FDA, USDA, and EPA have all failed the public in providing any meaningful regulation of these novel organisms. In fact, these public agencies are currently so beholden to the private interests of Monsanto, Dow, DuPont, and other chemical and agribusiness corporations that the environmental and food safety organizations all over the US have called for an immediate moratorium on the release of any more GE organisms. OAEC has been a leader in that work, especially in developing campaigns around California to build grassroots power to stop GE crops and foods.

In 2004, OAEC founded GE-Free Sonoma County. OAEC staff took the lead in drafting a ballot initiative which appeared on the November 2005 ballot. The initiative would have placed a ten-year moratorium on the cultivation, sale, or distribution of GE organisms into the environment. Unfortunately, the very conservative local and state Farm Bureaus mounted a heavily-funded campaign to scare voters into thinking that the moratorium would prevent the use of various vaccines and medicines, though this was not true. While the measure lost by 55 percent to 45 percent, the result was to move the issue into the forefront of the public consciousness. OAEC believes that continued education and activism around the issue will eventually lead to a ban, or at least strong regulation, on a statewide basis.

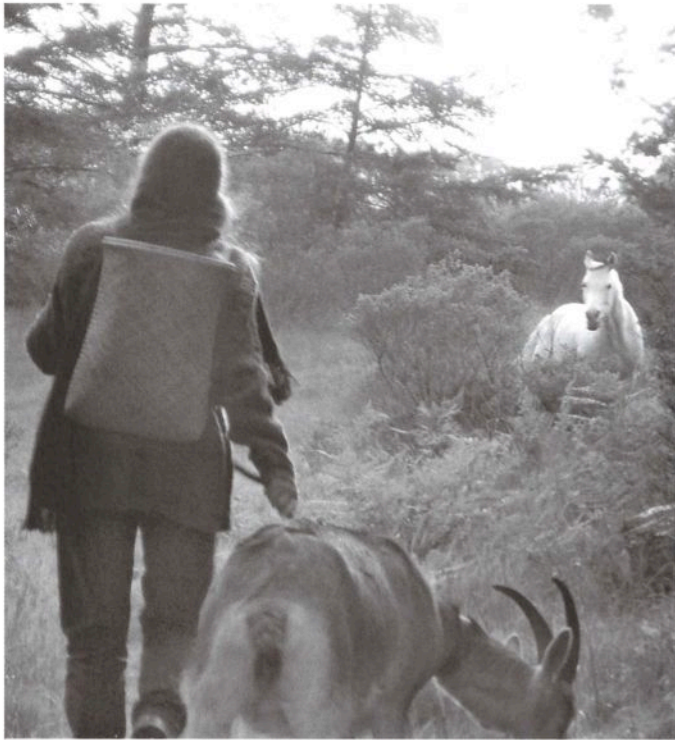
- **Basins of Relations Program.** OAEC's Permaculture Program Director, Brock Dolman, wishing to create more awareness of watersheds as an environmental, social, and political entity, began the "Basins of Relations" program to train local watershed groups in education, advocacy, monitoring, and restoration. The program has trained or helped to start 27 citizen-based watershed groups or councils in central and northern coastal California.

Our activist programs are successful partly because we're based in intentional community.



Students at OAEC's strawbale greenhouse workshop.

JIM COLEMAN



Hiking in Sowing Circle/OAEC's back country.

- **The WATER Institute.** In 2005, we broadened our involvement with water issues by creating the WATER Institute (Watershed Advocacy Training Education and Research). The WATER Institute has been instrumental in adding and implementing a “water resource element” as part of the Sonoma County 20-Year General Plan update, and is actively researching conservation hydrology with the goal of creating model watershed “budgets” that can be used in advocating for watershed conservation and restoration to local governments in general planning and other policy processes. The watershed budget traces all inputs and outflows from a watershed, reveals the dynamics of water flow, and leads to strategies for both how to rehydrate the land and underlying water table and how to prevent pollutants from infiltrating the water supply.

- **School Garden Teacher Training Program.** Begun in 1996, this project helped establish 85 garden programs throughout northern California—not only creating a garden at the school, but integrating the garden into the school curriculum—and helped launch two affiliated programs, the Sonoma County School Garden Network and the Green Schools Initiative. More recently we expanded our focus to urban schools in low-income

OAEC Values

Here are some of our shared values, with which we hope to synthesize place, community, and intention.

1. Respect Ancestry

The sheer volume of industrial technology, media, and materials in our lives force upon us the illusion that the present is the only time frame to pay attention to. Yet without knowing the lessons learned by our recent and distant ancestors, we are indeed destined to repeat past mistakes, and to lose the knowledge and wisdom they held. We at OAEC strive to honor the ancestry of our land, and the wisdom of people who preceded us.

2. Respect Diversity

A diverse natural system is a healthy system. With diversity, life hedges its bets, exploits every niche, and becomes resilient through interdependence. Biologists tell us that we are living amidst the sixth great extinction event in the history of the evolution of life on Earth. This one was not caused by meteorite, volcano, or ice age, but is a consequence of a brief thousand years of humans exploiting every life form and resource encountered. Faced with this precipitous decline in biological diversity, we at OAEC greatly value actions that conserve and restore every expression of life.

3. Respect Ripeness

To know when something is ripe, one must pay attention and have patience. Just because we may be ready for that tomato or

peach to be eaten, it may not be ripe. As passionate harvesters of our cultivated vegetables and fruit, and of wild mushrooms, Bay Laurel nuts, and other native delicacies, we learn well to wait until just the right moment. This is a practice OAEC also applies to our social change programs. Social, economic and political conditions are often unripe for the change we so passionately desire today. Rather than act out of time and harvest a sour fruit, we seek to prepare well, and act when the moment is truly ripe.

4. Cultivate Democracy

We hold democracy as an ideal to approach, not as a result achieved. We apply democratic values in all we do, from our loftiest program goals to the most routine daily acts of our staff and community. We are committed to democratic values: participation, inclusiveness, equality, empowerment, shared responsibility, transparency, accountability, and respect.

5. Cultivate Community

In 1850, the population of California was less than 100,000. In 2004, it was over 35 million. Many of us lack the kinship, geographic context, or locally evolved cosmology that made the world coherent and meaningful to our ancestors. Our challenge is to begin to act as if we plan to live here another ten thousand years. That requires cultivating communities based on a local sense of

areas, especially inner-city San Francisco schools, which receive free training and special follow-up support.

- **Mother Garden Program.** OAEC trains teachers, interns, and permaculture students in biointensive organic gardening, manages its extensive seedbank of open-pollinated and heirloom plants, provides seedlings to numerous school and community gardens, and holds three public plant sales a year.

We believe we are as successful as we are in teaching workshops and our activist programs partly *because* OAEC was part of the original vision of the community founders, and because OAEC is physically based in the Sowing Circle community. Participants in our workshops and advocacy programs can clearly see, in our community in our daily lives, the environmental ethics that OAEC promotes.

Philip Tymon is Administrative Director of Occidental Arts and Ecology Center. He is not a member of the Sowing Circle (although he lives nearby). Adam Wolpert, Brock Dolman, and Dave Henson are all Sowing Circle members.



Participants of OAEC's school garden teacher training program learn to build a cob bench.

BROCK DOLMAN

place, awareness of the limits of natural resources, connection to the rest of the world, and democratic self-governance. Every OAEC program seeks to cultivate this practical, long-range perspective.

6. Cultivate Literacy

Researchers report that 60 years ago, the average U.S. High School senior knew about 40,000 words. Today, that High School senior knows 10,000 words. This is indicative of the “dumbing down” of America. When we lack the linguistic capacity to make sense of the world, we risk becoming little more than pawns of the power elite. We believe that we still do have a choice. At OAEC, we value, teach, and try to model ecological literacy, global literacy, economic literacy, historical literacy, democratic literacy, and other tools for critical thinking.

7. Cultivate Creativity

We value the creative energy within each human being. From whimsical indulgences to journeys into the depth of mystery, our creativity is essential to our humanity. When we develop our capacity for creative self-expression, we enjoy richer and more satisfying lives. OAEC encourages each person in our community, and those we engage through our program work, to explore and achieve their creative potential.

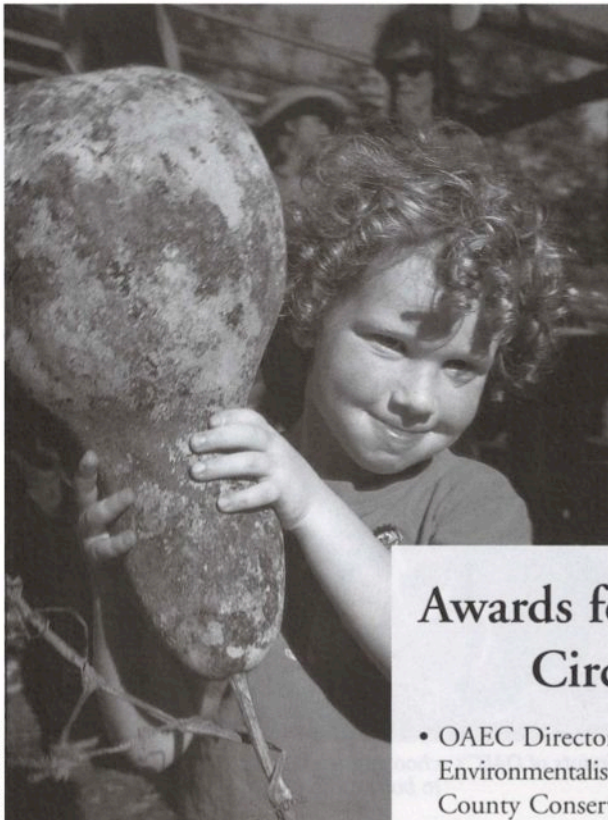
8. Practice Solidarity

We have designed our work and lives so we must ask certain questions over and over again. With whom do we stand? For whom or what will we interrupt our daily routine and make a sacrifice? How far can we extend our personal circle of love and caring? We value personal and community acts of solidarity—speaking up for the voiceless and standing beside those who struggle for justice. As a project and a community, we at OAEC strive to create space in our jobs and in our personal lives to change that which could be made better, and to stand with all who aspire for a better world.

9. Be Radical

To be radical is to address the root cause of a problem—to remove the source of a disease rather than simply treating the symptoms. We recognize that we are living in a time of nearly unprecedented danger. Basic global systems that support human life are close to collapse because of ozone depletion, climate change, mass species extinction, compounding environmental chemical toxicity, fresh water depletion and human population explosion. Actions that seek simply to regulate the degree of the harm are no longer tolerable. Rather, at OAEC, we value ideas, strategies and actions which are nonviolent and compassionate, and which focus on deep, structural, radical change of the sort that will give our children's children a chance to enjoy more beautiful days.

—O.A.E.C.



DAVE HENSON

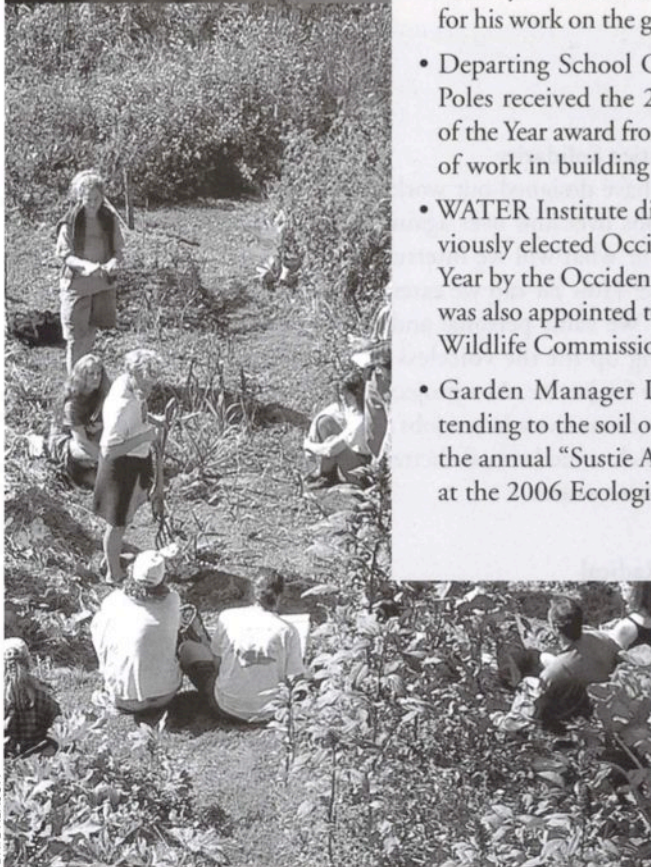


BROCK DOLMAN

Awards for OAEC/Sowing Circle Members

- OAEC Director Dave Henson received the 2005 Environmentalist of the Year award from the Sonoma County Conservation Council (SCCC), primarily for his work on the genetic engineering moratorium.
- Departing School Garden Program Director Tina Poles received the 2005 Environmental Educator of the Year award from the SCCC for her seven years of work in building the program.
- WATER Institute director Brock Dolman was previously elected Occidental Environmentalist of the Year by the Occidental Chamber of Commerce and was also appointed to the Sonoma County Fish and Wildlife Commission.
- Garden Manager Doug Gosling, who has been tending to the soil on this site for 23 years, received the annual "Sustie Award for Sustainable Farming" at the 2006 Ecological Farming Conference.

—P.T.



DAVE HENSON



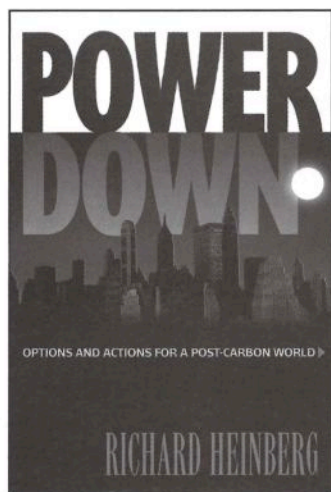
JIM COLEMAN



JIM COLEMAN

From above clockwise: A hands-on organic garden workshop in the south garden. Jacob chooses a dried gourd to clean for an art project. Group photo of some of the OAEC staff and Sowing Circle Community. Brock and Jake on Biodiversity Exploration Day! Ezra loves helping Renata save seeds for next year's garden.

REVIEWS



Powerdown Options and Actions for a Post-Carbon World

By Richard Heinberg

New Society Publishers, 2004
Pb. 208 pp., \$16.95

Reviewed by Diana Leafe Christian

Powerdown takes over where Richard Heinberg's *The Party's Over* (reviewed in *Spring'06* issue) leaves off. *Powerdown* explores four possible responses to Peak Oil challenges—"Last One Standing," a government strategy of war and competition; "Powerdown," a government strategy of self-limitation, cooperation, and sharing; "Waiting for a Magic Elixir," wishful thinking, false hopes, and denial; and "Building Lifeboats," a scenario of individual community solidarity and preservation.

The aim of the Last One Standing strategy is for the most militarily powerful countries to shift the pain and loss of resource depletion onto less industrialized, poorer nations through military and government takeover. This results, Heinberg points out,

in dead and maimed soldiers from the invading countries; dead and maimed soldiers *and* civilians in the invaded nations; an increasingly indebted and fragile economy for the invading nations; increasing poverty, sickness, epidemics, and despair in all nations in the conflict; and increased environmental destruction worldwide—all to delay the inevitable oil shortages in the invading countries for a few more years, while the quality of life plummets irrevocably for everyone. "The horrors of The Last One Standing strategy are inevitable," he writes, as a result of which we or our immediate descendants would "probably die in resource wars, famines, or plagues."

The aim of the Powerdown strategy is to avert global economic and environmental collapse by voluntarily cutting back on

providing oil to these countries. The centralized Cuban government organized their own form of Powerdown. They redesigned the country's economic, agricultural, and transportation systems; distributed collectivized farmland to individual farmers; shifted from individually owned vehicles to public transportation and bicycling; supplanted industrial farming with organic farming; relocated agricultural activities closer to cities to reduce transportation, refrigeration, and storage; and utilized permaculture design, oxen as draft animals, and individual city gardening on terraces and rooftops. In the beginning, times were tough: adult Cubans lost 30 pounds on average, and tens of thousands of children were seriously malnourished. Most people became vegetarians out of necessity. Now,

Now, 12 years after they lost their oil supply, Cubans have enough to eat, and although "poor" by the standards of wealthy, industrialized nations, are doing reasonably well.

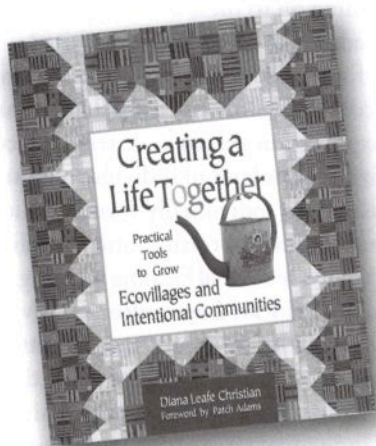
levels of population and on resource consumption. It would involve an immediate concerted government action of industrialized societies to stop further conventional economic growth and redistribute wealth, both to equalize richer and poorer people within their own nations, and between their nations and poorer nations. It would mean using penalties and incentives to induce people to limit their resource use per-person, and limit and conserve the use of oil, coal, natural gas, fresh water, topsoil, and other basic, limited resources. It would mean providing public education about sustainability on an immense scale. Everyone, especially people in wealthy nations, would need to reduce their consumerist lifestyles and seek "more modest material goals more slowly achieved." And everyone would need to help stabilize and reduce the swelling human population.

Heinberg contrasts Cuba and North Korea, whose governments both experienced sudden energy shortages when the former Soviet Union collapsed and stopped

12 years later, Cubans have enough to eat, and although "poor" by the standards of wealthy, industrialized nations, are doing reasonably well.

"People can do extraordinary things if motivated by a strong and clear appeal to a developed sense of ethics," Heinberg writes. "Most people (though certainly not all) are ethically motivated; they want to believe that what they are doing is *good*."

North Korea, with an equally centralized government, could not adapt, mostly because of their much colder climate, a series of weather disasters, and a more militaristic government. After North Korea lost its Soviet oil supply, its annual grain production dropped to one-million tons of grains *below* a subsistence level, and an estimated two million of the country's 22 million people starved to death. Members of US Congress who visited reported that people were eating grass and bark. Even now, 60 percent of North Korean children suffer from chronic malnutrition. Meanwhile, a huge percentage of the country's



Creating a Life Together:

Practical Tools to Grow Ecovillages and Intentional Communities

By Diana Leafe Christian
Editor, *Communities Magazine*
Foreword by Patch Adams

"Every potential ecovillager should read it."

—Bill Mollison

"Wow! The newest, most comprehensive bible for builders of intentional communities."

—Hazel Henderson

"A really valuable resource . . . I wish I had it years ago."

—Starhawk

"On my top three 'must-read' list for cohousers."

—Ann Zabaldo,
Takoma Village Cohousing

"I stayed up till 2:00 am with this book! . . . I recommend it for all cohousing groups and cohousing professionals."

—Sally Wright,
Pleasant Hill Cohousing

"The right book at the right time. Will help community founders avoid fatal mistakes."

—Hildur Jackson, Co-founder,
Global Ecovillage Network

New Society Publishers, 2003
\$22.95 • store.ic.org • Bookstores

annual wealth goes into maintaining its army, and renewed famine seems likely.

The Powerdown strategy requires that powerful centralized governments dismantle themselves voluntarily. "Institutions do not give up power easily," Heinberg writes. ". . . the idea that we must create *larger and more powerful* governmental bodies *in order to later do away with centralized international and national governments* is clearly problematic." He considers it unlikely that the government of any wealthy, industrialized nation would voluntarily choose a Powerdown strategy.

Waiting for the Magic Elixir focuses on hopeful solutions that would temporarily address one aspect of the problem, but which don't touch the underlying matrix of interconnected problems. Even if, for example, we could magically find new oil fields, or use coal, nuclear power, wind generators, or passive solar design to run our power plants or heat our homes, these

strategies wouldn't help us grow food or address environmental degradation, global climate change, or our mushrooming world population. Even if scientists miraculously and swiftly overcome the technical challenges of using hydrogen fuel cells, or the

If there is a sane path from where we are to a truly sustainable future, these [intentional community] folks have surely found it.

technical and environmental challenges of extracting fuel from tar sands and methyl hydrides, or if thermal depolymerization suddenly became effective and widely available (or if we in fact do invent free energy devices or get saved by aliens) what do we do about the weather getting ever-warmer and our now-seven billion mouths to feed?

Facile solutions are a form of denial, he says. They "merely draw our attention away from the problem too soon, and we're often quite happy to have our attention so diverted," while the problem continues to grow.

Building Lifeboats is the response of individuals or small groups who repudiate

Books and Organizations Advocating a Powerdown Strategy

Some resources Richard Heinberg recommends:

- The Apollo Alliance: www.apolloalliance.org
- The Natural Step: www.naturalstep.org
- Natural Capitalism: www.naturalcapitalism.org
- Industrial Ecology: is4ie.org
- Biomimicry: www.biomimicry.org
- The Global Reporting Initiative: globalreporting.org
- Community Choice: localpower.org
- The Post-Carbon Institute: postcarbon.org
- *Plan B: Rescuing a Planet Under Stress and a Civilization in Trouble*, Lester Brown (W.W. Norton, 2003)
- *Ecological Economics: Principles and Applications*, Herman A. Daly and Joshua Farley (Island Press, 2003)
- *Energy Revolution: Policies for a Sustainable Future*, Howard Geller (Island Press, 2002)
- *The 2030 Spike: Countdown to Global Catastrophe*, Colin Mason (Earthscan, 2003)
- *A Prosperous Way Down: Principles and Policies*, Howard T. Odum and Elizabeth C. Odum (University of Colorado Press, 2001)

militarism, expect a societal collapse over the next 5-20 years, and want to help themselves and their friends stay fed, sheltered, and safe from violence and disease. Heinberg examines past civilizations that collapsed, slowly or quickly (the western Roman Empire, the classic Mayan civilization), and scholars' analyses of the reasons for and steps by which societies collapse. He postulates likely collapse scenarios, from large countries breaking up into smaller regional governments (like the former Soviet Union), to wealthy individuals becoming local warlords in Mad Max-like feudal societies, and useful goods, not money, becoming the basis of commerce. He looks at who is most likely to suffer—people living in highly populous regions, or which need massive energy inputs for heating or cooling, or in which everyone is armed. Countries in which people don't use much energy per person will do better, he believes, as will some indigenous societies, and the Amish.

He distinguishes between what he calls "mere survivalist communities" and "preservationist communities of service," that ". . . will persist through acts of service that will make them indispensable to the regional population. Members of such communities will teach important skills—food growing and storage, tool and clothing making, house and boat building, renewable energy generation, and more; and provide healing, entertainment, general education, spiritual leadership and counseling, exchange depots for food and other commodities, seed banks, biodiversity refuges, and more. Survivalist communities will need to protect themselves from the people around them; preservationist communities will be protected by the people they serve."

Heinberg observes that even the most dedicated peace, social justice, and environmental activists won't tackle the thorniest problem—reducing the world's swelling population—because it is culturally taboo (not to mention, political suicide) to suggest that people's personal reproductive rights be limited.

He ends on a hopeful note for a tiny fraction of the world's population—us. He mentions friends of his in various intentional communities and ecovillages

worldwide who are pursuing Powerdown and Lifeboat strategies simultaneously. "While they engage in activism on many fronts," he writes, "participating vigorously in the anti-globalization, peace, and environmental movements—they also have established rural bases where they save heirloom seeds, build their own homes from natural and locally available materials, and hone other life-support skills

that they and future generations will need. I admire those people unreservedly: if there is a sane path from where we are to a truly sustainable future, these folks have surely found it."

I found *The Party's Over* and *Powerdown* both heartbreaking and empowering. I can't recommend these books highly enough.

Peak Oil DVDs

Another way to learn about Peak Oil issues is to hear from the experts directly.

The End of Suburbia, a video documentary featuring some of the world's leading Peak Oil thinkers and analysts—including many of the experts cited by Richard Heinberg in *The Party's Over*—is perhaps the best-known video documentary on the subject, an underground hit passed from friend to friend and shown in people's living rooms. Besides Richard Heinberg, renowned urban designer Peter Calthorpe and others, you hear from: • Colin Campbell, former geologist for Oxford University, Texaco, British Petroleum, and Amoco; founder of ASPO (Association for the Study of Peak Oil); and author *The Coming Oil Crisis*. • Kenneth Deffeyes, petroleum geologist, researcher for Shell Oil, Professor Emeritus at Princeton University, and author of *Hubbert's Peak: the Impending World Oil Shortage*. • Julian Darley, environmental philosopher, founder of the Internet broadcasting station GlobalPublicMedia.com, founder of the Post Carbon Institute, and author of *High Noon for Natural Gas*. • Matthew Simmons, author of *Twilight in the Desert: the Coming Saudi Oil Shock and the World Economy*; advisor to the Bush Administration; and CEO of the world's largest investment bank, whose clients include Halliburton and the World Bank. • Michael C. Ruppert, Peak Oil pioneer and author of *Crossing the Rubicon: The Decline of The American Empire at the End of the Age of Oil*. • James Howard Kunstler, new urbanist and author of *Home from Nowhere* and *Geography of Nowhere*, about suburbia, and *The Long Emergency*, about Peak Oil and other approaching threats, describes the anticipated devastating effects on industrial society (78 minutes, available in DVD or video, www.endofsuburbia.com).

In **Colin Campbell, Petroleum Geologist**, veteran geologist Campbell explains Peak Oil, the basics of petroleum geology, how oil affects and inflames geopolitics, and the damaging effects of free market economics in hastening oil and gas depletion (*Global Media Productions, distributed by New Society Publishers, 135 minutes, \$24, www.newsociety.com; www.postcarbon.org*).

In **Matt Simmons, Energy Banker**, Simmons, an international investment banker, petroleum analyst, and energy consultant to the Bush Administration, documents why he believes Saudi Arabian oil fields, cannot, as claimed, increase oil production over the next few decades, and the economic and geopolitical implications, from his 2004 presentation to the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington, DC, and four in-depth interviews (*Global Media Productions, distributed by New Society Publishers, 200 minutes, \$24, www.newsociety.com; www.postcarbon.org*).

In **Richard Heinberg, Human Ecologist**, Heinberg gives a compelling chapter-by-chapter synopsis of *Powerdown*, along with an in-depth interview (*Global Media Productions, distributed by New Society Publishers, 200 minutes, \$24, www.newsociety.com; www.postcarbon.org*).

—D.L.C.

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Ecovillages
**A Practical Guide to
Sustainable Communities**

By Jan Martin Bang

New Society Publishers, 2005

Pb. 284 pp., \$24.95

Reviewed by Diana Leafé Christian

Author Jan Martin Bang—permaculture designer, former kibbutz dairy farmer, and currently member of a Camphill Community in Norway—has had wide-ranging experiences of sustainable living, learning, and teaching on four continents. He describes his experiences and shares the ecological, social, and spiritual design systems that have impressed him most, accompanied by brief descriptions and color photos of 24 intentional communities or small settlements he has visited worldwide since the 1970s.

He begins by sharing where he's been and what he's learned about the ecovillage movement, and sets the tone: personable, humorous, self-revealing. The book reads like a well-informed letter to a friend. He employs Robert and Diane Gilman's description of an ecovillage ("Human-scale, full-featured settlement, etc."), and tells how Global Ecovillage Network got started and how he got involved with it, as well as a brief introduction to permaculture, and how as a new permaculture teacher he helped develop the Green Kibbutz movement in Israel. He introduces ecological footprints and ecovillage auditing, and various kinds of natural buildings styles, sustainable agriculture methods, water management and sewage treatment

systems, sources of off-grid energy and energy auditing, and alternative economics. Each chapter contains several color pages of one or more different communities or settlements, the chief characteristics of the community tied loosely, in some cases, to the theme of the chapter.

GEN (Global Ecovillage Network) suggests that a healthy ecovillage must support three kinds of values: personal, social, and ecological. Jan observes that this is quite similar to the three Anthroposophical spheres of community ("Threefolding") modeled in Camphill communities worldwide which offer life in community to people with developmental disabilities. These spheres are the spiritual (worshiping, learning, and making music and art), corresponding to the personal; that of

**He introduces
ecological footprints
and ecovillage
auditing.**

agreements and rights (making decisions cooperatively, working out interpersonal issues), corresponding to the social; and the economic (producing, buying, selling, and looking after one another).

Because this book is entitled "Ecovillages" and has many short color photo sections of communities, I expected it would focus on ecovillage theory and principles, with details and variations on a variety of long-standing successful ecovillages worldwide. I was expecting to see Crystal Waters in Australia, and the most famous North American example: Eco-Village at Ithaca, along with Torii Superiore in Italy, the many Danish ecovillages, and, ideally, examples in Latin America and Africa. But it's not that kind of a book. Few literal "ecovillage" communities are included (Findhorn, ZEGG, Lebensgarten, Ecovillage Training Center at The Farm, Earthaven). Some brief photo-overviews are of long-standing intentional communities (some of which have become more ecologically sustainable in recent years; others which I assume are included because, the extent to which people cooperate and

share resources is itself considered sustainable). The photo overviews include several kibbutzim, two Camphill communities, a Bruderhof community, a '70s-era rural homesteading community in Australia, a high-rise apartment complex in Germany with some ecological features, an urban hospital converted to an ecologically oriented co-op in Amsterdam, an ashram in Italy devoted to an Indian guru which has some interesting looking buildings, an organic farm in Italy that was once a co-op and is now privately owned, an ecological education center in Turkey that has since closed down, and a pair of Egyptian villages whose residents grow rice cooperatively, have some off-grid PV power, and use methane digesters. Interesting and inspiring, even, but not exactly a Who's Who of ecovillage projects.

This of course brings up the subject: when is a community an ecovillage, and when is it not? Is an intentional community which in more recent years became more ecologi-

cally sustainable (or some members, or some neighborhoods have become more sustainable), and which now calls itself an ecovillage, really an ecovillage? Who decides this? Moreover, does anyone think they're qualified to decide this? If GEN never presumes to draw lines between what is and isn't an ecovillage, I certainly won't.

Nevertheless, I found myself looking at some of the profiled settlements and wondering why the book was titled *Ecovillages*. For example, consider the Woodcrest Bruderhof in New York, which is included in the photo-profiles. The Bruderhof communities are religious income-sharing communes founded by an Anabaptist pacifist Christian sect in Germany in the 1920s, which for a time were affiliated with the Hutterites. They are known for their successful community businesses, for bridging with various Israeli kibbutzim, as well as for having a hierarchical governance led by male elders, and for being conservative, and some would say relatively strict, in matters having to do with discipline in relations between the sexes, and between

parents and children. But interested in ecological sustainability?

Or Twin Oaks in Virginia, which also is profiled. Twin Oakers grow and raise much of their own food, harvest most of their own firewood, and have pioneered a village-scale economy with successful on-site community businesses, which is great. But they've been doing this since before the concept of "ecovillages" was developed. One of their nine small-group residences, built in the '90s, is passive solar and has off-grid power and other sustainable features. (Is it the case that many communities always were destined to be ecovillages-in-the-making, and the concept and set of ecological principles came along later?)

I think this book isn't so much about actual ecovillages as it is about the *idea* of ecovillages—some principles they embody, some sustainable systems they employ, and some helpful methods to keep in mind when creating our own. I might have called this book "Toward Sus-

tainable Human Settlements," "Principles and Methods for Creating Sustainable Villages," or even, "Helpful Alternative Systems I've Studied; Cool Places I've Been." Crystal Waters, Torii Superiore, and EcoVillage at Ithaca aren't included, I suspect, partly because Jan and his camera haven't made it to those locations yet, and he began collecting information that later became this book long before there *were* very many up-and-running ecovillage examples to visit.

One aspect the book reduced my full enjoyment—the quality of the photo reproduction and how they're arranged, which is the doing of the original European publisher. (The book was later picked up for North American distribution by New Society Publishers, but by then the book was already printed.) Most photos look relatively washed out and are framed within a watered-down pea-soup page color, which gives a kind of anemic cast to all the photo sections.

I'm still waiting for that book on ecovillages that will delve deeply into ecovillage practices and characteristics, with well-



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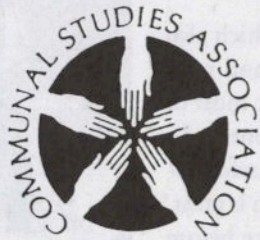
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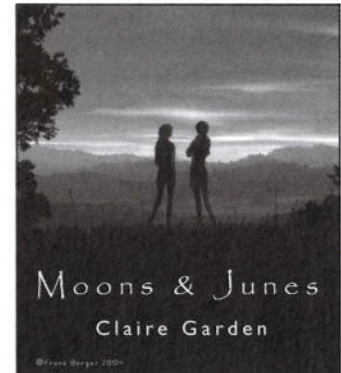
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established, on-the-ground examples world-wide, including Africa; with first-person how-we-did-it stories (like Liz Walker's *EcoVillage at Ithaca*, 2005); and, ideally, vivid, intensely saturated photos (like Gaia Trust/Green Books' *Ecovillage Living*, edited by Hildur Jackson and Karen Svensson, 2003). And, while we're at it, with an ecological footprint analysis of each! Who's gonna write that book?!



Moons and Junes

By Claire Garden

Books Unbound E-Publishing Company,
2005

75 pp. Downloadable pages, \$5.95. \$10.95
mailed CD rom.

www.booksunbound.com

Reviewed by Diana Leafé Christian

Moons and Junes is another wonderful novel for young people set in a realistically portrayed intentional community. Claire Gordon's first, *Child of the Wild Wind* (reviewed in the Fall '04 issue; www.electronicbookpublishing.com), introduced Mockingbird, a 12-year-old boy, and his dad, Jacob, as they joined Wild Wind community in rural Iowa. In *Moons and Junes* the protagonist is 13-year-old Megan, a girl from the local town who visits Wild Wind, only to have her life, and that of her parents, profoundly challenged and changed. (Most of the same characters from *Child of the Wild Wind* appear in *Moons and Junes* as well; however, each book is "stand alone" and one not need to read the other book to get the context.)

Here's why I am impressed by *Moons and Junes*: First, even though it is sympa-

thetic to and entertaining and humorous for young people, it grabbed my attention as well—I wanted to know what the characters would do next!

Second, as in *Child of the Wild Wind*, Claire got the community setting so right—or at least, this specific kind of community. Wild Wind is income-sharing commune with onsite businesses and all the usual community characters—the managers who want others to be productive and efficient, the grumbling slackers who resent the “Fascists” (hey, isn’t it like this in *your* community too?), the community veteran who stops all efforts to change things, the nurturing community process folks, the weird-vibe visitors who do bizarre things and give the community a bad name with the neighbors. Like East Wind, where Claire lived

The author got the community setting so right.

for a year and a half, community members live in small-group residences each with their own room, raise organic food, use composting toilets, eat in the community kitchen, pick their own chores and work projects but have rotating mandatory kitchen clean-up, dress from the free clothes bin (also called Commie Clothes), wear fanciful costumes or go partially unclothed, shower in unisex showers and consider nudity no big deal. And like mainstream culture people (and parents) everywhere, Megan at first, and her parents, are suspicious of and resentful toward the no doubt-unwashed hippie Communists for undermining the traditional decent values that we hold dear and want to instill in our children. Classic. But not stereotypical. The characters, from Megan and her town friends to her hardworking parents and the folks at Wild Wind, were all sympathetically drawn and quite believable to me. There aren’t good guys and bad guys, but realistically portrayed people whose points of view you can understand.

Third, the plot helps reveal and illuminate real community issues, with no soft-pedaling. People who don’t show up for their work shifts and do shoddy work;

frustrated managers who quit in disgust or put up, not only with no honor, but widespread resentment. People who want a stricter new-member policy to select for people who don’t drink or smoke to excess and seem responsible; people who prevent such policies so they can get more new members to support their preferred way of life. People who yearn for more personal privacy; people who scorn personal privacy as a middle class hang-up. People who are so countercultural and personally self-expressive that they repel neighbors and potential supporters; people who are so confident and self-reliant that they attract and beneficially influence outsiders.

Lastly, I was impressed because the characters grow and learn from their experiences—they get their consciousness raised. Essentially the message of this book is one that community activist Laird Schaub and the Fellowship for Intentional Community have been putting out there for years: that community process and community values have much to teach the rest of us—that community living has beneficial, exportable “products” for mainstream

THE LAST STRAW

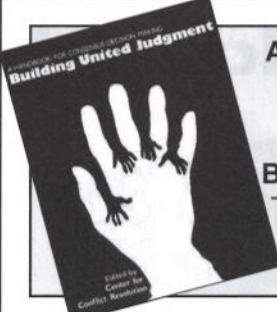
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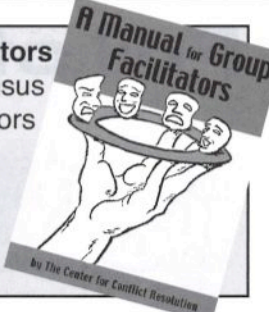
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culture. We get to see this lived out in the characters of *Moons and Junes*, although not in a preachy way, ever.

One thing that concerns me about the book really has nothing to do with the story or Clair Garden's fine writing style: it's that readers might think, "Oh, this is the way it is in community," rather than, "Oh, this is the way it is in an exceptionally countercultural, rural, income-sharing commune." How I wish we had novels that *also* realistically portrayed life in a cohousing community, or a student-housing co-op, urban group household, or rural sustainability education center. Or an ecovillage. Hmm.

My other quibble is that, since this book is electronically published, and thus not sitting cover-up on the table at your local bookstore where people can reach for it and think, "Wow, what's this? A novel set

in community." Nevertheless, readers who want to get this book can do so easily, as long as they have Internet access and a printer. (Books Unbound can also mail you a CD.)

I highly recommend *Moons and Junes*, as well as *Child of the Wild Wind*, for anyone contemplating community living who wants to know more about what to expect, or who lives in community now, and wants to show their family what it's like.

Diana Leafe Christian is editor of Communities magazine and author of Creating a Life Together: Practical Tools to Grow Ecovillages and Intentional Communities, and the forthcoming Finding the Ecovillage or Intentional Community of Your Dreams: A Field Guide (New Society Publishers, spring, 2007). She lives at Earhaven Ecovillage in North Carolina.

The plot helps reveal and illuminate real community issues, with no soft-pedaling.

GAIA UNIVERSITY

(continued from p. 15)

"And where are they," Liora asks. I look for their address.

"You're not going to believe this; they're in Boulder, Colorado! Lets give them a call." We get an appointment with Sally of Revans University for the next day.

Over coffee and donuts we explain our mission. Sally invites us to contact the parent organization of Revans U, one IMCA, an international association of management professionals, to see if we could use their support. So where are they, we wonder? They're 40 minutes up the road from my ecovillage in England and I am due back there next week.

This remarkable connection blossoms: IMCA has developed a dynamic quality assurance scheme, called IMCA Socrates®, for action learners at work, accredited to Bachelors, Masters, and Doctorate degree levels, and they're experienced at installing their programs in corporate bodies worldwide.

Will they take on Gaia U, we wonder? They did! Now we know that the vision can manifest on the ground, move from dream to operational reality, shapeshift from design to action.

This is how our accreditation, the element we had expected the most difficulty with, came about with relative ease, so early in the journey. Then we were left with the challenge of filling in all the details to take the Diploma WorkNet structure to a global level. The journey has begun and there are two Regional Locales in formation, as Gaia CERTN at The Farm's Ecovillage Training Centre in Tennessee, and as Gaia Deutschland in Germany, this last focalized by Declan Kennedy, chairman of Gaia U's growing and illustrious Advisory Board. We are starting with MSc degrees and Graduate Diplomas this year and more programs are in development in Mexico, Brazil, Spain, and Australia.

Liora and I have made a lifelong commitment to develop Gaia U, our legacy project for the movements.

Oh, and by the way, we're to be married later this year, too.

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Jun 18-19, Jul 15-16, Aug 19-20, Sep 6-7 • Permaculture Fundamentals
Earthaven Ecovillage, Black Mountain, NC. Parts two through five of five-weekend course. Patricia Allison, Chuck Marsh & others. Five-weekend course—part I of Permaculture Design Course. Topics: sustainability, integrated human ecosystems, food forests and local foodsheds, processing human waste, natural building and appropriate technology, economic strategies, sustainability in the city, healing cultural wounds. Plus hands-on garden work, pond-making, natural building, graywater systems, erosion control, rock work, dances, circles, campfires. \$650 for all 5 weekends, incl. food, camping. Indoor lodging also available. www.earthaven.org; ehpa@directway.com; 828-664-0076.

Jun 19 - Aug 25 • Natural Building Skill Builder
O.U.R. Ecovillage, Vancouver Island, Canada. Cob construction, light-clay infill, strawbale and cob finishing, stonework, natural plasters, earthen floors, community life. Background theory and natural house design principals. \$3,900, incl. meals, camping. Elke Cole from Cobworks, Holger Laerad, and other guest instructors. www.ourecoovillage.org; our@pacificcoast.net; 250-743-3067.

Jun 23 - Jul 7 • Permaculture Design Certificate Program
EcoVersity, Santa Fe, NM. Scott Pittman, founder, Permaculture Drylands Institute, and co-founder, Permaculture Credit Union. Permaculture is a practical design system to create settings with the diversity, stability, and resilience of natural ecosystems, and to provide tools for building energy-efficient homes, water conservation, alternative waste treatment, soil building, preserving biodiversity, land restoration, erosion control, seed saving, and land stewardship. \$890. EcoVersity, 2639 *Agua Fria Street, Santa Fe, NM 87505*;

www.ecoversity.org; info@ecoversity.org; 505-424-9797.

June 26-Aug 18 • Ecovillage and Permaculture Certificate Program: Integrating Land, Building
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 30-Jul 4 • Mud Walls, Earth Plasters
Earthaven Ecovillage, Black Mountain, NC. Steve Brodmerkel and Chuck Marsh. Finishing adobe brick walls on a house at Earthaven, learning how to shape and prepare the walls for plastering, building an arched adobe interior wall, possibly be "stair-stepping" cob-adobe walls to interface with a strawbale wall. \$255, incl. camping, meals. www.earthaven.org; arjuna@earthaven.org; 828-669-0114.

Jul 7-9 • Healing Through Food, Gardening, Herbs, and Ceremony
Occidental Arts & Ecology Center (OAEC), Occidental, CA. Rekindle deeper knowing through plant spirit medicine, medicinal herbs and oils, gardening as a practical/spiritual practice, food as medicine. Weston A. Price's pioneering 1930s nutritional work, herbal oil infusions, salve-making, using hand tools effectively, composting, garden bed preparation, planting, preparing sauerkraut and rejuvenative snacks. Michelle Vesser. \$425/\$375, sl/sc, incl. meals, lodging. www.oaec.org; oaec@oaec.org; 707-874-1557.

Jul 7-16 • 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 sl/sc, incl. camping, meals. www.cfc.us; sc05e@cfc.us; 800-763-8136.

Jul 8 • Northern California Cohousing Bus Tour
San Francisco Bay Area: East Bay. Day-long bus tour: Swan's Market Cohousing (Oakland), Berkeley Cohousing, Doyle Street Cohousing (Emeryville), Temescal Commons and Temescal Creek Cohousing (Oakland). \$85, incl. lunch. www.cohousing.org; tours@cohousing.org.

Jul 8-16 • Creating Sustainable Communities: the Ecological Dimension
EcoVillage at Ithaca, Ithaca, NY. Introducing ecological foundations of living in more life-enhancing ways. Connection to bioregion & place; sustainable land-use strategies; organic agriculture & local foods; green building & sustainable energy use; personal sustainability & culture change; social & economic dimensions. Brief presentations, hands-on projects, field trips. Part of a month-long curriculum created by GEN's (Global Ecovillage Network) Gaia Education project. Instructors: Liz Walker, co-founder & executive director of EcoVillage at Ithaca, and author, *EcoVillage at Ithaca*; Elan Shapiro, sustainability educator and consultant, Ithaca College and Cornell University. \$875-\$1050 sl/sc, incl. meals, lodging; \$700, commuters. *EcoVillage at Ithaca, 100 Rachel Carson Way, Ithaca, NY 14850*; www.ecovillage.ithaca.ny.us; ecovillage@cornell.edu; 607-256-0000, 607-272-5149.

Jul 10-Aug 11 • Ecovillage Apprenticeship
Ecovillage Training Center at The Farm, Summertown, TN. Third of four month-long apprenticeship programs (See Sep 4–Oct 6). Organic gardening from seed through harvest, natural buildings of all types, fundamentals of permaculture and ecovillage design. Ecology, energy & resource conservation, social & community skills, the economics of sustainability. Field trips. Instructors: Albert Bates, Valerie Seitz, Matt & Jennifer English; guest instructors throughout the year: Adam & Sue Turtle, Murad Al Kufash, Greg Ramsey, Liora Adler, Andy Langford, Scott Horton, Sizwe Herring, Ed Eaton, Howard & Katey Culver. Approx. \$300/ week (incl. meals, lodging). www.thefarm.org; ecovillage@thefarm.org; 931-964-4324.

Jul 13-16 • Creating Community in Later Life
Second Journey, Whidbey Institute, Whidbey Island, WA. Conversation among architects, developers, educators, health care 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; kenpyburn@yahoo.com; 919-403-0432.

Jul 14-16 • Woodshop for Women
Occidental Arts & Ecology Center (OAEC), Occidental, CA. Essential tools and their proper use; safe and effective use of power tools; structural integrity; and basic techniques such as cutting, nailing, drilling, driving, and leveling. Kate Lundquist, guests. \$425/\$375 sl/sc, incl. meals, lodging. www.oaec.org; oaec@oaec.org; 707-874-1557.

Jul 15-16 • Permaculture Fundamentals
Earthaven Ecovillage, Black Mountain, NC. Part three of five-weekend course (See Jun 18-19).

Jul 17-Aug 6 • Permaculture Design Course
Bullock Permaculture Homestead, Orcas Island, WA. Design methodologies, observation skills, whole systems design, annual and perennial foods, energy/water/waste management, appropriate construction, plant propagation and culture, outdoor mushroom cultivation, herbs and natural fiber use. Douglas Bullock, John Valenzuela, Toby Hemenway, Sam Bullock, Fungi Perfecti. \$1,500, \$250 deposit. permaculture.sam@gmail.com; 360-376-2773.

Jul 21-23 • North American Cohousing Conference 2006

Chapel Hill, NC. Learn from and network with the country's most experienced cohousing residents and professionals through keynote addresses and workshop. Also, bus tour of local cohousing communities, half-day workshops on topics of special interest. \$240. Additional for lodging, meals, half-day workshops, bus tour. www.cohousing.org; braford@sbcglobal.net.

Jul 21-29 • Ecovillage Design and Permaculture Practicum

Ecovillage Training Center at The Farm, Summertown, TN. Sustainable village design: site selection, master planning and pattern design for ecovillage; consensus and conflict resolution, financial aspects, work issues, best practices. Ecology, energy and resource conservation, social and community skills, economics of sustainability. Greg Ramsey, Albert Bates, Scott Horton, Valerie Seitz. \$1200, incl. meals, lodging. www.thefarm.org; ecovillage@thefarm.org; 931-964-4324.

Jul 22-29 • Wise Woman Ways of Herbal Medicine

Earthaven Ecovillage, Black Mountain, NC. In a circle of women, reweave our deep connection with the plants, the Earth, and ourselves. Women only. Corinna Wood, Red Moon Herbs. \$750, incl. meals, camping. Indoor lodging also available. www.earthaven.org; info@redmoonherbs.com; 828-350-1221.

Jul 28-Aug 12 • ZEGG Summercamp 2006: Consciousness in Love, Responsibility for the Earth

ZEGG Community (Centre for Experimental Culture Design), Belzig, Germany. Multi-faceted insight into ZEGG community. Talks and seminars, village groups: living together, participating in Forum, exploring the ideas underlying ZEGG. Music and other cultural activities. Children's Camp. Cost: 8 days, Euro 365; 15 days, Euro 610. People 27 and younger pay according to means (minimum: 8 days, Euro 155; 15 days, Euro 280). www.zegg.de; empfang@zegg.de; +49-33841-595-10.

Jul 28-30 • Starting and Sustaining Intentional Communities

Occidental Arts & Ecology Center (OAEC), Occidental, CA. Dave Henson and Adam Wolpert, plus guests. Visioning, how to find land and finance a purchase, various legal forms available for holding land (limited liability company, corporation, land trust, etc.), organizing as a for-profit or nonprofit, group decision-making process (meetings, agreements, facilitation, agenda management, conflict resolution), financial organization of your community, legal and insurance issues and costs, dealing with zoning and regulations, long-term planning. \$425/\$375 sl/sc, incl. meals, lodging. www.oaec.org; oaec@oaec.org; 707-874-1557.

Aug 1-3 • Introduction to Natural Building

Ecovillage Training Center at The Farm, Summertown, TN. Straw, cob, wood and other natural materials. Wattle and daub, adobe, earthbags, earthships, traditional Mexican styles, bamboo, slipclay, domes and arches, earthen floors, earth plasters and alis, passive solar, foundations and drainage, living roofs and thatch. Energy and resource conservation and the economics of sustainability. Matt English, Valerie Seitz, and guests. \$300 incl. meals, lodging. www.thefarm.org; ecovillage@thefarm.org; 931-964-4324.

Aug 4-18 • Permaculture Design Certificate Course

EcoVersity, Santa Fe, NM (See Jun 23-Jul 7).

Aug 6-12 • Midwifery Assistant Workshop

The Farm, Summertown, TN. Learn the skills and knowledge needed to assist a practicing midwife in-home or birth center deliveries. \$795, incl. lodging, two meals/day. *The Farm Midwifery Workshops*, P.O. Box 217, Summertown, TN 38483; midwives@themacisp.net; 931-964-2472.

Aug 6-18 • Network for a New Culture Summer Camp West

Near Medford, OR. Personal growth, community building, and spirit building; play for the progressive and the polyamorous. www.nfnc.org.

Aug 9-13 • Mixing Media: Strawbale and Adobe

Earthaven Ecovillage, Black Mountain, NC. Steve Kembel, Mollie Curry, Steve Brodmerkel. In-depth five-day natural building intensive—raising a strawbale wall and joining it to cob-adobe walls and preparing strawbale surfaces for plastering. Possibly making cob niches, arches, and cob benches. \$325, incl. meals, camping. www.earthaven.org; arjuna@earthaven.org; 828-669-0114.

Aug 11-13 • Farm Experience Week

The Farm Community, Summertown, TN. Tours and shared group activities to help participants get to know The Farm's daily life and culture. \$150, \$175, or \$200, depending on time of registration; less for two or more; family rates. Incl. camping, vegan meals. Indoor lodging accommodations also available. www.thefarm.org; Vickie@thefarmcommunity.com; 931-964-3574.

Aug 12-13 • Starting a Successful Ecovillage

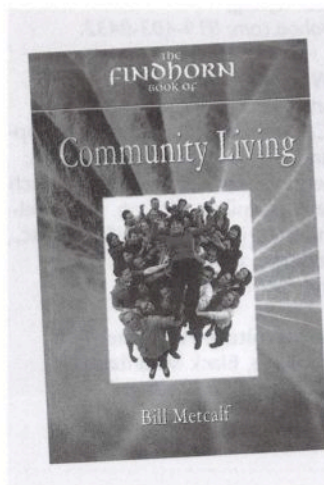
O.U.R. Ecovillage, Shawnigan Lake, BC. Diana Leaf Christian, *Communities* magazine editor and author of *Creating a Life Together: Practical Tools to Grow Ecovillages and Intentional Communities*. Typical time-frames & costs, vision documents, decision-making and power, legal structures, finding & financing property, sustainable site plans, selecting new members, creating good communication skills and dealing with conflict well. our.pacificcoast.org; info@pacificcoast.net; 250-743-3067.

Aug 18-20 • Twin Oaks Communities Conference

Twin Oaks Community, 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 18-20 • Starting a Successful Ecovillage

EcoReality Project, Salt Spring Island, B.C. Diana Leaf Christian, *Communities* magazine editor and author of *Creating a Life Together: Practical Tools to Grow Ecovillages and*



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Intentional Communities. Typical time-frames & costs, vision documents, decision-making and power, legal structures, finding & financing property, sustainable site plans, selecting new members, creating good communication skills and dealing with conflict well.
jan@bytesmiths.com.

Aug 18-21 • 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; info@lostvalley.org; 541-937-3351, #109.

Aug 19 • Herbs for Women
Earthaven Ecovillage, Black Mountain, NC. Corinna Wood of Red Moon Herbs. Learn about common herbs that support optimum health in every cycle of a woman's life: menstruation, pregnancy, breastfeeding, and menopause. Get to know plants that help prevent and treat menstrual cramps, osteoporosis, hot flashes, anemia, hormonal mood swings, and more. \$59-\$85, sl/sc. www.earthaven.org; info@redmoonherbs.com; 828-350-1221.

Aug 25-27 • Twin Oaks Women's Gathering
Twin Oaks Community, Louisa, VA. "Women Celebrating Ourselves in Community" through workshops, dance, drumming, swimming, creative activities, performances, sweat lodge & mudpit, movement, ritual. \$40-140 sl/sc, incl. camping, workshops. Paying in the upper region of the sliding scale helps us subsidize women who can afford less. www.twinoaks.org; 540-894-5141.

Aug 25-27 • Starting a Successful Ecovillage
Los Angeles Eco-Village, Los Angeles, CA. Diana Leafe Christian, *Communities* magazine editor and author of *Creating a Life Together: Practical Tools to Grow Ecovillages and Intentional Communities*. Typical time-frames & costs, vision documents, decision-making and power, legal structures, finding & financing property, sustainable site plans, selecting new members, creating good communication skills and dealing with conflict well. www.ic.org/laev; lois@ic.org; 213-738-1254.

Aug 26-26 • A World Beyond Capitalism Conference
Portland, OR. Second Annual International Multiracial Alliance Building Peace Conference. FREE conference, camping, meals, childcare. Multi-lingual event w/keynote speakers, workshops to create alliances among intentional communities, permaculture activists, co-ops, independent publishing communities, progressive activist groups and other equality-seeking organiza-

tions. Live music, theatrical performances. No pre-registration or registration required. www.aworldbeyondcapitalism.org; 503-727-2622; 310-285-3222.

Aug 27-Sep 2 • Advanced Midwifery Workshop
The Farm, Summertown, TN. CEU's offered. *The Farm Midwifery Workshops, P.O. Box 217, Summertown, TN 38483*; midwives@themacisp.net; 931-964-2472.

Sep 1-4 • Interior/Exterior Earthen Plasters
Earthaven Ecovillage, Black Mountain, NC. Mollie Curry, Steve Brodmerkel. Base coats, finish coats, niches, decorative work. Carpentry may include installing windows and doors. \$175, incl. meals, camping. www.earthaven.org; arjuna@earthaven.org; 828-669-0114.

Sep 1-10 • Permaculture Fundamentals
Earthaven Ecovillage, Black Mountain, NC. Nine-day intensive. Patricia Allison, Chuck Marsh. Part I of Permaculture Design Course. Sustainability, integrated human ecosystems, food forests and local foodsheds, processing human waste, natural building and appropriate technology, economic strategies, sustainability in the city, healing cultural wounds. Hands-on garden work, pond-making, natural building, graywater systems, erosion control, rock work, dances, circles, campfires. \$650. www.earthaven.org; peggyssusu@yahoo.com; ehpa@directway.com; 828-664-0076.

Sep 2-8 • Natural Building Intensive
Emerald Earth, Boonville, CA. Michael G. Smith, Darryl Berlin, Sara McCamant. Strawbale, cob, straw-clay, clay wattle, natural plasters and paints, adobe floors, and more. For anyone seeking a comprehensive understanding of natural building options. \$500 incl. camping, meals. www.emeraldearth.org; workshops@emeraldearth.org; 707-972-3096.

Sep 4-Oct 6 • Ecovillage Apprenticeship
Ecovillage Training Center at The Farm, Summertown, TN (See Jul 10-Aug 11).

Sep 5-29 • A Natural Builder's Practicum
O.U.R. Ecovillage, Shawnigan Lake, BC. With Elke Cole from Cobworks, and Holger Laerad. For those who have taken a natural building training program or apprenticeship (minimum two-week workshop). Projects may include cob, bale and plasterwork, as well as roof construction. Focus will be on developing efficiency, productivity, quality. \$800 Canadian, incl. camping, meals. our.pacificcoast.org; naturalbuilding@oureecovillage.org; info@pacificcoast.net; 250-743-3067.

Sep 5-7 • Fellowship for Intentional Community (FIC) Spring Organizational Meeting
Songaia Cohousing, Bothel, WA. Planning, policies, reports, consensus decision-making by FIC board members, staff, and volunteers. FIC publishes *Communities* magazine,

Communities Directory, distributes *Visions of Utopia* video, and operates ic.org website and Community Bookshelf mailorder book service. Hosted by Songaia Cohousing. Public invited. jenny@ic.org.

Sep 8-10 • Art of Community Northwest: Building Sustainable Community
Seattle, WA. Fellowship for Intentional Community (FIC) & Northwest Intentional Communities Association (NICA). Speakers, workshops. Meet people from existing and forming communities. Build Community Where You Are (neighborhoods, workplaces, churches); Tools You Can Use (consensus, facilitation, conflict resolution, ecological assessments); Sustainability (permaculture, biodiesel, CSA farms). Speakers include Laird Schaub, FIC executive secretary, process/facilitation consultant, community founder; Geoph Kozeny, "Peripatetic Communitarian," producer/editor *Visions of Utopia* video; Diana Leafe Christian, *Communities* magazine editor, author, *Creating a Life Together*; and many other speakers. www.ic.org; fic@ic.org/artofcommunity; avatar@ic.org.

Sep 8-10 • EcoVillage at Ithaca Experience Weekend
EcoVillage at Ithaca, Ithaca, NY. Enjoy a balance of nature connection, personal renewal, and hands-on learning—harvesting organic produce at on-site CSA farm, building a root cellar, exploring ecological lifestyle changes. Presentations on place-based learning and land stewardship, green building and renewable energy systems, consensus decision-making, and building cooperative community. Delicious meals, swimming in the pond, exploring Ithaca's famous gorges. \$200-\$250 sl/sc (incl. meals, lodging), local resident rates \$150-200 sl/sc *EcoVillage at Ithaca, 100 Rachel Carson Way, Ithaca, NY 14850*; www.ecovillage.ithaca.ny.us; ecovillage@cornell.edu; 607-256-0000, 607-272-5149.

Sep 8-11 • Cordwood Masonry Workshop
Trillium Farm Community, Jacksonville, OR. Four-day intensive on the ancient art of cordwood masonry with contemporary masters Rob Roy and Jaki Roy. www.cordwoodmasonry.com; www.deepwild.org/birchcreek.



Reach

COMMUNITIES WITH OPENINGS



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 FALL 2006 ISSUE (OUT IN OCTOBER) IS JULY 12.**

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

Please make check or money order payable to Communities, and send it, plus your ad copy, word count, number of insertions and category to: Patricia Greene, 381 Hewlett Rd., Hermon, NY 13652; phone 315-347-3070, 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 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 or 540-894-5798 for more information on being listed in the Communities Directory.

AQUARIAN CONCEPTS COMMUNITY, Sedona, Arizona. Founded by Gabriel of Sedona and Niann Emerson Chase in 1989. Currently 105 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, landscaping, Soulistic Medical Institute. Serious spiritual commitment required. POB 3946, Sedona, AZ 86340; 928-204-1206; info@aquarianconceptscommunity.org; www.aquarianconceptscommunity.org; www.globalchangemusic.org; www.musiciansthatneedtobeheardnetwork.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.

CASA CLARA, Albuquerque, New Mexico. We are a group of people committed to taking charge of our aging in a supportive, interactive and conscious environment. Twenty garden apartments in a lovely, convenient location near university. All have two bedrooms, one bath. Units will be rentals (\$625-\$825 and rent controlled), but all decisions as to daily life and services will be made by an association. Membership in the association will be a condition of rental. Contact Carol at ceaglass@nmia.com or 505-266-3331.

DANCING RABBIT, Rutledge, Missouri. We are a growing ecovillage of more than 30 individuals of diverse ages and backgrounds, actively seeking new members to join us in creating a vibrant community on our 280 beautiful acres in rural northeast Missouri. Our goals are to live ecologically sustainable and socially rewarding

lives, and to share the skills and ideas behind that lifestyle. We use solar and wind energy, earth-friendly building materials and biofuels. We are especially interested in welcoming more women and families with children into our community. 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. A multi-generational ecovillage on 320 forested acres near Asheville. Dedicated to caring for people and the Earth, we come together to create, and to sustain beyond our lifetimes, a vital, diversified learning community. Our 60 members use permaculture design, build with clay and timber from the land, draw power from off-grid systems, drink and bathe in gravity-fed spring water and use constructed wetlands for waste treatment. We raise children in Earthaven's nurturing village environment and many of us work on the land in community-based businesses. We make medicines from wild plants, use consensus for decision-making, and nourish our families with organic local foods grown at Earthaven and in our bioregion. Our diets range from omnivore to vegetarian. We enjoy an abundant social and cultural life, and practice diverse spiritual paths. We offer workshops on permaculture design, natural building, herbal medicine and other subjects. We're seeking new members of all ages and family situations, especially organic growers, people with homesteading or management skills and skills in the trades. www.earthaven.org; info@earthaven.org; 1025 Camp Elliott Road, Black Mountain, NC 28711; 828-669-3937.

ELDER FAMILY COMMUNITY, near Cherokee, North Carolina. We are a small, growing family-of-choice looking for healthy, financially secure adults, mid-50s and 60s, who are retired or semi-retired, past child rearing, non-smokers, experienced with cooperative groups, easy to get along with, willing to take training in consensus and committed to mutual support, spiritual growth through relationships and living together as a loving extended family.

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Please specify which section you wish your ad to appear under:

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Mail this form with payment (by July 12 for the Fall issue) to:
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315-347-3070; patricia@ic.org

We are looking to share ownership in an expanding project of eight acres and shared housing that includes both private and group space. We are near the Smoky Mountain National Park and are part of a larger mixed-age intentional community with community building, swimming pool and nature trails. Contact Anthony Becket, 1425 Firefly Rd., Whittier, NC 28789; 828-508-2643.

ENOTA MOUNTAIN RETREAT, Hiwassee, Georgia. Live, serve, play and experience the simple life in the beautiful north Georgia Mountains. We are seeking residents for our service-based spiritual, educational retreat center/campground/organic farm located on 60 magnificent acres with streams, waterfalls and ponds. Surrounded by 750,000 acres of National Forest. Our focus is sustainability and serving our guests. We have current need for construction, sales, accounting, front desk, farming, animal care, housekeeping, whatever is needed to operate the retreat center and farm. We offer clean air and water, housing, 2-3 home-cooked sit-down healthy meals together per day, stipend, free long distance, Internet access, free laundry and much more. Come help us build a community and make a difference. www.enota.org; 706-896-9966.

FELLOWSHIP COMMUNITY, Spring Valley, New York. We seek co-workers. Located 30 minutes north of NYC, we are an intergenerational community founded in 1966, centered around the care of the elderly. Now numbering about 150 elderly, co-workers and children, we grow our own fruit and vegetables bio-dynamically. All ages work together in our practical work activities. They include a candle shop, metal shop, wood shop, weavery/handwork group, greenhouse, publishing press, bakery, outlet store and medical practice. The spiritual science (anthroposophy) of Rudolf Steiner is the basis for our work. There is a Waldorf School and several other anthroposophical initiatives nearby. Our lifestyle is an intense social/cultural commitment to the future of mankind. Check out our web site at www.FellowshipCommunity.org If you are interested in co-working or need additional info, please contact our office at 845-356-8494; or write to: Ann Scharff, c/o The Executive Circle at 241 Hungry Hollow Rd., Spring Valley, NY 10977; rsffoffice@fellowshipcommunity.org

SANDHILL FARM, Rutledge, Missouri. We are a small family of friends living together on an income-sharing organic farm. We value cooperation, raising children, living simply, caring for our land, growing most of our own food, working through our differences, making good ecological choices, and having fun with our friends. We've been at this for 31 years and continue to grow in our visions and our capability to realize them. Sound like home? POB 155, Rutledge, MO 63563; visitorscm@sandhillfarm.org; 660-883-5543; www.sandhillfarm.org.

TWIN OAKS, Louisa, Virginia. "Not the revolution, but you can see it from here." We are an income-sharing, non-violent, egalitarian community that's been living this lifestyle for 38 years. We would love to have you visit and right now, we're especially looking for more women members, as well as people in their 30s and 40s. We can offer you: work in our community businesses, an abundance of home-grown 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

AWBC 2006

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Northwest Intentional Communities Association



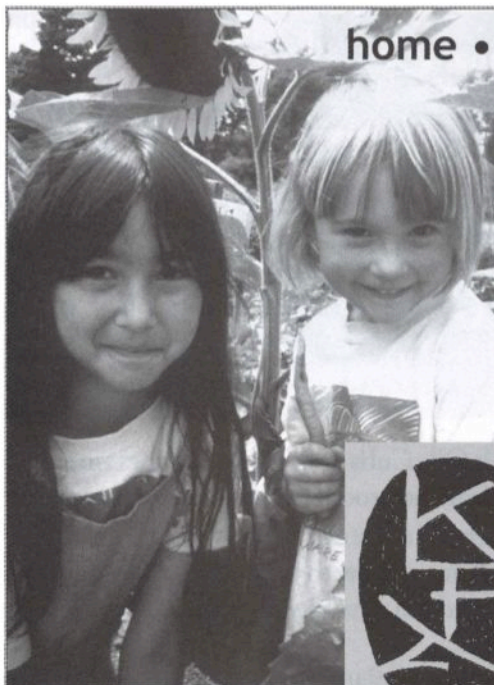
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ECO-FARM, Plant City, Florida. We are a family farm near Tampa, Florida working to create a sustainable, farm-based intentional community. 55 acres surrounded by ponds. One solar house with large community kitchen, laundry, large private room available; also two livable older trailers. Our interests are: sustainable living, alternative energies, drumming, environmental issues, farming, social justice. We farm vegetables and ornamental trees, and also have a small farm mechanic shop in which com-



Dancing Rabbit
E C O V I L L A G E

Building Sustainable Community

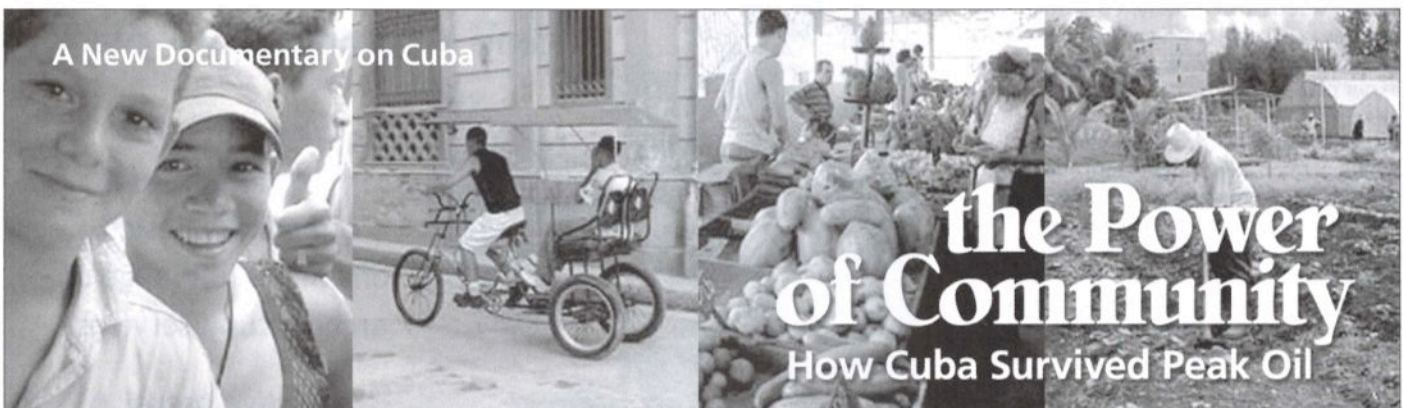
Dancing Rabbit welcomes all kinds of participation from people who want to get involved: you can receive our newsletter, make a donation, or just help spread the word about us. We also host a visitor program that welcomes prospective members to come spend time in our community.

Visit our website to learn more!

At Dancing Rabbit we're building a rural ecovillage, learning about sustainable living while we educate others. We're open to all kinds of individuals, families, and groups who share our commitment to sustainability, cooperation, feminism, and building for the future.

Dancing Rabbit Ecovillage

1 Dancing Rabbit Lane
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660-883-5511
join.dancingrabbit.org



A New Documentary on Cuba

the Power of Community
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As the world fast approaches Peak Oil, Cuba provides a living example of how a country can successfully address what we all will have to deal with sooner or later – the depletion of finite fossil fuel resources.

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Cuba's transition from large farms and plantations and reliance on fossil-fuel-based pesticides and fertilizers, to small organic farms and urban gardens, and from a industrial society to a sustainable one, is an example for the rest of the world.

Seeing this film, you may also see the world where we live as another, much larger, island.

To order *The Power of Community* on VHS or DVD, go to www.communitysolution.org/cuba, call 937-767-2161, or write to P.O. Box 243, Yellow Springs, Ohio 45387.



A program of Community Service, Inc.

munity members participate. If interested, check out our web site at www.ecofarmfl.org; 813-754-7374, ecofarmfl@yahoo.com.

NESS COMMUNITY, Hermon, New York. Simple living, off-grid community on 100 acres of woodland, meadow, cliff and riverfront. Six adults ages 34 to 60. Four small homes, barn, solar and hand workshops, bathhouse, biodiesel sawmill and shared garden. We use solar energy, wood heat, some biofuels, sawdust toilets, carry water and walk in from parking lots by the road. Potluck dinners and meetings. Goals: sustainability, affordability, sharing resources, interdependence, positive thinking and service. Children welcome. Seek co-creators who are emotionally mature and dedicated to low-impact homesteading lifestyle. Canton-Potsdam area has strong alternative and Amish communities, four universities, low zoning and good soil. Close to Ottawa, Lake Ontario and Adirondack Park. *Patricia 315-347-3070; peagreen@earthlink.net; Alison 315-347-4097. Or write: Ness, 381 Hewlett Rd., Hermon, NY 13652.*

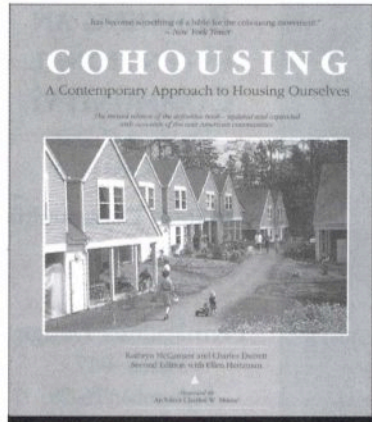
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CoHousing

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A Contemporary Approach to Housing Ourselves

By Kathryn McCamant and Charles Durrett



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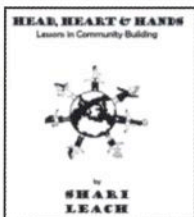


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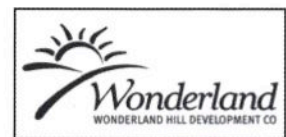
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Marta Station and 20 minute walk to Mary Lynn Elementary. The Cohousing Community Center has community dinners, a child play area, workshop space and courtyard with fountain and great neighbors. Access to community center is available for a small associate member fee. The Land Trust has a great green space for people and dogs and numerous community activities, including seasonal festivities, gardening, fire circle, drum circle and others. For more information call 404-992-4399.

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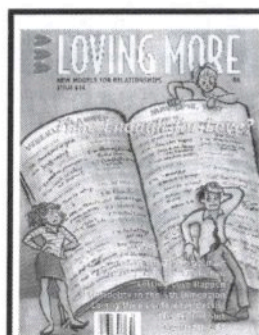
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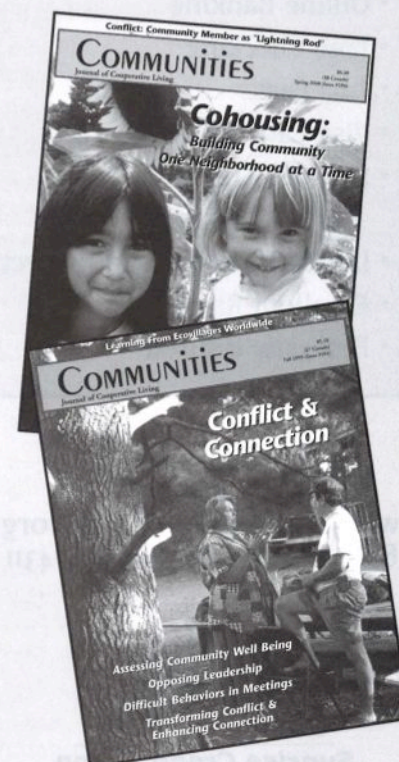
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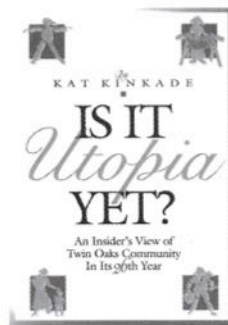
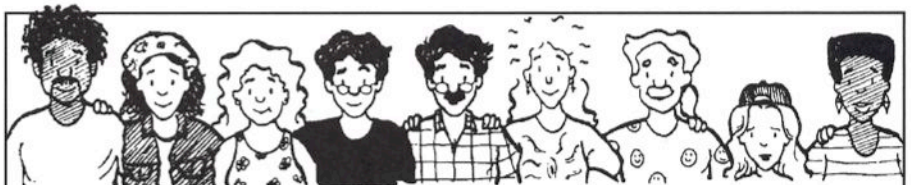


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An Insider's View of Twin Oaks Community in its 26th Year by Kat Kinkade

Is it Utopia Yet? is a lively, first-hand account of the unique struggles and triumphs of the first 25 years of Twin Oaks Community, one of America's most

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The FIC is a network of communarians promoting communication and understanding about and among intentional communities across North America. The Fellowship:

- publishes *Communities* magazine and the best-selling *Communities Directory*.
- built and maintains the Intentional Communities site on the World Wide Web

<www.ic.org>.

- hosts gatherings and events about community.
- builds bridges between communities and the wider culture.
- serves as an information clearinghouse for all aspects of community—for individuals, groups, and the media.

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PERIPATETIC COMMUNITARIAN

(continued from p. 80)

owned by a cooperative and are powered by biodiesel, a fuel made from used vegetable oil. They eat local, organic, in-season foods, and in some years grow many of their own vegetables. They emphasize their internal economy, including barter.

Education

- *Moonshadow* (Whitwell, Tennessee) was created by environmental and social-justice activists and is home to Sequatchie Valley Institute, a nonprofit education organization. They do publications, video, audio, and computer networking, and host workshops and tours on such topics as land restoration/conservation and sustainable living technologies.

- *Lost Valley Educational Center* (Dexter, Oregon) runs a retreat and conference facility, hosting various outside groups as well as organizing their own workshops in areas such as Ecovillage and Permaculture Design, Heart of Now (personal growth), and yoga. They also offer longer-term internships.

- *Breitenbush Hot Springs* (Detroit, Oregon), a worker/owner cooperative, hosts 20,000 guests each year in its holistic health and spiritual growth retreat and conference center. Additionally, they generate their own hydro electricity, get their heat from geothermal wells, and have a history of forest preservation activism.

Political Activism

- *Emma Goldman Finishing School* (Seattle, Washington) is an income-sharing community whose members work to build economic, political, and cultural alternatives. Individual community members have worked with Homestead Community Land Trust to create real self-determination locally; with www.riseup.net to create grassroots computer technology alternatives for those working against capitalism and all forms of oppression; and with Community Alliance for Global Justice to bring social justice, environmental sustainability, democracy, and self-determination to the global economy.

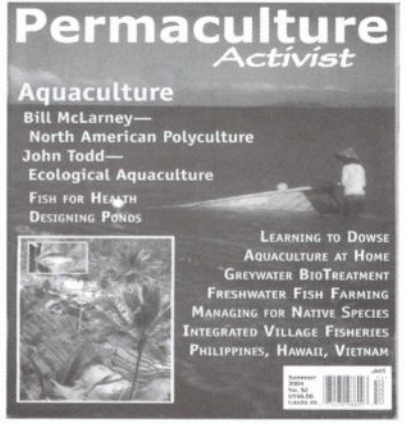
- *Jubilee Partners* (Comer, Georgia) ministries include resettling refugees from various countries; working to abolish the

death penalty; visiting prisoners; peace-making; and raising money to promote justice, peace, and healing in Nicaragua.

There's much good work that needs doing in the world and, naturally, the categories overlap considerably—so it's no surprise that most of the groups I've described have activities that fall under more than one heading. I encourage you to reflect on what they're attempting and either support their good works, consider joining one of these efforts, or use their example to start something of your own aimed at making the world a better place.

Geoph Kozeny has lived in various kinds of communities for 33 years, and has been on the road for 18 years visiting communities—asking about their visions and realities, taking photos, doing video interviews, and in general exploring what makes them tick. Presently, he is editing part two of "Visions of Utopia," his video documentary on intentional communities.

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Good Works: Walking the Talk

In the first volume of my “Visions of Utopia” video documentary, I described the visionary and practical roots of intentional communities:

Although “Utopia” is traditionally thought of as an imaginary place, history is full of examples of real people attempting to create new societies to improve the status quo. In fact, that’s what all intentional communities throughout history have in common: each is based on a vision of a better world, and a commitment to live in a way where everyday actions reflect the stated goals . . . Their members are out there every day, rolling up their sleeves and exploring new possibilities. Intentional communities are, essentially, testing grounds for new ideas about how to live better, more satisfying lives . . . lives that actualize our untapped human potential in a way that’s environmentally and socially sustainable.

Building a better world requires ongoing hard work, and many of today’s intentional communities have found useful ways to help make some headway. Often the more inwardly focused groups—for example many religious communities and some of the back-to-the-land groups—don’t consciously do much to influence issues beyond their immediate circle; however a majority of today’s communities have practices or projects designed to foster positive change in the wider world. Such efforts include, but are not limited to, social support services, affordable housing, land conservation, ecological models, education, and political activism. Here are excerpts from a few examples found at directory.ic.org.

Serving the Poor, Disenfranchised, or Disabled

- **Catholic Worker Communities** (174 in North America, 15 in 10 other countries) typically offer soup kitchens and housing and support for the homeless, and actively protest militarism and war and promote peace.

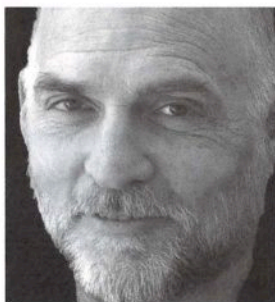
- **Camphill Communities** (10 in N. America, nearly 100 in 20 other countries) create a life with children, youth, and adults who have developmental disabilities. They provide education, advocacy, therapeutic care, and other services to support people with special needs and help them participate fully in the world as contributing citizens. They also

emphasize sustainable and healthy methods of consumption, agriculture, and natural resource use.

Affordable Housing

- **Fort Awesome** (Berkeley, California) builds sustainable, affordable housing; emphasizes democratic cooperative organizing; and strengthens local communities through education and by organizing resource sharing.

- **N Street Cohousing** (Davis, CA), the first “retrofit” cohousing in the US, has added one house at a time to their existing 17-house working class (thus “affordable”) neighborhood. Removing fences has created a beautiful open-space area that includes vegetable, flower, and water gardens; a play structure; a hot tub; a sauna; and a chicken coop, plus a large grassy area, a pond, and more.



BY GEOPH KOZENY

Land Conservation

- **Raven Rocks** (Beallsville, Ohio) was originally established to buy, restore, and permanently preserve more than 1,000 acres of hill and ravine lands that include native hardwood forests. Their pioneering work in underground buildings, incorporating seven solar strategies in one structure, is a primary

educational tool.

- **River Farm** (Deming, Washington), one of the five Evergreen Land Trust communities, maintains wildlife areas, practices ecologically-based farming and forestry, and hosts educational events related to the local watershed and sustainable forestry practices.

Ecological Models

- **EcoVillage at Ithaca** (Ithaca, New York) is a replicable model of a cooperative, environmentally sensitive community. The pedestrian village is surrounded by woods, open meadows, and a 10-acre organic farm. Their nonprofit educational organization, affiliated with both Cornell and Ithaca College, teaches courses in various aspects of sustainability.

- **Dancing Rabbit Ecovillage** (Rutledge, Missouri) builds with alternative techniques such as strawbale and cob, and uses renewable energy from both sun and wind. Vehicles are

(continued on p. 79)

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Community Bookshelf

At Community Bookshelf we know what it takes to create and sustain community and we want to provide you with the skills and information you need to make it happen for you. We hand-pick only the best books about community and community skills. Topics include:

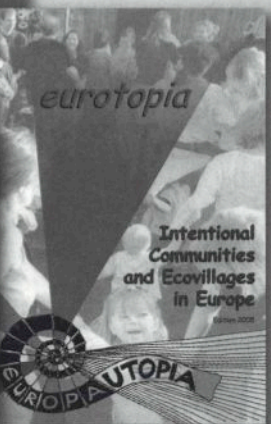
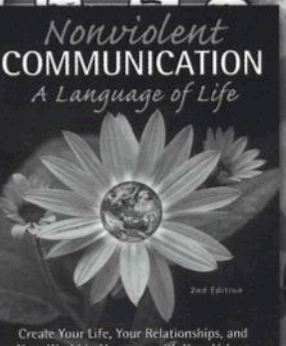
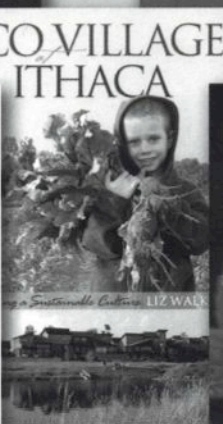
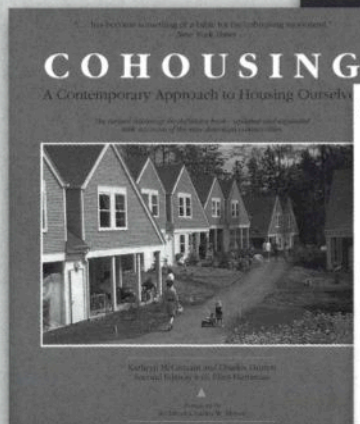
- **community building** – how to start an intentional community or find the one of your dreams
- **community stories** – inspiration and insight directly from the source
- **group process** – how to run successful meetings, where everyone feels good about the decisions that were made
- **communication skills** – learn how to meet conflict head-on and resolve it successfully
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One of Kibbutz Lotan's service projects has been to train Israeli Bedouin Arabs in natural building techniques, and to host natural building seminars for Jewish and Arab youth, including Palestinian and Jordanian teenagers. Comments after the seminars: "This was the first time I had any real contact with Arab people"; "Our time together really changed my opinions"; "I can't wait to get back and start on our own projects"; "I hope our connections will remain."

—*Michael Livni, Kibbutz Lotan*



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