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Winter 2006 • Issue #133

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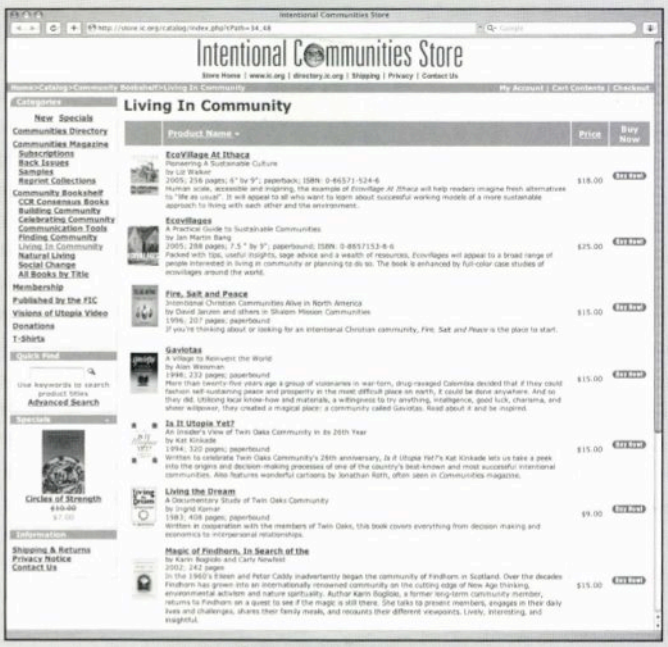

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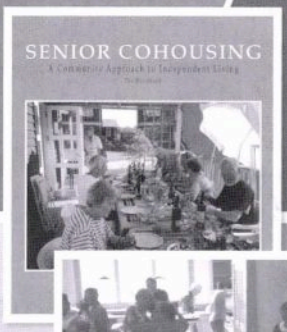
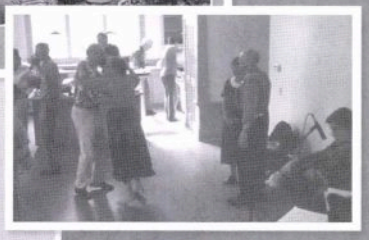


"At last, here is a guidebook to a new way of aging for older Americans ...

-Kathy Goss, Journalist, review for Amazon.com

SENIOR COHOUSING

A Community Approach to Independent Living - The Handbook



"This book is the most comprehensive and up-to-date book currently available on the topic of senior cohousing ...

... Durrett has done a superb job in thoroughly covering the psychological and social aspects of cohousing in addition to the logistics, operations, and design elements. Although an architect by training, Durrett has an intuitive feel for what a reader needs to know about this fast growing new trend. The comprehensive nature of this book, demonstrates Durrett's knowledge of the topic from a holistic perspective way beyond the mere design facets of creating cohousing communities. He innately understands all the concerns, fears, misunderstandings, and objections people may have about cohousing – and logically and thoroughly addresses each one in an easy to follow logical style.

Not only is this book unique in its subject matter, but also the presentation of the content is the most comprehensive and "usable" of any book currently available on this subject. Durrett's book quite simply is the "gold standard" for anyone interested in this subject. Regardless if you are a layperson wanting basic information, a highly motivated individual wanting to create a cohousing community, or a professional working with seniors and/or the aging field, this book is a "must read."

Senior Cohousing is not only a pioneering book in its presentation and coverage of a fast growing social and lifestyle trend, but it is an insightful, comprehensive overview addressing every aspect of cohousing. This book is cohousing from A to Z – all presented in an engaging and easy to follow format. Durrett is clearly the US leader and expert in this field, and his book is guaranteed to have far-reaching impact as people become more aware of this practical, economical, creative, and resourceful way to live."

– Alice Jacobs Ed.D., MS;
Senior education and learning specialist

"... and cohousing – perhaps the most creative housing options for seniors – is one that we can make happen for us NOW ... It is easy to read, highlights all the major issues one needs to anticipate, and gives clear how-to-do-it guidelines to a group wanting to take charge of their own housing future. It tackles problems that any group will undoubtedly face and gives helfpul solutions, making the often daunting task of creating a cohousing community seem "do-able." It is a very inspiring testament to growing old "in community."

– Lisa Anthony,
Second Journey
secondjourney.org

Senior cohousing is an entirely new way for seniors to house themselves with dignity, independence, safety, mutual concern, and fun. Developed with the residents themselves, senior cohousing combines the automony of private dwellings with the advantages of shared facilities and community living. Senior cohousing residents live among people with whom they share a common bond of age, experience, and community – a community they themselves built to specifically meet their own needs.

Twenty years of working with, and living in, cohousing helped create this 249-page book by Charles Durrett, licensed and award-winning architect. After the first introduction of the cohousing concept to the U.S. by husband-and-wife team Kathryn McCamant and Charles Durrett in 1988, almost 100 such communities have been built and more than 150 groups are currently in the process of creating a cohousing community.

Illustrated with photos and graphics, this book addresses in great depth the advantages and the why and how of senior cohousing. This book is also for younger people working with their parents to come up with alternatives to traditional retirement homes, in the same way they now plan their finances, to also consider the need to address their social and emotional well-being. The book is divided into four parts: Introducing Senior Cohousing, Senior Cohousing in Denmark, Creating Senior Cohousing, and Pioneering Senior Cohousing in America. The book offers detailed steps, so anyone can create a senior cohousing community.

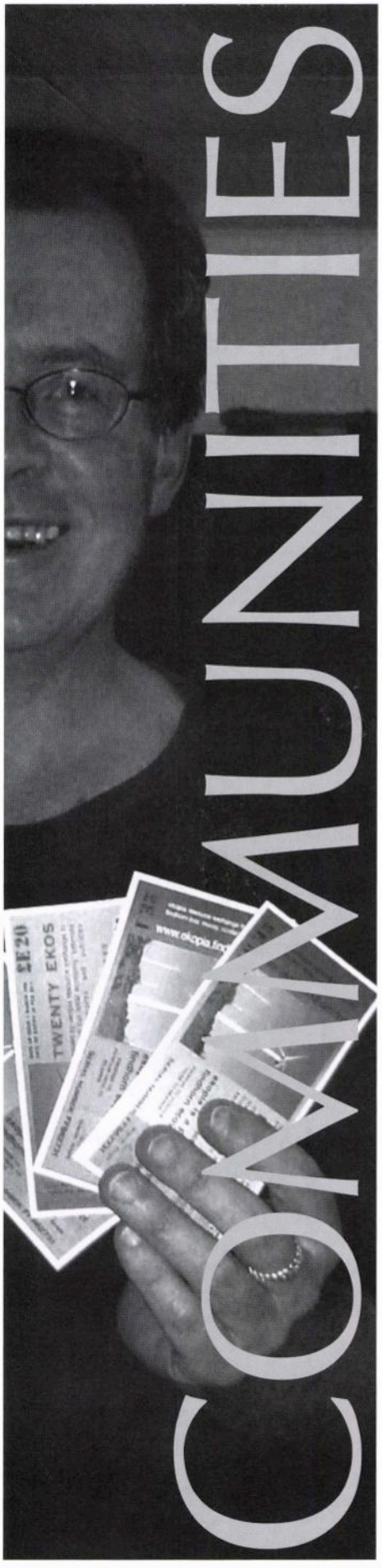
To order the book 'Senior Cohousing', send check payable to:

McCamant & Durrett Architects
1250 Addison Street #113
Berkeley, CA 94702.
ph. 510.549.9980

or

Online at
www.cohousingco.com

$34.00 (USA), $35.20 (Canada & Mexico), $39.50 (other locations in the world). Prices include shipping & handling.



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HELPING YOUR *Local Economy Thrive*

42 How a Steady State Economy Can Change Our Lives

The Steady State Economy concept—which claims that the economy is part of the environment and not the other way around, and which seeks a low, sustainable level of natural resource use—is shaking economics today the way Darwin's natural selection idea did to biology, says economist *Paula L. Craig*.

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48 An Abundance of Small, Sustainable Solutions

Your local community is already rich, says community economist *Paul Glover*, with enough potential wealth nearby to enable *everyone* to work a few hours daily, and enjoy healthy food, low-cost housing, clean and safe transport, handcrafted clothes, and household goods—and do so while replenishing rather than depleting the integrity of the planet.

50 Our Own Money: Recipe for Healthy Local Economies

Ecovillage and peak oil activist *Albert Bates* shows how standard of living is a function of the speed at which money bounces back and forth in the economy. Velocity, not volume, determines how well off we are, as the town of Wörgl, Austria, happily demonstrated in the early 1930's.

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Farmer's market in Portland, Oregon. Photographer, Matt Bonsai.

COMMUNITIES

Life in Cooperative Culture

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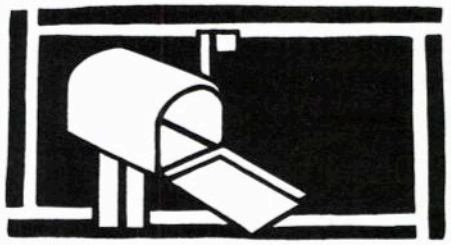
LETTERS



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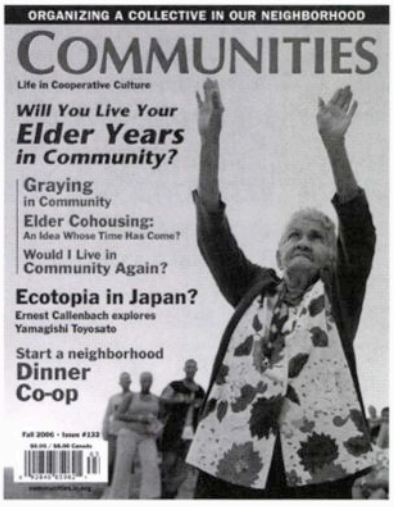


Will You Live Your Elder Years in Community? Issue (Fall '06)

Dear *Communities*:

I found your Fall '06 issue on elders in community informative, thought-provoking, and entertaining, especially the article "Graying in Community," and the topics it examined, from the general "throw-away" mentality of our society to the more personal issue of the contributions of elders to their communities. Two decades ago I was able to use my carpentry skills to help build Sirius Community. Yet now, after a stroke and with numerous medical conditions, such labor would be exhausting no matter how I paced myself. Also, due to a neurological impairment, the activity, noise, and rudeness of some folks here is simply overwhelming. Since I can't change my impairment and I don't expect the community to cater to my needs as I grow older, I am seeking alternatives. So your fall issue was most timely, relevant, and on target for me, as I'm sure it was for many others. I will share my well-underlined and much dog-eared copy with a few friends, whom I expect to get together with for chess, tea, and discussions provoked by your publication.

Ken Pratt
Sirius Community
Shutesbury, Massachusetts

Dear *Communities:*

I do believe that living in community is good for us elders. I am doing quite well for having just passed my 82nd birthday. The Parker Street Co-op is aging beautifully, with the recent new members adding to our social, intellectual, spiritual, and community wealth. We are getting better at the selection process and really good at the consensus process. The sensation has been arising, by osmosis, that the spirit of community grows with the age of our community even as the average age has hovered about the same. We are continually becoming more endeared with ourselves even if no one goes around making exclamations of that openly—it is just in the air. I feel that the big hurdle occurred in late 2004 when we completed the repainting of the entire exterior of the two buildings via a four-month consensus process. Despite the seemingly contentious aroma that wafted about, we were all smug about the compliments we got from neighbors and the self-satisfaction that glowed from within.

Ken Norwood
Parker Street Co-op
Berkeley, California

Ken Norwood is the author of Re-building Community in America *(Shared Living Resource Center, 1995) —Ed.*

Dear Diana,

I enjoyed the most recent Communities more than usual, really appreciating your concentration on older people living in intentional community. I think that there is little doubt that these are the people now most likely to join intentional communities worldwide, and I think the future will see many more intentional communities set up to focus on older people.

I found "The Giant Sea Turtle in our Shower" by Molly Prentiss very insightful, amusing and informative. Also, Ernest Callenbach's "'Ecotopia' in Japan?" was well written. The author both accurately informed us, as far as he could,and w as honestly unclear about those aspects of the Yamagishi communes (especially Toyosato) which we non-Yamagishi-members find almost incomprehensible. Keep up the good work.

Bill Metcalf
Griffith University
Brisbane, Australia

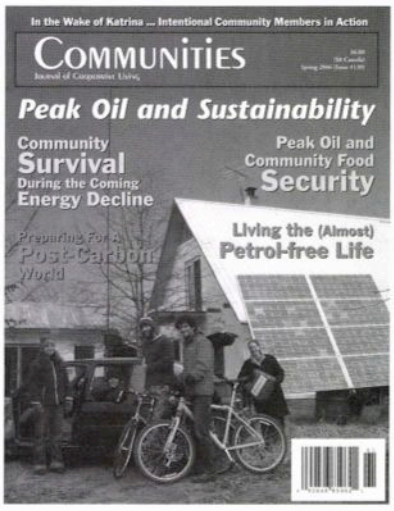
Bill Metcalf is a Findhorn Fellow, former president of the International Communal Studies Association, and author of many books on community, including The Findhorn Book of Community Living, and Shared Visions, Shared Lives: Communal Living around the Globe. *—Ed.*

Dear *Communities:*

In its 66 years, our Quaker-originated Bryn Gweled Homesteads community in Pennsylvania has had an abundance of issues concerning aging. Many community members have fulfilled their aspirations to remain in their homes until their death. In this area, a local Quaker organization, Friends LifeCare at Home, has an "insurance" service that provides help to elders desiring to remain in their home, so that the hiring of reliable assistance (lawn mowing, snow removal, repairs, nursing, etc.) can occur through screened sources. Our family benefited from this. It also minimizes squabbling among siblings. Professional guidance is available through LifeCare concerning the issue of when an elder should be transferred to a skilled nursing facility. Even those planning to go to a retirement facility can use LifeCare because no one can predict when one's health will deteriorate too rapidly to permit entry into a retirement community.

Several Bryn Gweled members were responsible for the formation of Friends Village, a local retirement home in which meals are available without medical services; Chandler Hall, a quality nursing home; and Pennswood, a Quaker retirement community. About a dozen Bryn Gweled members have moved to Pennswood, which has almost as much reliance upon pure voluntarism as Bryn Gweled. Foulkeways is another Quaker retirement community about ten miles from Bryn Gweled. There are possibly a dozen other local retirement communities. Bryn Gweled has always sought a wide age range in new members, even though geared particularly for parents of young children. An abundance of "senior housing" facilities for those past 55 is now available at Bryn Gweled, and this has attracted some new elder members, especially those who missed the presence of children around them. If our community is too small to adequately cope with senior housing, then other communities have reason for recognizing that in the 21st century, the improvements available at specialized senior facilities are so attractive that they can be wisely utilized by those who can afford it. The costs for adequate care of the elderly are so great that they are far beyond the financial capacities of average American.

John R. Ewbank
Bryn Gweled Homesteads
Southampton, Pennsylvania



Disagreeing with your "Peak Oil and Sustainability" Issue (Spring '06)

Dear *Communities,*

I am writing to present a counterargument to the ideas presented in the article, "Community Survival and the Coming Energy Decline," in your Spring '06 issue on Peak Oil. Before I begin, it is important to make a clear distinction. At some point in the future, oil and fossil fuels in general, will run out or become impossibly expensive to extract. The important question is: how soon? I believe Peak Oil is not an immediate crisis, but one which should take its place among other important environmental concerns.

First of all, it is very controversial to claim that we will run into severe oil supply shortages in the next 10-20 years. An example of a great article rebutting this can be found at *www.gasresources.net/Lynch(Hubbert-Deffeyes).htm.*

Fortunately there is a much simpler argument: the Earth has plenty of coal, and one can run a modern industrial society using it (while ruining the environment). As was mentioned in your article, the Earth has proven reserves of coal for 200 years at current consumption levels. Of course, in a worst-case scenario where energy consumption continues to increase at its current rate, and where we switch completely to coal for fuel, this timeframe would be much shorter. However, proven reserves refer only to coal extractable with current technology at current prices. With foreseeable advances in technology and price increases, we have another 800 years worth of coal at current use levels (data from the World Energy Council). Even if you assume the aforementioned worst-case coal use scenario, that's still well in excess of a hundred years' supply. Mind you, this is very pessimistic. It assumes that positive trends like the Kyoto global warming treaty, increasing energy efficiency in industry, and decreasing levels of world population growth won't do anything to slow down our growth in energy demand.

Coal already supplies almost half of US electricity, and with relatively cheap chemical conversions it can supply gasoline for cars and be a basis for making fertilizer and plastics. Both South Africa, during apartheid embargos, and the Germans, during WII, ran industrial economies largely on coal (awful examples).

So why is an environmentalist like me writing against treating Peak Oil as a crisis if it encourages people to use renewable energy sources? I think it's a dangerous argument for several reasons:

- It sets up incentives that some in the mainstream will see as necessitating increased fossil fuel extraction to avert a crisis. Drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, or ramping up the incredibly destructive extraction of oil from the Canadian tar sands becomes much easier to justify. Most importantly, it may encourage a national energy policy that foresees increasing use of coal. Coal produces more global warming effect per energy output than any other fossil fuel.
- The crisis mentality may also encourage isolationism in the communities movement as communitarians seeks to assure their own survival after the collapse. Communities around the world are engaged in amazing demonstrations about how it is possible to live a full and sustainable life. These examples will only have an impact on the

world environment if we can continue to share them with the mainstream.

• Finally, when the fossil fuel crash does not happen in 10-20 years, environmentalists will again be portrayed as Chicken Littles, undoing the credibility we have built up by sticking to what good science tells us.

Thanks for the great magazine!

Dan Einstein
Cleveland, Ohio

*Jan Steinman, co-author with Diana Leafe Christian, of "*Community Survival During the Coming Energy Decline,*" replies:*

Thank you for your thoughtful response to our Peak Oil issue.

I disagree that the notion of imminent oil shortages is "controversial," but I appreciate your citing a reference. I have gone over the paper you cite in some detail, and remain unconvinced that the author, who appears to be an oil and gas industry consultant, lays any doubt on the concept that global petroleum and natural gas production will peak, and will irrevocably decline thereafter.

So the issue seems to be more about "when" and "how bad will it be," rather than "if." What we do know is that our entire way of life depends completely upon a resource that we all agree will go into decline. The precautionary principle demands we be prudent!

You may have fallen into the "price" trap when you argue that coal—or oil may last much longer than one might first imagine. Adam Smith's economics assumes that scarcity causes price increases, which then makes it profitable to relieve the scarcity. It is an open-ended model, and completely ignores the fact that resources are finite. If you and billions of dollars are stuffed into a space suit orbiting the Earth, and you have eight minutes of air left, how much will you have to pay for an additional minute of air?

I know of no "relatively cheap conversion" of coal into gasoline. The examples you cite (apartheid South Africa and Nazi Germany) both collapsed, so I'm not sure they're good examples. Their alternative transportation fuel use never reached more than a small percentage of total. And eventually, General Rommel's Afrika Korps tanks lay strewn across the desert sands, victims of empty fuel tanks rather than enemy fire. It can be argued that the inability to successfully supplant fossil fuel brought down both regimes!

To address your final points:

• *I agree that educating people that a shortage is coming works, to some extent, to benefit those who will profit from such a shortage. What would you have us do instead —just let it happen without preparation? Although you seem to be in favor of denial, do you not agree that this is a perfect example of the precautionary principle, "that if the potential consequences of an action are severe or irreversible, in the absence of full scientific certainty, the burden of proof falls on those who would advocate taking the action?" (Wikipedia) Or in this case, those who would advocate inaction.*

• *I apologize if you were able to somehow interpret the article as promoting isolationism—that certainly was not our intent! We wanted to represent a balance, so that people begin asking the right questions, rather than dictating a "this is what's going to happen" missive. I favor the idea of "lifeboat communities" preparing themselves well, while continuing to interact and educate the greater community.*

• *On your third point, we will have to disagree. Even the US Geological Survey—the least credible and most conservative of all the Peak Oil predictors—says it will happen by 2030, just 23 years from now. They also claim that it will be $39 a barrel by then, and have in the past claimed that oil would peak by 1928—so how credible are they?*

There is a consensus among credible scientists—as well as you and I—that petroleum and gas will peak and irrevocably decline. Petroleum use continues to increase. These two trends are on a collision course. Humankind has a long history of not being very far-sighted when it comes to resoures. Shouldn't we err on the side of caution?

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.**

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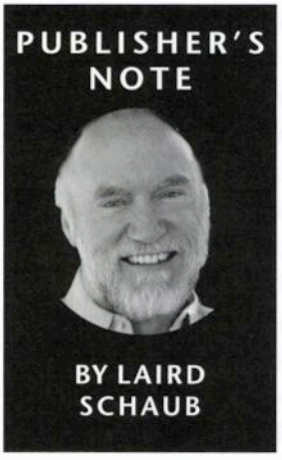
Patricia Greene, Advertising Manager,* patricia@ic.org*; 315-347-3070; 381 Hewlett Rd., Hermon, NY 13652.

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.

No Pat Answers: Can Communities Be a Safety Net for People Struggling in Life?



We get a lot of calls at the Fellowship for Intentional Communities office. Most are from people looking for community in some fashion, and a set of standard replies satisfies the bulk of them. This past summer however, I was asked by a networking friend in Washington DC to help a 50-year-old woman (whom I'll call Pat) in the Washington suburbs who was suffering from Multiple Chemical Sensitivity (MCS) and wanting help exploring options in community living. I knew this was not going to be a routine inquiry.

Pat is better off than many who suffer from MCS. She lives alone in a condominium that she owns and is healthy enough to be able to tolerate urban air. Also, when she's up for going out, she has access to free transportation within the metropolitan area for the disabled, courtesy of the city of Washington (which is more supportive of the disabled than many cities). She also has some professional skills in design that she's hoping can be parlayed into paying work. Right now she's eking out a life on disability payments and was calling to see if there may be a fit for her in an intentional community.

Like many of us, she wanted a life where she'd be less isolated. She yearned for a community where the membership was socially mature, intergenerational, and open to a challenge. She wanted to live in a beautiful, affordable, safe, quiet place with clean air and easy access to public transportation. She desired a climate that was neither too hot nor too cold.

Part of the challenge is that Pat's energy and stamina are sharply limited, and she doesn't have near the contact with the natural world or other people that she'd like (and which most of us take access to for granted). She needs a certain amount of help with regular chores such as shopping, cleaning, and personal grooming. Further, she cannot work with computers and can write letters only with difficulty.

As a community networker for 25 years, I have first-hand knowledge of groups doing some amazing things in support of members with limited capacities and special needs. In almost all cases however, this has been extended to people who had already been fully contributing members for years before their debilitations surfaced. It is another kettle of fish to extend support to new members who need special

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

assistance right from the get-go, where there has not already been a history of contribution from the individual that might serve as a form of karmic credit they can draw against.

My own community has turned down candidates for membership because not everyone was willing to accept a person who was not immediately able to contribute more than they needed in return, and some were unwilling to take a chance that things would balance out in the future. They were not willing to carry someone who had not already "proven" their worth. Knowing that this is not unusual among communities, I set about trying to figure out what Pat might bring to the table that offered prospects of a fair exchange for the support she was seeking. Fortunately, there were things to work with. (This is not always the case. In more severe manifestations, MCS can wipe out a person's reserves to the point where just surviving can take the person's full energy and attention.)

Where can people with Multiple Chemical Sensitivities go?

In addition to her design skills, Pat claimed above-average social skills and a facility with problem solving and management. With luck, this might be her ticket into community. While she doesn't have the constitution to employ these skills in a regular job, all communities need organizers and people with a flair for internal bureaucracy, especially when practiced with sensitivity. Of course her self-assessment may not match that of the folks living in her potential community, but still it gave me an angle to attempt. Unfortunately, her needs would be immediately in play, and her personal

ORGANIZING A COLLECTIVE IN OUR NEIGHBORHOOD

COMMUNITIES

Life in Cooperative Culture

Have You Noticed?

COMMUNITIES has become COMMUNITIES

Communities has a new suit of clothes!

We've busied ourselves the last two years with overhauling the look and feel of this magazine. Now we're ready to show off.

After a decade as the publisher, the Fellowship for Intentional Community (FIC) had to face the economic reality that this periodical was steadily losing money. Too much money. When coupled with the bleak national trend toward declining magazine sales, we decided that we either had to get better, or get out. Bankrolled by generous and dedicated supporters who believe in *Communities'* ability to make a difference in the world, we've been working our fannies off to make this publication downright irresistible.

Over the last 18 months, we've switched to four-color covers (issue #127); started paying photographers for higher resolution cover images (issue #128); bumped up the quality of our interior paper stock to address muddy images (issue #130); hired a Photo & Illustrations Editor, and bought a professional-grade design monitor for our Layout Manager's computer (issue #131); and redesigned our cover and interior (issue #132). What's more, we've done all this without diluting one iota our dedication to offering informative and insightful articles about community living.

Hopefully, you—and all those potential new subscribers out there—will like the result.

Type Casting

Communities was launched in 1972. After considerable experimentation in the early years, the editorial staff settled in 1975 on the distinctive Peignot font for our logotype (see the first "Communities" in the subhead above). After sailing under that flag for more than three decades, we figured it was time for a fresh banner, one befitting our buffed up countenance and brassy belief in our future. Beginning with the fall issue (#132) we debuted our new Optima logotype (see graphic above). It's more modern, clean, and bold—the very qualities we aspire to on the inside pages as well.

And while we were at it, we upgraded our subtitle. Leaving behind the more staid sounding "Journal of Cooperative Living" we're now showcasing "Life in Cooperative Culture." We don't just tell you who has the heart for community; we're the people who bring you community stories from the heart.

—*L.S.*

assets might take a while to manifest (allowing for time to settle and learn the culture and quirks of her new home). Pat will likely need one or two allies among the membership who see the potential she represents and are willing to go to bat for her. Will she find these fast enough? Will a community be willing to take a chance? I'm not sure. And as painful as it was for me to prune her hope, I needed to be honest with Pat about her chances: she would have to expect communities to be cautious about taking on a member with MCS.

Yet where can people with MCS go (or, for that matter, people with depression and all the other varieties of mental health limitations)? The federal government has been purposefully divesting itself of safety net responsibilities since the Reagan administration of the 1980s, when we began "deinstitutionalizing" people to help finance our military misadventures. Who will pick up the slack? What kind of alternative culture are we creating if only the demonstrably healthy need apply?

It is hard to handle inquiries like Pat's, where the need is palpable. It's clear that community would be a good environment for her, and yet I know that her options are limited and it will be hard to find a fit.

Understandably, the first priority of communities is to create a solid lifestyle for its membership. Not all succeed in that goal, and of those that do, there are many worthwhile ways to direct any surplus resources. It is much more likely, I think, that a group will devote extra energy to civic involvement and neighborhood improvement (which is a wonderful and much-needed activity) than hold back against the possibility of supporting disabled prospective members. The truth is, communities cannot fill all peoples' needs, even though all people need community.

Communities cannot fill all peoples' needs, even though all people need community.

In the end, I spent about five hours talking with Pat on the phone, reading her writing, and thinking about potential solutions. It was little enough and I've no idea how much my efforts will ultimately make a difference. Yet I tried. And the most poignant thing of all is that I stood out for trying. According to Pat, no one else had extended themselves even that far on her behalf.

So there we have it, a very sad situation and a vexing problem. ✪

COMING IN FUTURE ISSUES

"Learning Sustainable Living Skills in Community" Spring 2007

Does your community offer work trades or work exchange opportunities, internships, or apprenticeships? Community Experience Weeks or Weekends? If so, what have you learned from your visitors, students, or participants? What surprised you? What works well? What would you never do again?

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

"Are You Growing Much of Your Own Food Yet" Summer 2007

Does your community or organized urban or suburban neighborhood grow vegetables or fruit during the growing season? Are you and your community, or neighbors, considering, or preparing for Peak Oil issues and rapidly escalating food costs? Are you participating in community gardens, CSA farms, or local food bartering systems? Is your group storing food with low-tech means (canning, fermenting, etc.?) During hard times, how would your group meet its nutritional needs for fat, protein, or carbohydrates?

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The Seed as Physician

"Before planting, put into your mouth one or more little seeds, hold them in your mouth, under the tongue, for at least nine minutes...

Anastasia stated: "Every seed you plant contains within itself an enormous amount of information about the Universe. Nothing made by human hands can compare with this information either in size or accuracy. Through the help of these data the seed knows the exact time, down to the millisecond, when it is to come alive, grow – what juices it is to take from the Earth, how to make use of the rays of the celestial bodies – the Sun, Moon and stars, what it is to grow into, what fruit to bring forth. These fruits are designed to sustain Man's life. More powerfully and effectively than any manufactured drugs of the present or future, these fruits are capable of counteracting and withstanding any disease of the human body. But to this end the seed must know about the human condition. So that during the maturation process it can satiate its fruit with the right correlation of substances to heal a specific individual of his disease, if indeed he has it or is prone to it. "In order for the seed of a cucumber, tomato or any other plant grown in one's plot to have such information, the following steps are necessary:

SPIT into the hole... in NO CASE should you WATER IT right off...

"Before planting, put into your mouth one or more little seeds, hold them in your mouth, under the tongue, for at least nine minutes. "Then place the seed between the palms of your hands and hold it there for about thirty seconds. During this time it is important that you be standing barefoot on the spot of earth where you will later be planting it. "Open your hands, and carefully raise the seed which you are holding to your mouth. Then blow on it lightly, warming it with your breath, and the wee little seed will know everything that is within you. "Then you need to hold it with your hands open another thirty seconds, presenting the seed to the celestial bodies. And the seed will determine the moment of its awakening. The planets will all help it! And will give the sprouts the light they need to produce fruit especially for you.

"After that you may plant the seed in the ground. In no case should you water it right off, so as not to wash away the saliva which is now covering it, along with other information about you that the seed will take in. It can be watered three days after planting. "The planting must be done on days appropriate to each vegetable (people already know this, from the lunar calendar). In the absence of watering, a premature planting is not as harmful as an overdue planting. "It is not a good idea to pull up all the weeds growing in the vicinity of the sprouts. At least one of each kind should be left in place. The weeds can be cut back ..."

According to Anastasia, the seed is thus able to take in information about the person who plants it, and then during the cultivation of its fruit it will pick up from the Universe and the Earth the optimum blend of energies needed for a given Man. The weeds should not be disposed of completely, as they have their own appointed function. Some weeds serve to protect the plant from disease while others give supplemental information...

Anastasia maintains that the fruit cultivated from the seed in this manner, and consumed by the individual who cultivated it, is capable not only of curing him of any diseases of the flesh whatsoever but also of significantly retarding the aging process, rescuing him from harmful habits, tremendously increasing his mental abilities and giving him a sense of inner peace. The fruit will have the most effective influence when consumed no later than three days after harvesting.... The fruit of plants grown like this will be distinguished from other plants of the same species not only in taste. If analysed, it will be seen that they are also distinct in terms of the substances they contain.

When planting the seedlings, it is important to soften the dirt in the excavated hole with one's fingers and bare toes, and spit into the hole. Responding to my question, "Why the feet?", Anastasia explained that through perspiration from one's feet come substances containing information about bodily diseases. This information is taken in by the seedlings. They transmit it to the fruit, which will thus be enabled to counteract diseases. Anastasia recommended walking around the plot barefoot from time to time...

©EXTRACT from *Anastasia* - Book 1 of The Ringing Cedars Series by Vladimir Megre. In Europe now considered the most significant books ever written, they are said to contain the most important revelations in the history of humanity. These books have already created an eco-community revolution across Europe. Thousands of people have quit their jobs in response to Anastasia's extraordinary messages and spiritual insights, to return to the land, reconnect with Nature and to regain their own source of power. Without advertisement the books have sold over 11 million copies and have been translated into more than 20 languages. Anastasia Vedrussa was found more than 10 years ago living alone in a forest in Siberia. She is considered to be a surviving member of an ancient culture whose powers and knowledge far exceed anything known today. Anastasia reveals "the missing keys" to understanding our true purpose and potential and shows how everyone may regain their lost powers. Now being released in English, they are not yet in any mainstream bookstores. If you would like to read *Anastasia* send a check/MO for $18.90 ($14.95 + $3.95 p&h within the USA) with your name and address, to: Ringing Cedars Press, c/o PSSC, 46 Development Road, Fitchburg, MA 01420 USA. Quote Direct Code: ANASEED1. Over 72% of Anastasia readers excitedly order books 2, 3 & 4 (those translated so far). If you request all four together the publisher will pay your postage! (USA only). Send only $59.80 (just the cost of the books) and quote Special Offer Code: 42GOFREE. (Offer expires March 30, 2007)

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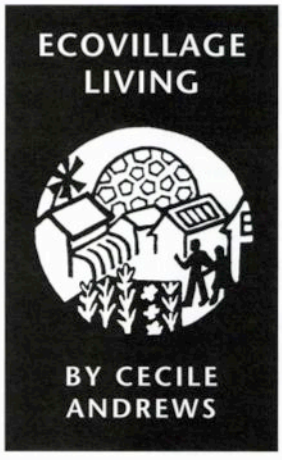
Creating a Non-Residential Ecovillage in Our Seattle Neighborhood

I've always been a little bit envious of people living in ecovillages, but at the same time I've known that I probably wouldn't leave my north Seattle home. And then, I discovered a variation on the ecovillage idea, something I've come to call "ecovillage lite" (as in "Bud Lite").

Oakland Ecovillage, which was formerly called Hanover Ecovillage, is an informal organization of small groups of people living around Lake Merritt in Oakland, California. Oakland Ecovillage members propose and schedule activities on a monthly calendar and meet in each other's homes and in local businesses. Not as grand as a "real" ecovillage, but something I felt I could do here in Seattle.



After learning about this group, I went to a local neighborhood center in the Phinney area of Seattle, about a square mile of residential neighborhood about five miles north of downtown and next to Lake Green. I'd offered classes on simple living over the years at the center, and told its directors I wanted to start Phinney EcoVillage. They were excited.

Again, though I've always been inspired by ecovillages, I wasn't sure I wanted to work as hard as the ecovillage founders I know, so we started small, offering workshops in the neighborhood center and adding activities as people responded. We don't plan (at least for now) any shared living, but, as one person commented, there's "un-intentional" living in an existing neighborhood.

Our goal is to promote ecological sustainability and community in our area. Our theme is to encourage people to live "sim-

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Cecile Andrews is a founding member of Phinney EcoVillage and author of The Circle of Simplicity: Return to the Good Life *(HarperCollins, 1997) and the new* Slow is Beautiful: New Visions of Community, Leisure, and Joie de Vivre *(New Society Publishers, 2006). She is on the board of the organization Take Back Your Time (www.timeday.org), powered on the web by The Simple Living Network (www.simpleliving.net). Cecile's website: www.cecileandrews.com. Phinney Ecovillage: www.phinneyecovillage.net.*

pler, slower, and smaller." When people live more simply, they make conscious choices about their consumerism. When they live more slowly, they make conscious choices about their time. And when they live smaller, they become more aware of their ecological footprint.

But the idea of "smaller" has ramifications other than just one's impact on the Earth. To me it means that small actions can eventually lead to big changes, particularly when the actions spread through community. It also suggests the importance of small groups. It's clear we need to learn to live with each other in caring and cooperative ways, and one of the most effective ways to learn is to experience the small group. In the small group, you can be recognized and accepted as your authentic self, and you get a chance to

When people live more simply, they make conscious choices about their consumerism.

talk about substantive ideas and experiences and clarify your own belief systems. In fact, small groups may be the only place people can have in-depth conversations these days, and as educator John Dewey said, "Democracy is born in conversations." To me, small groups are essential for social change.

Some of the groups we have started include a natural health group, a "living lightly" group, a "home alone" group (weekly coffee in a neighborhood cafe for those who work at home during the day), a weekly walking group, and so on.

We also spend a lot of time working with already existing groups and including their events on our calendar and alerting

our email list about their activities. I find that if I get involved with other people's projects, they get involved in mine, and we begin building up a stronger sense of community. So, besides supporting the neighborhood center, we work with a group fighting our local zoo (which is in our neighborhood) to keep them from building a massive garage, and we are involved with our local community council and the local anti-war group (in Seattle the anti-war groups are organized by neighborhoods).

We also work with local businesses. In particular, we sponsor a "salon" with a local bookstore, gathering to talk about the books we're each currently reading.

Our theme is to encourage people to live "simpler, slower, and smaller."

Our latest, and most popular effort, is the "Phinney Neighbors Fighting Global Warming" group. People have been inspired by Al Gore's movie *An Inconvenient Truth* and are ready to do something.

The key to this kind of effort is responding to what's in the air and then acting on it, rather than having a fixed long-range plan. With a long-range plan in your mind, you aren't really responding to what people want, and this can undermine true participation. My personal approach to social change is based on the philosophy that if you bring people together to talk about things they care about, they will discover the answers and actions to take. It means being open and giving up preconceived notions of what your outcomes will be.

Most of all it means that whatever you do, you focus on the people themselves and on developing a sense of community. ✪

The Cohousing Conference in Carolina

... A Senior Moment?

This past July, for the first time since 1999, there was a national cohousing conference on the East Coast—on the campus of the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill. Needing at least 150 paid participants to break even, organizer Joani Blank was all smiles when she announced at the closing session that attendance had topped 250.

National conferences are a time to see friends, talk shop, and tell stories. The connections occur in a random kaleidoscope of pace and energy, all telescoped into three days. One minute I was trying to shoehorn my way into an SRO workshop on community work systems. The next I was out in the hallway getting the poignant, yet hopeful news from a persistent group outside Philadelphia *still* looking for the right piece of property. Saturday evening, I went from lending a hand during the frenetic pre-dinner rush at the conference bookstore, to a tender 15-minute video tribute in remembrance of Merlin Porter Borden, a friend and robust 60-year-old who died of a massive heart attack in 2004 while putting the finishing touches on an installation at his beloved Liberty Village, a community he helped found. Following that I was whooping and hollering as the ring man at the post-dinner benefit auction, cajoling the audience into one more bid. It was a crazy, packed three days, with too many conversations and too little time. In short, it was a great conference.

Unfortunately, there were a number of logistical challenges with the site: the main dorm was on the other side of major construction from the student union, where all the conference activities happened; exhibitors were not allowed to set up tables and booths in the student union until late Friday, even though almost half the people participated in pre-conference workshops and tours that started that morning; there was no decent food within an easy walk

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

of the conference site after the campus food service closed down Friday afternoon and we were not allowed access to the university wireless system with our own computers—which meant no Internet connections on campus with personal machines. On the plus side, Joani and her staff worked tirelessly to overcome the glitches, and no one let these temporary setbacks spoil a good time. Most of the key players in the cohousing world were there, the mood was good, and the networking couldn't have been better..

National conferences are also a time to check the weathervane, to see which way the cohousing winds are blowing. It had been three years since the last cohousing conference, and the main shift in that time has been a freshening breeze in the direction of cohousing for seniors. Leading the way in promoting this concept are several heavy hitters: Chuck Durrett of The Cohousing Company, Zev and Neshama of Abraham Paiss & Associates, and Jim Leach of Wonderland Hill Development. Chuck has recently published *Senior Cohousing* and on the first evening he shared with folks how touched he was by visits to

We want to build more than equity; we want to build equality.

senior cohousing projects in Denmark—he'd never seen people happier; he'd never seen people approach their senior years with more grace and realism. Will that also be the experience in the US? We're about to find out. ElderSpirit Cohousing has just been completed in Abington, Virginia; Silver Sage Cohousing has broken ground in Boulder, Colorado; and a number of other projects are on the drawing board.

Promoting senior-only communities is a definite shift from the original concept, which was solidly multi-generational. Most of the built cohousing projects purposefully commingle people of all ages, and it is my clear impression that the seniors living in the 30+ groups I've visited love that mix. Is there also a demand for seniors only? That remains to be seen.

I'm inspired by the vision of community as a platform for action and social change.

One thing is certain however: there should be plenty of material to work with as the Boomers enter their 50s and 60s.

The other theme at this event was activism. Figuring that a high percentage of the folks who attend national conferences aspire to connections beyond their property lines, Katie McCamant closed the event with a pithy pitch to get more involved in local neighborhoods, spreading the inspiration of community far and wide. Current Coho/US board president Rick Mockler reinforced Katie's plea, and I was thrilled to observe how well that dovetails with the FIC's initiative to expand our scope beyond that of intentional communities, to support community building wherever people want it. It's no longer enough to just build it and wait for them to come.

Almost everyone understands that community should be a goold place to live, raise kids, and grow old with grace and fulfillment. Yet I want more than that. Like Katie and Rick, I'm inspired by the vision of community as platform for action and social change. We want to build more than equity: we want to build equality. ✪

Financial Security vs. Freedom of Choice

FEDERATION UPDATE

BY TOM FREEMAN

Two years ago the retail chain Pier 1 Imports ended a 30-year relationship with Twin Oaks community in Virginia, dropping us as the vendor who made their rope hammocks. The immediate impact was to plunge our community into economic austerity. Our continued existence was never in doubt, thanks to many years of prudent and conservative fiscal policy, but we had to slash our domestic spending by 40 percent.

There was a sense of irony in the relationship between Twin Oaks and Pier 1. Twin Oaks is an egalitarian, income-sharing intentional community that prides itself on creating small footprints on the land, a voluntary labor system, and social consciousness. Pier 1 is a multinational conglomerate that sells overpriced consumer goods imported mostly from developing nations. Yet, we attribute our longevity and growth at Twin Oaks to our relationship with Pier 1.

And we were not the only community to benefit from this relationship. As Pier 1's hammock sales increased, we were able to offer the excess production to other communities, first bringing East Wind in Missouri into the business as a partner, then contracting with other smaller communities to also create hammocks. Making hammocks for Pier 1 was like pennies from heaven dropping into the pockets of the communities movement.

The relationship with Pier 1 had its price. As Pier 1 grew, so did their orders. Then, Pier-1 began tightening the management of their supply chain, meaning (since hammocks were a seasonal item), they began asking us to ship larger orders in a shorter window of time. Hammock "pushes" (a systematic and intense increase in production) were common in our winter months at Twin Oaks. This seasonal production fit Twin Oaks well, as outdoor work wound down in the community during the colder months.

Tom Freeman has lived at Twin Oaks for over 11 years. For most of that time he has been involved in management of the hammock business in one form or another. This column reports on 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. www.thefec.org.

In the mid 1990s the number of hammocks Pier 1 requested became staggering. Members of Twin Oaks felt they were being asked to make more hammocks than they were comfortable doing. Our community managers of the hammock business tried to shift more hammocks to East Wind and other communities. Many of them did not have the same seasonal labor shifts as Twin Oaks and felt exploited at being asked to make so many hammocks in such a short time. The seasonal ups and downs of production did not fit well for their internal economies, as in winter months they would be flush with production and summer months they would have little.

To ease the labor issues of hammock production at Twin Oaks and the other communities, the managers of our hammock business decided to spread out hammock production over the year and store the finished hammocks in our warehouse in anticipation of Pier 1's spring orders. For a while this worked fine. Twin Oaks still made most of its hammocks in the fall and winter but the rest of the production was spread out over the rest of the year. And the other communities could make the same amount of hammocks each month if that suited them, allowing them to plan a more stable economy.

As Pier 1 grew larger, the very nature of their business changed. No longer were they just an importer of cheap imported goods, they began to see themselves as design and style leaders in the industry. The simple rope hammock we had been providing was no longer good enough. They wanted something different. We had a warehouse full of rope hammocks waiting in anticipation of their needs and they wanted something different. They wanted a fabric hammock.

In retrospect, we can look back and see that their request for fabric hammocks was the beginning of the end. At the time though, we saw it as a new opportunity. We scrambled to both create the new fabric hammock for Pier1 and to convince them of the ongoing salability of the rope hammocks in our warehouse. For a while we kept it going with a win-win compromise. We made the new hammock models that Pier 1 wanted and Pier 1 still sold the traditional rope hammocks that we liked making.

There was a feeling of emancipation. We could create the economy that fitted our desires for community and right livelihood, not fill the needs of a large multinational conglomerate.

Pier 1's changing product needs brought new uncertainties and tension to the communities involved. The managers of our hammocks business could not anticipate from season to season what Pier 1 would want. Hammock production returned to a seasonal nature. Many individual community members felt dismayed at what they perceived as Pier 1's dominance of their lives and the communities they lived in. Members of Twin Oaks began to voice concern about the negative impact of the Pier 1 relationship on our community.

In the mid 1980s, when Pier 1 started their expansion, Twin Oaks recognized the danger of being dependent on one large customer. We created the "Pier 1 strategy," which in fact was an intention and plan not to be so dependent on Pier 1. To meet these aims,

Twin Oaks started a tofu business, put more energy into its fledlging indexing business, and attempted to sell hammocks to other retailers besides Pier 1.

As Pier 1 continued to grow, meeting production needs taxed our community's resources and there wasn't much left over for the Pier 1 strategy. Our tofu and indexing businesses remained small and hammock sales to Pier 1 still accounted for the vast majority of our income. At the same time, some Twin Oaks members felt that being a Pier 1 production facility was easier than the alternative. After all, we had been dealing with Pier 1 for almost as long as there had been a Twin Oaks. They would never drop us.

There have been some positive developments, though. Over the last two years our tofu business has tripled its net income. Our indexing income is up 45 percent in the same period. And we are managing our money better than we have in the past. The new Twin Oaks economy brings its own tensions and problems. We're still not out of austerity yet. Though each year gets better with our economy being more broadly diversified.

If there is a moral to this story, I think it lies in learning the danger of creating a community economy dependent on one large customer. If we were a traditional business we could just keep expanding to buffer the dependency on a Pier 1-type customer. We could produce our product with cheaper labor in other countries, as our competitors do. We could expand our product line to other casual furniture. We could do these things and more. Instead we've chosen to be a community but not a business. We have businesses in order to support our community; we're not a community that exists to support our businesses. It's an important distinction.

Our tofu business has tripled its net income. Our indexing income is up 45 percent. We are managing our money better.

But in August, 2004, they did drop us. They informed us they would stop selling hammocks (though they would take some of our inventory to be negotiated later at a reduced price). The moment that many people had prophesied but few believed would ever happen, happened. Twin Oaks was without Pier 1.

When this news was announced, our community became very quiet. There was some anxiety, some fear, but mostly I remember a sense of serene peace. There was a feeling of emancipation. We knew there would be discomfort and hard work ahead, but we had choice now. We could dictate our own future. We could create the economy that fitted our desires for community and right livelihood, not fill the needs of a large multinational conglomerate. We could return to a sovereignty in our economy that had been missing for many years.

The last two years without a Pier 1 account have been hard. We've tightened the belt a few notches and cut spending.

A few months after Pier 1 ended the relationship, a representative from L.L. Bean called. They were interested in having a domestic hammock vendor. Their orders would be approximately half the amount of the Pier 1 account at its height. Our community talked about it. It would end our austerity period after just a single year. It would bring in lots of money and the things that money can buy.

In the end we decided we didn't want a new Pier 1. Finally free after all those years, we chose not to go back. ✪

Can Cohousing Communities Help Generate a More Sustainable Economy?

Some time ago, a neighbor here in Berkeley Cohousing requested permission to build a shed to store ladders and other equipment for his window-washing business. Some of this equipment currently rests on the side or back of his house in a narrow right-of-way. Responses among our members were mixed, including at least one who felt the request took advantage of the rest of us by using shared outdoor space (of which we have very little) for private purposes, specifically "money-making purposes." In the end, considering the issue of creating sheds for private use led to us to finally build two much-needed community bicycle sheds, but we have yet to address the original need this cohousing neighbor expressed.

How do other communities respond to the economic lives of their members? As someone trained in regional planning, it seems to me that how well cohousing members recognize and support the livelihoods of their neighbors may well affect the economic sustainability of cohousing itself over the next few decades. Are we recreating on a small scale the kind of "bedroom suburb" that consigns people to commute through other people's neighborhoods because of the desire to keep certain realities out of sight and out of mind of the home? Are we really NIMBY ("not in my backyard") reactionaries disguised as communitarians?

As in 90 percent of all intentional communities, members of cohousing communities don't share incomes or work in community-owned businesses together. Except for retirees, most working-age cohousers commute to jobs every day. We pass through other people's neighborhoods to make our living elsewhere, returning to our safe havens at night.

I began asking these questions as I visited other cohousing communities around the country last summer. One modest but inspiring example I found was at Two Echo Cohousing on the rural outskirts of small-town Brunswick, Maine.

Betsy Morris volunteers as Research Director for the Cohousing Association of the United States (Coho/US). She has a masters and doctorate in city and regional planning, provides technical assistance to nonprofits serving low-income communities, and is working on assisting intentional communities with project management and aging-in-community strategies. www.communitysector.net. The Cohousing Life column will be written in alternate issues by Betsy and her partner, Raines Cohen, a board member of both Coho/US and the Fellowship for Intentional Community (FIC), and a certified senior cohousing facilitator.

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Two of Echo's 27 homes are owner-built and fairly spread out, but the majority of their 90-plus acres are in a conservation easement that will remain undeveloped. Among the usual mix of teachers, ministers, and social service professionals are a plumber, a builder, and a cabinetmaker. Another resident runs a lobster boat off the coast 20 miles away. The community agreed that he may store dozens of lobster pots (bulky wood and wire crates) on the property off-season in exchange for a full-community lobster dinner he organizes every summer.

With so much land, each household at Two Echo Cohousing is able, if it wishes, to build a two-story garage on the property. The cabinetmaker got support to build a woodworking shop as an expansion of his garage allotment. While city building codes and insurance requirements place some restrictions on industrial uses in this residential zone (that is, in the cohousing development), community members, local city planners, and the insurance company were willing to work out something creative and fair to support the cabinetmaker's livelihood while meeting community needs. He now has the advantages of a business close to home, saving money and oil. This arrangement also allows him to care for his children part-time, while also providing a new and potentially productive resource for other community members.

So far, the most varied set of experiments in cohousing economics I've seen are at the 24-household Cobb Hill Farm Cohousing in Hartland, Vermont. Cobb Hill started as a model of sustainable agriculture by a group of sustainable agriculture activists who created a cohousing community on their 380-acre property.

The community subsidized the building of one housing unit to be affordable for a young farming couple who moved to Vermont to manage the group's Community-Supported Agriculture (CSA) farm and dairy herd. Combinations of members have invested in farm-related businesses that produce cheese, honey, chickens, lambs, and eggs for sale to community members and to the public. Most, if not all members, volunteer regularly in the gardens, fields, diary, and farm stand, while paying full price for the fresh organic products they buy for their own use.

Cobb Hill also operates its conservation lands as a legally incorporated lumber business. Logging their own land as a business means lower property taxes, but it also fuels a highly-efficient heating system for all the homes and common buildings. A few members manage this lumber business on a volunteer basis, while contracting out the physical labor to a part-time local contractor.

How well do cohousers recognize and support the livelihoods of their own members?

Finally, six or seven Cobb Hill members operate a Sustainability Institute with offices in the original farmhouse on the land. These members consult, teach, and evaluate projects around the world using the theory and methods of systems analysis.

In many non-cohousing intentional communities, members are encouraged or even expected to purchase goods and services from fellow community mem-

bers, but this is not usually the case in cohousing. At Cobb Hill, the cheese makers don't solely buy milk from the Cobb Hill Dairy. No sustainable business can afford to rely on only one supplier (or one buyer). At Cobb Hill, the cheese makers buy milk from a variety of dairies in the area, so if any one dairy has a shortage or a problem with their cows, the cheese making does not grind to a halt.

Cobb Hill and Two Echo have the advantage of abundant land. All these economic activities require space for equipment, and in some cases generate woodshop or barnyard smells, so a cohousing community with on-site economic activities like these would need a lot of room—either in homes, the common house, barns, or outdoor parking spaces. Nevertheless, smaller communities can and do support the livelihoods of their members in more modest ways.

Two Echo's cohousers include a plumber, a builder, a cabinetmaker, and a resident who runs a lobster boat off the coast 20 miles away.

Some cohousers recognize this universal need and address it through design features. At ElderSpirit Cohousing (in Abingdon, Virginia) and at Cobb Hill, each home, including owner-occupied and rentals alike, has a room off the living room or in the basement suitable for a home office. In the first cohousing neighborhood at EcoVillage at Ithaca, and now the three new homes built at Berkeley Cohousing (a retrofit community), each home has a second-floor loft or hallway area which can be dedicated for a home office.

Some cohousing communities provide onsite business or work space for their residents. At Sunward Cohousing in Ann Arbor, Michigan, the community rents out several office spaces in their common house basement to residents, including a builder and a therapist. EcoVillage at Ithaca does the same with its common house. At Pioneer Valley Cohousing in Amherst, Massachusetts, several residents built a small onsite building which houses small architect and graphic design firms. One neighbor here at Berkeley Cohousing manages a house-cleaning cooperative. She holds regular trainings of new co-op members and occasional co-op meetings in the common house. In exchange, we get an extra clean of our common house and opportunities for a free professional kitchen or bath cleaning at our homes.

These are the kind of low-impact, "clean" industries that one would expect to generate little conflict among cohousing residents. But that is not always the case, either. At Cobb Hill, the cheese makers produce whey, a rather smelly liquid that drains from an outdoor vat on the common property. Trainings and tours at Cobb Hill make use of their common house, which otherwise would remain empty during the day. However, the traffic and noise of visitors have caused problems for the Cobb Hill members whose housing units are within the common house and who use its kitchen as their extended living space. Good fences (i.e., signs and other cues) are needed to make good neighbors in this instance.

These stories suggest to me a number of points about making cohousing a more sustainable environment. Single-use space, except perhaps in the case of

spaces for very small children, does not make good ecological sense. "Bedroom community" cohousing, where one lives in the community but drives elsewhere to work, makes little sense either. Conserving resources requires mixed-use spaces of many kinds. Creating space and acceptance of home-based or on-site jobs in cohousing communities does make sense—and minimizes driving to jobs without restricting people's ability to make a living close by.

If we wish to bring in greater diversity into cohousing, we may need to address the real and perceived power imbalances that come with our widely differing kinds of work experiences. This may mean also welcoming a wider variety of communication styles, and not holding hidden assumptions and/or stereotypes about people who work in the trades or other blue-collar jobs, as this can lead to conflict. For example, many if not most cohousers are "knowledge workers" and managers, working in bureaucratic or other white-collar environments. Teachers, researchers, managers of professionals, or the children of such, get trained to be indirect and speak in abstractions partly because they enjoy playing with ideas, and partly to minimize the potential for causing offense among peers. Sharing ideas without reaching any conclusions in fast-paced discussions, using email, or quickly reading numbers or long technical reports are not universally-appreciated experiences! People who work in the trades, however, have learned more direct, straightforward, and sometimes blunt ways of communicating, particularly in workplaces where one needs straightforward direction to get the work done, such as in construction sites and factories.

I would like to see cohousing communities plan for flexible spaces that could be rented or shared for income-generating purposes among members, perhaps with revenues generated by these work spaces helping lower costs or monthly dues. These could include storage areas for community members (especially those living in smaller housing units), where materials from their businesses or otherwise could be kept safely but not adversely affect other community members in terms of sounds, unsightliness, or smells.

Looking at cohousing communities as elements of a working economy in the wider culture seems key to sustainability. If cohousing buy-in prices grow too high as the housing market escalates, we could end up with cohousing communities filled either with retired folks who can only afford to buy in because they have with equity from homes they purchased long ago when property values were lower, or affluent folks who buy in because they like the way the cohousing community looks, but haven't necessarily committed to knowing their neighbors. Further, if the cohousing movement becomes a monolithic white-collar, professional enclave in terms of its members' occupations and incomes, if we become esthetic-focused "NIMBYs," we could easily lose our ability to be self-managing neighborhoods with members who understand and can repair and maintain our community's mechanical and other physical systems. ✪

Are we really NIMBY ("not in my backyard") reactionaries disguised as communitarians?

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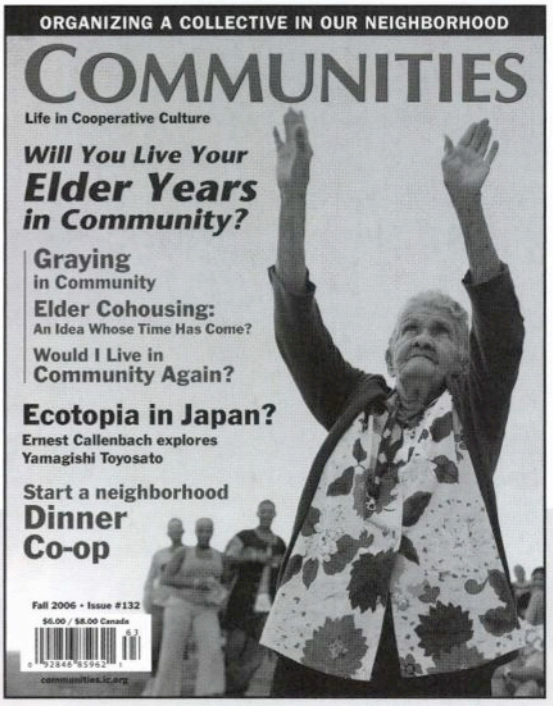

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CYNTHEA LEE ROSE

When We Should Use "Blocking Power"

Q. I'm always hearing about how, in a well-functioning consensus process, blocking is rarely supposed to happen, and only under extreme circumstances, and so on. Can you please provide some stories or examples of appropriate use of a block?

Caroline Estes responds:

The term "blocking" is the secular term for the Quaker term "standing in the way of." The term was developed by non-Quaker groups using consensus in order to take out any ambiguity that the term "standing in the way of" might present in the wider society when dealing with the issue of blocking. Appropriate blocks in the secular (that is, not Quaker) realm usually cover anything that is contrary to the basic principles of the organization. If a motion or project is to go forward, it must have not violated any of the basics of the organization making the decision. So there has to be an evaluation whether it is a personal block (that is, for personal moral or ethical reasons) or whether it is a block based on the moral or ethical principles of the organization as a whole. So, given this, appropriate blocks are very rare, since most people are not interested in blocking for blocking's sake.

One example of an appropriate block that I witnessed personally was when a group wanted to do violence to buildings in Wall Street because they were planning protests

against the whole corporate world. The group had a commitment to nonviolence in its basic charter, so deciding to do a violent act was in opposition to its basic agreements. Therefore when someone blocked the proposal that the group take violent action, it was an appropriate block. The use of blocking in any organization should be so limited that it would almost never need to be used. When you find an organization with many blocks to proposals, it usually says that the group needs to go back and re-examine the entire consensus process.

Sometimes the use of what's called a "sunset" clause in a proposal will eliminate the need for a block. This is a clause that is added onto a decision that will automatically make the decision null and void at some particular time in the future (the "sunset"). If the decision were to continue, it would have to be reconfirmed through the consensus process after the time it became null and void, as though it never existed.

When you find an organization with many blocks to proposals, it usually says that the group needs to go back and re-examine the entire consensus process.

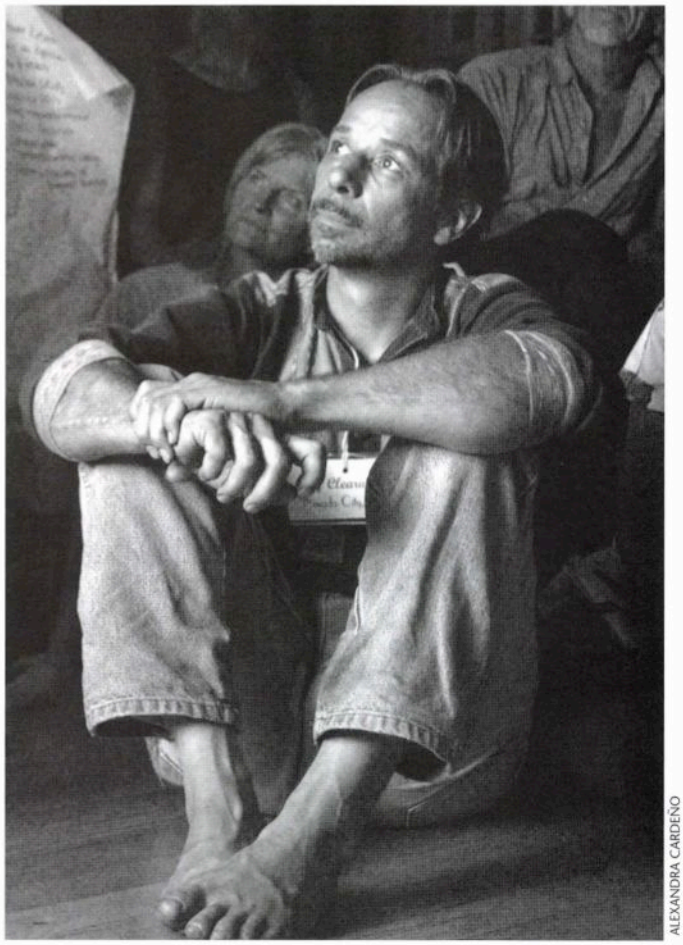
However, one area in which appropriate blocking may occur more often is in decisions about people joining as new community members, in contrast to decisions about policy, actions, or programs, because group members will potentially have to live with this person for many years.

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, US Green Party, the Association of Waldorf Schools of North America, and many other organizations. db@peak.net.

Beatrice Briggs responds:

In over 15 years of being in groups that make decisions by consensus, I have only witnessed one block—and that was an inappropriate one (someone pushing her personal agenda, unrelated to the principles of the group). One example of an appropriate block I have heard of involves a group of Mexican midwives who were seeking government recognition of their profession. They were invited to attend a midwives' gathering in the United States, but could not afford the travel expense. The US midwives offered to pay their way. The proposal to accept this offer was blocked on the basis that if the group's purpose included the Mexican government's recognition and support for their work, then accepting "foreign aid" would take the government off the hook, so to speak, and weaken their efforts to change the Mexican policy regarding midwifery.

One hypothetical example I can imagine is an intentional community, struggling to achieve financial sustainability, considering a proposal to open membership to anyone, regardless of financial means. A block based on the argument that accepting the proposal would threaten the future viability of the community would, in my opinion, be valid.



ALEXANDRA CARDEÑO

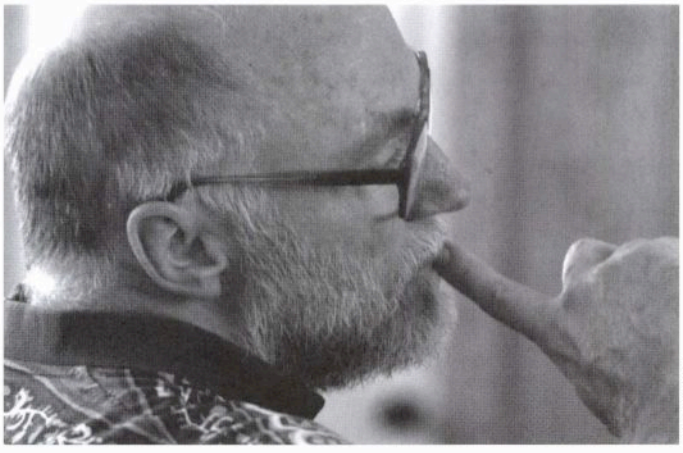
(Of course, it would also be important to have further discussion about how to achieve economic diversity in the community.)

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 Huehuecoyotl, 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:

Someone told me recently that the Quakers say one should only block a few times in a lifetime at most, and only after a sleepless night and the shedding of tears. Personally i can only think of one time that i blocked a decision, and that was after much effort at finding an alternative. As it turned out two other members also blocked the proposal with me.

I think a valid block is most likely to arise in cases where either there are different interpretations of an existing group value, or where two group values come into conflict with each other. The most frequent case of the latter i see in forming communities is that most intentional communities hold both ecological sustainability and financial affordability as values, and these naturally bump up against each other. Many green building technologies cost two to ten times the conventional alternative (for example: marmoleum vs. vinyl floor tiles; sustainably harvested wood vs. clear-cut lumber; or photovoltaic solar panels that take more than a decade to pay for themselves), which obviously drives up the price of one's community home. In a group holding both these values, i can imagine a member standing in the way of a decision if they think the group is veering too far off to one side or the other.



ALBERT BATES

Sometimes someone who is perceived as obstructive actually does have a block based on group values; it's just that the person has trouble articulating the connection to other people's satisfaction. Lysbeth Borie, a consensus facilitator and teacher with Alpha Institute in Oregon, has a wonderful story to this effect. A participant at a Pacific Green Party meeting in Oregon was causing terrible frustration in the rest of the group by threatening to block on a series of proposals intended to improve administrative efficiency. He carried through on the threat to a chorus of upset—until Lysbeth as facilitator finally helped the group figure out that his concern was that the administrative changes would significantly increase centralization within the organization. Decentralization is one of the ten key values that are the base of the Green Party around the world. Until this member spoke out, the group had not realized how their proposed action was in conflict with their own stated values. Once the concern was fully understood and light bulbs of understanding shone, the upset subsided and the block stood. Of course it would have been easier had the member been able to communicate his concerns more clearly at an earlier stage of discussion—but not everyone is equally articulate.

A block based on the argument that accepting the proposal would threaten the future viability of the community would, in my opinion, be valid.

The other situation in which it is appropriate to block is if a member sees that the course of action proposed by the group would have a catastrophic result. Not just risky or undesirable, but disastrous. In such a case it becomes the member's responsibility to the group to stand in the way of a decision. A famous case of that among Quakers happened at Pacific Yearly Meeting during the Vietnam War. A proposal was before the group to charter a big ship, load it up with humanitarian aid, and send it to North Vietnam. Such an act during wartime is considered treason. It looked like the proposal would pass until someone pointed out that if this action were taken in the name of the Pacific Yearly Meeting, then all members of the organization—even those not present, including parents of young children—could be held liable

and imprisoned by the US government. At this point the facilitator (the "clerk," in Quaker parlance) declared that it was time to adjourn for lunch . . . and over lunch, a bunch of private citizens got together to figure out how to make the project happen, just not in the name of Pacific Yearly Meeting. This allowed the considerable energy for the idea to move forward, while neatly addressing the concern.

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 sixth anniversary in the fall. Her website, www.treegroup.info, offers free tools and resources. tree@ic.org.

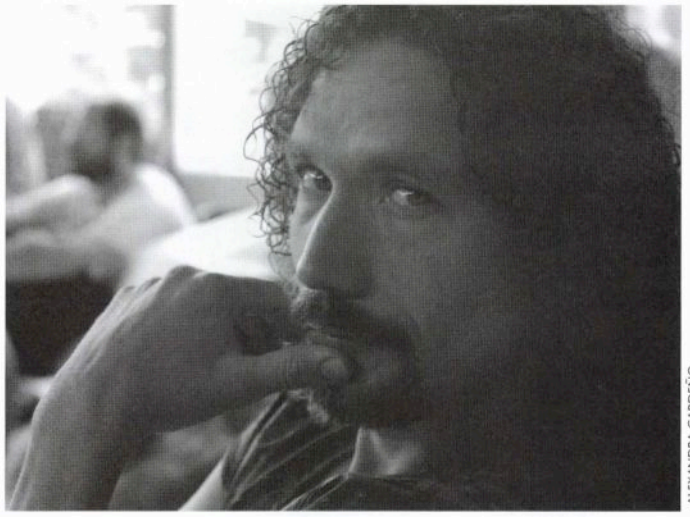
(Tree notes that she uses lower-case "i" in her articles "as an expression of egalitarian values.")

Karl Steyaert responds:

In my experience, blocking is rare because it is a high-cost and largely avoidable strategy. By blocking, a person publicly opposes a proposal, typically creating group tension and division, and potentially reducing the chances of finding a mutually desirable outcome.

As an alternative to blocking, a person with concerns about a proposal can talk with its advocates in order to understand what basic needs they are hoping the proposal will meet, and then suggest other ways that the group, or they, might meet those needs. A facilitator or another third party can provide essential support for this discussion, offering empathic understanding and reflection to both sides of the debate. Once people on both sides of an issue fully hear and understand each other, and understand what basic underlying needs they are all trying to meet, they can generally find collaborative strategies that fulfill all needs expressed, without polarizing into a blocking standoff.

Despite the costs of and alternatives to blocking, there are rare situations in which blocking may appear to be the most desirable course of action. Next I will describe two such examples, as well as alternatives which might have been considered.



ALEXANDRA CARDEÑO

In the first case, a newly founded community was considering the membership of a young single mother, whom I will call Sue. As Sue was deeply dedicated to the values of the community and was a close friend of a number of community members, the majority of people backed her bid for membership. At the same time, a woman named Ruth expressed concerns regarding Sue's serious health challenges, questioning the young community's ability to support Sue and her child at this stage in its development. After heated debate, a small group of community members supported Ruth in blocking Sue's membership, citing their concern for the well-being of the community as a whole, and their belief that Sue would be better served as well if she didn't join at that time.

In this case, I can see how blocking served a key function, allowing people to protect what they saw as the essential well-being of the community. Nonetheless, I imagine that more empathic connection might have avoided use of a block. For example, with deeper mutual understanding, instead of Ruth blocking, the community as a whole might have decided to drop Sue's proposed membership, or come up with a strategy that reassured Ruth while still welcoming Sue.

A valid block is most likely to arise where either there are different interpretations of an existing group value, or where two group values come into conflict with each other.

Consider a second example, which occurred in a community dedicated to sustainable living. A new community mem-

JILLIAN DOWNEY

ber, whom I'll call Peter, proposed building his house in the community using state-of-the-art green technologies. While most community members supported his proposal, one community member in particular, Lisa, was concerned about the true sustainability of his proposal, citing his use of all-new, rather than recycled, building materials, and the 3,000 sq.ft. design for a dwelling to be used by only one person.

In this situation, Lisa and Peter were unable to engage in meaningful dialogue, third party facilitation skills in the community were limited, and time concerns led many community members to push for a limit on discussion. The community polarized into two factions around the issue, and Lisa ultimately chose to block Peter's proposal.

Again, while I could imagine a block seeming desirable under these circumstances, I could also envision Lisa finding preferable alternatives. Had Lisa been able to engage in open-hearted conversation with Peter (which would have been more likely with the support of a skilled facilitator or empathic third party), she could have come to understand his vision and intentions for his house, which was to share his home with his adult children and to be able to run his business from his home. In addition to listening to Peter, Lisa might have explained how her concerns about the materials and scale of this home were rooted in her deep passion for environmental sustainability.

If Lisa and Peter had been able to share this mutual understanding, they might have explored strategies that fulfilled both of their needs. For example, what if Lisa had helped Peter identify sources of high-quality reused building materials for his home? Or would Peter have been open to reducing its size, to making certain spaces within it available for shared use by other community members, or to using space in the community common house for his business and to host his children? Countless alternative proposals could have emerged from a truly collaborative brainstorm.

In sum, I see blocking as an important option in group process, to be drawn upon in circumstances where core needs are at stake and other collaborative strategies cannot be found first. Ultimately, blocking a proposal is relatively rare, particularly when a group has already developed its communication, facilitation, and conflict resolution tools.

Blocking is relatively rare, particularly when a group has already developed its communication, facilitation, and conflict resolution tools.

Karl Steyaert is a facilitator, trainer, and consultant who works with individuals and organizations. Formerly an educator and facilitator at the Findhorn community in Scotland, he has experience in formal consensus, Nonviolent Communication, and Sociocracy. Karl offers trainings and consultation across North America, and is the cofounder of a living-learning community based in Oakland, California. ksteyaert@gmail.com.

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

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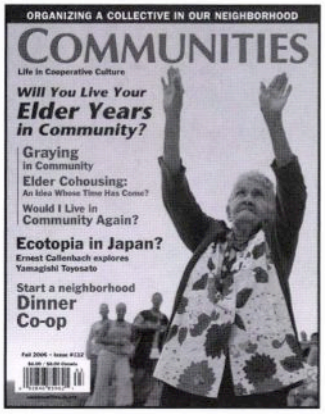

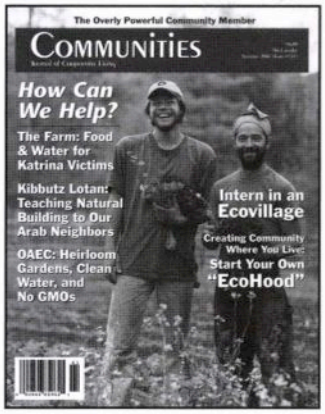

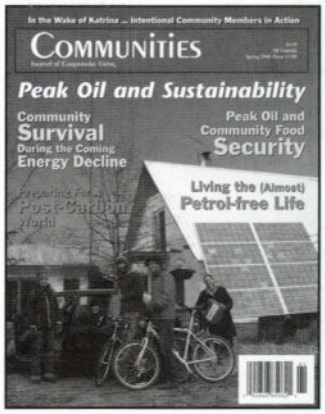

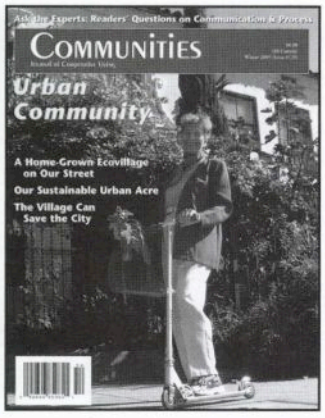

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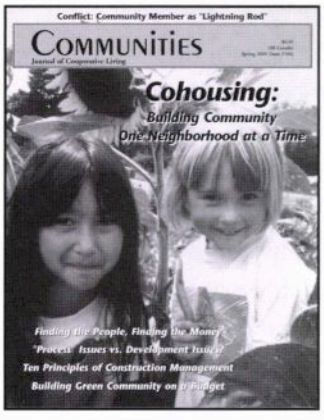

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Author Frank Beaty, left, at Teaching Drum Outdoor School in Wisconsin.

The Dilettante's Journey, Part II

How do you pick a community to join if you're interested in . . . EVERYTHING?

BY FRANK BEATY

Author Frank Beaty considers himself a dilettante because he's "something of a dabbler, a sampler of life." In Part One he described his brief visits to Earthaven Ecovillage in North Carolina, Lost Valley Educational Center in Oregon, Maplewood Farms (not its real name), Green Gulch Zen Center in California, and his voyage aboard a shipboard community, the Farley Mowat, *as a volunteer for the Sea Shepherd Conservation Society. Never staying in one community long, the Dilettante next visited sustainable education centers in northern California.*

Occidental Arts and Ecology Center (OAEC)

I knew very little about Occidental Arts and Ecology Center (OAEC) except that reportedly the land was beautiful. It was the first stop on my spontaneous whirlwind northern California eco-community tour.

Redwoods, blue skies, the ocean just a few miles over the golden hills to the west, and crisp, technicolor brilliance form my lasting impressions of the area. OAEC's entire rural property seemed to rest on one hillside, so that its tilt was strangely

uniform, and pockets of steeper slopes above hid clusters of yurts and cottages, barely visible behind lush foliage. As I started along the path, I felt a tingle. This place was enchanted.

The man who greeted me quietly in a French accent, Harold, offered to guide me to the gardens. We passed through a leafy archway of vines. Upon first glimpse of the first garden, I quite actually choked up. The Dilettante had sampled beauty in his day, but this field surpassed much of it.

Next I met Doug, head gardener and botanist, and his apprentices. As we worked and talked, my respect for Doug, for other residents I met at OAEC, and for the organization, took hold and deepened. The intentional community is called Sowing Circle; OAEC is its research and teaching foundation. Its last job posting, for example, called for someone to manage a water quality monitoring project for the region. Many of the OAEC staff are scientists as well as activists and communitarians, working in their region and nationwide to fight for environmental and related issues. On site, they teach courses in ecology, sustainable building, community, and art. Adam Wolport, a professional painter, directs OAEC's Arts Program and co-leads its course on starting new intentional communities.

Friday evening I attended the 2nd Annual Chautauqua show at OAEC's new outdoor amphitheater. This is a program based on the spirit of the Chautauqua movement that spread over the United States a century ago, which combined lecture, debate, entertainment, and practical education to benefit rural areas.

The audience of area locals murmured and filled the rich, polished hardwood benches. Community craftspeople had only recently built these benches into the earth, forming a permanent amphitheater under a twinkling grove of huge oaks. A beautiful stage, also of hardwood, completed the circle and a stone-pit fire marked its center. Faerie lights strung in the trees filled the area with a glow. Before the show had even begun, I sat and basked in the feeling that this was my kind of place and these were my kind of people.

OCCIDENTAL ARTS AND ECOLOGY CENTER

Community members, including Doug, the head gardener, at OAEC in California made quite a good impression on the author.

A fair young man opened the show playing a lullaby on tall, weird instrument made from an African gourd, which he had learned to play during his time in the Peace Corps in West Africa. He plucked the two dozen strings and sang perhaps the most heartbreaking song I have ever heard. After a moment of resistance I let the tears flow. No use fighting it.

After him, and separated by lively musical interludes, came mimes and hilarious skits and historical lectures re-enacted with poignancy and passion. I watched wild spoken-word performances and engaging Native American bands. During a side-splitting piano revue that lampooned members of the community, I turned and found Doug in the audience when his name came up. I hardly recognized him; his quiet composure had dissolved into beet-red uncontrollable laughter. A woman brought a stool to the stage and delivered an eloquent update on the successful local fight against genetically modified foods. Every act was professional-grade, and the talent was all local. Afterwards, people visited friends they saw there or formed small groups at the fire for more singing and laughter.

As I started along the path, I felt a tingle. This place was enchanted.

The magic of the Chautauqua fulfilled every promise of the tingle I'd felt when I first came to OAEC, and it remains among my most cherished memories. I left reluctantly that night. And I still wonder how I might breach their ranks someday and return there, to fill a role and make a home. But theirs is a serious operation, and the Dilettante would have to raise his game a few notches before hoping to play with the big kids.

Ecology Action

Next I visited John Jeavons, the legendary gardener, author, and teacher of French-intensive, bio-intensive-style

gardening at his farm, Ecology Action, near Willits, California. Jeavons shows you how to grow more vegetables than you ever thought possible, and on less land than you could ever imagine (and in fact wrote a book with a similar title). He started his tour with a classroom slideshow covering the history of human population growth, which took a slight dip during the Black Plague on its way to today's explosion. He told our group of visitors that the end of cheap hydrocarbon energy is upon us and that, at our present rate of soil erosion, thanks to today's methods of commercial agriculture, we have at best 40 years of topsoil left worldwide. At best.

In short, he scared the bejeezus out of us. His burly, grizzled presence added *gravitas* to his dire message. But he also soothed us with assurances that, with the proper techniques, we could grow enough food to feed a family of four, all in a small garden plot.

Next he led us down the terraced gardens of his farm. The flat land that holds Ecology Action's buildings abruptly ends at a cliff-side slope of 45 degrees. This steep hill is actually the growing area, and it looks out over the valley town of Willits, surely thousands of feet below. As you stand on the upper edge of this field, the effect is positively vertiginous, and I have never seen any farm so majestically severe. Cold springtime mist-clouds whip up this slope from the nearby Pacific, and dry August sun bakes the rocky soil. Often this farm endures these weather extremes in one day.

OCCIDENTAL ARTS ECOLOGY CENTER

The Dilettante was also mighty impressed with the show-stopping Chautauqua performance held in OAEC's outdoor amphitheater.

Most farmers would probably not buy this property, but here it is, flourishing. Jeavons has deep, sure knowledge of what works, knowledge borrowed from Middle-Ages Europe and gained from his own years of personal and staff research. You name the obstacle; he can overcome it. Hardship is his game.

Theirs is a serious operation. The Dilettante would have to raise his game a few notches.

He showed us the best way to compost, a method radically different from anything I'd learned elsewhere. He defined double-digging and demonstrated the most energy-efficient physical movements needed to do it. He urged the examination of exact calories burned growing a crop, versus calories yielded in that crop. He showed us cheap and easy ways to grow cash crops like lavender and prepare them for market. All his helpful hints rang with the knowing that tough times lie ahead for us all. But I didn't mind. I found his tone hopeful and his practical wisdom hugely valuable.

Ecology Action hosts a handful of well-educated, sincere interns from around the world, and my own tradition required that I consider, at least briefly, joining their ranks. But the cost of the internship was more than I could afford, and despite my deep respect for Jeavons and my keen interest in his approach, upon honest reckoning it became pretty clear that this weren't no place for no Dilettante.

Teaching Drum Outdoor School

In the summer of 2005 I was off again to visit intentional communities. I also set out to learn some basics of wilderness skills, of living on the land, Native-American style. I didn't necessarily want to live like that forever, but I hoped to find a viable community around such values and practices, and see where it might lead. Did such a place exist?

Teaching Drum Outdoor School hides deep in the North Woods of Wisconsin. The school offers a longer-term, more authentically Native American approach than your average Tom Brown-type primitive skills weekend course. Students at Teaching Drum, called "seekers," commit to a year-long course, living around a big national forest lake through all four seasons. In the warm months they learn tanning, fire-building, for-

FRANK BEATY

At Teaching Drum Outdoor School the author got introduced to the art of traveling by canoe.

aging for wild edibles, and Native purification ceremonies. In winter they learn to make snow-cave homes and then live in them. According to the founder, Tamarack Song, none of these skills will really live in you until you've learned to connect deeply with the land. That process takes time.

Tamarack had a huge gray beard and round specs, and he spoke softly, unblinking, as he greeted me. One of Tamarack's assistants, Glen, drove me from the school's cabins out to the lake where the students lived. We hiked through a rolling forest of birch and pine until we came to a primitive shelter in a clearing. We met a few students, then Glen canoed me across a wide, beautiful lake to meet my host camp, where we met more people, clad mostly in forest-green khaki. I bade Glen farewell and collapsed in my tent.

That evening another camp crossed the lake in canoes to join us for dinner. They brought eggs, wild greens, fruit, and some mystery meat, and combined it with our stashes to make a feast for a dozen. (The meat, I learned, was deer lung. Bright red when raw, brownish-gray when cooked, lung generally had to be fried to a crisp or else it was too chewy and spongy. It tasted like liver.) During dinner conversations flowed. People ranged in age from roughly 19 to 45, and even included a 12-year-old boy and his parents.

The instructors called meetings daily, all 25 or so gathering in a big circle under the birches. Here the casual conversations would meander from where best to harvest burdock to some deep personal or spiritual matter, long silences between topics and even between words. I spent the first half hour wondering "so when are we going to get down to the business at hand?" Eventually I realized this *was* the business at hand. The practical and the personal, instruction and inspiration, met and merged without transition. I began to see these meetings pulse and flow with the spirit of this, a very real community.

The casual conversations would meander from where best to harvest burdock to some deep personal or spiritual matter.

This crowd had personality and a keen wit. A student from Latvia, Alex, officially and repeatedly requested a class on eating bugs. He was maybe the skinniest guy I've ever met,

FRANK BEATY

A Teaching Drum student prepares deer lung for the evening supper.

and was soulful and hilarious. The bug-eating class, despite his earnest consternation, had become a running community joke. I met young people, evolved and thoughtful, each of them on a quiet, profound quest for meaning. Some were anarchists, some poets. A few wore their depth (or damage) on their sleeves, while some had the light, urbane demeanor that I am more accustomed to on the "outside."

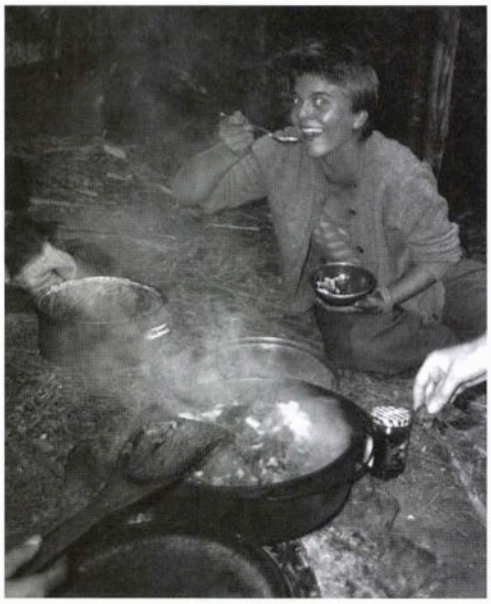
Working feverishly and face-first in searing heat, I ran out of drinking water.

Another student, Matt, had appeared at the first meeting in a full buckskin suit he'd made himself, talking slowly through a toothpick about a fallen tree he'd found, in case anyone wanted to join him in a birch-bark harvest. Giving much credit to Teaching Drum, he told me later that he'd transformed himself from a belligerent, alcoholic, right-wing Navy sailor into the person I saw now: a man with clear eyes and a calm, even heroic competence. He liked to look far away into the forest, listening to things I could not hear, and then come back to me quickly with a twinkle and a teasing question.

Another student, Katy, single-handedly saved my ass on at least three occasions. When I'd first arrived and was searching forever and in vain for a tent site, Katy went searching herself, unnoticed. She returned presently, tugging at my sleeve, and led me to a perfect, level clearing. Late another afternoon, watching the skies, she suggested that we put a tarp over my tent, against my strong urge to stay near the fire and continue eating cashews. She worked like a mule on that tarp, with my feeble help, and got devoured by mosquitoes in the process. Throughout that night a vicious thunderstorm raged, but my tent stayed dry. I would have been a sopping, suicidal mess without her.

Days later I accepted the honor of serving as fire-tender for the sacred sweat-lodge ceremony. An insulated earthen dome became an oven as Tamarack led 20 naked students and teachers inside for a Native purification ceremony. That was their test; mine was to keep the huge fire outside blazing, while hauling massive, red-hot boulders from fire to lodge, one after another. Working feverishly and face-first in searing heat, I ran out of drinking water. But I was alone and couldn't abandon my post during the most serious ritual of the year. Just as my vision faded and I started to expire, Katy loped out from the forest like some mute angel, gallons of water in each hand. She'd served me and saved me repeatedly, automatically, with perfect timing, and without being asked. And not just for me—for everyone. It was simply her role: how she served, loved, and belonged.

During my short stay I learned some of the art and science of the canoe; I picked wild edibles for dinner; I learned to poop in nature and wipe with damp bog moss (the most difficult challenge of the week). I learned that mosquitoes will kill you if you let them—they'll just keep sucking, and call a thou-



FRANK BEATY

Teaching Drum students found their deer lung dinner delicious.

sand friends over to suck, until you disappear in a terrible cloud and you have no blood left and you are dead.

I watched four young women take apart a road-killed deer with small knives, quietly and without complaint or hesitation. Over time they filled a box with neatly wrapped bundles of meat. The smell of guts hit me, and I watched the black-green flies swarm and bite. I found a leafy branch and shooed vicious flies from the women's exposed arms and faces. Allison sang a lovely song and conversations rose and fell, but this was difficult work, physically and emotionally. At least two of the women were vegan. One woman, Chelsea, went to bed before sundown, exhausted, and dreamed all night about the deer.

For three days the seekers fasted in preparation for the dreaded Mosquito Course. Tamarack declares mosquitoes the greatest teacher of his life. Naturally, he takes his students through the same kind of hell he's suffered. This course begins with a purifying sweat ceremony and culminates with the students venturing out to their own private forest spot, naked and still, and letting the satanic swarms have their way unhindered. Until I knew for sure whether I would participate, I fasted with the rest. Even after Tamarack and I decided that I would sit out the course (I ain't that stupid), I found very little food. I ate three apples and a handful of Brazil nuts over my last two days.

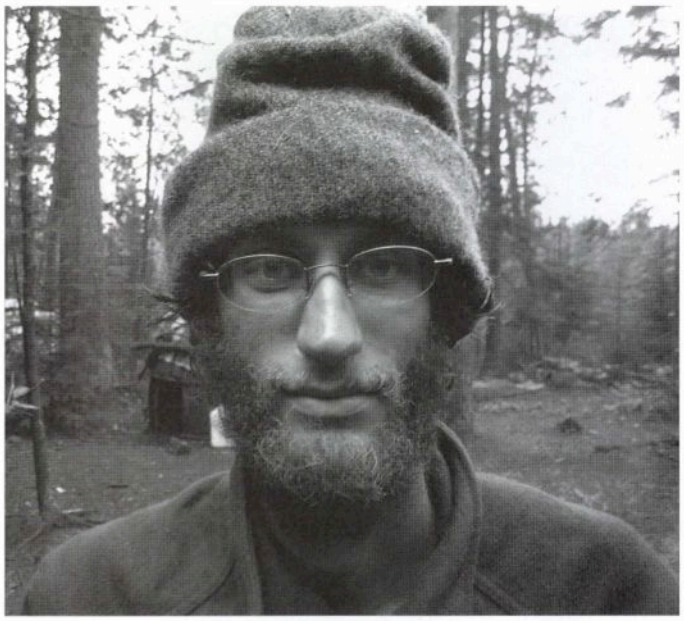
I watched four young women take apart a road-killed deer with small knives, quietly and without complaint or hesitation.

I decided to leave after day five, and the goodbyes were sweet and true all around. But I confess I giggled like an idiot as I drove off, my heart already set on the first fried-chicken buffet I could find.

My time at Teaching Drum humbled me some. And no matter how madly the Dilettante dashed away from the place, I positively glowed with the discovery of yet another diamond out there, another priceless and precious community of people. For those people I hold nothing but love and gratitude.

Earthaven Ecovillage

Which brings me back to the remainder of my visit to Earthaven Ecovillage in North Carolina, in the spring of 2006. As evening came after a day of plucking roots from the Gateway Field agricultural project, I made my way to the Trading Post cafe for a snack and some wireless emails, courtesy of stream-fed hydro-power. Chris Farmer (called "Farmer"), the project's co-founder, came in, as he'd promised, to buy me a beer. His gratitude for my handful of volunteer hours at Gateway Field, I assured him, was excessive. But I accepted his kindness and raised my bottle in excited praise for the barn, the field, the whole damn thing.



FRANK BEATY

Alex, a student from Latvia, officially and repeatedly requested a class on eating bugs.

Farmer's brother Derek had donated a full day out there too, and apparently he did so fairly often despite having plenty of work in Asheville. I had grown quite fond of his honesty and genuine kindness. As we wrapped up work earlier, Farmer had approached Derek and thanked him sweetly, adding that without his help they could never have finished the roof today. They hugged each other tight.

"You don't even know," Farmer told me over his beer. "My entire life, Derek has never raised his voice to me in anger. Not once. And growing up, even though he's four years older, every time I wanted to go with him and his friends somewhere, he always let me. Every time." All day I'd resonated with Farmer, with his co-founder Brian Love, with their commitment and vision to their Gateway agricultural project. And earlier, seeing Earthaven's land, learning about its projects, and meeting its people had excited and moved me just as much. But not until that moment, as I swigged my beer and looked around on the porch of the Trading Post, did I know I could make a life here.

But first things first.

I've scheduled a little talk with the Dilettante.

Frank Beaty works as a medical editor, volunteers in progressive politics, and is helping start both a community garden and an alternative fuel co-operative. As of this writing, he still lives in Los Angeles.

PORT TOWNSEND ECOVILLAGE

Port Townsend Eco Villagers in Washington State, about to shift perspective on the legal entity they'll use to co-own property.

To Be or Not to Be an LLC:
Changing Horses in Mid Stream

BY KEES KOLFF

Are there any more questions or comments? This was the second meeting for the final draft of a proposal at Port Townsend EcoVillage, a community we're forming in Port Townsend, Washington. We had finished another long, open discussion about our new proposal to switch from owning our property together in a Limited Equity Co-op (LEC), which we had been planning to use for two years, to a Limited Liability Company (LLC).

"Yes!" said one of our members. "I know we've discussed this for months, but tell us again why, after more than $2,000 in legal fees, hundreds of legal-team hours, and more than two years of thinking that we were going to become a Limited Equity Co-op, we are now about to abandon ship and become a Limited Liability Company? I want to make sure I get it."

"Well," I said, "basically, an LLC is more in line with our values, gives us more flexibility to meet individual and community needs, will cost less money, and encourages us to be a bit more interdependent. It's another step away from 'my house' towards 'our community.'"

Silence.

"Is there any more discussion?" asked our facilitator.

Silence.

"I'm going to call for consensus. Are there any concerns?"

Silence again, and our facilitator let it be a lo-o-ong silence. This was a big one!

"We have consensus," she declared. "Let's take a break and celebrate."

We began looking at legal structures for shared property ownership more than two and a half years ago. At that time we had considered following the path of many other community developers and newly forming communities by first forming an LLC to limit our group's liability during the forming and construction phase of our ecovillage, and then switching to a Homeowners Association, Condominium Association, or Limited Equity Housing Cooperative for our final legal structure. However, when we chose a Limited Equity Co-op to own our property together, the best co-op lawyer in the state said we didn't need an LLC as a transitional legal structure. At that time the lawyer had never heard of an intentional community using an LLC as a permanent legal structure to own their land and buildings in common, and we hadn't considered doing this ourselves.

About a year ago, though, several of our members began to explore how we could more creatively meet the needs of community members who might have different financial and physical needs, especially because families and living arrangements in our community might change over time. When we realized that the perpetually renewable co-op lease of an LEC is still fundamentally the "*my* own real estate; *my* own house" model, and an LEC allowed only one class of membership, the "owner," we yearned for more flexibility and interdependence.

In calls for help to community consultants Diana Leafe Christian, Laird Schaub, and Dave Henson, the idea emerged of all of us owning all the property through an LLC with leases for individual homesites. Dave lives at Sowing Circle community in Occidental, California, the only community we know of organized as an LLC. Sowing Circle has only eight land-owning members, most of whom work for the community's on-site nonprofit, Occidental Arts and Ecology Center (OAEC). This arrangement seems to be working well for Sowing Circle, but they are still adjusting the formula for returning a member's equity over time when he or she leaves the community. Could it work for us with an anticipated 27-household community and no established on-site nonprofit or business to bind us together? We'll find out.

The perpetually renewable co-op lease of an LEC is still fundamentally the "my own real estate; my own house" model.

Financing the project is one of our major concerns. We are an urban ecovillage where building codes are stricter, and land, housing, and development costs are higher than for

PORT TOWNSEND ECOVILLAGE

Community members working on their site plan with a scale model. The chart describes the stages of CT Butler's Formal Consensus *process.*

our rural cousins. The current owners are resident members who are willing to carry an owner-financing contract for $800,000. This will help our cash flow as we pay for the seven acres of land and current onsite housing for seven adults and two kids. But this arrangement still leaves an additional estimated $1.4 million to pay for general community infrastructure, common house, barn, and other structures, not to mention additional dwellings. In housing co-ops (including Limited Equity Co-ops), people who must get real estate-based "share loans" in order to buy into the project must pay higher interest rates than if they weren't going to lease their housing unit but would own their unit outright, through a legal entity such a Homeowners or Condominium Association, for example. We also figured that the limited equity part of an LEC would make it even harder for banks to make loans with reasonable interest rates, or to even offer loans at all.

We'll have to be very creative to finance our LLC and foster the kind of economic diversity we value as a community. We'll try our own internal loan fund by borrowing from members,

How we saw the differences between an LEC and an LLC

	Limited Equity Co-op	Limited Liability Company
Legal		
General legal flexibility	Moderate	Greater
Legal costs to establish	Could be over $5,000	Probably under $2,000
Lawyer with expertise	Out of town, more expensive	Local, less expensive
Prevalence of use	Rare in Washington State	Very common, not complex
Membership		
Membership admission control	Considerable. But be aware of fair housing laws	Complete control, since this is primarily a business and not a housing model
Membership types	Only one class allowed: owner-resident member	Multiple types allowed: renter, non-resident, partner, investor, etc.
Number of legal members	Limited by number of share blocks and/or dwellings	Unlimited
Partners as members	Yes, must co-sign lease	As we wish
Location of member residence	Specified in member lease	Specified in LLC minutes
Membership tie to dwelling	Member "owns" a lease	Member owns percentage of whole
To change residence "ownership"	Requires sale of shares; probably costs money	Needs decision recorded in minutes; may cost nothing
Economic		
Member ability to get real estate-based bank loans?	May be virtually impossible with limited equity	Nil
Loan interest tax deductible?	Yes	No
Blanket bank loans for organization?	May be possible with National Cooperative Bank and others	We're not sure yet
Additional buy-in charge for additional adults in a dwelling?	May be impossible to implement in one class share-holder model	Possible, but may be difficult to implement
Taxes on net profit or loss	Paid by Co-op	Passed on to members; could benefit lower-tax-bracket members
Member ownership value	By number of shares held: equal percentage of common assets plus value of dwelling	By percentage of total assets of the LLC, can calculate same way as in an LEC
Distribution of equity	Best done legally in proportion to investment (from IRS perspective)	Any way we want
Costs associated with sale	Real estate transaction, etc. including title insurance	Could be minimal
Decision Making		
Decisions made by consensus?	All and only members and co-members must have equal voice	We can be as inclusive or as selective as we want with various types of decisions
Decisions made by vote?	One vote per "share block"	Any way we want
Change in legal entity (from LEC to LLC, or LLC to LEC)	May be difficult psychologically	Easy, commonly done in development projects

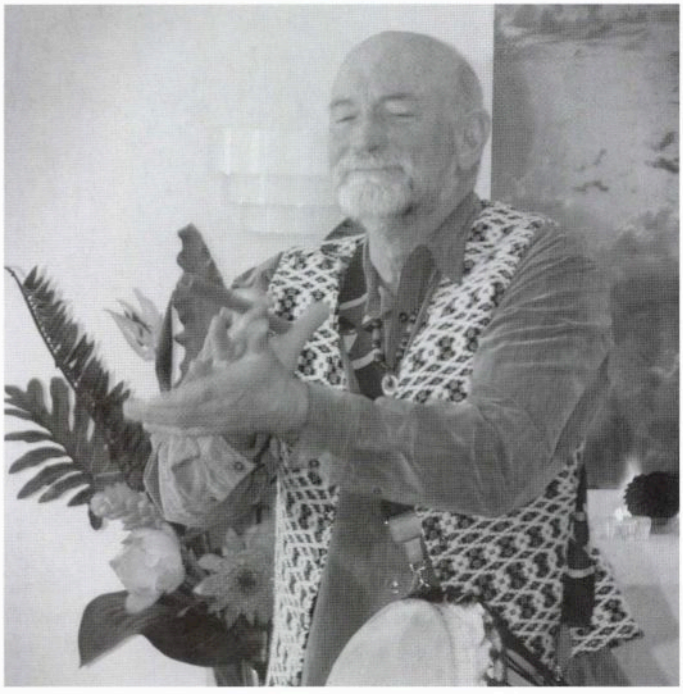
friends, and investors. We'll apply for grants, lease space to our own nonprofit educational foundation, and develop onsite income-producing businesses. In the first year of our CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) farm we already had over 20 members as of last summer. Honey from our hives is part of the CSA farm shares, and last summer our bees gifted us with 180 pounds of honey.

In order to help us decide between an LEC and an LLC, our legal team developed a table comparing the specific similarities and differences between them. (See pg. 40.) Some of these differences may be unique to Washington State, or to Port Townsend, with a population of only 8,500 people. None of us are lawyers and we take no responsibility for the accuracy of the comparison, but we found the table useful. We did not include in the table the many important ways that the LEC and LLC models are similar: for example, they both allow for shared ownership, the ability to limit equity, flexibility in creating additional legal entities, flexibility in adjusting assessments according to need, member participation in deciding where each of us could live, and the complexity of "operating agreements" (LLC) or "occupancy agreements" (LEC), etc. They are also both probably legally scary and mystifying to the average property owner in the United States.

We'll try our own internal loan fund by borrowing from members, friends, and investors.

We have set ambitious goals for ourselves to establish a loan fund and successfully recruit members to join our ecovillage and co-own our property together through an LLC. We agreed to return to the Limited Equity Co-op model as our first default if we don't succeed. Rumor has it there are many other intentional communities out there organized as permanent LLCs, but we can't seem to find them. If your community owns its land through an LLC, please let us know. We would love to learn from your experience. We welcome all the help we can get!

Kees Kolff is a physician and former Medical Director of SeaMar Community Health Centers in Seattle. Since moving to Port Townsend in 1997, he served four years on the City Council, with two years as Mayor. He and his wife Helen were active in the RoseWind CoHousing Community for five years and then founded the Port Townsend EcoVillage in 2003.



PORT TOWNSEND ECOVILLAGE

In its first year of operation Port Townsend's six beehives produced 200 lbs. of honey (top). Community member and songmaster Laurence Cole leads groups in the songs and poems of Rumi, Hafiz, and other poets (center). At the community's outdoor kitchen (bottom).

ALBERT BATES

Communitarians know that happiness has less to do with owning things than with having happy families and good friends, asserts author Paula L. Craig. Students at The Ecovillage Training Center at The Farm in Tennessee.

How a Steady State Economy Can Change Our Lives

BY PAULA L. CRAIG

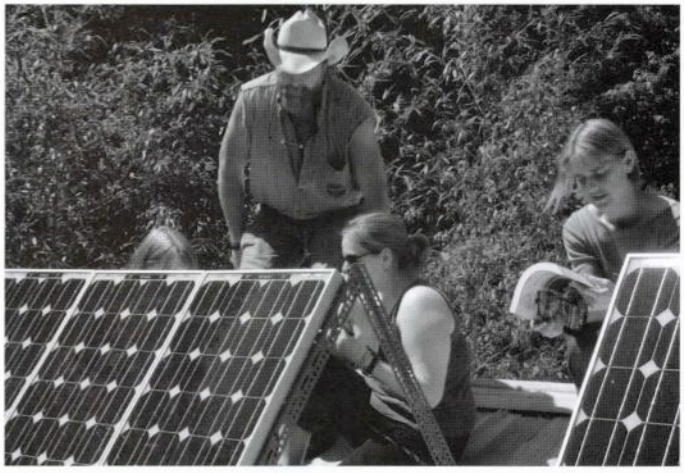
Economics is the most exciting science on the planet today. This may surprise some of you who struggled to stay awake through Econ 101 in college, and forgot it the second the final was over. I'm not kidding, though: The "Steady State Economy" concept is now shaking economics the way Darwin's natural selection idea did biology. And while this concept is still very much a minority position among economists, it's gaining.

What is the Steady State Economy? It's easier to start with what it isn't. Most conventional economists over the past several decades lived and worked by the gospel of economic growth. The conventional rules are simple: Expansion of the economy is good; contraction of the economy is bad. "Recessions" and "depressions" contract the economy; "booms" expand it. "The economy" in the U.S. is usually measured by the magic number of the Gross Domestic Product or GDP. (Those of you who took Econ 101 a while ago may remember the term "GNP," or Gross National Product, which for our purposes is the same as GDP.) GDP is measured in a unit likely to strike people interested in community and sustainability as a little odd: U.S. dollars.

It may have occurred to you that measuring the prosperity of a nation by measuring what the nation spends is absolutely nuts.

The U.S. government has an agency, the Bureau of Economic Affairs or BEA, that calculates the country's GDP on a regular basis. The BEA dutifully reports the GDP numbers to the TV news shows, the newspapers, etc., who just as dutifully report to the public that the economy grew or didn't grow. For example, for 2005 the BEA reported that the U.S. economy grew by 3.5 percent, which resulted in, among other things, President Bush being widely congratulated for his achievements in economic growth. The problems with measuring economic growth (that magic number GDP) in dollars are obvious once you begin to think about what the BEA does to calculate it. In essence, the BEA collects data on how much Americans spend on various things. The BEA takes precautions to avoid counting the same goods sold twice; they count food, for example, only when a grocery store sells it to someone for eating, not when the store buys from a wholesaler. The BEA adds up all the dollars spent, corrects for inflation, and the result is the GDP. When a mine sells coal to a power plant,


MARK MAZZIOTI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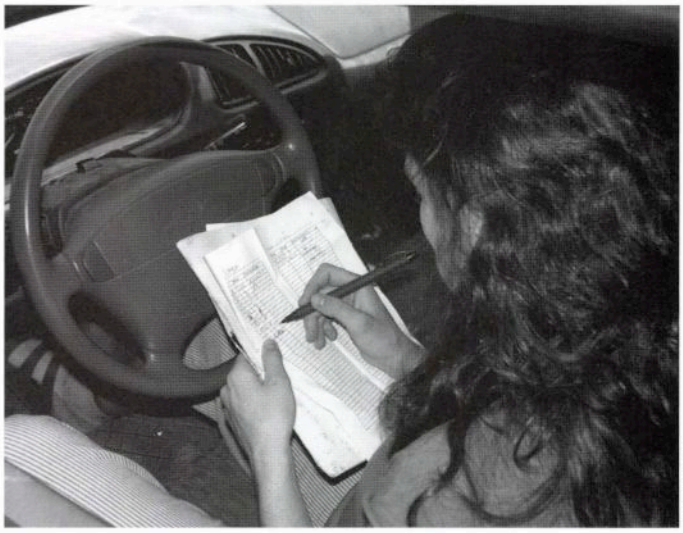

ALBERT BATES

Advocates for the Steady State Economy know we must accept the physical limits our environment and conserve or find alternatives to natural resources like oil. Members of Dancing Rabbit in Missouri install a wind generator (top); residents of Ecovillage Training Center at The Farm in Tennessee install solar Panels (middle); and members of EcoVillage at Ithaca in New York share car use (bottom).

What is "Globalization"?

The conventional view of globalization can be summed up simply: the more international trade, the better. Therefore all trade should be as free as possible. This conventional view of free trade rests on the economic principle of comparative advantage, meaning that if one nation is better at producing a product than another nation, each should specialize in what it does best. Trade between the two nations supposedly will make everyone better off.

Comparative advantage does have a basis in fact. If you want to eat bananas, Ecuador will do a better job of growing them than New York. Comparative advantage gets tricky when you start thinking about just how trade will make everyone better off. When conventional economists talk about people being better off, they mean that the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of both nations will rise. Unfortunately, as noted in this article, GDP as conventionally measured is a lousy way to tell whether people are really better off or not. Higher GDP means people are *spending more*, not that they are happier or more prosperous.

ALBERT BATES

A natural building student at The Ecovillage Training Center at The Farm in Tennessee.

The supposed benefits of globalization get even murkier when you realize that the conventional analysis of comparative advantage assumes that transportation costs between the trading nations are low. In reality, transportation costs are fairly low, which is why toasters, toys, and most other products are made outside the U.S. these days. But why are transportation costs so low? That's easy: they are subsidized.

Most international transport travels by ship, rail, truck, or airplane, all of which run on fuels distilled from crude oil. Crude oil is essentially sunlight in solid form, produced naturally from the decay of prehistoric forests and swamps. It takes thousands of years' worth of sunlight falling on an acre of swamp to make a single barrel of oil. Unfortunately, today's crude oil prices do not reflect oil's true scarcity. Instead, oil prices are based largely on the cost of pumping the oil out of the ground. Oil prices also ignore the huge costs of climate change caused by burning the oil. As if that weren't enough, oil prices also do not include the costs of wars fought over control of oil-producing regions, such as the Iraq war and the first Gulf War. Crude oil prices today are about $60-$70 per barrel in U.S. dollars. Such low prices only encourage more rapid depletion of irreplaceable oil reserves. A more accurate price would probably be $600-$700 per barrel, possibly higher.

Globalization as we know it today is little more than a fantasy supported by cheap oil. Where transportation costs are highly subsidized, globalization is a ticket to impoverishment for all. If transportation costs were more realistic, you'd still be able to buy bananas in New York. But they'd be more expensive, and many New Yorkers might choose to buy local fruit instead. The Ecuadorians would focus less on banana plantations and more on growing food for their own people to eat. This change would have other beneficial effects, in that the economies of both countries would no longer be held hostage to events occurring thousands of miles away. Prices that more accurately reflect economic reality would ultimately make both New Yorkers and Ecuadorians genuinely better off than they are now.

—*P.L.C.*

FINDHORN FOUNDATION

The Steady State Economy is based on the concept that the economy is part of the environment. Findhorn members conserve natural resources in part by recycling graywater through their Living Machine greenhouse.

the GDP goes up, and the more coal sold to the power plant, the higher the GDP goes! Cars are great for the GDP, because they're lots more expensive than cheap, sustainable transportation like bicycles. Double the population and the GDP goes up, because all those people buy things. Cleaning up the Exxon Valdez spill raised the GDP. If our government wants to give the GDP a really big boost, they can always buy an aircraft carrier or a nuclear bomb! It may already have occurred to you that measuring the prosperity of a nation by measuring what the nation spends is is absolutely nuts. While there are a fair number of people out there who honestly believe that happiness is found in spending lots of money, they don't often become environmental activists or join intentional communities. Communitarians usually know that happiness has a lot more to do with happy families and good friends than with whether or not you have a BMW in the driveway. Fortunately, science has borne this out. Research shows that once people get past the level of real deprivation—in other words, knowing for sure that you will be able to eat regularly this year—how much money people have has a remarkably small effect on their satisfaction with life.

Research shows that once people get past the level of real deprivation, how much money people have has a remarkably small effect on their satisfaction with life.

The Steady State Economy is built on this concept—that money doesn't buy happiness. Steady State Economy holds that *the economy is part of the environment*, not the other way around, and that we must respect its physical limits. Steady State Economy aims for a low, sustainable level of natural resource use. The Steady State Economy considers economic growth as generally something to be avoided, because growth increases resource use. Steady State Economy says that if that magic GDP number is going down, but our quality of life is improving, that is a good thing. If the economy is growing but the quality of life is getting worse—and that's exactly what we have today for most people in the US—that is a *bad* thing.

The question then arises of how we should measure the economy. One school of thought holds that measuring quality of life in dollars is a rather silly project, and focuses on asking people how contented they are with their lives and their finances. Another approach is to use the GDP numbers but to add corrections to them. For example, pollution of a river or the loss of a forest can be converted into a dollar equivalent and subtracted from GDP. The Index of Sustainable Economic Welfare (ISEW) and the Genuine Progress Indicator (GPI) are efforts in this direction. These measures show little or no genuine growth in the U.S. economy since at least the 1970s.

How can we reach Steady State Economy? The first requirement for Steady State Economy is holding a few feet to the fire: challenging the politicians, reporters, and economists whenever they start holding forth on how much we need

Global Economic Collapse

How likely is a global economic collapse? When I walk out my front door on my way to work in the morning, the U.S. economy seems pretty solid. The air smells fresh, freeways are full of cars, new construction is going up all around my office, and gasoline and food are cheap. We haven't had a severe economic jolt in the U.S. since the 1930s. The last really major population decline in Western society was the Black Death in the 1300s. That sort of thing just doesn't happen any more in modern society, right?

The conventional economic wisdom is that a global economic collapse won't happen, because we moderns are smarter and have better technology than our ancestors. Why worry about pollution or climate change? Most economists are optimists who believe science, technology, and the market will always solve our problems and provide substitutes for anything that is in short supply. Doomsday predictions have been wrong before.

Unfortunately for the optimists, economic collapses have also happened many times in history. Some happened suddenly; many were almost unimaginable ahead of time. The Roman Empire collapsed along with its economy. The ancient Maya civilization collapsed in the Yucatán peninsula. The Viking colonies of Greenland died out suddenly. Which way is our civilization going to go? Most economists still forecast growth, not decline. However, economic prediction is a highly inexact science. No system of economic forecasting has ever been found that is more accurate than "we predict that the economy this year will grow at about the same rate as it did last year." When things happen that have not happened before—like adding billions of new people worldwide, or the depletion of U.S. natural gas reserves—*all bets are off.* Once serious economic problems develop, today's highly integrated global economy spreads them easily from country to country.

I think that unless we make some drastic changes, a global economic collapse could very well happen in the next 5-10 years. In some places, such as Haiti and Sudan, economic collapse has already occurred. Even in the U.S. there are frightening signs: ballooning debt loads, including mortgages, student loans, credit card balances, and the national debt; huge numbers of families seeking bankruptcy protection; fish stocks declining; the rising sea pushing against the levees of New Orleans; and desperate immigrants crowding across the border, seeking refuge here at almost any cost.

I think that unless we make some drastic changes, a global economic collapse could very well happen in the next 5-10 years.

I believe that science offers clear hope for a way to avoid economic collapse, but not in the form of a hydrogen car or a fusion power plant. Consider that some historians find the single most important new technology of the last 500 years to be the invention of double-entry bookkeeping, which made modern capitalism possible. The new miracle technologies will include a smarter economics that aim for fewer people living happier lives, and using far fewer resources to do it.

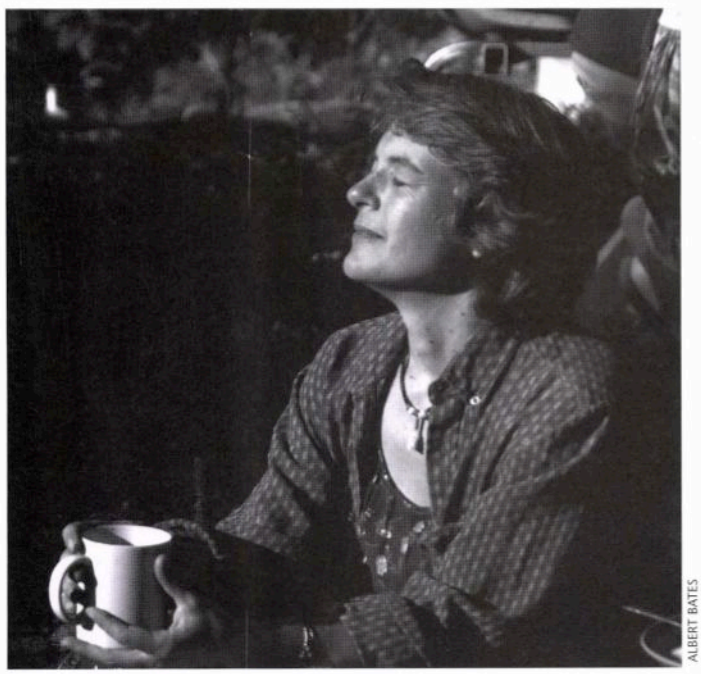
—*P.L.C.*

more economic growth. (Remember that permanent economic growth is physically impossible, because economic growth always requires at least some resources, and the Earth isn't getting any bigger.) Steady State Economy also requires a stable

Any community that emphasizes quality of life over buying more stuff is already on the right track for a Steady State Economy.

population size and high prices for natural resources. Ways to achieve these are beyond what this introduction to Steady State Economy can get into, but they're certainly not impossible. Last, enjoy what you've already done! Any community that emphasizes quality of life over buying more stuff is already on the right track for a Steady State Economy. Moving people from the rat race of the "work and spend" lifestyle into an organized neighborhood or an intentional community is sure to hurt the GDP—but more accurate and valid economic measures show it's a great thing to do.

Paula L. Craig is an employee of the U.S. Department of Commerce (the views presented here are hers personally and do not represent the official position of the U.S. government). She loves reading and reviewing books on economics, history, and sociology, and is a member of the U.S. Society for Ecological Economics. A resident of Falls Church, Virginia, Paula hopes to live in an intentional community someday. See her reviews of Herman Daly's Beyond Growth *and* For the Common Good, *pg. 64.*



ALBERT BATES

Resources for a Sustainable Economy

Creating a Sustainable Economy:

- *Beyond Globalization: Shaping a Sustainable Global Economy*, Hazel Henderson, Kumarian Press, 1999.
- *For the Common Good: Redirecting the Economy toward Community, the Environment, and a Sustainable Future*, Herman Daly. Beacon Press, 1994. (Recommended by Paula L. Craig. See her review, pg. 65.)
- *Beyond Growth: the Economics of Sustainable Development*, Herman Daly. Beacon Press, 1996. (Recommended by Paula L. Craig. See her review, pg. 64.)

Local Economies, Local Currencies

- *Interest and Inflation-Free Money: Creating an Exchange Medium that Works for Everybody and Protects the Earth*, Margrit Kennedy. Seva International, 1995. (Recommended by Albert Bates)
- *Going Local: Creating Self-Reliant Communities in a Global Age*, Michael Shuman. Free Press, 1998. (Recommended by Jonathan Dawson)
- *Healthy Money, Healthy Planet: Developing Sustainability through New Money*, Dierdre Kent. Craig Potton Publishing, 2005. (Recommended by Stephen Burke)
- *Money: Understanding and Creating Alternatives to Legal Tender*, Thomas H. Greco, Jr. Chelsea Green, 2001.
- *The Future of Money: Creating New Wealth, Work, and a Wiser World*, Bernard Lietaer. 2002.

Our Current Economic System:

- *The Loss of Happiness in Market Democracies*, Robert Edwards Lane. Yale University Press, 2001. (Recommended by Paula L. Craig)
- *Shoveling Fuel for a Runaway Train: Errant Economists, Shameful Spenders, and a Plan to Stop Them All.* Brian Czech. University of California Press, 2002. (Recommended by Paula L. Craig)
- *The Mystery of Banking*, Murray N. Rothbard. Penguin Group, 1983. www.mises.org/mysterofbanking/mysteryofbanking.pdf (Recommended by Louis Wu)

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- *Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or Succeed*, Jared Diamond. Penguin Books, 2005.
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BY PAUL GLOVER

CYNTHEA LEE ROSE

Everyone could have a job and enjoy a high quality of life growing or making needed products locally, suggests author Paul Glover. For example, products could be organic herbal remedies like these from Red Moon Herbs based at Earthaven Ecovillage.

AN ABUNDANCE OF Small, Sustainable Solutions

Your local community, town, or neighborhood is already rich—there's enough wealth nearby to enable everyone to work a few hours creatively daily and then to relax with family and friends to enjoy top-quality healthy food. To enjoy clean, low-cost warm housing, clean and safe transport, high-quality handcrafted clothes, and household goods. To enjoy creating and playing together, and growing up and growing old in supportive neighborhoods where everyone is valuable. And to do this while replenishing rather than depleting the integrity of the planet.

Grassroots economic initiatives, grand and tiny, multiply by thousands. In San Francisco, Parks for People tears up asphalt to plant neighborhood gardens. In Santa Fe, New Mexico, the Permaculture Credit Union makes loans for eco-

logical repair. Hundreds of Madison, Wisconsin, citizens have relied on their own local paper money. Hundreds of Ithaca, New York, citizens have done the same, and also have joined their Ithaca-based co-op health plan, and dozens have volunteered in its free health clinic. (See "Local Currencies," pg. 52.) At Windy Acres Farm in Dallas, Texas, scores of residents help cultivate and share weekly harvests: "I always need Johnson grass hoed and vegetables picked, sorted, and boxed," says Windy Acres manager Charles Richardson.

Multiply these individual efforts by millions. Jane Bodine, for example, grows a tall strip of lush corn between sidewalk and street, in Manayunk, Pennsylvania. "Every year I put something different and unusual there, to show the neighbors new ideas," she says. Near Bear Mountain, California, Gary Strouss and four other families generate electricity from a shared micro-hydro unit in Kennedy Creek. Selling his car to rely on bicycle and train makes Randy Ziglar of Los Angeles feel much freer: "Cars are tanks in the war against nature." At Grove City, Pennsylvania, Joe Jenkins' family uses a homemade waterless toilet that generates safe, sweet-smelling soil.

America is being healed even while it decays. At the same time that U.S. industrial jobs are being stolen to globalization, thousands of practical programs are proving people can rebuild damaged local economies from the ground up—making them better than before. Thousands of jobs are being invented by citizens dedicated to ecology and social justice. How? We are organizing local talent to produce what we need. We're building an economy which connects people, rather than controlling them.

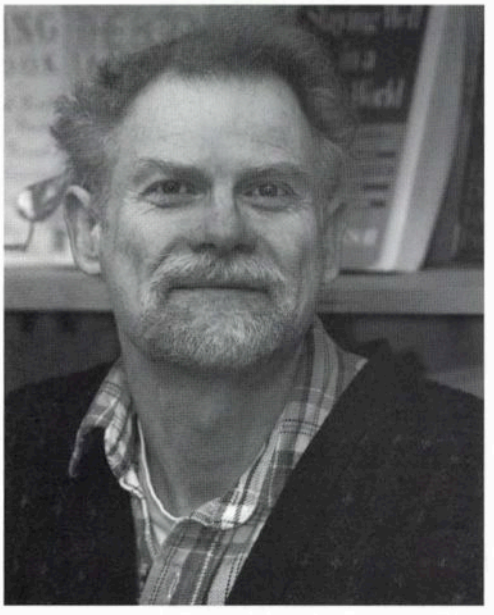
The foundations of sustainable local wealth are energy efficiencies, local food and fuel, water conservation, holistic healing, alternatives to the automobile, nonprofit housing, local manufacture, and trade. The prime tools for this conversion include earth-bermed co-op dwellings and superinsulation, solar and wind energy, urban agriculture, tree-free paper, compost toilets, bicycles and trains, farmers' markets, co-op health care, and local currencies.

We start with the tools, time, and money that we have, regardless of geography, wealth, or skills. We don't even need to wait for permission. Whatever we do is an essential contribution to the necessarily organic process of civilizing civilization. When television stations broadcast such initiatives, twenty-four/seven, multitudes will turn off the TV to join the fun.

Imagine if all 300 billion hours of paid labor that Americans perform yearly were dedicated to making our lives easier, rather than to enriching banks, utilities, landlords, agribusiness, insurance companies, chain stores, oil companies, and government. Instead, we'd be living in homes that need little fuel for heating and air conditioning; homes that we'd own securely. We'd be transported in vehicles that need little fuel—especially rail. We'd eat far more food grown without pesticides. We'd be responsible trustees of the natural resources of our regions. And we'd be trading money created locally for our use—money that stays home to help us hire each other and which is available without interest charges. Our time and money would be used to make our neighborhoods friendly and beautiful.

We'd have more than jobs and money. We'd relish work, by putting love at the center of commerce.

We'd measure our worth as neighbors and citizens, not as consumers. Yet we'd own more of quality than before. Best of all, we'd revive an American Dream—to earn enough money from one job to raise a child, feed and clothe ourselves well, and travel. We'd have work that's creative and interesting. We'd have more than jobs and money. We'd relish work, by putting love at the center of commerce.



Author Paul Glover

Paul Glover is a "consultivist" for grassroots economic development. He is founder of Ithaca HOURS local currency and the Ithaca Health Alliance in Ithaca, New York; Greenplanners, his consulting service; and Citizen Planners of Los Angeles. www.paulglover.org.

BY ALBERT BATES

MARK MAZZIOTI

Members of Dancing Rabbit Ecovillage use their own local currency to buy goods and services from each other.

Our Own Money:
A Recipe for Local Economic Revival

As local groups and communities created their own local scrip currencies and exchange systems, they learned about economists' deepest secret: money and information are equivalent — and neither is scarce!

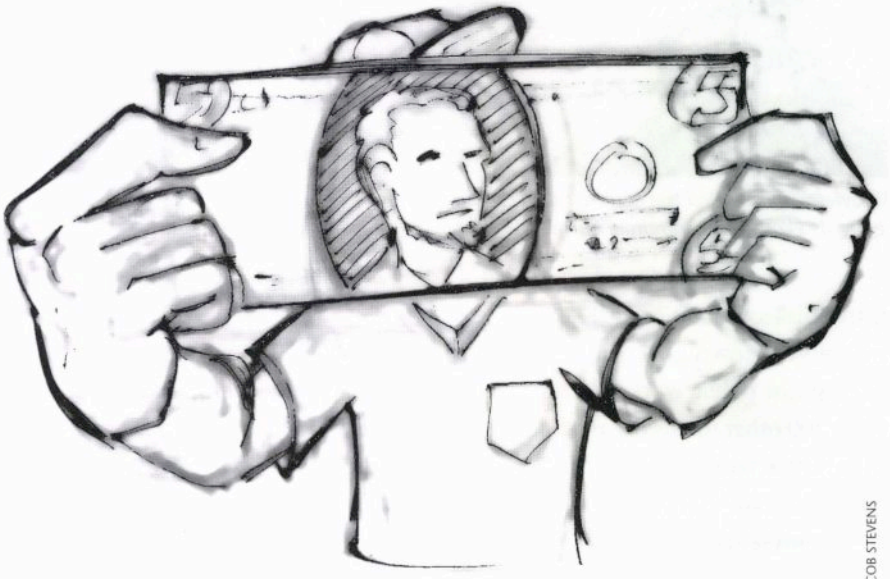
—Hazel Henderson

In the 1970s, while visiting a cousin who was chasing a degree at Harvard Business School, I learned something about economics that has stayed with me ever since. As my cousin carefully watered his tiny garden, he explained "standard of living" to me. Standard of living is not the product of how well you extract resources or exploit labor, or even how much material wealth you amass, he said. Aristotle long ago warned us that human desires always expand faster than

natural resources, and if you try to get ahead in that contest, you will lose.

Standard of living, my cousin explained, as he pruned some brown and yellow leaves from his plants, is a function of the speed at which money bounces back and forth in your economy. It is velocity, not volume, that determines how well off you are.

A little over a decade after that educational foray into Harvard Yard, I came across one of the seminal books for 21st century survival. In *Interest and Inflation Free Money: Creating an Exchange Medium that Works for Everybody and Protects the Earth*, Margrit Kennedy challenged the whole idea that we have to have a money system based on constant growth. Nothing grows endlessly. Nature is a wave. If we have a large expansion, we need a large contraction to balance it. If we are talking about global economies, these large contractions can be seriously damaging. So Kennedy came up with some ideas for economies that are steady state. (See "How a Steady State Economy Could Change our Lives" pg. 42.) Steady state economies don't use interest. They are simply based on the fair exchange of value for value.



JACOB STEVENS

If you have your life savings in a bank, Kennedy said, they're probably not going to do you as much good as they would if you invested them in preparing your children to have greater self-reliance or helping one of your neighbors start a business. If you invest in a bank, chances are the money is actually leaving your community entirely. If you invest in your neighborhood, your community, and your region, you are keeping the money at home, where it has nothing to do but speed up its passing from hand to hand.

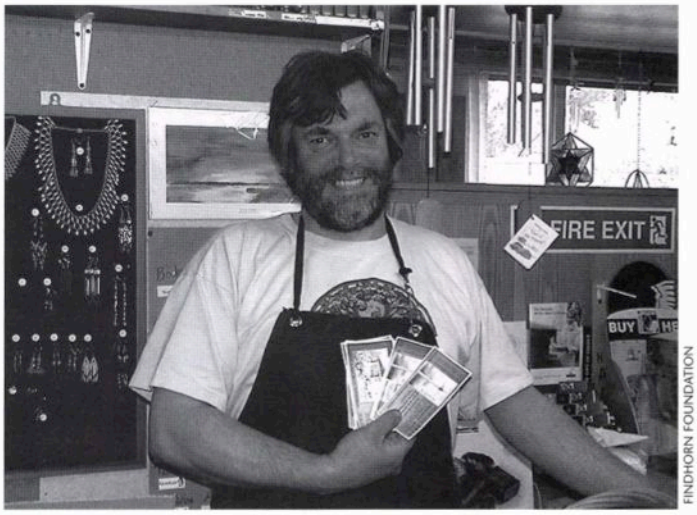
Money is a measurement, not a thing. It is an agreement between people to use something common for all exchanges.

Kennedy also observed the waxing and waning of local currencies, which tend to proliferate whenever a community perceives a need to protect its internal economy from outside disturbances such as war or depression, or when the national currency collapses and people are forced to devise their own alternatives. Local currencies decline less often from lack of success and more often by government edict, which happens when they are perceived (correctly) as a threat to national banks and the central command and control hierarchy that regulates monetary systems.

In a case study that illustrated my cousin's lesson perfectly, Professor Kennedy went back to the global recession of 1932, to the small Austrian town of Wörgl. Confronted with the collapse of the national currency, the town elders of Wörgl issued 32,000 "Free Schillings" (interest-free Schillings) protected by a deposit of normal Austrian Schillings in a local bank. The clever burgermeisters of Wörgl put a "rest fee" on the normal Austrian Schillings that amounted to one percent per month. The fee had to be paid by the person who held a Free Schilling at the end of the month, and a tax stamp was then glued to it. Without the current stamp, the Free Schilling was worthless. This caused everyone who received a Free Schilling to spend it before they spent their standard Austrian Schillings so they would not have to pay the fees at the end of the month. This meant they spent their Free Schillings first, and they spent them fast. It was a game of musical chairs, and at the end of each month the music sped up, people spent Free Schillings like crazy, and the Wörgl economy boomed.

I imagine everyone just took off work and kicked back for a few days at the start of the month, exhausted from their revelries in the days before.

While ordinary Schillings circulated an average 21 times in the course of a year, Free Schillings circulated 463 times over the same year, and created goods and services worth 14,816,000 Schillings. While most of the countries in Europe suffered dire shortages (setting the stage for ethnic persecution, extreme nation-



FINDHORN FOUNDATION

Findhorn member David Hoyle, who founded the community's Ekopia Resource Exchange, holds Ekos, the community currency.

alism, and ambitious war), the small town of Wörgl reduced its unemployment by 25 percent and the town government used the money it raised in tax stamps for public works. It built bridges and improved roads. When 300 other towns began to adopt the Wörgl system, the Austrian central bank stepped in and declared it illegal. The case went to the Austrian Supreme Court and Wörgl, Austria—and the world economy—lost.

In reality, money is a measurement, not a thing. It is an agreement between people to use something common for all exchanges. For most people, this agreement has been in place since before they were born and is taken for granted. Sometimes, they grow so attached to it that they will staunchly defend it even when it has stopped working and become destructive of everything else they hold dear. That is what happened to the Wörgl system, and any alternative money systems created today can expect to encounter similar opposition from cultural, political, and financial interests that are heavily invested in the status quo ante. Because of this, I would expect that many of the most successful experiments of the next

Standard of living is a function of the speed at which money bounces back and forth in your economy. Velocity, not volume, determines how well off you are.

ITHACA HOURS

An Ithaca HOURS note.

Local Currencies

BY STEPHEN BURKE

Among local currency systems in the U.S., Ithaca Hours is one of the oldest, at 15 years, and most successful, with about 1,000 users in a town of 30,000 people.

As revolutionary as they might seem, local currencies have a long history in the U.S. There was no national paper currency in the U.S until late in the 19th century, and many communities employed their own local currencies for daily economic transactions.

The last era of widespread local currency use was in the Great Depression, when U.S. dollars were exceedingly scarce. A less severe, but general and real, scarcity of dollars led to the development of Ithaca Hours in the early 1990s.

Ithaca is a small town in central New York. Located far from the financial hub of New York City, it's closer to the Rust Belt and Snow Belt cities of the northeast which have been ravaged by spiraling energy costs and vanishing jobs. Underemployment is a perennial problem in Ithaca, where a large workforce in a competitive work environment translates into low wages.

Ithaca Hours was planned as way to promote gainful work for people, without depending on dollars. The idea was to create a completely new revenue stream to facilitate economic transactions. People could earn and spend Hours with their neighbors, trading goods and services, saving their dollars for other purposes.

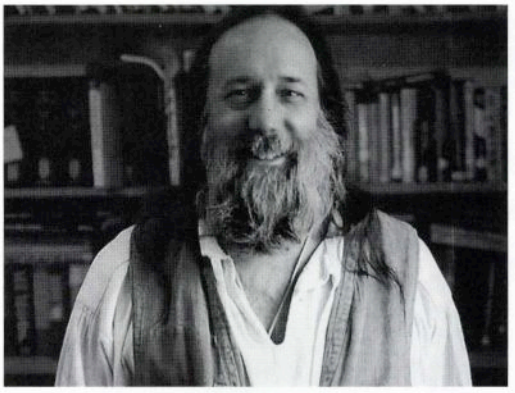
Ithaca Hours is a member-based organization. Anyone is welcome to use Hours. But members sustain the system with an annual fee of $10 (or its equivalent, one Hour). And members are the means for issuing Hours into the community: the $10 fee brings each member a disbursement of two Ithaca Hours. This provides seed money for each member to spend with other members and, with about 600 members currently, constitutes an infusion of about $12,000 into the community each year.

century will emerge clandestinely and only be revealed when they have become so encased with popular support that eradicating them would be difficult.

Today Professor Kennedy lives in Lebensgarten, one of the oldest and most successful ökodorfs (ecovillages) in Germany.

It was a game of musical chairs, and at the end of each month the music sped up, people spent Free Schillings like crazy, and the Wörgl economy boomed.

For the past 30 years her work in complementary currencies, micro-enterprise, and local lending have been expanded into a global movement, much of it still below the surface. In writing my book, The Post-petroleum Survival Guide and Cookbook: Recipes for Changing Times (New Society Publishers, 2006), I included the Wörgl recipe for economic resuscitation between my mother's recipes for skillet cornbread and sweet potato soup.



Author Albert Bates

Albert Bates is an instructor at the Ecovillage Training Center at The Farm community in Summertown, Tennessee, and author of 11 books, on energy, climate, history, and law, including Shutdown: Nuclear Power on Trial *(1979),* Climate in Crisis: The Greenhouse Effect and What We Can Do *(1990), and* Post-Petroleum Survival Guide and Cookbook: Recipes for Changing Times *(New Society Publishers, Fall, 2006).*

Members also benefit from inclusion in an annual Directory—an "alternative yellow pages"—which is often where members (and non-members, too) will look first for goods and services. The Directory is also online, so can accommodate new entries all year long, unlike the standard Yellow Pages.

At first, the Ithaca Hours' system primarily consisted of people trading services. Businesses largely were wary of accepting a currency that they couldn't use for nonlocal expenses, such as paying utilities, taxes, and goods purchased from outside the community. But as membership in Ithaca Hours grew, businesses realized the advantages of access to a large group of people with a currency they were eager to spend. Increasing numbers of local businesses began accepting Ithaca Hours, since accepting a local currency is a way to attract new, loyal customers. Accepting a local currency provides a small, local business with a distinct advantage over non-local chain stores. And because each business is free to create its own acceptance policy, the business doesn't end up with too many Ithaca Hours notes that it can't spend. Most businesses accept a limited amount, or limited percentage, of Hours per transaction. But businesses that do a good deal of business in the community, and that wish to maximize the competitive advantage of Hours acceptance, can (and do) accept 100 percent Hours from a customer for selling their product or service.

In recent years, the strength of the Hours system has enabled the Ithaca Hours organization to offer interest-free loans to member businesses. The system also makes regular contributions to community groups for a gamut of philanthropic purposes.

Ithaca Hours has been recognized by economists for the value of its "multiplier effect"—multiplying economic transactions in the community and creating new ones, with its local scope. For example, an Ithaca Hour spent at a local music store will soon be spent at another local business, while a dollar spent at a Borders chain will mostly likely soon leave the community for the bookstore chain's corporate headquarters elsewhere.

There is also an ineffable community-building aspect to using local currencies. Local people spending Hours find that the very act of spending them leads to conversations and camaraderie, something spending government-issued dollars don't do. They also show the power of a community to solve even seemingly intractable problems (shortage of money!) by taking creative action, together.

Stephen Burke is president of the Board of Directors of Ithaca Hours in Ithaca, New York.

JIM BOSJOLIE

"New jobs can be created locally by offering goods and services locally," says author Paul Glover. EcoVillage at Ithaca residents grow and sell produce at the local Farmer's Market.

"Mutual Enterprise"

Creating New Jobs Locally

BY PAUL GLOVER

Capitalism says that jobs come from investors and bankers. Socialism says that jobs come from politicians and bureaucrats. They both say that their economic systems are the only ones with the money, authority, and knowledge to create jobs. But an economic system based on mutual enterprise says that good jobs are generated by average people who work, who raise children, and who depend on the health of communities. Virtually everything used in a locality can be made locally, by small, energy-efficient shops that use regional resources (including components of discards), and which control and recycle all emissions and byproducts. Specialty materials shops (such as foundries and sawmills) can be linked to each other and to micro-industrial assembly shops.

Even today, thousands of high-quality household goods are produced locally for internal markets, including soaps, shoes, clothes, rugs, drapes, food, toys, and furniture. Communities are busy providing food and food processing, compost, garden tools, clothes, hats, gloves, shoes, wool and angora goods, plant fibers, recycled fibers, lamps, tools, forges, herbal medicines, and healing. These are the basics.

There are thousands more products for which regional and national markets could be found, such as trolley components and cargo bikes, insulation, transit, compost toilets, cleaning supplies, and scrap-metal reprocessing. Such products can be made and exported without waiting for external capital, and without further contaminating our environment.

As local production networks for such industries as these become more extensive, and as the increase in local wealth enables more of us to afford locally-produced durables and household goods, the unit price for local artisanry and manufacture gradually becomes competitive with mass-produced imports.

Locally made goods are already competitively priced, when we calculate that buying local goods in locally owned stores produces local jobs that save money by reducing unemployment's costs of social services, vandalism, drug use, violent crime, and jail.

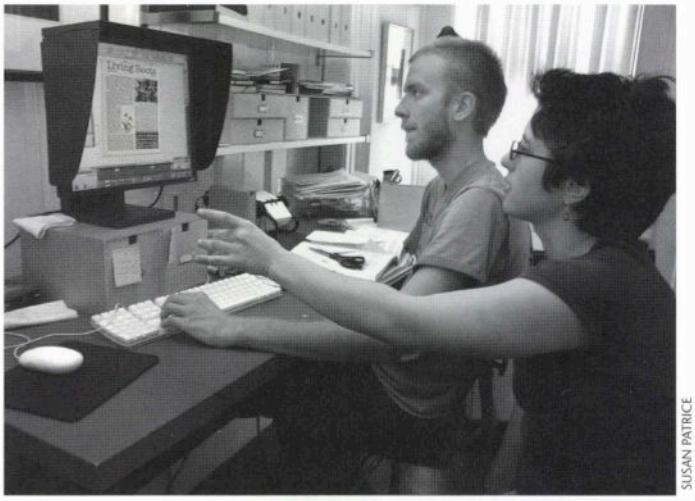
Several related changes in local economies are needed to facilitate these transitions:

- Large-scale employers would need to change in significant ways. They'd need to embrace job sharing and flextime, and consider the benefits to themselves and society of six-hour days without reduced pay. Kellogg, the cereal company, thrived on this basis for 54 years. Employers would need to end racial bias in hiring and invest in workers as assets (even as friends), rather than as costs. Research shows that labor productivity and yearly business growth are highest in countries where income is more equal between employers and employees (*Economist*, 11/5/94).

Virtually everything used in a locality can be made locally by small, energy efficient shops that use regional resources.

- The government would need to gradually cease providing welfare to large corporations in the form of special tax breaks, bailouts, and below-cost sale of raw materials. Many local governments are catching on to better kinds of job development. They've quit chasing heavy industry, venture capital, and franchises. St. Paul, Minnesota, for example, has a Homegrown Economy Project. Eugene, Oregon, hosts the Buy Oregon project, which finds local contractors to bid for regional manufacturing subcontracts. In Littleton, Colorado, the director of business/industrial affairs, Christian Gibbons, says "our New Economy Project creates economic development from the inside. Research shows that 90 percent of new jobs are created by local business".

  Working with existing businesses returns the biggest bang for the buck. The federal study "Local Economic Development Tools" agrees, concluding that expansion of local firms through import-replacement programs can generate ten times more jobs than imported capital.
- Bankers would need to learn that small loans, not large ones, are actually likelier to be fully and promptly repaid. Chicago's South Shore Bank and India's Grameen Bank have proven the superior safety of small loans to low-income people. This requires an end to racial bias in lending.
- Schools would need to teach all students how to become powerful community managers, creators of jobs, and active union and co-op members, rather than obedient drones.
- Planning departments would need to become public resource and innovation centers, welcoming new ideas and serving the public rather than developers.



SUSAN PATRICE

Thousands of locally manufactured products have regional markets, such as cargo bikes, insulation, and composting toilets, all of which need office support staff, creating yet more local jobs.

Again, none of the above initiatives are exotic. They are in fact current national trends. Such processes promise measurable improvement rather than continued decline. With these programs, we will be able to use our buying power to vote for powerful communities and set examples for the world.

A "consultivist" for grassroots economic development, Paul Glover, is founder of Ithaca HOURS local currency, the Ithaca Health Alliance, Greenplanners, and Citizen Planners of Los Angeles. www.paulglover.org.

FINDHORN FOUNDATION

Creating value-added food products from local farmers and growers is a source of local jobs at Findhorn Foundation in Scotland.

FINDHORN FOUNDATION

Findhorn members can invest in onsite enterprise such as affordable housing, like these community members' homes.

How Ecovillages Can Grow Sustainable Local Economies

BY JONATHAN DAWSON

In contrast with most local economies around the world, ecovillages tend to display a distinctive and uncommon level of vitality. One sees bakeries, theatres, shops, and cafés that draw in visitors from far and wide. Local organic cheeses, wines, fruit, and vegetables combine great quality with low food mileage (meaning the food was sold to customers a relatively short distance from where it was grown). Crafts studios turn out beautiful ceramics, textiles, carvings, and candles. Schools and training centres for both children and adults flourish. Publishing houses, printing presses, manufacturers of solar panels, waste-water system designers, consulting companies... everywhere there is evidence of economic vitality and diversification.

So far, so good. But this economic "success story" is a little more complicated—and perhaps also a little less impressive—than it first appears, for almost all ecovillages are inextricably tied into the wider and destructive global economy that surrounds them. Participants in training courses (and non-formal education is the largest source of income for many ecovillages) tend to leave large air-mile "carbon footprints" behind them.

Ecovillage enterprises, in common with all others in the capitalist economy, depend on a culture of consumerism that

far outstrips the meeting of basic needs. In addition, even though many ecovillages have lower than average ecological footprints, most continue to make fairly extensive use of industrially produced and mass-distributed building materials, clothes, computers, airline travel, and so on. Moreover, the rules of the market mean that it tends to be predominantly the well-off who can afford to participate in the courses and buy the beautifully hand-crafted cards, ceramics, and candles turned out in ecovillage studios, leaving behind an uncomfortable whiff of elitism. Even our community-based local currencies—the *Credito* in Damanhur, Italy, and the *Eko* in Findhorn, Scotland—are tied to the national currencies and ultimately sink or swim with them.

This hardly adds up to the breaking of the mould and the pioneering of a new paradigm of economic behaviour. It is unsurprising that this should be the case, for it is in the sphere of economy above all others that ecovillages and intentional communities will necessarily find it most difficult to buck the system. Here, their smallness of scale, such a boon in many other

Almost all ecovillages are inextricably tied into the wider and destructive global economy that surrounds them.

domains, is a severe limitation. In a global market so heavily skewed towards the interest of the large and powerful—Helena Norberg-Hodge's memorable phrase "Small is beautiful, large is subsidised" springs to mind—and where mass-produced goods consistently cost less than those made by artisans using local materials to satisfy local needs (exactly what we are aiming for in a low-footprint, steady state economy), how are ecovillages to find a way of walking their talk?

The ecovillages that come closest to this ideal have turned their backs, as far as they can, on the global economy. Residents at Tinkers' Bubble ecovillage in Somerset, England, limit their use of fossil fuels to kerosene for their lamps and fuel for two communally-owned cars (for a community of around 15 people), while seeking to be self-sufficient in food and building their own houses using local materials. Similarly, the Club 99 neighbourhood of the German ecovillage, Sieben Linden, is pioneering a very low-footprint lifestyle, minimising purchases from the global economy. Both these communities reduce their dependence on motorised equipment by using horses to help with energy-intensive tasks.

FINDHORN FOUNDATION

Members and supporters of Findhorn community have raised over a million dollars to invest in their various community co-ops, including the community store, the Phoenix, which sells local organic cheeses, wines, fruit, and vegetables (top); a wind turbine co-op (center); and its CSA farm (bottom).

These are important experiments. However, they hardly represent a strategy for the evolution towards a steady state economy (unless one sees the collapse of society as we know it to be inevitable, with all survivors reverting imminently to a more or less fossil fuel-free lifestyles). For better or worse, we know that Tinker's Bubble and Club 99 don't represent models that many will buy into.

Of particular interest is the story of a group of weavers in the Lancashire town of Rochdale, England, in the 1840s. Facing a market no less distorted and damaging (albeit on a smaller scale) than that we experience today, the weavers worked long hours for little pay and were forced to make their purchases in the company store at inflated prices. The cooperative movement that they helped to create was based on

Even though many ecovillages have lower than average ecological footprints, most use industrially produced building materials, clothes, computers, airline travel, and so on.

So is there, then, no middle ground between integration into the global economy and cutting all—or most—links with it? Identifying such a path can be described as the economic Holy Grail for ecovillages and other related movements within the wider sustainability movement. The good news is that, new as the scale and nature of our predicament is, there is valuable precedent from which we can borrow.

the principle of *mutuality*—that is, support among groups seeking to break their dependence on the capitalist bosses. Successful worker-owned enterprises used their profits to start up and support other enterprises also owned by their workers. One hundred and fifty years later, the cooperative movement has a global membership of many millions enjoying mutual support within producer co-ops, consumer

JONATHON DAWSON

At Damanhur Community in Italy people use their local currency, the Credito, *to purchase goods and services from each other, such as greenhouse-grown produce.*

ECOVILLAGE SIEBEN LINDEN

The Club 99 *neighborhood of Ecovillage Sieben Linden in Germany is known for its low ecological footprint lifestyle.*

co-ops, credit co-ops, as well as co-ops for marketing, health, insurance, and many other necessary goods and services.

Two characteristics of the cooperative movement are especially important for current purposes. First, by granting one vote per investor (irrespective of the total invested by each), it conferred democratic rights in the economic sphere, which is generally dominated by speculative capitalists. Second, and crucially, the co-op movement enabled the owners of cooperatives to make decisions on the basis of considerations other than maximising short-term profits. For the early co-operators, these concerns were predominantly social in nature—improving working conditions, getting access to better food, and strengthening communities. Today, we would add a strong emphasis on environmental protection and restoration.

So, how would an ecovillage economy that borrowed from the cooperative experience look? To some extent, it is already on the ground, with numerous cooperatively owned enterprises in existence within ecovillages. My own community, Findhorn, has created an Industrial Provident Society (a legal form established under the earliest piece of cooperative legislation, in England in 1852) to permit members to invest in community-owned enterprises and initiatives. Over a million dollars has been raised in this way from community members and supporters for investment in community initiatives, including a buy-out of the community store, the purchase of wind turbines, and investment in affordable housing.

However, in today's globalised economy, this is no longer enough. A key additional step is to recognise that on their own, individual ecovillages are much too small to escape the perverse gravitational pull of the global economy. The boundaries of mutuality must extend far beyond the limits of the ecovillage itself. This only becomes possible if ecovillages consciously identify themselves, in the economic sphere at least, as belonging to a family of initiatives significantly larger than themselves.

Is there no middle ground between integrating into the global economy and cutting all links with it?

Let us explore how this could look by taking a couple of examples that illustrate the type of cooperative alliances being proposed. Two German ecovillages, ZEGG and Sieben Linden, are fostering the development of networks of organic food pro-

FINDHORN FOUNDATION

Findhorn residents grow much of their own food in greenhouses and fields.

ducers and suppliers in their own regions. Rather than trying to achieve full food self-sufficiency within their communities, they have decided to use the surplus demand, created in part by the needs of the many visitors coming to participate in courses, to enhance the capacity of local growers. ZEGG is also involved in numerous other initiatives to strengthen the fabric of its own bioregion, including a local exchange trading system (LETS), campaigns to promote fair-trade products, a Community Supported Agriculture farm, a free school, an info cafe which acts as a centre for tolerance against right-wing extremism and violence, projects with refugees and asylum-seekers, a forest kindergarten, and all kinds of cultural activities.

Ecovillages need to identify themselves as belonging to and serving something larger than themselves alone.

The Centre for Alternative Technology (CAT), a Welsh ecovillage, is a key actor in a multi-faceted Welsh initiative, Ecodyfi, whose mission is "to foster sustainable community regeneration in the Dyfi valley" in ways that build on local distinctiveness: "Food, holiday, and other products will all benefit from being associated with a clean, green image of the valley—where the Dyfi valley is a leader in sustainable community regeneration."

A key goal for Ecodyfi is to work towards "greening" the local energy economy. Through an European Union-funded project in 1998-2001, Ecodyfi brought around $600,000 into the local economy, raised local awareness of energy issues, and implemented a number of small community-based water, wind, solar, and wood-fuel schemes. These included the UK's first community-owned wind turbine, a farm-based hydroelectric scheme, and solar water heating in ten houses. Some income from the community-owned wind turbine is diverted to the Community Energy Fund to benefit energy conservation initiatives for local people. There are plans for a second community-owned wind turbine and for the development of biodiesel locally. The Powys Renewable Energy

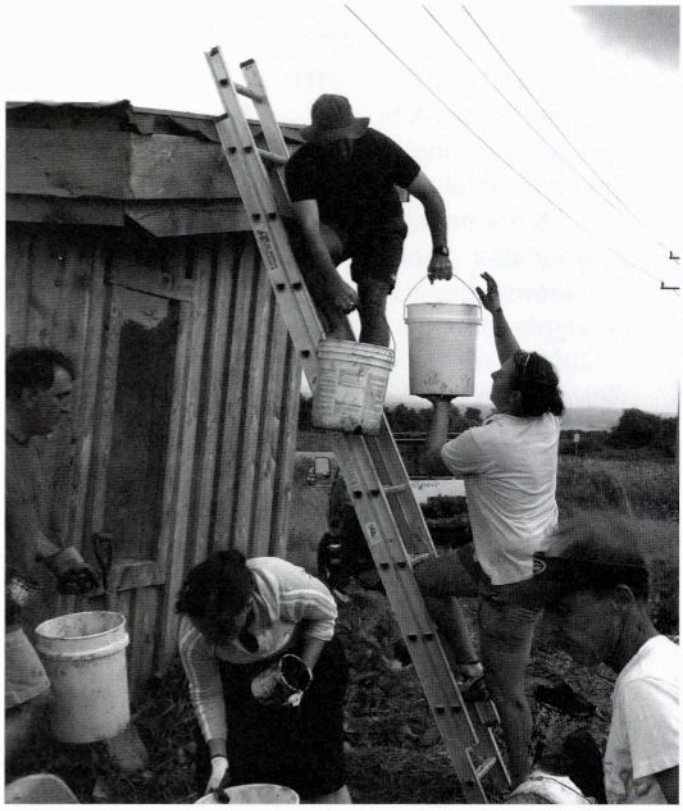
Partnership, in which Ecodyfi is a central player, won the "100% Communities: Rural" category in a European Commission competition.

Ecodyfi is also an active partner in programmes to promote farm-scale horticultural production and marketing in the Dyfi Valley in partnership with the organisation Farming Connect; to strengthen community links through seed swaps, plant swaps, and garden visits in collaboration with Dyfi Valley Seed Savers; to reduce waste and increase composting; to promote community-based tourism; to manage a wildlife area; to improve broadband access for local people; and to involve young people in the planning, design, and fund-raising for a sports facility for skate-boarding, roller-blading, and bicycles.

One final example of an ecovillage engaged in cooperative, bioregionally based activity is EcoVillage at Ithaca in New York state. EcoVillage at Ithaca works closely on education for sustainability with both Cornell University and Ithaca College. Its partnership with Ithaca College includes the development of a curriculum on the "Science of Sustainability" and Ithaca College has made a commitment to become "one of the premier college campuses in the country, modeling sustainability in all its aspects." EcoVillage at Ithaca is also a major player in the Sustainable Tompkins County initiative, whose aim is to make this the lowest per capita footprint county in the US. Committees associated with this ambitious project are working on a city car-share scheme, a green urban development, waste-management, and sustainability circles in the schools.

This is the way to go for ecovillages that would seek to attain greater autonomy from the global economy and to make a contribution to the emergence of steady state economies. The metaphor of ecovillages as yoghurt cultures seeking to inoculate their surrounding bioregions with the ferment of sustainability seems especially apposite. As we have seen in the examples above, first steps in this direction are already emerging: one, the need for ecovillages to identify themselves as belonging and of service to something larger than themselves alone; and two, the creation of alliances with partners with which they can work bioregionally.

The third step, currently less well developed, consists in developing ties specifically of economic mutuality. This is an important growing point for ecovillages and other intentional communities. We are constrained by a lack of resources and partners from taking on many of the noble community- and planet-serving activities that we could undertake. Yet, there are many individuals and organisations out there that understand that the allocation of investment capital as currently overseen by the global economy ultimately serves no-one.



JIM BOSJOLIE

Creating alliances locally, EcoVillage at Ithaca hosts hands-on courses in sustainability like this one, partnering with Ithaca College and Cornell University.

The mountain that faced the working men and women of Lancashire a century and a half ago appeared no less intimidating that that facing us today. We have much to learn from their example. Only by creating an alternative economy of solidarity within which we are able to take decisions on the basis of criteria other than increasing short-term profit can we break free from the gravity of the global capitalist economy. This takes a weight and a muscle that the intentional communities movement on its own does not come near to commanding...yet. Partnership and alliances define the way forward.

Jonathan Dawson is President of Global Ecovillage Network (GEN) and Executive Secretary of GEN-Europe. He has worked in community economic development in Africa over the last 20 years as a project manager, researcher, author, and consultant. He lives at Findhorn Foundation in Scotland where he teaches courses on applied sustainability up to graduate level. His book, Ecovillages: New Frontiers for Sustainability *(Schumacher Briefing Paper #12), is available from Green Books. (Note: We preserve the spelling of our Commonwealth country authors.)*

How Using Money with Nothing Behind It Affects Your Personal Buying Power

The increasing price of most goods and services you buy, the decreasing purchasing power of your savings, the boom and bust business cycle, and the coming United States national bankruptcy are all caused or assisted because the US Government's central bank, the Federal Reserve (the Fed), counterfeits money. None of these economic events are pleasant. All are human-made and entirely avoidable.

Inflation comes from increasing the total number of dollars in existence, by printing more of them. An economic boom is from people spending the new, easily-gotten money carelessly. A bust is because printing more money doesn't create any more working hours in the week, any more barrels of oil, or any more factories. The plans made during the boom period can't be carried out, because the saved resources that the new money should represent don't actually exist. The way to prevent inflation, booms, busts, and a bad national credit rating, is to stop printing money.

Inflation. Suppose you are playing the board game, Monopoly. You have $2,000 and think you're doing great. Unbeknownst to you, another player just came back from the copy machine with a whole shoebox full of counterfeit $500 Monopoly bills. As the game continues, you watch in disbelief as the cheating player seems to have an inexhaustible supply of money. Prices for nearly everything climb out of sight. The buying power of the savings you've earned dwindle to nothing. You're ruined, and the cheater ends up owning everything without having worked for it.

In this example, as in real life, the cheating player is the Federal Reserve Bank. Whenever the Fed prints new dollars, it is counterfeiting. To hide the crime, the *rise in prices* caused by the introduction of bogus money is given the name "inflation," and the counterfeiting is disguised by calling it an "economic stimulus." If someone points to the shoebox as the source of inflation, the Fed claims to be "fighting inflation," even though they are the ones causing it.

Louis Wu, who works in the computer industry, is helping form a cohousing community in the US.

The boom is from spending new, easy money carelessly. The Fed prints money and loans it to banks, who loan it to people who try to make stuff. The people who borrowed don't pay as much attention as they should, because they got the money on much better terms than they would have if the money was genuine. In the Internet bubble we saw dot-coms, dot-bombs, and pets.com. New Internet companies proclaimed with pride how they didn't have a shadow of a clue how they were ever going to produce more resources than they consumed by existing. The waste was even worse than my local recycling program, which runs a truck by every house in the city, burning fuel that is more valuable than anything which can be made from the trash they pick up. Today, we have the housing bubble. People took out adjustable-rate interest-only mortgages on enormous, overpriced houses, betting they would find some even bigger sucker to sell their house to, while counterfeiting by the Fed makes the value of the house appear to increase. I think we will look back and call August 2006 the peak of the housing bubble.

The bust is because printing money doesn't create real resources. The bust is because printing money doesn't, as noted earlier, create any more working hours in the week, farm harvests, barrels of oil, or factories. The plans made in the boom can't be carried out, because, again, the saved resources the new money is supposed to represent don't actually exist. Imagine that ten people are stranded on a desert island, and have to fish ten hours a day to survive. If they declare shells to be "money," it doesn't make them rich, even though shells are plentiful. The people would still need food and shelter to live, not shells. Likewise, workers in the new boom companies eventually notice there is no more food around than there was before; it's just been shifted around. As with the cheater in the Monopoly game, it's been shifted around in a very specific way. The groups that got the new money early, like the government and the banks, bought stuff at the older, lower prices. The people that got the money last bought stuff at the newer, raised prices. Ouch!

National bankruptcy. In 1971, Nixon declared bankruptcy for the United States. Bankruptcy means being unwilling or unable to pay your debts. How Nixon did it was to declare that US Treasury bills would no longer be redeemed in gold as promised, but only in more dollar bills. To disguise what was going on, this was not called declaring bankruptcy but rather "closing the gold window."

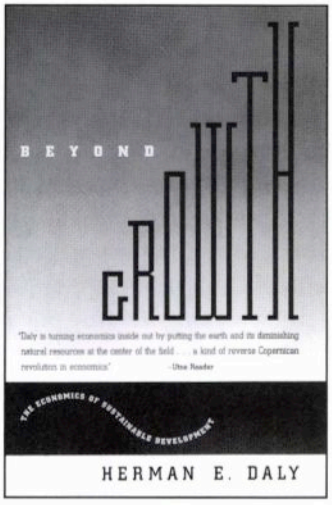
Now, 35 years later, many holders of US Treasury bills are deciding that the US is like the deadbeat family member you keep giving loans to, but who never pays you back. Holders of US Treasury bills are about to give up and accept our bankruptcy. When they do this and revalue or dump their US Treasury bills, it will not be pleasant. The US will be in a similar situation to a publicly-traded company whose stock value falls to near zero after accounting fraud is discovered. Picture a US-sized Enron, where everyone who depended on the dollar is damaged.

Printing more money doesn't create any more working hours in the week, any more barrels of oil, or any more factories.

We should remember it is a quintessentially American value to leave your native country and immigrate to a land of opportunity, should that appear wise. The claim that "the national debt doesn't matter because we owe the debt to ourselves" is false. Almost half of US Treasury bills are owned by non-Americans, most notably in the Pacific rim. And even if we did owe the national debt entirely to ourselves, defaulting on it would mean wiping out grandma's retirement savings stored in that "safest of investments," US Treasury bills.

Stop counterfeiting money. The way to eliminate price inflation, booms and busts, and national bankruptcy is to stop counterfeiting money. Ending that crime will also curb wars, curb national debt, and curb bogus public works projects by making the true price of these activities more apparent. The few times in world history when the dominant governments didn't counterfeit money, such as during Queen Victoria's reign in England, there were no boom and bust business cycles. Life was more peaceful. We can have that same kind of peace any time we want it, by educating ourselves in economics and refusing to tolerate monetary nonsense. A final thought: perhaps the flowering of nanotechnology will decentralize power in a way never seen before. In any case, the next ten years will be interesting as the status quo attempts to maintain control. What if global warming and peak oil were just a ruse to create a global water monopoly and energy empire? ✪

REVIEWS



Beyond Growth: The Economics of Sustainable Development

By Herman E. Daly

Beacon Press (1996)
Pb. 264 pp. $20.00

Reviewed by Paula L. Craig

Professor Herman Daly has been fighting the good fight for sustainable development for over 30 years. Although *Beyond Growth* came out in 1996, it is still one of the best books available on sustainable development and the steady-state economy. Events since then have only provided more support to Daly's work.

The book begins with a telling incident that occurred when Daly worked as an economist for the World Bank. While reviewing a World Development Report titled "Development and the Environment," Daly noticed a diagram with a square labeled "economy" and two arrows labeled "inputs" and "outputs." Daly suggested that a large box labeled "environment" should go around the whole diagram, with text explaining that the economy is part of the environment and depends on the environment as a source of raw material inputs and as a "sink" for waste outputs. Daly's suggestion was refused, and the entire diagram was omitted from the final World Bank report.

Do you find it strange that seeing the human economy as part of the environment, and not the other way around, could possibly be considered controversial? In *Beyond Growth*, Daly takes on the question of just how big our economy can grow relative to our ecosystem. Most economists assume that the economy can grow forever without limits. Daly disagrees, explaining that our Earth and its resources place real physical limits on what humans can do. Even in an "information economy" computers and their users need a physical resource base to operate. Better information can make our use of resources more efficient, but we cannot eat recipes!

If we know something is impossible, we can save an infinite amount of time and money by not trying to do it.

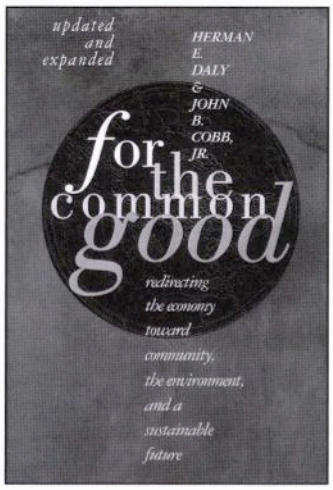
Daly describes sustainable development as development without growth. The idea that we can have "sustainable growth" is absurd in a world where we have already passed the limits of what the Earth can support for long without impoverishing future generations. That doesn't mean no development at all—we can make life qualitatively better.

Most economists assume that the economy can grow forever without limits.

Daly makes a number of interesting suggestions on U.S. tax policy. In the U.S. most taxes come from taxes on wages and the like. This amounts to a tax on employment—strange, since employment is something we want more of, not less. Daly thinks most taxes should come from fees on things we want less of, such as pollution and resource depletion. He also wants limits placed on how much executive pay can be deducted from corporate taxes: no more than 10 times what the lowest-paid worker at the corporation receives. Sounds like a real step forward to me!

Daly includes a chapter on Biblical support for the idea of the steady state economy. As I don't share his religious views, I don't find this very convincing. However, I like the idea that certain principles of wise management apply in economies as different from one another as modern industrial capitalism and the pastoral economies of Jesus' time. If you are a Christian, you may well like the book even more than I do.

Beyond Growth is not easy reading. The vocabulary is college level. There are a few equations, though they can be skipped without losing Daly's main arguments. The book is rich enough that it is worth making the effort. The chapter on the carrying capacity of the ecosystem in the Ecuadoran Amazon and the Paraguayan Chaco is only eight pages long, has no equations, and is worth the price of the book in itself. Its central message: If we know something is impossible, we can save an infinite amount of time and money by not trying to do it. An ever-growing standard of resource consumption for an ever-growing world population is one of those impossible things.



For the Common Good:

By Herman E. Daly and John B. Cobb, Jr.

Beacon Press (1994)
Pb. 534 pp. $24.00

Reviewed by Paula L. Craig

For the Common Good is a far-ranging book that covers everything from economics and the environment to ethics, national security, health insurance, university reform, and religious philosophy. Herman Daly is an economist and John Cobb a theologian, which gives you some idea of the book's broad perspective. It has thought-provoking analysis and some truly great commentary. Just to give you a taste: "Economics cannot do without simplifying assumptions, but the trick is to use the right assumptions at the right time." Or, regarding using technological fixes for environmental problems: "It is one thing to say that knowledge will grow (no one rejects that), but it is something else to presuppose that the content of new knowledge will abolish old limits faster than it discovers new ones." Another on the same subject: "If it ain't broke, don't fix it; if you must tinker, save all the pieces; and if you don't know where you're going, slow down." On employment: "Without abundant cheap energy, solving unemployment by growth is impossible."

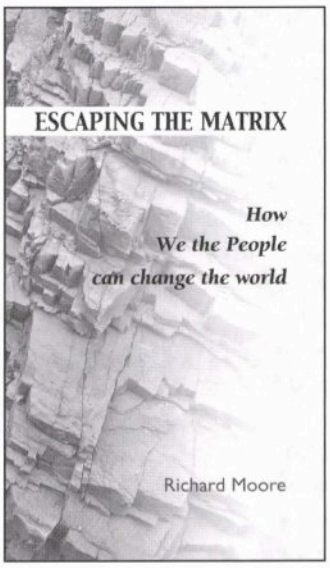
Community (in small towns, urban neighborhoods, even nations), is one of *For the Common Good's* central concerns. The modern obsession with economic growth and growth of consumption has led to treating people as if they were interchangeable. Much of conventional economics has a pronounced anti-community bias. Since economics affects public policy, community relationships have declined as a result. The authors present some radical suggestions on decentralizing the economy: they point out that it is entirely possible for a town of 10,000-20,000 people to produce nearly all the goods needed for a high quality of life locally. A localized economy, as compared to an export-oriented economy, would be less demanding of resources, less subject to events happening elsewhere, and inherently more stable and satisfying to the inhabitants. Development strategies that seek to expand sales volume, or bring in lots of new workers, or increase exports, only weaken a local community in the long term. The authors argue convincingly for high tariffs on imported goods. While high tariffs reduce economic growth, the improvements in community life and sustainability more than make up for the losses.

Daly and Cobb do an excellent job at asking fascinating questions and poking holes in existing economic theory and practice.

Daly and Cobb do an excellent job of asking fascinating questions and poking holes in existing economic theory and practice. In my opinion, no serious student of economics, public policy, or sustainable development can afford not to read this book. On the other hand, some of the proposed solutions seem both extremely difficult to implement and not much of an improvement over the present system. The proposed negative income tax for the poor and abolition of corporate taxes are examples. The authors sometimes come across as a little naïve. They suggest having the government employ everyone who can't find another job. I think they do not realize just how hard it is to make government employment programs work; such programs inevitably decline into a morass of dependency and corruption (the Washington, DC municipal government has taken precisely this approach in the past few decades, with predictable results). Other proposals are better, such as the severance tax for natural resource extraction. The proposals on pulling our military out of the Persian Gulf and putting the savings toward energy conservation, thus eliminating America's need for Persian Gulf oil entirely, seem positively prophetic, given that they wrote the book in 1994. Daly's Index of Sustainable Economic Welfare deserves to be far better known than it is.

The writing is a bit dry; if you're new to Professor Daly's work, you might want to try one of his other books first, such as *Beyond Growth*, reviewed left. While some chapters of *For the Common Good* are little more than speculation, many are excellent. Overall, the book is a great choice for any community library.

Paula L. Craig works for the U.S. Department of Commerce and is a member of the U.S society for Ecological Economics. She lives in Falls Church, Virginia. See her article, "How a Steady State Economy Could Change Our Lives."



Escaping the Matrix: How We the People Can Change the World

By Richard Moore

Pb. 210 pp. $15.95.

Reviewed by Molly Morgan

As a provocative metaphor, author Richard Moore effectively borrows the scenario of the popular 1999 science fiction movie, "The Matrix." In the film, the main character has lived his entire life suspecting the world is not really as it seems. When given the opportunity to pull back the curtain, he learns the horrifying truth: the Matrix—every aspect of our day-to-day existence—is an illusion created by machines manipulating our brains in order to enslave human energy. Moore asserts that in real life, our civilization is based on a great many illusions, but he parts with Hollywood for his vision of how to respond to this awareness. One action hero can't save the world; it will require every one of us fully awakening to our capacity for self-governance. And the solution will not involve guns or violence, but a process which he calls "harmonization."

According to Moore, humanity is facing a crisis of survival. In order to respond to such an unprecedented challenge, we need to understand that we don't have a list of separate problems to solve; we have a system that must be transformed. After more than a decade of in-depth research into a wide variety of subjects, Moore concludes that our entire political/economic system is beyond our control and that ordinary people not only can, but must, take responsibility for fixing it.

Each chapter of *Escaping the Matrix* gives readers an opportunity to peel back another layer of the elaborate deceptions of our culture. For example, Moore begins with a description of the Matrix, a reality in which lies become the basis for history, reinforced throughout the millennia via mythology, religion, schools, media, and other institutions. He includes a brief history of humanity, demonstrating that "civilization"—the 6,000 years representing less than 10 percent of the time humans have walked the Earth—is a system of domination and exploitation by ruling elites.

Beliefs about human nature that have developed under such stressful conditions are so incomplete that they facilitate continued disempowerment of the majority of people as well as destruction of Earth's life-support systems. In contrast to commonly held notions that humans are ruthlessly aggressive and competitive, there is abundant cross-disciplinary research indicating that pre-civilization societies were highly cooperative and egalitarian—which we in the communities movement are, of course, rediscovering. Moore concludes that it is crucial for us to tap into this legacy, find our common identity, and come together as humans, moving beyond the ideological structures that have been created to divide us from one another. The current political systems were not designed to enable us to live cooperatively, and the elites who benefit from these systems cannot and will not effect the changes essential to our survival.

It is possible for wisdom itself to manifest.

Fortunately there are proven processes that make it possible for us to act on this

imperative. Moore notes the two circumstances under which people typically meet: "Collaborative dynamics tend to avoid internal divisiveness when it arises, while adversarial dynamics tend to reinforce and encourage divisiveness among factions." In neither case is conflict resolved, and this also applies to most compromises. We must acquire these skills, and Moore uses the term "harmonization" to include any facilitation and dialog techniques that enable people with very different perspectives to respectfully listen to each other and take everyone's concerns into account when solving problems and making decisions. This includes consensus and other fair, participatory decision-making methods.

Moore reviews several case histories in which diverse groups of people were brought together for several days and experienced extraordinary breakthroughs to achieve a sense of community and empowerment. When people enter this space of harmonization, all the energy that was tied up in roles and positions is released and available for constructive work. He adds: "Something more than creativity and intelligence can be enabled: it is possible for wisdom itself to manifest." These processes give people a taste of what direct democracy would actually feel like. Moore encourages us to devote our energy to arranging dialog experiences in our wider communities to facilitate the emergence of self-governance in our societies.

Such experiences are key to building the transformational movement Moore advocates. By definition, a cultural transformation involves the propagation of a shift in worldview—something that removes us from our standard mindset and takes us into a territory for which we have no words; it enables us to see possibilities we didn't know existed. This movement would be particularly unusual in that it would not be characterized by any particular programs or platforms, which—no matter how noble—are ultimately divisive and usually give rise to opposition movements.

Moore maps a possible progression of the transformation: discussing economics, maintenance of peace, repossessing the commons, and other aspects of local self-governance. He believes that once harmonization practices become the norm at a local level, they will lend themselves to regional and even global methods of interacting. The structure of the movement will become the structure of the new society. Moore also insists that personal and social transformation must proceed together; in fact, given our evolutionary inheritance, personal transformation can most readily occur in the context of social transformation.

We don't have a list of separate problems to solve; we have a system that must be transformed.

I heartily recommend this book. I found Moore's focus on the practical and political application of process refreshing and motivating. Harmonization is not a prescription; each neighborhood, town, or local community will have to fine-tune processes to its own unique needs. While some in the general population may find the book a bit short on specifics, I think most readers of *Communities* will readily appreciate Moore's ideas about how to enable experiential change at the local level. The book provides an extensive annotated bibliography (including the Fellowship for Intentional Community), which he maintains and updates on his website. He also invites people to participate in his online forums (www.EscapingTheMatrix.org). Information for obtaining the book is on the website, and it can be ordered through any bookstore's regular channels.

Mollly Morgan has a background in environmental and political activism and management of nonprofit organizations. She lives in San Diego, California.

REACH

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

You may use the form on the last page of Reach to place an ad. ***THE REACH DEADLINE FOR THE SPRING 2007 ISSUE (OUT IN MARCH) IS JANUARY 15.***

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, 5295 CR 27, Canton, NY 13617, 315-386-2609 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 2007* Communities Directory.

COMMUNITIES WITH OPENINGS

AQUARIAN CONCEPTS COMMUNITY, Sedona, Arizona. Founded by Gabriel of Sedona and Niann Emerson Chase in 1989. Currently 107 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.musiciansnetwork.org*

AQUARIUS COMMUNITY, Vail, Arizona. Do you have living space in Canada? Exchange with us. *Box 69, Vail, AZ 85641-0069; jkubias@hotmail.com*

DANCING RABBIT, Rutledge, Missouri. We are a growing ecovillage of more than 30 individuals and are actively seeking new members to join us in creating a vibrant community on our 280 beautiful acres in rural Missouri. Our goals are to live ecologically sustainable and socially rewarding lives, and to share the skills and ideas behind this 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! *660-883-5511; dancingrabbit@ic.org; www.dancingrabbit.org*

EARTHAVEN ECOVILLAGE, Blue Ridge Mountains, North Carolina. Earthaven is a multi-generational ecovillage on 320 acres near Asheville. Dedicated to caring for people and the Earth, we come together to create, and sustain beyond our lifetimes, a vital, diversified learning community. Our 60 members use natural building techniques, drink and bathe in gravity-fed spring water and use off-grid power. We practice consensus for decision-making, and nourish our families with organic, local foods. Our diets range from omnivore to vegetarian. We enjoy an abundant social and cultural life, and practice diverse spiritual paths. We're seeking new members—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, near Cherokee, North Carolina and Smokey Mountain Park. For retirees. Two new furnished group homes in private cove with private bedroom suites, private bathrooms and large common kitchen. More group homes planned. We are a "family" of loving friends committed to spiritual growth through relationships. Looking for mid-50's and 60's, non-smokers, healthy, financially secure. Must be experienced with harmonious, cooperative, consensus groups. After a six-month guest membership, members will buy a share of ownership if they choose to stay. We are part of a larger mixed-age eclectic community with community building, swimming pool, organic garden, trails and adjoining 46-acre spiritual retreat center. Contact *Anthony or Ann, 828-497-7102; or email: annariel@dnet.net*

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

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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*

HEARTWOOD COHOUSING, Bayfield, Colorado. Located in southwest Colorado, with easy access to the high peaks of the San Juan Mountains and the red rock canyons of Utah, we are a cohousing neighborhood with a deep sense of community. Built in 2000, we support a population of approximately 40 adults and 20 children in a cozy cluster of 24 homes nestled within 250 acres of pine forest and pastureland. We make decisions by consensus and value open and honest communication to accommodate the diverse needs, backgrounds, and perspectives of our members. Find out more about Heartwood and available property: *www.heartwoodcohousing.com; info@heartwoodcohousing.com; 970-884-4055.*

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, MI 63563; visitorscm@sandhillfarm.org; 660-883-5543; www.sandhillfarm.org*

Statement of Ownership, Management and Circulation

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Extent & Nature of Circulation

	Average No of Copies Each Issue during Preceding 12 Months	Actual No of Copies of Single Issue Published Nearest to Filing Date
A. Total No Copies *(Net Press Run)*	3503	3378
B. Paid &/or Requested Circulation		
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D. Free Distribution		
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E. Free Distribution Outside the Mail	0	0
F. Total Free Distribution	0	0
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H. Copies Not Distributed	198	212
I. Total	3503	3378
J. Percent Paid &/or Requested Circulation	94%	94%

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RURAL COMMUNITY, USA. Movement forming based on cause and effect reality (unpopular); not what is politically correct and sells (popular). Does anyone else suspect words like community, organic, sustainability, ecological are becoming meaningless? First cooperative, 200+ adults 50+ children, rural, much land, mostly food and energy self-sufficient and no debt. Why isn't pacifism, usuary, owning more than one uses, population control, "where people's money actually comes from," and "the undesirability of debt" ever talked about? Life is assumed to be about endless chores—why? Why isn't it ever talked about how easy and enjoyable life can actually be? *www.a-new-possibility.info Call 352-275-5659.*

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SANDHILL FARM, Rutledge, Missouri. Internships in Sustainable Community Living. April 1 to November 1, 2006. If you love gardening and would like to gain experience in organic farming, food processing, tempeh production, homestead maintenance and construction skills, consensus decision making, group and interpersonal process. Learning is informal and hands-on. Come for six weeks or longer. More information about the Sandhill Farm Intentional Community and applying for an internship: 660-883-5543; *interns@sandhill-farm.org; www.sandhillfarm.org*

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PERIPATETIC COMMUNITARIAN

(continued from p. 76)

deep financial hole, resulting in what folks called "the Changeover." To avoid bankruptcy, the elected board (after a lot of soul searching) mandated that the community switch over to a cooperative structure, requiring all adult members to share equally in the debt retirement and operating expenses. Few jobs were available in what was then Tennessee's poorest county, and additionally many community members felt disillusioned that a core tenet of their communal vision had been abandoned. The resulting exodus was huge, and many in the community had the experience of a painful divorce.

In both of these examples, the community pioneers believed they were setting up something sustainable—yet external circumstances prompted unwelcome major changes. In contrast, and fortunately, many examples of intentional community living have thrived over the decades, and today there is much that remains effective and inspiring. At The Farm, for example, the community survived its Changeover crisis and now enjoys a diverse economy, with dozens of for-profit and nonprofit entities providing meaningful work that generates income for many of the residents.

Many intentional communities, by design, embrace such features as resource sharing, simple living, recycling, good communication skills, democratic decision-making, collaborative design, community business ventures, cooperative schooling and childcare, and also provide working models of such environmentally friendly technologies as composting toilets, biological sewage processing systems, organic gardening, off-the-grid power generation, and use of natural building materials and techniques. Looking at that long and impressive list, it's clear that the underlying visions are relatively expansive in accounting for environmental stewardship and social sustainability.

On the other hand, there are critically important concerns yet to be discovered that will mandate future major societal changes—for example, a hundred years ago very little was known about chemical pollution, high cholesterol, or Peak Oil—all of which are fomenting change today. Thus sustainable living also requires open-mindedness and adaptability.

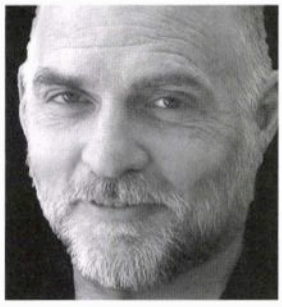
Intentional communities tend to have a more balanced overview of how money issues fit into the larger scheme of things.

Another significant aspect of sustainability is the transfer of culture and skills to subsequent generations. Hence mentoring, participation, and leadership training are also important and, as history shows, without such traditions many otherwise thriving groups will fold a generation or two after the death of their founders.

The more any community succeeds at covering these bases, the higher the likelihood that its members will experience an increase in personal growth, satisfaction, and sense of community—the things that give meaning to our lives, and a sense of well-being. Hopefully we'll be inspired by the Native American wisdom that advises us to live for the next seven generations, leaving a healthy planet for our great grandchildren's great grandchildren. Now *that's* sustainability.✪

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.

Accounting for Sustainablilty



BY GEOPH KOZENY

Accountants measure and count things (often limited to money), analyze their data, and then report what happened. Sustainability is about the end result, whether measured or not. Accounting and sustainability are thoroughly compatible when done well, but in today's global culture they often end up at odds. When that happens, decisions made by accountants typically trump concerns of sustainability.

When accountants' decisions are divorced from sustainability, usually the accounting is incomplete and the results get skewed. For example, when a crisis emerges in a company or a government, we often find that critical factors such as environmental impact, resource depletion, or quality of life were never included in the organization's accounting. The Earth and future generations end up paying a heavy price.

The results of accounting practices can be used to inform the planning process, yet the planning is only as good as the criteria that get included in the analysis in the first place. On the other hand, sustainability describes an operation that can be continued indefinitely into the future. When seen in retrospect, it's usually obvious how sustainable (or not) any particular practice has been—whether or not we knew ahead of time what to look for or how to measure it.

Unfortunately, it's easier to measure the flow of dollars and cents than it is to account for social inequities, diminishing resources, and environmental pollution. Our mainstream culture tends to obsess on the financial bottom line, and as a result, the pursuit of profit often becomes an end in itself, with no accounting for the side effects of the "profit-making" activities.

Unfortunately, it's easier to measure the flow of dollars and cents than it is to account for social inequities, diminishing resources, and environmental pollution.

The missing link is usually a lack of accountability: either no one takes responsibility for unforeseen consequences, or research that predicts unpopular consequences gets withheld from the general population by parties who have conflicting interests, usually tied to substantial profit-making schemes. Typically those in the know end up pretending that the consequences were unforeseen.

In contrast, intentional communities tend to have a more balanced overview of how money issues fit into the larger scheme of things, though it's also fairly common for the members of a community to fall back on the fiscal bottom line when the issues get challenging. For example, soon after the Great Depression, idealistic pioneers created a housing cooperative called Co-op Homesteads on a 180-acre farm a few miles north of Detroit, with the intention of never selling the land and thereby creating sustainable, affordable housing. However, by 1979 suburban sprawl had totally surrounded their neighborhood, and the value of the land had increased to $11,000 per acre. At that point, a majority of the members voted to override their bylaws and forced the sale of the property, which was eventually turned into a shopping mall. Although all members got a fair share of the proceeds, some felt ethically and morally betrayed by the non-consensual revision of their bylaws that allowed their homes to be sold out from under them.

The Farm, situated in rural Tennessee, offers another example of how a financial crisis can wreak havoc with a community's idealism. Founded in 1971, the community originally had a communal economy based on something resembling the early Christian philosophy outlined in the Book of Acts, and later reformulated by Karl Marx as "from each according to his ability, to each according to his need"—with a major work ethic thrown in for good measure. However by 1983 the community found itself in severe poverty and a

(continued on p. 75)

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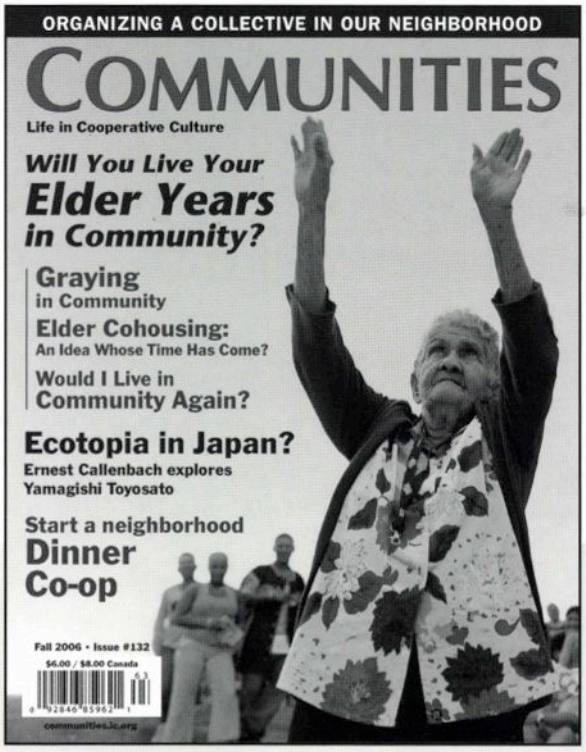

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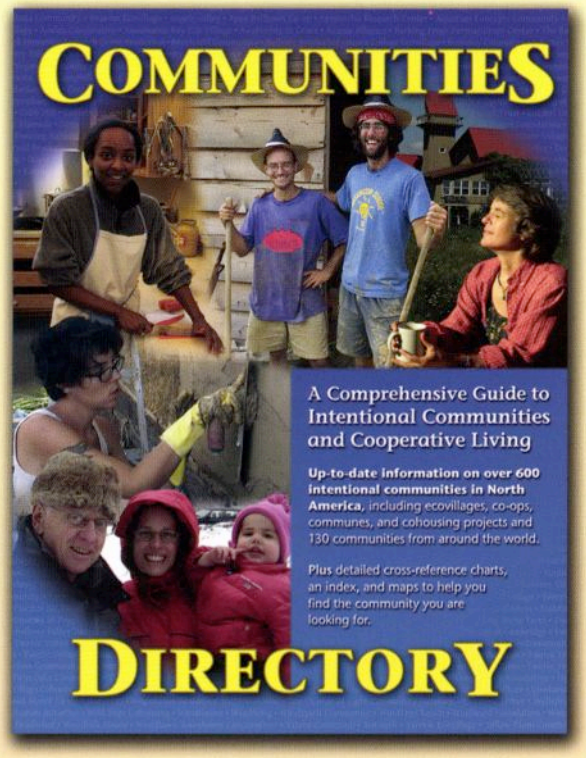

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