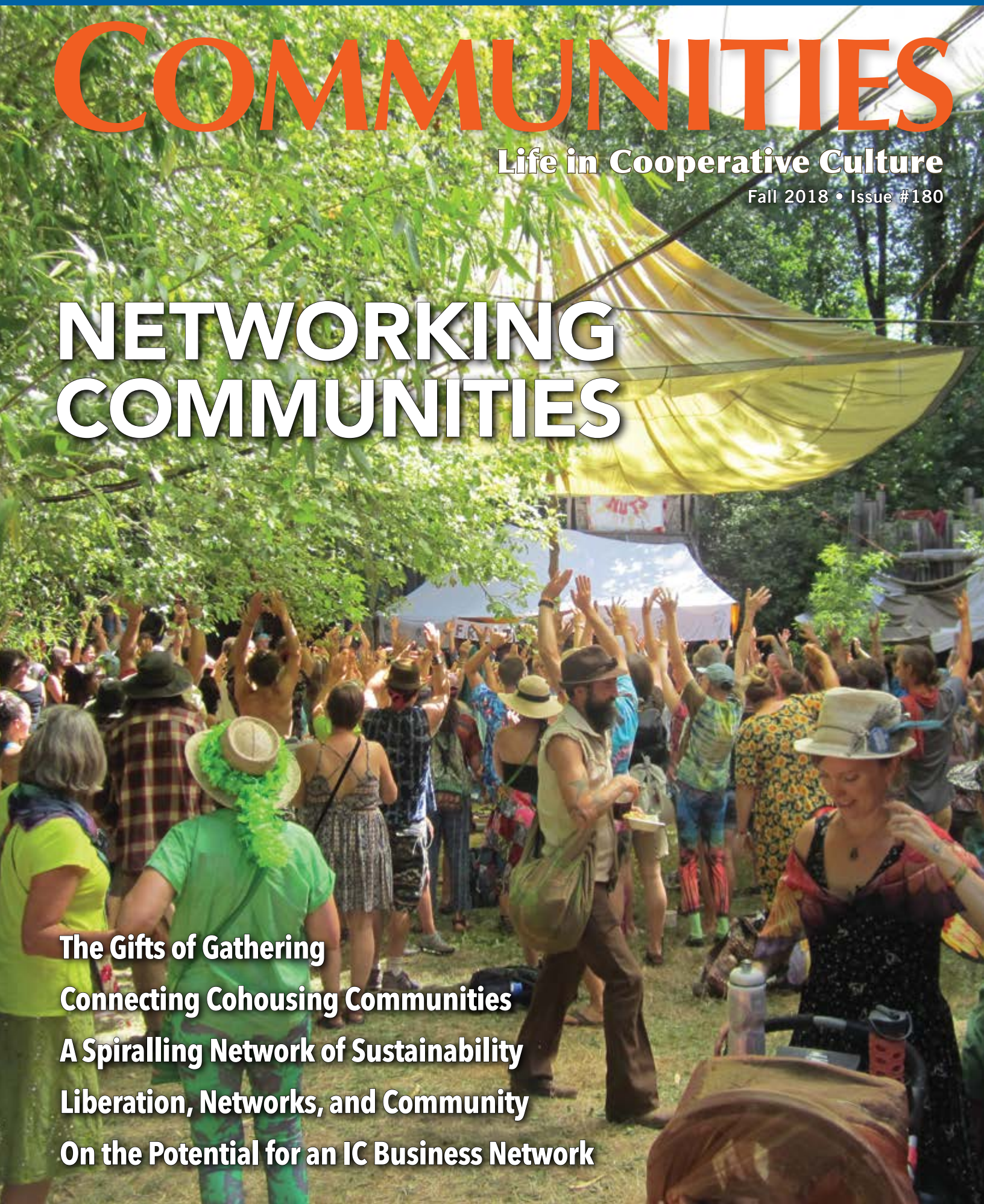
ALLIANCES • EVENTS • WON'T YOU BE MY NEIGHBOR?

COMMUNITIES

Life in Cooperative Culture

Fall 2018 • Issue #180

NETWORKING COMMUNITIES



The Gifts of Gathering

Connecting Cohousing Communities

A Spiralling Network of Sustainability

Liberation, Networks, and Community

On the Potential for an IC Business Network

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CFNC Spring Camp: May 18-22, W. VA.
NCNW Cascadia: June 30-July 7, So. WA
CFNC East Coast: July 13-22, W. VA
NFNC West: July 27-Aug 5 + 6-9, So. OR
CFNC Fall Camp: Oct 5-9, W. VA

New Culture Southern California

HOME | SPRING CAMP | NC COMMUNITY PRINCIPLES | MORE

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- Consent Culture
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CONTACT US: aciv@cfnc.us 304-825-3555 http://aciv.cfnc.us

New Culture Northwest Cascadia Fall MiniCamp

Southern Washington
Thursday September 28 — Sunday October 1, 2017

Held in the beauty of the Gorge at Windward Intentional Community, MiniCamp is a 3½ day tent camp with workshops, forum, and much fun! We work to connect deeply, build tribe, explore sustainability, support relationship freedom, create intimacy and step into our power for critical social and personal change. Registration opens August 1, info: ncnw.us

Visit www.new-culture.org for a list of all NFNC related organizations and events.

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CAMPHILL ASSOCIATION OF NORTH AMERICA

Issue #180
Fall 2018

NETWORKING COMMUNITIES

ON THE COVER

Fair participants network and celebrate in Community Village, Oregon Country Fair, July 13, 2018. The Intentional Communities Booth is just off-camera right.
Photo by Chris Roth.

Communities
Life in Cooperative Culture

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Publisher's Note BY SKY BLUE

EVERYTHING IS IN SOMEONE'S BACKYARD

Chris Roth

There was a time when dropping out and going back to the land to live the good life was a viable option. Perhaps it still is, but only for a very, very small percentage of humanity. There's no escape. And at this point, with so much devastation and injustice happening around the world, we have to ask the question, is it even right to escape?

On an ecological level, escape is increasingly unrealistic. Climate change doesn't care about your permaculture plan. (Permaculture can add to your resilience in the face of climate disruption, but cannot bestow immunity.) Radioactivity from Fukushima doesn't care about national borders, and pollutants carried by water don't stop at your property line. (While you can take measures to mitigate these threats, they will be at best only partially effective.) If you live in an ecosystem that's collapsing it ultimately doesn't matter how sustainable your community is.

On an economic level, there's virtually no avoiding some amount of involvement in global, industrial, free-market capitalism. Even if you're somehow able to make or barter for everything you need to live, chances are that some of what you're bartering for was created with inputs of financial capital. Avoiding this entanglement becomes more possible the more low-tech you're willing to live, but realistically, is this really an option for most of the 7.5 billion people who live on this planet given the realities of infrastructure that, for as unsustainable as it is, is depended on by billions of people?

And then the social dimension comes in, and you have to face the fact that pursuing this kind of lifestyle is a privilege, and as with any kind of privilege, a hallmark of privilege is getting to avoid facing it. No one is entitled to consume more than their fair share of the earth's resources or to limit the access of others to the resources they need to sustain themselves. But even if you're managing to live a lifestyle that doesn't consume more than your fair share, and you personally are not actively limiting the access of others, there are global systems that are, and avoiding them is condoning them. Ethics aside, there's also the real possibility of living in a region inundated by climate refugees, or, if there are food or water shortages, needing to contend with desperate people, assuming you're not one of them.

Escape is impossible, and arguably immoral. If we want safety and security for ourselves, our families, our communities, then it needs to be available for everyone on the planet and done sustainably. We have to do something. But how do we even begin to deal with all of this? Recognizing the systemic, interdependent nature of it all is a start.

There is no more outside

Over half the world's population uses the internet. Over half live in urban areas. The vast majority of people are dependent on local economic systems that are dependent, either for resources or legitimacy, on national economic systems, which are dependent on and to some extent beholden to global economic systems. There are almost no "uncontacted" people left on the planet. For all practical purposes all of humanity exists as a single global society. Trying to extract yourself or a community from this is virtually impossible.

I frequently hear people say things along the lines of, I want to live in a sustainable/self-sustaining

community. People seem to have a glamorized image of self-sustaining and vastly underestimate what's involved. I live in a community where we produce around 60 percent of our own food; it takes up a huge chunk of our capacity. Getting to 100 percent would be monumental. And there's so much more than food.

Take nails for instance. Are you going to set up a forge to make your own nails? Or are you planning on living in structures that don't require nails, or really any metal tools at all? Okay, say you want to set up a forge, how are going to set up the forge in the first place without buying the equipment? Or, are you going to make the equipment? How are you going to do that?

Okay, say you want to go neo-primitive. What land are you on? How did you get that land? Even if you own it outright, you still have to pay property tax, so where's that money going to come from?

How far are you willing to go without dental or medical care? Are you ready to never use a mode of transportation other than your own two feet?

There is a compromise born of a deep acceptance of the way things are combined with a commitment to certain values and ideals mixed with a large dose of good-natured flexibility about how things turn out. Finding the right balance that cares for you, your community, and the whole world all at the same time is core to what intentional community is all about.

There is a beauty and an art in the pragmatism of building community. Building community includes everything that exists in our day-to-day lives. It's the relationships, friends and families, the interplay of human habit with natural environment, it's food and water and shelter, it's raising the children, building the buildings, all the necessities of life, dealing with our shit, literally and figuratively, it's the negotiations of all these things with others, it's our sense of meaning and purpose, it's fun and music and dance and culture, and the people you're doing it all with and the places you're doing it all in, and how all of that is cared for and managed within the context of the world as it exists around you. All of our ideals and intentions have been brought down to the level of, how exactly is this going to work?

We need to accept the fact that how it's going to work is, at least at first, participating in global capitalism and using non-renewable resources like fossil fuels. It's just the way the world works right now, and there's no way to change it without continuing to participate in it to some degree. There's no changing it from the outside. There is no more outside. There are no more backyards.

Yeah, it sucks, but it's what we have to deal with, and avoiding it, hating it, being afraid of it, isn't going to help. Our task is to transform this global human society from the inside out. We must become highly engaged global citizens understanding that, collectively, all our actions together make the world what it is becoming.

No one is free until all are free

Let's get real. We are facing multiple, interconnected global dangers, rooted in the exploitation of people and planet. These dangers include climate change, wealth disparity, and social injustice.

These are co-created and mutually reinforcing problems. They are systemic.

This system perpetuates wealth disparity and dispossession of land, generates political disenfranchisement, makes legal the oppression and exploitation of some people by others, and supports resource extraction that is destructive of ecosystems.

It's fostered by and reinforces cultures that promote or condone violence as a form of conflict resolution, that assert the superiority of one group of people over others, and that believe in or accept the entitlement of some people to resources and decision-making at the expense of others.

The legacies of oppression and exploitation of some groups by others have real impacts on the current ability of people to sustain themselves and thrive, and efforts need to be made to correct this and heal from the trauma it has caused.

Some people benefit from the systems of capitalism, patriarchy, and racism that underlie geopolitics and the global economy. Everyone is harmed by these systems to some degree or another.

We have to do this together. Everyone has to be on board. Everyone. That's the only way this is going to work. However much you have, be it in material, social, political, or emotional resources, if you have more than others, share it, and if you can get others to do the same, do it.

Human society has the capacity to support the health and well-being of all forms of life, if we recognize the rights of nature, the interdependence of all life, and that the health and well-being of one depends on the health and well-being of all. This movement is about creating communities that endeavor to create solutions, work toward this ideal, and change the direction of human society. If you're reading this I believe that you are part of this and playing a role in this movement. Thank you for doing this work.

Sky Blue (sky@ic.org) is Executive Director of the Fellowship for Intentional Community.

Alliance Building

There are lots of organizations out there that FIC identifies as allies, partners, or simply like-minded and aligned. We have a kind of sibling relationship with several in particular: Cohousing Association of the US (CoHo/US; www.cohousing.org), North American Students of Cooperation (NASCO; www.nasco.coop), and the Global Ecovillage Network (GEN; www.ecovillage.org). These are all groups actively networking and providing support to particular models of intentional community, and they're all groups we've had some measure of relationship with for at least 20 years. These days we enjoy a positive relationship with each and frequently find simple ways to support each other—for example, cross-sharing on social media.

We also continue to build relationships with other organizations, including those that help create a broader perspective—in particular, Transition US (transitionus.org), which networks and supports the Transition Town movement in the US, and various permaculture events and publications.

We've been a member of the New Economy Coalition (neweconomy.net) for almost three years—check out the sidebar **CommonBound**!

We've also been working for several years with the North American arm of the Global Ecovillage Network, acting as a partner to the Global Ecovillage Network of North America (GENNA; ecovillage.org/region/genna) and the recently expanded GENNA Alliance.

GENNA Alliance is a collaborative platform for organizations and individuals serving the regenerative communities network within North America. Initial partner organizations include: Global Ecovillage Network (www.ecovillage.org), Fellowship for Intentional Community (ic.org), NuMundo (www.numundo.org), VillageLab (www.villagelab.net), GEN-US (gen-us.net), and NextGENNA (nextgenna.org).

Current initiatives within the Alliance include:

- Data sharing
- Consultancy program
- Cross-promotion
- Event organizing
- Internships
- Collaborative fundraising

For more on the GENNA Alliance, check out Cynthia Tina's article in this issue ("Leading Edges of Collaboration: GENNA Alliance," pp. 14-16).

There are numerous other organizations we're in communication with and we are always on the lookout for opportunities to support them, collaborate, or projects to work on together that we couldn't do alone.

—SB

CommonBound!

FIC has been a member of the New Economy Coalition (NEC; neweconomy.net) for close to three years, and had representatives at their biennial conference, CommonBound (www.commonbound.org), held earlier this year in St. Louis, Missouri. Being a member of NEC has helped provide context for the FIC, putting our work in a broader perspective that includes a multitude of people, organizations, and communities all working towards similar values.

The over 200 members include 350.org, Equal Exchange (equalexchange.coop), US Federation of Worker Cooperatives (usworker.coop/home), Code Pink (www.codepink.org), Transition US (transitionus.org), and many more groups doing community organizing, political action, providing services, networking, advocating, and more across the US.

NEC "is a network of organizations imagining and building a future where people, communities, and ecosystems thrive. Together, we are creating deep change in our economy and politics—placing power in the hands of people and uprooting legacies of harm—so that a fundamentally new system can take root.

"Our network advances change in three main ways:

1. We convene and connect leaders to tackle common challenges in their work to build a new economy.

2. We amplify stories, tools, and analysis, weaving a collective new economy narrative that can build shared identity, shift culture and policy, and promote a clear vision of the next system.

3. We lift up the work of communities on the frontlines of interrelated economic and ecological crises who are organizing for transformative change, through right relationships and direct support.

"The 'new economy' represents an emerging vision for a just, sustainable, and democratic future:

• Justice: A new economy must work for all people, starting with those who have historically been marginalized and exploited by racism, imperialism, classism, patriarchy, and other systems of oppression.

• Sustainability: A new economy supports regeneration of both human and natural systems. It builds community resilience by rooting wealth and power in place and in service of human needs on a finite planet.

• Democracy: A new economy incorporates democratic principles into the management of economic and civic life."

One of the NEC projects we've been tracking is the development of a Policy Platform, which will detail out the kinds of political and economic changes to public policy we're collectively calling for. Once developed it'll be a great thing for us to be able to point to, rather than needing to articulate ourselves.

Being a member of NEC has also put us in closer contact with allies like the Sustainable Economies Law Center (www.theselc.org), and Shareable (www.shareable.net), and has also helped us connect with organizations we hadn't connected with before. Being part of that network has been highly beneficial and I recommend exploring membership with them.

—SB

Conferences: Making the Movement Personal

I've been a main organizer for the Twin Oaks Communities Conference for most of the last 18 years. The conference has been one of the few conferences focusing on intentional community happening annually, and has been held consistently for 24 years. It also helped spin off the West Coast Communities Conference, now in its fourth year. They are joined by several other events, including Institute by the North American Students for Cooperation (NASCO; www.nasco.coop), now in its 40th year, and the annual or biannual national and regional conferences by the Cohousing Association of the United States (CoHo/US; www.cohousing.org).

These are some of the places where the network becomes tangible. A call is put out, logistics are organized, and people gather together in the furtherance and exploration of this thing they're each doing in different places. These are places where people living in, or interested in living in, communities come together to meet and co-educate, and for the people who already know each other to gather in reunion.

Especially for people coming from new or struggling communities, it's refreshing to be able to talk to people who understand about the challenges in community but who are not part of the community and mixed up in whatever you're dealing with. It's an opportunity to learn, have fun, and create connections that can bring social and material support.

At the Twin Oaks and West Coast conferences we do facilitate a session where communities that are represented at the event present themselves to the group. It's an opportunity to get in front of people who are looking for a community to join but also for people in different communities to know about each other. Simply knowing about each other, who's out there, what opportunities and options exist, supports everyone involved. For example, the first community you visit is not usually the best fit, but if that first community is connected to more communities you're more likely to find a good fit. So, it's good for the seeker, but it's also good for the community that is found by someone who will help them thrive. Communities being connected to communities also creates opportunities for mutual support, especially in times of crisis. Communities are more likely to understand and be sympathetic to the problems of other communities, and are also more likely to have a bigger pool of support to draw from.

These events are good portals into the larger movement. They offer an introductory experience into the world of communities. Lots of people out there would be interested in intentional community if they knew about it. So many people visiting Twin Oaks tell me things like, "I wondered if any '60s communes still existed and did a Google search and found Twin Oaks." But finding Twin Oaks means finding a whole network of communities, from the five other groups in the same county, to the other communities in the Federation of Egalitarian Communities (FEC; www.thefec.org), to the Cohousing Association of the US, the Global Ecovillage Network, NASCO, and more.

Communities exist as models for collectivizing. As more and more people start to need to do it out of necessity, models for doing it well will be more and more important. We want to grow this movement so that the benefits of intentional community can be available to more and more people. We want to keep bringing in more people to join groups that need them. So, we have to put keep putting ourselves out there and make this movement real.

—SB

Clusters of Communities: The Radical Triangle

Intentional communities benefit from being in close proximity to each other. It simply makes social and economic exchange easier, which makes starting new communities as well as expanding existing communities easier.

A cluster that came on my radar recently is the "Radical Triangle" in upstate New York. I had the opportunity to visit Wildseed Community in March. It is "an emerging Black and Brown-led, feminine-centered, queer-loving, earth-based intentional community, organic farm, healing sanctuary, and political and creative home forming on 181 acres" in Millerton, New York (see www.wildseed-community.org).

Next door is the Watershed Center, "a retreat and resource center for changemakers" offering "seminars, workshops, consulting and organizational retreats designed to help people align their lives with their own deepest sense of purpose, to strengthen the creative capacity of organizations and to facilitate strategic conversations in service of democracy, ecology and liberation" (see www.thewatershedcenter.org).

Using land from Watershed is Rock Steady Farm, "a women and queer-owned cooperative farm, rooted in social justice, growing speciality cut flowers and sustainable vegetables" (see www.rock-steadyfarm.com).

And using land from Wildseed is Linke Fligl, "a queer Jewish chicken farm" and "cultural organizing project" (see www.linkefligl.com).

I was blown away by the work these groups are doing and the extended community of interconnected groups and projects and individuals doing amazing work, manifest on their land, in the local town, the region, and all the way to NYC. Please check these groups out and offer support!

—SB

Founded in 2010, WolfStone Ranch is a licensed nonprofit animal shelter that has so far saved the lives of over 250 dogs and cats. And now I want to form an Intentional Community with Kindred Spirits as passionate and committed as I, to help me expand WolfStone Ranch into a **SPIRITUAL RETREAT CENTER FOR PETS… and their people!**

WolfStone Ranch's overall goal is to become a deeply spiritually-based, passionately activist community dedicated to making the rural Midwest a much more compassionate place for all the animals (and people) who live in this region.

First, please see my online ad at **www.ic.org/advert/wolfstone-ranch**… and then check out my website, **wolfstoneranch.org**.

DIVERSITY is crucial to the success of the new WolfStone Ranch. Therefore, I am enthusiastically seeking people of all ages, races, ethnicities, genders, sexual identities... and religions that do not practice torture or sacrifice of animals. (Being a vegetarian is required.)

IF YOU RESONATE WITH MY VISION for WolfStone Ranch, then you will be welcome here! Prospective members may be invited for a one-week work and visioning stay at the ranch.

cohoUSing

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Cohousing provides the community we need to thrive while ensuring the privacy we enjoy.

CohoUS is a national non-profit raising awareness of the benefits of cohousing and supporting the development of cohousing communities nationwide.

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www.cohousing.org

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www.ourecovillage.org
info@ourecovillage.org

OUR ECOVILLAGE

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 or shared projects.

Through fact, fiction, and opinion, we offer fresh ideas about how to live and work 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 also seek articles about cooperative ventures of all sorts–in workplaces, in neighborhoods, among people sharing common interests–and about "creating community where you are."

We do not intend to promote one kind of group 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 thematically to community living and/or cooperation, 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 Writers' Guidelines: COMMUNITIES, 23 Dancing Rabbit Ln, Rutledge MO 63563-9720; 800-462-8240; editor@ic.org. To obtain Photo Guidelines, email: layout@ic.org. Both are also available online at ic.org/communities-magazine.

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 handpick our advertisers, selecting only those whose products and services we believe will be helpful to our readers. That said, we are not in a position to verify the accuracy or fairness of statements made in advertisements–unless they are FIC ads–nor in REACH listings, and publication of ads should not be considered an FIC endorsement.

If you experience a problem with an advertisement or listing, we invite you to call this to our attention and we'll look into it. Our first priority in such instances is to make a good-faith attempt to resolve any differences by working directly with the advertiser/lister and complainant. If, as someone raising a concern, you are not willing to attempt this, we cannot promise that any action will be taken.

Please check ic.org/communities-magazine or email ads@ic.org for advertising information.

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; 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.

Notes from the Editor BY CHRIS ROTH

Won't You Be My Neighbor?

The COMMUNITIES editor is invariably involved in networking—connecting readers to authors, connecting community-seekers, communitarians, communities, and cooperative activists and projects to one another, connecting our own nonprofit with other people and projects who are allied with our work. Magazines like this one, focused on Life in Cooperative Culture, are inherently networking tools, bringing disparate individuals and groups together through the magic of the written word and reproduced image. Fortunately, the editor does not need to be comfortable at parties, power lunches, golf courses, social media sites, or networking gatherings to contribute to this work. I (in this case) can be exactly who I am (that is, someone not generally drawn to any of those things, except the latter when they involve intentional community).

As mentioned here before, I first read COMMUNITIES in my high school library, back when Paul Freundlich (whose latest article appears on page 65) was editing it. My high school years are also notable for the fact that by the end of them I had sworn off television completely, believing it to be a distraction and an escape. I felt it added no meaning or value to my life, and I wanted to pursue real life (such as that I'd read about in COMMUNITIES) instead. With rare exceptions (usually involving family visits or YouTube clips), I have never deliberately watched television since.

Why is this important? It might not be, but for the purposes of this Editor's Note it is. For despite the connection between those two things—discovering the world of community and disavowing the world of television—it's not true that *no* television show ever had any lasting meaning to me.

One show did. Unlike the others, it found an emotional resonance and affected me in ways otherwise restricted to such things as real life, good books, and music. And perhaps not surprisingly, it was created by someone who (in the words of his eldest son) hated television. Yet he also had a dream of the entire country coming together as "one community" through that medium.

My parents bought their first TV specifically so my brother and I could watch the new show *Mister Rogers' Neighborhood*, which debuted on national television when I was six years old. Fred Rogers quickly became the most important adult in my life besides my own parents and other family members; he visited our living room every weekday evening before dinner, and took us around his home, his neigbhborhood, and the Land of Make-Believe. As has been true for millions of young viewers, he seemed to speak directly to me. And his messages, I see in retrospect, were all about the understandings and skills that lead us to be "good neighbors," good members of our communities—simply by being (and accepting and loving) our whole selves, which makes it natural and easy to accept and love others in the same way. The difficulty of attempting to capture those insights simply via the written word is the flip side of the power that the medium of television—which can reveal so many aspects of a person's being simultaneously, if used skillfully—brought to those same insights, when in the hands of Fred Rogers.

Mister Rogers' Neighborhood recently re-emerged into national consciousness through the documentary *Won't You Be My Neighbor?* As of this writing, I've watched it four times, with four dif-

Michael Roth, Christopher Roth, Johnny Costa, François Clemmons, Fred Rogers, Joanne Rogers, and James Rogers on church steps in Pittsburgh, 1972.

Nancy Roth

ferent friends, and I will not soon tire of watching it.

My family's connection with Mr. Rogers became more than just through the television. One day my father, the organist and choirmaster at a local church, came home from work and asked us to guess who'd just auditioned, successfully, to be his new tenor soloist. We couldn't guess. It was Officer Clemmons (François Clemmons off-screen). François, who lived a commuter train ride away in New York City, became a frequent visitor to our house, and a regular overnight guest especially before major choir performances, and my mother (a keyboardist herself) accompanied him in children's concerts he gave of Mr. Rogers' music around the Northeast. After a few years of this, my parents, my brother, and I took a trip to western Pennsylvania to help my grandmother move up to our town.

François, in Pittsburgh for show filming at the time, suggested we attend a Sunday morning church service with him—we might appreciate the preacher. It turned out to be Fred Rogers, whom we met after the service, and who immediately invited us all to lunch. He was the same in person as on the screen—gentle, kind, genuinely caring, imaginative, funny. In the restaurant, the waitpeople continuously topped off my water glass after nearly every sip. Finally, I asked, "Why do they keep filling my water glass?" Mr. Rogers looked me directly in the eyes from the other end of the table and said "You know, I've often wondered that myself."

Fred Rogers' being and his values—for him, everything comes down to "love...or the lack of love"—seem timeless. Watching *Won't You Be My Neighbor?* with a close friend seems simultaneously like being in my childhood living room—being reminded that I am loved, that I love, that I am fine just the way I am, that I am special to others and that they are special to me, that the world of make-believe and imagination has lessons for everyday life as well—and reconnecting with that message in the present day, after countless messages to the contrary coming from mass culture and consumer society.

The values embodied by *Mister Rogers' Neighborhood* are as applicable to our lives today as when we were children, but they are at a great disadvantage in mainstream society. Intentional communities and other cooperative efforts to establish an alternative to that society create opportunites for exploring, much more easily, the quality and pace of life that Mr. Rogers embodied and shared with his viewers and his real-life friends and neighbors too. Caring, kindness, patience, an embracing of the whole self and of feelings (of all kinds of feelings, not just "happy" feelings), facing rather than denying or escaping from challenges, self-acceptance and acceptance of others, love... all of these are the medicine that we need in the modern world, in all phases of life.

Fred Rogers was fighting an often losing battle against the direction of our society and civilization. As described articulately by him and others in the documentary, the forces of commodification, the forces that would mold both children and adults into consumers, that would dull their senses and feelings, are powerful and nearly ever-present today. Yet they can be held at bay more effectively when two or more are gathered together...and when a whole group is gathered together, real alternatives are possible.

Large portions of each of of my fellow film audiences left the theater with tears in their eyes, moved not only by the beautiful visions and realities, consistent kindness and caring offered by Mr. Rogers and his neighborhood, but likely also by grief at how far we have fallen away from the world that, person by person, interaction by interaction, Fred Rogers showed was possible, and helped make possible in our own lives. If there's ever been a true "television neighborhood" (remember, as someone who also "hates television" for the most part, this is a somewhat radical thing for me to say), it's been the neighborhood of all of us touched by Mr. Rogers.

However, I am not going to spend the rest of my life watching *Mister Rogers* reruns. I'm going to remember the gift he gave so many of us in our childhoods, through an unlikely medium that many of us subsequently rejected, and do my best to be the kind of neighbor Fred Rogers was talking about all along. And I'll also remember another abiding message his show imparted: media matters.

That's why, even though this magazine currently reaches only a small fraction of the audience Fred Rogers reached, I think it matters. And it's also part of why the FIC's other efforts at outreach and service also matter: the Directory, resources offered through Communities Bookstore, multimedia projects like *Planet Community*, and events and gatherings celebrating the various ways intentional communites and others seek to cultivate *neighborhood*. In a world with many countervailing forces, it's up to all of us, through our relationships, our families, our communities, our networks, to reweave the fabric of a world in which neighborhood, community, imagination, life-in-all-its-imperfection, and love, often marginalized now, are at the center of everything once again.

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Fair participants network and celebrate in Community Village, Oregon Country Fair, Veneta, Oregon, July 13, 2018.

Chris Roth

Visiting Energy Park on the Oregon Country Fairgrounds, post-Fair, July 27, 2018.

Chris Roth

Answering the "Call of the Mountain" through a Spiralling Network of Sustainability

By Thomas Macintyre

"De la espiral hacia el centro, el centro del corazón, soy el tejido, soy el sueño y la soñadora..."
("From the spiral towards the center, the center of the heart, I am the fabric,
I am the dream and the dreamer..."
—lyrics from a song sung at CASA network gatherings)

CASA is the Council of Sustainable Settlements of the Americas,
the regional Latin American network of GEN, the Global Ecovillage Network.
This story refers to the Colombian branch of the CASA network.

Participants celebrate the end of the Future Search.

Photos by Theresia In der Maur

Planting palmas de cera.

Sufi dances of universal peace.

It is December 9, 2017, and together with my wife Martha and five-year-old son Mateo, we are arriving at the Ecovillage Anthakarana, situated in the mountainous coffee region of Colombia, South America. It is the 11th "Call of the Mountain," the annual gathering of the CASA Colombia network of sustainable initiatives.

As members of the organizing team of the network, and co-organisers of the event, my wife and I have experienced a rough year. With a traumatic late change in the hosting community, burnouts amongst organisers, and the personal and political intricacies of working within a group, the network is at a breaking point. Leading up to the event, some organising members dropped out, and phone calls began streaming in the night before the event from other regular participants: *"Sorry, I cannot come, something else has popped up."* All the online meetings throughout the year, two hours, three hours, planning agendas, travels to the host community—putting one's nuclear family aside to volunteer time for the network—all that work with the very real prospect of the upcoming event being a fiasco. Driving up to the off-the-beaten-track Anthakarana, potholes and stones jarring our 4x4 car, the only flame keeping us going is the amazing job of the community Anthakarana to host the event at short notice, and a personal sense of responsibility to see the process through.

Arriving at the nearby football field, we park and start the 10 minute walk down the muddy path to Anthakarana, laden with supplies. Tired, we arrive, and put up our tent. It begins to rain. The rain quickly turns to a downpour, and is soon torrential. Water begins streaming through our borrowed and supposedly waterproof tent. We scramble out and cover our tent with a 7x3 meter plastic sheet I brought "just in case." No more rain enters...but perhaps it is too late. While Mateo excitedly jumps on the wet mattress with muddy boots, an embodied sense of *pereza* (laziness/resignation)[1] takes an overpowering hold of me. Beyond frustrated and disappointed, I feel angry and fed up. That question many of us ask ourselves is souring dangerously in my stomach: Is it all worth it, being actively part of a network? The answer feels very much like no.

An Expanding Spiral

So how did we manage to get to this breaking point? The Call of the Mountain was born in 2006, as an annual gathering for the ecovillage network RENACE of Colombia. It was a means for members to come together, share experiences, laugh, cry, and feel in solidarity in what often feels like lonely experiments in alternative living. With the ecovillage network growing, and the increasing interest of members to connect with other communities, the 2012 Call of the

Mountain event was held in the Ecovillage Atlantida, with over 400 participants from a wide range of communities, intentional and otherwise, local and international, all with a shared purpose of co-creating more sustainable futures together. During this event, the network CASA was born with the intention of expanding the network beyond the ecovillage realm.

The Call of the Mountain subsequently mushroomed into a large, intercultural event, with the mission of articulating diverse worldviews and sustainable practices across ethnic, social, and economic groups in society. The event was held in the Hare Krishna community Varsana in 2014, and the Indigenous Misak University in 2015, each event with over 400 participants, including invited guests from Indigenous and Afro communities of Colombia, as well as a wide range of organisations.

However, there has been a long-term simmering tension in the network concerning the role of CASA and the Call of the Mountain: Should the network focus on expanding and articulating its vision with other sustainability groups as a means to disseminate its sustainability message? Or should it concentrate on taking care of, and deepening relations between its original members and improve their initiatives through smaller, more intimate family gatherings? During the 2016 Call of the Mountain, held in the Amazonian community Anaconda del Sur, a collective decision was made to focus on the former strategy of expansion: The 2017 gathering would be held in the Indigenous community of Atánquez, attempting the articulation of CASA with the spiritual heartland of the Indigenous tribes of the Sierra Nevada in Northern Colombia. It was a decision which would change the course of the network.

The Stagnating Spiral

The articulation process started early, and it started well. A strong CASA organising group was formed, and through a collective decision a CASA member with close connections to the Kankuamo community of Atánquez was given the role of liaison between CASA and the community. An early connection to the Indigenous group had been made through a Kankuamo representative participating in both the 2016 Call of the Mountain event and the 2017 general CASA assembly. Corresponding CASA/Kankuamo work groups were set up to deal with logistics, funding, finances, and cultural issues, and CASA organisers went to visit the Kankaumo community. However, the CASA team found itself struggling with communication problems both within its network and with the Kankuamo representatives. Technical communication problems were exacerbated by the challenges of articulating an intercultural event with the complex political dynamics of the Kankaumo community. Despite these challenges, the process moved forward, with the excited exclamation uttered during one CASA meeting, "Guys, we need to start preparing for there to be up to 2000 people at the event; this is going to be huge!"

Then disaster struck. Justifying its decision through a CASA breach in protocol, a message was sent by the main Kankuamo representative stating that the community had decided to cancel the event. Stunned silence. Then chaos. What had happened? Who was at fault? Could the damage be repaired? What to do now? Through an emergency CASA meeting it became clear that indeed a breach in protocol had occurred on the CASA side. It became equally evident, however, that strong political and cultural factors were at work in the Kankuamo community, which had contributed to their decision to call off the collaborative event. Stuck between the hope that the situation could be resolved, and the difficulty of finding another community in the Sierra Nevada to host so many people, the process stagnated. With the event dates rapidly approaching, the realisation set in that the Call of the Mountain was not going to take place in the Sierra Nevada: CASA had not managed to articulate its sustainability vision with the Kankuamo community. With the option of cancelling the event being raised, Bahamar, the elder of the Ecovillage Anthakarana, offered to host the event. One of the pillar communities of CASA, with a strong focus on family values and spirituality, Anthakarana was bringing the Call of the Mountain back home to its roots.

Back to the Story of Anthakarana

So now we are back at the tent, and I am summoning the strength to fulfill my obligations as co-organiser and active CASA member. It is going to be a long seven days and I am not looking forward to it. *"Que pereza, que pereza,"* I tell myself.

"Papa, I want to see my friend Nawell," my son Mateo says. Martha and I look at each other. "For Mateo," we silently tell each other, and leave the tent. We arrive at the communal kitchen of Anthakarana, where those who have arrived have gathered. I see their happy faces at seeing us arrive; we exchange hugs and kisses, slaps and knowing looks. I am truly surprised to feel an honest feeling of *returning* to friends and family after a long time away. These are the people

1. The Spanish word *pereza* roughly relates to "laziness" or a disinclination to activity or exertion despite having the ability to act or exert oneself. Many of us have felt this *pereza* when working in a community setting; but when do we reach the point of *Ya, no más!*—no more!—and walk away?

Participants look pensive during Future Search.

Bahamar placing an ecovillage card.

Group presenting their findings during Future Search.

I know and have shared so many experiences with. Where else would I rather be? I would like to have said that all the hard work—all the struggle and disappointments—was worth it, seeing them all here. However, I do not have that feeling. Over the evening meal of *arepas con queso* (maize cakes with cheese), and *sopa de platano* (plantain soup), catching up with the fellow organisers, I look around to see who has arrived. Special invitees? Nobody. Representatives from articulated communities? Absent. Where is everybody? What has become of our network CASA?

The Contracting Spiral

The following morning we are met with drizzling rain. After breakfast served with coffee produced on the neighbouring farm, and brewed with gas from the bio-digester in Anthakarana, we make our way down to the *Buenoka*—the ceremonial house of Anthakarana. Passing *siete cueros* plants, with their beautiful purple flowers, children running around in superhero outfits, we walk in procession, led by the the *saumadoras*—incense burners—towards the future of CASA.

In the turmoil of organising the Call of the Mountain in Anthakarana, it had become clear that the event would be very different from previous ones. In the midst of the crisis, a methodology called "Future Search" was put forward, in which we would explore the past, present, and future of the network CASA and its gatherings. This workshop would be externally facilitated, with the goal of inviting key people from the network, as well as communities in which the Call of the Mountain had previously been held. Although most invited participants did not arrive, a total of 35 people were present, now entering the *Buenoka* to evaluate the network.

The following grueling three days involved exercises in understanding the community processes we were involved in, and planning the future of CASA. We explored the past of the network, transformational moments and experiences, what was happening in the present, and our individual and collective visions for the future. In addition to the more cognitive Future Search methodology, the ancestral practice of the *Circulo de la palabra*—talking circle—around the fire took place the first night to connect our hearts to the process. The following are the learning outcomes which resulted from these three days:

- **Build relations with individuals of various communities, not the communities themselves.** Although it sounds impressive to say that CASA is articulating sustainability visions with Indigenous, neo-rural, and urban communities, more effort should be placed on deepening relations with individuals of these communities who commit to answering the call of the mountain.
- **Build and develop relations through projects, not discourse.** Despite the beautiful "rainbow" discourse of CASA, common purpose across diverse grassroots initiatives is developed through concrete collaborative projects which benefit all parties involved.
- **The need to work from a mentality of "abundance" not "scarcity" in the network.** From financed projects of eco-neighbourhoods, disaster relief, to academic research, there is wealth of knowledge and collaborative work being carried out, as well as resources in the network upon which to build a future.
- **Take better care of the core "family":** A self-organised and self-financed event requires tremendous commitment from its organisers, most of whose work is voluntary. There is a need to better recognise and compensate (monetary or otherwise) the work being invested by organisers. For this it is important to put forward not only hugs and rainbows but an effective economic strategy.
- **Collaborative leadership implies recognition of network pioneers and opening up**

Participant enjoying the amazing view from Anthakarana.

Mateo taking a siesta with Mr. Rabbit.

The ceremonial Buenoka during Future Search.

Magical Talent night.

The author Thomas Macintyre during Future Search Methodology.

opportunities for them to be mentors. The network would benefit from better recognising pioneer members, many of whom are disconnected from CASA and who carry an abundance of experience to share. Likewise, the invitation for inactive members to reconnect to the network to share their wisdom.

The Magical Realism of the Call of the Mountain

Perhaps best characterised by *Anthakarana*, a Sanskrit word which means the bridge between the visible and invisible, the Call of the Mountain provides an experiential sense of magical realism, drawing the spiritual connection with the call of Mother Nature through rituals and ceremonies, and the very real experience of being together and co-creating meaningful futures (as well as the little bit bizarre). After the three days of intense work during the Future Search workshop—leaving a collective explosion of catharsis—the rain stopped, the sun came out (literally) and we celebrated being together. The following days involved planting seedlings of *palmas de cera*—the national tree of Colombia—each of us planting our purpose with the network along with the seedlings into the rich organic soil of the Colombian Andes. There were workshops on native seeds and activities on Nature's rights. During the "magic night" of talents, we all showed each other our creative, artistic, and rather silly sides, with theatre, singing, Sufi dances of universal peace, music, and a group *Haka*—the traditional war dance of the Indigenous Maori of New Zealand. Depite the trials and tribulations, the following Spanish saying sums up the group feeling: *"Estamos los que estamos. Somos los que somos."* ("We are here those that are here. We are what we are.")

Returning to the Center of the Spiral

In my birth home of New Zealand, the symbol of the *Koru*—the spiral—is a powerful metaphor for the cyclical nature of life. On the one hand, the *Koru* represents creation due to its fluid circular shape, with the unfurling fern representing movement and expansion. This can be seen in CASA and the Call of the Mountain expanding, articulating its vision beyond the realm of ecovillage to other sectors of society. On the other hand, the inner coil of the *Koru*, with its rolled inner leaflets, suggests a return to the point of origin. Having fulfilled its natural cycle of expansion, the network of CASA is in a process of moving back to the center of the spiral—back to its family roots, re-imagining itself.

There is no doubt that CASA is something special. There are many NGOs working *for* communities in Colombia doing important work. But CASA is comprised *of* communities, working *with* communities, forming relations across boundaries and realizing collaborative change at the grassroots level. Participating in the Call of the Mountain is an unforgettable experience in embracing what is different, what is difficult and beautiful, trying to connect with what we do not know. It has been an enriching experience, yet for me as an organiser, the process has taken its toll. I have given it my best at a critical time, and have decided to step down, dedicating more time to growing plantain and coffee on my farm, and being with my family. As the saying goes, distance makes the heart grow fonder—so I will take the time to let my experiences settle, in full awareness that as an organic and vibrant network, CASA will move on—unfurling, dying, and being reborn.

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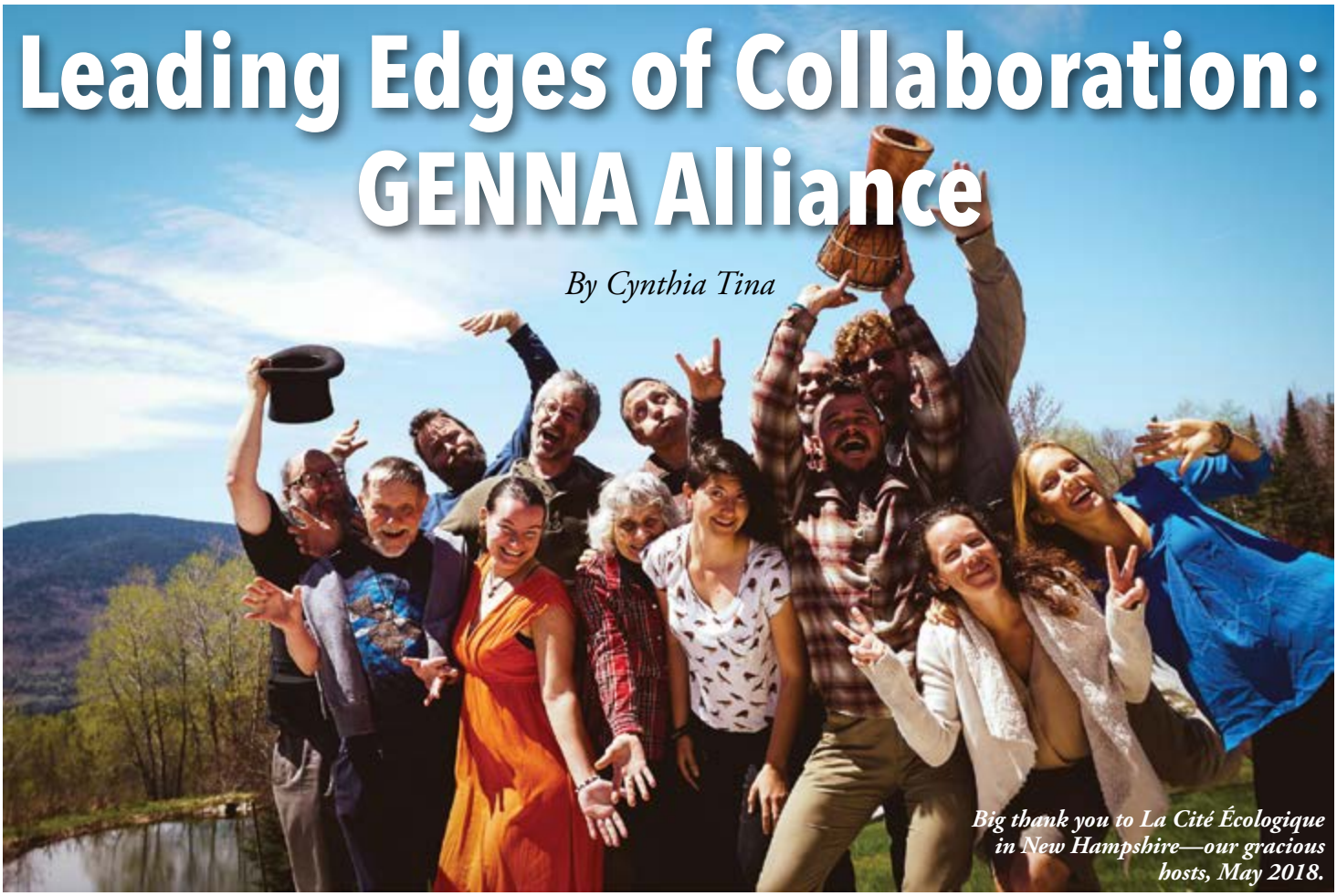
Leading Edges of Collaboration: GENNA Alliance

By Cynthia Tina



Big thank you to La Cité Écologique in New Hampshire—our gracious hosts, May 2018.

Flames flickering in the hearth only added to the warmth we each felt inside, with raw cacao and a hit of chile in our bellies. In the midst of laughter and storytelling by the fire, a slim stack of papers floated from person to person. The reason we had gathered was a document, barely more than five pages, yet the culmination of over five years of exploration, trial, healing, and deep community building. Each signature to grace the final page signaled welcome to a new era of collaboration amongst key networking organizations in the regenerative communities movement.

My involvement with GENNA Alliance began in Spring 2014 at Dancing Rabbit Ecovillage[1] in Missouri. I was invited as the North American representative of NextGEN[2] (global network for ecovillage youth) to participate in an attempt to form a consortium together with the Fellowship for Intentional Community[3] (FIC) and both the US and Canadian networks of the Global Ecovillage Network[4] (GEN). Although many of the same individuals sat in the room then as in our most recent meeting, the outcome four years ago was quite different. We had failed to formalize any partnership. The time for deeper collaboration was not yet ripe.

Barriers to collaboration within the regenerative communities movement are no different than those found the world over: ego, organizational baggage, scarcity mentality, attachment, lack of trust and transparency, bureaucracy, competition, etc. These are consequences of deep cultural wounds. Challenges like these do not simply go away. They must be recognized as they arise and handled with patience, remembering that it takes time to build bonds of lasting trust. The test of successful collaboration is when we are able to harness tension for its tremendous power and life-sustaining potential.

In the years that followed the Dancing Rabbit meeting, various configurations of FIC, GEN, and similar organizations met in attempts to bring greater cohesion and solidarity to the regenerative communities movement in North America. Though the location and constituents were different, the driver for each meeting remained the same: to take our collaboration to the next level for a thriving network. None of us wanted to build yet another organization, but rather harness what each organization already brings to the table for strategic partnerships, joint projects, shared staff, and more.

About GENNA Alliance

During our most recent meeting in May 2018, we sat by the fireplace in the cozy community room at La Cité Écologique[5] of New Hampshire to initiate a formal partnership of six key networking organizations:

- **Fellowship for Intentional Community**[6]: Supporting and promoting the development of intentional communities and the evolution of cooperative culture (through Communities Magazine, Directory of Communities, and online resources, event cosponsorship, and more).
- **VillageLab**[7]: Developing and offering customized whole systems designs in organizational architectures, new paradigm economic systems, and community cohesion creation for "communities of intent" of all types including businesses and intentional communities.
- **NuMundo**[8]: Facilitating the transformation of individuals and the world through an interconnected network of impact centers (ecovillages, intentional communities, permaculture farms, social projects, and retreat centers).
- **NextGENNA**[9]: Propelling young adults to energize ecovillages and intentional communities through events, education, and leadership opportunities.
- **GEN-US**[10]: A meeting place and incubator for leaders in the ecovillage movement from the United States.

• **GEN-Canada** (re-emerging network): Contact nebesna@citeecologique.org for more information.

Although these partners have different missions, histories, and organizational cultures, they recognize that on a foundational level they share a similar vision for the future:

"We envision a world of interdependent cooperative communities stewarding the conditions of regeneration, justice, peace, and abundance, in order to realize the full potential of flourishing for all life, for all generations to come."—GENNA Alliance

This is exciting news for community land projects throughout North America! GENNA Alliance is actively designing ways to better serve and make visible those doing community-building work on the ground. We believe that communities of practice, place, and purpose offer essential solutions to many of the world's pressing social and ecological crises. Broadly, we term this phenomenon the *regenerative communities movement*, a subset of a wider *regenerative movement*, comprised of innumerable individuals and groups that share a common vision of humanity living in co-creative harmony with Earth's biosphere and with each other.

Some of the key project areas we intend to focus on are:

• **Bioregional Mapping**: Create a bioregional communities map of North America to reflect real geographical, cultural, and population boundaries.

• **GENNA Consultancy**: Form an association of community consultants to reach more groups in need of service, design for better quality, share revenue, and stack staffing functions.

• **Data Sharing**: Pool information about thousands of regenerative land projects around the world into a central database for distributed sharing on the websites of each contributing organization.

• **Events**: Produce virtual and in-person gatherings for those who wish to plug into GENNA Alliance, gain skills to further their missions, and network for greater collaboration. In October 2018, we intend to partner with the Convergence at Arcosanti[11], Arizona, to produce an incubator-style gathering for leaders in the regenerative communities movement.

• **Cogeneration**: Develop innovative ways to share resources, energy, enterprise, and knowledge amongst GENNA Alliance partners. We can strategize for mutual empowerment by mapping the needs and strengths of each contributor. For example, when funding is needed for a project, we can tap into the group's resources to kickstart the endeavor and tithe back to the collective.

The two-part name, GENNA Alliance, reflects our two-fold nature.

GENNA stands for the North American Region of the Global Ecovillage Network (GEN). We focus on meeting the needs of community projects within "Turtle Island," the name given to North America in the creation stories of some indigenous peoples. The image of a turtle in our logo is meant to honor the rich cultural heritage and ecology of Turtle Island, as we work to grow community networks towards a more beautiful, just, and regenerative world.

The word Alliance signifies that we are an independent "collaborative platform" designed to synergize our efforts as organizations. Collaborative platform is just one of many phrases being used to describe new ways of organizing human endeavor that are more responsive to the needs of our increasingly complex world. In a recent interview, Arthur Brock, of Holochain[12], describes the situation succinctly: "We are using the organizational structures of *industrial age machines*, when we need to become *information age organisms*."

At this time, over 20 individuals run and steward the development of GENNA Alliance.

Nature's Way

Ants and bumble bees build miracles of nature with more grace than our organizations can often manifest getting an e-newsletter out. The nature of nature is collaborative. What secrets can we remember from the natural world? What happens when we aspire to the grandeur, efficiency, and productivity of ecosystems?

In GENNA Alliance, we use the notion of the "the commons" to help explain how our collaborative platform operates based on patterns found in the natural world. Jeff Clearwater, of VillageLab, explains, "Throughout our evolution we have had the notion of the commons. That which belongs to everybody yet nobody—our shared sets of resources that nobody can or should own—the very air we breathe, the water—the oceans, our languages and culture." The shared resources of GENNA Alliance include social media reach, staff roles, community mapping data, consultancy clients, and more. As stewards of GENNA Alliance, our job is to co-design protocols and values to manage these shared resources.

Another pattern observed in the natural world is dynamic (chaordic) balance between chaos and order. While tech-pioneers of the modern age are designing protocols for the universal interoperability of computer systems (decentralized, open source, etc.), likewise, next generation organizations are noticing they function remarkably well when control is released and way is given for simple (lean) and flexible (agile) agreements to take root. Participation amongst members is vital for the thriving of any commons. GENNA Alliance has limited staff and bureaucracy by design. Much as the health of a forest is reflected in the vibrancy of exchange amongst its species, the health of GENNA Alliance depends on the active exchange of its members.

A Global Pattern

In my engagement with collaborative platforms around the world, I have noticed a spectrum of emerging models. While I'll describe just

Exploring the possibilities for data sharing and new technologies at La Cité, May 2018.

The FIC brainstorms how they can contribute to and benefit from the Alliance during our Arcosanti meeting, November 2017.

Photos courtesy of www.cynthiatina.com

three of these "networks of networks" as examples here, an extended list can be found on my website: www.cynthiatina.com.

• **Permaculture CoLab**[13]: Born at the 12th International Permaculture Convergence in London in 2015, the Permaculture Collaborative Laboratory (CoLab) is a space to collaborate and enhance the effectiveness of permaculture networks around the world. The CoLab is experimenting with sociocracy and constellation frameworks to foster the development of working groups, with thematic or geographical focuses. This potential chaos is organized with the help of "the secretariat" for stewardship and technical support. *(Model: A project of the Permaculture Association, a UK nonprofit. Anyone can join the CoLab on a voluntary basis through the Colab dashboard, supported by the User Guide and Secretariat.)*

• **ECOLISE**[14]: The European network for community-led initiatives on climate change and sustainability, ECOLISE is a growing coalition of over 40 member organization, including Transition Town, permaculture, ecovillage, and similar movements. On the spectrum of chaos and order, ECOLISE has a strong organizational structure which well positions them to interface with policy makers in the European Union, United Nations, and national governments. At the same time, ECOLISE seeks to become a platform for its members, with simple processes to enable anyone to propose projects, balancing individual agency and collective intelligence. *(Model: Nonprofit including a general assembly, council, executive board, and secretariat. Running on annual membership fee and fundraising. Application to join.)*

• **Post Growth Alliance**[15]: A platform with a singular and remarkably effective purpose: "a cooperative content creation and social media marketing service that leverages the collective reach of member organizations and supporters to increase exposure to #postgrowth ideas and activities." The brilliance of this initiative is that it offers a simple way for organizations to get more of what they want—social media reach—without needing to formalize promotional exchanges with each organization individually. *(Model: Nonprofit running on membership fee, $80/year. Application to join.)*

It is an incredible journey to witness the emergence of collaborative initiatives around the world, and to contribute to the development of the GENNA Alliance in North America. I have experienced that the gestation phase of such endeavors (often years in the making) includes all the processes and conversations needed to get us to the place where we can finally write-up a formal agreement document. The sweet celebration of signing such an agreement is the moment when idea becomes creation. Now the real work begins to steward this creation towards its full potential.

Projects are not the people who birth them. Much like children, they have an identity and life path that is beyond anything we could fully plan. Our task is to nurture the heart-to-heart human connections that will sustain us as a network and community. More than any signed agreement or innovative structure, it is those moments of authentic connection, like the one we shared by the fireplace in New Hampshire, that solidify the bedrock from which we can build collaborative platforms to regenerate our world.

How to Engage

We welcome the support of all individuals and organizations in North America that share our values of cooperation, stewardship, and social justice. Individuals can join us as volunteers to develop their skills in project and administrative support. Organizations can apply for membership in GENNA Alliance and be added to our invitation list, from which we will onboard qualified members. We appreciate donations and investments from all who recognize the importance of our work. We'd be glad to hear from you at genna@ecovillage.org.

Cynthia Tina is an originator of GENNA Alliance, a collaborative platform for individuals and organizations serving the regenerative communities movement within North America. She has visited over 100 intentional communities and ecovillages across four continents. Since 2015, she has served on the Boards of the Global Ecovillage Network (ecovillage.org) and the Fellowship for Intentional Community (ic.org). She is a cofounder of NextGENNA (nextgenna.org), a nonprofit producing learning experiences for young changemakers. Cynthia is a freelance marketing consultant, facilitator, and educator. Her mission is to grow networks of people, projects, and communities working in collaboration to regenerate our planet. Connect with Cynthia at www.cynthiatina.com.

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1. dancingrabbit.org
2. nextgenna.org
3. ic.org
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9. nextgenna.org
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11. arcosanti.org
12. holochain.org
13. international.permaculture.org.uk
14. www.ecolise.eu
15. www.postgrowthalliance.org

Such a blast to be together at Arcosanti as the Alliance is forming, November 2017.

Outlining our core projects towards the end of the La Cité meeting, May 2018.

Networking through the Mandala: Finding and Binding Common Values

By Evan Welkin

Sonita Mbah

Keep refreshing the vision around the values you share. Go back again and check the tension between what you profess to believe or want to live by and what's actually happening.
—Laurence Cole, 14-year member of Port Townsend Ecovillage

This advice from an experienced communitarian could be an instruction for internal reflection, a recommendation for realignment on core values within a community that shares daily life together. It can just as easily be a call to action for the international intentional communities movement. What are the tools we can use as a global movement as we network among ourselves, reach out across different cultures, languages, and belief systems to build a regenerative world? Indeed, how interconnected are ecovillages, intentional communities, and communitarians in the world today and are we actually a part of a common design?

Port Townsend Ecovillage (PTEV), whose members have contributed to Communities on a range of topics for over a decade, have offered many reflections with the intentional community network from their home on the northwestern edge of the US. In their exploration of legal structures, overcoming hardship, and models of governance in these pages, PTEV ecovillagers have offered wisdom from many dimensions of their experience for the benefit of the greater movement. They themselves attribute inspiration for the visualization of their own community values to a tool from another ecovillage half a world away.

Laurence explains PTEV's adoption of a mandala visioning process in their community foundation: "We met this woman named Robina McCurdy from New Zealand... She had created a book from her [experience] living in her community in New Zealand... She groked that if they weren't really on the same page in terms of core values, then they really didn't belong trying to make things work because they had really distinctive notions about what life was for and what we're supposed to do here. So she came up with this notion that it's prob-

ably a good idea if you're going to try to do something together, that you [come to consensus] on the values you share [using the Mandala]... Everything relates back in any layer of the Mandala to the core values so people can check in on a periodic basis, hopefully more frequently than not."

Robina's book is entitled *Grounding Vision—Empowering Culture: How to Build & Sustain Community Together—A Manual of Participatory Tools for Social Change Facilitators* (Robina McCurdy, published by Earthcare Education Aotearoa). Robina's community, the Tui Land Trust and Community (ecovillage.org/project/tui-community), formed in 1984 to create an intentional community village for holistic living on the south island of New Zealand (referred to by its indigenous name, Aotearoa). The community encourages "closeness to the land and support of families and personal growth." Members of the community run the Institute for Earthcare Education Aotearoa (earthcare-education.org/wp_earthcare/projects), whose goal is "empowering sustainable culture through ecological systems design and education" through Robina's "participatory processes for collective decision-making and action," including a mandala visioning process. From the seed of inspiration planted by the Tui Community experience, PTEV created their own mandala still used today for inspiration, introduction of the community to new members, and realignment to core values.

The mandala is both a tool and metaphor for the interconnection and alliance of community wisdom around the world.

As described by Pi Villaraz of the Maia Earth Village in the Philippines: "'Mandala,' the Sanskrit word for 'Circle,' is an Asian microcosmic spiritual symbol in Hinduism and Buddhism that represents the universe. In Southeast Asia, the Mandala is a pre-colonial system in which a network of kingdoms peacefully self-governed around a spiritual center, which established order and relationship between the cardinal points in a symmetrical manner. Integral to the concept of the mandala is the notion that power is shared symmetrically and synergistically, emanating from a spiritual center rather than from a physical kingdom governed by a single leader."

Distilling the inspiration from ecovillages and communities around the globe into a recognizable pattern, the Global Ecovillage Network (GEN) embraces a holistic approach to sustainability, integrating the Social, Cultural, Ecological, and Economic dimensions of existence. At the centre, GEN places the practice of whole systems design. The dimensions of sustainability and the central path of whole systems design make up the Sustainability Mandala, a road map to the creation of ecovillages—intentional or traditional communities in urban and rural locations, using participatory processes to integrate ecological, economic, social, and cultural dimensions of sustainability to regenerate social and natural environments.

The Sustainability Mandala integrates 30 Ecovillage Principles—six in each dimension of sustainability. It illustrates and distills years of experimentation and learning within the global network, as well as current research on resilience, sustainability, and participatory design. It is also the fruit of GEN's longstanding collaboration with Gaia Education, and their shared commitment to develop and promote holistic, community-led approaches to resilience and thriving on planet Earth. GEN uses a set of cards based on the dimensions of sustainability and their associated ecovillage principles (ecovillage.org/resources/market/ecovillage-design-cards) in mandala trainings by educators around the world to introduce ecovillage design.

The Sustainability Mandala and Ecovillage Principles provide a map of crucial areas of attention when implementing ecovillage lifestyles for positive transformation. They are the basis of GEN's activities and a tool for learning, reflection, dialogue, research, and design—usable by individuals, groups, projects, organizations, communities, and countries. These principles can be applied wherever a person is—in one's individual life, in an organization, in designing a new project, in formulating community-led development plans, and more. They are an inspiration and road map to implementing ecovillage lifestyles regardless of where or who you are.

In GEN Executive Director Kosha Joubert's words: "The Ecovillage Design Cards allow us to achieve within hours what previously took days: including all stakeholders in a participatory design process and identifying blind spots and leverage points so that we can identify next steps and a consolidated plan towards regenerative community design that everyone agrees on. They provide a powerful tool for group alignment and transformation."

The mandala is therefore both a tool and metaphor for the interconnection and alliance of community wisdom around the world as a road map for continuous evolution. The organic and spontaneous link between the Tui Community and Port Townsend Ecovillage represents a single instance of a single layer within an interconnected network creating a regenerative model of living worldwide.

Indeed, in addition to an education or community visioning tool, the Global Ecovillage Network Oceania and Asia (GENOA) region where the mandala originates also uses a "Seed of Life Mandala" as an organizational model for its regional network. They share that "during a GENOA gathering in 2014, the organization conceded to create [an alternative to the] top-down asym-

Eugénie Dumont

Eugénie Dumont

metric structure that has led to internal organizational problems throughout the history of our network. In response to [these problems], we agreed to practice positive empowering approaches that share unitive participation between all of our parties. Instead of organizational role-setting, we agreed on a seven-tiered Vision Council platform founded on The Learning Organization model, where groups may co-facilitate the essential continuous learning of all their members in ways that continually transform the whole... For GENOA, the Mandala serves as an ongoing visioning journey... In a fast-changing Asia, the Mandala allows us to stay open as we grow larger, older, and wiser, and most especially more authentic to Who We Are and Are Becoming as a collection of diverse, powerful, and beautiful people"

GENOA uses the mandala in organizing Emergence Convergences around the region, an open-space, open-source platform that brings cross-disciplinary communities and individuals together to share and learn collectively from one and other, to listen deeply, and to be in dialogue.

The Mandala as a sacred symbol and tool is used all around the world for visioning, designing, and organizing within the ecovillage movement. The power of this model of unity in diversity is clear in its organic growth through the ecovillage movement and ability to connect a many-faceted network in a common cause. Its ability to simply articulate a common vision is also of critical importance to individual communities all over the world. While we honor the traditions that articulated this model to us, we also appreciate how spontaneous connection through the mandala reminds us that we are part of a common design, a universal wholeness far more simple and complex than our human understanding. We are reminded to keep coming back to this design, as individuals, communities, and networks, to reconnect with the core of our existence in relationship with everything around us.

Evan Welkin was born in Deadwood, Oregon and raised in the Pacific Northwest exploring collectives, cohousing, and communal living. His passions for communication, fundraising, and organizational development inspire his work with NGOs, local government, and businesses to create abundance and catalyze change. He has a particular passion for movement building and collaborative community regeneration using art, media, and the written word. He joined the Global Ecovillage Network to coordinate the communications team of the European Ecovillage Conference in 2017 and now serves as the international Communications Director. He and his family live in Italy, developing an ecovillage and folk school. He can be reached at @Ewelkin on Twitter.

Communities of Intention in Peru, Ecuador, and Beyond: A Summer of Travel and Rediscovering Communal Roots

By Renay Friendshuh

If you had asked me 15 years ago what an intentional community was, my seven-year-old answer would have been of a place where there's always new people coming and going, where everybody eats together and has work parties in the garden, where there are potlucks and celebrations and check-in meetings all year 'round and skinny dipping in the summer. I grew up at Sandhill Farm in rural Missouri, home to so many people through the years and sister community to Red Earth Farms and Dancing Rabbit. Sandhill has been collectively farming, sharing resources, welcoming newcomers, evolving, and growing since 1974 and I'm proud to say that it's where I was born.

I moved off the farm just before high school and I've since connected with many other groups: summer camps, internships, sports teams, etc. Those communities have given me so much through the years and recently I found myself comparing them to the commune where I grew up, wondering what my definition of intentional community would be now. Interested in networking more with the communities movement, I decided to explore how others define community.

With tremendous support from the Larson International Fellowship, funded by Carleton College graduates, I was able to pursue my curiosity. From the FIC Directory, I got in touch with several groups around South America who invited me to visit. As I was studying in Peru in the spring, the plan was to travel north from there, through Ecuador and Colombia, in the summer. My partner, Ben, would be doing his own Larson project along a similar route, so our paths would merge at some places and drift apart at others.

What I was not expecting when I planned the trip were the communities I met in between my three scheduled stops. Long before the summer had even started, when I was still at school in Lima, I happened across an amazing community at a public park. El Parque de Miraflores is a popular tourist stop in Lima, teeming with groups of ice cream vendors, paragliding instructors, and surfing guides. One day when I was walking there, another group caught my eye; in fact, they caught everyone's eye.

The group was practicing a sport known as slacklining. Their lines, which are like tightropes, but with a flat strap instead of a cord, were set up in a festive web connecting the palm trees. Most of them were low—only two or three feet above the ground—but the one that caught everyone's attention was high—maybe eight feet up—with a big pile of mattresses set up below. These guys were incredible, flipping and jumping and twisting on this one-inch strip of webbing. As I watched, a young man came over and asked if I wanted to try (the low ones, he assured). And did I ever!

The group welcomed me easily and shared tips as I gingerly tried out my first steps on the line. Over the next few months I became one of the regulars; I even bought my own, loving the challenge of jumping up and walking all the way across the line. The most incredible part, though, was the space we created. The regulars were comprised of a diverse assortment of men and women from all over the continent and we welcomed any and every one to try it out. I often had a whole line of kids waiting to take their turn, parents watching with cameras, nervous yet impressed at their kid's bravery. Adults joined in too, tourists and locals alike. All were welcomed and encouraged, just as I had been.

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When the summer arrived, I was sad to say goodbye to the slackliners, but delighted to carry a piece of that space with me (my line took up a good quarter of my backpack's weight for the next three months). I set out the day after my 21st birthday, traveling solo up the coast from Lima to Chancay, where my first intentional community was located. From the back of a mototaxi—a little buggy attached to a dirt bike—I spotted the recognizable forms of *trulys*, which looked like great, upside-down honeycomb towers made of mud, the sure sign of Eco Truly Park, where I would stay for the next week.

Eco Truly is a yoga retreat, spiritual center, and ecological farm on the western coastline of Peru, just a few yards from the seaside. I was welcomed in and led to a surprisingly spacious *truly* shared by two other farm volunteers—Camilla, from France, and Thaysa, from Brazil. Camilla and I, having just arrived, enjoyed a self-guided tour at dusk which revealed a spiral garden, a fat goat, a tall cow, a pregnant horse, and a sprinkling of murals that decorated the property.

That first evening, we were all invited to a spiritual ceremony honoring Hare Krishna. The ceremonial *truly* was very large and colorful, smelling of spices and incense. We spent the evening sitting barefoot before a large altar, surrounded by enthusiastic mantras and musical instruments, light-hearted laughter and conversation. I felt no pressure to participate and simply enjoyed the lively energy. It was like a big, family singalong. Although I do not self-identify as spiritual, these ceremonies were integral to the community and I was glad to have an open invitation.

Each morning at Eco Truly, volunteers were asked to work four hours in the kitchen or fields. These work parties were a great way to get to know one another, sometimes playing between different languages to get our messages across. When we weren't landscaping around banana trees or building a bamboo shelter for the baby colt, the other volunteers and I enjoyed seaside walks and early morning yoga. After three months in the city, it felt so good to walk barefoot and feel the earth again.

Everyone ate meals together, which I savored because it reminded me of home. There were little things too—the industrial-sized sink where everyone washed their own dishes, the expansive gardens, and even a dinner bell—that were just like Sandhill. One key difference, though, was that Eco Truly is a retreat center, so visitors spend money to be there. I did too, though much of the fee was exchanged for my volunteer work. This business aspect seemed to separate visitors and members in a way that I was not expecting. However, I think much of the disconnect had to do with my short visit there, and one night in particular did a lot to dissolve that separation.

Several days into my visit, we were all invited to a women's circle. As we sang, played music, and shared a bit of our stories with one another, I could feel the distance fading between the volunteers and the members. I was impressed how connected I had become to a place so different from my culture, based on a spirituality I had never even heard of, yet welcoming enough to make me feel at home. After my week of yoga and meditation at Eco Truly, Ben joined me and we headed north again on a noisy, crowded Peruvian bus.

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The next communal space I encountered was again not on the agenda, but came in the form of a groovy little hostel called Moksha in Huanchaco, Peru. Huanchaco was a classic, small beach town, the main strip by the coast packed with tank-top vendors, surf shops, and street food. In Moksha's communal kitchen, time passed quickly with the other travelers from Australia, Germany, Italy, Argentina—everyone getting to know each other as we waited our turn on the one-burner stove.

In the evening, we walked to the neighboring Frog Hostel for some live reggae music, *maracuya mojitos* (a sweet mixed drink with passion fruit and mint), and ridiculous conversation with a cynical gringo. We also set up the slackline on the beach and soon had a swarm of local kids jumping all over it. It was a great scene: palm trees, pink clouds at sunset, silhouettes of surfers. It was easy to imagine staying there all summer.

Two days later, though, we said goodbye to our hostel friends and set out to cross the border

Photos courtesy of Renay Friendshuh

into Ecuador. My next stop was something completely different. The community, Terra Frutis, was located near Gualaquiza, on the eastern, mountainous side of Ecuador where the climate was ideal for growing tropical fruit—a big part of their mission. I arrived at the smaller of the community's two properties and that afternoon a man named Matthew showed me around.

Matthew was from the United States, as were most people living at Terra Frutis at the time, and he taught me a lot that first day. I later wrote in my journal, "I have to admit I feel pretty cool with my trekking shorts, tall muck boots, and freshly sharpened machete. I can now recognize many of the important plants such as katuk, pineapple, dragon fruit, rollinia, coconut, and sugar cane."

Despite all that I was learning, though, the first few days were rather tough. It was difficult to know where I could be helpful, since the three guys often kept to themselves. Also, since everyone was responsible for their own food and had a unique diet—vegan, raw vegan, or fruitarian—we rarely ate at the same time or prepared food together, something I recognized as fundamental to my concept of community.

After a couple days, however, another young woman arrived, full of enthusiastic, feminine energy. Her name was Kimberly and the two of us bonded quickly. Kimberly shared how transformative a raw vegan diet had been for her health, allowing her the energy to explore the world for the first time. That night all of us stayed up late talking of food and people and art, reminding me why I love community.

The other members of Terra Frutis joined us the following day. They had been on the larger property, Mount Frutis, and had come down for the monthly meeting. It was there that I learned their purpose was to create a fruit farm abundant enough that their members could one day live completely off the land, exemplifying to the world a healthful way of life.

After the meeting, I was delighted to hear that there was a chance to travel up Mount Frutis, something I had been waiting excitedly for since my arrival. Kimberly and I went with Jason, one of the founding members, and it was a good thing we had a guide because the farm sat atop a small mountain and its ascent required first a taxi, then a riverboat, and then a steep uphill climb through deep, squelching mud. Once at the top, though, the views of the tropical countryside were magnificent and I soon forgot to be tired.

For the seven of us on the mountain, our days were filled with mulching plants, transplanting sugar cane stalks, and seeding naranjilla. Here there was plenty to do and many hands to do it. Even the field work felt creative, everyone piling together great nests of mulch and nutrients around young trees, almost like putting together a living mural. At night, we would often share long, meandering, silly, philosophical conversation, admiring the moon shadows, intensified by our proximity to the equator.

It was so good to get my hands dirty again and even better once I discovered the bathing hole. Laying back into the sandy bottom of a mountain stream, I felt vibrantly connected to the forest. On my last night on the mountain, after my bath, I was delighted to find the others sitting around a festive bonfire. We sang and played drums and made up frivolous songs about fruit and it was the most lovely sendoff.

I left the big farm and said my goodbyes to Terra Frutis after two weeks. My next bus took me to meet Ben in Cuenca, Ecuador, where he had made his own connections. The next two nights we stayed with his friend, Carlos, who owned an AirBnB, its common space adorned with hammocks, guitars, and a whole wall of elaborate drawings created by visitors. You could just feel the energy of the house and all the people who had passed through, each one remembered by their little drawing on the wall. I drew Ben with his film camera, standing atop a small planet like the boy from *The Little Prince*.

Our next stop was also a connection that Ben had found, this time in Manglaralto. Our bus brought us down from the high mountains, descending into a sea of clouds, and the road turned misty and enchanting. By the end of the day, we had traveled all the way to the western coast, stopping at a little house marked by a bright purple gate. This was the home of Upi and Loida, whom Ben had met the previous week. I was a bit uncertain about disturbing them so late in the

evening, but the young couple soon dispelled any such concerns and we ended up playing cards for hours on their kitchen floor.

Upi and Loida built their own home and made a living selling homemade jewelry to passing travelers. We had seen jewelry vendors everywhere we went; but being in their home, experiencing the joy they both had for the craft, gave the work a new light. The next morning, we each picked out several beautiful pieces from their many boxes and bags. Then, after sharing a delicious meal of fresh fish with our new friends, we headed north again. The openness the couple shared with us was inspiring and I'm reminded of this every time I put on Loida's necklace.

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The last intentional community on my itinerary was also in Ecuador. Ben and I decided to visit this one together and after a confusing two days of bus hopping, we eventually arrived at Dos Tortugas, on the coast near Jama. Peter and Liesel are the founders and namesake of Dos Tortugas, the only other member at the time being Alberto the architect (not to mention Luna, Felix, and Benny, their three lovable dogs).

Liesel welcomed us cheerfully and showed us the sweet *casita* where we would stay. Our balcony overlooked the sea and each night we watched little fishing boats come in from the bay. The fishermen would go full speed straight for the beach and lift up their motors just before they hit sand, the boats skating to a stop on the sandy shore to unload. Then the seagulls would circle, eagerly awaiting fish scraps to be thrown back to the ocean. We could see everything from that little mountain cabin.

Peter and Liesel had bought the property nearly a decade ago, moving from the United States and artfully constructing two beautiful buildings there with the help of many neighbors. At last they had been ready to open their doors to new visitors and members. Then, just a year and a half before our visit, the whole area had suffered a severe, 7.8 earthquake, ruining many homes, costing lives, and traumatizing the community. The catastrophe destroyed one of their new cabins, forcing them to rebuild and put all plans on hold until very recently. Ben and I were among the first visitors since.

The community was not quite set up for visitors like us, eager to jump into projects, always asking what else we could help with. Nevertheless, they accommodated our enthusiasm and we had a blast putting together a cinder-block rocket stove, fixing broken chairs, and planting seeds that sprouted unbelievably fast in the tropical heat. Peter taught us how to harvest coconuts, and when Ben and I fried fish for everyone on the new rocket stove, Liesel rounded out our meal with a stir-fry and white wine. Ben and I also helped them design a website so that more people could learn about Dos Tortugas and share that beautiful space with them.

After two weeks at Dos Tortugas, Ben and I traveled north again, meandering our way up through Colombia to Bogotá, appreciating our newfound awareness of spontaneous community spaces. Throughout the trip, whether visiting communities or finding them by chance, I discovered that my definition of intentional community just kept expanding. Little moments like preparing food, planting trees, making music together around a campfire—intentionally creating a place to share with one another—that was when I felt most connected. My hope was to rediscover the vibrant community network of my childhood and what I found is that I never truly left. Organic community spaces are possible everywhere and that is something I will take with me.

Renay Friendshuh is a senior psychology student at Carleton College in Northfield, Minnesota. She grew up at Sandhill Farm in Missouri and has been seeking out communal spaces ever since. When she is not studying, you can find her playing water polo, slacklining, or researching her next travel plans. She would like to become a counselor with a specialty in expressive arts therapy. Renay loves connecting with new people and can be reached at friendshuhr@gmail.com.

Connect: Now More Than Ever

By Setesh FreeMan

Chris Roth

Author Setesh FreeMan and fellow Lost Valley communitarian Kurt Smith discuss community living in front of the Intentional Communities Booth in Community Village at the Oregon Country Fair, July 13, 2018.

Now...more than ever. A statement that rang so deeply within my core, a 22-year-old, representing an intentional community that is seven years older than myself, in a consensus meeting of over 200 people, for a gathering in its 48th year.

Flashback to March 2016. I found myself distracted from an Organic Agriculture class at the University of Georgia, fiddling through the ic.org website with awe and wonder at the amount of communities that shared a like-minded vision for living with intention. I had become inspired from relationships with intentional communities in the Atlanta, Georgia area, such as the Lake Claire Community Land Trust and Heartwood Community, and continuously disgusted by the university system. As I walked out of that class, sure enough, there was a flyer on a pegboard in the hallway of the plant sciences building for an educational program at Lost Valley Education and Event Center/ Meadowsong Ecovillage. It stated "Holistic Sustainability Semester—earn a PDC and EDE during a three-month immersion in a 28-year-old intentional community."

The Holistic Sustainability Semester focuses on the five spheres of sustainability: Ecological, Social, Economic, Worldview, and Personal. The course couldn't have come at a more important time in my life (Fall 2016) as I was seeking a deeper connection with the Earth and longing for a sense of tribe in my day to day life. Through group ZEGG Forums, talking stick ceremonies, and communal ecstatic dance I was opened up emotionally like I never had been before. At times it was both necessary and challenging to work with elements of the shadow self. With classes ranging from permaculture design to history of intentional communities, indigenous wisdom, nonviolent communication (NVC), sustainable economics—and with renowned communitarians such as Ma'ikwe Ludwig and Laird Schaub traveling across the country to teach in the course—the three-month immersion provided a framework to quickly dive into a lifestyle committed towards networking communities.

Lost Valley is a 501(c)3 learning center, educating youth and adults in the practical application of sustainable living skills since 1989. Located on 87 acres, a 30 minute drive southeast of Eugene, Oregon, Lost Valley also operates as an aspiring ecovillage, housing 40-plus resident-educators, using a governance system adapted from Sociocracy, with consent-based decision making. Within months of becoming a resident I found myself in roles such as the Secretary of the Board of Directors, managing

a humanure composting system, marketing educational programs, and representing Lost Valley at the Intentional Communities Booth of the Oregon Country Fair's Community Village.

2017 was my first year participating in the Oregon Country Fair, located just west of Eugene in Veneta, Oregon. The Fair has extremely deep roots, dating back to 1969, and is a community in its own right. I found the Fair to be a wild, dance-filled cultural experience with synchronistic connections constantly flowing. The Oregon Country Fair truly feels like a family—especially for those who participate in a role with the Fair, which is open to visitors from 11 am-7 pm for three days but continues throughout the night for those who play a contributing role or have become an elder of the Fair through consistent years of contribution. The OCF features concerts, circus acts, Alice in Wonderland-like costumed performers, presentations on solar energy, activist centers, booths of all sorts of craft creations, delicious food, and much more. It is a one-of-a-kind experience! The Community Village, an activist center, often referred to as the heart of the Oregon Country Fair, defines itself as "a part of the Oregon Country Fair Family that is dedicated to education, information access, and networking for progressive social change. We create a spiritual center manifesting the Village Vision of love, peace, trust, justice, cooperation, equality, and social service. By believing in dreams, thinking of others, valuing differences, and experimenting with new ideas, we hope to expand our consciousness, growing beyond the Fair into the world at large." The Community Village meets at least once a month year-round and operates on consensus.

A highlight of the Community Village at the Oregon Country Fair is the Intentional Communities Booth. The booth, designed to share information about communal living during the Fair, has an impact reaching far beyond just the three days of the Fair. Booth members meet together during the village meetings once a month for many months in advance of the Fair, as well as holding multiple meetings at the physical locations of the communities represented in the booth. This provides excellent opportunity for the intentional communities represented to network with each other, both through sharing information and physically traveling to the different communities. I felt honored at the opportunity to host an Intentional Communities Booth meeting at Lost Valley. I, along with Khyla Allis (Lost Valley's other booth rep), walked the different representatives around the land, telling stories of the ecstatic dances in the meadow, my favorite place to go for a dip in the creek, the best trees to climb, as well as how we operated as a community. The 2017 booth's theme was "Connect: Now More Than Ever."

The booth represented not only residential intentional communities in the Eugene, Oregon area, including Breitenbush Hot Springs and Retreat Center, East Blair Housing Cooperative, Heart-Culture Community Farm, Lost Valley Education and Event Center/Meadowsong Ecovillage, and Maitreya Ecovillage, but also groups dedicated towards community-building: the Eugene Avant Gardeners, Heart of Now, and Network For a New Culture. During the meetings before the Fair, through connecting with representatives for Network For a New Culture, I became aware of La'akea Permaculture Community in Pahoa, Hawaii. La'akea's mission for egalitarianism, consensus decision making, off-grid living, and permaculture deeply aligned within my own core values. I began to ask myself the question: How can I best connect intentional communities? What came forth was to spend the winter at La'akea—building a bridge between two different communities—and to return to Lost Valley in the spring to share what I have learned.

La'akea Permaculture Community was founded in 2005 by a group of individuals who connected at a Network For a New Culture Summer Camp in Oregon. Located on 24 acres in the lush rain forest of Puna, Big Island, La'akea is fully off-grid, using solar power and rainwater collection systems. La'akea operates as an event center hosting the Network For a New Culture Winter Camp and Summer Solstice Camp, as well as ISTA (International School for Temple Arts) trainings—a worldwide network for spiritual, sexual, shamanic healing. The community has 10 adult members plus two children, and is actively seeking new members. There is also a work-trade residential exchange to live in the community as a non-member. La'akea has held space for deep exploration of the heart and soul in ways that give me clarity on why I choose to live in community. Through weekly heart-shares, a strong focus on communication, authentic relationships, and encouragement towards polyamory/sexual freedom I have found that I have stepped into my power, in balance of masculine/feminine more than ever before. I will always remember the times of planting over 100 Taro plants, a sacred food source to native Hawaiians, and all the work that went into the main house construction project. However, what I expect to remember most is my first Network For a New Culture Camp.

Network For a New Culture, inspired by the ZEGG community in Germany, seeks to build a sustainable, violence-free culture through exploring intimacy, personal growth, transparency, radical honesty, equality, compassion, sexual freedom, and the power of community. New Culture camps are hosted across the United States at different times during the year. New Culture Winter Camp was the most powerful

2016 Lost Valley Holistic Sustainability Semester students pictured with a water-tank mural they created.

2018 Network For a New Culture Winter Camp at La'akea Permaculture Communtity.

Photos courtesy of Setesh FreeMan

community-building container that I have been a part of to date. I did find that I was quite young in comparison to the New Culture attendees, with an average age range of late 40s to mid 50s. However, I believe that New Culture is very accepting of the younger generation, and encourages younger energy to come into the tribe. Through daily ZEGG Forums, communal meals, workshops on tantra, dance, NVC, and various forms of social permaculture, the container got stronger and stronger each day. Having gone through a multitude of personal breakthroughs—deep laughter, crying, safe screaming, dancing, sensual play, tantric temples—I had never opened up so fully before. Through my experience I believe that Network For a New Culture is one of the most capable containers for living intentional communities to be created out of, just as La'akea was in 2005.

As my half-year stay at La'akea was wrapping up there began to be changes in the movement of the Earth. My last day at La'akea was May 3, 2018. During the last four days earthquakes shook the community, upwards of 150 a day, with the magnitude increasing to 6.9. I recall, four hours before my departure while lying on the floor of the tiny home I resided in, the Earth feeling as if it was continuously moving underneath me. While waiting at the airport I received a message stating that fissures of lava were opening up in Leilani Estates, a residential neighborhood approximately three miles from La'akea. I felt an immense desire to be with my community family at La'akea during this time, but recognized I needed to continue on with my flight back to Lost Valley.

In my initial shares with the Lost Valley community, regarding my experiences and desires to build deeper bridges between Lost Valley and La'akea, it was hard to resist tears in expressing the unknown that surrounds a community that I love dearly. There had already been talks on working together for co-creating a Permaculture educational course/internship that could involve a Permaculture Design Course at Lost Valley and a hands-on internship at La'akea. However, this has been put on hold with the eruption. Much of the community has taken this time to travel to the mainland to work on projects or visit family. About half of the members are still on the land as of July 1. Although the flow has continued to move south towards/into the ocean away from La'akea, the quality of the air has the community considering a more permanent evacuation, at least until the eruption ends (which is unpredictable at this point). This eruption has deepened my connection with the members of La'akea. As of July 1, I have had the opportunity to host five different residents/members from my stay at La'akea, and provide Lost Valley as a place of rest while away from the island. Some of them have stayed for multiple weeks. Although in ways originally unexpected, there has truly been a bridge built between Lost Valley and La'akea.

The 2018 Oregon Country Fair Intentional Communities Booth is in full swing, with additions of Dharmalaya, an urban permaculture center in Eugene as well as The Mothership, an urban community in Portland. In my return to Lost Valley I have most recently begun playing the role of Visitor Coordinator. Through this role I have desires to connect with other communities on how we can better support each other through visitor exchange programs and sharing knowledge to visitors about other intentional communities that may meet their needs/curiosities best. However, what I have come to learn through my stay at La'akea is that the most impactful way to establish a network of communities is through authentic relationships. I continue to find myself in awe of the communal networking that I have been blessed to be a part of since the flyer at the university of Georgia caught my eye two years ago. Living in community has facilitated an opening of the heart, deepened communication skills, created a rooted connection with the Earth, and ignited a passion for life. I believe I have a duty to network with others who are doing this work. It's time to Connect: Now More Than Ever.

Setesh FreeMan is a member of Lost Valley Education and Event Center/Meadowsong Ecovillage, Permaculturalist, Ecstatic Dance DJ, avid tree climber, Deadhead, and dedicated to the Network For a New Culture movement.

Chris Roth

Patch Adams holds the Communities Directory as he encourages his audience to explore intentional community during a talk in Community Village at the Oregon Country Fair, July 14, 2018.

Communities: Better Together

By Bruce Perler

Photos courtesy of Bruce Perler

Attending communities conferences has been a powerful way to connect with and feel the deep significance of our movement, the restoration of village life and its integration into our modern world. Over the last few years, I've been fortunate to join in on three of the four West Coast Communities Conferences, beginning in 2015 at Groundswell Institute (groundswell.institute). These experiences, especially enjoyed with fellow travelers from my community, have become a rich part of our shared life.

The last WCCC, fall of 2017, was held at Terra Madre Gardens (www.terramadregardens.com). It was there that I had a powerfully meaningful encounter with Diana Leafe Christian. After years of reading her articles and admiring her straightforward style and ardent support of community done well, it was a mind- and heart-opening experience to meet her in person. She'd heard of the Goodenough Community through her work as editor of Communities (from 1993-2007), and was so pleased to meet me, the person who traveled the furthest to be at the WCCC conference. I still remember the enlivened and humbled feeling of being called out by Diana, appreciated across gathered attendees, for representing an elder community with such a long history, 48 years of offering our cornerstone event, a Human Relations Laboratory (www.goodenough.org/human-relations-lab).

Later in the event I would attend Diana's introduction to Sociocracy, now a pivotal conversation in my community's life. Speaking intimately with Diana about the Goodenough Community's story and our time of life, I became clear of the timeliness of this opportunity to update our governance and decision-making model. After talking with dear friend Elias Serras at the event, I was clear and strongly motivated to host Diana's Sociocracy workshop on behalf of my and other communities in our home region. An old acquaintance, and fellow shaker and mover on the West Coast, Raines Cohen, overheard our conversation and suggested that I contact the reinvigorated Northwest Intentional Communities Association as a collaboration partner in hosting the Sociocracy workshop. Genius idea, Raines, and full of fortune. What a pleasant surprise to find that an old friend, Syd Fredrickson, was now the head of NICA. Now the collaboration ball was rolling.

What began as a fortuitous connection with Diana and great tip from Raines has grown into a multi-event collaboration between NICA and the Goodenough Community. We scheduled with Diana to teach her three-day Sociocracy workshop in April of 2018, then began networking with others in NICA towards other exciting projects, including the hosting of NICA's 2018 Spring Gathering and 25th Anniversary Celebration, held at Sahale, the rural learning center run by Goodenough Community. Not long after we'd committed to the Sociocracy training and booked the NICA Gathering, my friend Elias put me in touch with Sky Blue of Twin Oaks and FIC. Elias had proposed to Sky that Sahale might be a good place to host the 2018 WCCC. Soon we were having regular conference calls with Sky, Elias, Paxus, Syd, and myself. Plans were set, and we are now broadening our collaboration, adding more regional players to our team to build on the excellent and growing tradition of the WCCC.

Looking back over the months since the 2017 WCCC, I can't help but notice a series of synchronicities that have been a clear unfolding of opportunities and energy for collaboration on behalf of the broader movement. It's as if the network that is already present is receiving our energy and lighting up to show us still more opportunities. Let's keep our eyes and hearts open; there's so much possible when we're working together.

Bruce Perler is 54 years old and a 20+ year Goodenough Community (www.goodenough.org) member living at its rural retreat and ecovillage, Sahale Learning Center (www.sahaleretreat.org), about two hours' drive west of Seattle. He enjoys networking with regional communities and getting to know more of the movement through the West Coast Communities Conference, this year hosted at Sahale Learning Center as a collaborative project. When not doing building maintenance work at the ecovillage, he is out with his wife enjoying the beauty of the Kitsap and Olympic Peninsula; kayaking, hiking, snowshoeing, and motorcycle camping. Contact him at Bruce@goodenough.org, 206-419-8361.

West Coast Communities (Un)Conference 2018

The West Coast Communities Conference will be held **September 14-16, 2018** at Sahale Ecovillage and Learning Center in Washington. This year's theme is **Cultivating Collective Liberation**. We'll focus on social, cultural, spiritual, and deep ecological technologies for communities of the future; intentional communities as living laboratories for social transformation; addressing privilege and oppression within intentional communities and the movement; and intentional communities as vehicles for cultivating collective liberation in the larger society.

This conference is an intentional, intergenerational experience of community. Whether you live in an intentional community, are interested in joining or starting one, are a networker or organizer, or are new to intentional communities, this conference will have something for you. Participants will learn about the intentional communities of the western US, gain skills and understanding for living in and developing intentional communities, and find mutual support and camaraderie with others involved with intentional community. We will celebrate the diverse types of community that exist, expand the potential of increased inclusiveness, and explore intentional community as a model for impacting wider social change.

Venue: Sahale Learning Center (www.sahaleretreat.org) is an ecovillage with a dozen residents, valuing permaculture principles, integrating human activities with the land, supporting human development and conscientious stewardship of all living things. It's located about 20 minutes' drive from Belfair, Washington.

Sponsors: The 2018 West Coast Communities Conference is cosponsored by the Fellowship for Intentional Community (ic.org), Northwest Intentional Communities Association (nwcommunities.org), and Goodenough Community (goodenough.org).

For more information: www.WestCoastCommunitiesConference.org, WestCoastCommunitiesConference@gmail.com, www.facebook.com/westcoastcommunitiesconference.

—BP

EUROPEAN DAY OF SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES, 22 SEPTEMBER: A Celebration of the Diversity of Grassroots Action

By Iva Pocock

What do a food fermentation workshop in Germany, a gathering in Lisbon University's permaculture garden, a conference on community-led climate action in Brussels, a lecture on rural eco-tourism in Serbia, and an ecovillage open day on a Swedish island have in common?

The answer lies in the map of the inaugural European Day of Sustainable Communities (EDSC), held in September last year (see www.ecolise.eu/european-day-of-sustainable-communities).

These diverse events were just some of the happenings that marked the day in 15 countries from the Balkans to the Baltic Sea, and along the western fringe of Europe.

Conceived and initiated by ECOLISE, the European network for community-led initiatives on climate change and sustainability, the EDSC is about celebrating the breadth of organizing and action that is taking place at the grassroots level in Europe. It's also about drawing the attention of policy makers, from European Union (EU) to national, regional, and local municipal levels, to the scope and potential of this broad movement.

Two communities that marked the day were the Arterra and Lakabe ecovillages in the Basque region of Spain.

"We brought together representatives from nearby ecovillages, community groups, and local government," says Francesca Whitlock, a resident at Arterra. "The day felt like a really positive step towards uniting all our work and bringing together local actors engaged in sustainability."

The second edition of the European Day of Sustainable Communities takes place on 22 September, 2018. ECOLISE's 43 member organizations, which broadly represent the ecovillage, permaculture, and Transition movements across Europe, as well as specialist research and educational organizations, are keenly involved in organizing the event.

"This year we'll be involved again," says Francesca. "It's an opportunity to build bridges and make new connections with like-minded groups in the region and make visible the work that's happening at the grassroots towards a more sustainable Europe."

Two new European partners are also on board: Let's Do It, the Estonian-based organizers of World Clean-Up Day, a global movement of communities cleaning up trash and agitating for waste elimination; and *La Fête des Possibles*, the festival of community-led action across France and francophone Belgium.

There's a new website (www.sustainable-communities.net) where participants are invited to register their event and to share via social media. At the end of May there were already events in six countries signed up!

To mark the day in Brussels, Belgium, the heart of EU institutions, ECOLISE itself is once again cohosting a conference with the European Economic and Social Committee, an advisory assembly to the EU made up of social partners from the 28 member states, and the Committee of the Regions, the EU's assembly of local and regional authorities.

Citizens, communities, and municipalities working together for grassroots climate action is the conference theme. It is inspired by the growing recognition that the global problems we face, such as climate change, urgently require innovative, systemic responses emerging from the bottom-up, not just the top-down.

The conference offers an opportunity for participants, both civil society organizers and policy makers, to explore the barriers to and potential of this type of collaboration. The latest research findings of the ongoing Municipalities in Transition (MiT) project will be shared (municipalitiesintransition.org), as will the outputs of ECOLISE's knowledge-gathering on community-led action in Europe, which is currently being collated on a Wiki (wiki.ecolise.eu). This open-source process of knowledge co-creation is a key strand of ECOLISE's work, helping to inform the work of policy makers and practitioners at all levels.

The Brussels conference will once again be a so-called blended meeting, one in which participants can be physically and virtually present. Last year it was fitting that a network of community initiatives committed to low-carbon solutions overcame the bureaucratic and security requirements of the EU institutions to bring citizen activists from five different countries into the heart of Brussels via the online meeting platform Zoom, which is one of the key tools to facilitate grassroots collaboration internationally.

Challenges

As a network of networks, ECOLISE aims to celebrate, stimulate, and increase the positive impact of community-led action on sustainability and climate change, by:

- Raising the profile and highlighting the potential of what is already happening across Europe and beyond
- Sharing and co-creating knowledge and catalyzing effective cooperation among member networks and other stakeholders
- Influencing European and national policy development and delivery to empower, enable, and build upon the benefits of community-led action.

The challenges we face in striving to achieve these aims, of which organizing the European Day of Sustainable Communities is a part, largely mirror

Online conversation within ECOLISE, the European network for community-led initiatives on climate change and sustainability.

the challenges of the communities who are taking action on the ground.

Limited resources and a heavy reliance on volunteers is a challenge for ECOLISE and its member networks and organisations. This situation is not unusual within the NGO sector, especially in Europe, and is an important factor in limiting its development and impact.

"There are 7000 community-supported agriculture farms feeding some one million people and 1500 renewable energy cooperatives (REScoops) in Europe," says Eamon O'Hara, ECOLISE Executive Director. "Climate action is already a driver of community-led innovation, with thousands of initiatives up and running across Europe. Yet these community initiatives often have very limited resources other than personal commitment and vision. Generally they face legislative barriers, a heavy over-reliance on volunteers, an absence of accessible funding, and no policy support. They are off the radar of European funding and research bodies."

Another challenge is that of building collaboration among 43 organizations that often have very different cultures and backgrounds. This is not helped by language barriers, and while we work predominantly in English, the language most common to all members, this sometimes makes communication and understanding difficult. There is also the challenge of relying on virtual working, with our members dispersed across Europe and our core team located in five different countries—Belgium, France, Ireland, Luxembourg, and the UK.

These limitations are also of course the network's strength. There is a tremendous depth of knowledge, experience, and commitment throughout the network, and diversity and being on the margins are familiar to many!

Overcoming the barrier of limited resources is at the very heart of all ECOLISE's work. ECOLISE is choosing strategically important places in which to push the message that communities need support. The role of the ECOLISE Policy Coordinator, the experienced climate negotiator and activist Meera Ghani, is key to this work, as is ECOLISE's membership in Climate Action Network–Europe.

"At the European Union level we are inputting into key decision-making fora. Internationally we participated at COP23 emphasizing the contribution and potential contribution of communities in various meetings and discussions," says Eamon.

So what has been achieved?

"Instant outcomes are not the nature of this business, but there are reasons for optimism. As governments confront the scale of the task ahead there is growing recognition of the importance of deeper engagement with citizens and communities," he says. "ECOLISE and other organisations have been pushing for greater recognition of and support for the role of grassroots, community-led initiatives and there are signs that the message is getting through. Of particular note is the establishment of a new Local Communities and Indigenous People's (LCIP) platform, which will be a party to future rounds of COP negotiations.

"In March of this year, in a policy statement on climate diplomacy, the Council of the European Union acknowledged, for the first time, the role of local communities in dealing with climate change. The Council's recognition of local communities' role in dealing with one of the greatest challenges of our time is an important breakthrough," says Eamon.

ECOLISE has also been contributing actively to the design of several new EU programmes, including a new Smart Villages programme, which is due to be launched in 2021. Here, as elsewhere, ECOLISE has been promoting recognition of the pivotal role of communities in contributing to climate and sustainability goals, and emphasizing the need for more dialogue between top-down and bottom-up in order to create a more supportive environment for such grassroots mobilization.

Later this year ECOLISE will also launch a new Sustainable Communities Programme, which will promote collaboration between partners at the regional level in developing a supportive framework for community-led action, while also facilitating exchange, cooperation, and mutual learning between regions, and upwards towards national and EU policy makers.

This, and all ECOLISE activities, are based on a very simple principle, perfectly articulated by the well-known activist and philanthropist Ross Jackson when he spoke at the ECOLISE General Assembly in March 2018 about what he saw as three key ingredients to the success of community-led activism in the future: "collaboration, collaboration, and collaboration."

Iva Pocock is ECOLISE's Communications Coordinator. A journalist by training, she has been communicating on sustainability since the early 1990s. She has worked for a number of environmental, development, and justice NGOs, both national and international, based in Ireland and Sri Lanka. As a journalist she has written extensively for the Irish Times*, among other media, covering social and environmental stories. She lived for six years in Brussels, Belgium, where she is proud to have instigated a small community garden. She is a founder member, in 1999, of Ireland's first ecovillage, in Cloughjordan, County Tipperary, where she and her family now live.*

A community open day held on the first European Day of Sustainable Communities.

Photos courtesy of Iva Pocock

EUROPEAN DAY OF SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

ECOLISE
EUROPEAN NETWORK FOR COMMUNITY-LED INITIATIVES ON CLIMATE CHANGE AND SUSTAINABILITY

On the Potential for an IC Business Network

By James Collector






What do pickles, hammocks, ecohostels, web design, tiny houses, bookkeeping, dance lessons, and herbal medicines have in common? They are all goods and services provided by businesses owned by members of intentional communities.

Yet there is currently no existing network of these businesses. I would love to see such a network created—for the benefit of both business owners and customers. As a customer who prefers to support ethical businesses, it would be helpful to have a designated site where I can search for products and services. As a business owner myself, it would be helpful to have a listing on a network searched by like-minded clients.

The internet is vast and its major entry points are currently controlled by corporate gatekeepers. I'm tired of being directed to large companies by biased search engines. Due to the monopolization of ecommerce by companies such as Amazon and Google, Americans in general lack access to ethical marketplaces. Alternative networks—such as the Communities Directory—can help us find what we seek.

In the mainstream, small-scale and decentralized marketplaces for goods and services have increased in popularity and use over the last decade. Etsy, an ecommerce site for homemade and vintage goods, is the fastest growing example of this trend in 2015, doing 10 times the sales of eBay: $1.93 billion in total sales, $195 million in revenue (www.sec.gov/Archives/edgar/data/1370637/000119312515077045/d806992ds1.htm).

Much of Etsy's appeal is based in how consumers value unique goods produced by identifiable people—for which they often pay a premium, rather than choosing a similar mass-produced good. Despite this trend in consumer preference, within the world of ecommerce, there are scant examples of an online "ethical marketplace."

A network of intentional community (IC) businesses could fill a real need for both customers and business owners. I have data to support this claim from a national survey that I conducted for the Fellowship for Intentional Community (FIC) in 2015. In this article, I'm going to share results from that survey as well as a vision born out the entrepreneurial incubator of the University of California, Berkeley. Before I do, I want to set the tone for any anti-consumerism readers who, like myself, retain a healthy skepticism of capitalism:

"Every community formed since the early 1990s that I know of, has been motivated by a spiritual impulse and/or by environmental and social justice concerns. Their founders learned to understand and use tools also used by mainstream culture—creating legal entities, buying property, borrowing money, paying interest—in order to create viable alternatives to mainstream culture."—Diana Leafe Christian, *Creating a Life Together*

Taking this attitude to heart, I set about surveying communities listed in the Communities Directory in 2015. From the 1,700-odd American communities listed at the time, I narrowed the sample down to the 679 established communities who had been active on ic.org within four years. I sent out the 21-question survey via email, requesting all business owners within each community to respond. Forty-five businesses from 35 communities in seven regions of the US responded. This 5.1-percent response rate may be partially attributed to that, as a whole, 6.9 percent of Americans owned an established business in 2014 (www.babson.edu/Academics/centers/blank-center/global-research/gem/Documents/GEM%202017-2018%20Global%20Report.pdf.). Whatever the reasons for the 5.1-percent response rate, the 45 respondents formed a diverse and relatively unbiased sample of the total population of business owners based in US intentional communities.

Here are the types of goods and services provided by the business owners who responded to the survey:

Goods	Services
• Educational material • Jams, pickles, snacks, gift items • Rental housing • Orchard produce • Gold mining • Herbs, plants, cut flowers, soap, and medicinal herbal products • Candles, hand waxing, food concessions • Campground, retreat center, motel • Affordable housing • Hammocks, handicrafts • Soup, room and board • Health retreats • Baked goods • Dry goods, bulk foods • Tents and tipis • U-pick strawberries	• Publishing • Custom woodworking, tool repair • Technical writing • Software user interface design • Technical support • Web design • Graphic design • Permaculture design and education • Sustainable land use planning • Manufacturing of books and DVDs • Horse boarding • Group dynamics consulting • Bookkeeping, accounting, general office work, and software training • Online sales consulting • Wilderness/hunting skills classes and expeditions • Eco-tourism and voluntourism • Residential cleaning services, personal cooking • Internships • Conferences • Special needs youth services • Architecture • Arborist and tree services • Consulting for nonprofit, volunteer-board, membership organizations • Tiny house design and construction • Nutritionist, placenta encapsulation • Spiritual consulting • Illustration

Analysis of the survey responses produced the following conclusions:

• Across the United States, businesses owned by members of intentional communities offer a wide range of goods and services to customers at the local, regional, and national level.

• These businesses tend to do business with each other and prefer purchasing ethically produced goods.

• More than half rely partially on the internet for some combination of marketing, hiring, sales, and/or delivery.

• More than half accept online payment.

• The most common challenges faced by these businesses are related to time, staffing, and limited local demand, yet the most commonly expressed need for support involved publicity or marketing.

• Finally, 58 percent responded that they would use an additional web presence if offered by the Fellowship for Intentional Community; 40 percent responded that they would use additional marketing or promotional opportunities; 19 percent would use online payment services.

It bears repeating that publicity and marketing were the most common forms of support requested by the survey respondents. A network of IC businesses would provide another avenue of discoverability for these businesses.

So, what would an IC business network entail? The most basic version could be a simple directory where IC business owners could create a listing/profile with their goods/services, location, and contact information. The other side of the spectrum would be a full-service online platform that might facilitate everything from sales and marketing opportunities to job listings and social networking features such as groups.

The target users for either a business directory or full-service platform might include:

1. Customers in the US seeking unique and ethically produced goods and services
2. Business owners/entrepreneurs who live in intentional communities
3. Cooperative business owners who may not live in residential cooperatives. (This subset would include a drastically larger user base while also diluting the emphasis on ICs.)

Customers will experience the platform as not just an online store, but also a place to network and explore. Visually, it ought to be clean and cozy. The ethical principles of each business ought to be clear. The search function ought to emphasize keywords and location. Search results ought to be displayed in an egalitarian manner to avoid hierarchical list formats.

Of course, envisioning is the fun part; the real work will be fundraising. Funds will be necessary for both initial development and ongoing operation. Funds might be raised through grants, crowd-sourcing, or private investors. Where there's a will, there's a way. It's also worth stating that such a platform could be either for-profit or not-for-profit, depending on business model.

Relevant grant opportunities exist at the state and federal levels, especially in the realm of small-business and rural economic development—a strong argument could be made that an IC business network would support both. Some examples of grant opportunities include Blooming Prairie Foundation, NCBA CLUSA's Cooperative Development Foundation, and the Small Business Innovation Research and Small Business Technology Transfer programs (www.sbir.gov/sbirsearch/solicitation/current), which help connect small businesses with federal grants and contracts from 12 government agencies. The Economic Development Administration (www.eda.gov/resources) also provides a number of grants.

Fundraising entails prudent assessment of the risks involved in developing a network of IC businesses. The idea dates back to 2000 when JT Ross Jackson wrote in his book, *And We Are Doing It!*, that the Global Ecovillage Network (GEN) had future plans to host on its website "fundraising facilities with multiple choices for donors, e-commerce for "green products" across the globe, a 'classified ad' service, ecovillage tourism, and a global clearinghouse for complimentary local money systems" (Jackson 77). In 2015, these plans were manifest in the Baltic Ecovillage Network's "Market," which is buried in the ecovillage.org sites and receives minimal participation (there are perhaps less than 150 posts per year).

The FIC has explored business support for its users in the past. According to the FIC's former executive secretary, Laird Schaub, "In addition to the major challenge of keeping the

information up to date (parallel to one of our main challenges in doing the Directory), there was a major stumbling block in getting enough listings of products to make the clearinghouse concept work—both because the numbers weren't that large to begin with and because the fees needed to compensate the clearinghouse raised the price too much."

Quality control represents another challenge to developing an IC business network. Several business owners expressed the sentiment that quality is the most important factor for customers. This concept can be conveyed as "Product over politics." This might also be framed as, "In the end, customers just want a better product." Possible solutions to the challenge of quality control involve the degree to which the FIC might attempt to control it. On other commercial platforms such as eBay and Yelp, a rating system allows users to signal quality after previous transaction experiences. Whereas on Craigslist, there is no overt framework for quality control other than the ability to report abuse.

Further challenges include the strong anti-consumerism sentiment present in the communities movement, which might be a barrier to adoption by new users. On the opposite side of the spectrum, scaling up or "outgrowing" can occur when a business becomes so successful that it must leave the community in which it was originally based, leaving the community bereft of a major income source. Geographic challenges due to perishable goods and localized service providers may also represent real challenges to user adoption. Finally, the challenge of stigma may exist. During interviews, several cooperative business owners, who were not associated with intentional communities, expressed a sentiment of being disinclined to be grouped in with residential cooperatives. As one owner said, "People always ask us if we all live together." The owner was quick to dispel that perception due to concerns about professionalism. If cooperative business owners face a stigma of being perceived as cultish or a bunch of hippies, it will be an important point for marketing efforts to avoid or address.

If this article is a call-to-action, the next step will certainly be fundraising. Given adequate funding, a small team of web-developers and marketing specialists could launch a prototype network of IC businesses and begin the long, uphill process of user recruitment. I would relish the opportunity to assist such an endeavor in any way. All along, my motivation has been to aid in the establishment of ethical and resilient alternatives to the business-as-usual economy of the United States. Specifically, the establishment of an ethical online marketplace could empower consumers to make better purchasing decisions, create a counterpoint to encroachment of corporate franchises, and provide economic opportunities for cooperative businesses and the businesses of intentional communities. This overarching vision is in alignment with the Sixth Cooperative Principle (as defined by the International Co-operative Alliance): Cooperation among Cooperatives.

Given the struggling economic climate of the United States and the ongoing trends towards cultural homogenization and monopolization, alternative networks such as the communities movement play an increasingly important role in keeping America weird and resilient. My data and research strongly suggest that a network of IC businesses would address the real challenges of small and cooperative businesses. Inversely, a network would help customers across America find ethical goods and services.

I can already imagine myself swinging in a hammock at an eco-hostel, eating pickles while I search for bookkeeping and dance lessons—all thanks to the IC business network.

James Collector is a graduate of the Master of Development Practice program at the University of California, Berkeley where he studied sustainability through the lenses of business, impact evaluation, and project management. He earned his Bachelors in Journalism from the University of Colorado where he wrote his senior thesis on the structure of the internet and its consequences for digital media. His firsthand experiences living and working in intentional communities in the United States, Argentina, and India have convinced him that there is no better place in which to raise a family and live a healthy life.






The Federation of Egalitarian Communities and Community Networking

By Sumner Nichols

Photos courtesy of Sumner Nichols

The Federation of Egalitarian Communities (FEC) was formed by a number of people, including founders of Twin Oaks and East Wind. Its intended mission is to create and grow a network of income-sharing communities. You can learn more about the FEC at thefec.org.

Here is the part of East Wind's bylaws that interests me the most: "We are striving to be self reliant, especially in cooperation with other groups…and we promote the formation and growth of similar communities." As an Occupy burnout (and subsequent college and workforce burnout) I wasn't looking for unrealistic and unattainable goals. East Wind having the stature of a four-decades-old establishment, institution even, held great appeal to me during my first visit. The energy and idealism of the founders got a boulder rolling that continues to this day at an even pace. The flavor and aesthetic of that energy and idealism have changed and morphed over the years as people come and go, but the community habitat that allows these creative forces to come together is still well intact (supported vigilantly by successful businesses). The opportunity to network with those who inhabit these special places and not only dream up, but execute on, plans for new communal living situations is one of the many reasons I give my time and energy to this movement.

Movement may seem to be an inappropriate word to some, in this context. How much larger is the FEC population since, say, 2000? How many people have come in and out of these communes and attempted to start their own? I have little data, but we are not dealing with large numbers here (at East Wind, the past 15 years have seen about 700 people come in as official visitors or members). Think of a slow, geologically slow, movement of income sharing and communal living from the late 1960s to today. Many FEC communities have sustained for decades and continue to inspire. The back-to-the-land spirit that motivated so many two generations ago is resurging as the increasingly absurd "mainstream" society fails to capture the interest of the new generation. The living social experiments of the large FEC communities provide the accumulation and transfer of experiential knowledge needed to accelerate new communitarians' transitions into varied communal living arrangements.

Let us imagine East Wind and Twin Oaks as two big anchors keeping the fleet safely in harbor. The fleet is made up of ships big and small and crews of endless variety. Of course, any of the various captains in the fleet can choose to break off in a dinghy to execute a specific plan. A great historical example of this is East Wind relying on Twin Oaks' hammocks business to support themselves through the beginning years. Business expansion is perhaps the most reliable way for growth. This top-down approach has to be carefully conceived and even more diligently managed. A seriously committed group of independent thinkers with a strong communal spirit is necessary. Of course, each ship's crews are learning to live with each other in the process of evolution. Individual mariners meet mariners from different crews and get to see a variety of living arrangements. Those that stick with the income-sharing fleet for a long enough time inevitably get ideas of their own of the best living agreements and a percentage of them feel drawn to attempt to be the founders of a new project. They venture off into unknown waters and experiment, blazing new routes. Most will burn out, but that is no reason to not try.

East Wind and Twin Oaks can choose to be passive, put out small bets, or take a bigger risk to grow community.

Small, minimalist projects don't require significant material support. Large top-down projects require taking on some amount of risk. Every concept is an option to be considered. East Wind and Twin Oaks can choose to be passive, put out small bets, or take a bigger risk to grow community (a goal explicitly stated in both communities' bylaws, and exemplified by Twin Oaks' spawning of nearby Acorn, also an FEC member community). Agreements for dividends, specific land use terms, etc. can be made to help get potential concepts off the ground. Getting the material support into the hands of those who have some chance of success is obviously the most difficult part of this process. And this is where networking comes in. Both communities have good reason to be wary of a lousy business plan or mal-intentioned schemers. I think this problem can be slightly alleviated by shared business experience (e.g., food manufacturing) and an effective joint venture. Keeping records, knowing histories, etc. can really help determine who is a thoughtful decision maker and who is in over their head. A big enough group with the right synergies and a willingness to be founders takes time and energy to form.

What is in the future of the communities movement? More Acorns and more little seedlings, one can hope. It is happening, slowly but surely at the moment. The flood of the late '60s and early '70s will undoubtedly be repeated; let us prepare for it!

Sumner is a 27-year-old attempting to live a moral life in an age of decline. He desires to be a participant in the creation of new cultures and new communities. When he is not managing the multi-million-dollar business that is East Wind Nut Butters he likes to garden, write, milk cows, and document the communities movement. You can read his blogs, which have plenty of pictures (and soon to be film), online at eastwind.org.

Liberation, Networks, and Community

By Yana Ludwig

Yana Ludwig

Bob Zellner of SNCC, speaking to Showing Up for Racial Justice organizers in North Carolina in May 2018.

I'm sitting in a Lutheran summer camp conference room on a steamy night in North Carolina, listening to Bob Zellner speak. Everyone in the room is white, and for once, that feels just fine to me.

Bob is talking about his days shadowing Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., being mentored by him and Rosa Parks. Bob is talking about the choice he made that didn't feel like a choice but a moral imperative, to become one of the first white people to show up in the civil rights movement in the South, joining and helping to nurture SNCC (the now legendary Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee). He is talking about fear, and persistence. And how he thinks now is worse than the '60s in terms of government repression. Sitting relaxed with a mic in front of the room, Bob talks about his hope for white people organizing other white people to stand up to racial repression, and I can see how his warrior spirit is both sobering for the people in the room, and helping strengthen our resolve to live up to that hope.

Ten years ago, I associated networking with things like the Green Drinks movement: fun rituals, but kinda lightweight. That's changed.

In my mind, Bob is talking community, almost from word one. But I usually do that translation in my head when someone is talking about a powerful movement. For me, organizing has shifted over the years from list making and task assignments, to something deeply relational: the authentic pursuit of getting our needs met collectively...a.k.a. community.

I don't usually expect that translation to be matched by the world around me. So I feel an unexpected thrill when Bob's language turns in that direction and we find ourselves talking about the power of *organizing our lives* in order to be in a better position to *organize for our lives*.

We are now talking about Fannie Lou Hamer, who organized the Freedom Farm Cooperative, a community in Wisconsin of fellow Black folks, in 1969. She is one of the main inspirations of the most exciting thing happening in the communities movement as far as I can tell: Cooperation Jackson.

Except if you go to Cooperation Jackson's website, it doesn't look much like a community's website. I recommended to a communalist conference organizer recently that he reach out to them, and he emailed back a little confused because he couldn't find the community part on their website. But it is there, woven into the talk of liberation and cooperative economics.

Cooperation Jackson is a firmly Southern project, grounded in the civil rights movement, and grounded in the new economy paradigm that is resisting capitalism on the ground by organizing co-ops, planting community gardens, and yes, starting an intentional community. The richness of these carefully crafted layers of Cooperation Jackson is part of what thrills me. This isn't organizing a residential community to play the middle class acquisition game more effectively, nor is it community for the sake of simply having a safer place to raise your kids or the leisure time to garden (both of which are fine things in and of themselves, but don't address systemic issues for others). This is about fundamentally disrupting the systems of economic and racial supremacy in our lives that are killing most of us by inches.

Networks and organizing are powerful for me today in ways that I didn't find them powerful 10 years ago. Ten years ago, I associated networking with things like the Green Drinks movement: fun rituals, but kinda lightweight in terms of the political power and disruptive potential they have. They were, for me, a way of playing the professionals' game better, and I've always thought that was a game with more downsides to winning it than upsides. They certainly didn't have much to do with my vision for a transformed society.

Today, networks have really different resonance for me. Both Cooperation Jackson and Bob Zellner have had something to do with that change. (I strongly suspect that my shift in this has been a shift away from the mental patterns of whiteness and middle classness that I've been steeped in from a young age. But that is another article, waiting to be written.)

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Rewind in my own timeline to the summer before.

I'm in one of those beautiful old big church buildings in downtown Los Angeles, facilitating a meeting of about 25 people. It's a delightfully diverse bunch this time: old activists and young ones, mostly people of color, and the strongest, most clear voices in the room are from a couple of young women of color doing bold public banking organizing in the city.

The container for this meeting is being held by Commonomics USA, the economic justice organization I am the Executive Director of at this time. But I'm not here as an expert on the topic: I'm here as a facilitator, putting into play the skills I've learned in residential community to attempt something that is still cutting-edge in the activist world: deliberately ending silos of interests to make something powerful happen.

This is the first in a series of meetings in California bringing together public banking advocates with fossil fuel and big banking divestment folks. We've deliberately invited people who don't normally end up at the same meetings, including, in this case, public housing activists who see some hope for public banking as a tool, in spite of the movement's history. The public banking world has been a largely white and upper middle class field for a long time, and to say it has some cluelessness about most people's actual lives would be kind. But the collective gathered here is interested in changing that.

I'm here in part because there are some really interesting parallels for me between that world and the intentional communities world. Each is centered on its own, very powerful tool: in the one case, publicly and democratically controlled finance; in the other, residential community with all its psychological, financial, and ecological benefits. Both tools can be used, and have been, to maintain and expand the comfort of the already comfortable, and to empower some truly awful things in the world.

The best recent example of this with public banking was Standing Rock. North Dakota sports the only public bank in the US currently, and it has provided a lot of economic resilience to that state. That's the good side. The bad side is that it was weaponized during the Standing Rock resistance to corporate power, and was a very effective tool to empower the police to shut down the protests.

And in the communities movement, we see communities that use the tool of residential community for a kind of deliberate insularity that allows child abuse, sexism, and other forms of abuse to flourish. I have multiple friends who were raised in genuine cults (a word I don't use lightly and use only in alignment with FIC's understanding of what that means). The damage these groups can cause their members and especially the young people raised in them is huge.

The parallel here is this: *without a social justice orientation and understanding, both public banking and intentional community can be dangerous and counterproductive to the world we ultimately want to create.* However, the flip side is true as well (and the communities movement will benefit from understanding this about itself): used within a social justice framework, community is an incredibly powerful tool for good, and one I am seeing increasingly as being powerful for disrupting systems of racial, class, and other forms of oppression.

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Back to that room in L.A. The organizing that happened at that meeting and in the follow-up sessions was one piece of a large, concentrated campaign that recently resulted in a major shift in how the state of California (which is the fifth largest economy in the world) is viewing public banking: not just as a way to continue being a powerful economy within capitalism, but also becoming a force of truly meeting marginalized people's needs. And we did our best in that meeting to center the voices of young people of color and make sure their agendas were the ones we were pushing the state to take seriously.

Used within a social justice framework, intentional community is an incredibly powerful tool for good—including for disrupting systems of racial, class, and other forms of oppression.

This, too, is community: the authentic pursuit of getting our needs met collectively. That spirit, of making our community organizing about real needs (and particularly the real needs of traditionally marginalized people) is what my broader networking and organizing work is teaching me and encouraging me to bring back to what I consider to be my "home" organizing scene of the intentional communities movement.

I want us to become a more powerful movement (a true *movement*) meeting the needs of people like me: queer, working class, with invisible disabilities in a female body. And I have learned that we will get there only by becoming a true movement to meet the authentic needs of people who are not like me: people of color, trans people, the truly poor, immigrants, and people with much more obvious and impactful disabilities than I deal with.

In short, our networks have to be things that connect the liberation of the white working class with people of color, as SNCC did. They have to connect community, agriculture, and black liberation together, as Cooperation Jackson does. And they have to use every tool we have available to us to connect the dots between finance, law, and liberation, the way that Commonomics is doing.

What the communities movement has to offer these broader movements are hard-won skills in cooperation, facilitation, etc. and the greater ease that comes from living with others and having energy freed up to also be activists and not just survive. What the movements and networks of liberation have to offer us is the ability to see community as a tool of either oppression or powerful organizing for liberation, and to get us solidly on the right side of history: transforming our movement into something that truly can create a world that works for everyone.

Yana Ludwig is a cooperative culture pioneer, intentional communities advocate, and anti-oppression activist. She is a cofounder of the Solidarity Collective in Laramie, Wyoming, an FIC Board member, and a Chapter Coach for SURJ (Showing Up for Racial Justice) which allowed her to meet Bob Zellner. Yana is the author of Together Resilient: Building Community in the Age of Climate Disruption *(under the name Ma'ikwe Ludwig), and has been a trainer and consultant for the communities movement since 2005. Yana now offers training on race and class oppression for communities with her partners, Crystal Byrd Farmer and Matt Stannard. See www.YanaLudwig.net.*

Inclusivity and Disability

By Allison Tom

When I saw the call for articles for the issue of Communities focused on "Class, Race, and Privilege" (#178, Spring 2018), I was immediately struck by the lack of mention of disability. This absence mirrors both the absence of discussion of inclusion of disabled people in broader North American culture and the absence of the issue in literature by and about cohousing communities. Since 20 percent of North Americans have a disability, this absence is striking. It's also very personal for me.

I was a member of a forming cohousing community, Little Mountain Cohousing (LMC) in Vancouver, British Columbia between January and December of 2015. I regretfully left that community when I could not figure out how to have my disabling condition accommodated in the meeting-intense early stages of creating a new cohousing community.

I'm a professor of education and anthropology on an extended medical leave because of an untreatable medical condition. A main symptom is chronic motion sickness; the condition has gotten progressively worse since its inception, and I now have severe problems with fatigue and nausea, especially later in the day.

I'm also a highly social person with lifelong personal and academic interests in culture, adult learning, creating community, and creating alternatives to individualistic ways of being and working. I enjoy being with children, young adults, and adults my age. I have two grown children of my own. I want to belong to a cohousing community because cohousing attracts people with many of my values and perspectives. I was frequently moved by the consideration I saw playing out in other members' discussion of a wide variety of issues, and I have a strong belief in cohousing and this community.

After the call for articles came out, I invited LMC members to talk with me about our experiences around my departure. Some came to my home for conversation and others have read and commented on drafts of this article. I also asked for information about including people with disabilities on the listserv *cohousing-l*. Drawing on my experience in LMC, these conversations, and my reading of the cohousing literature, I have suggestions to make about including disabled people in forming and existing communities.

Shauna Butterwick

I joined LMC early in 2015 and participated in general meetings, potlucks, and other social events. I was a "focus member" on the community-building committee. I felt welcomed and valued by other members and genuinely wanted to move into the community's new home. (LMC is currently in pre-construction phase with a goal of move-in in early 2020.)

I made contributions to the community that drew on my experience teaching adults and my interests in culture. For example, I designed an exercise to help us experience the shift from a "my home, my castle" mentality to a "thinking about the community" mentality. I joined and participated in *cohousing-l*, subscribed to this magazine, and enthusiastically bought and read books on cohousing, participatory democracy, and community-building.

Despite all of this, I reluctantly withdrew from the community at the end of 2015 because I was exhausted by the demands the cohousing model and process placed on me. As I was leaving, LMC was still debating construction materials and priorities and searching for land. Both issues were critically important to me and I worried about what and where my future home might be. Other members of the community were gracious about forgiving me for my absence when I was unable to attend meetings, but this gracious attitude, however welcome, was no substitute for actual participation.

I was also in my own personal state of transition and learn-

ing. Over the course of 2015, I continued to explore diagnostic and treatment possibilities for my condition. By the end of that year, I was forced to accept that there were no more medical options to pursue and faced the challenge of accepting a progressively restricted life.

I couldn't figure out how to continue and I was trying to solve this problem on my own. I failed to find a way to raise my sense of exhaustion with other LMC members. I do believe that most members of LMC would have been receptive to a conversation about accommodating me if we had been able to find a way, in those early days, to have that conversation.

Those of us with physical limitations but reluctant to ask for excessive help may be invisible as we self-select out of a culture that celebrates healthfulness and sturdy independence within community.

But the challenges to my participation were significant. The skills of facilitating and participating in consensus-based meetings were new to us all. Early meetings often ran over time. This left me hanging on through meetings that ran over so I could participate in final decisions. Our lack of a meeting space of our own meant I drove further than is good for me and sat in chairs that didn't meet my balance needs. The needs of the working adults in the community meant that many meetings and social events were scheduled for evenings, and weekend meetings were scheduled in the afternoons as often as in the mornings. I was able, after some months of negotiating, to have our community meetings rescheduled to weekend mornings, and the community-building committee met in my home on weekend mornings. But overall, what I knew was that I couldn't keep up; what I didn't know was how to request and accomplish accommodations to include me.

Since I left LMC, the community has bought land and has a building plan that looks likely to result in a lovely community in a neighbourhood where I would like to live. I've stayed in touch with community members and with our facilitator and have some sense of the community. In retrospect, I can see how things got to a place where leaving seemed like my only option, but I also feel that if I had stayed, I would be very happy to be part of this community and I would have had contributions to make. I believe it's possible for many disabled people to more fully participate in community formation and community life.

Some of the factors that combined to make leaving seem like the only option were my own. I was exhausted and ill. My personal process of accepting a long-term debilitating condition created an unfortunate confluence of my own trajectory and the trajectory of the community. Other barriers are aspects of my personal style. I tend to be better at advocating for other people than for myself, for instance. I prefer to raise problems when I can see possible solutions, and I couldn't devise a solution by myself. I'm also a private person and didn't feel comfortable discussing my medical issues with a group of strangers.

Other issues inherent to cohousing affected my ability to ask for and receive accommodation for my disability. For one thing, the literature on cohousing made me keenly aware of a tension between cohousers' interest in inclusivity and their caution about attracting people who want to join so they can be "taken care of." Community websites often include a FAQ section with a question such as "Do I get free day care, elder care, or help if I get sick?" with the answer that the community cannot meet ongoing daily care needs. Seniors' cohousing websites may emphasize the fitness and athleticism of their members. I've also been struck by threads on *cohousing-l* about individuals who are "too needy."

It's also easy to find discussions of how cohousers have been able to support one another with needs such as post-surgery recovery or reciprocal well-being checks. Still, the overall tone of cohousing emphasizes a hearty DIY spirit. Many communities celebrate how they managed much of the building process themselves, or how they manage their own grounds maintenance. These overtones can be discouraging to people with physical limitations. Cohousing communities have encountered individuals who are eager to ask for help in daily living. Those who are reluctant to ask for excessive help from others may be invisible as we self-select out of a culture that celebrates healthfulness and sturdy independence within community. We may have much to contribute and no intention of asking for excessive daily assistance and be unwilling to discuss our health difficulties in the face of this message.

The cohousing spirit emphasises learning to consider the good of the community over the wishes of the individual. Explanations of how to participate in consensus decision making, for example, can undermine the need to ask for individual accommodation. We heard frequently that blocking a consensus decision should not be done because of a personal preference or need but because the community's values or integrity would be damaged. I value the norm of considering the good of the community, but I was perhaps too cautious in expressing my needs.

There are structures of cohousing that can be difficult for many disabled people. Since almost all disabled people find that some aspect of daily life is more time-consuming or fatiguing for them than for others, the time-consuming aspects of cohousing can be a particular barrier. For me, for example, sticking it out in meetings that ran over their scheduled time was not a simple irritant; I was pushed to choose between participating in an important decision and leaving before I was harmfully fatigued. LMC favoured face-to-face communication over written, especially electronic, communication. When it's difficult to attend meetings or social events where issues are discussed formally and informally, closing the door on electronic discussions can close the door on a vital path to participation.

How can communities better include disabled people?

Clearly, not every disability can be accommodated in cohousing. Some things may simply be too severe or too complex to be addressed within a larger community. But many of us with disabilities are being unnecessarily and unintentionally excluded when we could be included with some simple changes. Creating an accommodation process, using electronic communication well, and building community capacity for difficult conversations can increase participation for disabled people.

The most important suggestion I have is for communities to create an explicit accommodation process as they are creating their other processes. Accommodation may not be an issue that needs the formation of an ongoing committee, but spelling out how unanticipated needs can be addressed will benefit those of us with disabilities that interfere with our participation and others

with situations that make participation more difficult than others realize.

An accommodation process might be grounded in a community's community-building committee. A process could consist of an open invitation to members to approach any member of the community-building committee with a need. The committee, or committee member, could work with the individual to create a small group that could discuss the difficulty and to explore possible responses and present them to the larger group for discussion and approval.

Such a process could provide a relatively private venue for discussing medical conditions and needs. It could also be used to discuss other personal difficulties or concerns. This kind of established process could serve both individuals who need accommodation and the community at large. The small group could say "no" as well as "yes"; the structure can facilitate both assistance and boundary setting. In all circumstances, the community should focus on what they can and cannot do and refrain from offering unsolicited medical or lifestyle advice.

Creating a process like this will require community conversation. This will itself be useful, raising awareness of the certainty that members of the community will ultimately need accommodation. A pre-emptive conversation creates an opportunity for discussion about principles and values rather than about an individual, and opens the possibility of greater ease discussing life's difficult challenges.

Communities can also work to use electronic communication well. It's true that email and other forms of disembodied communication can lead to miscommunication and regrettable outbursts. But eliminating these avenues of communication also restricts members' ability to participate in conversations. It would be better to put energy into learning how to communicate clearly and respectfully over email and group chats than to restrict this important avenue. Another form of electronic communication that could be important is software or hardware that facilitates easy distance participation in meetings. Whenever possible, the community should pay for the costs of distance inclusion instead of asking a disabled member to assume this personally, just as the community maintains a website and pays for meeting space and the like.

In my discussions with LMC members, we reflected on how difficult it is to get to know each other in the early stages of community formation. We felt that, in retrospect, we could see that it would have been useful to engage earlier in activities to help us get to know each other. Slogging together through decisions about land and buildings can build trust and intergroup knowledge. But if we had also focused earlier on structured conversations about values, we might have come to know each other better. This could well have made it easier for me to ask for help.

For example, last year LMC hosted a "vision and values" workshop that engaged members in conversations about what they wanted. This is the kind of conversation that would let us get to know each other and come to trust that difficult conversations are possible and safe. Forming communities should strive to give time to conversations about hopes, wishes, values, and fears as often as conversations about land and buildings.

These experiences create the space for people to learn that they can indeed "trust the group." Our facilitator frequently urged us to trust that the group decision-making process would yield solid decisions. For example, I can see now that some of the conversations about building priorities and locations that initially alarmed me resulted in decisions that please me. Within my first year of belonging to a forming community, I wasn't in a place to know that "trusting the group" would yield positive outcomes—but I am now able to see how a cohousing community can come to sensible decisions through considering the diverse viewpoints and hopes of the group.

More than one LMC member has told me they had wanted to encourage me not to leave when I declared my inability to continue. It might have made a difference to me if accommodation had been anticipated ahead of time.

Cohousing aspires to be as inclusive as possible, but North American culture suppresses conversation about disability and health, which have long been considered private. How can we create processes where previously invisible needs can be seen and addressed—within limits—and have voicing those different needs not be an extraordinary moment or request but part of the process of coming together?

Acknowledgements: I'd like to thank LMC members Jack Brondwin, Paul Cottle, Daisie Huang, and Ildi Varga, facilitator Kathy McGrenera, and colleague Shauna Butterwick for taking the time to discuss these ideas with me.

Allison Tom is an Associate Professor in the Department of Educational Studies at the University of British Columbia on long-term medical/disability leave. A mother of two grown children, she was a member of Little Mountain Cohousing in Vancouver, British Columbia in 2015 and is working to build a new community in the Vancouver area.

Countering Ableism

In June FIC received the following inquiry via our online contact form:

Greetings.

We are forming an intentional community. I have been browsing your pubs for several months and have not yet found materials which address our needs. I have found many articles about diversity and inclusion, but none that address ableism. Searching your site I found this result:

Search results: "disability inclusion" —No products were found matching your selection.

Perhaps I didn't search correctly. Or perhaps People with Disabilities (PWDs) have been overlooked, as is all too typical.

Please advise.

Thank you,
Patty Smith
Partner, The Mill ART Garden

After hearing back from McCune, manager of the FIC's Virginia office, Patty responded:

Thanks for your reply. I much appreciate your sensitivity to this issue and your promise to do more in the future.

Enlightenment is a process. As both a PWD and parent of two sons with significant disabilities, I have gained insight into the issue. A big part of my motivation for building intentional community stems from this experiential knowledge. Racism and sexism are addressed much more frequently than ableism. We know that diverse communities are the most creative and resilient, so making our communities as diverse as possible is not only morally correct, but institutionally profitable.

Syracuse University has created an introductory guide to disability language and empowerment, including a section on "people-first" language—"a way of describing disability that involves putting the word 'person' or 'people' before the word 'disability' or the name of a disability, rather than placing the disability first and using it as an adjective." That guide is here: sudcc.syr.edu/LanguageGuide.

Some people describe my youngest son as "a Down's kid" but I much prefer a "young man with Down syndrome." My son is not his diagnosis. He's blue-eyed, kind, methodical, organized, handsome, has a great sense of humor, gets along well with others, and is a big Harry Potter fan. And he also has Down syndrome.

Please feel free to keep in touch and let me know how your organization is progressing on this issue. I think it's wonderful that you are including "inclusion" in your discussions about community; the benefits to all are immeasurable!

With sincere thanks,
Patty Smith

HOW TO HELP ONE ANOTHER:
Connecting Cohousing Communities in a Regional Network

By Jude Foster

Cohousing communities are scattered across this continent now, some in unique, solo locations, others in geographic clusters in and around urban areas, and new ones always in development. In each community the members dive into a new paradigm of relationships and shared responsibilities and begin to figure out how to live together. In Portland, Oregon, some folks from different communities got together and began to collaborate almost 10 years ago. We saw the big questions:

How to live together? How to help one another?

Cohousers have lots of support from our shared resources—the well-known books, the cohousing "elders," the national listserv and website, and the regional and national conferences. All of these provide invaluable information, patterns to follow, and voices of experience. And yet every community has to live into their own new story. Every community runs into unique challenges, and every community runs the gamut of the perennial and familiar rough spots.

How to live together. How to help one another.

The number of cohousing communities in our area went from two (founded nearly two decades ago), to four, to six, to more now, plus forming groups. Others are established in Bend, Ashland, Corvallis, and Eugene. In the midst of this growth and expansion, something new began, which started among a few of us at an annual End-of-Summer party at Trillium Hollow. We asked one another, "Why don't we start connecting across our communities more consistently?" A few months later, a few inveterate networkers stepped up to create this regional group for mutual support and connection. We called it the PDX-Plus Cohousing Group, and we have kept it together, meeting quarterly for almost 10 years now.

Many stories, shared experiences, help, and advice have flowed between the meeting participants, who then take what they learn back to their own communities. We rotate the hosts for our meetings, arrive early for tours and shared potlucks, marvel at the different physical layouts and land, and share everything from plant cuttings to an overabundance of fruit to advice on best dining tables. We also connect online with an open Google Group which now has about 150 members.

We start our meetings in a circle, with an introduction and report from each community. We try to pick a main topic for each meeting, although sometimes our reports on current issues shift the agenda. Some consistent representatives come to most meetings, and there are always a few new faces, with anywhere from 10 to 25 at each meeting.

All kinds of topics arise in our discussions: What really serves as community glue and what does not? How do we do multigenerational living effectively, in real time? What does it mean to be more than neighbors, not quite family? Where is the balance between shared and private lives? How are our meal programs structured, and how are they working or changing? How is decision-making unfolding—consensus details, blocks, time-sensitive issues, prioritization, hurdles, team vs. whole-community decisions? How do renters work out, do they participate equally, do they come to meetings? How do we negotiate issues of power? Sometimes we share recommendations—do you know a good cohousing-friendly lawyer, who is the best realtor, who has Reserve Study advice? And of course, always, getting the work done—how many hours of workshare, issues of aging and changing capabilities, tracking or not tracking, outsourcing work, people fading out, burning out, moving out...how do we manage all that?

I read through past minutes to prime myself for this writing, which reminded me that we have circled around these same topics again and again. The current details change, the themes remain the same. I asked myself, has it helped us to connect? In a number of instances, I am certain it has:

- Treasurers from our different coho's got together and talked shop.
- Facilitators helped with several difficult meetings in sister communities.
- We have experienced death and dying and shared our learnings about aging and end-of-life, including resources like the new Villages movement.
- We discussed and compared our Emergency Preparedness priorities, projects, information, and resources.
- We coordinated open house days, bus tours, shared workshops, and special events.
- We set up a PDX+ Facebook page as well as the Google Group.

Photos courtesy of Jude Foster

• We have now started a first working group in preparation for the 2019 National Cohousing Conference, which is happening in Portland.

• Best of all, we have met face to face, heard stories, found out that most of our challenges are shared, and gathered inspiration to move forward in some new ways.

Then I must ask: What hasn't worked? Where have we fallen short? This was the topic of our most recent meeting.

• We are all so busy. The demands of cohousing plus our complex personal lives can be all-consuming. It's hard to stay connected to others who are equally busy elsewhere. It's easy to forget to try. The Google Group helps a little but not always enough.

• We don't keep all our commitments, recently noticeable around Emergency Prep. Good, balanced emergency prep has been hard to accomplish within each community, not to mention cooperative planning between communities. Big ideas abound, follow-through can fall short.

• It's hard to keep the mutual support alive among the sub-groups and specialists in each community, regarding such topics as facilitation, treasury and budgets, and online communication.

• Why do we find ourselves "reinventing the wheel?" Sometimes we forget that work has already been done and that we could tap into and learn from others' experiences.

Where is the PDX-Plus Coho Group going from here?

• We recently became more organized by choosing and announcing each community's representatives.

• We are reaching out to forming communities who are not yet in touch with us.

• We are beginning to plan for next year's National Cohousing Conference, which will happen here in May 2019. This big project will undoubtedly be both demanding and rewarding.

As I read back through minutes from nine years of meetings, I found some succinct quotes which show the elevated inspiration which sometimes comes through when we talk face to face.

• "We have signed up for multiple collisions between the dream and the reality."

• "We must hone a lifelong practice of holding everyone else's opinion as important as our own."

• "Enter each conversation with a degree of respect you would give to your lifelong partner."

Yes, it can be simultaneously reassuring, daunting, and energizing to learn that our challenges and our joys in living intentionally in community are shared. For all these reasons, this networking regional group will continue to be a worthwhile endeavor and a model of cooperation, as we live into the big questions: How to live together, and how to help one another.

It can be simultaneously reassuring, daunting, and energizing to learn that our challenges and our joys in living intentionally in community are shared. For all these reasons, this networking regional group will continue to be a worthwhile endeavor.

Jude Foster has lived in Trillium Hollow Cohousing, in Portland Oregon, for 11 years. Earlier in her life, she spent most of her 20s and 30s living in two different, more intensive spiritual communes, one small, one large. She is a long-time Montessori guide, a Buddhist, and a gardener. In Trillium her major involvement is with the Legal/Financial and Landscape Teams. She says the garden photo to the lower left is worth a thousand words.

cohousing
THE COHOUSING ASSOCIATION OF THE UNITED STATES

Upcoming Cohousing Conferences

Regional Cohousing Conference
September 21-23, 2018
Amherst, Massachusetts
cohousing.org/ne2018

National Cohousing Conference
May 30-June 2, 2019
Portland, Oregon
cohousing.org/2019

THE COHOUSING RESEARCH NETWORK:

A Community Approach to Communities Research

By Angela Sanguinetti, Heidi Berggren, Neil Planchon, Diane Margolis, Robert Boyer, and Chuck MacLane

Research on cohousing has been increasing, attracting researchers from a variety of academic disciplines, and building evidence of the benefits of living in community. The Cohousing Research Network (CRN) catalogues, supports, disseminates this research, and promotes collaborations. This article introduces the reader to CRN and shares some of the organization's strengths and challenges. We overview our mission, history, structure, and activities. We then reflect on our experiences as a highly interdisciplinary and geographically dispersed network of researchers that interfaces with other organizations, cohousing communities, and the media.

History and Mission

In 2010, several members of the Cohousing Association of the United States (Coho/US) Board of Directors, including Diane Margolis, David Entin, and Laura Fitch, recognized that good data is critical to advancing the mission of Coho/US to support communities and the growth of the cohousing movement. They began work on a multi-phase survey of cohousing communities. Diane Margolis and Coho/US Board Member Richart Keller organized a two-day workshop at the 2011 Cohousing Conference in Washington, DC, to discuss the survey effort and find potential collaborators. Researchers and writers from all over the world gathered and formed CRN. CRN continues to host workshops and present research at national and some regional cohousing conferences.

CRN's mission is to increase the rigor and reach of cohousing research. We aim to encourage the highest quality of research and increase reliable knowledge of cohousing by bringing together and supporting researchers and writers whose work focuses on cohousing. Our responsibilities include, first, to conduct and communicate research with scientific integrity. As the research arm of Coho/US, our own research initiatives focus on the US. We also aspire to be a global resource center for intentional community research. We act as an information clearinghouse for the media and a collaborative hub and resource center for researchers.

CRN encourages cohousing communities to refer any research requests they receive to us, so we can help ensure that new research leverages existing knowledge and available data.

For cohousing communities, CRN seeks to ease the burden on residents who are frequetly asked to participate in research. We aim to ensure that the time and effort they volunteer as research participants is efficient and results in valuable insights for the cohousing movement, and that research results are communicated back to them. CRN encourages cohousing communities to refer any research requests they receive to us, so we can work with the researcher to ensure that their research leverages existing knowledge and available data, and that demands on communities are reasonable and worthwhile. In some cases, we are able to provide researchers with raw data to analyze for their particular research questions, eliminating the need for any new data collection efforts.

Structure and Activities

At the core of CRN is a steering committee of seven people, including a Director, Assistant

Director, and Communications Director. Several members were formerly on the Coho/US Board, and since 2015 we have had a member concurrently serving on the Coho/US Board of Directors, acting as liaison between the two organizations. We have also had a similar relationship with Partnerships for Affordable Cohousing (PFAC). Through these partnerships, we seek to understand the research needs and priorities of these groups that support communities and community professionals. The steering committee meets monthly via video chat, and regularly includes other researchers in these meetings to support their research and form and foster collaborations.

CRN has been funded primarily by donations. Our steering committee members regularly apply for research grants, but to-date awarded grants have typically supported only the lead researcher, with an occasional stipend to CRN for resources and services rendered. CRN receives support from Coho/US in terms of recruiting research participants and collaborating on research proposals for grants. Donations to Coho/US can be (and often are) earmarked for CRN.

CRN maintains a website (cohousingresearchnetwork.org), which features a comprehensive bibliography of academic, peer-reviewed cohousing research. Scholars in a variety of fields are interested in cohousing, and research output is growing. The goal is to inventory this research into one place, thus facilitating an understanding of what has been done and sparking ideas for future research. CRN Assistant Director Heidi Berggren receives alerts from her university's library database every time a new article on cohousing is published, then provides citations and abstracts to the bibliography page manager, CRN Communications Director Neil Planchon—who is also currently developing our bibliography into a searchable database. At this time, the bibliography includes only peer-reviewed research specifically focused on cohousing, but plans are in the works to expand the database to include research on all types of intentional community. We also plan to include theses, dissertations, and books in the future.

A community approach to research brings immense benefits and challenges analogous to benefits and challenges of living in intentional community.

In August 2015, CRN created Research-l, an online community discussion board for the global intentional community and cohousing research communities to come together. As of May 2018, 107 subscribers from all over the world regularly engage in collaborative and vibrant conversations. Topics range from sharing research and news, to announcing calls for papers and conferences, seeking and forming strategic partnerships, identifying data sources and resources, and connecting folks in remote locations.

The research effort that began in 2010 and spurred the formation of CRN set a precedent for our future research. In particular, we have now conducted two rounds of national cohousing surveys, and plan to continue this recurring effort every five years. Each survey effort includes a household level survey (a sort of US Cohousing Census) and a survey at the community level, describing physical characteristics of communities (e.g., size, location, building measures, etc.), as well as general social practices (e.g., governance and work enforcement structures, etc.). The household level surveys are much broader and flexible in terms of content; for example, our last round included a focus on aging in cohousing. These survey data serve as the most comprehensive inventory of the physical and social characteristics of US cohousing communities and the demographics and experiences of their residents.

A Community Approach to Research

CRN approaches research as a collaborative, interdisciplinary endeavor. This approach is not unique. In fact, interdisciplinary and translational research are growing trends and there is a new field dedicated to understanding these approaches called team science. However, we realized this could also be considered a *community* approach to research. A community approach to research brings immense benefits, and challenges, that we find analogous to benefits and challenges of living in intentional community.

Like most intentional communities, CRN strives to be inclusive and diverse. Bringing together members with a range of perspectives and skill sets contributes to outcomes that transcend what each individual could do alone. Communities are richer and stronger when some members like to garden, others like to cook, others are handy for construction and maintenance issues, etc. (just one of many dimensions of diversity). Likewise, CRN's diverse membership is the foundation for a capable and resilient community of researchers, and better re-

search projects than any one researcher might achieve alone.

Several steering committee members live in cohousing—in fact, two are founding members of their communities. These members keep us in touch with the research needs and priorities of US cohousing communities, provide important community connections for research efforts, imbue our research with realistic expectations and interpretations, and lend us credibility when we are talking to cohousing residents (they see we are not just a bunch of academics). Several other steering committee members work at universities, where they publish prolifically, pursue grants for cohousing research, and disseminate that research within their respective fields (from political science, to urban planning, sociology, and psychology). Our Communications Director, Neil Planchon, adeptly manages the technology and outreach programs that are critical to our organization.

A brief overview of the current CRN steering committee's research illustrates how our diverse backgrounds and interests contribute to a richer understanding of cohousing. CRN Director Emerita, Diane Margolis (Professor Emerita of Sociology at University of Connecticut), recently completed a new book focused on her community, Cambridge Cohousing, and the challenges of simultaneously building private homes and a commons. Current CRN Director and Coho/US Board Member Angela Sanguinetti (Research Environmental Psychologist at University of California, Davis) has studied how participation in specific types of activities in cohousing enhances residents' connection to community and to nature, and potential models for increasing diversity in cohousing. The work of CRN Assistant Director Heidi Berggren (Associate Professor of Political Science and Women's and Gender Studies at University of Massachusetts at Dartmouth) suggests that living in cohousing increases residents' participation in political activities like voting, petitioning elected officials, and attending political rallies. Chuck MacLane (retired Personnel Psychologist) is interested in how communities and prospective residents can better predict the person-community fit. Robert Boyer (Assistant Professor of Geography and Earth Sciences at University of North Carolina, Charlotte) has studied the cohousing development process, and in a recent study of the US general population found that interest in cohousing extends far beyond the current resident demographics—suggesting there is room to grow!

Approaching research as a group of individuals with different perspectives and skill sets encourages each of us to grow in terms of our ability to communicate our own ideas and learn from each other, outcomes similar to those developed in community. Like a community, we practice acceptance and celebrate each other's successes. For those of us working in competitive academic environments and not living in community, these benefits are perhaps particularly valuable.

The community of CRN includes *all* cohousing researchers and writers; therefore an initial and ongoing challenge we face is getting these community members to participate in our collaborative network. We view this as similar to the challenge an intentional community faces in recruiting new members or (re-)engaging current members who are "doing their own thing." Our steering committee, comprised mostly of CRN founders, has an established collaborative culture, but we are still striving to understand best practices for engaging others. Our website, bibliography, and email forum are critical strategies, but we lack the resources to engage in as much outreach as we would like.

To prevent burnout among ourselves, we are developing criteria and limits for research support, e.g., offering existing data or the opportunity to contribute up to five questions in one of our national surveys.

CRN does not turn researchers away if they are open to collaboration. We take every opportunity to support others' endeavors in order to increase the research quality and ensure findings are accessible. Sometimes we collaborate with a researcher who is not experienced and this means we take on a lot of work reviewing, providing feedback, and editing. This is resource-intensive and can lead to burnout among steering committee members. In our research, we have seen how some cohousing residents have a similar experience when they feel other community members are not carrying their own weight. This seems to be less of a problem when there are clear requirements and at least some level of accountability or enforcement for work-share. We are therefore working toward developing criteria and limits for research support, e.g., offering existing data or the opportunity to contribute up to five questions in one of our national surveys.

In conclusion, the Cohousing Research Network (CRN) is a virtual intentional community of researchers who recognize the benefits of community and are in fact enacting community in their pursuit of rigorous, compelling cohousing research. The collaborative research process is not free from challenges. However, as seems to be the case for most communitarians, we believe the personal and collective outcomes of collaboration are worth the trouble.

Contact CRN at hello@cohousingresearchnetwork.org.

Angela Sanguinetti, Director of CRN, is a Research Ecological Behaviorist at University of California, Davis, Institute of Transportation Studies and Energy and Efficiency Institute.

Heidi Berggren, Assistant Director of CRN, is Associate Professor of Political Science and Chair of Women's and Gender Studies at the University of Massachusetts-Dartmouth.

Neil Planchon is a co-developer and founding resident of Swan's Market Cohousing, life coach, and nonprofit technology and business development consultant (neilplanchon.com).

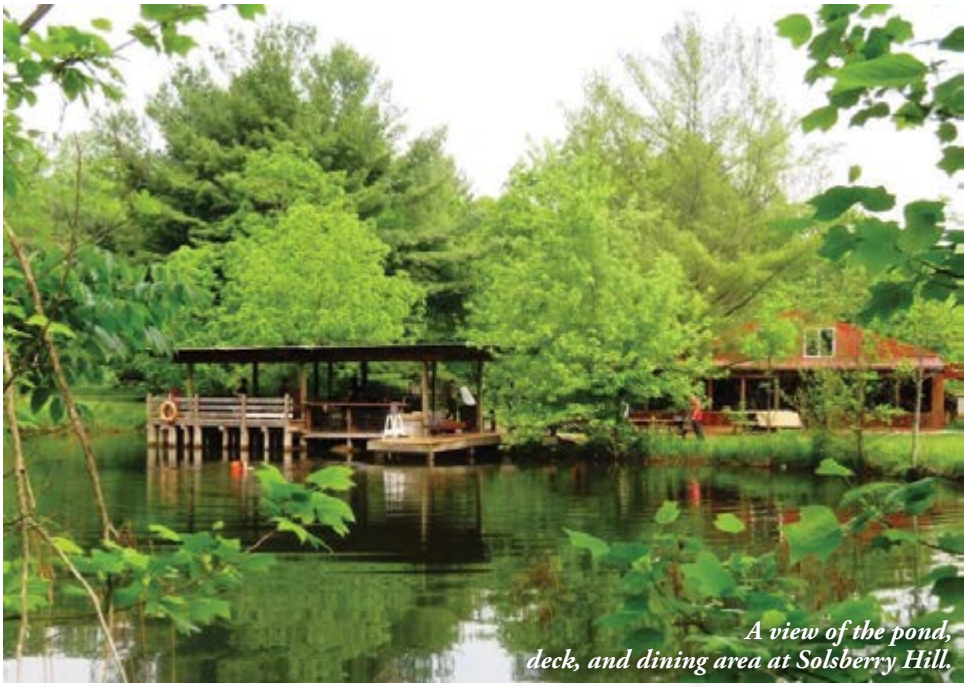
Diane Margolis, Professor Emeritus of Sociology at University of Connecticut, is a founder of Cambridge Cohousing and CRN; her latest book is Cohousing and the Commons.

Robert Boyer is an assistant professor of urban planning in the department of Geography and Earth Sciences, University of North Carolina at Charlotte.

Chuck MacLane retired from the US Office of Personnel Management in 2008 after 34 years as a Personnel Research Psychologist, and now consults for public and private organizations.

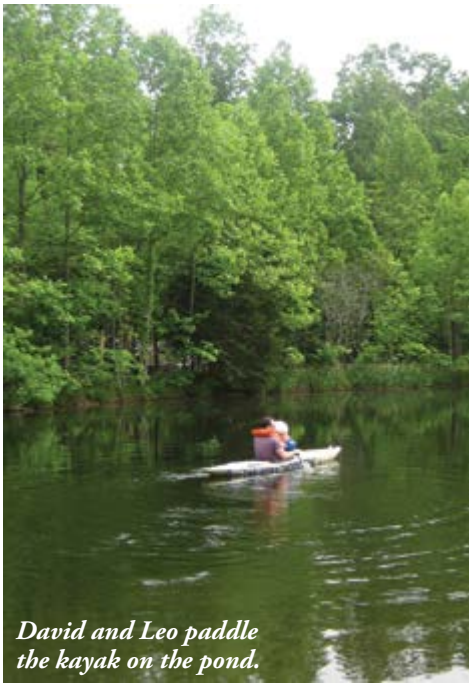
The Gifts of Gathering

By Laura Lasuertmer



David Janzen

A view of the pond, deck, and dining area at Solsberry Hill.



Laura Lasuertmer

David and Leo paddle the kayak on the pond.

David Janzen

Lunch is ready at the Ohio River Valley gathering.

Laura Lasuertmer

Our worship service on Sunday morning featured music by Ross (accordian), Raquel (vocals), Mary Kate (violin), and Grace (guitar).

I have been a part of Catholic Worker gatherings since attending my first Midwest Faith and Resistance Retreat in Chicago, Illinois in 2010. I recall sleeping on the gym floor, shooting hoops with other young adults, and listening in on conversations with elders in the movement. I remember the buzz of elation at realizing I had found my people.

I've grown accustomed to that injection of inspiration that comes from a weekend spent talking, playing, and working with others who have chosen a similar life path. I come away feeling both that my life is heading the right direction and that our small movement does make a difference in the world. I come away with a better sense of the greater purpose, the greater whole.

The Midwest Catholic Worker—which is a loose constellation of small communities across Indiana, Iowa, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Illinois, Ohio, and Kentucky—is quite good at gathering. In fact, you could go to a gathering every season of the year if you wanted:

• Every spring, Workers gather for the Faith and Resistance retreat. The location for this retreat changes every year, depending upon which community needs support for local activism. This year the Hildegard House Catholic Worker in Duluth, Minnesota hosted a pipeline protest in solidarity with the Ojibwe Nation and members of the Fond-Du-Lac Reservation.

• Every summer, St. Isidore Catholic Worker in Cuba City, Wisconsin hosts Growing Roots, a radical education session that combines workshops with farm work, song, and prayer.

• Every fall, Workers converge upon a rural Catholic church in Sugar Creek, Iowa. This is a social gathering, a regional check-in, with a talent show, round table discussions, and shared singing and praying.

• Every winter, Betsy Keenan of Strangers and Guests Catholic Worker in Maloy, Iowa hosts a craft retreat to teach weaving, make candles, soap, and other goods.

Back in 2013, my community, the Bloomington Catholic Worker (BCW), lamented that all these gatherings were quite far away. We all

had babies and small children, and the prospect of traveling 16 hours round-trip over a weekend sounded like torture. We longed to be more connected to other Catholic Worker communities and lamented that there wasn't an Indiana gathering. So we got to work, and together with the Little Flower Catholic Worker in Indianapolis hosted a weekend gathering in March 2014. The following year, we moved the gathering even closer to Bloomington and widened the region. Thus in 2015 the Ohio River Valley Catholic Worker and Christian Community Gathering (ORV) was born.

We longed to be more connected to other Catholic Worker communities and lamented that there wasn't an Indiana gathering. So we got to work.

This last weekend (May 18-20) was the fourth ORV gathering at Solsberry Hill Retreat Center, 15 minutes west of Bloomington. This year we spent the weekend with folks from eight different communities. Every year some of the same people come, from places like Lydia's House and The Parish Farm School, and some new folks show up. Attendance seems to hover around 45 adults and children.

In one sense, this gathering is like summer camp. We pitch our tents, get out fishing poles and swimming suits. One night we have a huge bonfire and sing along and the other night we have a square dance on the deck over the pond. We start our days off with morning prayer or Quaker meeting and then have round table discussions in the morning and afternoon. This year our discussion topics included "Formation in Community," "What Is God to You," and "When Dreams of Community Die." We also have a two-hour work session on the property. Conor and Bridget McIntyre, the owners and directors of the retreat center, generously give our group a discounted rate in exchange for our labor.

While we aren't always enthusiastic about organizing the gathering or cleaning up afterward, the gifts of it are bountiful. This year, the gifts for me were hearing about how Lydia's House in Cincinnati is renovating an eight-unit apartment building to use as transitional housing for single-parent families. It was a gift to meet the men from Little Bear Creek and learn about how their four-member community farms 25 acres near Dayton, Ohio. It was a gift to speak to Adam Gianforte, from Chicago, who chose to spend seven months living in a homeless camp under a viaduct, and so had a lot to say about building community with the marginalized. This is why we gather together—to share stories and encouragement, to build support for one another, to strengthen the intentional communities movement. So if you're looking for a gathering to join, please know you're welcome at the Ohio River Valley gathering in May 2019!

Laura Lasuertmer was a member of the Bloomington Catholic Worker (BCW) community for eight years. In August, she and her family left the BCW to start a land-based, interfaith, Catholic Worker-type community near Bloomington.

A Missing Connection?

I've been wondering these days about the ways Christian intentional communities and secular intentional communities can come together. There are groups of Christian communities: The Shalom Mission Communities, The Bruderhof, The Catholic Worker Movement. Among Christian communities, there exists a support network called the Nurturing Communities Network which aims to help communities flourish over the long haul. And I know of the Federation of Egalitarian Communities, and other secular ecovillages like Dancing Rabbit. But I do not have any personal connections with these communities, nor have I visited any of them. It seems that though Christian and secular communities may have different underlying motivations, they have arrived at similar values and practices.

I'm wondering if there has been a gathering or a conference to intentionally bring these groups together to talk about our experiments in community living—or if religious difference needlessly keeps us apart. I welcome conversation on this topic and can be reached at lertmer@gmail.com.

—LL

Joy and Linda hosted story time each night for children and adults.

Laura Lasuertmer

Our work afternoon involved supporting trusses on the roof over the amphitheater.

David Janzen

PERENNIAL LESSONS from Historical Communities

By Amy Hart

The Mushroom Building at the author's home community, The Lavra.

The Stage Deck at The Lavra.

Photos courtesy of Amy Hart

I am a graduate student researching the history of intentional communities, so when I think of "networking" with other communities I think of drawing lessons from the past to inform our present. For my Ph.D. dissertation at UC Santa Cruz, I am currently researching the Fourierist communities of 1840s United States. These communities are notorious for their short life spans, leading to their nickname among scholars as Four-year-ites. These communities fell apart for a variety of reasons, including financial hardship, intra-group quarreling, religious differences, and simply a loss of desire to continue on once the US economy recovered and other options for work and land acquisition re-emerged.

People often ask me if my academic research gives me lessons I can apply to my own community in the Central Coast of California. I usually go along with them, joking that my research never stops, as my personal and academic life are constantly overlapping, but in reality, I have found few lessons that cross over this vast period of time between the 1840s and today. The issues faced by the communitarians I study are difficult to relate to today—questions like: Should women be elected into leadership positions? (They couldn't even vote in the US during the time of these communities.) How involved in the abolitionist cause should community members be? (Slavery would still continue to divide the country for another 20 years until the Civil War.) And which denomination of Christianity should be celebrated at the community? (Some Fourierist communities went so far as to offer Swedenborgian readings in lieu of church service!)

These issues just don't exist at my California community, where members who attend any church at all are in the extreme minority, and where even referring to a meeting as "church" might actually mean you are attending the local ecstatic dance held down the road on Sunday mornings (frequently referenced as "dance church" by locals). There is no question as to whether women should receive an equal vote or be allowed to hold leadership roles at my community, and for most of the history of my community (albeit only five years) most members have been female. Slavery is long gone, though we are in agreement that racism continues on in the country, to our universal dismay.

Being a historian often leads me to look toward the past for lessons about the future. This is usually a comforting exercise for me; I can look to the brutal, contentious presidential elections of the early 19th century and think that maybe the latest political squabbles aren't the worst the country has ever seen, for example. But looking toward history also requires responsible contextualizing of the social and political issues of the past, and avoiding irresponsible or oversimplified comparisons between events of the past and today. Thus, I recognize that the particular issues faced by communitarians of the 19th century differ in significant ways from the challenges faced by communitarians today, though some general themes can still be found from the past that might teach us lessons about our present and future.

Here are a few overlapping issues from historical communities I still find relevant today:

1. Financial responsibility is still key to the health of a community.

A perennial reality of the Fourierist communities was their insufficient capital and financial indebtedness, which often led to a vicious cycle of internal tension, membership turnover, and desperate admittance of new members who won't work well with the group. The Trumbull Phalanx community in Ohio in the 1840s, for example, tended to fudge their financial requirements for new members, allowing them to pay for their membership in alternative methods other than cash. This meant the community held an excessive number of cows, pigs, and wagons, but was forced to default on its property loans.

Prioritizing the financial health of the community is probably the most boring topic to most community members, and in the history of our community, only two out of dozens of members have ever agreed to take charge of the finances. But while spreadsheets, budgets, and bad-

gering members about overdue payments are among the least attractive elements of communal life, they are also some of the most essential. Communities can survive a few boring meetings about finances, but they can rarely survive bankruptcy.

2. Rules exist for a reason.

Long lists of rules and regulations are tiring and cumbersome to many communitarians, but leaving lingering issues unspoken and undecided is worse. The unclear position in which communitarians are left when issues go unresolved can leave them tiptoeing around that issue, feeling uncomfortable about overstepping an invisible line that was never explicitly drawn. This is why, in Fourierist communities, decisions often had to be made over whether the group would allow anyone to drink alcohol, eat meat, or hold church services on the property. Those communities who silently divided on these issues or left people to decide these contentious matters for themselves often ended up with internal divisions and bitterness.

And this is why, at our community, there are seemingly-bizarre rules about sleeping on the living room couch for more than two nights per month, or personal items becoming communal property after being left out in communal spaces for more than three days in a row. Of course, rules themselves should not be enforced to absurd degrees, but I have found that having stated guidelines at my community prevents everyday issues from being in a state of constant negotiation, which can cripple communities. These rules typically involve a past event that inspired their existence, but stating that past makes everyone clear about their future.

3. Flexibility in membership is essential.

Communitarians living at a community for over five years have likely made concessions and compromises they never thought they would have to make. Circumstances in communities can change rapidly, making some potential members suddenly seem much more appealing than they did before, and others seem suddenly poisonous based on experiences with them. At the Northampton Association of Education and Industry in Massachusetts, labor activist Sarah Bagley applied to live at the community in 1844, but her lack of abolitionist credentials and personal contacts in the community led to her application being rejected. One year later, under desperate financial circumstances, the community reached out to Bagley, asking if she might still be interested in moving to the community and even leasing the community's factory. Suddenly, Bagley's skills in textile mills and factory work made her a very attractive member to the financially-struggling community.

In my own community, our negative experiences with members in their young 20s had led us to view them all as transient, lazy, leeches. Then, when a wave of openings appeared all at once in the community and a wave of 20-somethings were the first the apply, we thought we would give them another chance. Their energy totally transformed the community, giving it new life and creativity. They revitalized the community garden, brought in bee hives, and initiated community social gatherings. While there are some individuals who might never thrive in the communal setting, I have found that it's best to avoid imagining an ideal "type" of person I would like to live at my community, while rejecting all those who fall outside of those preconceived criteria. "Older" members need to be flexible to change with the needs of the community, or their inflexibility might inadvertently undermine the future of the community.

• • •

While these lessons from the past might seem vague or predictable, I am constantly reminding myself of them when another meeting on finances seems too boring to handle, or another explicit rule too cumbersome. While I wish we could "network" with the past in more direct ways, such as asking these historical community members to keep diaries on their experiences in community and the advice they would like to leave for future generations, this is unfortunately not possible. Thus, all we can do is look to past communities, and the community members who populated them, and try to understand what they found most fulfilling and most impossible to accept about communal living across time. The specific political or social issues faced by any one community might change across time periods, but those aspects of communal living that are most likely to undermine communal structures are timeless.

Amy Hart is a Ph.D. Candidate in History at the University of California, Santa Cruz. She researches women who joined intentional communities in 19-century United States. She lives in a small intentional community located on the Central Coast of California called The Lavra.

Artistic chicken coop at The Lavra.

Amy with baby goat.

Composting toilet at The Lavra.

LINKED BY LOVE AND TRANSPARENCY: The Need for Human Connection

By Satyama Ratna Lasby

Chris Roth

I have a passion for communities that dare to dream about peace in love. This passion has taken me across the globe, living and studying the subject of free love in the communities of Osho and Tamera. I have also lived as a long-term resident on Koh Phagnan, where spiritual seekers converge as a "community" over the teachings of Agama, a tantric yoga school. Now in my life begins a journey in how to link community living to the topics of yoga and tantra. Of the eight communities I've lived in, the ones which remain the strongest, in my opinion, are the ones doing deep internal work so that they can be ready and able to move into the topic of love without fear.

Seeking and appreciating truth, intimacy, and depth... There don't appear to be many communities converging explicitly over the topic of relating. Yet the topic is intriguing for many, and seems to be inspiring a growing movement of spiritual beings looking to find freedom in their relationships, and even sex that aspires to Godly heights. Aware and highly functional people seeking truth tend to be those also seeking how to communicate very well. They are the bold and daring types who go for what they want, and this includes sex and love. For me, my path is now finding the sweet combination of the two. Most of us know that erotic passion in relationships fades in every long-term monogamous relationship. The people moving to and from the communities that support free love are people who wish for the best in their personal lives, and also in the personal lives of their friends, and those who live in these communities.

The people living in or visiting either Osho communities (all over the world) or Tamera are linked by an understanding that, as erotic beings, we will likely be attracted to more than one person in our lifetime, no matter what relationship we have, whether single or in partnership. We all have longings, we want them fulfilled, we want to do it right. It is not simple, due to our emotional bodies! This brings us together in deep collaboration and risk-taking in the name of love, and the energetic/spiritual fields of these communities have been supporting the growth of this topic for years. We see this manifested in the many starting communities that openly choose the path of free love, or are led to it after people in relationships begin affairs and have conflict as a result. We know that the secrecy or deception of an affair in a traditionally monogamous relationship causes so much tension or conflict that either the community suffers or someone leaves.

Here is where communities daring to open their discussions and relationship issues tend to be long-term, successful communities. If the social element and erotic nature are not addressed or permitted, conflicts arise, communication falters, and communities fail. Those that embrace open relating or polyamory as the norm are rare; they can reduce their isolation by networking, learning from, and visiting each other. Tamera, as a good example, now has online courses in the Healing of Love, so that those living in newer communities can learn and those not able to yet visit a working polyamorous model like Tamera can ask open forum questions on how the communities deal with internal processes that come up when people are sharing love.

Even when a community permits open relating, as both Tamera and Osho communes do, it's not necessarily an easy path: we all have similar feelings, yet revealing what is happening inside is usually the hardest part, the part kept within. How exactly to handle internal struggles, conflicts between couples, the feelings of being rejected, not chosen, insecure, used for sex, etc. are universal challenges. Communities need to support the tools that work, such as open and authentic communication (including perhaps nonviolent communication), sharing circles, or Forum.

Tamera in Portugal has been practicing free love for 40 years. This

works because of the field of truth and transparency in relating; communication is a priority, and healing waters run deep. The Osho commune in India (and at one point in Oregon) is known for its openness to sex as well as tantric teaching. It got that way by Osho's readiness to speak about sex and tantra to his disciples, and by the deep work people did on themselves via meditation and therapies, so that personal lives were made more open and public. At one time nudity and sex were common in the Osho communes' tantra groups, and there are groups such as ISTA (International School of Temple Arts), wherein this field of trained people continues their growth, communally.

Openness helps everyone in a community to be this way, and this is the air I wish to live in, with people who are radically honest and open with their personal lives. People are invited to move beyond fear. Gossip ceases. A common understanding of truth emerges when community members take a deep look at awareness and/or meditation. Meditation seems to be a key element in both linking these types of communities together, and also helping people handle their emotions when it comes to love, free love, and polyamory. Meditators also seem to have a handle on ethics more than non-meditators, so the truth is likely to be revealed more quickly via the magic and synchronicity in "spiritual" communities.

Those practicing free love in community work deeply on communication with lovers—understanding that for love to really be love, one must be free to act and speak as they wish.

Those experienced in the concept of free love, and practicing it in community, work deeply on communication with lovers—sharing a common understanding that for love to really be love, one must be free to act and speak as they wish. I won't forget my shock in the first days of living in the Osho meditation commune, openly being asked if I wanted to have sex, told that other lovers were involved, and then witnessing all of the relationships actually occurring with this man as days passed. Everyone seemed joyous about it, but at that time I needed the support of good friends, and courage to say how rejected I felt after sexual encounters that were "detached." I had never before had this type of experience, being a conditioned Canadian. A pattern of guessing and repressing feelings doesn't work in communities, but it happens in many due to the shame connected with sexual acts or feeling as though one's actions or desires for numerous people are wrong. If people are sharing and honest, trust is built and the community can survive. The communities of Osho and Tamera are trying to get to the same place; they do it in different ways.

To simplify, Osho uses active meditations, emotional release, group therapies to help people de-condition themselves from how they think they are supposed to be, and this opens the door to love. Osho's take on tantra attempts to take the identity or personality out of the experience as its attempt is to unify Shiva and Shakti with God. Tantra therefore permits relationships with more than one person. Tantra can also be celibacy. Tantra can be monogamy, wherein two people practice sacred sexuality for the sake of reaching the divine through their partnership. Tantra cannot be understood without meditation. It is therefore experiential, having ethical tests along the life path of a practitioner who wishes to take it seriously. Communities that are connected via sexuality do tend to take it seriously, because life gets better when our love lives improve. Tantra is happening quite a bit at Osho due to its connection with meditation. At Tamera, tantra is not so well-known, yet the community's openness provides ways to radical healing for many.

At Tamera, it is known that they support free love, a.k.a. "freedom from fear" in love, and this creates a field where people will dare to relate with more than one person. The field is open yet that doesn't mean it's easy or simple. By far it is the most transparent community that I have lived in to date, where conversations about sex are often held at the lunch table; offers for sex, declarations of love, and feelings that people have about their romantic situations are revealed through the process of Forum. As the community openly permits and practices open relationships, much processing is done on the emotional and intellectual level via Forum and other community-supported techniques (group support, for example) wherein a facilitator will lead a member of the community who voluntarily steps into the circle to reveal a topic they have to a larger group. The presenter follows the suggestions of the facilitator (who is also supported) to come into perhaps another way of looking at issues, such as jealousy, performance, loneliness, frustration in their love lives, etc. "Mirrors" (reflections, often presented in spontaneous theatrical form) for the person who has stepped into the middle are also given by members of the community so

Chris Roth

Satyama Ratna Lasby (left) and friends.

Photo courtesy of Satyama Ratna Lasby

Chris Roth

Chris Roth; concept/artwork by River Bousquet and friends

they can hear and see how they are perceived by others.

I have not experienced a tool as powerful for revealing and building trust, as well as diminishing judgment, as Forum. When it is done with the power of witnessing, a sense of community builds quite quickly among participants; secrets do not exist, and relating and daring to relate, especially on the topic of sexuality with more than one person, can be done. Having sex with more than one person has always been done in the world, but it is full of shame, guilt, pain, judgment, and many times loss of the love that wanted to happen, due to lying and hiding for fear of harming or losing someone. When living in the field of Tamera, it is shocking how open it is at first; for example, you must check in and make public your intentions with a romantic liaison before it is done.

In a place where sexuality is open and the people in the field are open, more possibility exists to dare. There's increased excitement, more honesty, more love. Even when a group's ethical guidelines are unstated, it seems that those choosing to be in these places are following good ethics. In fact, they are openly discussing and sharing ethical love (and sex) with their partners (in many cases, more than one), and being real in desire and attraction. The transparency increases trust. They are placing words on desire, making approaches, being clear. When energy, awareness, and impulse are present between their members, these communities are networked together through the topic of free love. People in communities like to feel that they belong, yet they also wish to be, and are often, rebellious individuals willing to truly be in the moment.

I make the link between these communities due to the value I see in their quest to expose the beauty of being a free human being. It is our human nature to want and need love, yet sex and the ideology of free love have such wounding and controversy associated with them that most communities and the people living in them do not dare to make their private lives public. Now that I have lived in these communities, where deeper feelings are exposed not repressed, I am able to see the value of openness and transparency for communities who wish to evolve. A subtle shift happens in the mind through experiencing a community of people living in a state of non-judgment; this more loving consciousness permeates the field, encouraging all who are there to drop negativity.

Is there networking between these communities? There is a need for it, as Tamera could open to spirituality and tantra, but it is not what they are specializing in. Tamera exposes our fears and builds bonds between the people who live there. I have deeper Tamerian friends than I have ever had while travelling to other communities or places in the world for my interest in spirituality. Many of us seem to share a core desire to look at how we as humans can get what we want without causing harm to others. In Tamera's workshop, The Healing of Love—similar in nature to The Path of Love, an Osho therapy group designed to explore our core wounds—the people who take the course have a strong desire to heal and move into a place where a relationship with trust can happen. Also at Tamera, the longer people live in this community, the more consciousness rises about the importance of going beyond the simpler, physical or sexual level.

We know that sex alone, prostitution, short-term actions around our desires in love do not work; therefore, time and patience, and many times a commitment to refrain from sex, is the path of love. Whether we learn this in a group, through personal experience, via the meditation path, or by committing to ourselves and our community, peace arises when we put intention into the area of and realities of sexual longings and love. If a community is not placing emphasis on relationships and what is happening between members, conflicts will eventually arise; people break up or have conflicts with one another that eventually cause them to leave a community. I myself have left a community when I did not feel the community supported my position in a romantic situation between a more established coupling. I wonder if the "third" person in a romantic situation ever gets help in a community not dealing directly with the issues of love and sexuality. This same dynamic happens a lot in the form of what society considers to be an affair, and a third party discovered is often ostracized.

There is a strong relationship between tantra and love, and even free love—a relationship that absolutely needs to be there. Perhaps this is why communities placing a focus on relating are networking through people interested in living life more spiritually. The spirit is evident via meditation practice with Osho sannyasins and visitors; the spirit is not so evident on the surface at Tamera, but when one goes deeper, a dedication to truth is the practice that is almost always being used. It's beautiful, and it's love in its highest form, if we can get our small (ego) selves out of the way.

Satyama Ratna Lasby is a yoga teacher trainer specializing in tantra yoga, practicing in Thailand, India, and Europe. Originally Canadian, she has been living in and studying the intentional communities of Osho, Tamera, Koh Phagnan, Pachamama, Auroville, Bahay Kalipay, Damanhur, and Johnson's Landing for nine years, also sharing the gift of meditation and Chi Nei Tsang abdominal massage on her journey. The article is about her personal experience at these places and does not reflect on the views of Osho or Tamera. You can connect with her on the subjects of how love networks people in communities or on the practice and specialty of tantric yoga at www.opentobliss.com. Her book on Tantric Yoga, which links community to the practices of yoga and tantra, is set to be published by February 2019.

From Holism to Community

By Dan Schultz

My Study Project: When I first sought to create community around a sustainable living project in northern California, I was at least smart enough to know that I was dumb about community. So I went out into the world to make a study of the subject, hoping to save myself from reinventing the wheel and minimize some of the common or serious mistakes. I spoke with over 120 communities and visited 22. Most probably someone's done it better, but it was a pretty potent project. Super valuable. Time well spent. I recommend it.

A Déjà Vu: I made conversation and asked lots of questions. I shut up and listened, took copious notes. One impressive feature of communities as a whole was a willingness to share. They even handed over organizing documents like bylaws, articles of incorporation, agreements, and such. From the top down, good people offered their stories, lessons, experiences, sentiments—all in the spirit, I felt, of compassionate gifting. My heart swelled. It was déjà vu.

Another Déjà Vu: I noticed that a unifying theme, intently focused on...anything (like a guru, religion, or something practical like ecology or a cottage industry)...is conducive to community longevity and harmony. Doesn't mean they've arrived at nirvana or anything, but it's a kind of glue that keeps people working together with common goals, missions, and visions. I was sure I had witnessed this before, too.

The Connection: Shazam! Definitely, I had seen such a unity and power before, as it existed in my chosen profession as a chiropractor. Holistic health care people are apt to share a common vision—to heal the planet, human and otherwise. If you want to witness such a potent specter of congruency, I tell you, go to a chiropractic convention. You'll rarely find a collection of such focused, fit, on-purpose devotees. It can be spine-tingling, pardon the pun.

The Kindred Spirit: Yes! That spirit of selfless giving that I felt with cooperative community was very much reminiscent of my first year after graduation, when the seasoned veterans of my profession (even ones who practiced right down the road from my new office) bent over backwards to assist my growth, to nudge me further onto the holistic path. I was so grateful, as I was for the generosity of communities.

Through my recollections, it occurred to me: "Maybe I'm not so dumb about community."

Common Threads: One might not right away see the philosophic brotherhood between holistic health care and cooperative community, but it's easily fathomed. Both revolve around people, healing, and understanding. The development and deepening of human trust, support, conflict resolution, and communication skills (sound familiar?) happen too, over decades as a practicing doctor of chiropractic. Through all the professional relationships, among clinic staff and with practice members, we touch each other's lives. Bonds form. Not coincidentally the term Chiropractic Community is commonplace in our circles.

Cooperative community has its agreements, bylaws, and charters. Similarly, a guiding philosophy and tenets are the foundations of holistic health practice. Without them, we wouldn't have made it this far. We owe much of that guidance to Bartlett James (BJ) Palmer, the intuitive genius who developed the philosophical principles of the chiropractic profession in its formative years.

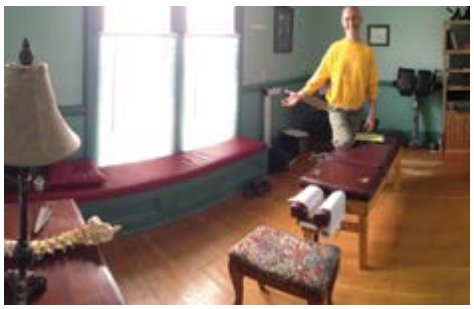
One of BJ's (many) profound statements was, "Get the Big Idea and All Else Follows." That statement seemed vague and cryptic to me at first. It grows on you. Understanding its deeper meaning inevitably led me to value community because it emphasizes the importance of living a life of service. Palmer's words about Natural Principles and Innate Intelligence direct that service toward living in harmony within ourselves, with the Earth, and with other people.

The collection of my personal experiences validates this. I've witnessed members of cooperative community yield their individuality to something greater than themselves. So too does the healer abandon the self, in empathy, to fully understand suffering and by facilitating the healing process we thereby sacrifice something of ourselves. In these ways holistic health forms hold an ideology of connectedness, not unlike the values communities share.

A Match Made in Healing: Years have passed since that pilgrimage and those interviews and studies of community. During that evolution, the intentions and visions that formed a natural, beautiful, resilient, self-reliant Maitreya Mountain Village were also the force that attracted massage therapists, reiki masters, herbalists, acupuncturists, intuitives, and many others. Could it be mere coincidence that all these holistic healers tended to be gardeners, students of nature, and great community members? I don't think so.

We're working hard toward a responsible existence on this planet. After work, chances are good to receive an adjustment, body work, or energy healing. Before work, we practice sound regimens to prepare our bodies for the day. We eat organic, meditate, and share feelings and truths at our weekly Heart Club meetings. We are dedicated to healthy bodies, minds, and relationships. As such, our ecovillage was an unexpected Tale of Two Communities, a symbiosis of sustainable and natural ideas that is ever evolving in its community service.

Dan Schultz is director of Maitreya Mountain Village (www.maitreya-mountainvillage.com), which creates intentional, caring community and farming in an off-grid, wilderness setting. Dan hosts and produces a talk radio program called New Culture Radio focused on sustainability, and leads Transition Del Norte in northwestern California.



Photos courtesy of Dan Schultz

Artwork by Pegi Eyers

Reclaiming the "We" from Ancient Wisdom

By Pegi Eyers

The rise of alternative community in recent years has been spectacular, and we have much to celebrate! Empire-building in the Americas has created a toxic system of alienation and ecocide, yet mass movements including cooperative culture have been able to resist this hegemony in thought and action. The economic model of unlimited growth on a finite planet isn't working, and in the face of potential climate disaster (or even collapse) we have been busy creating localized small-scale communities, and finding our kindred spirits in the process. At this point with the stakes so high, we are fulfilling the directive to shift the paradigm and replace it with more ethical and sustainable ways of being. Intentionally or not, in our rapid coming-together to form community we have drawn on ancient models of tribal and village life, from eras that must pre-date colonialization both in Europe and here on Turtle Island. Yet how much do we truly remember?

Perhaps there is a hidden code that gets activated in a collective the further away from Empire that we stray, both metaphorically and in the immediacy of our lives. And this arc must surely change and grow as we cycle through our own passages and personal mythology. The revival of community bonds cannot be repressed (even in the world of "me-me-me" hyperindividualism) and like the perennial green fuse, continues to rise again.

In my own life, decades ago as a (very) young adult, I was fortunate to witness the burgeoning of the hippie "commune culture" first-hand. Embraced by the magnificent landscape of British Columbia, alternative communities were springing up in all kinds of wilderness locations, and I hold vivid memories of the "structured freedom" and excitement that ran through each activity, as folks were poised to learn, share, and grow together. Tucked away on a mountainside near the town of Rock Creek, life was joyous, fast-paced, and full of surprises in this highly-functioning open community. Innovation in material culture, camaraderie and deep bonding, superb physical accomplishments on the rugged or green-kissed slopes, lots of nude swimming, new forms of intimacy, bold statements, spontaneous kindness, and deep debate are other qualities of this era that come to mind. Yet egoic stances and conflict also made their mark, and looking back I can see that for every progressive idea or behavior, my

cohort and I still held negative conditioning and dysfunctional behavior from our childhood (probably in cookie-cutter middle-class suburbia).

Now here we are decades later, and I have to marvel that finding guidelines for lasting change, or the "neurodecolonization of our psyches," can still be a challenge. Being raised in the Americas presents us with a unique set of cultural habits that are hard to shake, even as we are "building the new" and embodying alternatives to the dominant society. We are surrounded by narcissism and other forms of infantilization, trained to compete and embrace the "cult of the individual" over the needs of the collective, and our attempts to overcome these patterns have often been a barrier. Relinquishing our western thinking and learning to put the "we" ahead of "me" is at the heart of collaborative community, and ancient wisdom from pre-colonial cultures worldwide (including those in Old Europe) hold elements of "ancestral mind" that may benefit us today. Copying these societies verbatim can fall under the rubric of cultural appropriation, yet being informed by the timeless **values** of earth-emergent knowledge certainly is not. At one time we **all** lived in tribal groups that acknowledged the sacred in every activity and emphasized the bonds of the community over the needs of the individual.

As modernists, let's not be too hard on ourselves, as we have been steeped in a brew of over-rational, over-analytical linear thinking; dualism and the mistaken belief that we are separate from nature; restlessness and a constant attraction to "the new"; an eagerness to dominate and control; and bias toward "the other" as a result of the racism and bigotry that surround us. Now these may be aspects of "western mind" we may want to revise or discard! And even though we have ancient models to follow, with the shift to old/new "future primitive" ways of thinking we are entering new ground, and it is simplistic to suggest that we can renounce ourselves completely as modern people. To *Reject Empire*, we are both moving forward and back, and when we consider the beauty and timelessness of pre-colonial worldviews, there are aspects we may want to encourage or embrace.

Let's look at a compilation of "WE" knowledge and the over-arching values that can be found in indigenous philosophies and our own pre-colonial heritage(s).

The Earth Our Mother

The world is a place of sacred mystery, and our relationship with the world is rooted in a profound respect for the land and all life. Humans are not above creation but part of it, and we flourish within the boundaries of the *Sacred Circle*. Our culture arises or is informed by the land and our bond to a particular landscape, and in this animist universe we are connected to the plants, creatures, elements, and earth spirits that dwell there. The love of the land and our community is the only true wealth we have—we are part of the Earth and the Earth is part of us.

The Natural World as Blessing, and Portal to the Sacred Circle

Leaving the "buzz" of civilization behind and immersing ourselves in nature easily and effortlessly brings us into the intuitive knowing of *Ancestral Mind*. Opening to the natural world and stilling our inner dialogue enables the mysterious unfolding of our hearts. Simply from being in nature we can see the world through the lens of love, and come to know that the *Great Heart* is the connective force in all creation. Filtered through the harmonious and beautiful space of love, our thoughts become allied with *Earth Community*. Clarity replaces confusion, and our thinking becomes a joyful series of inspirations in service to furthering the goals of Gaia, which are to flourish and thrive. Instead of identifying with the separatist and mechanistic worldview of industrial civilization in body, mind, or soul, we find that we are at home again in the *Sacred Circle* of the heart. And in fact, we have never left.

Entwining Heart and Mind

We understand that the gifts of the intellect such as critical thinking and discernment are as important as the gifts of the heart. Trusting in the balance, the wondrous gifts of the human heart and the human mind revolve as required, for nurturing and sustaining a *Good Life* for ourselves and all beings. To utilize the powerful gifts of both heart and mind, we are constantly processing our feelings and thoughts back and forth in a necessary weaving. Both dynamics are required—the theory we obtain from deep reflection, research, and analysis, as well as the agency to act on this information in synch with our creativity and intuition. The essence of being human is taking both the revelatory and grounded aspects of ourselves, and integrating them through love.

Patterns of Ancestral Mind

By reclaiming our place within (not above) *Earth Community* we organically find ourselves practicing a cyclical thinking that is based on spirit connectivity, natural processes, creativity, and peace, rather than singularity, ownership, or dominance. When we are physically grounded and embodied our restless mind fades, and we find ourselves vibrant and present in a field of mindfulness and awareness. We begin to perceive time as a spiral, and are more connected and empathic with others. Our learning is purely experiential, as we are empowered to acquire knowledge at our own pace in our own way, and our overall self-identity is based on our own experience and self-reflection. Being a part of earth-emergent community allows us to hold an "everyday" sense of mystery, wonder, and awe, and all of our intelligences are combined to fulfill our holistic potential as a "true human being." With ancestral or ecocentric mind as the foundation, the entire collective, tribe, or community is able to integrate self-discovery, soul, wisdom, and responsibility.

Reciprocity with the Land and Each Other

Our existence is sustained by expressions of gratitude such as ceremony and prayer, as we unconditionally give thanks for all life and the elements that make life possible. We are in a symbiotic relationship with the Earth, as everything we need to live a *Good Life* comes from the land, and our activities are intertwined with the seasons and cycles of nature. When we embody these principles and have respect for all beings through ceremony and prayer, the cosmic balance is upheld and restored, and the survival of the community ongoing. The reciprocity of maintaining good relationships with each other and all beings is a shared collective value, and our elders and mentors teach us and model to us the virtues of wisdom, bravery, generosity, and selflessness that guide us in these interactions. It is our

responsibility to hold the role of our teachers in the highest regard, and to ensure that the generations following also become *Wise Elders*, and continue to pass on our collective values, history, and wisdom.

Wise Elders and the Oral Tradition

Our stories and storytelling are sacred practices in tribal societies, as traditional narratives and songs compiled over time in our own language link us to our *Ancestors* and the sacred ecology of the land. Myths, poetic sagas, and folklore are passed from storyteller to storyteller and bard to bard, and our most valuable origin stories, histories, memories, beliefs, insights, cultural keystones, and guiding forces are embedded within our dynamic oral tradition. Sets of story "bundles" serve as valuable teaching aids for understanding different aspects of tribal life such as governance, hunting, harvesting of wild foods, healing, women's mysteries, and guidance for our children as they grow.

Values Held by the Collective

In contrast to the competitive "possessive individualism" of western-centric capitalist systems, decolonized people are not indoctrinated by the selfish goals of material acquisition or ego advancement. Our focus is community-based, and we support the unique strengths of each person to contribute to the whole. We practice kindness and loyalty, cooperate with each other, take pride in our connectivity, work toward common goals, share responsibility to create material and spiritual culture(s), take turns at leadership, gently critique or unconditionally praise in equal share, be good hosts to those from other territories, and realize strength from our disciplined collectivity—all in service to the well-being and unity of the whole. Our personal goal in life (and that of all the individuals in our kinship group) is to become whole and true human beings, to value who we are from infant to elder, to fulfill the potential of our personal mythology, and to harmonize and integrate all aspects of our being equally—our physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual awareness—all culminating in the agency of personal sovereignty.

We Are the Ancestors of the Future

We revere and honour our Ancestors, the trustees of the Earth, and our offerings enable us to feel their presence and connect us to our place of origin. Those who have gone before have established the traditions that guide us, and their hard work and love have created us. There is no greater continuity to our collective knowledge and oral tradition, both individually and collectively, than communing with the ancient wisdom of our *Ancestral Spirits*. With gratitude we call upon them to teach us and show us the way, and we understand that in the greater continuum of time we are the Ancestors of the future.

It may be hard work to remember and practice ancient ways of knowing, or to reclaim earth-rooted identity after being told that life in urban or suburban America is the only way to go, or that we cannot exist without the benefits and amenities of the dominant society. But we owe it to ourselves and our kinship groups to join the worldwide circle of *Cooperative Culture*, and move through great change and turmoil to a time of "unity in diversity" as we align ourselves and our communities with a holistic paradigm once again. The love, respect, and care we feel means that we are incapable of using or abusing nature past the carrying capacity of the land, and in the end, these are the mindful qualities that will translate into sustainable societies and well-being for all. Regaining our humanity as whole human beings dwelling in an animistic universe once again might be challenging, but the outcome is clear that by *Rejecting Empire* in principle, thought, and deed, we will protect and sustain the sacred ground of our collective for the generations yet to come.

Writer and visual artist Pegi Eyers is the author of Ancient Spirit Rising: Reclaiming Your Roots & Restoring Earth Community*, a survey on the interface between Turtle Island First Nations and the Euro-Settler Society, social justice work and solidarity, rejecting Empire, and the vital recovery of our own ancestral earth-connected knowledge and essential eco-selves. Recipient of a 2017 Next Generation Indie Book Award, it is available from Stone Circle Press (www.stonecirclepress.com).*

It Takes a Village: The Journey to Build a Lifesharing Community in New Orleans

By Amy Syracuse

Planting the seeds of knowledge through hands-on activities.

Guild member Leah helping to prepare dinner.

"You can be propelled by something or paralyzed by it." That's how Raphael Village founder and Executive Director Jacqueline Case explains the years-long journey that prompted her to build Raphael Village, a Camphill-affiliated lifesharing community in New Orleans.

The inspiration for Raphael Village came from Jackie's son Case, who has autism. As Case approached school age in 2003, Jackie saw firsthand the need for high-quality educational services for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities in her local community. She began an intensive search for schools that would allow her son to thrive.

Guided by a mother's instinct, Jackie followed her research and recommendations received from friends, colleagues, and family. The path led to the Waldorf School of New Orleans, where Jackie found the educational philosophy and whole-child support she knew Case needed. Within the school, he flourished.

What Jackie didn't expect was the growth Case's education would inspire in herself. An architect and historical renovation specialist by trade, Jackie joined the Waldorf School's Board. She served in Board positions for six years, and as school administrator for one year—in the process, expanding her personal network and immersing herself in anthroposophy, curriculum development, and all matters of school operations.

Though she didn't realize it at the time, Jackie had broken proverbial ground on the construction project of her lifetime: building from the ground up New Orleans' first lifesharing community for people with autism spectrum disorder, Down syndrome, cerebral palsy, and other disabilities.

Laying the Foundation

Around 2009, Case reached a point in his education when a more individualized approach was needed. As she considered next steps, Jackie recalled a chance meeting at an Association of Waldorf Schools of North America conference back in 2004.

Serendipitously, Jackie happened to strike up a conversation with a fellow conference participant. It was Becky Rutherford, a Camphill Academy faculty member and longtime Camphill Special School teacher, who first told Jackie about a Camphill school for children with special needs in Glenmoore, Pennsylvania.

"It was only a casual conversation between strangers at a conference," Becky recalled. "But it shows that ideas, inspiration, and connections can come from unexpected places."

Jackie decided to write to Camphill Special School administrators, and received an invitation to visit. In November 2010, she traveled with her husband to Glenmoore, toured the campus, and met staff, including Claus Sproll, the school's director of finance. A Camphill community member for more than 30 years, Claus had experience supporting communities at the earliest stages of their development.

Visiting Camphill Special School was eye-opening, Jackie recalled. "My husband Mark and I struggled. Why should we go back to where people are considered less than others... where our son would have fewer opportunities?"

But the decision of whether to relocate was fraught, with risks and opportunities on both sides.

Ultimately, the family's love of New Orleans and entrepreneurial spirit won out. Instead of relocating, Jackie and Mark decided to commit their time, energy, and expertise in architecture and construction to creating the educational infrastructure needed by Case and others in their hometown.

Building a Framework

Upon returning from Camphill Special School Jackie began working to launch a state-accredited private school for middle and high school students with special needs. Called Raphael Academy, the school would adapt the Waldorf curriculum for students' learning dif-

ferences, while building social and life skills and nurturing students' self-esteems.

By January 2011, she had secured instructional space, set budgets, and was holding open houses. But it took time to gain traction.

"General lack of awareness in the community was difficult to overcome in the beginning," Jackie explained. "People often think that the one special needs school that has been around for 60 years should be enough."

When Raphael Academy didn't have sufficient enrollment to launch by the start of the 2011-2012 school year, Jackie reached out to Camphill colleagues for guidance.

"Claus advised us to do events in order to build our community," said Jackie. "So we started small, with an after-school program and a summer camp. In 2012, we had enough students to open the doors."

Claus also suggested that Raphael Village focus on building the community that would be right for its environment. "The essence of networking is figuring out how to connect to the core principles while finding your own way...allowing new forms of community to develop and building something that is place-specific," he said.

Raphael Academy's first class comprised five students, 12 to 20 years of age. With the oldest student aging out of the program after the first year, the school added an adult day program in 2013 for those 18 and older, called the Guild at Raphael Village.

The establishment of the Guild allowed graduating students to seamlessly transition to vocational and life skills programs, while remaining part of Raphael Village. The Guild operates Monday through Friday, bringing students into the wider community and providing supported employment and volunteer opportunities.

Notably, the Guild's educational vision isn't limited to individuals with disabilities. For students to be successful, Jackie believes public outreach is needed to help employers understand why they should hire people with disabilities and how to create supportive and inclusive work environments. Raphael Village is seeking grant support to do just that.

"There are many programs and initiatives that support people with disabilities on how to get ready to work," explained Jackie. "We want to actively support them in getting a job and help business owners cultivate workplaces that provide the right fit."

Taking a Holistic Approach

As students' needs have expanded, so, too, have Raphael Village's mission and scope. This holistic approach has driven the community's success and cultivated a natural kinship with the international Camphill movement.

The Raphael Village Board decided to join the Camphill movement as an Affiliate Member to help support continued growth. Its application was approved by the Camphill Association of North

Raphael Academy students and staff.

Raphael Academy faculty and students at work.

The Soraparu Soiree, a Raphael Village fundraiser.

Guild member Harry.

Photos courtesy of Amy Syracuse

America (CANA) in spring 2017, enabling Raphael Village to participate in CANA meetings and events, and allowing Raphael Village to apply for grant funding from Camphill Foundation, a nonprofit public charity supporting Camphill communities.

With its lifesharing program on the horizon, Raphael Village is among only a few urban Camphill-affiliated communities in the United States, and the only Camphill-affiliated community in the southeast region.

Since becoming a Camphill affiliate, Raphael Village's development has continued. The Guild adult day program earned certification to become a Medicaid provider, further expanding Raphael Village's reach within the local community.

This development helped Raphael Village address a key challenge: Private tuition can be difficult for many families to afford. But becoming a Medicaid provider through the Guild adult day program wasn't easy.

"It is time-intensive...and there is an unanticipated amount of required paperwork and documentation," Jackie explained. "You could dedicate a part-time employee to oversee just that component."

In August, Raphael Academy will add its first combined Early Childhood/First Grade class for children four to six years of age. Raphael Village currently serves more than 30 Academy students and adult Guild members. The community is expected to grow by more than 30 percent over the next two years.

To accommodate this growth, a major capital project is under way. Raphael Village will begin construction of a Town Center at the end of this year. The Town Center will include a cafe with a catering facility for vocational training, as well as workshop and classroom space and administrative offices.

In the next two years, Raphael Village also expects to found its lifesharing community, the Hearth, where adults with disabilities will be able to live in households, while learning, working, and contributing to the rich fabric of their New Orleans community.

Collaborating with Camphill Colleagues

Through its ongoing journey from after-school program to integrated urban lifesharing community, interaction with and support from Camphill colleagues have been invaluable.

For the past two summers, Guild members have traveled to Camphill Special School and the Camphill Special School Transition Program at Beaver Farm to participate in farming, gardening, craft making, and other educational and vocational activities. This year, Guild members will visit and learn from colleagues at Camphill Village USA in Copake, New York.

The Guild at Raphael Village is led by Camphill Academy graduates Caroline Finck and Laura Mooney, who were mentored by Becky Rutherford. Camphill Academy provides professional education and certification in Anthroposophic Curative Education, Social Therapy, and related fields. Through these personal connections, Camphill Academy has been a rich resource for professional development.

"Camphill Academy has been able to share guidance, consultation, and specific trainings. Its international work helps Raphael Village recognize that they are part of something that has a far-reaching significance," Becky explained. "Shared principles and practices make a strong connection."

Meanwhile, Camphill Foundation centered its 2018 annual gala on celebrating Raphael Village, giving the new community more visibility and providing needed financial support through a $50,000 grant to benefit its Town Center capital campaign.

"We are excited to support Raphael Village in bringing the values of Camphill to a new part of the country and hope Raphael Village will be an exemplar for the region," said Camphill Foundation Executive Director Shelley Burtt.

Raphael Village, in turn, supports Camphill by sharing knowledge and resources within the Camphill family and through Camphill Foundation's Inspired Communities Workshops, held each November. These workshops offer education, support, and networking opportunities to empower new generations of lifesharing community leaders, including those outside of Camphill.

"Lifesharing was always an important part of the vision for what we wanted to create," Jackie concluded. "Raphael Village is a place where people can learn, live, grow, and support others in reaching their fullest potential."

Amy Syracuse is the External Affairs Manager for Camphill Foundation, based in Chestnut Ridge, New York.

Guild member Joseph.

Jackie Case presenting at a Camphill workshop.

Guild member Jessica.

Our Community Can Change When We Work Together Well

By Paul Born

Photos from Champions for Change Calgary 2015.

Photos courtesy of Tamarack-An Institute for Community Engagement

The promise: give people good information and effective tools, and they will organize and work together to create the kind of communities they want.

The first time I met author Margaret Wheatley, she said something that stayed with me. She said (or at least this is how I heard it): "Do not worry about organizing people...when people are engaged, they will organize as they need to."

Her book *Leadership and the New Science* inspired me when I began thinking about systems change. It also helped me to look at leadership not just as an individual act, but also as something people do together.

As people act toward a common agenda, they bring a collective leadership to bear upon the issue. What I find amazing is that in the act of working collaboratively, we can observe leadership happening on two levels. Individual leadership takes the form of contributions such as sharing a personal vision, listening, analyzing the facts, giving direction, and being bold. Collective leadership takes the form of work that happens between people, including conversing, engaging, agreeing, collaborating, deepening relationships, and acting together. As I observe collective action, I see people bringing to life the principle that "the whole is greater than the sum of its parts" (Aristotle).

For the past 15 years, I have had the privilege of working at the Tamarack Institute, where we observe, document, and teach collective action to individuals and communities seeking to improve their social and economic conditions. We have landed on five core ideas to explain and teach this community change.

Collective Impact is the most powerful set of ideas as it provides a group of actions, including building a common agenda and a shared measurement system, to make it easier to work together and to strengthen mutually reinforcing activities between community partners. Continuous communication keeps the partners aligned and builds momentum, while a backbone governance and staffing model provides an agreed-upon structure for action as well as dedicated professionals to support its implementation.

Community Engagement is the most important as it recognizes that for large-scale change to occur, we need to engage a large number of people who believe in the cause and are willing to act. We have observed that when people have good information, are consulted about the desired change, and have an opportunity to be involved in the change process, they become committed to the work at hand and actively participate. This is critical because sustainable community change requires everyone in a community to be engaged, not just the traditional leaders and organizations associated with the issue

Community Innovation is the most critical, as to be content with how things are now is to assume that if we just work harder, smarter, or invest more money in the current way of doing things, we can get a different result. Change at the community level requires us to rethink current systems of program delivery. It requires us to come up with new ideas. New ideas can emerge when we engage people with lived experience in an issue (e.g., when someone living in poverty gets involved in a campaign to end homelessness). They are able to provide critical insights into their needs, helping to foster a culture of new or renewed thinking.

Collaborative Leadership is the most personal as it requires people involved in the change process to consider how they show up in the work. I often express collaborative leadership in this way: "I am a leader, we are all leaders, there is work to do, let's get on with it." This provides a framework for building collective action. First, we recognize that leadership is individual—that when people are engaged, they start to take ownership of the change required

and take individual action. Second, when people are collectively engaged, they join forces to create a joint action in order to make the whole greater than the sum of its parts.

Evaluating Community Impact is the most essential as it recognizes that change cannot scale unless we can understand the outcomes. A shared measurement system requires us to understand not only what we want to change, but how we might be able to measure the change as real and tangible at the population level. At Tamarack, when we track community change we most often consider three levels of outcomes. First, we want to know how many individuals and families have experienced an improvement in their lives as a result of the programs that have been put into place. Second, we want to track a community's potential by understanding and documenting how its capacity for change is improving. This involves tracking outcomes such as a growing cross-sector collaboration, strengthened engagement with people of lived experience, or a more exact and broadly held understanding of the issue. Third, we want to track "policy" shifts (large-scale sustainable change) and the changes in approach to the issue either on an organizational level (e.g., a business improves hiring practices to reduce poverty) or on a community-wide level (e.g., the city institutes a lower bus pass fare for low-income people).

Though we most often discuss or teach these five ideas separately, we are increasingly seeking to understand all five as critical elements in any community change process. Can collective impact really work, if we do not have deep and broad engagement? Can we embrace change by working collaboratively, if we do not change how we understand leadership? Shared measurement might help us set goals, but does it take into account a more comprehensive understanding of how complex change can be?

The innovation that is part of genuine large-scale change requires us to hold all five of the above ideas in tandem. In so doing, we increase our likelihood of making a large-scale collective impact. Like the five fingers on a hand, each idea offers something of critical importance, but when all five fingers work together the work is easier and more effective.

Marcy's Story

Marcy is an amazing community developer from a small city in Alberta. A social worker by training, she has done multiple jobs, including front-line service, over the course of her 20-year career. She is currently an upper-mid-level manager working for her city government and is active in her provincial community developers' association. She has long desired a better quality of life for low-income citizens and has worked to end homelessness and provide improved housing for Aboriginal people and new Canadians in her community. Creating a more equitable community is her passion.

But Marcy had become increasingly concerned that no matter how many great programs her city provided, the population-level statistics for vulnerable people didn't seem to change for the better. Low-income families tended to remain poor, and those who moved out of poverty were quickly replaced by others.

I first met Marcy when she attended our five-day Communities Collaborating workshop in Calgary. Marcy was ever positive...but tired. She was deeply committed to her work, and now, in mid-career, she wanted to see bigger results. She was tired of partnering with other agencies in her community only to see that after huge amounts of work, nothing ever really seemed to change.

Champions for Change Calgary 2015.

What Marcy desired was a system that would take collaboration to a higher level and truly achieve a bigger impact in her community. I remember that she became very curious as she participated in the workshop I was delivering, called "Collective Impact—The First 12 Months." It started as I described a deliberate process for engaging people with lived experience. I remember seeing her sit back in her chair and ponder how her own community could do this. Later, when she was in a peer-to-peer learning circle, I saw her describing what she had learned. Her energy was returning.

Marcy attended other workshops over the next several years. She participated in webinars, communities of practice, and multi-day workshops on community engagement and impact evaluation. She took her learning back to her community. She also brought community partners, low-income citizen leaders, and even business leaders to our events.

She had changed, and in turn, her community was developing new ideas and implementing new programs.

The Whole Is Greater than the Sum of its Parts

In an interview with Marcy two years after I first met her, she shared this observation:

"Paul, what I was looking for was a simple understanding that would help the collaborative action of our community to be more effective. I first saw a lot of hope in the idea of Collective Impact—it was simple to explain, and as I shared the amazing papers written by FSG and Tamarack about it with community partners, we all became excited by this fresh approach to community change. I kept remembering what you had said. Collective Impact sounds familiar because it is really just a highly evolved understanding of collaborative action, though the role of the backbone organization and the potential of shared measurement were highly motivating.

"I quickly realized, though, that in order for our community to make lasting change, we needed to get really good at bringing the whole community into this work, including people with lived experience and the business community. My growing understanding of community engagement became critical to our work. Then, as I started to work with people who were not social workers or community development specialists, my understanding of leadership needed to shift and my understanding of community roles in collaborative change became broader.

"Most importantly, things really shifted for me when I took the workshop Evaluating Community Impact because it really brought the idea of shared measurement into focus for me. When we started tracking outcomes effectively and shared real data in our community and discussed it with organizations, we could clearly show our desired results and in turn were able

to focus the work of our partners. This truly changed how our collaborative evolved."

Marcy had changed. Not only did she become more motivated and skilled at collaborative collective impact work, her understanding of the work became much more comprehensive and focused.

The Practice of Community Change

In my workshops, I often talk about "your collaborative understanding of change." In simplest terms, your team answers the question, "How do you think change will occur?" Typically, I ask collaboratives to consider four questions when building their understanding of change:

1. Who are we now? What is the work we do and why do we do it? This helps us explain ourselves, and begs the question—if we are doing the work we are doing, what does this say about our theory of change? If we are delivering many programs that are specific to helping individuals live better lives, but no programs that are focused on community development and creating better living conditions in neighbourhoods, then our theory of change might be that "change occurs when people have the personal skills and resources to take control of their lives." We may recognize that healthy neighbourhoods do improve lives, but the absence of initiatives to improve neighborhoods in our community would suggest otherwise.

2. What is the change we want to see? This is a collective vision and often supports a collaborative to think more comprehensively about the kind of community it wants. By thinking in these terms, we automatically express a broader understanding of the change needed.

3. How do we think that change will occur? This is, of course, the critical question in theory of change work. When we analyze what we are currently doing and compare it with the change we want to see, we can see the gaps in our thinking more clearly. We can then ask how we might realize a more comprehensive vision for a great community, one in which there is equity and we live sustainably. The broader discussion is, then, to consider how we might get there. What is our thinking system? What kind of leadership do we require? How do we work together to make this happen? Answering these questions might broaden our theory of change to: "We all have a role to play in building a better community. When many leaders and everyday citizens work together, more can happen than when any one organization strives to be the best that it can be."

4. What then will we do, and how is this consistent with how we believe change is going to occur? The action steps needed for change must be consistent with the theory of change. If we believe in collaborative action, then we need to organize collaboratively. If we believe everyone has a role to play, then we must create roles for everyone. If we broaden our understanding of change to include community development and policy change, then we must build these into our plan.

Deepening Community Montreal 2017.

Working Together

When people understand what they want to change and have a strong understanding that a collaborative, community-wide campaign is the only way change will occur, they long for a process that will involve everyone in their city to become engaged and join them in creating the kind of place they want. This is a time to build community momentum.

The first 12 months of a collaborative campaign are critical in how the work is positioned. These months are also the most important time for building broad commitment. It is a time for engaging people, not for "selling" our idea.

The "we need a strategic plan" instinct is very strong among community and business leaders, and even though people want to create a comprehensive plan that engages the community, their focus on establishing strategic priorities and action steps dominates their thinking. There seems to be an urgency for action.

Henry Mintzberg, one of Canada's top business academics, shares with us in his Harvard-published paper "The Fall and Rise of Strategic Planning" why traditional planning can trump strategic thinking. The idea of planning is to engage everyone who will eventually need to implement a strategy. People need to internalize the common vision, and when they do, the strategic priorities and action steps jointly developed are owned by the people who will implement them.

My strongest recommendation to anyone who wants to implement a large-scale community change process is to take the time to really engage your community. The way to do this is to involve people from all walks of life in cross-sector dialogues and "planning experiences" so that they receive compelling information, are well consulted, and have the opportunity to share how they want to be involved. This needs to be a transparent process. Your only "to do" is to listen and to embrace whatever arises.

If instead you choose to first develop your vision, strategic directions, and action steps with a small group—and then take this plan "to the people" to get their input, feedback, and ultimately buy-in—my experience is that people will be cynical at best and hostile at worst. Why? When you bring "your ideas" to people and ask them to respond, they feel as though they are being asked to rubber-stamp decisions that have already been made. You have not evoked their creativity or sense of possibility—rather, you have relied on perceived experts to tell people what to do. The world has changed. People want to be engaged, not sold on an idea. If they own the idea, they will help make it real.

Five Steps to Change (A One-Act Play)

During my workshop "Collective Impact: The First 12 Months," I share with the audience the key deliverables that can be achieved in the first year together as a collaboration. I start the workshop by describing a conversation you may have had with your President or Board Chair.

You: We have for some time discussed the need for a large-scale community campaign to reduce cancer rates in our state.

Board Chair: Yes, you have excited us with ideas about collective impact and have been working with our community to create the key conditions for success.

You: We are ready to launch and have a solid group of leaders who want to collaborate. They represent business, government, and the community. We have also engaged a good representation of people with lived experience. Several funders have expressed interest, and we have assessed that there is a strong sense of urgency in our community around this issue.

Board Chair: Wonderful! Can you help me understand what we will actually do in the first year? I understand the macro goals and the key elements of collective impact. What I am less clear about is what do we actually do to build momentum and ultimately get results.

You: I know at times it feels like we are very emergent around community change. This is intentional as there are some big shifts we require in our community to move from "incremental change" thinking to "transformational change" thinking. We need to catalyze collective leadership and help people work differently, by:

• Understanding the greater system and the complexity of which they are a part.

• Fostering a different, deeper type of dialogue that leads to greater clarity, understanding of difference, and innovation.

• Shifting our collective focus from reactive problem-solving to co-creating the future.

Ultimately, we require five shifts in perspective throughout our community, moving people from deficit-based thinking to asset-based thinking, building trust, and helping leaders put relationships at the centre. In addition, we need to make data much more inclusive, so people really understand what is going on. By working in an emergent fashion, we are able to better understand and gauge the energy within our community for this issue. We can also shift emphasis if needed and detect any possible blind spots in our thinking.

Board Chair: Absolutely, a cultural shift is required. Things cannot remain status quo.

You: But you are interested in our deliverables. Here is a summary.

• First, we will develop an engagement strategy with the goal of engaging at least 1,000 people in dialogue about their experience of cancer and seek their input into how we can reduce the incidence and mortality rate of this disease. We will use best-practice community engagement techniques to achieve this. We are forming a "listening team" to implement this strategy.

• Second, we are developing a data team that will gather all the sources of information that organizations are currently using to make decisions. We will identify any information gaps that need to be filled. We will use this data in our engagement strategy to foster awareness and generate ideas for change.

• Third, we will write a community plan. But we are making a commitment to the community that we will not write the plan within the first 12 months. We want to assure people that we have truly taken the time to engage, inform, consult, and involve them. Our plan clearly lays out a governance model (backbone role) for how we will implement the plan over the next five years.

• Fourth, we are building a database of people who are engaged and interested in getting involved in this campaign. We will also work strategically to encourage agencies and business to participate and ultimately sign on to implementing the community plan. By having upwards of 100 partner organizations, we will be able to form a true common agenda.

• Finally, we want to work with funders to have them commit to the plan by bringing their clout, expertise, and money.

Board Chair: That is an ambitious work plan, though very concrete. I think we are ready to take this to the board.

The Future of Your Community

There are days when it is hard to be hopeful. As we see news of environmental change and we listen to politicians who spread hate and division, our hearts sink. Organizations can become entrenched and people fearful. The positive change we long for can so easily dissipate.

I ask that you have courage and to take the time to see past the challenges and look into the hearts and ambitions of the people who live around you. I have met and worked with thousands of people to build better cities and communities, and I have found we all have three things in common. We want to live in a safe and nurturing place, we want opportunity for ourselves and our children, and we want to live in an equitable, democratic world. My experience is that even if people have vastly different political approaches, faith-based beliefs, or cultural understandings, we are far more the same than we are different. I have come to see that we don't all need to believe in the same things to work well together in building a great city. We just need to care about the same things—and around the fundamentals, we do.

What we need is the opportunity to meet each other, to have a conversation from the heart, and to embrace each other's stories. Never fear people's desire to organize, says Margaret Wheatley: "They always will." The real issue is: will they organize against one another or with each other? I believe that if we can equip people with the solid principles and practices of collective impact and community engagement, they will organize with each other. They will find space for their ideas and bring their best to the common table.

Community change is possible.

Paul Born grew up as the son of Mennonite refugees. This is what made him deeply curious about and engaged in ideas that cause people to work together for the common good. Paul is the cofounder and co-CEO of Tamarack Institute (www.tamarackcommunity.ca) and the founder and director of Vibrant Communities. A large-scale community change facilitator, Paul is the author of four books (including two Canadian bestsellers), a global faculty member of the Asset Based Community Development Institute (ABCD), and a senior fellow of Ashoka, the world's largest network of social innovators.

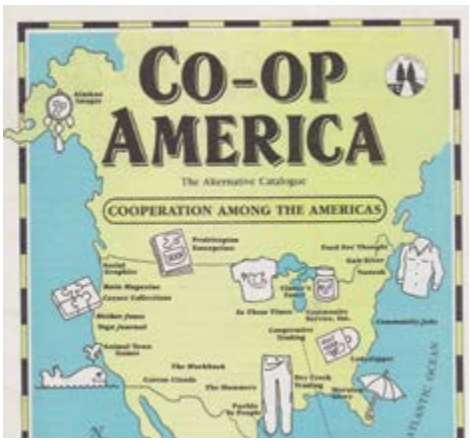
Deepening Community Montreal 2017.

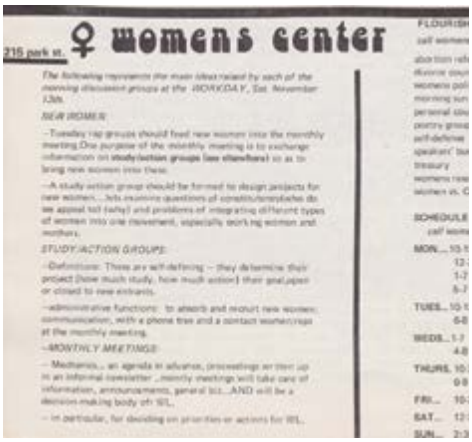
Deepening Community Montreal 2017.

Champions for Change Calgary 2015.

Dancing between Network and Community

By Paul Freundlich





It seems there's some overlap, perhaps confusion between a network and a community. A network is something I use for specific purposes; a community is something I feel which completes me, based on mutual recognition that is intuitively acknowledged.

Recently I was at the 50th Anniversary celebration of one of our community dances. I knew most of my fellow dancers, but only a few dozen as part of our community of Dance New England. Without equivocation, I would say that recognition was mutual, though not entirely parallel. Factoring the communal experiences of DNE's summer camp and complex of possible relationships over the years, each person had a slightly different picture of their community, and what it means to them: friends, lovers, childcare, kitchen shifts, late night bull sessions—above all, the powerful choreography of our free-form dancing, ranging from ecstatic to subtle, partnered to the whole floor, weaving a tapestry, engaging and moving on—like a sand painting alive in the moment, then swirled away.

Even as I was reliving my epiphany, I spotted a dancer whose presence, if my recognition was accurate, was anomalous. The woman (if indeed she was whom I thought) and I had served together on the Board of the CERES Coalition of leading environmental and social investment organizations for more than a decade. We were part of a *network* that has fought its battles with corporate America for the future of the planet, and in the process had come to like and appreciate each other as colleagues.

It had been a few years since we left that Board, and time places its markers. Nevertheless, no question about venturing a "re-introduction." Between songs, I approached, and feeling like an awkward idiot, said her name, and was it she?

Yes, indeed. My wife joined us. Several years before, we'd exchanged social visits with the woman and her husband. He had passed. She was gingerly exploring what life had yet in store—and here she was. It was a good conversation, and whether it leads to a deeper version of friendship may have more to do with circumstance than intention. No doubt that if she found a fit with our version of life's adventure, she would quickly become a pillar of our community.

Years ago, in my days of cooperative organizing, I derived a matrix theory, where within an urban environment, each person effectively had an overlay they could place over a city. For some that might be a favorite restaurant, the public library, a church. For our alternative community, there was the food co-op, the Women's Center, the co-op daycares and schools, the most lively group houses. A social life grew up around these venues, and the repetition of contact and conversation confirming shared values moved naturally from network to community.

The major distinction of that transition was boundary issues. When, as Editor of this magazine, I visited Kerista Village in San Francisco, the clear demarcation was between talking and touching, defined by membership. When I visited the Arcata Food Co-op, I was valued both for representing a networking journal, and through shared discussions at national meetings with key staff, also seen as part of a national network of progressive leaders, whose values and experience, even if in different environments, were similar enough to be felt as a community.

This recognition of community transcends the specifics, and places networking where it belongs—as a useful tool for getting things done, and maintaining the connections which sometimes lead to community. For instance, there's a proliferation of networks helping returned Peace Corps Volunteers keep connected. When I've attended Peace Corps reunions, whatever the level of continuing communication—listservs, social media—it's obvious that the core experience took place during the two years of service, which were so intense and extraordinary that there is an instant affirmation of shared community. At one event, a senior FEMA administrator told me that in his travels pulling together teams to deal with crisis, it took only a matter of minutes to identify the personnel who were veterans of the volunteer experience—whether with Peace Corps or other volunteer cohorts such as AmeriCorps, VISTA, or Teacher Corps. They were the ones he found he could count on for imaginative, effective leadership.

Intensity, shared experience and time—these are what transform a network into a community.

A friend told me this joke: A troubled person goes to a shrink. After listening for hours, the psychiatrist suggests this may be hard to understand, but the root of the problem is the patient is in love with her raincoat. "In love with my raincoat?" she responds. "That's absurd. Of course, I'm fond of it."

I'm fond of networks. I love community.

Paul Freundlich was an Editor/Publisher of Communities *(within our collective framework) for a decade (mid '70s-mid '80s). He is the founder and President Emeritus of Green (Co-op) America, launched Dance New England, helped found the CERES Coalition and served on its Board for 23 years, was Chair of the Stakeholder Council of the Global Reporting Initiative. Paul's novel,* Deus ex Machina*, is available through Amazon, and many of his films and videos, dating from early documentaries about the Peace Corps, are on YouTube. His most recent project is "Exemplars," a portal to explore the world's most promising creations at www.exemplars.world.*

REACH

REACH is our column for all your Classified needs. In addition to ads intended to match people looking for communities with communities looking for people, Reach offers ads for events, land, internships,services, books, personals, and more to people interested in communities.

You may contact our Advertising Manager, Gigi Wahba, to place a Reach ad. Email Ads@ic.org, call 415-991-0541, or go to communities.ic.org/ads/ for more information or to submit your ad online.

THE REACH DEADLINE FOR ISSUE #181 - Winter 2018 (out in December) is October 28, 2018.

The rate for Reach ads is…. Up to 50 Words: $25/issue or $60year; Up to 100 Words: $50/issue or $100/year; Up to 250 Words: $75/issue or $200/year. If you are an FIC Member you may take off an additional 10%.

You may pay using a credit card or PayPal by contacting Gigi online or over the phone using the contact information above. Or, you may mail a check or money order payable to Communities with your ad text, word count, and duration of the ad, plus your contact information, to: The Fellowship for Intentional Community, 23 Dancing Rabbit Lane, Rutledge, MO 63563.

Intentional Communities listing in the Reach section are also invited to create a free listing in the online Communities Directory at Directory.ic.org, and also to try our online classified advertising options. Special combination packets are available to those who wish to list both in the magazine and online.

COMMUNITIES WITH OPENINGS

DURHAM, NC 55+ COMMUNITY. Village Hearth Cohousing welcomes LGBTs, straight friends, and allies. Building 28 accessible, Energy-efficient homes clustered on 15 beautiful acres. Only a few left. Starting construction Fall 2018 in culturally vibrant progressive Durham for move-in late 2019. Come on by! WWW.VillageHearthCohousing.com

ROCKY CORNER COHOUSING, THE FIRST IN CONNECTICUT! Here is what makes us unique: We are the first cohousing in southern New England, the closest to NYC. We are 5 miles from the small vibrant city of New Haven where political action and fine arts are thriving. We have been using sociocracy as our governance and decision-making model since 2012.We use permaculture principles to decide how to use our land. Neighbors can garden and farm together as much or as little as they want. We will own our individual energy-efficient homes and co-own organic farmland and a beautiful common house. Here are some of our values: We strive to create a neighborhood that is supportive and inspiring for individuals and families. We support people of all ages to enter, stay and participate in the community throughout their lives. We value our children as members of the community encouraging their participation and leadership. We work cooperatively for mutual benefit. The community promotes the physical and emotional health, safety and security of our members and guests. We make space in our lives for play and artistic expression. We encourage continual learning, skill sharing and teaching. We consider the Rocky Corner community, the wider human community and the health of the Earth when making decisions and choices. Does this speak to you? We have Affordable and market-rate homes for sale that will be ready to occupy in 2018 -19. Construction is starting. Come join us now! Find out more at www.rockycorner.org

D'ACRES PERMACULTURE FARM AND EDUCATIONAL HOMESTEAD seeks enthusiastic, motivated people looking for long term residency to further our mission of building community and living sustainably. Located near the White Mountains in New Hampshire, our 200 acre property is home to large vegetable gardens, countless fruit and nut trees, an abundance of flowers and herbs, pigs, chickens, alpacas, rabbits. We also have direct access to a vast network of mountain bike and cross country ski trails right out our back door. Opportunities abound for building your own enterprise; blacksmithing, fiber arts, bee keeping, food products, traditional arts, draft animals, the sky is the limit at DAcres. Check out "The Community Scale Permaculture Farm" the book that gives the full story. Visit www.dacres.org.

ALPHA FARM IS A SMALL RURAL COMMUNITY FOUNDED IN 1972, located in the Coast Range of western Oregon. We are seeking new members to assist in our current revitalization and the development of new community income streams. Of particular interest are individuals with a cooperative mindset, skilled in Office Administration, Auto Mechanics, Infrastructure Maintenance or large scale Organic Gardening. If this sounds like you, please contact the Visitor Coordinator at alpha@pioneer.net.

HUNDREDFOLD FARM IS A 10-HOME COHOUSING COMMUNITY NEAR GETTYSBURG, PA. Our custom designed energy efficient single family solar homes are surrounded by 80 acres of fields and forest. Community gardens and a greenhouse provide organic produce year-round. Four ready to build lots start at $75k. Come grow with us! www.hundredfoldfarm.org

COHOUSING A LA MEXICANA! Located near Ajijic Lake Chapala, 3 Acres are ready for building homes. We stand for Sustainability, Community, Multiversity and Aging in Place. We are seeking quality VISIONARY AND ADVENTUROUS members/investors to embrace this unique opportunity. Contact Jaime Navarro at rancholasaludvillage@gmail.com or www.rancholasaludvillage.com

HILLS, WOODS, PASTURES, GARDENS. Currents is a small, rural, multi-generational community 14 miles outside the university town of Athens, Ohio. Co-op inspired, consensus that works, solar micro-grids, our own water system.In our 36 years we've made a good start; now, still inventing ourselves and looking for energetic individuals, families, or groups to carry the vision forward. We have 162 acres, with sufficient planning and sweat, might include… small-scale cooperative farming? Craft shops and home-based business? If you would like to help imagine and build and don't mind not-starting from scratch, please inquire. Housing options now available. Send inquiry to heycurrents@gmail.com.

SPIRITSONG COMMUNITY -- We are a small community of five people wanting to be ten people looking for new members. We are located in Napa county, CA. We live on 37 acres of mainly wooded land 2 miles up a dirt road. We have several structures available for people to live in. We are off the grid of the Internet, we have organic gardens, and a small dairy herd. We have a non-dogmatic interest in Spiritual Awareness. Contact Rory Skuce 707-965-3994 or middletownmassage2@yahoo.com

COWEETA HERITAGE CENTER AND TALKING ROCK FARM are located in the mountains of Western North Carolina in a beautiful and diverse temperate rainforest. CHC is looking for others who would like to join together to form an Intentional Community embracing the principles of Voluntary Simplicity and Healing the Earth and Each Other. Simply put, we wish "to live simply so that others may simply live." It is a recognition that nature provides us with valuable services and resources that we can use to enrich our lives. Utilizing local resources, appropriate technology, and working cooperatively, we can discover creative ways to meet our needs as "directly and simply as possible.". Come join Coweeta and learn how to live lightly on the land and enjoy the Earth's bounty! Contact Coweeta for more info or to schedule a visit!! Contact Paul at coweeta@gmail.com.

DANCING RABBIT ECOVILLAGE, Rutledge, Missouri. Come live lightly with us, and be part of the solution! Dancing Rabbit Ecovillage is an intentional community and educational non-profit focused on living, researching, and demonstrating sustainable living possibilities. We

live, work and play on 280 acres of lovely rolling prairie, and welcome new members to join us in creating a vibrant community and cooperative culture! Together we're living abundant and fulfilling low-carbon lives, using about 10% of the resources of the average American in many key areas. Our ecological covenants include using renewable energy, practicing organic agriculture, and no private vehicles. We use natural and green building techniques, share cars and some common infrastructure, and make our own fun. We welcome individuals, families, and sub-communities, and are especially seeking women, as well as people with leadership and communication skills. Join us in living a new reality: sustainable is possible! 660-883-5511; dancingrabbit@ic.org

COMMUNITIES FORMING

EARTH ANGELS ANIMAL SANCTUARY, AZ, CARETAKER POSITIONS AVAILABLE. Seeking persons with serious interest in growing our Animal Sanctuary. Looking for people who delight in having animals in their daily lives, who work well cooperatively and who think creatively. Experience with natural horsemanship, business, website development a plus. See: www.earthangelsanimalsanctuary.org or Contact Susinn at 702-277-2241

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few, if any, hold the type of idyllic space as this very special piece of land. Price: $875,000 USD Contact: simplelivingbydesign@gmail.com or Call WhatsApp in Costa Rica: +(506) 8994.4601 (Central Time Zone) Details, photos, videos: SimpleLivingByDesign.com

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SERVICES / OPPORTUNITIES

HOUSEPARENTS/COWORKERS: THE LUKAS COMMUNITY seeks a compassionate, hard working couple or small family to live with and help care for our developmentally challenged residents and to participate in our therapeutic programs. www.lukascommunity.org/join_us. Send resume and cover letter to Kristen Stanton at lukas@lukascommunity.org or The Lukas Community, PO Box 137, Temple, NH 03084.

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FREE NATURAL BUILDING INTERNSHIP IN MOAB, UT! Join us for our five-month internship, where 16 interns will work together under natural building instructors to build two straw bale homes from foundation to finish. Homes are built for low and very-low income residents of the community. Housing and food stipend provided! Seasonal internship dates are typically February 1st – June 30th, and July 15th – December 15th. Contact us directly at coordinator@communityrebuilds.org or (435) 260-0501. More info at www.communityrebuilds.org

PUBLICATIONS, BOOKS, WEBSITES, WORKSHOPS

WISDOM OF COMMUNITIES - Since 1972, Communities magazine has been collecting and disseminating the lessons learned, and now we're distilling them into a new 4 volume book series on the following topics: Starting a Community, Finding a Community, Communication in Community, and Sustainability in Community. With over 300 pages each of hundreds of our best articles, this series is intended to aid community founders, seekers, current communitarians, students, and researchers alike in their explorations. Available in print and digital format: https://www.ic.org/wisdom

BEST OF COMMUNITIES BOOKS - We've distilled the most insightful and helpful articles on the topics that you–our readers–have told us you care about most, and have organized them into 15 scintillating books. Learn about Starting or Visiting a Community, Consensus, Good Meetings, Making Agreements, Solving Conflicts, Cooperative Economics, and more! Available in print and digital format: www.ic.org/best-of-communities

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"REINHABITING THE VILLAGE: COCREATING OUR FUTURE" - created by Jamaica Stevens and Executive Produced by Keyframe-Entertainment - is a 352-page graphically rich, softcover book showcasing the work of 12 Visionary Artists and over 60 Contributing Authors. The book features "Voices from the Village" sharing their experience, best practices, strategies and resources to empower communities through practical wisdom and inspiring perspectives. The book offers a roadmap and blueprint for building a legacy for our future through the shared development of social technology tools, innovative templates, models, permaculture guidelines and resources that are useful to communities everywhere. Buy the book at: http://keyframe-entertainment.com/culture-art/reinhabitingthevillage/ Discounted bulk book orders are available, please contact info@keyframe-entertainment for more info.

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN INDIANA--CENTER FOR COMMUNAL STUDIES (CCS). The Center for Communal Studies (CCS) was created in 1976 as a clearinghouse for information and a research resource on communal groups worldwide, past and present. Located on the campus of the University of Southern Indiana in Evansville, the Center encourages scholarship, meetings, public understanding and learning about historic and contemporary intentional communities. ARCHIVAL RESEARCH COLLECTION: We invite researchers to use the Center's Collection of primary and secondary materials on more than 500 historic and contemporary communes. Our Collection is housed at Rice Library and has over 10,000 images and a reading room with an extensive library. Online resources may be found at http://www.usi.edu/library/university-archives-and-special-collections. Email the archivist at jagreene@usi.edu for information. REGIONAL RESEARCH: The CCS is part of a rich array of historic communal resources within a 30-mile radius of Evansville that includes the famous Harmonist and Owenite village of New Harmony. New Harmony's Workingmen's Institute Library and the State Museum collection also offer unique research opportunities. PROGRAMS: The CCS sponsors lectures, conferences and exhibits. The Center will sponsor a Communal Studies Minor in the USI College of Liberal Arts beginning fall 2019. WEBSITE:The CCS website (http://www.usi.edu/liberal-arts/communal-center) serves scholars, students and the interested public. CENTER PRIZES AND RESEARCH TRAVEL GRANT: The CCS annually awards a Prize of $250 for the Best Undergraduate Student Paper and a Prize of $500 for the Best Graduate Student Paper on historic or contemporary communal groups, intentional communities, and utopias. Deadline for submission is 1 March. The Center also annually awards a $2,000 Research Travel Grant to fund research in the Communal Studies Collection. Applications are due by 1 May. LOCATION AND CONTACT: The CCS is located in Room 3022 of Rice Library at the University of Southern Indiana. Evansville has a regional airport with jet service from Chicago, Atlanta, Dallas and elsewhere. You may contact the Center by phone 812/465-1656 or email director Casey Harison at charison@usi.edu.

FREE GROUP PROCESS RESOURCES AT TREE BRESSEN'S WEBSITE: www.treegroup.info. Topics include consensus, facilitation, blocks and dissent, community-building exercises, alternative formats to general discussion, the list goes on! Articles, handouts, and more - all free!

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CREATING THE IDEAL INTENTIONAL COMMUNITY
(OR REVITALIZING AN EXISTING ONE)

I, Sahmat, grew up in intentional communities and have lived in 10 of them. I have been so dedicated to Community with both humans and Nature that I've been called "The Community Guy". The communities I grew up in shared a fairly strong "sense of community". I call this deep and sustained sense of community "Common-unity" because it's a state of unity we share in common, with the unique individuality of each human and each species still honored. It's this state of Common-unity that I've found most valuable in life and to me it's the main reason for living in an intentional community. When a group is deep in Common-unity together, there's a shared sense of love, joy, and peace that tops any other group experience.

However, I've found that in all the communities I've lived in, the sense of community is not nearly as deep and sustained as it could be. It's precisely this lack of Common-unity that is the root cause of the catastrophic global suffering of racism, wars, child abuse, abuse of women, environmental and species destruction, etc. So the ultimate goal is ending global suffering through "Global Common-unity": the spreading of Common-unity throughout the world by forming a global network of Common-unity-dedicated Communities.

So I've spent my life learning how to create Common-unity-dedicated communities that share true Common-unity: a deeper and more sustained sense of community. There are two keys to starting a Common-unity community (or moving an existing community into deeper Common-unity):

1. The first key to Common-unity is for everyone to be "Common-unity-dedicated" as their top common priority. This doesn't seem to be the case in any existing community, which results in focus and energies being bled off into other priorities. So maintenance of Common-unity doesn't get enough time and energy.

2. The second key to Common-unity is to learn "Common-unity Skills", skills that must be practiced to maintain Common-unity: Speaking from the Heart, Empathetic Listening, Emptying of Ego-attachments, Conflict Resolution, Consensus, Heart Wound Healing, Cooperative Housing, and Cooperative Economics. Modern culture does not teach us these skills.

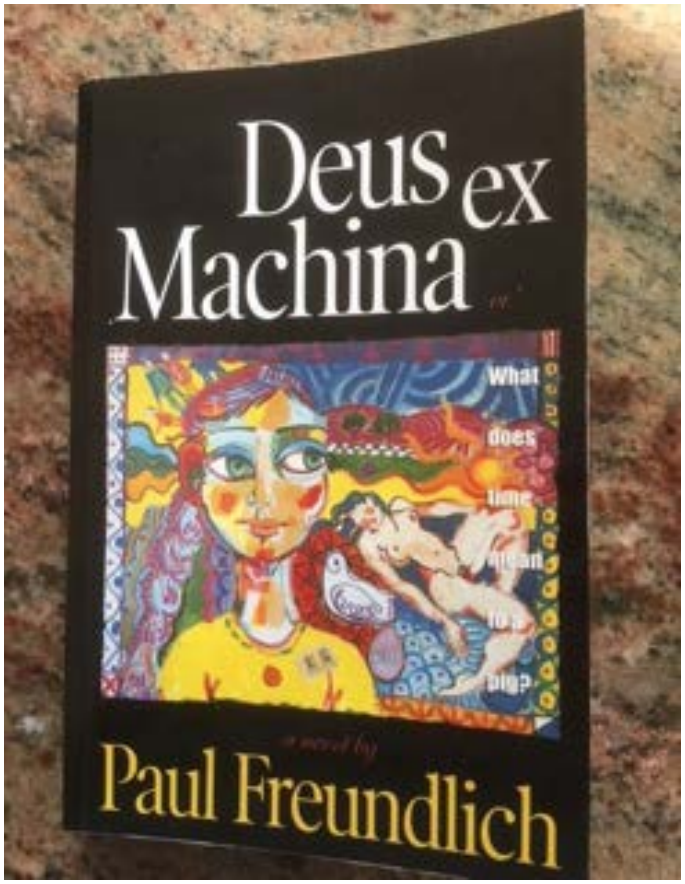
We at the Alliance for Global Community have developed free workshops that train you in these Common-unity Skills. The workshops contain the Sharing Circle process developed by M. Scott Peck, a Nature connection exercise developed by John Seed and Joanna Macy, healing exercises developed by Byron Katie and Richard Moss, and exercises in creating Cooperative Housing and Cooperative Economics. We've tested various versions of these Common-unity Skill Building workshops over the past 25 years, and we've found them to be quite effective in teaching Common-unity skills that can help maintain Common-unity. If you'd like to start a Common-unity-dedicated community, or if you'd like to bring more Common-unity into an existing community (perhaps through a Common-unity sub-community or "pod"), you need to learn or improve these Common-unity skills as soon as possible.

To find out how to sign up for a free public Common-unity Skills workshop or schedule a free workshop for an existing group or community, please go to my website thecommunityguy.org There you can also find out how to get a free copy of the book "Skill Building for Global Common-unity".

COMMON-UNITY WITH HUMANITY AND NATURE

November, 1963. In the middle of the Pentagon's grey corridors, the inner courtyard is a green haven for civilians and military on their lunch break. On a crisp fall day, an attractive young matron waves to her naval lieutenant husband. It is 12:15 pm, and Kay has nothing on her mind except the small picnic basket she has brought. Along with the rest of the United States, she is oblivious to preparations in a Dallas office building, perhaps on a nearby grassy knoll, which at this moment remain suspended in time, subject to intervention and choice, if...

If we only knew then what we know now…



Plunked down in the middle of the 20th century, reverted to his childhood body, but his memory intact, Joshua Leyden takes a run at revising his own life, and changing a future that needs some tinkering.

"Held me every step of the way. A great read, challenging ideas, fascinating and seductive." – David Kahn, Harvard Faculty.

Consider two trains heading in opposite directions, but stopped in a station. While the trains wait, it is possible to change between them. Transferring passengers would then head down their own timelines, reviewing past images incrementally. So it is with memories. So it is with dreams.

"Wonderful, touching characters, reworking our fate." – Hazel Henderson, Economist.

Each night, the sun went down, Nora to bed, and Josh prowled around her soul, searching for a key to unlock their mystery. While Nora slept beyond a narrow wall, Josh fought the need to break on through to the other side – replaying every mistake he'd ever made in either life. Rising, hitting the brandy, writing in a notebook lest the typewriter wake the girl. He couldn't even feel sorry for himself when he knew Nora had it far worse.

It's about time: A love story, both provocative and playful…

Paul Freundlich, Founder of Green America and Dance New England; for a decade an Editor of "Communities"; filmmaker, essayist and activist has created a journey that transcends time and reworks reality.

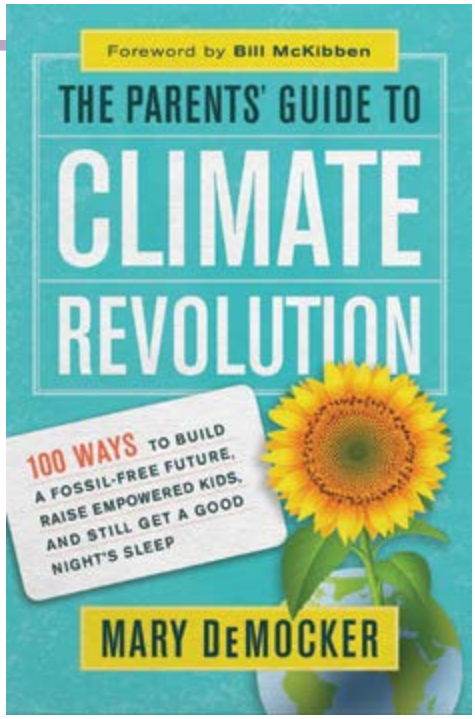
Available from Amazon.com [search: Paul Freundlich]

Cultivating Climate Revolution

The Parents' Guide to Climate Revolution: 100 Ways to Build a Fossil-Free Future, Raise Empowered Kids, and Still Get a Good Night's Sleep

By Mary DeMocker

New World Library, Novato, California, 2018, 360 pages



Editor's Note: *In* Communities *#174, Bill McKibben made the strong case that the question he receives most often about climate change—"What can I do?"—is just a little off; the more relevant question is "What can* ***we*** *do?" Ma'ikwe Ludwig's* Together Resilient: Building Community in the Age of Climate Disruption*, published last year by the FIC, reveals the same truth: viable solutions arise from collective, rather than simply individual, action. Recently we received a review copy of another book highlighting the importance of building community, of networking, of working together for systemic change, while also specifically addressing a key component of climate work: how to talk with and engage younger generations about it. We'd be interested in any other reflections on this topic, particularly within an intentional community context; please share your thoughts and stories with editor@ic.org.*

Author Mary DeMocker starts Chapter 44 in *The Parents' Guide to Climate Revolution* with this:

"One day, one of my nephews, after only four years on the planet, had received enough petrifying information about his prospects that he announced, 'Mom, I don't want to be alive anymore.'

"Alarmed, his mom pulled him onto her lap and asked, 'Why?'

"'The Earth will die and I don't want to be here when everything's dead.'"

Reading this, I burst into tears. I remember back years ago when my daughter was in elementary school, middle school, and even high school and I was struggling with when, what, and how much to tell her about climate change and the future of her world. I have been an environmental activist for most of my life and an environmental educator for 30 years, so it seems like I've always known about climate change. It was always a tough subject to teach about, but telling your own child is even harder. It just gets more excruciatingly painful as time goes by and climate change gets worse and more politicians go into denial or just refuse to take action.

In the Foreword to this book, Bill McKibben writes: "Up to a certain age, we should not tell kids about climate change. It isn't their fault, and it's too big for them to entirely comprehend. Instead, our job is to make children fall in love with the natural world."

That is a philosophy well known in environmental education, but there is disagreement about when is the best age to start telling kids about the environmental problems that modern civilization has created. And, sort of like sex ed, you've got to start telling them at a young age if you don't want them to get a distorted view of things from their peers, the media, and other adults who don't think about what is age-appropriate to say around kids. DeMocker tackles these issues well in her book.

Not just a book for parents, this is a book for anyone who is concerned about the future. Most of the information is quite accurate and up-to-date, with short engaging chapters that each ends with a list of effective actions you can take, listed according to how much time you can spare, so even very busy people can join the climate movement. There is an extensive list of notes and references for those who wish to dig deeper.

DeMocker makes a good case for focusing our energy on bringing about systemic change in how our civilization operates rather than just making personal changes to reduce our carbon footprints. She promotes collective rather than individual action and broad networking between groups. One section containing seven chapters is titled "Grow Community Connections" and later there is a chapter on nonviolent communication. She writes about intersectionality between environmental and social justice movements.

DeMocker goes a bit too far in her Introduction when she starts off with "Stop recycling. Get off your bike, stop gardening, leave your cloth bag in the SUV, and bring hamburgers to the family picnic. Let your faucets leak, leave your windows open with the heat on, and for heaven's sake, don't hang your laundry." While I agree with her that "we are all captive within a dirty-energy infrastructure" and that our individual lifestyle choices cannot stop climate change, small children cannot understand this reasoning and they will imitate their parents. So, for parents with small children, modeling a sustainable lifestyle is more important that getting politically active, and gardening can help grow the love of nature that McKibben promotes in the Foreword.

The chapter that inspired me most was near the end. Titled "Light Yourself on Fire," this section described DeMocker's passionate response to the New Deniers, people who deny that any action can help and say resistance is futile. Reading this, it hit me that the websites and books I had been reading lately have been pulling me in that direction with their discussions of adapting to climate change and preparing for the collapse of industrial civilization. While resilience is an important topic, we will have a much worse future to adapt to if we don't all get active right now to change the system. As my daughter, a leader of the Climate Justice League at the University of Oregon, put it on her graduation cap, "Resistance is Fertile." DeMocker's book is a good way to get involved in growing the Climate Revolution, parents and kids together!

After working for a year as a high school biology teacher in a small logging town, Sharon Blick (formerly Teague) traveled the country giving slideshows about saving ancient forests and then founded the environmental education nonprofit Nearby Nature 25 years ago in Eugene, Oregon. With her husband Jim, she now owns and runs the Living Earth Farm just west of Eugene and helps out with the 350 Eugene chapter in her spare time.

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I love Communities magazine. Deciding to be communal is the best decision I've ever made in my life. Communities has been there from the beginning.

–**Patch Adams, M.D.**,
author and founder of the Gesundheit Institute

Communities has become one of our go-to sources for thought-provoking pieces about people opting out of the rat race and living life on their own terms.

–**Christian Williams**, Editor, Utne Reader

Each issue is a refreshing antidote to the mainstream media's "me, me, me" culture. Communities overflows with inspiring narratives from people who are making "we" central to their lives instead.

–**Murphy Robinson**,
Founder of Mountainsong Expeditions

Community has to be the future if we are to survive. Communities plays such a critical role in moving this bit of necessary culture change along.

–**Chuck Durrett**,
The Cohousing Company, McCamant & Durrett Architects

For more than 40 years Communities has done an outstanding job of promoting the communitarian spirit as well as serving intentional communities and other groups coming together for the common good.

–**Timothy Miller**,
Professor of Religious Studies, University of Kansas

For many years we've been associated with and have strongly supported Communities because we're convinced of its unique contribution to the communities movement in the United States and the world.

–**Lisa and Belden Paulson, Ph.D.**,
cofounders of High Wind community

Communities has been important to me ever since I began researching intentional communities back in 1980.... The Editors have always been willing to include critical articles which challenge accepted norms.

–**Dr. Bill Metcalf**,
Griffith University, Brisbane, Australia

Communities is an invaluable resource.

–**Professor Emeritus Yaacov Oved,** Tel-Aviv University

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