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**Balancing "Masculine"
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Spring 2008 • Issue #138

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SENIOR COHOUSING

A Community Approach to Independent Living - The Handbook

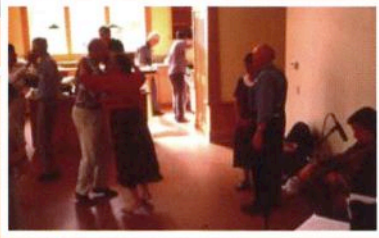
SENIOR COHOUSING

A Community Approach to Independent Living



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

-Kathy Goss, Journalist, review for Amazon.com



"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 helpful 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 autonomy 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:

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SPECIAL FEATURE

Women in Community

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For over 25 years the women of Goodenough Community have been developing a program for nurturing women's growth and well-being and providing each other with caring support. *Colette Hoff* and other women describe how it has changed their lives.

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When *Anissa Ljanta* moved from a large rural community in the US to live alone in Auckland, New Zealand, she faced many challenges amidst the outrageous realities of suburban life. Dealing with the stereotypes, the violence against women, and the difficulties of parenting became much easier once she broke through the isolation and found her tribe.

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Mollie Curry hoists a chainsaw and finds herself entangled in a perplexing web of sticky questions. Here she attempts to untangle the threads, both within herself and within her community.

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Calliope Kurtz, having just spent her first full year arduously "passing" as a woman, moves from the San Francisco Bay area to a commune for a chance at a new life—and meets some unexpected opposition.

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What was it like to live in an all-women collective house in Palo Alto in the 1970s? *Janaia Donaldson* recalls this family of women and the trust, safety, and intimacy that made it feel like "deep home."

57 Building a Business in Community

There wasn't much chance that her lifelong dream of owning a bookstore would come true in her rural Missouri community. So *Alline Anderson* set off down the exciting and terrifying path of launching the Milkweed Mercantile—creating jobs, providing a market for community products, and offering a warm place for visitors to put up their feet.

LUCAS FOGGIA



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Can't Live With It,
Can't Live Without It**

What can you do if some people in your group seem to have more power than others? Our consensus trainers and group process experts respond. *Caroline Estes, Tree Bressen, Beatrice Briggs, and Laird Schaub.*

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The Ballad of Shiram

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**How Community Values
Conquered Climate
Change: A Future History**

Jump forward in time fifty years to a day when we are celebrating having avoided the worst dangers of climate change. But how could we have gotten there from here? *Malcolm Hollick* reckons it's because we transformed our cultural values and began emphasizing personal growth, creativity, relationships, and cooperation—starting right about now.

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Anne Frobeen at Kiko Denzer's workshop in 2006 at O.U.R. Ecovillage, Shawnigan Lake, British Columbia.

Photo: Jan Steinman

COMMUNITIES

Life in Cooperative Culture

EDITOR

Alyson Ewald (*Red Earth Farms*)

LAYOUT

Cynthia Lee Rose (*Earthaven*)

PHOTO & ILLUSTRATIONS EDITOR

Ann-Marie Stillion

ILLUSTRATIONS

Ann-Marie Stillion

Billie Miracle (*WomanShare*)

PHOTOS

Fatima Bannazadeh, Mollie Curry, Janaia Donaldson, Lucas Foglia, Tatiana Ginzburg (*Shiram*), Cheryl Harrell, Amie Hoff, Jay Paul Kawatski, Steve Kemble, Kurt Kessner (*Dancing Rabbit*), Carol Knudsen, Rebecca LiaBraaten, Anissa Ljanta, Whitney Old, Michelle Pearson, David Pole, Gen Shi (*Shiram*), Andrej Stegancev (*Shiram*), Jan Steinman, Zephyr Twombly, Natalia Utkina (*Shiram*).

COPYEDITING

Marie Marcella

PROOFREADING

Molly Hatfield

ADVERTISING MANAGER

Patricia Greene

OFFICE MANAGER

Tony Sirna (*Dancing Rabbit*)

CIRCULATION MANAGER

McCune Porter (*Twin Oaks*)

EDITORIAL REVIEW BOARD

Deborah Altus

Laird Schaub (*Sandhill Farm*)

Tony Sirna (*Dancing Rabbit*)

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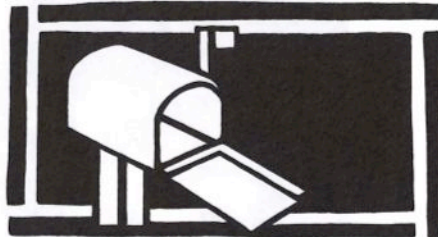
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LETTERS



Send your comments to editor@ic.org or *Communities*, 7 Smith Rd., Rutledge, MO 63563. Your letters may be edited or shortened. Thank you!



Hard Questions

Dear *Communities*,

I read "Tragedy's Hard Questions" (*Communities* #136), shed a tear, and resolved to write this letter.

And then I began to recall some events that occurred at Sandhill shortly before the accident.

I was a visitor there, and I saw that monster mill, and I remarked that it was the most wickedly dangerous machine I had ever seen. And I've had a good deal of experience with industrial machines and safety issues around them.

Two days before the accident, I was on the feeding deck, pushing canes into the mill. Another operator was there too, and when I saw her getting close to the mill I grabbed her arm and pulled it away from the machine.

What I got for my trouble was a scolding, with words like "assault" and "violation." I was intimidated by this and held my tongue. Big mistake.

Two days later I was a thousand miles from Sandhill, and the accident happened. The machine committed the assault, and it was a big one. Experience was a good teacher, and her tuition was quite high.

It can never be known if the accident would have happened two days sooner if I had not acted as I did.

I was not in authority and had no responsibility other than for a fellow human in possible peril from the jaw of a deadly dangerous machine. Yet I still have a pang of guilt because I might have done it differently, made my feelings better known. At least I could have shut down the machine and done some shouting.

This accident has changed me; now when I see danger lurking, I am much more assertive.

John Ditman "Shining Bear"

Wygelia

Adamstown, Maryland

Less Process, Please

Dear Editor,

I am a *Communities* magazine subscriber.

I have enjoyed articles on peak oil, permaculture, energy conservation, small house design, common house design, and fun activities. I guess these topics come under the heading of "doing things."

However, I don't like endless stories about process. This may be a male prejudice. If the ladies want to waste time trying to make everybody happy, okay. Personally, I would rather just vote on it.

I don't live in community, so I am on the outside looking in. I do see the need to come close to reaching consensus on important topics, but allowing one person to clog things up is overkill. You will rarely get any collection of 50-60 adults where every single one is

sane—let alone reasonable and rational. Don't let the most dysfunctional person in the group run your lives. A supermajority of 2/3 or 3/4 is consensus enough for me.

George S. Burnett
Spartanburg, South Carolina

Remembering Geoph Kozeny...

Dear *Communities*,

I'd like to offer this piece in honor of Geoph.

Dear Geoph,

Since you've often been absent from my physical space but never absent from my heart space, I have to ask myself what has changed now that you're not physically present in my life at all any more. What do I miss, and what do I still have with me?

Well, there are the hugs. I will miss those. You and I were great huggers of the hug-with-your-whole-body-and-soul school. We dug our chins into each other's shoulders, nestled into each other's bodies as if we were cradles for each other. I wrapped my arms across your shoulders, felt your heart beating, felt your hipbones dancing against mine. We could put more into one hug than many people put into a lifetime of love-making. We spoke a common language: "I love you and I love life, and I'm glad you're part of the whole picture."

Other things I will miss: your quick humor, your sensitive eyes, and your caring questions. Late-night conversations in the hot tub. Your tofu stir-fry, something you always fixed for us while you stayed with us. No one could master the art of frying tofu in olive oil and soy sauce and garlic the way you could. A small art, but a very real one.

What I will take with me into the future of my own soul's memory:

Your will to create community, and your willingness to knit relationships from the most fragile threads. Your conversations, your interest in whatever

was taking place at the moment you arrived, and your ability to weave yourself into whatever was going on.

Your loyalty, not only to people but also to ideas, places, and traditions. You were always open to the radical, but you were also enthusiastic about the traditional. I'll never forget that first holiday you spent with us, and how you came up with a gift for each of us. Each carefully wrapped gift reflected perfectly how you saw each of us.

Your everyday wisdom. Your willingness to embrace change. Your embodiment of community as a sharing of spirit. Your gentle laugh. Your wide grin. The twinkle in your eyes and in your soul.

The love and intimacy that spanned continents and called us all into greater connection.

Maril Crabtree
Hearthaven
Kansas City, Missouri

...And Shlomo Etzioni

Dear *Communities*,

Many kibbutzim are vanishing. So are the pioneers who built them.

These "last Mohicans" were incredible people, many of whom gave up a comfortable life in the Diaspora for a precarious existence in Israel. Typical of this breed was Shlomo Etzioni, whose funeral at Kibbutz Tsora I attended.

Shlomo Etzioni was born 78 years ago in the mining town of Kalgoorlie in Western Australia. There wasn't much Judaism to be imbibed there, but his parents were fervent Zionists and it was only natural that he should be a Zionist too.

He joined a Zionist youth organization, Habonim, and like several compatriots in that group, made his way to a kibbutz in Israel, in his case Tsora. Over the years he worked in various agricultural branches and then turned to chemistry and science education, producing a series of chemistry textbooks. On the side, he worked with youth movements and was active in

a worldwide organization of cooperative and communal communities.

Ironically, after Shlomo and a small group of friends made their way to Israel, hordes of Israelis made their way to Australia, where, without the least doubt, life is much easier and salaries are much higher than in this country.

His interment was a clear reflection of his ideology. He was buried in a beautiful wooded area of the Judean Hills not far from his modest kibbutz home. He was laid to rest in a coffin, which is unacceptable to the Orthodox, and the only cleric present was Shlomo's friend, a Liberal rabbi from Manchester. There were the usual memorial prayers, but they were recited by his friends and family.

The tributes were less than solemn, because they evoked the memory of a man who was always light-hearted—always, as one mourner put it, "with a smile on his face and in his heart."

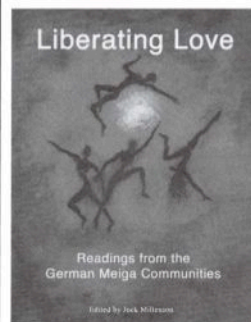
Nechemia Meyers
Rehovot, Israel

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Communities Editorial Policy

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

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

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

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

Submissions Policy

To submit an article, please first request the *Writer's Guidelines*: **Communities**, 7 Smith Rd., Rutledge, MO 63563; 660-883-5330; editor@ic.org.

Advertising Policy

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

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

Patricia Greene, Advertising Manager, patricia@ic.org; 315-386-2609; POB 62, Canton, NY 13617.

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.

Martyrs and Slackers

Finessing the Fit Between Flexible and Fair

This issue of *Communities* will be released in early March. In the northern hemisphere, that's springtime—a time of year when many people shift into high gear on construction, gardening, and other warm-weather projects. In the spring it sometimes seems like there's a lot to get done before winter comes around again. I find myself reflecting on how groups expect members to contribute toward that work, and toward creating healthy and vibrant communities. While the thought is excellent, the practice can be fraught with pitfalls.

Almost all communities want their members to work toward building and maintaining the group. And almost all groups struggle with the best way to get it done—both the work itself and managing the tensions that inevitably accumulate around the dashed hopes that everyone will pull their share of the sled.

Over the course of two decades as a community consultant, I've had ample opportunity to labor with groups about

work. While there's considerable variety among successful work agreements, I am offering here a distilled set of questions that I believe all groups need to address. If your group has failed to address one or more of these questions, I guarantee that somewhere along the line the ambiguity will bite you in the butt.

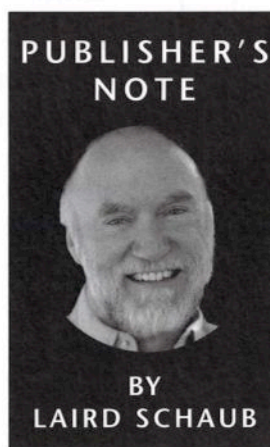
What Work Counts?

In general, groups function better when they've defined what work is acceptable—at the very least you'll be more likely to get the dishes done and the trash taken out. The biggest nuance here is whether governance work counts the same as maintenance or construction. Does an hour serving on a committee

equal an hour pulling weeds? Some groups handle these two kinds of contribution differently. Some put them all in the same pot.

To Quantify or Not

Do you want to set a minimum number of hours that members are expected to contribute? Some do and some don't.



Laird Schaub is executive secretary of the Fellowship for Intentional Community (FIC), publisher of this magazine, and cofounder of Sandhill Farm community in Missouri, where he lives.

More, do you want to keep track of how many hours people work, or just go on the honor system? On the plus side of quantifying, it will make it easier to budget. If you write it all down, it'll be less mysterious figuring what jobs are hard to fill and you'll be better positioned to do something about it in a timely way. On the down side, it means a whole lot of administration and record keeping (and weren't we trying to get away from that?). In addition, work expectations can be a battleground for the clash between those who love rules and those who abhor them. Where one side finds security, the other finds a

hours now for a more relaxed time later? How wide a range of member participation can you tolerate, and what can you do to restore balance when you've stretched too far?

What Are You Trying to Accomplish?

On the surface, it's about getting the work done. But for some, there's also the strong desire that work be undertaken together, for the purpose of building connections, and because "many hands make light work." They'll favor Work Days, job parties, and project blitzes. At my community, Sandhill Farm, we call them "GOs," both because of the intent that

Does an hour serving on a committee equal an hour pulling weeds?

straightjacket. The key is not being surprised that this tension exists.

If you think a system for recording what people actually do will eliminate doubts about whether people are doing their fair share, guess again. Not only will there be suspicions about how accurately people record their hours, but not everyone leans into a mop with the same gusto. Which brings into play the unpleasant reality that one person's hour will not be perceived to be as valuable as another's, and people will further disagree on the size of the gap between them—talk about a can of worms!

How Flexible Will You Be?

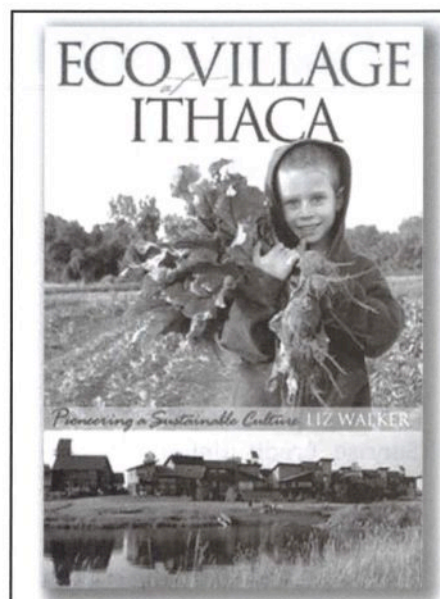
Lives are complicated. People lose jobs, children get sick, arms get broken, people sink into bouts of depression. To what extent will it be okay for people to do less than their fair share while they weather a personal crisis? And even if it's okay, is there an expectation that they'll share with others what's going on? To what extent can people bank

everyone will be active, and as a tongue-in-cheek acronym for "group orgasm". While we generally keep our clothes on, it's true that on the best occasions there can be a transcendent ecstasy when everyone aligns their energy for a common purpose—even for things as mundane as spring cleaning, planting garlic, or unloading a truckload of jars.

Can Money Be Exchanged for Labor?

People looking for group bonding will be resistant to the idea that members be allowed to pay dollars in lieu of doing the work themselves—which may otherwise be an attractive alternative to those with more money than time. To what extent is that okay, if at all?

In some cases, allowing an exchange of cash for work—or work for cash—can be a rather clever way to help those who struggle to make ends meet to simultaneously pull their weight and ease the strain on their wallet. It can also help a bit to level out the inequalities among member income levels.



"...a great contribution...

to the sustainability movement. Her personal, engaging account of the process of creating one of the most successful alternative communities is invaluable."

Starhawk, author of The Fifth Sacred Thing

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How Will Community Work Be Organized?

Do the first people to sign up get the best choices? By what process can people change their work commitments? How about term limits? Do you want to have periodic Job Fairs where all the work assignments are put on the table and new people get a chance at the “plum assignments?” You may think you know what the choice work is, but you may be surprised. I’ve known communities where there was a scramble to see who got to scrub the toilets, while committee

Here’s a sample job description for the Work Team (feel free to drop or adapt any aspects that don’t quite fit your circumstance):

- Helps find members with appropriate skill, time, and motivation to fill community service needs.
- Meets with all new residents (this includes renters, interns, and perhaps long-term guests) to thoroughly explain community service expectations.
- Meets periodically with all residents to discuss how community service is going

***Work expectations can be
a battleground between those who love rules
and those who abhor them.***

slots went begging. At my community, for instance, I’ve been doing everyone’s taxes for over 30 years and there is nothing as certain in my life as the heart-felt gratitude I receive every April when all the members marvel that the only thing required of them is that they sign their returns.

Will seniority equate to privilege when choosing work? Will renters be expected to contribute in the same way as members? Will they be *allowed* to? Or will renters have to go to the end of the line when choosing work assignments?

Setting It Up to Succeed

I recommend you consider establishing a standing committee. Let’s give it a clever title, such as the “Work Team.” Taking into account all that I’ve outlined above, I think you want a proactive advisory group that labors (so to speak) with members to address work concerns, yet has little to no authority to impose solutions. You don’t want the Work Police; you want something more akin to the Work Doula.

for them, and to help everyone find appropriate work that balances what they like doing, what they have skill doing, and what the community needs doing.

- Meets regularly with all committees to discuss their labor needs.
- Is available to talk with residents about whom there are work-related complaints. (Note: this might be done in conjunction with the Reconciliation Team, whose job description I will defer to another time.)
- Determines which people receive exceptions from community service, including whether the exception is whole or partial, permanent or temporary. (Note: this task will be accomplished by applying guidelines established by the community.)
- Reports to the community at least quarterly about how well labor needs are being met and how well the system is working.
- Determines the distribution of funds that have been generated by residents paying money in lieu of contributing labor.

Managing the Martyrs & Slackers Dynamic

No matter what work system you put in place or how savvy the Work Team is at their job, you have to expect an accumulation of tensions over time and should anticipate the need to periodically clear the air. It's kind of like going to the dentist periodically to get your teeth cleaned. Things don't get better on their own, and delays can get increasingly expensive, not to mention painful.

Every so often (perhaps every two years), I think you need to have the Martyrs & Slackers conversation, where you let people express if they believe they're doing more than their share, unburden guilt if they sense they're doing less than their share, defuse the upset with people who are doing a lot and lording it over others, and deal with the frustration over the perception that some members are freeloading.

Your group is not *bad* because these feelings have bubbled up; it's normal. The *bad* thing is not dealing with them. Consider a special session where this is the only topic you tackle. Here's a possible sequence of questions you can ask in a series of three go-rounds (note: if there's a significant backlog of tension, it may take more than one meeting to get through all three rounds):

Round One: Have everyone answer the first two questions together:

—*Question 1: What work are you currently doing for the community?*

—*Question 2: Are you feeling OK about the level of your contributions to the community?*

Round Two: Have people address the third question below, and follow up as needed if people are directly criticized:

—*Question 3: Are you feeling OK about the level of contributions others are making to the community?*

If there are complaints, people will have to name names; otherwise, everyone will be wondering if the speaker is talking

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about them, and blood pressures will soar. It'll go much better if you have a facilitator who can handle the heat, and group agreements about how you'll support giving and receiving critical feedback.

Note the value of having people begin by self-disclosing what they're doing and feeling. Often, there will be surprises (either unknown contributions, or greater self-awareness about tensions involving them than others

will you commit to undertaking?

The group ought to be feeling much better at the end of this sequence, and you should have a bouquet of fresh commitments—both in the form of how people can support others and how they can do more themselves.

A final piece of advice: if at all possible, try to have a sense of humor about it all. For example, one of the ways we try to cope with work tensions at Sand-

Not everyone leans into a mop with the same gusto.

suspected) and the answers to the first two questions can draw the poison from the responses people were poised to give to Question 3.

Round Three: Have everyone answer the last two questions as a pair:

—*Question 4: What support from the group do you need to take on more or different things?*

Pause here to allow the group to respond to what has been requested before asking:

—*Question 5: In light of the response you just got, what new or different things*

hill is by having a rule that only one martyr trip is allowed per day. Because we eat together every dinner and cooking is rotated among all adult members, we have the further agreement that the cook has first dibs on the cross. Thus, if you feel a rant coming on about how nobody does as much to support the community as you, you first have to check to see if the cook is in a good mood. If not, you'll just have to hold your tongue. That way everyone gets a turn, and we save on lumber and nails.*

\$\$\$\$\$ GOING UP \$\$\$\$\$

For the first time in eight years, we're raising the cover price of this magazine. Where a single copy used to cost \$6, now it's \$7, and a four-issue subscription has been bumped from \$20 to \$24.

When setting prices, we're always trying to balance accessibility with fiscal responsibility—we'd say "profitability," but *Communities* has only finished in the black twice in the last fifteen years. Our goal is simple: to publish the most exciting and insightful magazine possible on the subject of community—and to break even in the process. In the last three years we've made a substantial commitment to enhancing the quality of this publication, and now we've increased the price to help cover the costs of sustaining these improvements. We hope you'll agree that it's worth it.

Women in Cohousing

Pioneers, Visionaries, and Leaders

It may seem odd, in the 21st century, to make special note of women in community. Women have inhabited the public and professional realms so fully by now that you may wonder why we would choose to give any special mention to outstanding cohousers who also happen to be women.

The thing is, something about founding and nurturing cohousing communities seems to inspire many women to reach their highest potential. I don't intend to diminish the efforts of men in cohousing or the role of women in other intentional communities (which is equally rich and varied). But compared to the world of conventional housing development and contracting, cohousing not only is a beacon of equality, but can be called, in large measure, the result of women's leadership over the last 20 years.

In no other multi-gender organizations or public aspect of American life—politics, higher education, high finance, science, medicine, or business—are women so clearly present as they are in our movement, as pioneers, risk-takers, visionaries, social entrepreneurs, investors, and decision-makers.

Cohousing very much expresses the "we did it ourselves" philosophy that is the essence of a sustainable community; no one person makes it happen or keeps it going. Still, communities can't get off the ground without a few burning souls willing to put in the early time, money, and vision that draw others. And among the many cohousing communities we've visited, mostly it was women who provided the spark.

While people in the entertainment industry may complain about ageism, blondism, and the vagaries of popular



Betsy Morris is a Cohousing Coach with Planning for Sustainable Communities (www.cohousingcoach.com) at Berkeley (California) Cohousing. She volunteers as Research Director for Coho/US.

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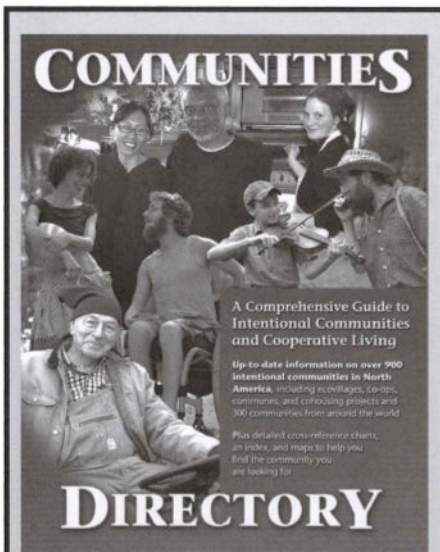
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appeal, the women of cohousing are phenomenal role models. They lead not through charisma alone, but through experience, passion, patience, intelligence, and determination.

Mentioning names might embarrass or shortchange someone, but nevertheless we can't resist giving a shout-out to a few phenomenal women in particular. Perhaps you'll be able to see a bit of yourself in them.

Kathryn "Katie" McCamant created the word "cohousing" and imported the concept from Denmark to the US. She is an architect, coauthor of *Cohousing: A Contemporary Approach to Housing Ourselves*, cofounder of both the Cohousing Company (now known as McCamant & Durrett Architects) and the development firm Cohousing Partners. With her husband and coauthor Charles "Chuck" Durrett, she first created and

affordable housing development corporation and raised several million dollars in subsidies. She is now sharing that model so that others can follow in her footsteps. Civic Ventures designated her a Purpose Prize Fellow in 2006.

Ann Zbaldo partnered with affordable-housing developer EcoHousing to create two cohousing neighborhoods in and around the northeast corner of Washington, DC; she lives in the first one, Takoma Village Cohousing. She helped launch The Cohousing Network (now the Cohousing Association of the United States, or Coho/US), serving on the board and pioneering a model for regional networking with Mid-Atlantic Cohousing. She is now a principal consultant with Cohousing Collaborative.

Joani Blank helped launch the nation's most urban cohousing neighborhood, Swan's Market Cohousing (Oakland, California), and lived at Doyle Street

Something about founding and nurturing cohousing communities seems to inspire many women to reach their highest potential.

lived at Doyle Street Cohousing in Emeryville, California, then created Nevada City (California) Cohousing, where they now live. They have designed dozens of other neighborhoods as well. Her system for acquiring bank financing and government approvals by appearing on paper to be "just another condo" is one of the main reasons cohousing is the fastest-growing sector of the communities movement. She and Chuck were recognized with a United Nations World Habitat Award in 2000.

Dene Peterson created Elderspirit in Abingdon, Virginia, a senior cohousing neighborhood based on spiritual values and offering affordable rentals. Dene, a former nun, initiated a nonprofit

Cohousing. She has visited more than half of all built cohousing neighborhoods, served on the Coho/US board, coordinated national conferences, and pioneered regional bus tours, giving potential cohousers an opportunity to "try before you buy" and meet other seekers—fostering the creation of many new communities.

Architects **Mary Kraus** and **Laura Fitch**, who both live and work at Pioneer Valley Cohousing (Amherst, Massachusetts) have designed several communities and created slide shows that they share with other cohousing groups, helping them recruit and make design choices.

Shari Leach didn't just sit around as her father Jim Leach became the nation's

leading cohousing developer with his Wonderland Hill Development Company. Shari helped groups develop the capacity for effective self-management and mutual care, and coauthored *Head, Heart and Hands* with colleague Annie Russell, who now lives at the company's first Senior Cohousing project, Silver Sage (Boulder, Colorado). Both Shari and Sherri Zann Rosenthal, a Durham, North Carolina, city attorney and Eno Commons developer, have served as Coho/US board presidents.

Kelly Scott-Hansen updated and rewrote her husband Chris's *Cohousing Handbook: Building a Place for Community*, and works with groups on development and group process.

Ecovillage at Ithaca author Liz Walker wrote about her experience cocreating, not just one, but two cohousing neighborhoods (with more planned) in Ithaca, New York.

Los Angeles EcoVillage founder Lois Arkin used the cohousing model in retrofitting an urban community in Los Angeles.

Neshama Abraham of Nomad Cohousing (Boulder, Colorado) has helped many groups with outreach and public relations. She cofounded the Elder Cohousing Network.

Karen Hester was part of the resident group that established Temescal Creek Cohousing (Oakland, California). She works with groups regionally to promote retrofit or "organic" style cohousing, which reuses existing structures by removing fences and linking backyards.

Joelyn Malone cocreated Monterey Cohousing (Saint Louis Park, Minnesota), then took her experience to the streets to forge new neighborhoods through Cohousing Advocates.

Alexandra Hart likewise helped create her former homes at Two Acre Wood (Sebastopol, California) and Yulupa Cohousing (Santa Rosa, California) and is now revisiting Sebastopol with Community Life Development,




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the firm she shares with her husband Michael Black. They are helping Sequoia Village Cohousing, a new affordable cohousing neighborhood, with visioning and group process.

Gwendolyn Noyes developed Cambridge (Massachusetts) Cohousing and went on to create a new developer-driven

serves on the board of its publisher, Positive Futures Network.

Lynne Elizabeth runs New Village Press out of Temescal Commons Cohousing (Oakland, California). **Louise Pape** publishes the *Climate Today* newsletter and website from her home at Commons on the Alameda in Santa Fe, New Mexico. Novelist **Rachel King** has

War II internment camp experience and also provided vital organizational energy for Coho/US before she passed away in 2001. Her neighbor **Nina Falk** is a pioneer in elder advocacy, creating tools to help people direct their own supportive care.

Many women are involved in keeping the conversation about cohousing

***The women of cohousing are phenomenal role models;
they lead through experience, passion, patience,
intelligence, and determination.***

condominium project up the street, among other projects with community flavor.

Eleanor Smith operates a national nonprofit, Concrete Change, that promotes accessible home design out of Eastlake Village Cohousing in Atlanta, Georgia. **Deborah Kaplan** ran the World Institute on Disability while living at Swan's Market Cohousing.

Many women in cohousing have been successful in the world of letters. **Sarah Ruth van Gelder** cofounded not only Winslow Cohousing (Bainbridge, Washington) but also *Yes!* magazine. She

included her Takoma Village Cohousing home in *Tales of the District*, serialized online. **Stella Tarnay** edited *Cohousing* magazine and did regional organizing in the Boston area.

Donella Meadows created the Sustainability Institute, cowrote *The Limits to Growth* and *Beyond the Limits*, and created a Pulitzer-nominated column for many years. Before her death in 2001 she launched Cobb Hill Cohousing in Hartland, Vermont.

Donna Dobkin at Berkeley Cohousing created incredible art based on her World

flowing nationally on the Cohousing-L online mailing list. Regular contributors on many topics include **Lynne Nadeau** and **Sharon Villines**. **Catya Belfer-Shevett**, while cocreating her future home at Mosaic Commons (Berlin, Massachusetts), has been serving on the Coho/US national web team, rebuilding the cohousing.org website for greater interactivity and participation.

While many worthy names go unmentioned here, it seems fitting to close with an appreciation of some of the next generation, the risk-takers who are venturing forth to create new communities today. North Oakland (California) Cohousing has been fortunate to have **Joan Lichterman**, **Jenny Guy**, **Tabinda Khan**, and other strong women to get things started and keep them going. **Marty Maskall** has been pushing hard to overcome obstacles and make Sycamore Village (Orangevale, California) a reality.

We couldn't fit everyone we thought of including here, and we're sure you know of more people (perhaps men as well as women) doing incredible things in cohousing. So come see more and add more people and stories at www.cohousers.org.✿



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The Cohousing Association of the US (Coho/US)
will be holding its national conference on June 12-15
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John Abrams, developer of Island Cohousing (Tisbury, Massachusetts) and author of *The Company We Keep*, will keynote the three-day event, which will include dozens of sessions on everything from common meals to financing development. Regional bus tours and intensive workshops will precede the event.

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Ecovillage Activists in Japan

The Japanese audience was singing along with ecovillager Giovanni Ciarlo—in Spanish! It was the second International Ecovillage Conference, held in Tokyo during November 2007. The packed crowd included environmental activists, progressive university professors and students, and Japan's "green press." Speakers included professors of architecture and engineering, innovative housing developers, environmental activists with special projects in rural areas of Japan, and three overseas guests—Giovanni, Penny Velasco, and me.

The conference was a wonderful opportunity for the three of us to learn about Japanese culture. We were told that people in Japan once had a powerfully-developed sense of community and connection to neighbors, in thousands of rural villages as well as in city neighborhoods. They also had an ancient, sacred sense of connection to nature, especially trees and forests. But nowadays most Japanese in

urban areas live in tiny apartments in concrete high-rises, with little connection to neighbors or nature. Land is so expensive that few apartments include gardens or landscaping. So the Japanese projects presented at the conference, while not "ecovillages" per se, were nevertheless inspiring to the audience

because they made the connection with neighbors and nature once again.

They were inspiring to us overseas guests as well—we enjoyed learning about Japanese colleagues doing projects similar to our own. For instance, Ikuko Koyabe, architect and Professor at Japan Women's University, presented case studies of what the Japanese call "collective housing"—

what we would call cohousing. She described projects in Sweden, Denmark, and the US, and then introduced us to the Kankanmori cohousing project in Tokyo.

Housing developer Akinori Sagane spoke of his work supporting the economic revitalization of remote mountain



Diana Leafe Christian, author of Finding Community and Creating a Life Together and former editor of Communities magazine, is editor of the new online ecovillage newsletter, "Ecovillages and Sustainable Communities." She lives at Earthaven Ecovillage in the US.

villages by encouraging sustainable forestry practices and a return to using wood as a building material.

Professor Yasuhiro Endoh of Aichi Sangyo University in Nagano showed slides of U-Court, a successful 22-year-old collective housing development in Kyoto. The project, completed in 1985, consists of 48 units in three buildings, each three to five stories tall. The buildings are arranged around a south-facing U-shaped courtyard containing tall trees and a patio. U-Court doesn't have a common kitchen or dining room, but in many ways it resembled cohousing. It boasts a shared meeting hall, stairwell

providing wind generators to communities in East Africa, Camphill Kimberton Hills in the US, and plans to revitalize Japanese villages in the Goshima Islands and in the city of Hokkaido Date.

Giovanni, a cofounder of Huehuecoyotl Ecovillage, is Mexico's representative to the Ecovillage Network of the Americas and a Board member of the Global Ecovillage Network (GEN). His first presentation at the conference was a slide show about successful up-and-running ecovillages in Latin America, including Huehuecoyotl and Las Cañadas in Mexico, Sasardí Nature Reserve in Colombia, and ABRA 144 in Brazil. When he played

Japan once had a powerfully-developed sense of community and connection to neighbors, in rural villages as well as in city neighborhoods.

entries that face into the courtyard, shared ivy-covered balconies running like outdoor hallways along the courtyard sides of the buildings, and hidden parking in one corner of the property.

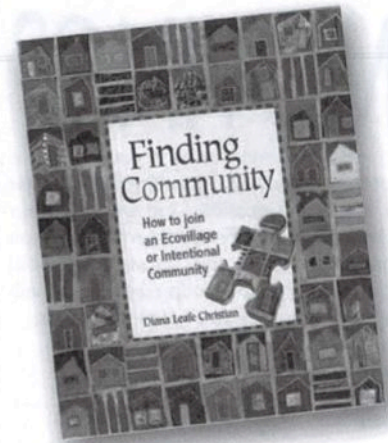
Housing developer Tetsuro Kai showed slides of two collective housing projects in Tokyo: Kyodo no Mori and Keyaki House. Each is a concrete multi-story apartment building with rooftop gardens and vine-covered vertical surfaces and balconies. The three-story Kyodo no Mori features passive solar heating and cooling, a rooftop wetlands for greywater recycling, and a solar-powered water pump. It was described as Japan's first cohousing community in Graham Meltzer's 2005 book, *Sustainable Communities* (and in the Winter 2005 issue of *Communities* magazine). Keyaki House is a five-story building whose residents use the original traditional house on the property as their shared common space and meeting room.

Other presenters described ecovillages in Denmark, a Japanese grant project

guitar and sang some of his original songs, he had everyone tapping their feet and moving to the music.

Environmental scholar Penny Velasco is director of GEN-Oceania/Asia in the Philippines and director of Happy Earth, a nonprofit that produces environmental education materials. She showed slides of Pintig Cabiao, the ecovillage she is helping to start in Manila. Pintig Cabiao is being cofounded by three Filipino nonprofits: Happy Earth; the Center for Ecozoic Living and Learning, a Creation spirituality-oriented environmental education center; and the Cabiokid Foundation, a fully-developed permaculture demonstration site adjacent to the planned ecovillage site.

I gave an overview of the concept of ecovillages with statistics from GEN, quotes from well-known ecovillage activists, and photos of Damanhur in Italy, Tlhologo in South Africa, IPEC in Brazil, and Auroville in India. My second presentation focused on ecological and



Finding Community:

How to Join an Ecovillage or Intentional Community

By Diana Leafe Christian
Foreword by Richard Heinberg

Diana Leafe Christian has done it again! Thoughtful, thorough, and engaging, and enlivened by stories from the trenches of real community life, *Finding Community* is a must-read for anyone seriously seeking community.

—Liz Walker, author,
EcoVillage at Ithaca

Encyclopedic knowledge plus wry humor plus a realistic assessment of what the future holds for all of us.

—Albert Bates, cofounder, GEN;
director, Ecovillage Training Center at The Farm

Through long experience and sheer social honesty, Diana Leafe Christian catalogs the pitfalls and delights of visiting and joining a community. *Finding Community* is like having an explorer's compass and a roll of charts under your arm as you embark upon unknown waters.

—Richard Register, author,
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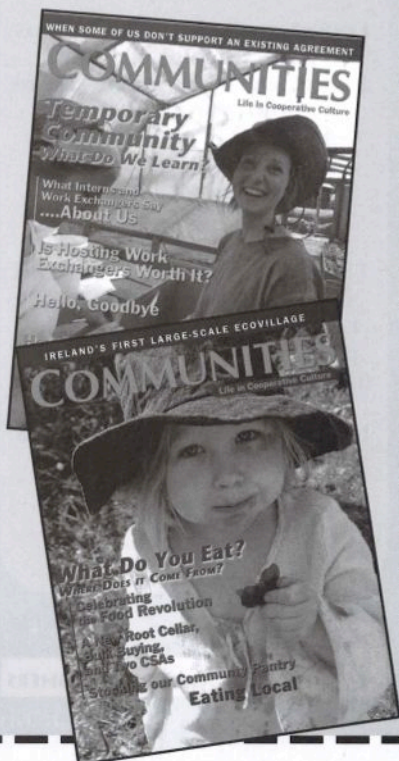
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financial sustainability in ecovillages, highlighting Findhorn Foundation in Scotland, Kommune Niederkaufungen in Germany, and Earthaven in North Carolina, where I live.

The conference was hosted by BeGood Café and the Permaculture Center of Japan, two nonprofits dedicated to promoting ecological sustainability. Sponsors also included the Tokyo-based *Bio City* magazine, several Japanese sustainability-oriented companies, and the Japanese Ministries of the Environment and of Land, Infrastructure, and

Giovanni, Akemi, and I visited Kankanmori Cohousing in Tokyo, which is located on the second and third floors of a twelve-story apartment building. We were given a tour of the common facilities by the project's architect and founder, Ms. Hiroko Kimura. Even though we were in a culture quite different from ours, Kankanmori felt *familiar*—especially its common kitchen and other shared facilities, and our guide's description of the cooking teams, common laundry use, and interpersonal process in meetings. Giovanni and I told Ms.

Even though we were in a culture quite different from ours, Kankanmori felt familiar.

Transport. On-stage hosts were Jun Shikita of BeGood Café and Koji Itonaga of the Permaculture Center of Japan and the College of Bioresource Sciences at Nihon University.

Giovanni, Penny, and I grew very fond of the folks at BeGood Café, who hosted us royally with Japanese dinners every night. The organization's founder and director, Jun Shikita, is a former fashion industry executive who started the café in 1999 to share and promote practical environmental information. We were also impressed by Akemi Miyauchi, the ever-helpful, untiring coordinator, who took care of everything we needed.

After the conference, the BeGood Café folks helped us foreign guests visit several Japanese intentional communities—a wonderful treat. Penny traveled to the Konohana Family, a fourteen-year-old organic farming community near Mt. Fuji. The goal of this vegetarian community, which produces nearly all its own food, is to live in harmony with the Earth and with each other. "You could feel the love among the members there," Penny later told us.

Kimura that the kinds of topics she described in their meetings came up at Huehucoyotl and Earthaven as well. Whether in Mexico, Japan, or North Carolina, communitarians seem to face the same kinds of issues.

Akemi and I also briefly visited Teturo Kai and his two beautifully designed and landscaped collective housing projects, Kyodo no Mori and Keyaki House.

I believe we in the communities movement can learn much from our Japanese colleagues—architects, developers, professors, and environmental activists like the folks at BeGood Café. It was an honor to meet them.

Contact info:

Diana Leafe Christian:

dianaleafechristian.org; diana@ic.org

BeGood Café:

www.begoodcafe.com/main/archives/

ecvc2007_report

Huehucoyotl Ecovillage:

www.huehucoyotl.net

Giovanni Ciarlo:

sircoyote@aol.com

Penny Velasco:

www.happyearth.info;

penny@happyearth.info✿

The Not-So-Simple Country Life

It's taken me a while, but I've finally realized that my little 3"x5" planner is just not working for me now that I'm living in community. I've been eyeing up a friend's 6"x 8" spiral-bound wonder for a few weeks, but so far I've been put off by the size of the thing. It certainly won't fit in the back pocket of my jeans.

My wife was hoping not to use a planner at all when she moved here. Or a watch. Yet she's just bought a digital watch, and is back to using the same planner she used as a college professor.

Why do I now need a bigger planner than the one that saw me through ten years of academic and professional work? Isn't moving to the country about finding a simpler life? You know, just gardening and knitting and goat-feeding and sitting by a roaring fire, telling stories?

Well, there's a lot of that at Dancing Rabbit, our rural Missouri community, and for most of us it's certainly a less stressful life than the one we left behind.

But it turns out that growing your own food, producing your own power, and dealing with your own waste is a pretty complicated business.

For instance, the other day I heard Ted and Sara in the kitchen discussing the finer points of mushroom cultivation. Back home in England, all I ever needed to do was go to my local market and say, "a pound of mushrooms please."

It reminded me how much goes on behind the scenes in getting food to our tables, both here and in mainstream America. At Dancing Rabbit, far less of that stuff is behind the scenes because we have to keep our systems ticking along every day. Buckets fill up. Jars get empty. And it's our job to keep an eye on it all. So we have all these committees and meetings and rotations

—and *that's* why I need a new planner.

I often long for the simplicity of just flushing a toilet, buying those mushrooms, or paying an electricity bill.



Toby Champion moved in June 2007 from Brighton, England to Dancing Rabbit Ecovillage in Rutledge, Missouri, where he now lives with his wife Michelle Day and their son Adam. Toby makes his living as a freelance software developer. Though he has been involved in numerous collectively-run groups, this is his first try at living in community. Note: We preserve the spelling of our Commonwealth country authors.

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e-mail: lukas@monad.net

www.lukascommunity.org

When I spend a night or two at a motel, I enjoy playing with all those buttons and levers for the lights and flush toilet, and munching toasted BLT sandwiches at a café. But I haven't the faintest clue

You see, it's the *relationship* with all the behind-the-scenes stuff that's simpler here: we're doing it ourselves, rather than paying others to do it, and we're using less resources, producing less

technology. In fact, almost any social and economic system other than mainstream American middle-class life is remarkably more complex, and therefore also substantially more satisfying."

Why do I now need a bigger planner than the one that saw me through ten years of academic and professional work?

where and how that electricity is generated, where my poo goes, or where the wheat, bacon, oil, lettuce, and tomatoes come from. Let alone how much the waitress gets paid, and where any leftovers might end up. I could spend an age researching it all, but I'd rather just get back to Dancing Rabbit and feel the incomparable satisfaction that comes from knowing exactly where pretty much everything's coming from—and where everything's going to.

waste, and probably having a lot more fun in the process. Most of us are able to live on very little money, so we end up with more time to spend on village projects and helping Dancing Rabbit become even more self-sufficient.

As Roger Welsch puts it in his new book *Forty Acres and a Fool: How to Live in the Country and Still Keep Your Sanity*: "Pioneer life, Indian life, subsistence living is not a life without technology, or even simply a life with an alternate

I suppose I'm still coming to terms with the complexity of my new life in community. But it's certainly more satisfying. In fact, maybe I'll make my own planner.*



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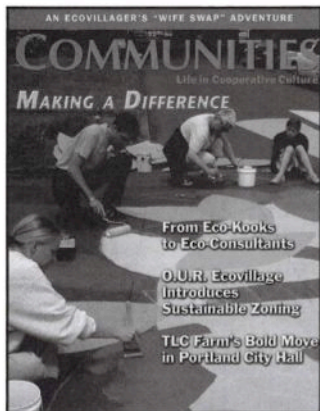
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COMMUNITIES

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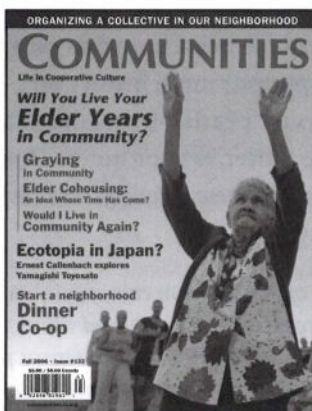
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#138

Can't Live With It,

THE POWER IMBALANCE

Can't Live Without It

Q. *We keep hearing from the same voices over and over in our meetings. Some of these people are founders, some are members who've been around longer than others, and some are highly-verbally confident members. It seems to me that they have more power than others in our meetings. What can we do about this?*



Caroline Estes responds:

This situation illuminates a basic misunderstanding about the nature of coming to agreements.

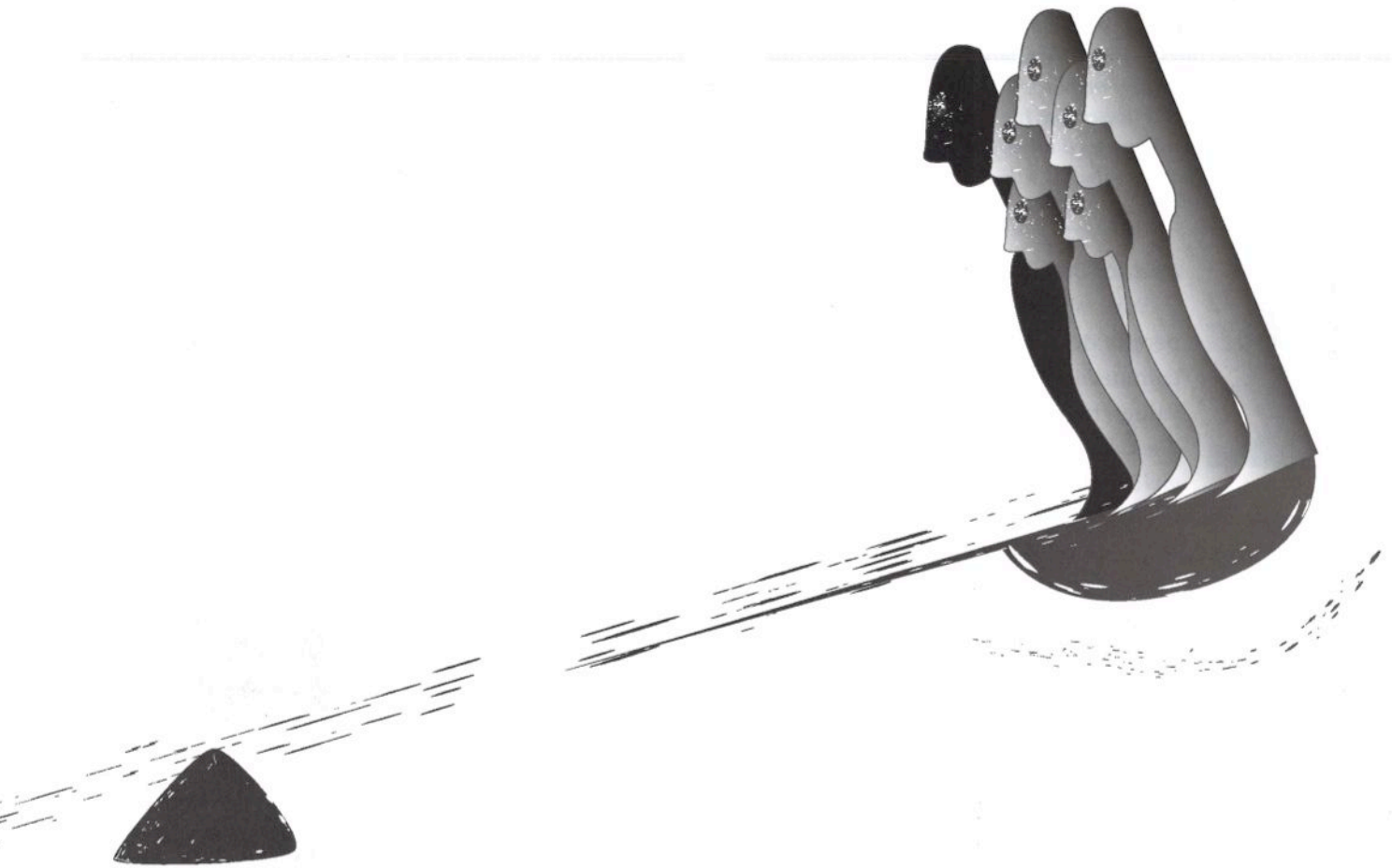
As a facilitator, it is important to remember the two requirements for healthy decision-making: democracy and egalitarianism. The first requires

that everyone has a voice, and the second requires an equal amount of influence in a decision.

The problem is how to give wisdom and knowledge and facts a proper place in the discussion. One of the techniques is to make sure that no one speaks twice until everyone who wants to has spoken.

Oftentimes those who have been founders or are very articulate have (in their opinion) more history and knowledge than others. However, "pearls of wisdom" can also come from those who are either new or quiet. The job of the facilitator is to balance all of these offerings in a respectful, democratic, and equal way.

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, and works with Hewlett-Packard, University of Massachusetts, the US Green Party, the Association of Waldorf Schools of North America, and many other organizations. db@peak.net.



Tree Bressen responds:

In my opinion, there are basically four things you can do about it:

1. Invitation. As facilitator (or facilitative participant), directly invite quieter voices to speak up, either all at once (“Would anyone who hasn’t spoken yet like to add anything?”) or to specific individuals (“Sarah, it looks like you might be sitting on something. Do you have any thoughts you want to share at this time?”).

the end as part of evaluating the meeting. You might even post the chart again at the beginning of the next meeting as a gentle reminder. You might also try privately interviewing some of the quieter folks to find out their perceptions of the meetings, as they are likely to have valuable insights for the group.

4. Make your peace with it. Recognize that there will always be differences in how comfortable people are speaking in front of a group, and that maybe it’s OK if everyone’s speaking time is not exactly equal. Some of the quieter people likely

i have yet to witness a group of people with no power differences.

2. Change formats. Instead of whole-group discussion, shift to small groups (two to five people) for all or part of an agenda item. Or try drawing pictures, having a go-round where everyone gets a turn, or any of more than two dozen formats outlined on my website at treegroup.info/topics/B20-formats.html.

3. Create a feedback loop. Ask for a volunteer to keep track of how often each person speaks, then post a chart at

have power in other ways outside of meetings. And i have yet to witness a group of people with no power differences.

Assuming your group has established a basic sense of safety in the meetings (for example, avoiding put-downs or sarcastic tones), then i suggest that it’s more helpful to emphasize supporting the quieter voices to speak up than to squelch the enthusiastic energy of the more actively-contributing members.

Tree Bressen is a group process consultant based in Eugene, Oregon, who works with intentional communities and other organizations on how to have meetings that are lively, productive, and connecting. She has lived in community most of her adult life. Her website, www.treegroup.info, offers extensive free resources on consensus, facilitation, and more. (Tree uses a lower-case “i” in her articles as an expression of egalitarian values.)



Beatrice Briggs responds:

Your observation is correct: some people do have more power, even in communities that espouse egalitarian values. In his book, *Who Really Matters: The Core Group Theory of Power, Privilege and Success*, Art Kleiner brilliantly describes

the universal phenomenon of informal power structures that set the agenda and influence key decisions in organizations of all kinds and sizes. Recognizing the existence of a “Core Group” in your community is an essential first step toward understanding the complex dynamics at work.

The next step is to identify who the members of the Core Group are, remembering that they are not necessarily part of the formal hierarchy. Here are some questions to get you started.

- Who are the people with the power to get things done even if it means bypassing the usual decision-making processes?
- Who has the power to stop something from happening?
- Who are the “heroes”—the celebrities about whom stories are told?
- Who gets paid the most? Receives special privileges or benefits?
- Who is identified as the intellectual/moral/emotional heart of the group?
- Under pressure, whose agendas are the most likely to prevail?

Great communities are created by great Core Groups.

Start to study the characteristics and principles of your Core Group. What do they stand for? What values do they practice? Are they committed to the community’s best interests? Not all Core Groups are toxic. In fact, great communities are created by great Core Groups.

Finally, observe the degree to which the rest of the community seeks (often unconsciously) to please the Core Group members. Note the tendency to make decisions on the basis of what others perceive that the Core Group wants or needs.

In this sense, the Core Group is a collective invention, emerging from the “hive mind” of the community.

Interestingly, Kleiner notes that “the less hierarchical and more fluid an organization is, the more influence the Core Group has. In a tight hierarchy...there isn’t much complexity to deal with. But when everybody’s decision makes a difference, the Core Group becomes critically important. Otherwise, no one would get anything done.”

If, after careful study, you decide that you want to undertake the difficult and sometimes dangerous task of intervening to change the community’s decision-making dynamics, Kleiner recommends forming a Shadow Core Group. He provides many practical suggestions for how to proceed, concluding with these words: “[This path] is not for everyone, but if you truly want to make a better world, it may be the most highly effective way to proceed. If you make a better Core Group, you may engender a better organization—and that, in the end, may be the only way, these days, to make a better world.”

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



Laird Schaub responds:

They *do* have more power than others, and for reasons that make sense. That is, they have more influence over what others do and agree to by virtue of their experience and prior contributions, and because people tend to be influenced by articulation and confidence. In short, they have more “rank.”

Having said that, the underlying concern may be whether these folks have *too much* power. This is important and murky territory. The first step is getting the issue out in the open by explicitly discussing member perceptions of how power is distributed in your group and the degree of satisfaction with that distribution.

This is not a simple conversation and can be highly illuminating. For example, it is typical for those with more power to be less aware of it than those with less power. In addition, the distribution of power is to some extent situation-specific: a person may have considerable experience with one issue, and little or none with another.

Further, there may be significant variance in people’s perceptions of how much power each individual has. Have you ever witnessed an argument between two people where each

strenuously claims to have less power than the other? The irony of this dynamic is that each is trying to get leverage on a current issue by claiming to have been the greater victim in the past. It's an interesting game.

And it's worse than that. The use of power can be assigned a position on a spectrum, where "Power Over" is at one end, and "Power With" is at the other. In cooperative groups, we are generally trying to promote a culture in which influence is used more in the sense of Power With—for the benefit of all (as opposed to Power Over, where influence is exerted to the benefit of some and at the expense of others).

There can be hell to pay when a person thinks they are using their power more on the Power With end of the spectrum and they are perceived by others to be operating more toward the Power Over end. To a large extent, the maturity of a cooperative group can be measured by how cleanly and openly they can have conversations about this particular gap of perception.

The fact that one can express an idea well does not necessarily mean that the idea is any good.

In thinking about how power relates to experience, it is a judgment call how much weight to give it. Those with more experience on an issue generally should be listened to carefully. Yet that doesn't mean that alternative views cannot be entertained. The current situation may significantly differ from previous ones, and there may be doubts about whether the "right lessons" were learned from prior experiences.

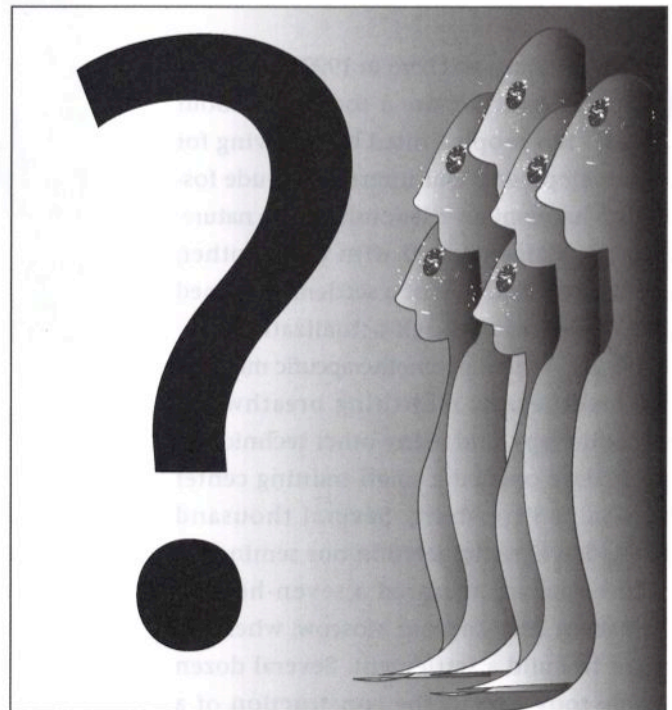
While this may not help in the short run, some groups make a commitment to supporting people learning skills that the group relies on. In addition to enhancing member growth (valuable in its own right), this is an investment in a future where more people have experience in that area, thus flattening the distribution of rank.

On the matter of verbal facility, the water gets even muddier since there is no obvious correlation between articulation and wisdom. The fact that one can express an idea well does not necessarily mean that the idea is any good. In general, the sway of the "verbally confident" is greatest in open discussion, where there is the most room for them to maneuver. To level the playing field, you might consider wider use of formats that interrupt this dynamic—for example, small group breakouts (where there is more air time for everyone to share their views, and a strong voice can only influence

a few at a time) or go-rounds (where everyone is guaranteed at least one turn to talk before anyone speaks twice).

Be careful though. These alternate formats tend to slow things down, and that can come at a different cost. Best, I think, is to mix it up and then to spend some time afterwards reflecting on how well the format served the group. Remember: the ultimate goal is not to get everyone to speak the same amount. It's to have effective, unifying meetings, where the power is flowing With and not Over.*

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



What burning questions about conflict and decision-making in community would you ask experienced process and communications consultants? Send questions to editor@ic.org. Thank you!

THE BALLAD OF SHIRAM

BY TATIANA GINSBURG

TRANSLATED FROM
THE ORIGINAL RUSSIAN
BY ALYSON EWALD

Our group was born in 1990 in northern Russia. We are a society of about ten people united by a striving for self-development. Our interests include fostering a harmonious relationship with nature, with the elements, and with one another, and the construction of a settlement aimed at the cultivation of self-actualization.

We use Western psychotherapeutic methods like logotherapy, rebirthing breathwork, gestalt therapy, and many other techniques. In 1996 we opened a small training center near Saint Petersburg. Several thousand people have participated in our seminars.

Last year we acquired a seven-hectare field about 250 km from Moscow, where we began to build a settlement. Several dozen people took part in the construction of a summer camp and in training and recovery programs at Shiram this year. Next year we are planning to open our summer camp again and continue building.

Since we are at the beginning stages of founding our community, I wanted to share our experiences with *Communities* readers. I set out to write an article, but instead I wrote this song. You may supply the music in your own mind.



NATALIA UTRINA

The Ballad of Shiram

*"Ashram" is what we called Shiram at first,
But later we began to have doubts
And called it "Shiram"—*

*"Shi" stands for the School of Game Techniques, which is the core
and basis of our community;*

Plus

*"Ram," which sounds like khram ["temple" in Russian], and
moreover remains from the original name, "Ashram."*

*In summer, at the GEN conference, talking with Alex from Kibbutz
Lotan, I learned that*

Shira is "a good word" that in Hebrew means "a song."

So, to introduce Shiram to you, I should probably sing a song.

Perhaps then I shall succeed in conveying the meaning of the word

"Shiram" to you,

O Reader!

And What is Shiram?

Perhaps it is

A field that softly spreads within a pine forest,
 Or an encampment by the river in summer,
 A cottage in the village that we have been
 building for nearly ten years, little by little,
 A banya where we take steam baths, con-
 versing intimately about the nature of reality,
 about the path to Enlightenment,
 A workshop, which, as we built it, taught us to
 lay brick and to build a foundation,
 The bridge we built over the stream, according
 to plans by da Vinci,
 Or perhaps, the field that we have not yet
 bought, but over which we have already
 Crossed swords many times?



SVETLANA VIBORNOVA

Or...

The roof we rebuilt on the banya after the fire,
 Our bread that came out perfectly the very first time,
 The mandala that I spent a whole year creating, slowly, quietly, calmly, deeply immersed,
 Or the puzzles that many people's hands have crafted?

Or my experience of meaning, which came to me at Shiram seminars?
 Or the unity I felt with everyone and everything, while lying in a grave in the forest dug by myself for this practice?
 Or the birth anew that we experience through the process of rebirthing breathwork?

Or, perhaps, the games we played in the evening, while drinking tea?
 Or the coolness of water permeating one's body after bathing in the river?
 The floating smoke of a campfire, seen from afar when
 approaching in the evening,
 The secret word one must speak, to go north with the
 others?

Or perhaps Shiram

Is the idea of a space where Life, Play, and
 Self-Knowledge are a single whole,
 The shape of an environment where human development
 is the top value,
 Above all the other values—survival, comfort, pleasure,
 and meeting each other's expectations,
 The concept of a community where Truth may be sought
 while building a house or ploughing a field.

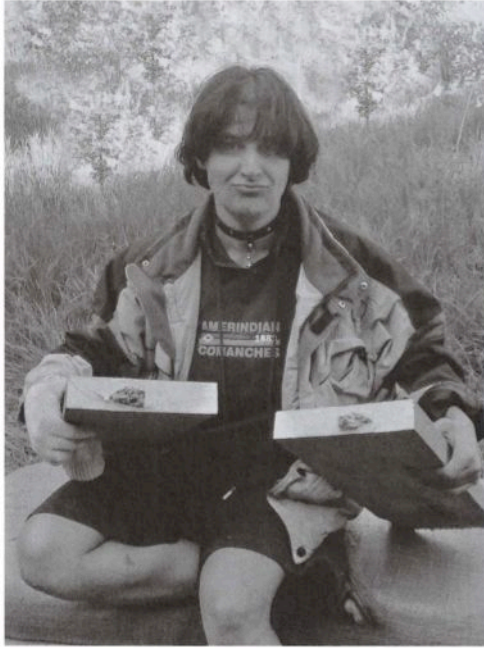
Or perhaps

It is the plan of a spaceship for those who have matured
 enough for global change and, having torn away from
 daily life, are ready to fly up...

Yes, it is a plan.



TATIANA GINSBURG



STEGANIC BY ANDREI

And it is also
A place where I have learned
 To use a chainsaw,
 To lay bricks,
 To communicate effectively, sharing sincerely my many concerns,
 To look for things in common with those I don't like,
 To make efforts to birth the common process,
 To get up early to make breakfast over the campfire for everyone
 (even if it is cool, or rainy, or I feel sleepy),
 And to practice Fu-Sin meditation...

And perhaps Shiram means heated arguments in the evening?
 Whether G., M., or A. should be given a merit called "F?"
 Whether a particular person deserves the status of one of the "People?"
 Whether she caused harm to anyone or, on the contrary, helped the team by
 her active consideration and participation in the process?
 And whether what he did was an effort aimed at creating Shiram?

This way we can see people and their relationships completely.

And it is possible, noticing problems, to try
 To overcome our failures to understand each other
 Through the openness that leads to dialogue.

Now I am sure—

**Shiram is not a building or a field or a house
 or a bridge!**

It is people, and the process of integration going on
 between them.

People striving towards Enlightenment.

And it is the way we engender

Ideas,

Houses, and the

Space around them.



GEN SHI



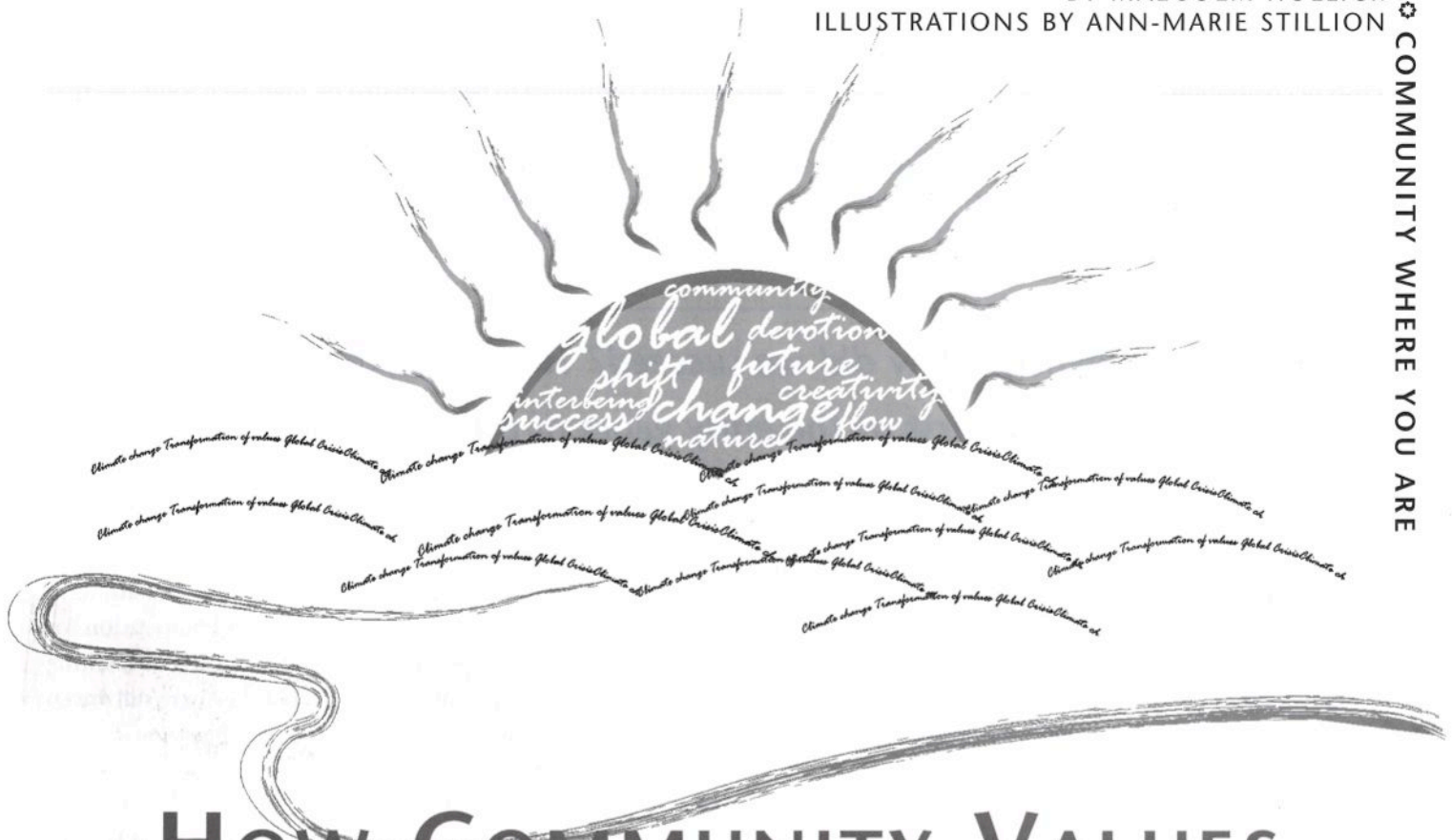
SVETIANA VIBORNOVA

How? you ask.

And I reply:

Creating with love, rising high above ourselves,
 Reaching for clear light, and merging with the whole
 United and Kind world.✿

Tatiana Ginsburg is a PhD candidate in psychology, a game leader, a professional instructor of Western breath psychotherapy techniques, a facilitator of Transformational Games from Findhorn, and an organizer of the international conference, "Global Enlightenment."



HOW COMMUNITY VALUES CONQUERED CLIMATE CHANGE

A FUTURE HISTORY

What if we figured out how to deal with climate change before it was too late? What if we met this challenge capably and successfully by using qualities and skills we've developed through community living? What would a historian write 50 years from now, looking back? Malcolm Hollick explores one possibility.

Amongst the hype as we celebrate 2050, it's timely to reflect on our efforts of the past 50 years to combat global warming.

The Earth's temperature is now significantly higher than at the turn of the century, the distribution of climatic zones is different, and sea levels are higher. But the worst fears have not been realised, and projections indicate that the climate will stabilize in the next 100 years. We certainly have much to celebrate.

So what happened? How did we succeed? To answer this question we need to look first at the early years of the 21st century.

The Global Crisis

By 2005, the evidence for climate change was growing stronger almost daily. Natural disasters such as hurricanes, floods, droughts, and forest fires were increasing in frequency and intensity. Ice sheets were retreating, and the Gulf Stream weakening. Subtle ecological shifts were being noticed everywhere. Atmospheric carbon dioxide and the planet's temperature continued inexorably upwards. People worried about the possibility of irreversible warming.

Simultaneously, we faced destruction of the natural environment, poverty, war, terrorism, depletion of fossil fuels, rapid technological change, rampant power of corporations,

religious fundamentalism, and the loss of meaning and purpose. Collectively, these issues formed a crisis of civilization.

In a parallel trend, universal values such as honesty, integrity, cooperation, and community had been steadily eroded since the Renaissance, to be replaced by competitive self-interest, individualism,

the best way to respond to global warming was to combine simple, cheap, available technologies with changes in social behaviour. Yet governments continued to be fascinated by high-tech solutions that would take decades to develop.

Politicians and corporate leaders used the scientific uncertainty to delay difficult decisions, fearing that they would lose office if they hit voters' "hip-pocket nerves." The issues also were complex. For

So what happened? How did we succeed? To answer this question we need to look first at the early years of the 21st century.

and hedonistic consumption. Reflecting these values, governments gave primacy to economic goals and the rising GNP. But this outdated indicator continued to rise even as quality of life fell and vital natural systems were destroyed.

With hindsight, we can see that the crisis could not have been solved without transforming cultural values. Voluntary simplicity *had* to replace consumerism. And the purpose of life *had* to shift towards personal growth, creativity, relationships, and community. This is in fact what has happened over the last 50 years. But how and why did it come about?

instance, increases in energy prices would hit the poor—and risk recession—but have little impact on consumption by the affluent. Similarly, the push for biofuels rapidly backfired as competition for land drove up food prices. Superficially, corporations were becoming more environmentally and socially responsible, but they were still driven by competitive markets and short-term financial objectives.

Meanwhile, the media continued to promote consumerism, despite growing coverage of climate change. Believing that one individual could achieve nothing, most people didn't try. Instead, people went on consuming and waited for "them" to do something about the climate—whether "they" were government, corporations, or scientists.

Faced with an uncertain future and meaningless lives, many people were drawn to the "truths" of fundamentalism, which often denied the problem and supported the status quo. Their dogmatic beliefs led to rigidity at a time when flexibility, tolerance, and creativity were needed.

Collective Paralysis

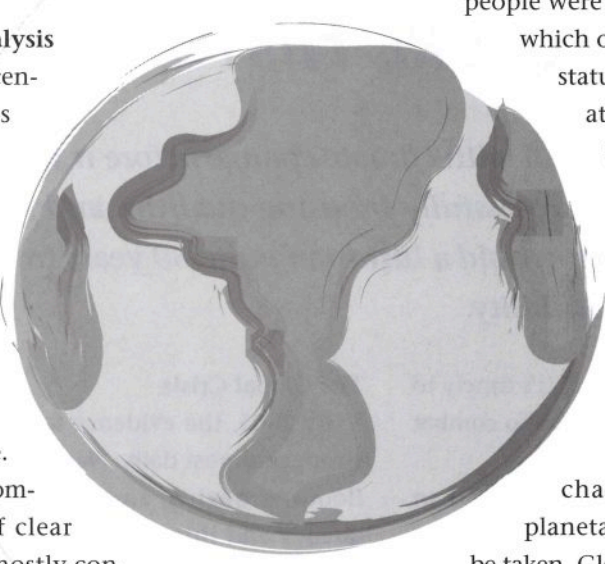
Early this century there was little sign of effective action on any of the key issues. There were major disagreements on how best to tackle climate change, for example, and negotiations on a truly global treaty were proceeding at a snail's pace. Meanwhile, corporations complained of the absence of clear policies, and individuals mostly continued their lives unchanged.

Scientists were almost unanimous that human activity was causing global warming and that immediate action was necessary. But opinions differed on the degree and speed of change, and on the consequent impacts. It was already clear 50 years ago that

The Grassroots Revolution

The world faced two starkly different possibilities. Either the wealthy nations could retreat behind defensive barriers—a response that would almost certainly have plunged the world into violent chaos—or united planetary action could be taken. Global communications ensured that everyone knew they faced a common enemy, and, for the first time in history, humanity learned to stand together in the fight for survival.

It was not national or corporate leaders who finally galvanised the planet, but ordinary people taking direct, local action. In the face of climate change, environmental and social breakdown, crime, and terrorism, people began to question the values and goals of their societies. And



in response to the stress of work and the transient delights of consumerism, people in the rich nations started to look for new meaning and purpose.

This trend was already strong by the turn of the century. World Values Surveys during the last two decades of the twentieth century revealed growing interest in spiritual matters in most industrial democracies (www.worldvaluessurvey.org). Similarly, in 2000 there were about 130 million "cultural creatives" in the USA and Europe, forming around 25% of the population (www.cultural-creatives.org). These people were concerned for the future of the planet and rejected consumerist values in favour of personal and spiritual growth, relationships, and community.

Amongst the cultural creatives were many who had developed their valuable personal qualities through management trainings, personal growth workshops, inner reflection, spiritual practices, and healing therapies. Their skills included team-building, group facilitation, conflict management, and decision-making processes. Some had lived in intentional communities where they honed their skills in the practical challenges of daily life.

Qualities associated with the more advanced cultural creatives included inner balance, harmony, and quiet self-assurance. Deeply attuned to nature, they were self-aware and self-reflective. Big-hearted, loving, and compassionate, they accepted people and situations as they were. They embodied their values, acting with a clear sense of meaning and purpose. Their emotional maturity led them to understand the importance of openness and sharing in group processes. They were tolerant of differences and open to new



In 2005 we could see the first signs of community action on climate change when many cities began to act independently of national governments. Growth was stimulated by sharing information on the internet and by the many demonstration centres being set up for alternative technologies and lifestyles. In the UK, these included visionary projects such as eco-houses at Beddington (www.peabody.org.uk/bedzed), and an integrated energy system in Woking (www.woking.gov.uk/environment/Greeninitiatives). Amongst intentional communities were pioneers such as the Findhorn Community (www.findhorn.org) and the Centre for Alternative Technology (www.cat.org.uk), new co-housing projects, and a growing number of ecovillages (gen.ecovillage.org). Many of these communities offered education on subjects ranging from composting toilets to conflict management.

Vital to the success of this revolution was recognition of the interactive nature of the crisis. Groups concerned with climate change, for example, realized that poorer nations would not restrain their

With hindsight, we can see that the crisis could not have been solved without transforming cultural values.

ideas. Confident and trusting of life, they saw the crisis as an opportunity for growth and change.

These advanced cultural creatives were at the forefront of a new breed of leaders. They were good communicators and networkers who preferred to facilitate cooperative teams rather than take command. Disinterested in personal power, their style of leadership resembled that of the Taoist sage who does nothing and yet everything gets done; who believes him- or herself to be successful when the people say "we did it ourselves."

burgeoning carbon emissions unless the rich first slashed their consumption and demonstrated practical support for economic justice. Understanding this, activists in richer nations continued to campaign for curbs on greenhouse gas emissions while also promoting voluntary simplicity and seeking massive transfers from defence budgets to development aid, debt relief, and environmental conservation. Coalitions expanded to unite environmental, peace,

development, and spirituality issues. These coalitions coordinated their actions, thus greatly increasing their credibility and impact.

Finally, climate-related natural disasters stretched government resources to the breaking point. Communities were faced with a choice between descending into violence or taking care of themselves. Most followed the latter path. They made emergency plans,

transport was inadequate, and set an example by walking and cycling for short trips.

Later, these groups became involved in local organic food production and distribution, small-scale renewable energy schemes, retrofitting old buildings, tree-planting, and setting up pools of shared machinery, tools, and equipment. Many of these activities created opportunities for new small businesses and hence boosted local employment and economic activity. Small businesses also ben-

It was not national or corporate leaders who finally galvanised the planet, but ordinary people taking direct, local action.

set up neighbourhood teams and communications systems, and stockpiled supplies and equipment.

Another turning point came when communities began to tackle disaster prevention through long-term change. A sense of urgency drove them to act on global warming without waiting for governments, corporations, or new technologies. They realised that individuals and communities are not helpless victims of circumstances, but are potentially powerful forces for change.

Also, new internet software made it easier for individuals to become active in community affairs, and to form autonomous ad hoc action groups.

Finally, people started to move beyond self-interest, judgement, fear, and anger towards the spiritual values of love, compassion, cooperation, and community.

Community groups began by promoting simple behavioural changes such as turning down thermostats and donning sweaters. They campaigned to darken office buildings at night, switch off advertising signs after midnight, and reduce street lighting to the minimum required for safety. They promoted local cultural events and domestic holidays to reduce travel, established car-pooling schemes where public

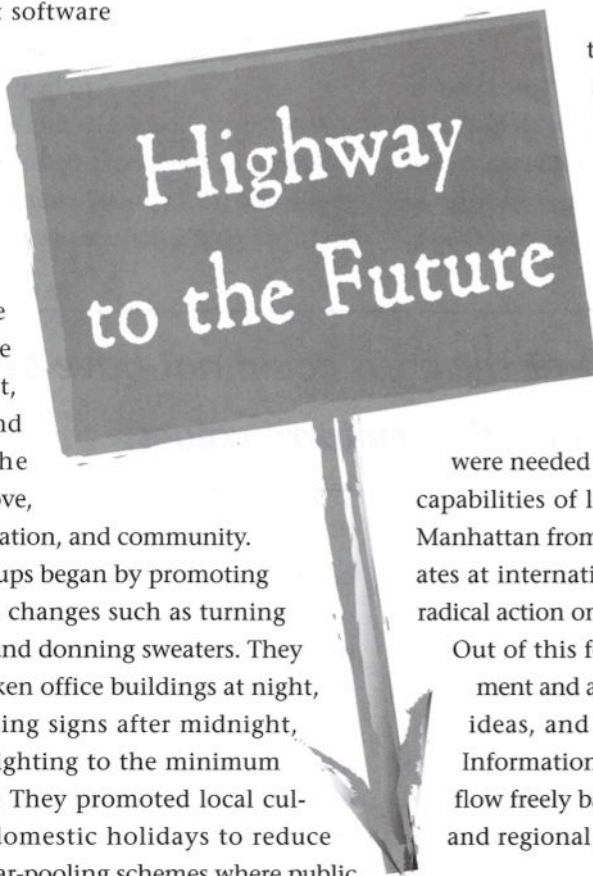
efited because they were more innovative and flexible than the big corporations and provided a more personal service.

By 2020, this movement had begun to reach a critical mass in many countries. Coalitions began to field candidates of principle and spiritual values in local and national elections. In 2030, cultural creatives formed a majority in many local governments, and were poised to take national power in some countries. These new politicians began to reverse the bias towards big government and business, arguing instead for local communities to be given resources and decision-making powers with a minimum of oversight.

Corporations are still major forces in the economy today, but their power has been tamed. The spread of spiritual values eventually penetrated board rooms. It also led to a big drop in demand for consumer goods and a rise in demand for local services. Increasingly effective boycotts of companies with unsatisfactory practices were organised. And the uncertainty of markets due to the global crisis favoured smaller, nimbler companies.

Within this transformed context, national governments continued to set policy and legal frameworks to channel resources where they were needed and to undertake major works that were beyond the capabilities of local communities, such as protecting London and Manhattan from rising sea levels. They also represented their electorates at international negotiations. However, they were able to take radical action only because of the changing values of their electorates.

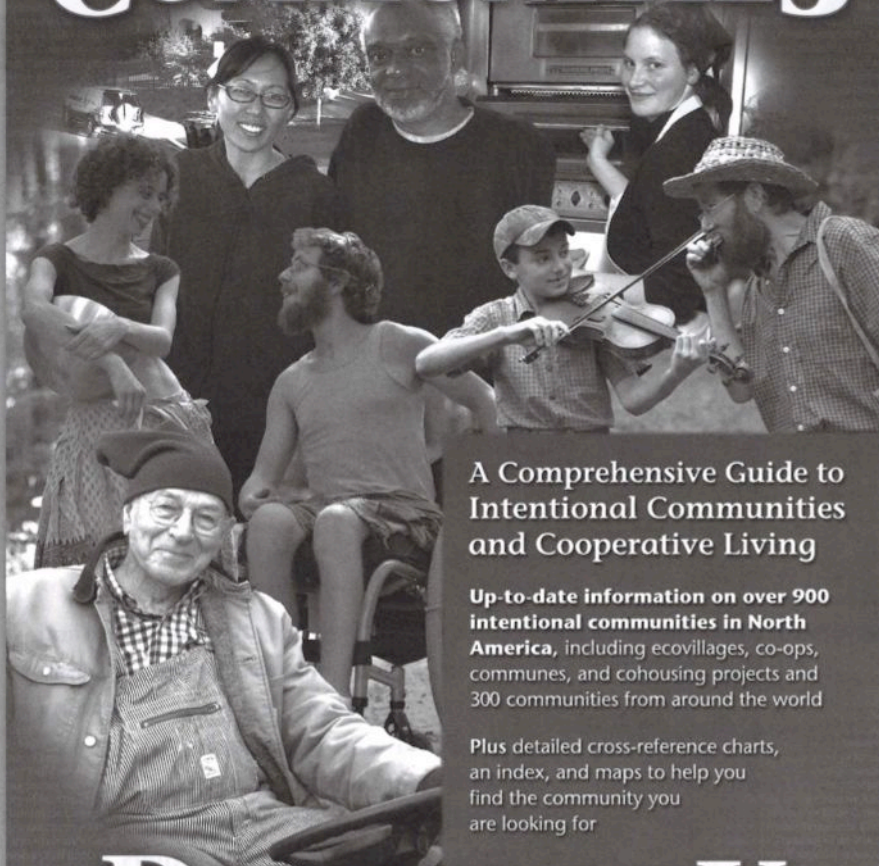
Out of this ferment arose a new arena in which policy development and actions were nourished by the exchange of information, ideas, and resources among all levels and across all sectors. Information and cooperation on a huge range of issues began to flow freely back and forth between international bodies, national and regional governments, corporations, nongovernmental



(continued on p. 71)

NEW EDITION – UPDATED FOR 2007

COMMUNITIES



A Comprehensive Guide to Intentional Communities and Cooperative Living

Up-to-date information on over 900 intentional communities in North America, including ecovillages, co-ops, communes, and cohousing projects and 300 communities from around the world

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

DIRECTORY

COMMUNITIES DIRECTORY

Over 900 North American communities, plus 325 from around the world, provide contact information and describe themselves—their structure, beliefs, mission, and visions of the future.

Includes articles on the basics of intentional communities and tips on finding the one that's right for you. You'll also find information on how to be a good community visitor.

MAPS

For the first time we've included maps showing locations of communities throughout the world. See at a glance what's happening in your area or plan your community-visiting adventure.

CROSS-REFERENCE CHARTS

These charts allow you to quickly scan for the communities that fulfill your criteria, including size, location, spiritual beliefs, food choices, decision making, and more.

All data is based on the Online Communities Directory at directory.ic.org (see below).



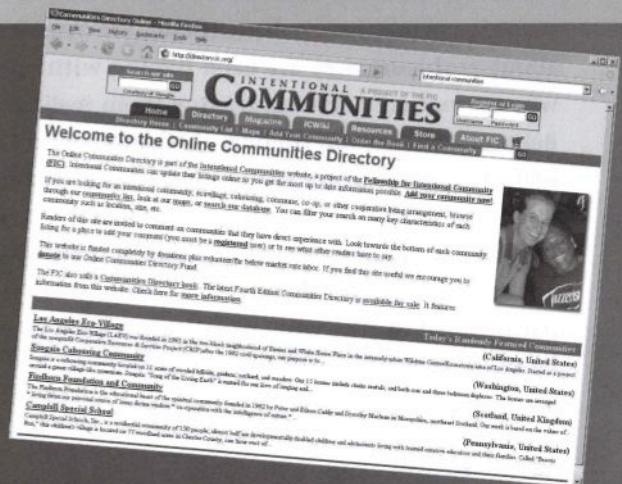
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ONLINE COMMUNITIES DIRECTORY

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VALUING A CULTURE of WOMEN

*I'm making my shoulders strong for the young to stand upon
Stepping lightly on the backs of those who hold me up
It's a chain of life unending, ever new and ever bending
Grateful is the heart for the chance to be alive . . .
(from *Chain of Life*, Susan Osborn)*

The sound of women singing fills the room as twenty women—members and friends of the Goodenough Community—come together in a circle on a Saturday morning. After leading the song, Irene turns leadership over to Joan, who introduces the theme for the day: “Ages and Stages: A Celebration of Women’s Lives.”

Joan asks the group to pair up and share a story from the last month that illustrates an issue they are wrestling with. Susan and Jane, who just met, are overheard talking about problems they are each having with teenage sons who are not cooperating, leaving them feeling powerless. Betty and Claire, old friends, are heard sharing the enjoyment they have in watching some of the younger women learn and grow. Over 70, they appreciate being in an intergenerational group of women. Hollis is sharing her passion about Planned Parenthood and a fundraising walk she just participated in. The women are called back into the circle by Mary, who invites the women to share what they learned about their partner.

Mary then describes four groups and asks the women to choose one to join.

“**Maiden** is the group for young women and those who want to deal with emotional maturity, sexuality, family of origin, and strengthening the inner self.

“The second group is for **Mothers**, and is appropriate for women who are struggling with parenting issues, grieving the loss of their mother, birthing a creative project, feeling needy, or considering having a child.

“A group of mostly middle-aged women between 40 and 60 will be addressing issues of deepening spiritual perspectives, maintaining balance while serving others, inner work like dealing with negative self-talk or anxiety, and reclaiming your voice. We call this group the **Guardians**.

“The fourth group is for older women, **Crones**, to share their experiences of aging—accepting limitations and deepening interdependence. This group is also open to any woman who wants to talk to women her mother’s age.”

The women look around and choose their groups. An hour of lively conversation later, it’s lunchtime—after which the whole group gathers again to share their discoveries.

You have been reading about a program offered by the women’s culture of the Goodenough Community. The women meet monthly, eight times a year, and have at least one weekend retreat. A team of six has provided leadership for over eight years. As understood in our community, “culture” suggests both

a medium for growth and common-sense support for the human development of women. Culture enhances the spoken word with songs and music, art, movement, and ritual of all kinds. The culture of the Goodenough Community has been developing for over 25 years and has become increasingly important to us as members, and to our friends as well.

As illustrated above, central among the concepts adopted by our women's culture are the archetypal stages of a

The following story illustrates how the Guardian archetypal frame works for Hollis:

I was in my early fifties when my stepdaughter, age thirteen, came to live with us. Less than two years later, my son, age 33, was diagnosed with brain cancer. Abruptly, I left the settled ways of my empty nest, which I had enjoyed for fifteen years, and began taking care of offspring again.

“Culture” suggests both a medium for growth and common-sense support for the human development of women.

woman's life—Maiden, Mother, Guardian, and Crone. These archetypes, which are all present in every woman, teach the value of all aspects of femininity. They help us better understand our behavior, our deepest longings, our psychological development, our response to life situations, and our spiritual journey.

In addition to the more familiar stages of Maiden, Mother, and Crone, we have added a stage called the Guardian that respects the way we become worldly-wise in mid-life. Joan Borysenko describes this stage in her book, *A Woman's Book of Life*: “Those of us who have accomplished enough of our personal healing to reach emotional maturity by the end of the first half of life enter the second half with a remarkable burst of new energy, a protectiveness of both our own rights and those of others. For this reason, I have chosen to call the midlife woman the Guardian. Perceiving injustices and willing to call people and institutions to their higher purposes and best expressions, the woman who steps fully into the Guardian archetype has the ability to encourage the best in herself and others.”

Right: Marjorie Gray takes over a leadership position from Joan Valles at the Goodenough Community. The women's culture provides a nurturing network that supports women taking on leadership roles.

The experience was very different from my years as a young mother, however. I was just as loving, just as protective, and just as committed. But somehow my motivation and goals were different.

And then our women's culture discovered Joan Borysenko's concept of the Guardian, which we adopted as a fourth archetype in recognition of a phase of development that longer lives have brought to modern women. Immediately I understood why I was no longer Mother, despite having my life revolve around my children.



REBECCA LIABRAATEN



FATIMA BANNAZADEH



REBECCA LABRAANTEN

Top: Hollis Guill Ryan, Linda Martin, and Barbara Brucker enjoy a Goodenough Community women's cultural event. Maryann Schumacher back to camera hugging Laura Sweany.
Bottom: Colette Hoff and Francisca Vega at Sahale Learning Center, the retreat center for the women's group. Besides their monthly meetings, the women hold at least one weekend retreat each year.

I was responding to more than the individual needs of my children. I was acting from the responsibility that springs from loving intention. I was caring for them and advocating for them not only from a maternal instinct but also from a driving social responsibility. In my case, the larger social calling was the needs of my extended family. Another Guardian might be responding to the needs of a community, a corporation, a movement, or an even larger entity.

I am now in my sixties. My stepdaughter has successfully established her own life, and my son is living on his own. A few years ago I began to feel an increasing urgency to shed the skin of Guardian and grow into yet another phase of life. My focus is re-centering on my own life and its meaning. What remains to be done in my life? What do I need to do to prepare for a wholesome old age?

And, so, I feel myself beginning to embrace Crone. Unlike the other phases, Crone cries out to be claimed with intention. In the women's culture of the Goodenough Community, we are developing a means to intentionally pass from Guardian to Crone, and I am entering that process—looking back and looking forward.

Central among the concepts adopted by our women's culture are the archetypal stages of a woman's life—Maiden, Mother, Guardian, and Crone.

Immersion in a culture of women who care for each other's well-being, who agree on standards of behavior, and who offer many opportunities for participation, growth, and self-study provides important role models and brings about profound change. Irene's story below is about her experience of raising a family in the midst of the Goodenough Community.

Through our network of couples and families, I am always learning about how to relate better with my family and friends, how to be a better partner in marriage, and how to help my husband be a more confident and engaged father. Living in community, I feel that friends see me—and my desire to be a better woman is stronger because I am seen. My friends are also invested in my success as a parent, so they help me do a good job for my family. They offer me encouragement, skill development, and compassion for the truly human experience and adventure of parenting.

Within the women's culture, I am engaged as a woman with children and I am seen as both a Maiden and a Mother. I am reminded of my own history of youthfulness as a way to understand the journey my teenage daughter is on. As a Mother, I am a student of archetypal mother figures. I have found models in Mary, mother of Jesus; Mother Teresa; Quan Yin; Brigit the Celtic goddess; and modern feminists, songwriters, psychologists, and

children. Our men enjoy their own rich culture, as do couples and families.

- We care for one another in practical ways such as offering childcare, transportation, help with homework, music lessons, consultation on health matters, and meals when we are sick.
- We plan events together so we can celebrate birthdays, enjoy vacations together, and observe the changing seasons.

Women need encouragement to move beyond reacting to patriarchy and rediscover a way of life that benefits women, children, and men.

sages—all introduced to me through our women's culture. I have learned about relaxing and belonging with my children. But more importantly, my women friends have become a collective living demonstration of archetypal "woman," to which each woman brings her version of the divine feminine.

There are numerous other ways our women's culture serves us and our community.

- Our multi-generational community provides a broad spectrum of human experience. Everyone benefits from being part of a web of relationships that represents human life at all stages. Our culture creates a pathway for older members to pass on the wisdom they have gained.

- Community life contains several subcultures that inform and enrich my life, my husband's life, and that of my

This final story is from a wise Crone, Joan, who has blossomed and matured as a leader in our midst:

As students in a women's college in the 1950s, my classmates and I were chastised by women faculty for passivity and lack of ambition. Most of us had our sights on marriage and family—a romantic dream that, soon realized, was as soon found wanting. A mother of three in the 1960s, I faced another challenge from the intense and growing feminist movement. Overnight the rules had changed: housewifery was "out"; career, sexual liberation, and activism were "in." It was unsettling to women without a strong sense of ourselves, and many of us flailed about for years trying to "find" ourselves. In the meantime, the fallout adversely affected our children and families.

(continued on p. 72)



AMIE HOFF

Clockwise from left: Kirsten Rohde, Carla Gleason, Tessa James, Colette Hoff, and Hollis Ryan (back to camera) enjoying dinner at a women's weekend.

HOW YOU CAN FORM A WOMEN'S CULTURE

Human culture is made up of experiences that fulfill and satisfy us. Women's culture is no different. Traditions, artistic experiences, symbols, customs, and all forms of creative expression sustain individuals, add depth of feeling, and enhance group spirit. Here are some tips for transforming your women's group into a ripe and vibrant women's *culture*:

First, your group of five or more can start by **practicing the skills of intimacy**—self-observation, self-disclosure, listening, and joining—in order to deepen relationships among all participants.



AMIE HOFF

Laura Sweany and Francisca Vega make music. The women of the Goodenough Community enhance their culture with songs, music, art, movement, and ritual.

Helping each other practically with a project, an emergency situation, or childcare helps strengthen bonds of friendship and builds a fabric of relationship.

Begin to share **music**, tell **stories** of common issues, and express yourselves together **artistically**. Create **traditions** like celebrating birthdays together. Share **inspirational and educational readings**.

Next, **decide on a leadership approach**. Consider rotating leaders each year and fill in needed supporting roles. Empowering chosen leaders and following them strengthens the leadership structure. Although a background in counseling or facilitation is an asset, a commitment to life-long learning and the desire to mature gracefully are sufficient qualifications for leadership.

Form a program team of the most committed participants. This enables your group to reach its learning objectives. Leaders offer ideas and facilitate gatherings, but the content comes from all the participants. Individual growth plans, completed by each woman annually, can encourage you to be intentional about how you want to mature and also provides direction for the program team.

Research modern and ancient resources that portray women's lives. This exposes your group members to a variety of perspectives. The Goodenough Community embraces Native American practices, rituals from the natural religions and the goddess tradition, and the perennial wisdom that runs through all faith traditions.

Eventually **norms will emerge** that reflect standards of behavior.

Values, more general than norms, are commonly-held ideas about what is good. An exercise you might find valuable is to reflect together on the qualities of a good woman. This inspires women to discern the qualities they want to develop in themselves.

Intentionally drawing out the **gifts and abilities** of each other is very valuable for building culture.

The Goodenough Community has written extensively and provided trainings on the development of culture within a group. We would be honored to consult with anyone desiring more information on how to create enduring culture. For more information, see our website at www.goodenough.org.

—C. H.

FROM *Intentional Community*



to Building a Tribe

One Woman's Journey

Living with a hundred people in an intentional community, I ridiculed couples living alone in one house. Now I am one of them. Moving from my income-sharing community into the mainstream of society was the one of the hardest things I have ever done. Three years on, I'm still in transition.

I had been involved in communities and cooperatives most of my life, and moving to Twin Oaks Community was like coming home. Moving away was another story. I went from living with a hundred others in the Virginia countryside to living by myself in Auckland, New Zealand. After living intimately with fellow communards, my loneliness was intense. Many a night I got home from work and cried. I could hear my neighbours go to the toilet in my block of flats (which didn't bother me; at Twin Oaks I was used to *seeing* my neighbours go to the toilet!), but they wouldn't meet my eye—let alone talk to me. Faced with the reality of suburban life, my fantasies of carpooling, potlucks, and community gardens wilted fast.

I had made a conscious choice to live in the mainstream. I figured that that was where I could be most effective in

the social change and environmental activist work I do. Besides, I was curious. Could I do it? I had never lived by myself or worked a nine-to-five job, but I was pretty sure I could do that. The bigger questions were whether I could



Author Anissa Ljanta (center, front) camps with some of her new friends in Otangaroa, New Zealand.

keep my individuality and whether I'd be able to find a tribe of like-minded people. How would I deal with gender stereotypes and violence against women? And would I be able to parent with only one other co-parent?

As it turned out, there were many everyday things in my new life that outraged and confounded me. Discussing TV in social situations was a classic example. I hadn't had a TV in fifteen years, and my cultural knowledge was full of holes. I would ask questions like, "Sorry, *who* is Britney Spears?" that would be met with laughter or incredulous stares.

I was socially inept to begin with: I was too eager to touch, I cried at work, and my concept of "normal" was

the results were surprising. My sharing gave others permission to come out with their stories, laying foundations for deep friendships and beginning to dispel my feelings of isolation. That was a *huge* lesson for me.

The concept of a weekend was difficult for me to adjust to. I found the ritual of Saturday morning lawn-mowing ludicrous. On a suburban street in the weekend, every house had a lawn being mowed. I didn't understand why people didn't share resources. Why not save money by sharing mowers, and also take the opportunity to interact with neighbours?

And then there was the traffic. I would stand at the corner waiting to cross and *fume* at the constant stream of traffic

How would I deal with gender stereotypes and violence against women?

limited. In the course of conversation I would drop a phrase like "one of my partners" and then barrel on with what I had to say. Only when I happened to glance up did I notice that my listener suddenly looked like a stunned mullet or was spluttering and red in the face. Usually I'm not shy, but such experiences sometimes made me hold back in conversations with people I didn't know well, unsure of how my contributions to the conversation would go down. But I soon found that when I chose *not* to withhold my story,

driving to work, one person per car. It seemed *crazy* to me that people living on the same street heading to the same destination to work at the same time would drive separately. But when I suggested carpooling, public transport, or car cooperatives, people looked at me as if I had suggested they move to a commune.

As a woman, there were even more new adjustments to make. At Twin Oaks and our sister communities, I had appreciated the high level of gender awareness. One of my favourite jobs was firewood delivery, and I still think there is nothing sexier than a woman in dungarees wielding a chainsaw. It was unremarkable at Twin Oaks to see men in skirts, a woman-managed auto shop, transgendered folks, straight and gay. I appreciated that the focus was on people rather than gender, sexual persuasion, or choice of clothing. Being immersed in that counter-culture for so long, I had come to believe that my values and beliefs were the mainstream. It came as a real shock to fully re-enter mainstream culture and face its gender stereotypes.

For example, I missed being naked, and the ease with which people were naked at Twin Oaks. People made an effort to appreciate beauty of all kinds, not just the skinny hairless women validated by mainstream media. I got to live in a culture that embraced me for who I was, where body image and dress were not fraught with tension. That tension hit me like a hammer when I left community. I missed skinny-dipping in the pond and resented being expected to wear swimwear. Even worse, my own attitude changed in response to being immersed in mainstream culture's billboards, movies, and newspapers. I was horrified to find

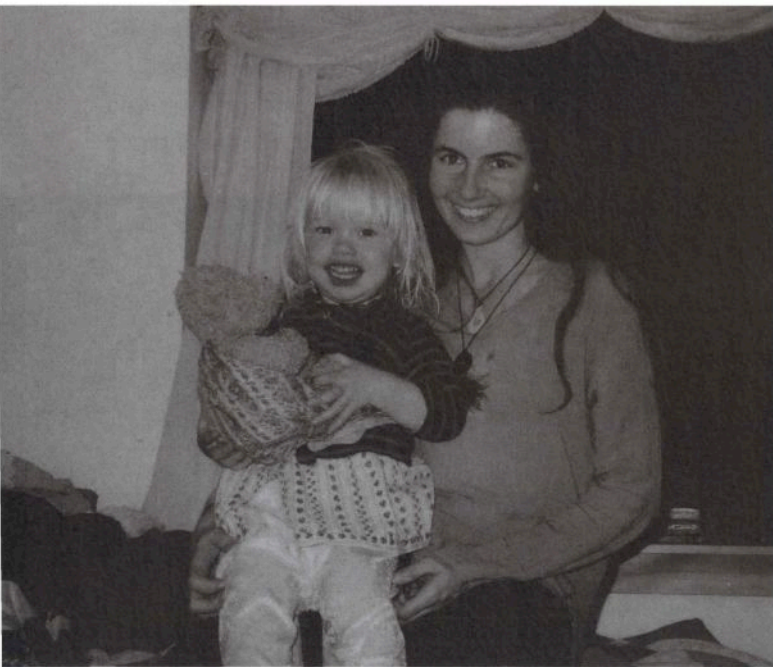


PHOTO PROVIDED BY ANISSA LIJANTA

Anissa with Willow at Twin Oaks. After sharing parenting duties there with a group of other co-parents, Anissa grieved to find herself without that support once she had left the community and become a biological mama herself.

out I was not immune to insecurities about my body and looks.

Of the many differences between life at Twin Oaks and my life now, there are two main aspects of my experience as a woman that I grieve for daily.

The first is safety, both emotional and physical. I am a survivor of sexual assault, and while fears for my safety no longer rule my life, I certainly appreciated the absence of such concerns at Twin Oaks. For instance, one of the things I most valued was walking along Twin Oaks' wooded paths at night. Seeing others on the path, my reaction was curiosity—not fear or wariness as it might be on the streets in the city. I became skilled in figuring out who it was by their silhouette, gait, and body language. I was reminded of the uniqueness of this again and again when women who were visiting the community commented on how wonderful it was to walk through the trees at night, free from any fear of violence. How sad that such a simple act is impossible for many women in the world, including Auckland.

I was horrified to find out I was not immune to insecurities about my body and looks.

The second aspect I grieve for is harder to articulate. At Twin Oaks I was part of the Star family, one of four coparents to Willow, within the framework of a larger supportive community that valued childcare and domestic chores by the allotment of labour credits. Even with four parents, I can remember nights when being with our kid in shifts was a stretch for all of us. Willow was sick with whooping cough, and to get any respite from his illness he had to be rocked all night for a week. The little guy spent time with primary caregivers other than his parents. This allowed his biological mama to have time to herself (oh, the luxury!), to do other work, and catch up on rest. It also helped Willow develop trust in adults outside his immediate family and build long-lasting relationships.

Today I am one of two parents. I am the biological mama of a four-month-old, living with my partner in a fairly remote area. I am repeatedly struck by the extreme difference in my experience of parenting. We have chosen

Top: Jonah Tupelo, a young member of Twin Oaks, greets a bovine friend. Bottom: Jed Isaac and Anissa, his mama, at their home in Piha, New Zealand.



PHOTO PROVIDED BY ANISSA UJANTA



ANISSA UJANTA



PHOTO PROVIDED BY ANISSA LIJANTA

Anissa with her friend Dream at a Beltane ritual at Twin Oaks. Anissa is dressed as the air element. In her new home in New Zealand it took time to find people with whom she could celebrate the changing seasons with rituals, dance, and music.

to be monogamous, a relatively new relationship model for me and one that suits us beautifully. My partner commutes to the city five days a week and doesn't see the small one awake for days at a time, which I find incredibly sad. I am the primary care-giver and hold down the fort single-handedly during the week. We have limited family around us. In those early nights after the birth there was no one to call on for support. There were no other mamas close by to offer a smile of encouragement, knowing looks, or snippets of counsel. It felt pretty lonely there for a while.

Then there came a day when I put my foot down. I refused to accept the isolation and began to actively seek community. I knew it would be different from intentional community, but I was determined to find like-minded people who were aware of social and environmental sustainability and who were parenting in their own unique ways. I wanted to create community wherever and however I could. I told everyone I knew how I was feeling and that I needed to meet like-minded parents

in my area. Word spread, and very quickly I got hooked up with some amazing people.

Baskets of gifts and gorgeous food arrived while we were in hospital with complications during the birth. New friends called around and arranged a meal roster in the weeks after Jed Isaac was born. Delicious meals prepared with love arrived on the doorstep. Phone calls came at opportune moments from other mamas checking in to see how we were doing. Yummy organic vegetables arrived uncalled for. Offerings of baby clothes and treats for me were left in the mailbox. In days I went from lonely to overflowing with abundance.

Soon I became one of the West Auckland Holistic Mamas—a group of smart, creative women finding their path in mothering in their own unique ways. We meet most Thursday mornings for some delicious woman-time to hang with the kids, share stories of attachment parenting, encourage each other's creative or activist endeavours, and revel in our differences. It doesn't matter how many hours' sleep we have had or how coherent we are—those Thursday mornings are a place to simply be.

Among the Holistic Mamas I found out that intentional community is a hot topic for many mothers parenting in natural ways. Something about the experience of having a baby in our isolationist culture shows women how much sense it

In days I went from lonely to overflowing with abundance.

would make to have a more immediate community. It is mostly the mothers and kids who carry the burden of dealing with the separatist way we have structured western society. I am in demand to tell stories, over and over again, of what Twin Oaks was like for a parent.

And so, gradually, I found them: my tribe. They had been there all along; I was so busy being critical about the world I had chosen to live in that I hadn't been open to seeing them. Slowly, friends emerged out of my activist work, the organic shop, community gardens, our community center, my work with Greenpeace, the festival scene, the Steiner school, the Green Party, the Holistic Mamas, and through other friends. I met my life partner working at an Eco Festival. Now, when I walk through the village I see familiar faces.

I found out about a group of people known as the Living Communities Trust, who feel like I do about building com-

munity in the city. They run community gardens in town and organise magical child-friendly Solstice and Equinox parties, with ritual, dance, and heartfelt music.

Clearly there are oases of connection and beauty amongst the madness of capitalist life. They're created by people like me who refuse to accept the isolation and are actively creating a better world. Knowing this, I feel richer for my experiences living in intentional community, but I no longer feel bereft. In fact, I still live in community.

I live in a beautiful, untouched corner of the world with a village feel. We know all our neighbours, the lawnmower gets passed around, cars and houses are left unlocked. There are community meetings about developments in the area,

Clearly there are oases of connection and beauty amongst the madness of capitalist life.

volunteers run our library and post office, we share a commitment to protecting our environment, and news travels fast on the community grapevine.

I still say "our" and "we" when I speak about Twin Oaks. The community and the people there will always hold a piece of my heart. But re-entering the world at large and working on the frontlines of environmental and social activism, I am surprised to find myself imbued with a strong sense of hope for the future. I find a broader, but nonetheless rich, definition of community. There are seeds of change taking root in the most surprising places. I am humbled by my lessons in the importance and power of creating community wherever life takes me.✿

Having travelled and worked in over twenty countries, Anissa Ljanta has come home to live in one of the most beautiful places on mama earth: Piha in Aotearoa-NZ. Among many other things, she is a writer, a inspiring workshop facilitator, a natural-health advocate, a keen gardener, a West Auckland Holistic Mama, a mediator, and a consultant to NGOs on organisational structure, conflict resolution, and public engagement. Anissa loves to dance, is committed to living her dreams, and is celebrating the return of some of her brain capacity after a bad case of babybrain. Note: We preserve the spelling of our Commonwealth country authors.

HOW TO CREATE COMMUNITY WHEREVER YOU ARE

Here are some tips that could apply to large intentional communities as well as to life in the mainstream:

Dream big and get others excited in joining you on your quest for community.

Start a weekly organic potluck in your local park and encourage people to bring juggling balls, kites, musical instruments, and kids.

Be creative about your approach—gather a few others who share your yearning for community and brainstorm together ways to create what you seek.

Have an annual street party.

Get to know your neighbours and put forward a proposal for lawnmower sharing, carpooling, and regular potlucks.

Start an alternative book club. Make a list of the qualities you value and want to develop. For example, "Book club seeking founding members: people who are ecologically aware, fun, and politically progressive—and know how to grow big cabbages."

Ask around and place ads in community newspapers and local cafés.

Talk to anyone and everyone about your dreams, passions, and visions of a more sustainable future. Surprising allies will emerge from the most unlikely places.

Volunteer your time for NGOs or social initiatives.

You'll meet like-minded people while doing much-needed work.

Look into setting up a housing cooperative or a community house.

Never lose hope! Remember to appreciate what community you do have.

-A. L.



MARK MAZZIOTTI

Author Mollie Curry, a natural builder by trade, plasters a strawbale wall.

WHAT'S MASCULINE, WHAT'S FEMININE, AND WHAT AM I?

"It was so cool seeing you cut down those trees the other day—you rock!"

I'd heard those words before. Yes, I am a woman who knows how to run a chainsaw. In fact, I know how to fell trees. A lot of this kind of work needs to be done in my former community—a forested ecovillage—and most of it gets done by men. In our culture, this kind of work is seen as "masculine": a certain amount of strength, focus, and bravery is needed to do it well. Doing such work inevitably brings me praise.

But I actually feel a bit strange about the kudos sometimes. There are a lot of issues and emotions mixed up in it for me, and I have many questions and very few answers. Still, I find the exploration compelling.

Sorting it Out

There are lots of good reasons for me to fell trees besides providing lumber for my community. Women doing "masculine" work helps bust the gender stereotype that says we are weak and fragile and shouldn't take physical risks. My tree-felling gives other women an example, inspiration, and permission if they need it, and shows kids that women can do this kind of thing. It's great that I get encouragement and praise for it—much better than discouragement, concern, or telling me outright that I shouldn't.

So why do I feel uncomfortable about it? Partly because I'm getting appreciated for doing "men's work," which means that it's the (stereotypically masculine) job and the qualities needed to do that job that are valued. Why should these qualities be valued more than "feminine" qualities?

Yet, like others, I *do* value this job and these qualities. It's important work that should garner praise for anyone who does it. That's the other reason for my discomfort: it bothers me that the men who do these jobs often don't get as much recognition as I do. People just assume men will do that kind of thing.

The special admiration I receive points both to the continuing reality of inequality and to the lack of proper respect for men when they do difficult, dangerous jobs. If the genders and their qualities (both culturally and biologically determined) were equally valued, perhaps I would get no more recognition for felling trees than men do.

To be fair, a softer (more "feminine?") part of me has also been honored and nurtured in my community, which had a lot to do with why I stayed at the beginning.

When I first arrived, thinking I would learn a little natural building and be on my way, I was deeply hurting from a breakup and cried over and over again in our check-ins. For the first time in my life, I felt that people not only allowed my tears, but valued them. People *thanked* me for crying, saying it opened their hearts and made it easier for them to share what was going on for them. This blew my mind. Sobbing like that had not been accept-

Women doing "masculine" work helps bust the gender stereotype that says we are weak and fragile and shouldn't take physical risks.

able in my upbringing—not even for girls. Not even when someone died. (When I cried at my grandfather's funeral, I was criticized for making it hard for my grandmother to "keep it together.")

I felt at times that many aspects of my personality were encouraged in my new home. My rational intelligence was appreciated, as well as my abilities to see all sides of an issue and to have compassion for others. In many ways,

"Male and female represent the two sides of the great radical dualism. But in fact they are perpetually passing into one another. Fluid hardens to solid, solid rushes to fluid. There is no wholly masculine man, no purely feminine woman."

—Margaret Fuller, Transcendentalist author and editor, *Woman in the Nineteenth Century*, 1845



CHERYL HARRELL

Cheri "Flo" Wagner demonstrates her proficiency with a chainsaw during an internship program led by Mollie and others.



MARK MAZZIOTTI

Mollie prepares clay for plaster. Over the years, she has found that her female body is not holding up under the strain of physical work as well as a male body might.

both my masculine side and my feminine side have been honored and valued in my community.

Still, despite “women’s lib” and feminism, I think even in our subculture we carry a lot of old cultural baggage. That first year, I noticed that women tended to do more of the mundane, “invisible” maintenance and sustenance tasks (gardening, cooking, and shopping), while men tended toward the more visible, lasting things, like building a composting toilet. Sometimes I cooked because the men who

Am I unintentionally suppressing the feminine within myself?

had said they would cook were obviously not going to think about it until they were ravenous. They resented stopping “work” to cook.

But What Does it All Mean?

Our culture, a bubbling mudpot of traditions and opinions, supposedly defines what is considered feminine and masculine. But although there is a sense of general agreement—we know what we mean when we say these words—pinning down a definition is tricky. So many of us carry an emotional charge about these concepts, stemming from a history of gender inequality, defensive reactions to women’s lib, and the confusion between maleness/femaleness and masculine/feminine characteristics.

“What is most beautiful in virile men is something feminine; what is most beautiful in feminine women is something masculine.”

*—Susan Sontag, author and critic, **Against Interpretation**, 1966*

Often I am not sure what is “masculine,” what is “feminine,” or whether it matters. I’ve engaged in thought-provoking conversations with both men and women who articulate a variety of viewpoints on the matter that rarely overlap. I have sought a definitive list of traits and failed to find one. Most of the articles I have read neglect to spell out what they mean when they say “masculine” or “feminine.” Now I know why: it’s *hard*.

Further muddying the waters, it is obvious to most people that each of us possesses both masculine and feminine characteristics no matter our gender. I believe we each need this balance of masculine and feminine within us, but I have a hard time separating these qualities from the gender they are associated with—and from the gender issues of our society.

My Journey

I notice that I highly value some “masculine” traits and strive to develop some of them within myself; for instance, I’d like to be more focused and goal-oriented at times. All well and good, except that I’m aware of our culture (and myself) undervaluing more “feminine” qualities. This makes me wonder whether I’m playing out something within me that wants so much to be valued that it is willing to “act male” (use chainsaws, build houses, and be more goal-oriented) at the expense of other qualities. Am I unintentionally suppressing the feminine within myself?

I’ve spent a lot of time in my life denying my feminine side—hiding my emotions, talking tough to fit in with the

Lately, I’ve been realizing that I like women’s work.

guys, thinking rationally, acting assertively, hating pink, not paying attention to my appearance, and doing “guy things” like building plastic models, playing baseball, and building houses.

As a small child I never really wanted to be a girl. I have three brothers, and it looked more fun and free to be a boy. So I was a tomboy. I played sports, hated dolls, and was pretty tough sometimes. I came of age in the 1970s, when some ground had been gained in the equality between males and females. Title IX, which gave equal access to sports for girls and boys, meant that I played on boys’ baseball and soccer teams until girls’ teams were established.

In high school and college, I read about women’s rights and the sexism of our language. I learned that some jobs in our culture earned plenty of money (usually jobs dominated by men), while others—“women’s work”—went unpaid or underpaid. Not wanting to get stuck in that trap, and wanting to be valued as a person, I acted masculine as much as possible. But there was no escaping my complex, multi-faceted *self*. Ultimately, despite working in a male-dominated profession, I am never going to be a guy.



MARK MAZZOTTI

Even Barbie enjoys getting muddy once in a while.

A Big Girl Now

Lately, I’ve been realizing that I *like* women’s work. This discovery comes as a bit of a shock. My body, having less testosterone, smaller bones, and so forth, is not holding up as well under the strain of physical work as a man’s body might. I am very emotional, and I value that—although I do feel crazy sometimes. I *like* cooking and growing food and flowers. I enjoy paying attention to the emotional and physical states and the needs of the people around me. And when I look deep inside myself, beneath all the cultural and historical layers, I find that I also value these things highly—whether despite or because of their “femininity.”

So what does that make me? I guess it makes me *me*—my own peculiar blend of qualities and traits. And it makes me a woman. A woman who cries a lot and also knows how to use a chainsaw. Now, is that so strange after all?✿

Mollie Curry lived in a community of around 60 people in North Carolina for eleven years where she gained heaps of skills in natural building, cooking, and communicating. Currently she and her husband teach, design, and build “naturally” as MudStrawLove.



STEVE KEMBLE

TRANSGENERED AT TWIN OAKS



“As a feminist culture, at Twin Oaks we tend to disregard traditional gender roles and behavior. Women and men choose their roles in the community based on their interests, strengths, and passions, not on any-one else’s preconceived notions.... We all wear clothing we find comfortable—pants for working in, skirts for coolness or festivity—heedless of mainstream ideas of “acceptable” fashion choices. Our commitment to fostering a supportive and joyful environment for all people—women, men, lesbians, gays, and children—is an integral part of Twin Oaks Community.”

These words, more than any others on the Twin Oaks website, offered me hope.

I had just completed a full year *en femme*—what is known in transgender parlance as the Real Life Test, even acquiring a California state ID labeling my sex as “F”—and although I was living in the ultraliberal San Francisco area, my trans life was no cakewalk. Whether it was my age (almost 50), my scant resume (ten years as a middle-class housewife), or my biological “destiny” (a woman cursed with male hormones), the job market was anything but liberal. *Please, oh please*, I pleaded with fate, *don’t let me turn 50 behind a cash register!*

Who would take a chance on an old tranny recently pink-slipped from an increasingly untenable marriage?

How about “utopia?” I figured an egalitarian community proclaiming feminist ideals would offer me a shot at a new life—perhaps even a happy life.

I was fatigued by the daily discipline to “pass” as female—a full hour shaving body hair, another hour applying lotions and makeup, topped off by 30 minutes putting together an outfit and polishing my nails. And, however presentable I became, it was back to a vampire’s crypt twelve hours later. The expense of the upkeep was staggering, especially in trendy

like Andrea Dworkin, I’m inspired by gender liberationists like Riki Wilchins, I dance to Yoko Ono records, and I know Anita Hill did the right thing. My Marxist heart isn’t exactly seduced by the trans “community” where the weary old class system is reconfigured in the terms “non-op” and “post-op.”

But “utopia” wasn’t a cakewalk either—at least immediately. I visited in August 2007, confident I’d found my freedom to be pink, but to my mortification I was informed the community was not especially impressed by the me

I was fatigued by the daily discipline to “pass” as female.

Silicon Valley where \$200 designer jeans are considered mere Starbucks attire. And what for? Just to hear, “Thank you, ma’am,” at Victoria’s Secret? For 90-minute increments of “affection” from randy trannychasers?

Perhaps Twin Oaks was a place I could be fem without the artifice, I surmised. After all, however overcompensating my presentation—skirts, stockings, and dangly earrings being a necessity for survival in the transphobic mainstream—I’m no Barbie bimbo. I’m down with scorched-earth feminists

they met. Twin Oaks suggested I visit again. Sensitive to prejudice as all transgendered people are, I read between the lines when perusing my input, focusing bitterly on one woman’s stated concerns of my having “body image issues.” *Lady*, I thought, *if your chest sprouted hairs like a werewolf, you’d probably have a few “issues” too.*

Trans isn’t *all* I am. I am not necessarily just my body. I’m actually looking for a world where I can put less energy into “being” trans. As I so often tell other transgendered women cooing over heels and swooning over corsets, it’s not how you look; it’s what you do. Fashion, I believe, is narcissistic; femininity is caring about others. Philosophers and feminists have said, correctly I think, that the feminine impulse is toward social connection: family, friends—in a word, *community*. It seemed intuitive for me to seek the caring, income-sharing feminist culture of Twin Oaks. I wanted to get out of myself—and into something wider, deeper, more enduring. Like gardening.

So, back for a second visit I went, attempting to tone down my pink presentation (although it’s universally acknowledged that trannies emphasize gender clichés under duress). Although I can only offer conjecture, I believe some resistance to my membership arose from precedent; apparently the only transwoman who had lived at Twin Oaks before me was described to me as a classic wolf in sheep’s clothing—a perfumed, swishing male chauvinist pig. Determined to overcome the unwanted association, I



Author Calliope Kurtz assists Sparkle in choosing an outfit at Twin Oaks’ Commie Clothes, which Calliope redecorated as a boutique.

worked harder, listened more carefully and preened less frequently. Community, I kept reminding myself, means contributing selflessly, acting with empathetic compassion—and staying mellow.

For the most part, the members of Twin Oaks helped me feel right at home.

I heard more encouraging words (“Thanks for keeping the kitchen so clean”; “I appreciate you doing so many hammock setups”; even “Groovy outfit there”) during my six weeks

Like Hillary, I nevertheless had some opposition to surmount.

I was crestfallen to receive a “gift” of Barbie merchandise from a feminist woman I particularly admired. (I returned the gesture by giving her a Yoko Ono *Imagine Peace* button). I heard it said that one person could never consider anyone with a five o’clock shadow to be a “real” woman. (Would I ever say hairy armpits made her a man?) Sometimes a comment on my appearance (“Well, aren’t *you* looking

It seemed intuitive for me to seek the caring, income-sharing, feminist culture of Twin Oaks.

of visiting Twin Oaks than I had heard during my ten-year marriage. Although there were a few holdouts, the overwhelming majority of communitarians referred to me by my preferred pronoun. Considering I abandoned shaving my arms and wearing makeup, that showed real courtesy. With the exception of a couple of feminists, perhaps still ideologically swayed by the notion of a “transsexual empire,” the queers especially rolled out the pink carpet for my membership bid.

bright today!”) was phrased in the italics of a sly putdown. Most discouraging was the evening I returned to the communal laundry room where my freshly washed and labeled pink outfits had been mischievously dumped on the floor and hidden. *Sigh*.

Still, that’s a far cry from *Boys Don’t Cry!* Hell, it was nothing compared to the indignities I endured during my ten-year marriage (“We’re not going out with you in that skirt!”). Compared to the multitudes of smiles and hugs I



Kenric, Sandy, Calliope, and Shal share a meal in the dining hall. Calliope had some opposition to face in her membership bid.

received during my visits, the little barbs were a drop in the bucket. I was up for it—determined to warm all skeptical hearts, at least in good time. Imagine my delight when, finally accepted as a provisional member, I arrived, suitcase in tow, to hear the words “welcome home” repeated sweetly to me throughout that dramatic first day. Significantly, a member who voted against my membership simply—but sincerely—said to me, “good morning.”

It sure felt like home. And that was only the beginning.

I couldn't believe my ears the day I heard another member, who was working with me and a visitor, say, “Ask Calliope, she knows how to do that.” My confidence was in rapid ascent. Soon enough, I was muscling in on Commie Clothes, the communal free store, sorting through blouses and shirts and stringing up holiday lights to make it look like a fab boutique. Unlike my marriage, where meals were prepared, served, and cleaned up without audible recognition, in community there's always someone with a positive comment responding to however humble or tentative an endeavor. It makes me reach higher. As Helen Reddy sang, “I come

*In becoming just another
communard, I am permitted the
luxury to pass on “passing.”*

back even stronger, not a novice any longer, ‘cause you've deepened the conviction in my soul.”

Twin Oaks is a busy little town. The sight of “some ugly broad” in a pink miniskirt doesn't carry shock value for very long. Gender drama is transitory. There are hammocks to make, dinners to prepare, commercial tofu to process, weeds to yank out of the garden. Here, it's a *real* Real Life Test every day. Soon enough I transcend my trans, content that in a short time I have gone from *Hedwig* to comrade. In becoming—day by day—just another communard, I am permitted the luxury to pass on “passing.” I can even get in touch with my masculine self—a rare opportunity in the transgender community, where hierarchies of gender presentation carry strict censures of behavior.

Would I recommend community to other transgendered folks? I would say don't expect utopia—but don't anticipate transphobia, either. I believe it comes down to an individual-by-individual interaction. Versatility is probably the single most important quality anyone of any gender needs to thrive in community. For the gurls, there's a place for stiletto heels (dance nights)—but keep those Big Chucks for garden shifts.



The author finds that living in community allows her opportunities to get in touch with her masculine side.

For the bois, you can macho all you want lifting heavy things—but you get extra points for touchy-feely talk at the dinner table. “Both Sides Now” works well. Role-playing doesn't go far in community; all too soon, you are *you*—and that's cool.

Twin Oaks's “disregard [for] traditional gender roles and behavior” has eased—and edified—my particular trans journey. Woman power! And I believe I've shown Twin Oaks that transgendered people are just *people*—infinitely arrayed. I'm very happy Twin Oaks and I overcame our nervous few first dates and are now working on a real relationship.

I offer very warm thanks to Hawina for guiding me so conscientiously through the membership processes.✿

Calliope Kurtz has published music criticism for Perfect Sound Forever and raised two wonderful little girls. She currently resides happily at Twin Oaks.



The women of Journey Inn created vision quests for women in the wilderness when such things were still rare. Left to right, an unidentified woman at a vision quest with Ann-Marie Crosby and Georgia Dow, 1981.

JOURNEY INN: Gleanings from the World of Women

It is an unassuming, smallish house set back off a quiet, tree-lined street in Palo Alto, a Bay Area community which is quietly fertile ground for new consciousness. As you turn up the walk, you are greeted by a garden... At the door a sign says Journey Inn. You pause to muse on the several layers of meaning implied in those words. After you knock, you may be met by one or even all four of the women who live here, and perhaps the orange-and-white cat who shares their journey.

These words open our first *Journey Inn* newsletter in spring of 1980. Journey Inn was a heart family with three women at the core. Begun in 1976, we embarked on three years of intense emotional healing. Later, our

household became a center of “feminine energy” from which we sponsored small groups, workshops, quarterly earth celebrations, and women’s wilderness vision quests.

Journey Inn became the foundation for each of us to find our meaningful work in the world. About eight years later our primary relationships changed, and soon we were bringing what we’d learned at Journey Inn into different contexts “out in the world.”

Join me for a visit to Journey Inn and reflections on how it changed my life on the journey out.

(Newsletter quotes are italicized.)

The Seeds

After completing her degree in social work, Shanja Kirstann's inner longing for "something deeper" propelled her to Well-Springs, a spiritual center in California. Here she met Georgia, whose similar drive for meaning had prompted her to leave teaching high school physical education. A close friendship flowered as they lived together for several years.

I was active in an innovative Bay Area group blending grassroots Christianity with meditation, metaphysics, and psychology. I was married to my high school sweetheart and had no children.

We met Shanja and Georgia in 1975 as part of a small group hoping to create an intentional spiritual community. After an intense summer of meetings, we came to realize

I had moved into another country: a sisterhood of women.

that community comes not merely from an idea, but from an inner connection among the members. Recognizing that we lacked that connection, the group dissolved. Within a year, seven of the eight couples in our group had separated, and the ex-priest had married.

I was the first to leave a spouse. Over the summer a deep soul-level connection grew between Shanja and me, providing the love and trust for us to open into deep layers of ourselves. I eased myself from my marriage, but it was unthinkable for Shanja to leave Georgia behind. So we three moved in together, emphatically declaring ourselves "not a community" after our experience that summer. Over the years I came to see we were indeed an intentional community, though not in the form or scale we associated with the word.

Sprouting stem and leaves

I came to Journey Inn longing to tap "the feminine" in myself, whatever that meant. What I experienced was safety and trust, an utter letting-down as we shared a mode of being that felt like "deep home." My tribe. No lengthy explanations rationalizing everything. No jockeying for a word in edge-

wise. Feelings, the body, and intuition were honored. The driving mind, competition, and control were given a back seat.

We were not simply three women sharing a house, but co-journeymen assisting each other in living life more fully. We supported and loved each other through deep emotional release. We gently asked the questions that let the feelings be felt. We rocked one another in the midst of pain. And we laughed as we noted there was Kleenex in every room, ready for any possibilities.

I think it was like therapy on steroids. We were all able to invest the time it required because none of us had major financial or relationship commitments: no children to raise, no high-demand careers, and low expenses with the shared rental house.



JANAIA DONALDSON

Summer Solstice Celebration, 1981. Inspired by Findhorn's seasonal celebrations, Journey Inn-mates gathered with friends at nearby Foothills Park to celebrate the sun and fire and all of nature.

In that safe environment, I began to dismantle my defenses and soften my armor. Under that armor I discovered my inner child, "Polly," whose vulnerability, sensitivity, and genuine shyness were a welcome though fragile counterbalance to my competent, mental, driving, out-in-the-world persona.

two new individual relationships, as well as the third relationship of our threesome. I had moved into another country: a sisterhood of women.

Years later, after we began groups at our home, we wrote:

Feelings, the body, and intuition were honored. The driving mind, competition, and control were given a back seat.

Living together as an intentional family/community is an intense, non-stop growth experience. What looks like an innocent process of deciding on which household tasks to do may turn out to be a four-hour intensive of releasing old patterns about authority, agreements, and standards of quality. Committed to this process, facing whatever appears before us, provides plenty of surprises at every turn.

Here we are, a family-group of women focusing on the feminine aspect of spirit, of life. Are we feminists? Not in the popular usage of that word (implying—perhaps wrongly—a movement, a position, a militant approach), though we support women in finding strength and beingness on all levels.

Our Identity

This was my first relationship with a woman, and it was in the context of a small family of women. I didn't simply exchange a male partner for a female one. I was forming

Not only are we tapping the spirit of the feminine, we are just as importantly rebalancing and using the positive masculine: creating objectives and tasks, giving expression to our experiences, defining, and clarifying.



PHOTO PROVIDED BY JANAIA DONALDSON

In the 1980s, Journey Inn became a learning community, offering programs on aspects of the feminine spirit. Left to right: Patricia Reis, Shanja Kristann, author Janaia Donaldson, Georgia Dow, Anita Pitcher, and Barbara Grasso. 1982.

Support for Our Vocations

Journey Inn was a supportive space for us to develop our work in the world. Unlike most families, our livelihoods were not separate from our personal lives. We didn't have ordinary jobs, nor were we interested in conventional career paths.

My Journey Inn-mates supported me to illustrate a story that touched my heart. Its etheric airbrush images led my graphic design practice into creating album covers for new age music. Georgia pioneered a self-defined vocation as a holistic health guide/nutritional consultant and educator. Shanja led Vision Quests for Women in the Wilderness. Her work broadened into leading groups in dreamwork, intuition, arts, healing, and consciousness.

Flowering

By 1980, our personal growth intensive had leveled off. Georgia partnered with Ann-Marie Crosby, who joined us at Journey Inn, bringing her knowledge of the essence of housecare and an appreciation for how the material world reflects spirit.

We undertook numerous group projects. We sponsored classes in massage, numerology, healthy cooking, and full moon meditations. In winter of 1981, we offered Journey Inn as a learning community, with programs on various aspects

of the feminine spirit: contemporary women's spiritual journeys, women mystics east and west, re-claiming the Goddess.

I marveled at the way our roles in the co-creative process dovetailed. Shanja was the visionary, catching ideas at their emergent edge. I helped give form to the wispy ideas, communicating them into planning outlines and brochures. Georgia was the producer, handling the physical details with a clipboard of packing lists.

Exploring "Group Being"

Our group meetings usually began with silence: honoring receptivity along with action. We invited feelings and

Our central focus was empowering and encouraging women and the invisible strength of the feminine within all persons.

intuitions along with ideas. We attempted inclusion on all levels. Domination, confrontation, competition, and aggression were largely absent.

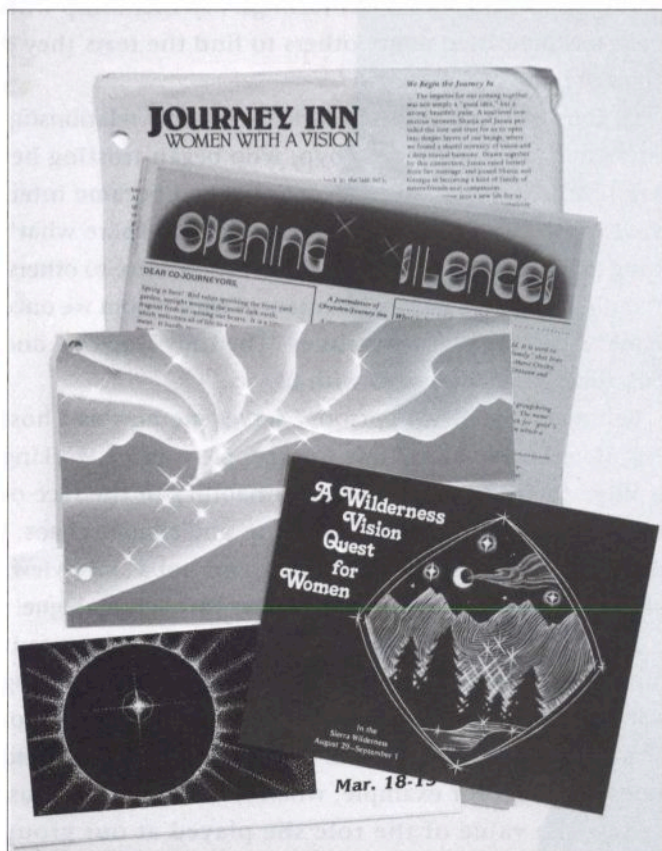
Early in 1981 we spent a weekend with a woman who taught group process at Findhorn and elsewhere. Afterward she told us, "You as a group of women can move into the finesses of relationships in ways I've never experienced with a group of men."

Outflowering

We were on the brink of forming a non-profit group in 1982 when both of the primary relationships changed and Journey Inn slowly dissolved. Within a year or so we were going in separate directions. We had re-parented one another, learned to co-create, and empowered one another in our vocations. Now we set ourselves loose into the wider world.

As with the intentional community process whereby we'd met, our group dissolved at the point of legalizing an organization. I think we innately preferred fluidity (the feminine) over structure (the masculine).

Ultimately, I think we had perhaps become too ingrown, too cozy in the safe space of Journey Inn. Even though I grieved the loss of my partner and my family, I was also relieved. Our processing had begun to feel oppressively endless to me, especially as more of my time was devoted to teaching and coordinating a graphics program. Within



JANMAR DONALDSON

A sample of the author's artwork. Her graphic design practice flourished within the co-creative atmosphere of her family of women.

a year or so I found myself in relationship with a man and working in the corporate world. But I was a different person for having lived in the World of Women.

Manifesting by Attraction. We Journey Inn-mates learned that things manifest by attraction (feminine principle) and by action (masculine principle). For years I felt

*We had re-parented one another, learned to co-create,
and empowered one another in our vocations.*

Journey Out: Reflections a Quarter-Century Later

The central focus in our life together was empowering and encouraging women and the invisible strength of the feminine within all persons. Living with women conscious of woman-energy totally changed my life and identity. My self-esteem was strengthened, giving me a confidence in wider dimensions of being and relating. It gave me a grounding in feminine approaches that I carried with me into patriarchal culture. Here are some highlights:

Valuing the “Other.” I had at Journey Inn the gift of living closely with someone I likely would not otherwise have developed a friendship with, much less lived with. Georgia and I were fundamentally different. Watching how she worked was like visiting a foreign country. Strongly right-brained, she was a sensitive, kinesthetic learner; her wisdom came from her body. I was more left-brained: quick with words, but not as connected to my body and feelings. Living with Georgia gave me an understanding and appreciation of the “Other” that helped me connect with my partner Robyn.

And something far deeper—I feel a bond of love between us distinctly different from any other I’ve known. We don’t have the attachments of a primary relationship or blood family, yet we’ve been intimate companions in one another’s deepest, most vulnerable soul-searching.

Embodying the Feminine in the Male System. I was very much the “Other” in the highly intellectual, competitive environment of Xerox software engineers. My experience with Georgia helped me bridge the worlds. I brought to our development of illustration software the right-brain, intuitive preferences of an illustrator even as I learned to write specifications in the precise language needed by engineers. I brought a “feminine” concern for the users’ experience into a hierarchical, problem-solving environment. Still, the women’s orientation to quality above quantity, to feelings and bodily knowing, to individual self within relationship, could only play at the margins of an engineering world based on measurable deliverables by individual contributors.

apologetic that I’d never put together a portfolio or pounded the pavements to get graphics clients—they came by referral. Then it dawned on me: I was using attraction, which took far less time and energy than action. Following that principle opened many doors in my later work, in finding a partner, in moving to the country, and in shaping environmental groups.

Evoker of Persons. From our work at Journey Inn, I developed the skills to be an “evoker of persons,” as Shanja and I named it, creating a safe space to gently coax out the half-formed, hidden, or unexpressed aspects of others. Those deep listening skills must have been a factor in the steady stream of people who came to my office later to bare their souls.

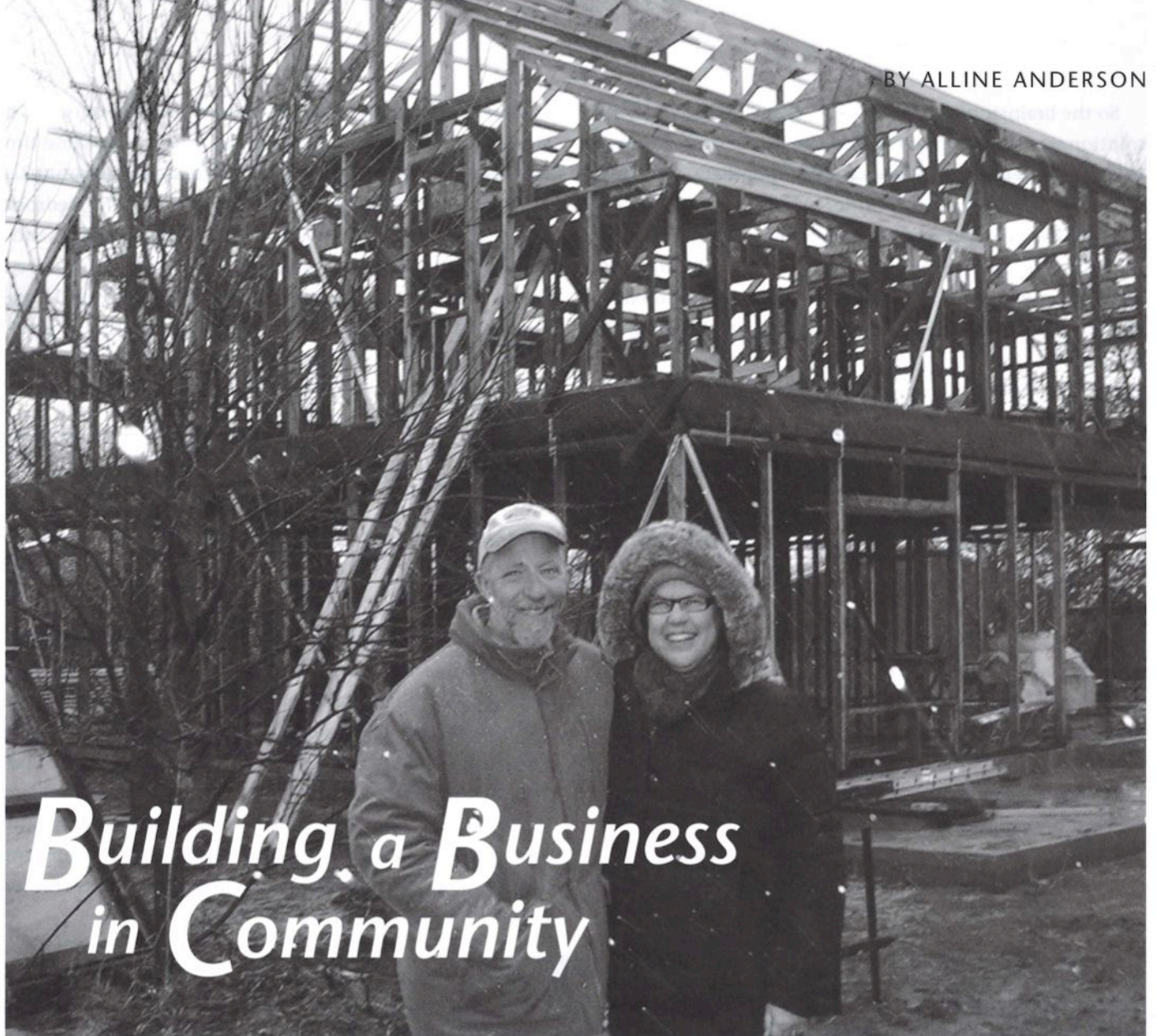
I saw what a gift tears were for me. Tears don’t lie—they’re a straight, honest line to our feelings. My friendship with them has permitted many others to find the tears they’d long ago buried.

Of course I brought this knowledge into my relationship with my current partner Robyn, who began trusting her intuition, emotions, and perceptions, and became interested in how people tick. Our practice is to share what’s going on inside, and we often extend this practice to others. To our amusement, new acquaintances with whom we once shared a holiday referred to us as “The Lady Doctors” and took turns having sessions with us.

Being an “evoker of persons” serves me now as I host *Peak Moment Television*. I talk with people who are working in their community toward sustainability in the face of resource depletion, economic decline, and climate chaos. I have deliberately shaped these programs not as interviews but as conversations, relating together through dialogue.

Articulating the Inexpressible. Our language is impoverished when it comes to expressing aspects of being that mainstream culture ignores. Journey Inn gave me a lot of practice trying to put words to processes, emotions, and states of being. For example, when Ann-Marie joined us, we saw the value of the role she played at our group gatherings, but it didn’t have a clear definition like “leader,”

(continued on p. 73)



Building a Business in Community

DAVID POLE

Author Alline Anderson and her husband Kurt Kessner battled the elements to frame up the Milkweed Mercantile. Next step: strawbale walls.

It has always seemed inevitable that I would one day start my own business. I used to dream of a book shop: a fire blazing in a hearth, my trusty golden retriever snoozing in front, the aroma of fresh-brewed espresso wafting throughout.

Missouri (Dancing Rabbit is located three miles from Rutledge, population 103, and fifteen miles from the county seat of Memphis, population 1,200). While I took some solace in knowing that Larry McMurtry has made his teeny hometown of Archer City, Texas a destination because of the

Crafting this business from scratch is the most exciting and terrifying thing I have ever done.

But when my husband Kurt and I moved to Dancing Rabbit Ecovillage in 1999, I couldn't see that happening. Even with my vivid imagination there was clearly neither traffic nor demand for a bookstore here in rural northeastern

bookstore he runs there, I am neither an Academy Award winning screenwriter nor a Pulitzer-Prize-caliber author. And rumor has it that his store, like many independent bookstores, is struggling.

So the brainstorming began. And, like all great ideas, our solution was staring us in the face the whole time. Dancing Rabbit, now ten years old with an adult population of about 36 and a kid population of nine, is growing by leaps and bounds. We have had several documentaries made about us, including an episode of Morgan Spurlock's *30 Days*, and countless articles and term papers. We answer hundreds of emails from around the world and host several hundred visitors a year. Many more would like to come, but we are currently unable to accommodate them.

Kurt and I began to wonder: could we support ourselves by sharing our skills and our passions—and at the same time meet two of the most pressing needs of our community?

And so began the Milkweed Mercantile: a four-bedroom bed & breakfast, a café with a commercial kitchen, and a store/community space all rolled into one. Our desire is that it become a business incubator for residents and members of Dancing Rabbit. It is a privately-owned, cooperatively-run, profit-sharing venture. We're hoping our multi-tasking skills will bring in—gosh—tens of dollars!

We intend the Milkweed Mercantile to be a place where people can go to regroup and remember what is in their hearts.

And there was the key.

Hundreds of people want to visit, to learn about sustainability and to witness environmental living in action. But because of limited housing options we have had to restrict our visitors to those who are seriously interested in becoming members. This leaves many out in the cold—those who want to learn more but do not want to move here.

At the same time, one of our most serious challenges, particularly for women, is earning a living. There currently isn't any "industry" here that people can plug into.

The Mission and Goals of the Milkweed Mercantile

The mission of the Mercantile is to provide meaningful work for a life that is sustainable in all ways.

Our goals are to create jobs; provide a market for items made, grown, and created by Dancing Rabbit members; provide a comfortable place for visitors and potential new members to stay while visiting; demonstrate the viability and aesthetic beauty of natural and alternative building; and teach others about living a more sustainable life through onsite seminars, public events, and our website

All Mercantile staffers will be paid the same hourly wage, plus a share of the profits. We are also establishing a Mercantile Artisan's Coop, which will provide materials and assistance in crafting items for sale.

Our Philosophy

We intend the Milkweed Mercantile to be a place where people can go to regroup and remember what is in their hearts.

As members of Dancing Rabbit, we are building the Mercantile with the same guiding principles and priorities with which we are building our village. These priorities and values are not just a trend or a phase we are going through. They are how we live our lives, what we are passionate about, and why we leap out of bed in the morning. The Milkweed Mercantile (a for-profit business) and Dancing Rabbit Ecovillage (the nonprofit Land Trust where the business is located) are committed to demonstrating ecological sustainability.

The Mercantile is a two-story strawbale building powered solely by sun and wind. Our



KURT MESSNER

Alline at work in her former quilt studio, now temporary headquarters for the Milkweed Mercantile—four businesses rolled into one.

water is all rainwater collected off our roof and stored in our 7,000-gallon cistern. We have a top-of-the-line composting toilet, and all building materials are either reclaimed or made from renewable resources. Surrounding the building will be a large wraparound porch to encourage porch-sitting, sunset-gazing, and long conversations. We hope to open in the summer of 2008.

The Eco Inn will be an entirely green alternative to a traditional B&B, demonstrating that sustainability does not have to mean deprivation—there can be beauty, abundance, and joy in living lightly on the earth. We will be presenting a variety of seminars (natural building, whole-foods cooking, yoga, consensus, and more) taught by members of Dancing Rabbit.

The Café will serve seasonal, local, organic meals. The ingredients will come from gardeners here at Dancing Rabbit and from other local farmers and producers. Coffee and tea will be fair trade and organic, the wines and beers primarily organic and local. In addition to meals, the kitchen will produce organic baked and preserved goods for onsite dining and takeaway. Our commercially-approved kitchen will be available for use by DR members to produce items for sale.

The Store will sell handcrafted items, organic food products, books, and ethically-sourced eco items. While beautiful



Clothing designer Eileen Fisher awards Alline a grant through her program assisting women entrepreneurs starting socially responsible businesses.

Benefits of starting a business in community

First on this list is the ten-yard commute. And the price is right—as part of the Dancing Rabbit Land Trust we pay a minimal lease fee per month. Alternative building, while time-consuming, can be more cost-effective than traditional construction. All builders are either members of Dancing Rabbit (enabling us to keep money within the community), or work exchangers (enabling us to fulfill our

*It is a joy to be building a business that embraces
and supports my values.*

and appealing, these products should be “things you need” rather than “things we want you to desire.” We will have that fireplace that I have always dreamed of, although my muddy dog will have to stay outside.

The Milkweed Mercantile online will weave all three components of the Mercantile into a whole cloth of eco inspiration. Inn reservations and store purchases will be easily made online. Additionally, the site will feature articles on aspects of an ecological life, links to websites we believe in, and even the sounds of the prairie. Visiting our site, you will not see any advertising, nor will you be encouraged to purchase stuff for stuff's sake. What we hope you will find is thoughtfully-prepared information presented with honesty and integrity.

outreach and education mission). It is a joy to be building a business that embraces and supports my values. It is our hope that everyone in the community will benefit from the abundance that the Mercantile will bring.

Funding

Kurt and I are fortunate to have a small nest egg from my parents. Additionally, the Mercantile was awarded a grant for socially-conscious, woman-owned businesses from the Eileen Fisher apparel company. The grant will be used to purchase a wind turbine and to cover legal assistance as we establish the Employee Profit Sharing and Artisan Coop Programs. By

(continued on p. 74)

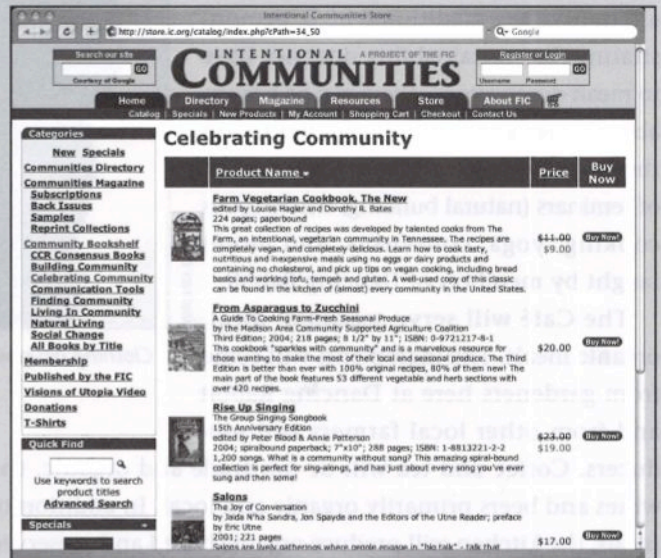
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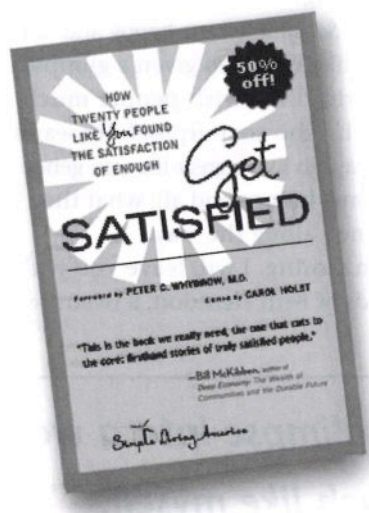
- **community building** – how to start an intentional community or find the one of your dreams
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Browse our store online at store.ic.org or look for us at upcoming community-related gatherings and events, including NASCO Institutes, Twin Oaks Communities Conferences, and all FIC Art of Community events and organizational meetings.



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REVIEWS



Get Satisfied **How Twenty People Like You** **Found the Satisfaction of** **Enough**

Edited by Carol Holst
Foreword by Peter C.
Whybrow, M.D.

Simple Living America, 2007
Pb., 177 pp., \$14 US/\$16 CN
www.getsatisfied.org

Reviewed by Alline Anderson

If you are reading *Communities*, you are most likely searching for a way of life that feels authentic. That is what led me to community, and what fills my heart now that I am here. But life has few easy answers, and the day-to-day “how” of living can be overwhelming. How do I define happiness? How do I pri-

oritize what is important to me? What is enough? Will I ever feel satisfied?

I’ve often wished that I had a little guidebook, written just for me, that contained all of my answers. It would eliminate all speculation on my part, point me in the right direction for every decision, and assure me of making the perfect choice. I would have no angst and no sleepless nights.

Alas, there is no such book. I finally learned what everyone else seems to have known for years—I have to do the figuring out myself. And that is exactly the point. It is ultimately up to me to find where my peace of mind lies, as each of you must find yours. Gulp.

*It is ultimately up to me to find
where my peace of mind lies,
as each of you must find yours.*

Which brings us to *Get Satisfied: How Twenty People Like You Found the Satisfaction of Enough*. It is a gem. Unlike my fantasy book, it does not contain any answers specifically for you or for me. What it *does* contain are firsthand stories from twenty very different people who found satisfaction in a variety of ways. Presented with open hearts, soul-baring honesty, and ample doses of hard work and courage, each author tells his or her own story. Some may hit you hard, some may make you roll your eyes. But all will get you thinking.

The book is divided into five categories: Resolving Dramatic Challenges, Discovering the Sanity Within, “Unstuffing” One’s Life, The Wonderment of Enough, and Cruising to Satisfaction. Each topic is covered beautifully in a chorus of authentic voices.

Some of the authors found satisfaction when it was forced upon them by adversity—a house burned down, a job was lost, or health deteriorated almost to a point of no return. Others found satisfaction more slowly and deliberately.

Each author presents different battles, different challenges, and different solutions. All of the essays are well written and thoughtfully presented.

In “More is Less: Confessions of a Clutter Queen,” Liz Milner says, “*It struck me then that, like our clutter, our lives don’t automatically fall into shape. We need to be stewards to our souls by making the conscious choices that shape and nurture them and by occasionally having the courage to throw out the trash.*”

In “Losing and Winning” Galen Warden shares how she shepherded her children through severe financial challenges and describes her growing realization of the depth of her own

power. “*Every item in every store merely has the purpose of providing revenue to those who present it. There is no need to buy it. However, it is amazing how items themselves are somehow infused with the spirit of those desperate to possess them... Our power to overcome the siren call of an item that beckons, “Owning me will improve you,” is a good skill to hold on to throughout life. You will own your things. They will not own you.*”

Steven Fisher talks about the significant tradeoffs he chose in order to spend more time with his family. “*Would I rather have a high-paying job with lots of money even if the job controls me, or a job that provides enough for me to live on but gives me time to enjoy life and also gives me a sense of accomplishment that makes me happy? Is this the balancing point? It was for me. I found that I am happier when I’m working hard and earning a living for it. I now have time that I can spend with my family and have a great sense of accomplishment every day.*”

And just as you may begin to feel a bit lectured to, along comes the delightful

Where's the Community Calendar?

You may have noticed that the Calendar did not return this spring as usual after its winter hibernation. That doesn't mean that events have stopped happening—there's more going on than ever. It just means that we're providing information about events to you in a different medium.

In the years since we began publishing our Calendar, more and more people have begun using the Internet to publicize activities and to find out who's doing what. In fact, direct contributions to our magazine's Community Calendar have trailed off significantly, to the point where our staff needs to hunt online for the information that fills the Calendar.

A periodical like ours simply cannot provide information of this type that's as fresh and immediate as the info you can find online. We suspect that our readers would be better served if we used these pages for the articles and columns that are our forte.

That's why we have decided to discontinue the Community Calendar and instead to offer this information via our online Community Events Calendar at events.ic.org. This increasingly-popular resource is loaded with listings about gatherings, festivals, conferences, workshops, and other community-related events. Posting your event is free, and the searchable interface makes it easy to find something you'd like to attend.

We believe you'll find our online calendar every bit as useful as the Calendar you used to see in these pages—probably even more so. Please check it out at events.ic.org and let us know what you think.

--Editor

Katherine Hauswirth who in "Ignoring Walden" cuts to the chase, acknowledging that while everyone wants to tell you how to do it, satisfaction remains your very own personal process. "One extreme of the simple-living spectrum are the territorial types who feel the need to surpass others, who equate ambivalence with weakness. On the other are magazines trying to convince us that scaling down requires more purchases: we have to go out and stock up on wholesome, charming, simplicity-related supplies. I can be attracted to either impulse, depending on my mood. But what really feels right is striving for independent thought and shunning programmed activity of any kind."

When I first picked up *Get Satisfied* I made the mistaken assumption that "satisfaction" equaled "simplicity." In Teena Hammond Gomez's essay, "Trading California for Kentucky," we learn that

to my sons and daughters: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe; The Indian in the Cupboard; A Story Like the Wind. I took a deep breath and whispered, 'You were terrific. I've loved you. Now I bid you goodbye.' A feeling of floating free crept into me. All those books accumulate a great deal of dust." She was then evicted by a firefighter, and her house burned to the ground. The story does not end there however, and her post-inferno observations are poignant and, well, satisfying.

Get Satisfied left me happy and hopeful. I feel like I've been given a glimpse into a world filled with people much like myself, who are purposefully searching for ways to live a great life and generously sharing, bumps and all, what they have gleaned along the way.

In closing, I will leave you with the words of Beth Herndon, a twenty-some-

I feel like I've been given a glimpse into a world filled with people much like myself.

she and her husband built a 3,600-sq. ft. country house with a 2,400-sq. ft. walk-out basement. She exclaims, "As I mentioned, simplifying doesn't mean downsizing—I have fabulous appliances and a beautiful kitchen!" I scratched my head. But I read on. And it began to dawn on me that satisfaction is a very personal thing. It was not up to me to judge, just to learn.

I think perhaps my favorite essay is "The Phoenix Rising" by J. Eva Nagel. With humor and pathos, she recounts what happened when her house burned down. After getting out the kids, the pets, and the photo albums, she had the chance to dash into a part of the building that was not yet engulfed in flames: the reading room. "I turn toward the shelves of books and it hits me: I am going to lose all of you. My life was on those shelves: books on childbirth, gardening, environmental issues... What about the biographies? And the novels! The ones I loved and read aloud

thing who works as a neurology nurse in Tennessee: "...as I age and continue on my journey, I am learning to ask not so much the bigger, weightier questions of my life, but of my heart instead. 'What are your truest desires?' And as my heart answers back, often quietly but deeply, I am learning to make time for those desires. I am learning that I cannot make it without them. In some cases, it is a person. Sometimes, it is a place. It could be a smell or a visual or a tactile feeling. But whatever it is, afterward I am never left wanting. Instead, I feel full—I have more than enough."*

Alline Anderson, a native Californian, is a member of Dancing Rabbit Eco-village and has been living happily among the meadowlarks and chicory of the Midwest since 1999.

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.

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

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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 natural builders and people with leadership skills into our community. Help make our ecovillage grow! 660-883-5511; dancingrabbit@ic.org; www.dancingrabbit.org.



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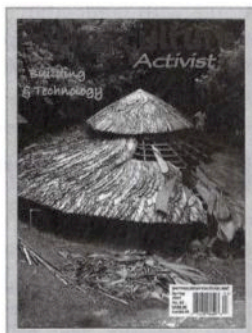
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GLOBAL COMMUNITY COMMUNICATIONS ALLIANCE, Tubac, Arizona. Founded by Gabriel of Urantia and Niann Emerson Chase in 1989. Currently 110 adults and children. International members. Global change work for Destiny Reservists in Divine Administration. God-centered community based on teachings of The URANTIA Book and Continuing Fifth Epochal Revelation. The Cosmic Family volumes, as received by Gabriel of Urantia. Organic gardens. Global Community Communications Schools, landscaping, Soulistic Medical Institute. Serious spiritual commitment required. POB 4910, Tubac, AZ 85646; 520-603-9932; info@gccalliance.org; www.gccalliance.org; www.globalchangemusic.org; www.musiciansnet.org.

FELLOWSHIP COMMUNITY, Spring Valley, New York. We seek co-workers. Located 30 minutes north of NYC, we are an intergenerational community founded in 1966, centered around the care of the elderly. Now numbering about 150 elderly, co-workers and children, we grow our own fruit and vegetables bio-dynamically. All ages work together in our practical work activities. They include a candle shop, metal shop, wood shop, weavery/handwork group, greenhouse, publishing press, bakery, outlet store and medical practice. The spiritual science (anthroposophy) of Rudolf Steiner is the basis for our work. There is a Waldorf School and several other anthroposophical initiatives nearby. Our lifestyle is an intense

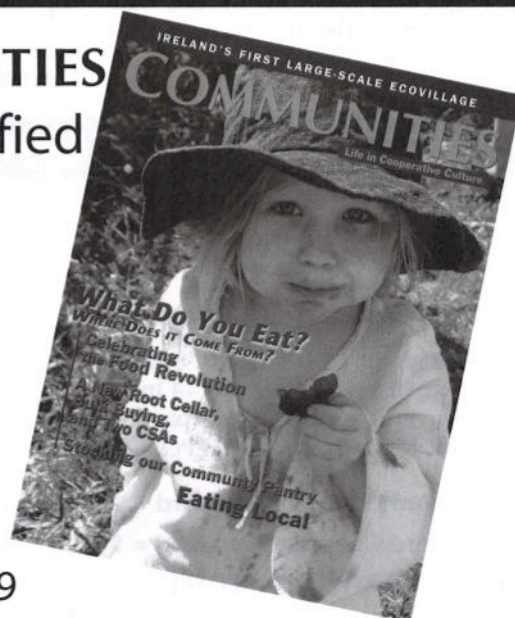
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SANTA ROSA CREEK COMMONS, Santa Rosa, California. We are an intergenerational, limited equity, housing cooperative 60 miles north of San Francisco. Although centrally located near public transportation, we are in a secluded wooded area beside a creek on two acres of land. We share ownership of the entire property and pay monthly charges that cover the usual expenses of home ownership. We have kept our costs reasonable by sharing all of the responsibilities of our cooperative and much of its labor. All members serve on the Board

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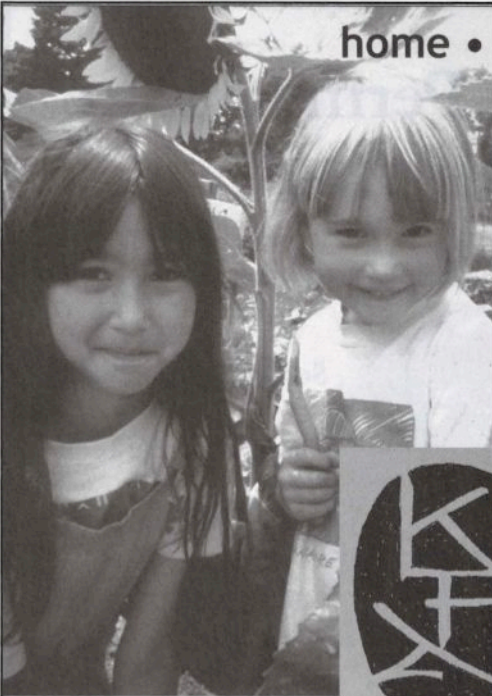
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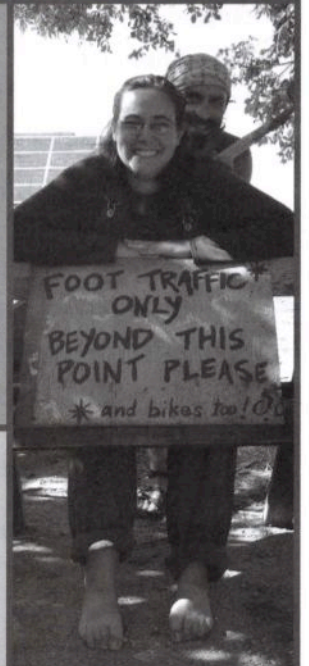
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A FUTURE HISTORY (continued from p. 32)

organisations, local communities, and individuals. This flow was made possible by the rapid evolution of communications and information technologies.

The Transformation of Values and Lifestyles

Ultimately it was an inner, spiritual transformation that made this grass-roots revolution possible.

In 2000, the primary goal of civilization was to maximise consumption. Free markets and trade,

workplace productivity, and economic efficiency took precedence over health, quality of life, and conservation of the environment. The result was competitive, individualistic societies lacking meaning and purpose, with high levels of stress, suicide, crime, and family breakdown.

By contrast, the core values of the world now are self-sufficiency, quality of life, and interbeing—a word coined by Thich Nhat Hanh to represent impermanence and interconnectedness, which began to gain general acceptance about 50 years ago. Today, we prefer to live materially simple lives deeply connected with nature. We devote ourselves to creativity and the arts, personal growth and wellbeing, relationships,

and community. And by doing so, we give our lives meaning and purpose.

Compared to 50 years ago, the wealthy now share more and consume less, travel less, and waste less. They are more concerned for the quality of the environment, social well-being, and the future of their children and grandchildren. And they are more aware of the consequences of their actions. Combined with new technologies, this transformation of values has reduced carbon emissions in post-industrial countries to 25 percent of those in 2000, and levels are still falling. Yet

satisfaction with life is far higher. Meanwhile, both the standard of living and quality of life in poorer countries has improved dramatically with only small increases in emissions.

How did human values and lifestyles change so dramatically in less than 50 years? The emergence of a new style of leadership was a key factor. Cultural creatives touched a chord in communities thirsty for change, and helped persuade governments of the importance of community action. As a result, governments began to fund employment of full-time facilitators to build self-reliant communities and promote change. Communities themselves provided similar opportunities by supporting personal and spiritual growth workshops, training in spiritual practices, and a range of therapies.

An unexpected side-effect of this process was that people discovered the intangible rewards of community activity and service. They began to spend more time on community activities, and less on “retail therapy.” Also, as they became more aware of their inner selves, they shifted away from materialistic concerns towards spiritual values, and their lifestyles changed accordingly. Thus, excessive consumption faded away naturally, rather than having to be reined in by government policies.


Conclusion

Many things contributed to our success in combating

climate change in the last 50 years. But the key factors were the shifts from material to spiritual values, and from individual to community values. Without this transformation, we would almost certainly be lamenting the deepening global crisis rather than celebrating the turning of the tide.*

Malcolm Hollick lives in the Findhorn Community, Scotland. He is author of The Science of Oneness: A Worldview for the Twenty-First Century and regularly posts articles on a wide range of subjects on malcolmhollick.zaadz.com/blog. Note: We preserve the spelling of our Commonwealth country authors.

Climate change Transformation of values



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CULTURE OF WOMEN

(continued from p. 37)

It seemed to me that if a woman were closely held in a wise community, she would be able to develop mentally, emotionally, and spiritually until she became a mature adult. That experience—and companionship—was what I was seeking in 1992 when I sought out a women's group sponsored by the Goodenough Community. Through this group I was introduced to the learning community which has been foundational in my life ever since.

The community encouraged my freedom to be myself (whatever that might be) and offered a curriculum for human develop-

ment and a network of friends to help me grow. The feminine archetypal stages have been especially important to my learning. For example, in 1995, when I turned 60, I asked to be recognized as a Crone-in-Training. I realized I wasn't mature enough to be a full-blown Crone and reasoned that I could learn and adopt the characteristics of that stage to help me "act my age." So some friends put on a little ceremony for me and two women agreed to give me ongoing feedback on how I was doing. When I turned 65, I was finally initiated by the women's culture as a Crone. Until recently I was the sole identified Crone at our gatherings.

Another aid to maturity that the women's culture offered me was leadership. I had always been a reluctant leader. I had been happy to serve on the women's leadership team but didn't want the responsibility for chairing it. Suddenly by necessity that responsibility fell to me. Over the next few years, with Colette Hoff as trainer and with the help of the other women on the team, I learned about group process, about group energy, and about creating and shaping an event around a theme to meet the needs of the women attending.

In addition to the archetypes, which are foundational to our women's culture, we choose themes to frame what we call our "curriculum." A recent example is our study of patriarchy and the impact it continues to have on both genders. Being feminine does not come to us in isolation, but is culturally and socially learned. The study of feminine principles led us back time and again to the framework of patriarchy—the unequal distribution of power favoring the masculine. And while the women's movement has made many gains for women, the cultural tension remains.

Women continue to need encouragement to move beyond reacting to patriarchy and rediscover a way of life that benefits women, children, and men—in other words, to develop what Riane Eisler calls relationship based on partnership and mutuality. In 2008, we will hold a series of public dialogues between the women's and men's cultures of the Goodenough Community with the goal of coming together in a partnership that honors our similarities and differences.

For myself, I have spent the last 30 years living in community and enjoying its opportunities for personal development and service to others. Many women have helped me, some of whom I have known for most of those 30 years. As my sisters ritualized my becoming a Crone, I became aware of what each of these phases of development gave me. Now I have an intuitive sense of where a woman is in her passage through developmental stages and into her fullest beauty. I love that there is an absence of judgment and an enjoyment of each woman's accomplishment and style of expression. And I appreciate the team of women who shape the women's culture with their lives—Hollis Ryan, Elizabeth Jarrett-Jefferson, Joan Valles, and Irene Perler. ❀

Colette Hoff, M.Ed., is cofounder of the American Association for the Furtherance of Community (Goodenough Community) and cofounder of the community women's program. A pastoral counselor and family

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educator, Colette has a special vocation working with women's issues, supporting and encouraging women through their life-stage transitions and on their spiritual journeys. Colette was recently initiated into the Crone phase of her life.

JOURNEY INN:
(continued from p. 56)

"communicator," or "producer." The word we eventually chose to define her role was "blender"—creating harmonious physical and social environments by introducing people and "fluffing" conversation between strangers.

Process and Results. Our culture is primarily results-oriented, framing almost everything in terms of problems to be solved. In contrast, Journey Inn's motto might have been, "The process is the result." Processing, by its nature, circumambulates through feelings and intuitions, especially when building consensus. This roundabout way of arriving takes longer, but is more inclusive.

When I cofounded a graphics program with another woman, our working style included both process and results. We spent a great deal of time setting the tone of the program as well as establishing the budget and setting quality standards. Our investment led to a rich working relationship and a durable program that is still going strong.

Feelings and thoughts. At Xerox meetings, people play the customary roles of facilitator, recorder, and timekeeper. But at Journey Inn we had one more role: a process observer who watched out for exclusion, getting stuck, or unexpressed emotions. I introduced that role into Xerox meetings and in activist groups I've facilitated. Being attentive to both

feelings and thoughts seems to make a group's work more complete—we're not leaving an important part of ourselves outside the door.

Synergistic Group Work. We Journey Inn-mates learned to work co-creatively, cooperatively, and with minimal ego. We often found that whatever we were creating had a life of its own, and our job was to "tune in" to it. The creation itself mattered more than who got the credit for the idea.

In my first years at Xerox, I worked with a woman and an unusually low-ego man. The primary mode that our other colleagues engaged in was competitive, analytical, and critical. By contrast, our trio relished a quick-moving creative process that fostered some novel ideas—and delightfully, none of us could remember who came up with the ideas. We were so thoroughly involved in the creative process that something greater could emerge.

Women's Contributions to Rebalancing the World. Over and over, we Journey Inn-mates expressed a belief that women's contributions were needed to rebalance the world. Our vision was "Woman as a Bridge to Transformation":

We are seeing that the often-invisible and unacknowledged qualities most needed now to rebalance a precariously endangered planet are precisely those aspects that are usually more fully developed in women. We feel it may be women who will have a larger contribution to make at this time in healing and transforming life on the planet.

We are now entering an era of declining resources, climate change, and contracting economies. In our

western cultures, our social fabric has been deeply shredded by consumerism, and we live in relative isolation in our separate households.

I think contraction will lead us to re-form communities of mutual support on a smaller, local, more personal scale. I hope women are at the forefront, providing a counterbalance to the current paradigm that is consuming our planet. Perhaps women who are or have been living in community will show us there are other ways to live, as I learned at Journey Inn.✿

Janaia Donaldson is the host and producer of "Peak Moment Conversations: Community Responses for a Changing Energy Future" (www.peakmoment.tv), along with her partner Robyn Mallgren. In addition to her Journey Inn life, Janaia has been a Layerist painter, a graphic designer, coordinator and teacher in the University of California Extension graphic design program, and a user interface designer at Xerox. She and Robyn live and work in the Sierra Nevada foothills in an off-grid home on 160 forested acres that they have protected with conservation easements.



Looking for more information about community?

Community Bookshelf

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BUILDING A BUSINESS

(continued from p. 59)

starting slowly and keeping costs down, we expect to be profitable within two years.

Community Support

This is the part that has been the most rewarding—and the most scary—for me. Up until now DR has been small and fairly insular. While we have regular public tours, an annual open house, and visitor sessions throughout the summer, we still get pretty used to it just being us around here. While we all agree that we hope to grow to a village of 500, getting there has always looked a bit fuzzy. So it was with some trepidation that Kurt and I shared our dream with the community. I so crave the support of my peers in bringing my dream to fruition. How would they react to the prospect of hosting a constant stream of (even more) strangers?

Fortunately, our plans have been mostly well-received, and people seem to share our feeling that the benefits

will outweigh the difficulties. Our community members, like us, anticipate that folks interested in staying at DR will be kindred spirits. Many members also look forward to having a comfortable place for friends and families to stay when they come to visit. At our annual retreat in February the group will undoubtedly spend time discussing the ramifications, both positive and negative, of inviting hundreds of people to Dancing Rabbit. Kurt and I look forward to feedback, and to making the Mercantile an asset to the community.

Reality Check

We thought we'd start building in March 2007. But it rained and rained and rained. The rain came in amounts that Noah would have covered under. Finally, in June the sun came out, and in spite of numerous cave-ins our fantastic crew finally got our basement, storm shelter, and foundation completed. Then in July and October both Kurt and I suffered intense personal losses in our respective families. The project stalled again. But every single person in the DR, Sandhill,

and Red Earth Farms communities was there for us, both physically and emotionally. We rallied our spirits and charged ahead. By winter the building was framed and gorgeous. We continued work whenever the weather allowed, and when it became too frigid to work outside, we came indoors to plan for the spring.

Crafting this business from scratch is the most exciting and terrifying thing I have ever done. I often feel overwhelmed. I am not really starting one business—I am starting four: a B&B, a café, an online store, and a “brick and mortar” store. It is often paralyzing to write check after check with funds not yet coming in. But it is equally exhilarating to tell others about my business and watch their faces light up. Sometimes when we get really nervous, Kurt and I pull out our DVD of *Field of Dreams*. Corny as it sounds, we take comfort as we sit in the dark of our cozy living room, chanting to ourselves “if we build it, they will come...”

The other thing that never fails to encourage us is the amazing help we're getting from our extended community. For instance, DR member Amy Seiden has always dreamed of running a B&B, and has agreed to be our Inn Manager. Jason Meier, a member of neighboring Red Earth Farms, has had years of restaurant experience and cooks like a man possessed. He has expressed interest in running our café. A new resident has an extensive background in retail inventory systems, a green interior designer has signed on to help, former DR interns are planning the garden, and other supporters keep appearing as the building takes shape.

We are clearly on the right track, and it feels great. I continue to learn the same lesson over and over—if I follow my heart, good things happen. By living in community, I feel that all things are possible.✿

Alline Anderson is a member of Dancing Rabbit Ecovillage. She is the Proprietor/Top Banana of the Milkweed Mercantile, which is scheduled to open in the summer of 2008. For more info, please go to www.milkweedmercantile.com.

Visions of Utopia: Experiments in Sustainable Culture

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

- A brief history of 2500 yrs of shared living
- Profiles of 7 very diverse communities
Camphill Special School ('61, PA), Twin Oaks ('67, VA), Ananda Village ('69, CA), Breitenbush Hot Springs ('77, OR), Purple Rose Collective ('78, CA), Earthaven ('92, NC)
- Insights about what works and what doesn't
- 90 minutes of information & inspiration!

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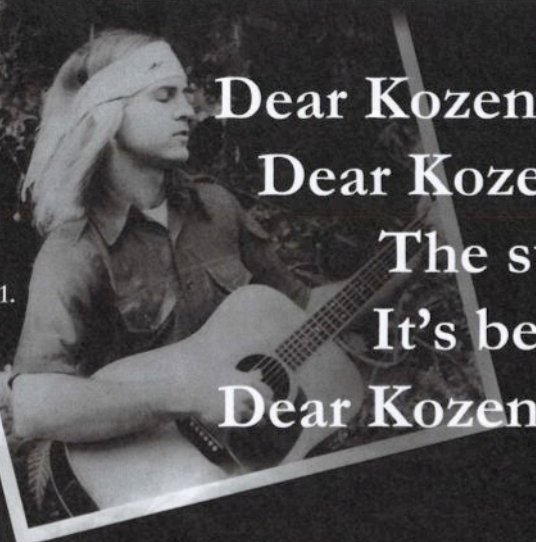
—Communal Studies Association, Oct 2003

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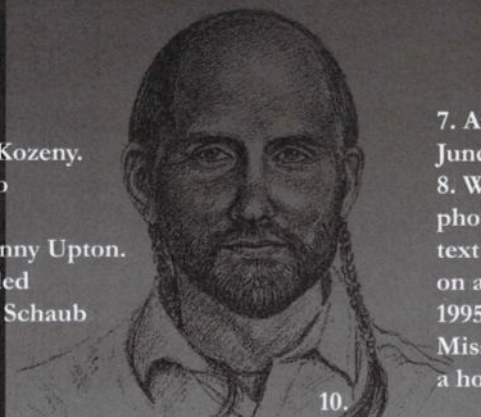
Ordinary People doing extraordinary things.



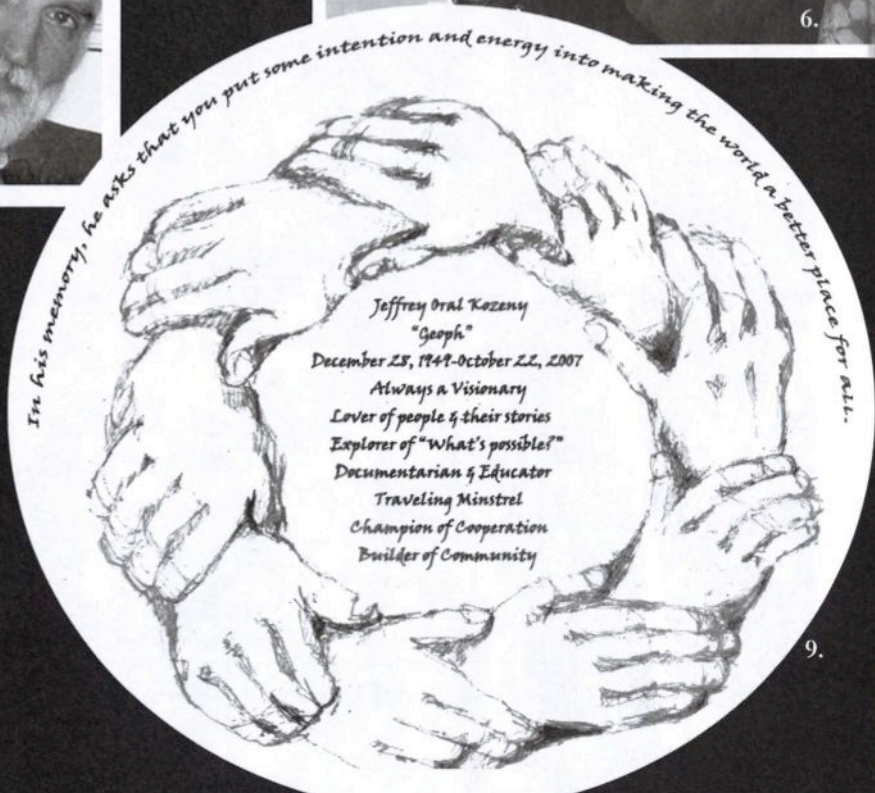
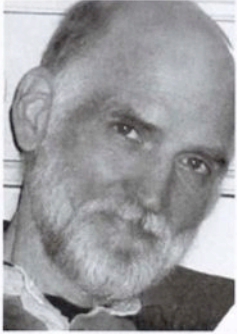
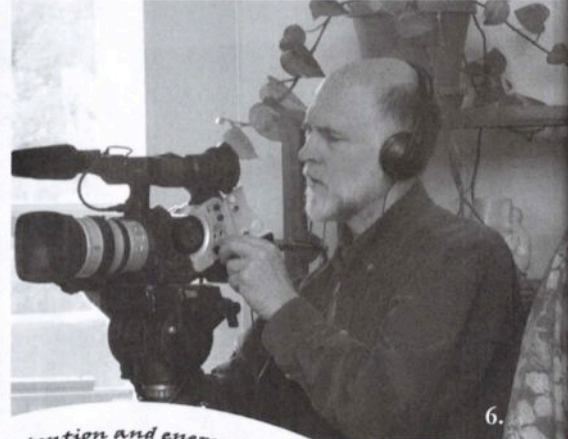
Dear Kozeny, won't you come out to play?
 Dear Kozeny, greet the brand new day!
 The sun is up, the sky is blue,
 It's beautiful, and we love you!
 Dear Kozeny, won't you come out to play?



1. With guitar; photo provided by Penny Kozeny.
 2. With Loren Schein; photo provided by Penny Kozeny.
 3. With Chris Englund and Miaya Sustaita; photo provided by Penny Kozeny. 4. At Eraca Cleary's apartment, San Francisco, July 2007; photo by Jenny Upton.
 5. Playing guitar at Summer Camp; photo provided by Penny Kozeny. 6. Filming Laird and Ma'ikwe Schaub and Ludwig's wedding, Albuquerque, April 2007; photo by Marty Klaif.



7. At 40th High School reunion, Neodesha, Kansas, June 2007; photo provided by Don Adams.
 8. With Jenny Upton, San Francisco, July 2007; photo: Dan Questenberry. 9. Memorial plaque: text by Geoph, drawing by Bob Poeschl based on a British coin. 10. Portrait by Mary E. Libby, 1995. 11. (p. 76) At Hearthaven, Kansas City, Missouri, 1990, helping the community build a hot tub; photo by Maril Crabtree.



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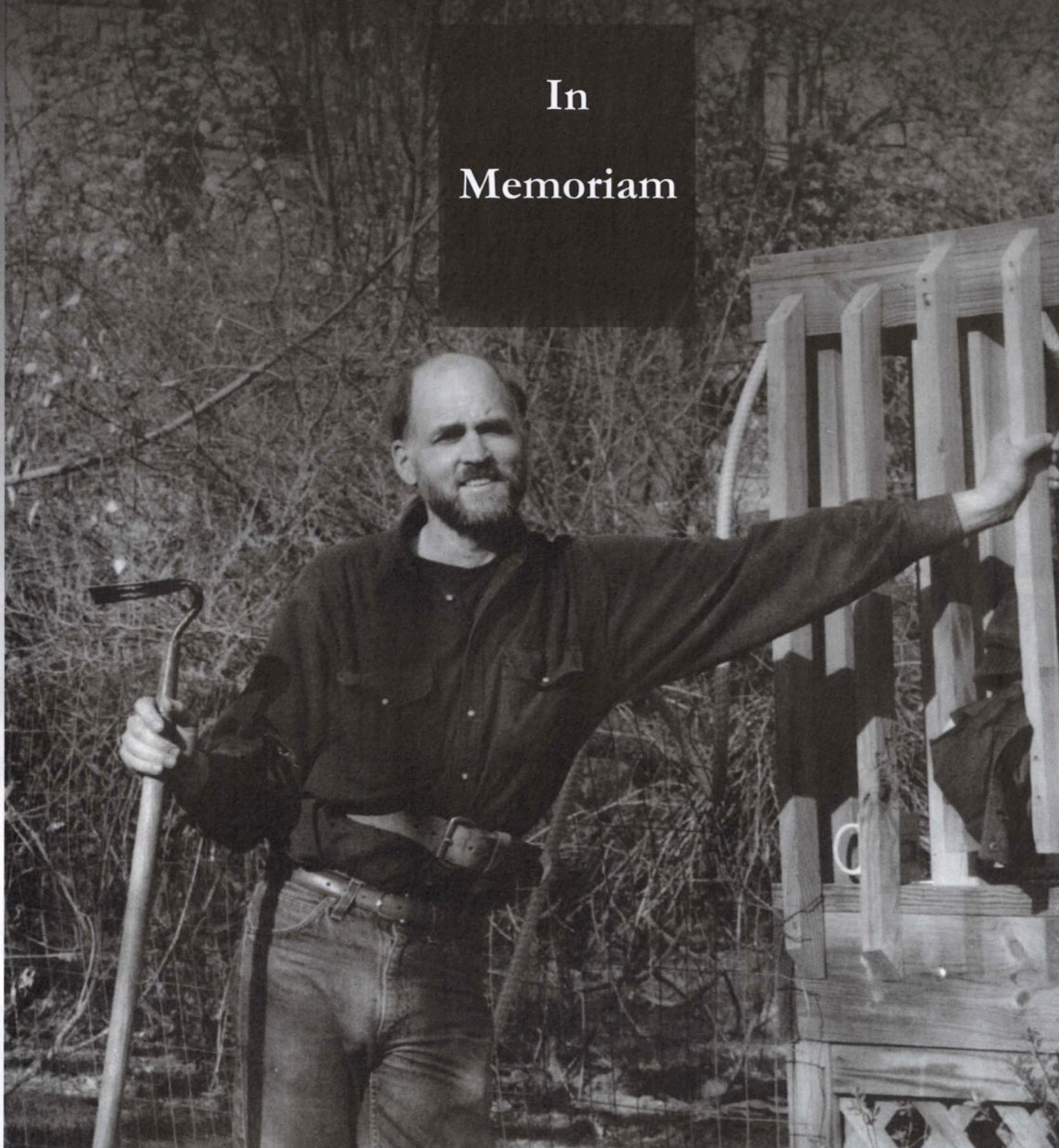
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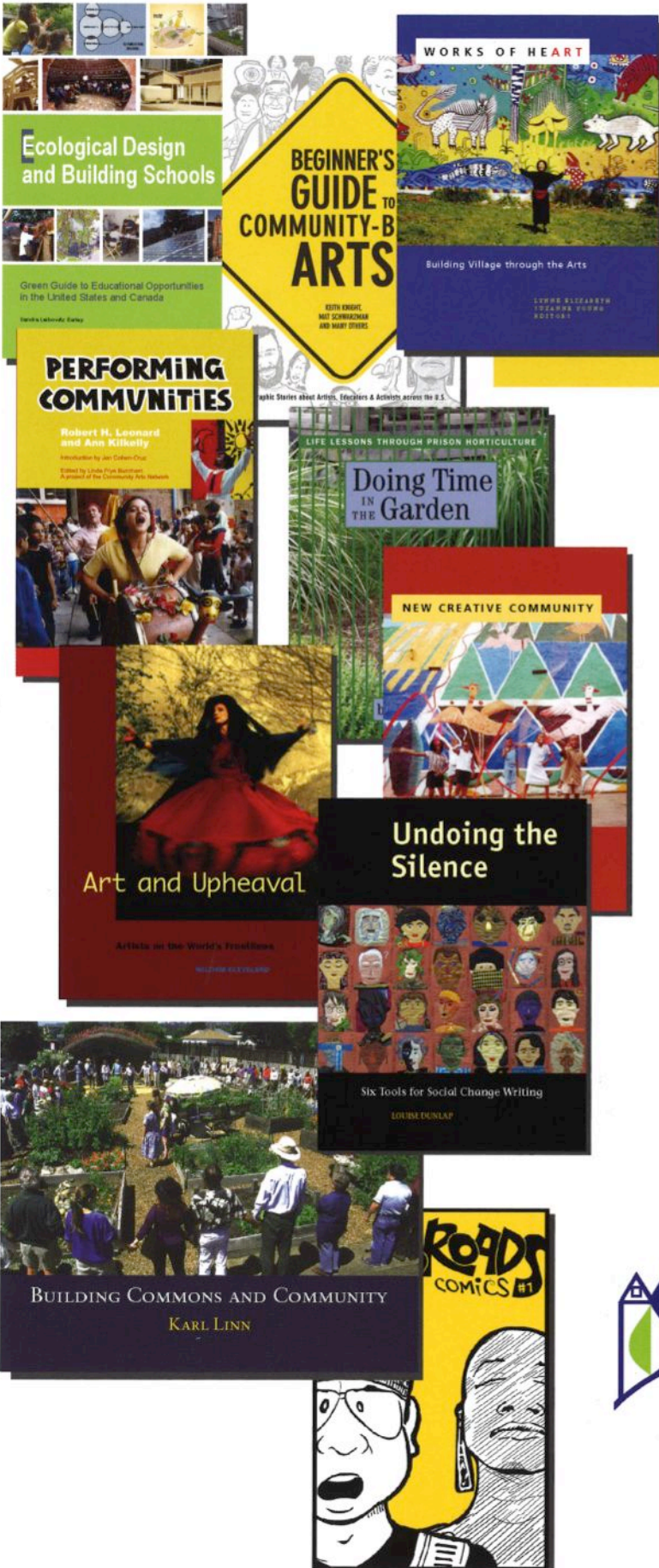
THE PERIPATETIC COMMUNITARIAN

Geoph Kozeny, a well-known and beloved community networker and activist, and regular author of *The Peripatetic Communitarian* column in these pages, died on October 22, 2007.

With these images(continued on p. 75) we celebrate and commemorate Geoph and his life.

In Memoriam





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