

WE'RE BACK! • GENERATIONAL SHIFTS IN COMMUNITY

COMMUNITIES

Life in Cooperative Culture

Winter 2019 • Issue #185



PASSING THE TORCH

**Generational Transition
and Communal Longevity**

**Handing Over Twin Oaks'
Garden Managership**

**Magic, Innisfree,
Earthaven, Morninglory,
Amana, Bruderhof, Heartwood**

**Seizing the Torch at
Fir Ridge and Maple Creek**

**Living in Multi-Generational
Communities**



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Please Help Us as We Relaunch COMMUNITIES Magazine!

**You Are Receiving This Issue
Because You May Be a Potential
(If Not Current) COMMUNITIES
Subscriber**

**Dear COMMUNITIES Reader:
We request and welcome
your support!**

In the last issue, #184, we announced on page 1 that FIC (the Foundation for Intentional Community), our publisher since the early '90s, had decided to suspend production of COMMUNITIES to allow for an organizational re-evaluation. FIC has since decided to focus on developing a new online platform to connect community-seekers to communities, and to no longer publish COMMUNITIES.

However, we are thrilled to report that we have found an allied organization to be our publisher, and, with full support of FIC, negotiated a smooth transition to our new home: **GEN-US (Global Ecovillage Network–United States)**. More details follow on the inside pages of this issue.

**Be part of our successful
transition and relaunch.**

GEN-US “grew up” with COMMUNITIES as a go-to resource and information hub, and has agreed to take us on because of the strong expressions of support we have received from those who value this magazine, and the anguish of many in contemplating its loss. It is not only a 47-year-old institution, documenting in real time a movement that holds wisdom and “pieces of the puzzle” essential in addressing the looming crises humanity is facing; it is also a community unto itself. In an age of evermore fast-paced and clipped communication, sent at lightning speed through cyberspace, it is something different—like intentional

community living itself. It aims to delve deeply into the human stories within the communities movement, and to share its contributors’ experiences with authenticity. We believe it is especially valuable and viable **because** it is so different from most forms of communication and media in the contemporary world; all the more important to maintain and help flourish **because** journals like it are increasingly rare.

**Please subscribe with our new
publisher—every subscription
makes a difference!**

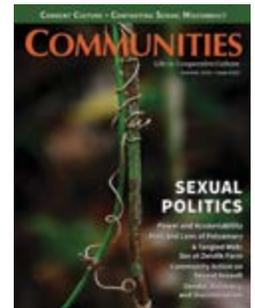
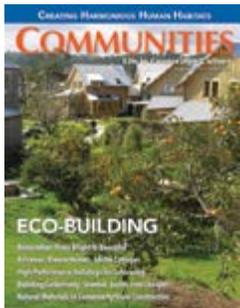
We are mailing this issue not only to our current, paid-up subscribers, but to many of you whose subscriptions have lapsed in the last few years, to some of you suggested to us through GEN contacts, and to all who have been receiving complimentary subscriptions from FIC (past and current FIC board members, staff members, etc.). GEN-US cannot afford to continue fulfilling those complimentary subscriptions, so we are asking you to subscribe, and thank you in advance for any support you can give. We are sending this sample copy in lieu of a mailed first-class letter, believing it better represents the magazine than any letter could, and also noticing that the economies of scale for printing and bulk-mailing make the cost of sending extra copies relatively small—which is also why boosting our subscription list seems an essential part of our path to continuing financial viability in our current form.

**To thrive into the future, we
aim to increase subscriptions
by at least 50 percent.**

We are confident that many more potential appreciative readers are out there than are currently receiving the magazine. We think you may know some of them.

(continued next page)

Would you consider giving gift subscriptions or “pay it forward” subscriptions?



Here is our new pricing structure, to encourage wider distribution of COMMUNITIES and to facilitate giving, sharing, and supporting the magazine:

PRINT SUBSCRIPTIONS:

- **First subscription:** \$30 per year in US, \$40 per year outside of US
- **Additional (gift or “pay it forward”*) print subscriptions in US:** \$25 per year for subscriptions two and three, \$20 per year for all subsequent subscriptions (\$100 total for four US subscriptions, \$200 for nine US subscriptions, etc.). Additional international subscriptions: \$35 per address.
- *“Pay it forward” subscriptions are gift subscriptions with no specified recipients, allowing us to respond to requests to send the magazine to individuals and groups without adequate funds to pay for it.
- **Bonus:** every print subscription also includes access to all digital back issues and a current digital subscription.

DIGITAL SUBSCRIPTIONS:

- **First subscription:** \$20 per year (digital, anywhere in world)
- **Additional (gift or “pay it forward”*) digital subscriptions:** \$15 per year for subscriptions two and three, \$10 for all subsequent subscriptions (\$50 for three digital subscriptions, \$100 for eight digital subscriptions, etc.)
- *“Pay it forward” subscriptions are gift subscriptions with no specified recipients, allowing us to respond to requests to send the magazine to individuals and

groups without adequate funds to pay for it.

- **Bonus:** every digital subscription also includes access to all digital back issues.

DONATIONS FOR RELAUNCH EXPENSES:

We also appreciate **tax-deductible donations** to help us cover the costs of relaunching the magazine. These include:

- General start-up and transition costs (extra labor, registration fees, etc.)
- Back issue transport from Missouri to Oregon
- Website upgrades at GEN-US.net
- Production of first new issues with GEN-US
- Promotional mailing of issue #185
- Subscription system migration and improvements

Thank you for any ways you can help support the above!

Please visit GEN-US.NET/COMMUNITIES to subscribe, order, or donate to COMMUNITIES. Or you can mail a check or money order (payable to GEN-US) with your subscription orders and/or donation to:

**Attn.: Linda Joseph/COMMUNITIES
64001 County Road DD
Moffat, CO 81143 USA**

(A form for tax-deductible donations is downloadable at gen-us.net/donate/magazine.)

Feel free to contact us with any questions at communities@gen-us.net.

Thank you for being part of the rebirth of COMMUNITIES!

Some Ways to Support COMMUNITIES

- ___\$5 or higher: Donation (tax-deductible) to COMMUNITIES
- ___\$10: One Copy of COMMUNITIES (sent to US address)
- ___\$20: One Four-Issue Digital Subscription plus all-back-issue digital access
- ___\$30: One Four-Issue Print Subscription (US) plus all-back-and-current-issue digital access
- ___\$40: One Four-Issue Print Subscription (International) plus all-back-and-current-issue digital access
- ___\$50: Three Digital Subscriptions including all-issue digital access
- ___\$55: Two Print Subscriptions (US) including all-issue digital access
- ___\$80: Three Print Subscriptions (US) including all-issue digital access
- ___\$100: Four Print Subscriptions (US) including all-issue digital access
- ___\$100: Eight Digital Subscriptions including all-issue digital access
- ___\$200: Nine Print Subscriptions (US) including all-issue digital access
- ___\$200: Eighteen Digital Subscriptions including all-issue digital access
- ___\$250: Your choice of print-digital subscriptions up to \$250 in value, and/or general magazine donation
- ___\$500: Your choice of print-digital subscriptions up to \$500 in value, and/or general magazine donation
- ___\$1000: Your choice of print-digital subscriptions up to \$1000 in value, and/or general magazine donation

Please contact us about donating larger amounts!

Single copies of current and back issues are also available (see rates that follow). If you'd like single or multiple copies of **forthcoming** issues, please contact us in advance for quickest and most affordable mailing options.

Individual Print Copies:

- ___\$10 per copy postpaid in US for 2019 issues (contact us for bulk orders)
- ___\$13 per copy postpaid international (contact us for bulk orders)

Individual Digital Copies:

- ___\$6 for one issue, ___\$10 for two issues, ___\$15 for three issues
- (\$20 digital sub allows access to all digital back issues)

Print Back Issues:

- 2019 issues: ___\$10 postpaid for first magazine, ___\$8 each additional magazine sent in same package
- 2018 issues: ___\$8 postpaid for first magazine, ___\$6 for each additional magazine sent in same package
- 2017 and older issues: ___\$7 postpaid for first magazine, ___\$5 for each additional magazine sent in same package
- ___International orders please add \$3 additional postage per magazine
- Complete available print back issue set: ___\$150 postpaid, US addresses only

We'll need the following information to fulfill your order:

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Additional Names and Addresses for Recipients of Gift Subscriptions (Print and/or Digital) or Current or Back Issues (if different from above):

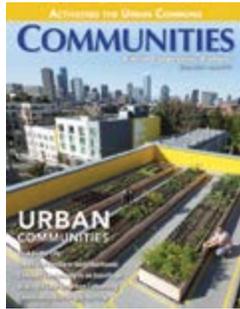
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(A form for tax-deductible donations is downloadable at gen-us.net/donate/magazine.)

Please make payment via COMMUNITIES' new website at GEN-US.NET/COMMUNITIES, or mail your check or money order payable to GEN-US to **Attn.: Linda Joseph/COMMUNITIES 64001 County Road DD Moffat, CO 81143 USA**

Feel free to contact us with any questions at communities@gen-us.net.

Thank you for your support!



Please Excuse the Possible Website Chaos

Migrating a magazine from one publisher to another is a more massive undertaking than it might appear at first glance. Specifically, migrating the website and all its complex elements is not something that can be done instantly. By the time you receive this magazine, we hope that the new COMMUNITIES website at GEN-US.NET will be fully up and running, with all the elements that distinguished the magazine website at ic.org. Complete back issue order pages, article index, article postings, easy-to-use subscription pages, individual-issue order pages, and donation pages—all of these we hope to have online and working well by the time you read this.

But there can be many a slip betwixt cup and lip, and we can't guarantee that the necessary work will be accomplished, and bugs worked out, on the schedule we're hoping for. If you visit GEN-US.NET and don't find what you are looking for, or it doesn't work for you, please contact us at communities@gen-us.net, and/or check back in a week or two. Thanks for your understanding!

“Pay-It-Forward” Subscriptions

If you or any other individuals or groups you know should be receiving COMMUNITIES (print and/or digital), but can't afford to pay for it, they (or you, on their behalf) can apply for a “pay-it-forward” subscription, available through the generosity of those who choose that option when supporting the magazine. Please send a message to communities@gen-us.net, along with the reasons you believe the requested recipient is a good candidate for such a subscription, and we'll make those subscriptions available as we receive funding for them. If you are

inspired by this model and can afford to contribute to support it, you'll earn the thanks not only of the magazine but of those who are able to receive COMMUNITIES because of you.

Back Issues Digital Access

For the first time, free access to all digital back issues of COMMUNITIES is now a part of every COMMUNITIES subscription. Please visit GEN-US.NET/COMMUNITIES for instructions on how to access these back issues. (We are not sure how long it will take to complete this part of the website migration/upgrade; we are hoping that this function will be available by the time you read this, but if it isn't, please know that it's coming.) Our complete searchable article index is also migrating over, making it more likely you'll be able to find the issue containing the article you're seeking.

Back Issue Print Orders

Per our agreement with FIC, the entire stock of COMMUNITIES back issues (more than 3000 copies total, of more than 100 issues still in print) is being shipped from the FIC office in Missouri to our new publishing base in Oregon. This move and website upgrade work may mean a gap in our ability to fulfill back issue orders, but we **hope** to be equipped to fulfill those by mid-January or soon thereafter. Please check the website for updates.

Contingency Plans

The magazine staff and GEN-US have created plans and budgets that we believe will allow us to continue our current format and frequency as we shepherd and develop the magazine over the coming years. Starting with a positive financial balance thanks to funds raised through our relaunch cam-

paign, we are committed to not spending beyond our means and, as insurance against radical measures like discontinuing the magazine, are committed to trying alternative measures instead, always communicated about with readers ahead of time and only as necessitated by finances (which we hope they won't be). These are measures that could reduce expenses if we needed to: printing some inside pages in black-and-white rather than color; reducing the page count of some issues; developing print-on-demand alternatives to our current magazine production method; or cutting staff compensation. But we're hopeful that the current format can be sustained! In fact, we plan to supplement it with at least one crowdfunded, print-on-demand book late in 2020—we'll let you know details as they develop.

Renewing Your Subscription

Recently, the magazine has been spending nearly \$2000 annually simply mailing out subscription renewal letters. We've identified this as an area of excess expense, and from here on out we will be sending **emails** and, if email reminders don't produce a response, **postcards**.

Please save us work and postage by responding to the email you receive! No letters will follow the postcard, so please act as soon as you receive your first notice. Thank you!

Relaunch Campaign

COMMUNITIES was able to migrate from FIC to GEN-US (rather than ceasing) only because of a successful fundraising campaign conducted among those on our authors' and advertisers' lists, and some others to whom word spread. We needed to raise a minimum of \$23,000 to cover existing liabilities (unfulfilled subscriptions and prepaid ads) and immediate relaunch costs. Thanks to more than 100 generous donors (listed on the back cover), we were successful! We are continuing this campaign to raise additional donations before our Spring issue, to allow us to operate according to our "optimal" (rather than "basic") budget and take more steps toward our goals, which include wider distribution of COMMUNITIES, an enhanced website, and subscription system upgrades, among other things. All donations are tax-deductible. Please visit gen-us.net/donate/magazine to learn more and to donate to this campaign.



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ONLINE ONLY

(links at gen-us.net/communities-online-only-articles)

Future Visions at Villaggio Verde

Etta Madden

At a spiritual ecovillage in Italy's Piedmont region, two long-time members reflect on work and transitions, both within their own lives and in their home community.

Sharing Knowledge Through Generations

Blake Wilson

At Little Permies Kids Camp, younger and older generations share the exploration of permaculture and earth-based living.

Passing the Torch from Indigenous Past to Communal Present in Hawaii

Emily Gleason

The Hawaiian islands were once totally self-sufficient, but modern inhabitants have become dangerously dependent on massive food imports and fossil fuels. Kuwili Lani and allied initiatives are looking to change that.

ON THE COVER



Solsara is, among other things, a non-residential community-of-practice based in western Oregon. Representing at least the third generation in a lineage of personal-growth workshops, Solsara focuses on the "practice of opening." Its

leadership includes both elders and younger generations, actively sharing and passing the torch (see solsara.net). Photo of workshop leaders/participants courtesy of Larry Kaplowitz.

COMMUNITIES

Life in Cooperative Culture

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Letters

COMMUNITIES

Editor's Note: *Over the last four months we've received numerous messages from readers in response to the prospect of COMMUNITIES' disappearance, and in appreciation of the magazine and what it has meant to them. We don't have room to include most of those messages here, but will share a couple below. Thank you again to everyone who has cheered us on and helped get us to this new publishing home!*

COMMUNITIES Magazine Stirs Memories

No more **COMMUNITIES** magazine? Is it possible? **COMMUNITIES** magazine hadn't crossed my mind for probably 30 years when the *Shadow Side of Cooperation* issue called to me from a passing newsstand. I picked it up, memories flooding my heart, flipped open the cover, and the first thing my teary eyes saw was "This could be the last issue of **COMMUNITIES** magazine!"

Back in the late 1970s and early 1980s I was a devoted **COMMUNITIES** reader and a volunteer **COMMUNITIES** copy-editor; by simple luck, the editor then was living in the same town as I. For years I dreamed of making the break myself, first visiting communes around southern Oregon, then in New England. I lived for a while—only two years, but when you're young two years feels like a generation—in an urban commune in a rust-belt town. We dreamed we had liaisons with rural communes in upper New England, and pictured ourselves moving en masse to the country when city life got too hot—as we were sure it soon would. My friends were all Hindu mystics and New Age dreamers, plus a few lesbian separatists and mushroom peddlers. The future looked so free!

But slowly it became apparent (slowly to me, anyway) that our little commune was drying up and would blow away in a puff of breeze called middle age. As Hemingway wrote about bankruptcy, social decay happens gradually, then suddenly. The couple who owned the fine old house we were living in and restoring went nuclear—nuclear family, that is. She started having children, he started a business, with paid employees, and the rest of us scattered to who-knows-where. Hard to remember I didn't understand that whoever owned the house had the veto power—but like I said, I was young. I left town not long after, went to college, started a career. I soon buried all thought of communal life and the memories of...of what? Of that betrayal? Of our fever dreams? Or just of who I was in those years?

In the long run I'm glad how things turned out for me—at least, I think so. The *Shadow Side* issue articles make clear that a communitard's struggle to root out our culture's pathology is a life-long and exhausting struggle. While our small towns and rural areas are becoming ever more ragged, urban life for professionals today is shamefully pampered. Of the communitards who had the courage to leave the city and who adapted to rural life, I wonder how their kids are faring. Are they indistinguishable from the put-upon local people, or has their parents' idealism helped them transcend? Have they migrated back to urban lives? Are they simple, or sophisticated?

In recent years when I've gone poking around in the beautiful southern Oregon commune country I've seen dismaying levels of new squalor, stunting addiction, people camped out in derelict trailers instead of living on the land—and new vacation homes that mostly sit empty. But maybe I'm just not looking far enough back in the hills.

For me, **COMMUNITIES** magazine and its rebuke to the machine of civilization was a great inspiration, the movement toward deurbanization my hope for reversing the world's decline. And 40 years on, I still wrestle with whether I simply wandered off the path, failed the test like H. H. in Hermann Hesse's *Journey to the East*. Or maybe instead

News from Our Partners

the commune world was crushed by the Reagan reaction, and left in its wake the debris of many disoriented and disrupted souls—sharing the fate of the Paris Commune in the 1870s, of the Sandinista state in the 1980s, of countless utopian gambles that have formed and dissipated ever since agriculture and urbanism walled us off from nature. Is it possible we might still find a way back to the garden?

Love,

Dan Littman
Oakland, California

Valuing COMMUNITIES

After receiving notice that COMMUNITIES was pausing publication, I got issue #184 and read it cover to cover in one day.

First off, thank you guys for making this effort. I know that the magazine has struggled with costs for years, probably from the get-go.

For me I have appreciated, and paid for, the unvarnished stories from community. When I visit communities and find they don't subscribe I know they are going to end up reinventing the wheel for not learning from others' experience. Everyone has the right to make their own mistakes. But this magazine has been so important in collecting and integrating the communities movement. The conferences are very important too.

I realize that the younger generation will use online resources. I want something in my hand to read and store as well as share. Being a seeker all these years, I still live happily by myself, and I still need the energy of the communities movement. I value its values. It is part of who I see myself as. I would mourn its passing. Once again thank you all for what you have made happen.

Pat Boyd
Washington DC

We welcome reader feedback on the articles in each issue, as well as letters of more general interest.

Please send your comments to

editor@gen-us.net or

COMMUNITIES, 81868 Lost Valley Ln,
Dexter OR 97431.

Your letters may be edited
or shortened.

Thank you!

Editor's Note: With this issue, we introduce a new column featuring contributions and news from partners who have pledged ongoing support for the magazine, and whose missions in the world seem allied with ours. Our inaugural partner is Paul Freundlich, whose years as COMMUNITIES editor and as a member of its publishing cooperative in the 1970s laid the groundwork for the magazine you are reading today. Paul has continued to contribute articles in the years since. We welcome additional partners; if interested, please contact us at editor@gen-us.net.

Announcing a New Blog, "Notes in Passing"

To friends, colleagues, and fellow travelers,

An ancestor of mine supposedly was an advisor to King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella, and then the Inquisition arrived. The scientific revolution to which my father contributed seminal work on plastics and nylon had the collateral impact of mucking up the atmosphere. Our lives unto our entire civilization rest on assumptions which, when tested by leaders infatuated with their own shadows, produce painful and potentially catastrophic outcomes.

And yet, after six decades of adventures in community, sustainability, and innovation—carried out through nonprofit organizing, film, video, and writing—my curiosity about what comes next remains high. The stories and anecdotes that will inform this Blog are based in my own experience, but touching on themes common to a semi-globalized humanity. As I seem to have learned a few things along the way, I hope the tale I'll tell is useful, with more than a dab of humor to lighten your journey. I invite you to share a dance which might well be a metaphor for life itself.

Please find the blog at exemplars.world/blog. (The first entry is "Persephone's Quest," at exemplars.world/2019/12/03/persephones-quest-post-1-of-a-weekly-exploration.) 🌿



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 contribute articles 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; email editor@gen-us.net. To obtain Photo Guidelines, email layout@gen-us.net. Both are also available online at gen-us.net/communities.

Advertising Policy

Please check gen-us.net/communities or email ads@gen-us.net for advertising information.

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 nor in REACH listings, and publication of ads should not be considered a GEN-US 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.

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.

Passing the COMMUNITIES Torch to a New Publisher



Chris Roth

Back in June, when we announced Passing the Torch: Generational Shifts in Community as the theme for COMMUNITIES #185, we had no inkling that the issue itself would mark the passing of a torch. But we're happy to announce that after the harrowing (to us, and possibly to you) news reported on page one of issue #184—“This could be the last issue of COMMUNITIES magazine!”—we have found a mission-aligned group excited to be the new publisher of this 47-year-old journal documenting the communities movement.

GEN-US, the United States chapter of the Global Ecovillage Network (and a fellow member with our former publisher, the Foundation for Intentional Community, in the Regenerative Communities Alliance) has agreed to be the magazine's new non-profit home. Six out of the seven members of the GEN-US Council have written for COMMUNITIES, including our second-most prolific author and former editor. All of them welcome the opportunity to work with the existing magazine staff (continuing in our roles with this new publisher) to help COMMUNITIES thrive moving forward.

We are very excited about this new collaboration, which promises to extend the reach of the magazine, as well as of GEN-US, more fully through the various networks to which we're connected. We believe this publisher transfer will allow not only the magazine itself but also both GEN-US (for whom the magazine will be its largest project) and FIC (now developing a new online platform connecting community-seekers with communities) to be more effective in the work we are doing, since it will allow greater focus on what we are each passionate about creating. And we anticipate continued mutual support between COMMUNITIES/GEN-US and FIC for one another's complementary efforts.

Reaching the point of producing a new issue of the magazine, under the imprint of a new publisher, with a delay of less than a month from when it normally would have come out with the previous publisher, was not necessarily easy. Those of us committed to relaunching the magazine spent weeks in each successive phase of the process that eventually led us to a formal transfer to GEN-US. We first explored any remaining possibilities within FIC, then searched more seriously for other interested groups, soliciting input, advice, leads. Eventually, after talking with enough people, we were led to what turned out to be the “match” we'd been looking for.

The magazine staff and GEN-US staff then spent many weeks in discussion, developing budgets/business plans and material to make the case for GEN-US to take on the magazine, and for others to support that transition. When the GEN-US Council and the FIC board of directors finally entered formal negotiations to transfer the magazine, and then reached an agreement, it was the culmination of several months of focused effort to find COMMUNITIES a new home—and not just any home, but one in which it would be a natural fit. All the while, we were also working on the issue you are holding in your hands (or perhaps reading on a screen), having faith that it would indeed see the light of day. The publisher transfer process delayed some parts

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10 weeks, Jan 6 - Mar 9, 2020

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30 hours instruction:
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BENEFITS OF SOCIOCRACY INCLUDE:

- Better meetings
- Getting more done
- Being better organized
- Feeling more connected to other community members, but only if everyone learns it, uses all its parts, and uses it correctly.

**"Your workshop was fantastic!
You are a master at taking
complex Sociocracy concepts
and making them simple."**

—Gaya Erlandson, Lotus Lodge,
Asheville, North Carolina

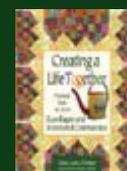
\$420 EARLY BIRD discount, till Dec 31
\$495 Regular Price, after Jan 1

COMMUNITY DISCOUNTS

3-6 people: 30% further discount
7-10 people: 40% further discount

More Info Here:

<https://tinyurl.com/SociocracyInfo>



diana@ic.org
www.DianaLeafeChristian.org

of the magazine production cycle, and it will take a couple issues to get fully back to our regular publication dates, but recovery was remarkably quick once the various elements of the transfer started to fall into place.

Along the way, we reached out to authors and other supporters who'd been closely involved with producing the magazine. We discovered that many of us had a lot in common—and that the possible absence of something important made its value to us even more clear. "You don't know what you've got till it's gone" proved itself truer than we could have imagined. We received impassioned pleas urging us to try to keep the magazine in production, and even wrote some ourselves, not wanting to lose the momentum necessary among its creators (including those who contribute articles as well as those who support it financially) to save the magazine from oblivion. One email to the Authors' list in mid-October read in part (edited slightly here for space/clarity):

The COMMUNITIES core staff is committed to keeping alive this 47-year-old forum for community storytelling, lesson-sharing, and exploration of diverse themes, challenges, opportunities, approaches, strategies, and insights related to cooperative culture in its varied forms. We have received messages of appreciation and encouragement from numerous people, ranging from communitarians, community-seekers, and aspiring community founders to communal studies scholars, activists in cooperative culture, and those leading more individual lives but nevertheless deriving inspiration, support, and guidance from what they read in COMMUNITIES. For some it has been literally life-changing, catalyzing their journey on a path that they would not have taken otherwise.

While its mission is ecumenical, it has nevertheless served as a kind of spiritual lifeblood for many people at different points in their lives, and has helped the broader public recognize the seriousness and relevance of the communities movement. It has been a way of sharing heartbreaks and joys encountered in cooperative living. It has been a way of recognizing that our own struggles are neither unusual nor pointless, but instead can contribute to a pool of shared wisdom; and that our successes and learnings can benefit not only us, but others with whom we share our stories, whether nearby or on the other side of the world. It has been a way for individuals and communities to reflect on their own situations and experiences, and grow from those reflections; and for far-flung individuals and groups to get windows into one another's worlds, and feel less isolated and more connected and inspired as a result.

It has also been a way for the magazine staff to feel a sense of purposeful connection with an extensive community of others also excited about this shared storytelling and educational forum. For us, the cessation of the magazine would be not just a "run-of-the-mill" loss (if there is such a thing) of work or project, but loss of something much greater: a community that we know wants to continue existing and that is inseparable from the creative endeavor of putting together every issue.

• • •

Fortunately, such soul-searching emails were replaced thereafter by a return to the creative endeavor of putting together this issue, and by the connective endeavors of creating an agreement between the old and new publishers and of reaching out to bring in the financial support needed to secure this transition. Completing both processes has been immensely gratifying, an experience of the power of community to achieve what no individual could manifest alone (in this case, the rebirth of COMMUNITIES).

As many groups profiled in this issue have discovered, finding ways of "Passing the Torch" can be vital in assuring that the flame of that torch does not flicker out and die. We've experienced that first-hand with this magazine, with countless people going "above and beyond" to assure that COMMUNITIES' own torch stays lit. May its flame continue to burn for many decades to come! 🐦

Chris Roth edits COMMUNITIES.



Chris Roth

GEN-US, New Home and Publisher for COMMUNITIES!

The Global Ecovillage Network–United States (GEN-US) is honored to welcome the COMMUNITIES magazine team to their new organizational home; and to serve as Publisher for this unparalleled journal dedicated to supporting communities in their co-creativity and resilience. The GEN-US Council commends the magazine staff for their years of service in publishing high quality, in-depth articles with vibrant photography, and providing networking and advertising opportunities for communities of all kinds.

Many thanks to all who have so generously supported the transition, ensuring COMMUNITIES continues! It goes on at the same quarterly frequency and high standards. GEN-US Council members have been subscribers, advertisers, donors, authors, and even past Editor. We look forward to stewarding this important community development resource well—and to contributing content relevant to creating regenerative communities, collaborative solutions, and education, so needed at this time of social and climate disruption.

Meet the GEN-US Council:

Linda Joseph, BSN, MSC—

Cofounder EarthArt Village, Colorado (1998-present)

Linda was involved in the planning and founding of the Global Ecovillage Network (GEN) and Ecovillage Network of the Americas (ENA) since 1994; has served on the ENA Council 1999-2011; GEN Board and Treasurer 2003-2013; GEN Elders 2014-present; GEN-US Council and CoLab reorganization of GEN North America (GENNA) and the Regenerative Communities Alliance (RCA), 2014-ongoing. Linda was editor/mentor for the prior Ecovillage Column in COMMUNITIES.

“I live in high altitude Colorado Rocky Mountains, in a small, rustic, off-grid cooperative community, inspired by all learned in the evolution of the ecovillage networks and key resources like COMMUNITIES every step of the way. I have great gratitude for Cmag’s contribution to so many years of my community life. I am enthused to be working with the ready, willing, and able magazine team, who’ve gone above and beyond during this transition to the magazine’s future. I’m invigorated by the many collaborative opportunities there are for informing, educating, activating, and connecting communities at this ‘great turning’ time.”

Daniel Greenberg, Ph.D.—

Auroville, India (2019) and roving

Daniel served on the Ecovillage Network of the Americas Council 2005-2015; GEN Board and President 2015-2019; GEN-US 2019 (2015-2019 ex officio). He is the Director of CAPE Consulting (Custom Academic Programs in Ecovillages); and Director, Earth Deeds. (See www.cape.consulting and www.earthdeeds.org.)

“I’ve loved COMMUNITIES since first coming into contact with it—1988—and have enjoyed contributing articles over the years on everything from children to carbon accounting to polyamory! I’m excited for Cmag to become more international and to connect more with the growing ecovillage network around the world! An amazing resource has just become even more vital in this time of transformation!”

(Alejandra) Liora Adler—

Cofounder Huehucoyotl Ecovillage, Mexico (1982-present)

Seed Group Cofounder of ENA 1996-2001; Liora has served on the ENA Council 1999-2013; GEN Board 1999-2003; was a GEN UN representative during GEN’s approval process for ECOSOC status, 2000. GEN US Council 2016-present and GEN Elder 2014-present. She is Cofounder and President: Gaia University International—2006-present; Board of Directors Global Village Institute for many years and ongoing; Cofounder: Capay Valley Regeneration Project, CA, USA. 2018-present; Board of Permaculture Institute of North America, and Ecosystem Restoration Camps International Advisory Council and California Council 2018-present.

“COMMUNITIES has been a significant part of my life since my understanding (after the turbulent ’60s) that community was the “propuesta” we needed after the “protesta.” Traveling the USA in 1978, COMMUNITIES Directory and magazines in hand, seeking the “right community,” we found in California the ‘community’ that later became Huehucoyotl Ecovillage in Mexico. The rest is history... Well done Cmag for the inspiration and practical skills you have shared, making community a reality for so many people.”

Giovanni Ciarlo—

Cofounder Ecoaldea Huehucocoyotl, Mexico (1982-present)

Giovanni was involved in planning and founding of GEN and ENA since the early '90s and has served on the ENA Council 1999-2014; GEN Board and President 2003-2011; as GEN UN representative during GEN's approval process for ECOSOC status in 2000, Coordinator of GEN UN events 2003-2011, and GEN UN support, since. Giovanni is a GEN Elder 2014-present; and on the GEN-US Council 2014-ongoing. Giovanni 'flew' with Global Ecovillage Educators for a Sustainable Earth (Geese), co-creating Gaia Education 1998-ongoing; Head of e-learning 2011-ongoing.

"COMMUNITIES has been a beacon of information, networking, activism, and inspiration for my community since the 1970s, when it was struggling to find its identity and home with the FIC. I have been honored to publish numerous articles in the magazine since the 1990s and have always found the issues relevant and influential in my thinking and decisions about community, ecovillages, and a transformational culture of cooperative living."

Lois Arkin—

Cofounder, Los Angeles Eco-Village (1993-present)

Founder and Board member of Co-op Resources & Services Project (CRSP), a resource center for cooperatives, 1980-ongoing, Lois has served as a founding member of the ENA Council, 1999-2013; GEN-US Board member 2014-present. Lois is a former Board member of Global Village Institute; Fellowship for Intentional Community, and Urban Soil-Tierra Urbana housing co-op, and has served the Beverly-Vermont Community Land Trust; and Los Angeles Intentional Community Summit. Co-author/editor of *Sustainable Cities: Concepts and Strategies for Eco-City Development*, Eco-Home Media; and *Cooperative Housing Compendium*, UC Davis, Center for Cooperatives Nominee, and Local Hero, KCET 2019. Lois is also a former editor of COMMUNITIES magazine's Ecovillage Column.

"Although diverse types of intentional communities have been trendy from time to time, the current era of planetary crisis calls out for these heretofore research and development laboratories to more publicly demonstrate higher quality living patterns at radically lower environmental impacts. COMMUNITIES has been telling their stories for decades, and whether from long ago or this month, the stories continue to be full of answers for the culture changes that must happen for a more resilient planet."

Diana Leafe Christian—

Earthaven Ecovillage, North Carolina (2000-ongoing)

Diana was on the ENA Council 2011-2013; GEN-US Council 2014-ongoing; GENNA Council 2014-2016. Author of *Creating a Life Together*, Diana has served as an international workshop and webinar trainer, consultant to communities, and communities conference presenter. She is an Associate Member, The Sociocracy Consulting Group; and former Editor, COMMUNITIES 1993-2007.

"COMMUNITIES is THE go-to resource for learning directly from longtime community veterans, founders, and those search-

ing for a community to join what it's like to live in community, found a new one, or seek one's ideal community home—for ecovillages, cohousing neighborhoods, urban group shared households, rural conference and retreat centers, income-sharing communities, rural homesteading communities, and more. From articles to columns to ads, there's no better place to get a direct, you-are-there sense of the vibrant international ecovillage and intentional communities movements today."

Nathan Scott—

EcoVillage Ithaca, NY

Nathan is Director of LEARN@EcoVillage Ithaca; and serves as a Senior Consultant to CAPE; he is Cofounder and Director, Global Climate Corps; and Senior Advisor, School of the New York Times. Nathan is currently a prospective GEN-US Council representative.

"COMMUNITIES has served as an incredibly valuable resource to a wide variety of constituents, from current and prospective members of intentional communities to students and researchers documenting the impact that communities are having on society at large."

Leonie Lylia Brien—roving

As a child, Lylia's parents moved with a group of like-minded people in 1984 to start a French community, La Cité Écologique Ecovillage in Québec Ham-Nord, where she grew up. In early adulthood, she helped spearhead the second La Cité Écologique community in New Hampshire, and trained in the many aspects of creating an eco-micro society, as well as traveling to gain certifications in Ecovillage Design. Lylia has been involved in multiple community committees including Human Resources, Finance, and Outreach, and served as Program Director for Ecovillage Institute; as a Global Ecovillage Network Ambassador and on the GEN-US Council 2016-ongoing; and GENNA Council 2016-2018. Catering food for her 130-person community and large events is a passion for over 12 years; Lylia is currently working with Littleton Food Co-op.

"In the time of environmental crisis, we have found the need of collaboration between all beings is crucial. COMMUNITIES has served for decades as a media to share information and highlight what it is possible to realize as a collective, and give a voice to pioneers in community living. I'm proud to support its continuity and important work to secure a sustainable future for all."

GEN-US is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt, charitable, and educational nonprofit organization. Our mission is to innovate, catalyze, educate, and advocate in global partnership with ecovillages and all those dedicated to the shift to a regenerative world. GEN-US serves as the fiscal sponsor for NextGENNA, GENNA, and the Regenerative Communities Alliance (RCA), bringing together a broad spectrum of partners whose philosophies and actions are devoted to supporting discovery, dissemination, and implementation of regenerative solutions for communities, and the planet.

Your donations are tax-deductible. EIN: 62-1793769. Thank you for your support!

Generational Transition and Communal Longevity

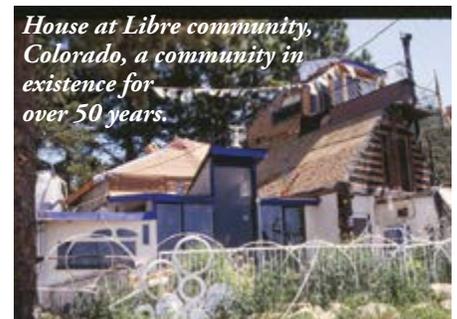
By Tim Miller



Shakertown staircase.



Martinsdale Hutterite Colony with wind turbines.



House at Libre community, Colorado, a community in existence for over 50 years.

The question of generational transition in American communities is inescapably related to one enduring puzzle: although most communities are intended to be permanent institutions, their lifespans in a great many cases aren't very long. Over and over, people with the highest ideals found intentional communities that turn out to be painfully short-lived. And often communal lifespans are directly related to changing generations. To put it simply, the children of communal founders, and others of the next generation in line, often are not interested in keeping the community going.

Trying to get a good handle on average communal longevity is a formidably difficult task. We have founding dates, or at least approximate dates, for a great many communities, but finding accurate dates of dissolution is much harder. Many communities seem to fade away; eventually someone notices that a community is gone, but no one has noted the date. It is safe to estimate, however, that the average lifespan of American communities

would be measured in (at most) years, not decades or centuries. A community that celebrates its 50th anniversary is the exception, not the rule. Some communal groups, such as the Shakers and Hutterites, are powerfully long-lived, but they are the rare exceptions to the rule of short existence.

So if there is a natural, innate human desire for community, why have the intentional communities of the last 400 years on the whole been short-lived? Developing an answer to that question tends to be anecdotal, but I will endeavor to provide a few generalized explanations.

Explanation One: Building is fun; maintenance is not. Communal memoirs that recount the spirit of the founding years usually bristle with energy. Starting a new community is full of great excitement. Such a venture is a daunting undertaking, with major issues of acquisition of property, financing the project, selecting and evaluating members, and many more. These pioneers are traveling to a new land and new way of life. Often there is land to be acquired, and then there are buildings to erect, a food supply to establish, and other essential tasks to complete. But maintaining what has been started seems to be less exciting than building it in the first place. Those who raise money for charitable causes bemoan the fact that donors like to support new initiatives and shy away from paying for routine operations, and a similar dynamic seems to be alive in the world of intentional communities.

Explanation Two: Community founders are typically fairly young, and as they age, they and their communities become less attractive to new young seekers of community. As I have suggested just above, the young energy that seems ideally suited to the building of community will not endure forever. And age discrimination is a reality in our culture. We no longer live in the traditional tribes that value their elders; a great many young people simply do not want to move into a community with an aging population. I once had a student who became a novice sister in a Catholic religious

order. Her fervor was great, and she had excellent contributions to make to that well-established and prosperous community. But before long she left, and when I asked her why, she said that the other members were simply too old—she had very few peers, and thus she felt adrift. Perhaps she could have joined others in creating a new community, but what happens then to the old one?

Explanation Three: Too many leaders, not enough followers. People interested in community are often cultural visionaries, and they often have strong personalities and leadership instincts. They often have distinctive and specific visions of community and want other people to unite on the basis of a particular vision. Sometimes that works well, as people find themselves drawn to a particular communal vision or to the person expounding it, but in many cases it doesn't work out because those who might join a community are busy promoting their own visions. The back pages of COMMUNITIES magazine are testimony to this problem: every issue has listings of proposed new communities that could take off and fly if only people would unite around this or that particular plan.

• • •

What is the shape of communitarianism as we move forward? No one answer seems to fit. The largest communal movement of all, that of the Catholic religious orders, has been declining in numbers for many years for a variety of reasons, and barring major reforms in the Catholic Church (specifically, allowing its clerical and monastic members to marry), the decline seems likely to continue. On the other hand, our second-largest communal movement, the Hutterites, is thriving, with some 50,000 members in North America (the majority of them in Canada) living in some 500 colonies. Our longest-lived communal movement on American soil, apart from the Catholic monasteries, is that of the Shakers, a tradition that inescapably seems near its end, although it is possible that one or two members may survive to see the 250th anniversary of the arrival of their forebears from England in 1774.

So I am reluctant to generalize or to offer any summary wisdom. I do have confidence that while many communities have short life spans, the communal impulse and form are not about to disappear. I'm reluctant to predict just what that future communal world will look like, however. Although the basics remain the same—people living together on the basis of a common purpose, practicing some level of economic sharing—the details are elastic. Such innovations (or at least modifications of earlier communal patterns) as cohousing and ecovillages seem well poised to be a prominent public face for the intentional communities movement well into the future. And in a society that is aging as never before, communal retirement housing was growing substantially as the 21st century dawned. A full-scale cohousing project or even a shared house with just a few people is far more attractive than a typical nursing home, so who wouldn't try to pursue that type of community?

In the early years of the 21st century some other variations on the old theme seemed to hold some promise for the future. The largely Protestant movement known as the New Monasticism has captured much of the sacrificial spirit of the great monastic institutions of the past, but with adjustments suited to the times: members can be married, and they don't have to pledge to stay for a lifetime. The plague of homelessness in the most prosperous societies in history is finding a communal response in little villages of the homeless living in tiny houses. That won't end homelessness, but it will help. There is no reason not to think that other such innovations will continue to arise.

Communitarianism has proved attractive to a small but highly dedicated group of Americans throughout our common history. It doesn't seem destined to become America's standard form of economic and residential organization, but neither does it appear to be disappearing. As long as idealists arise among us, communes will be in our midst. 🌱

Note: This article is a revised version of an excerpt from my recent book, Communes in America, 1975-2000 (Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 2019).

Tim Miller is a research professor of religious studies at the University of Kansas and a historian of American intentional communities, with a focus on the communities of the second half of the 20th century. His most recent book is Communes in America, 1975-2000, published by Syracuse University Press in 2019. An earlier volume in that series is The 60s Communes: Hippies and Beyond. Tim is also author of The Encyclopedic Guide to American Intentional Communities.

Counting Communal Longevity

Tracking the longevity of intentional communities is a formidably difficult task. A great many communities do not leave good, accessible records. In some cases we can identify, or at least estimate, community starting dates, but finding dates of dissolution is much harder, since many communities just kind of drift away and don't have clear termination dates. Eventually someone notices that a community is gone, but when did that happen?

To try to figure out just how many communes survive for a generation or longer I turned to my database of 3,000 American communes that have appeared since the early days of European settlement. Using a rather flawed measuring stick to identify communities reaching or approaching generational transition, I counted communities that had been active in three or more different decades, and eventually found just over 800 of them. However, that number is misleading. Many of my long-lived communities are student housing coops, which usually have steady turnover in membership and don't really face generational transitions, even though they may last half a century or longer. Many more are religious communities, such as Buddhist monasteries, where, again, the resident practitioners tend to come and go even as the institution continues.

But the bottom line remains: a solid majority of communities do not survive for long, or at all, past the founding generation. The problem of transition, to say the least, has not been solved.

—TM

Passing the Torch at Magic

By Jen and Hilary Bayer



Second generation fellow Robin Bayer (aka mom!) manages our habitat stewardship, working to change hearts and minds as well as the landscape.

We're 20-year-old twins born and raised in Magic, a residential service learning community. As we've grown older we've wondered increasingly about futures we might shape here and elsewhere.

Today about 20 Magic residents ranging in age from 15 to 83 share three detached homes on a half-acre just two blocks from Stanford University in Palo Alto, California. Each year hundreds of people in a larger service community volunteer, learn, and contribute through Magic to further common good.

Magic is rooted in an "almost comically archetypal and naive '60s vision of peace and love." Central to that vision, however, is an element many at the time found, and some still find, incongruous or unappealing. That element is commitment to science—behaviors by which we make better predictions. Magic founders shared a desire to learn together how to apply human ecology, which they term "science of the pertinent," to be healthy, to cooperate, and to care for the Earth.

Leadership Structure and Decision-Making

In early years Magicians aimed to create a level social structure. Over time, those with longer tenure—currently 10 to 40 years—became a core group of "fellows" who embrace, "From each according to ability to each according to need," in dealings with each other.

Fellows shoulder responsibility for strategic decision-making. They formulate community standards, manage Magic's public service projects, and provide continuity.

Residents who stay for shorter terms—often linked to academic programs or career moves—retain greater personal autonomy, share day-to-day tasks like food service and cleaning, and organize outings and social events.

Over time we've codified a flexible "3-C" approach to decisions, weighing competence, past contribution, and commitment into the future as we listen to each other. Though fellows lead and guide, in some situations—purchasing and installing an electric vehicle charging station is a recent example—a relatively new highly qualified resident may wield more influence than all of them.

Generational Shifts of Leadership

During our lifetimes we've observed founders grooming potential future genera-

tions of leaders including us. Today David, 73, is stepping back. Jeff, 63, Robin, 52, and Hilary, 51, are transitioning to senior leadership.

Their ascendance is having a cascading effect. Andrew, 30, has lived at Magic for almost a decade, half of it as a fellow. He now coordinates community members in making labor contributions, something formerly in Hilary's domain. A youthful Gen-Z cohort—Harper, 15; we, Jen and Hilary, 20—who've been growing into leadership from an early age also are finding new opportunities.

Though David remains active and others still seek his counsel, we often hear him say, "This is your decision; you'll live with consequences far longer than I." Implicit in such letting go is trust in younger Magicians' competence and in our desire to ensure his well-being.

As we make these transitions we've encountered bumps in the road. Recently, just weeks after Jeff retired from his job in the solar industry with intent to engage more fully at Magic, he launched into planning a thorough renovation of our landscape. Other fellows wanted him to join in addressing what they considered more urgent matters. When David delivered that message bluntly, Jeff felt "shut down."

In discussions that followed fellows examined David's, Jeff's, and others' fearful behaviors: seeking control, projecting imagined slights, avoiding conflict. They analyzed deference, allegiance, and other group dynamics. They reassessed personal and shared goals.

Resolution included Jeff's guiding others in planting six new fruit trees, his organizing Magicians to lay wood-chip-over-cardboard mulch to obviate need for annual weed suppression, and our deciding together a list of plants that we're now installing as seasonal rains begin.

Watching fellows who'd lived and worked together for so long navigate this conflict, we became even more aware that the work of community is ongoing. When we stopped to think about it, we appreciated their commitment to science and loving.

Divide and Regroup

Four fellows have left Magic. Two remain close friends; another harbors ill-will. Jeff departed twice for eight or nine years to found another community and

then lived with two successive partners. Even during these leaves he was a stalwart supporter and regular participant. He's now been at Magic continuously the past 15 years.

Fellows' continuing work to achieve harmony and their comings and goings are food for thought. Today we contemplate mostly imminent choices. Shall we stay at Magic or depart for college or other experience? How can we learn and serve here and elsewhere? In the future, we'll likely draw on what we've learned watching fellows and other residents as we decide to whom we want to make what commitments.

A Recurrent Leadership Issue

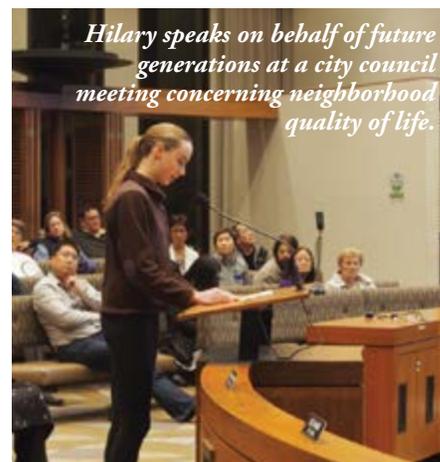
By distinguishing between fellows and other residents we at Magic have explicitly defined a hierarchy. Some residents harbor visions of a more exact egalitarianism and want to realize those here and now. Others view our hierarchy as a way to preserve stability, be faithful to purposes mandated by Magic's public service charter, and respect those who've labored decades to earn Magic's reputation for service to common good and to fund purchase of homes we occupy.

Over our lifetimes tension between residents holding these differing views has waned. Residents express growing appreciation for fellows' contributions, competence, and commitment. An ever larger fraction are here at least in part to learn how we've created and sustained Magic. Fellows devote more life to apprising prospective residents of Magic's philosophical underpinnings, history, and current social structure. Today they provide applicants Magic's orientation manual and other writings, and encourage them in interviews to think carefully about whether they're comfortable with the fellow-resident distinction.

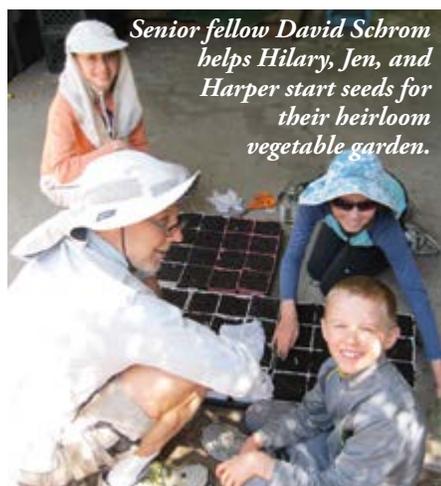
Still we sometimes misperceive how well we'll live with this structure. In easy cases everyone acknowledges discord and cooperates to resolve differences or distance gracefully. In more difficult ones a dissident acts overtly, or worse covertly, to test community



Resident Luigi Nardi hosts a screening of a documentary about his mountaineer brother.



Hilary speaks on behalf of future generations at a city council meeting concerning neighborhood quality of life.



Senior fellow David Schrom helps Hilary, Jen, and Harper start seeds for their heirloom vegetable garden.



Second-generation Magic fellow Robin Bayer (first row, third from right) and 40 volunteers celebrate a successful morning fieldwork session removing noxious invasive plants from oak habitat.

Photos courtesy of Jen and Hilary Bayer



norms: removing shoes before entering, being respectful of others, keeping sinks and counters clear of dirty dishes, contributing labor cheerfully, on schedule, and to established standards.

In these circumstances fellows and residents who embrace the prevailing Magic ethos aim to assist outliers in recognizing that all benefit when we enthusiastically pull together or make a smooth transition to living less closely. We recall only a handful of the hundred or so residents with whom we've lived and who've since moved away who will receive any but a warm welcome if they return to visit.

Young Blood, New Ideas

Of course adherence to old ways in a changing world can be an impediment to successful adaptation. Fellows are assiduous in seeking evidence on which to base continuing evolution of Magic.

At Magic we provide a nightly common dinner for all residents and guests. For many years we left serving dishes available for latecomers. After a young resident who'd been here only a short time expressed concern about health risks and provided research to support his views, we began refrigerating leftovers promptly.

For more than 30 years we had signs on toilet seat lids requesting, "Gentlemen, please sit to pee." Five years ago a 20-something resident suggested we change those to be less gender-specific. Fellows proposed, "Ladies and gentlemen, please sit to pee." Younger residents responded with, "Friends, please sit to pee," and that, plus a "Thank you" suggested by an elder, is what's there today.

While leftover refrigeration and toilet seat lid sign changes may seem trivial, the latter, especially, lies within a realm where people today often generate more heat than light. With commitment to evidence, reason, and common good we resolved them amicably and to everyone's satisfaction, and took advantage of younger generation knowledge and insight to honor better our commitments to health, cooperation, and stewardship.

Leadership by Example

From as early as we can remember parents emphasized the importance of what each of us did in every moment. We heard more times than we can count about the proverbial butterfly whose alighting on a flower triggers a series of events culminating in a devastating tornado a continent away.

Biking has turned out to be a way in which we've led from an early age. Magic fellows are dedicated bicyclists. We rode in a bike trailer, then in bike seats, then on trail-a-bikes until we began riding solo at three.

In the two years we went to school we biked every day, even cold, windy, rainy ones. When

people said, "I can't believe your parents make you do this!" fellows congratulated us for grabbing what advertisers pay for: attention to our message. Fifteen years later with the number of Palo Alto students biking to school doubled, we feel good thinking we may have played some part.

After we left school following first grade, we interacted more with Magic residents. When we were 11, we challenged two in their mid-20s to race us up a road that climbs 1300 ft. in three miles. After we won, one of them, a former Stanford pole vaulter, began training again to be able to ride with us.

As we grew older and paid more attention to adult conversation, we heard one after another Magic supporter or program participant compliment people at Magic for "walking the talk." Leadership, we saw, is "showing a way by going ahead." We were learning to "Be the change you want to see" by watching fellows do just that and emulating them.

Chop Wood; Carry Water

Everyone at Magic shares in maintaining and operating it. We and our brother have lent a hand for as long as we can remember, learning along the way and lifting responsibility from others.

As pre-schoolers we served by answering short-term residents' and visitors' questions, gardening, and cleaning. As we've gained more skills we've built and repaired, researched and taught. By the time we were teens each of us was cooking community dinner one night a week. Now when cooking we sometimes train new resident cooks.

We've also grown our roles in Magic's public service projects. We started planting and caring for native oaks on local recreational open space when we were toddlers. Over the years we accumulated sufficient expertise to be regular crew members, then crew leaders, and now also spokespeople.

In 2018 we wrote an article for *Pacific Horticulture* describing Magic's work with oaks, and a few months later we presented the project at an International Oak Society conference at UC Davis. After the conference a group of 40 traveled 100 miles to Palo Alto for a tour of Magic's plantings and lunch at Magic, where they peppered us with questions about community liv-

ing and the oak project. In moments like these we feel like fellows.

Questions and Choices

The transition to growing responsibility and leadership we outline here seemed natural and unfolded smoothly within Magic. For the past four years, however, we've thought more about how to continue it elsewhere as people have asked with growing frequency and intensity, "Where are you going to college? What will be your career?"

Magic and its immediate surroundings are populated by people with exceptional amounts of schooling, much of it within institutions with worldwide reputations. Most of these people assume that we'll aim to attend famous colleges and graduate schools and enter one or another profession.

Watching peers strain to excel and "create a compelling story" to improve chances of admission to elite schools, and interacting with people who've cleared this hurdle one, sometimes several times, we wonder. Though we love to learn and to be around others who do, we're surrounded by people at Magic and in the larger Palo Alto-Stanford community who help us learn. We've also the resources of the web. This seems like a lot, but do we need more?

People tell us we "must" have a college degree. We ask, "How can this evidence ability to contribute better than a record of effective work for common good?"

They tell us, "College is a great experience! Everyone should have it." We look at overburdened college student mental health services and rising suicide rates and think, "Really?"

They say, "The world is becoming more cutthroat. You'll fall behind unless you grab every opportunity." We see how parents' degrees have been tickets to privilege and ask, "How much privilege do we need to live well? How much can we contribute by sharing opportunity, and how much by striving for power and increasing our risk of being recruited into what Anand Giridharadas terms "the elite charade of changing the world"?

At the same time, we look with apprehension at a burgeoning human population, a shrinking resource base, and growing hazards including climate destabilization, nuclear weapons proliferation,

and emergent and resurgent infectious disease. To live well how much shall we pursue narrow self-interest, and how much common good?

We wonder about opportunities at Magic, outside it, or in combination with it? Do we want to become fellows and fulfill that level of leadership and responsibility? With whom will we share it? In an era of increasing ecological volatility, will we and others want to move Magic? Or divide it? Or evolve it in ways we've yet to foresee? How will we realize aspirations to form sustained peer friendships? To contribute?

So far we've worked to keep options open. As we neared college age we took standardized tests, a new experience for us. We've completed a few college-level courses in classrooms and online. We've also continued to do things that we enjoy—music, art, recreational sports, being in nature—with little regard to their worth in the eyes of college admissions officers.

We've also initiated a public service project, Silicon Valley Barcode of Life (svbol.org). Through it we're addressing what we consider to be one of the most pressing issues of our times: bioannihilation, the sweeping away of diverse life, from tiny insects to huge redwoods and whales, through extinction and massive population reduction.

In a little more than a year we've been able to inform hundreds of people about the importance of biodiversity, threats to it, and ways to protect it. We've learned and taught about how DNA "barcodes," unique identifiers derived from short sequences of genetic material, are used to catalog and track biodiversity. And we've generated DNA barcodes for hundreds of species, some of which we're the first to sequence.

Reflecting upon what we've learned and how we've served through SVBOL we ask, "How can we do this better? Can we grow it to be a right livelihood within or outside of Magic? Shall we do something entirely different? If we stop, who will do it?"

What Next?

We've enjoyed myriad opportunities to learn and to serve as we've grown up within Magic and participated in passing the torch. We also want to explore beyond it.

Whatever we do next, we're grateful for what we've been given and we aim to use it to benefit all. Wherever we go we'll carry lessons learned in a community where those who led made loving their goal and science their means. 🐦

*Jen and Hilary Bayer have grown up at Magic (ecomagic.org). They love being outdoors enjoying and caring for nature. For more than 15 years, they've participated in Planting for the Second Hundred Years. Recently, they've initiated a biodiversity conservation project, Silicon Valley Barcode of Life (svbol.org). They've written an article for COMMUNITIES previously (*Coming of Age in Service Community*), one for Pacific Horticulture (*Magical Thinking*), and letters to the editor published in the Palo Alto Weekly and Stanford Magazine. They've been featured in Palo Alto Weekly and Bike Intelligencer stories.*



Here we are (second and fourth from left) with the fellows, our brother (far right), and our grandma (fourth from right).

THEN AND NOW: Generational Shifts at Heartwood Cohousing

By Sandy Thomson



We are in the midst of a generational shift. The first child born at Heartwood was the last of the founding children to graduate from high school this year. Mac and I had three kids in the time it took to create Heartwood. My third, Joe, was born in my bedroom six months after we moved in. We were in the honeymoon stage of community living. The community lit candles when I went into labor and as I was laboring I could look out my window and see the candles burning in the windows of my neighbors. It was a great support. For six weeks after he was born I never had to leave the community. The community was there for me and for our family. It was bittersweet to have a graduation party for our “little Joe” in our common house this year at a time when we aren’t sure what we will become as a community.

Our dream was and still is to be a multi-generational community. All the children who were here in the beginning and those who have come since then, who grew up in an environment of love and support and incredible outdoor freedoms and responsibility, have now left home to continue their education or lives outside of Heartwood. I am incredibly proud of each of them. They will make the world a better place. But I am also incredibly sad.

What now? What do we do now that our young kids are gone? How can the community encourage new families to move in? How do we support the adults who have grown and supported each other for all these years as they age? The parents

of the children that have grown up in Heartwood don’t want to leave. It’s their home. They have deep relationships and roots here. I don’t have the answers and I want to know how to make a smooth transition.

It feels like a loss and a new beginning at the same time. Heartwood will never be exactly how it was in those first 20 years. Things will be and are different. The families who have come to check us out lately have different ideas about what it means to be a parent. The freedom our kids were allowed growing up in Heartwood seems scary to them. They have less time and often both parents work. The cost of living in our area is challenging. But they yearn for connection and community like everyone else.

I think we are uniquely set up to welcome families. We have rebuilt the SS Ponderosa, an amazing play structure in the middle of the community, in anticipation of kids laughing and playing in the village green again. There are many retired people here who love children and can help out with some of the challenges a family faces when both parents work. We have a safe place for children to grow and many eyes to look out for them. We are surrounded by nature, which I think is missing in many of the lives of both children and adults of this next generation.

Heartwood is on the verge of a big transition and it is exciting to think that we can offer what we have to another generation of children and adults. I would love to hear what it is that millennials are looking for in a community. We are committed to

attracting families and making Heartwood a place where they feel loved and supported. But it is a different time. I have been thinking of this and even the old cohousing tag line “creating an old-fashioned neighborhood in a new way” probably doesn’t make sense to the young people who are coming to community now. What is an old-fashioned neighborhood to them? I’m sure it’s not what it is to me. So for them it’s not something old-fashioned they yearn for, but something new they have yet to experience. That is scarier than trying to recreate a feeling or a way of life. They will have to have faith and vision to see what cohousing can bring to their lives.

I worry because it seems they have less time to put into the community than we did. When we moved into cohousing we had several households where only one parent worked. The other parent helped take care of kids, and not just their own. They planned celebrations, cooked common meals, participated in work parties and meetings. Some of them worked together to teach in a wonderful home-school cooperative for several years. Will this new generation be able to contribute to the work of the community? Can those of us who are retired help them to contribute by caring for their children while they participate? Will it be a win/win for families and communities, with retired people helping young families because they have time and they want to help raise the next generation in a way that will benefit humanity? Will this mutual support help bring a sense of purpose and hope to the older generation? Young families can bring joy and laughter to a generation that has been through a disheartening time in the evolution of humankind, and older members can bring experience, wisdom, and day-to-day help to the younger generation.

It occurs to me that what we, the boomers, were looking for was a 1950s kind of feel and environment, where kids ran free

in the neighborhood, and stay-at-home moms supported each other and created a community. I think what the next generation of cohousers will need is more like the 1930s, when grandparents were an active part and a necessary component of making the family work. It was a mutually beneficial arrangement: grandparents helping with childcare, parents helping out with eldercare. I read a book recently about Denmark and why it rates as one of the happiest countries in the world. One thing it has adopted is a “bonus grandparent program.” Grandparents adopt a family and help out with childcare, homework, driving kids around so parents are less stressed and older people have more of a purpose. This seems like a win/win for everyone. Maybe we can do something like that for the next generation. Maybe the tag line for the future is something like: “Heartwood Cohousing—where young and old come together in a mutually supportive way.”

How will we make this transition? What shifts in behavior and perspective will we need to make? Is community something the next generation even wants? Those are some of the questions I am thinking about now. It feels like we are on the brink of something exciting, but we will need to change and grow to see it flourish. Someone said at our last community meeting, “The only person who wants a change is a wet baby”! Change is often hard but necessary. Here’s to what’s ahead. 🐦

Sandy Thomson is a mother of three and a founding member of Heartwood Cohousing (www.heartwoodcohousing.com) near Durango, Colorado. She is passionate about children, community, and being outdoors in Nature. She has lived in Heartwood for 18 years, since its beginning, and is actively involved in gardening and farming, celebrations, administering the community’s common meal program, and just being a good neighbor.

What shifts in behavior and perspective will we need to make? Is community something the next generation even wants?



Photos courtesy of Sandy Thomson

Morninglory Farm Community

By Robbie Anderman and Christina Anderman



Morninglory is part of the back-to-the-land movement that began in the late '60s and flowered in the '70s. We actually were the latest “wave” of immigrants into this unceded Algonquin Territory. Many of our neighbours’ families have been in this area for over 110 years. They were enticed away from their families in Europe with offers of “free land”...if you can survive the cold, cold winters, the swarms of black flies and mosquitoes in the spring, and the short growing season on thin, often rocky, soil. They say that when those pioneer settlers first saw the land, those who could afford to, left.

We were the latest to give it a go. Many of our fellow back-to-the-landers left after a few years, letting go of their dreams of a life in the country, at least this area of the country. Of the several small community and commune farms that sprang up, only two others are still communities living on the land together.

And it is “living on the land” together that is a key element in our community. Morninglory has long had a tradition of requiring people to live on the land for all four seasons before they can ask for permanent membership/residency. It’s like the land selects the people and the new people and the land have a full year riding around Sun on Earth together before they/we know whether compatibility exists.

It’s funny, some of the emails/letters we receive from people who want to live “off the land”...we write back suggesting they likely are living “off” the land, while we are endeavouring to live “on” the land.

A key feature of Morninglory is that we’ve always been “off the grid.” No connection to the mass electricity grid. It’s cramped our possibilities in the outside world, yet it has not cramped our style. Thankfully, solar panels have come down in price and most residences have some power. Landline phones arrived in 1984, internet in the late '90s.

The enduring and thriving of Morninglory would not be without the support of fellow back-to-the-landers over the years in the neighbourhood. Thus, as we write this in the middle of February, we are amidst planning to celebrate all those people, living, dead, nearby, and recently or long ago departed from the area. In the spirit of community and cooperation, this event will also be a neighborhood collaboration. We are inviting everyone to come forward in the local community hall to either sing or speak their stories of coming back to the land, or what their experience was like as they saw their family’s and neighbours’ farms getting bought and moved onto by folks from “away”—folks who were quite different, “foreigners” in a way.

Our Beginnings (Robbie)

Mike Nickerson and I were invited to visit this area in the winter of '68-'69 by a friend to show us contrast with our city lives. We saw more stars than I'd ever seen

and were informed land was inexpensive, since the provincial government was buying old farms for next to nothing to get people off the land and into the towns. The article about us in the first *Mother Earth News* helped bring even more people to the area.

We found the “right place” for us and moved onto this land in late March, dragging our bulk food and gear up the quarter-mile driveway through thigh-deep snow. We were both around 19-20 years old...and lucked out with a great-tasting dug water well, a stream, a view, log barns and house, etc., not too far from the highway, and only six miles from Killaloe, four miles from Wilno.

We had been living in Toronto for a few months attending Rochdale College (an experimental college) that encouraged self-directed learning. We decided that Morninglory would be like Rochdale, a place to learn about living on the land in the country and welcomed other people who also wanted to learn this.

The open door into the community lasted about nine years. Mike, at age 20, had built a three-story, 41-foot-diameter geodesic dome with help from visitors. Then he decided to move along into other interests, leaving the door open. I had traveled a bit and came and went while others did as well.

Conflicting opinions arose in the late '70s and Mike offered to sell his half share to the largest group who could agree with each other. I joined a group with four others who wrote up agreements satisfactory enough to qualify to be a land trust. Mike and I had realized right from the start that there was no way that any one being could actually “own” land and all the beings who manifested themselves on the land. This land trust is set up to legally clarify and state that this is the true situation. We can't get mortgages, yet we can't lose our

homes if someone gets sued.

Ten years later most of the trustees had moved along and others had replaced them. With no real plan, and most focus being on survival in a challenging and beautiful environment, we slowly emerged and evolved into a community. Coming from many different backgrounds and experiences, we had one mission in common: living/surviving on the land and sharing land. None of us had grown up sharing land, and ideals met reality.

At one time in the early '80s, we were sharing all meals and growing organic food together. Then dietary opinions differed, and gardening methods differed, and we were on to separate meals, except potlucks, and we divided the gardens amongst the gardeners. Still, we helped each other when needed and shared many resources.

Christina's Morninglory Story

Thoughts on our intentional community ecovillage experiment:

I consider living in intentional community on this 100 acre piece of hilly, rocky land a life project of Robbie, myself, and others. We are learning to live in harmony with other people and with Mother Nature while learning to cooperate for mutual benefit. We are also aware that this is a big pioneering experiment. I see it as a search for a way of life that avoids war, destruction, inequality, and the desecration of Earth and all Life. Instead we aim to finds ways to listen to, mimic, and co-create with Nature and Spirit and each other, to

bring joy, peace, cooperation, worthy work, beauty, fulfillment, and abundant life to all.

On our path in this search, we have experimented with many ways that were not mainstream: cooperative land-sharing, cooperative food-buying, ride-sharing, consensus decision-making to govern ourselves, off-grid homestead living (with no electricity or with renewable solar energy, and with woodstove and passive solar heating, and utilizing outhouse/compost toilets), natural home birth for our children, attachment parenting, unschooling/homeschooling, growing much of our own food organically, using natural herbal and preventive health care, and building our own homes (gradually becoming more energy-efficient, well-insulated, solar-oriented, solar-electrified, and using more natural materials than the mainstream average).

How is our experiment going? I think that “village-making” takes generations, and at nearly 50 years we have experi-

We aim to finds ways to listen to, mimic, and co-create with Nature and Spirit and each other.



Photos courtesy of Robbie Anderman and Christina Anderman

enced three generations cooperating together here so far. We have celebrated many successes (one of which is that we are still here after 49 years!) and many challenging times (telling someone, after much deliberation and discussion, that they have to leave the community is never easy even though it is for the best interest of the community).

Some examples of achievement I celebrate and am proud of in this pioneering experiment:

The time I, who have always had a great resistance to conflict, got up my courage to talk to Gary about the necessity of discussing problems with people instead of retaliating when you don't like what they did. This was after he turned our children's trampoline upside down because he didn't like where we had put it. He listened to me and did communicate a little more after that.

Often people who move here learn completely different life lessons than they had in mind on arrival.

A few of our Talking Feather Circles for conflict resolution, and the facilitated weekend I organized for conflict resolution have really gone deep for everyone and resulted in true inner growth and more community harmony.

The creation of our Mission Statement, our five Land Trust Agreement documents, and our Values Statements, after hundreds of hours of consensus decision-making work by the whole community over many years.

The building, in 2010, of a new, two-storey community "Cider Barn" to better house our old oak apple/pear cider press plus a new hand-operated small batch juice press, and a large, hydraulic juice press, with storage upstairs. This was built on the stone foundation of the original pioneer drive shed barn, and has two floor drains which drain the wash water out to the gardens on two sides of the barn. The water to wash the presses comes from a 200-gallon rainwater tank mounted on a tall base, allowing fairly good gravity pressure for washing the juice presses after use, and for watering the south garden.

The dry fruit pulp press-cakes are moved after pressing into the compost piles in the garden below, and the baby fruit trees that later sprout out of those piles are carefully moved out to become rootstock for our middle son Ethan's tree nursery business.

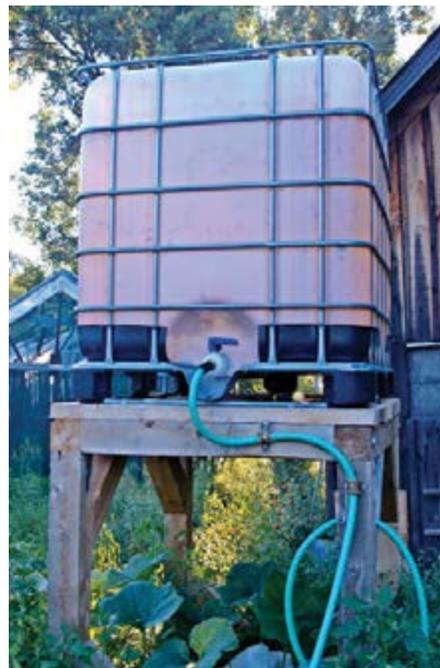
We paid for this barn partly with a grant, partly with our own community money, and partly with some family inheritance money. It was built mostly by hired local builders and partly by community members, with 90 percent of the lumber being sourced from harvesting trees on the land. The building has housed and will house many happy years of juicing by Morninglory and the surrounding neighbours, with children flocking in each autumn to help sort, pour apples, watch the juice fountain out, and especially taste the rich fresh juice.

Nowadays (Robbie again)

We meet as a community nearly every Sunday for two hours, followed by a potluck. Some of these meetings are work meetings. The roles of facilitator and secretary rotate around so everyone gets practice at these arts. All decisions are by consensus.

We have a stable membership at this time, though several folks are "off" doing the life lessons that call to them, and return regularly. Our population thus moves between 17 and 30 humans. We are not looking for more members, as the land can only support this amount of people, yet we do welcome visitors from time to time as life allows. Sometimes we're all too busy to host another person living on the farm, even for a day or two.

Which brings up the fact that we all call Morninglory our home and have established a policy that each new person on the land has to have a host who is a member. We're





not a museum or a tourist attraction, though some people seem to think we might be.

Some folks call us a commune. To me that implies a shared economy. As we have separate economies, with each contributing a monthly maintenance fee to keep up our shared resources and to keep the approximately one mile of driveways plowed in the winter, I prefer to call us an intentional community.

We encourage each other to clarify our personal boundaries, physically and emotionally, and to check with each other for consent when appropriate, or unsure. Many forms of relationship have been experienced here, though not by everyone. Monogamy, celibacy, polyamory, same gender, and likely more than I am aware of. We've also had to step in as a group and draw boundaries for visitors who have their own ideas of what people here are like.

We have been comfortable with a "clothing optional" possibility at our swimming pond and most anywhere anyone is comfortable. Bugs and cold limit this a lot.

Beginning around 1990, many of us began celebrating Winter Solstice and Summer Solstice as a group, though rarely as a whole group. We started sharing Winter Solstice around a BIG White Birch tree in the forest near the stream. Soon after that, our sons burst in one day saying they had found the perfect Winter Solstice Spruce tree in a clearing in the forest northwest of the old main garden. What was 10 feet tall when we first gathered there is now well over 40 feet tall and still sees all ages of humans decorating the tree each Winter Solstice with natural material decorations, food for the birds, prayers, songs, acknowledgments of season changes, and statements of thankfulness.

As a cofounder, what I've noticed most have been the changes in the landscape. Trees are a big part of our lives here on Morninglory. When we moved here, there were approximately 70 acres of open pastures and fields. Since then the landscape has changed: now there are maybe 10 acres clear and the rest have grown in with about 35 different species of local indigenous trees. To this we have also added several non-native trees that have qualities we felt were advantageous to us and to the local environment. From all this we get to enjoy the added oxygen and beauty, especially when they dance in the wind.

Seeing trees that were my friends grow and then die has brought my own mortality home to me. I am doing what I can to pass along responsibilities and to encourage others to pick them up. It is so gratifying when this happens smoothly.

I've also witnessed many changes in the people who are coming. I imagine that people, and I've named over 180 who have lived here for a week or more over the past nearly 50 years, come here to learn something, as was our original intent. Often it seems they learn more than they imagined, or even completely different life lessons than they had in mind on arrival. Some stay longer than others. Some people put down deep roots. I used to think I was maintaining the farm for the people who would be coming. Recently it dawned on me that these are the people I was preparing for. Whew!

Most people here really like to garden. Some love working with fruit trees and bushes. Most all of us love dancing and either play or love listening to live music, Handcrafting and building are also arts we love. Natural medicines are the usual path, including herbs from trees. Nine children have been born on the land. Two of our members have died on the land.

We have reached out into our local community to help with issues that are dear to us. Plus we have put on events for the public in town, and written articles and many letters to the local newspapers. We love being alive right now, on Morninglory, on Earth, living in community.

An update from October 2019: Our Celebration of 50 Years of Back to the Land in the Killaloe area went very well. We filled the hall with people, music, stories, photos, and fun. The mayor sent her regards and two other town Councillors came and spoke. More people would have joined us, except the 1.5 foot snow storm blowing outside the Hall was a bit daunting for some folks.

Three months later we hosted many "alumni" and friends on the farm for three days of celebrating 50 years together on the land.

Challenges arise and we join together to work them out towards harmony. It's not always easy. Yet it is worth doing. We're so blessed to be able to live here now. 🌱

Robbie Anderman, father and grandfather, loves snowshoeing, making musical instruments, and playing flutes and mountain dulcimer with friends. He helped work on the original Woodstock Festival for six weeks. He's also the author of The Healing Trees: The Herbal and Edible Qualities of Northeastern Woodland Trees (healingtreesbook.com), 2017.

Christina Anderman, mother and grandmother, teaches Senior Fitness classes as a volunteer in Killaloe. She invented Cool Hemp organic fair-trade non-dairy frozen desserts, from hemp seeds, that were distributed for 10 years across Canada. She loves dancing, singing, and making nourishing food for people.

For more information on Morninglory, see www.morninglory.ca.

Passing the Torch at Innisfree

By Nancy Chappell and Julie Freeman Mullins

Nancy:

I am retiring after 27 years at Innisfree Village, a lifesharing community with adults with developmental disabilities. Most of those 27 years, I lived in a house with residents either on our 550 acre farm in Central Virginia or in one of a few town houses in Charlottesville. I came to Innisfree as a single mom with my son, Galen, then 2 ½ years old. I wanted to live in community for the sake of my son and wanted to participate in this particular lifesharing community for both of us. I believed in the saying, “It takes a village to raise a child.”

I arrived as a Residential Caregiver or in Innisfree-speak, simply a volunteer. We have coworkers (the adults with intellectual disabilities whose families pay tuition for them to be here) and everyone else was considered a volunteer. Volunteers came from far parts of the globe and were expected to live in a house and cook, clean, provide social activities, assist with personal care, and generally manage the household. We were given room and board, a small monthly stipend, and health insurance. Some volunteers had been here a while and were running our workstations of weaving, woodworking, bakery, kitchens, and gardening.

In addition to running the house alone or with other volunteers, I eventually made my way to the office where I became the Volunteer Recruiter in 1995. Except for a few years as the Medical Coordinator, recruiting has been my main responsibility here. I believe I recruited, processed, welcomed, and trained (with

help) about 350 volunteers into our community. This is a great way to make friends from all over the world: India, Germany, Sweden, Romania, Mauritania, Mozambique, France, Greece, Finland, Kazakhstan, Russia, Ireland, and the list goes on.

As I approach my 65th birthday, I am planning to move on out and do other volunteer work, travel, and relax, as long as my health and savings allow.

What has changed since I arrived in 1992?

- The dirt roads have all become paved.
- There are now staff in addition to the volunteers—it is a constant struggle against becoming top heavy.
- We have added these workstations: farm, herb garden, art studio, community house.
- More than a dozen residents have passed away.
- We are more professional and of course technology has changed everything.
- Every house has been upgraded, a few torn down, and there are a few new ones.

At the risk of sounding like an old fuddy-duddy, it seems harder to attract the idealistic volunteers, who have been our backbone, to come and serve for a year. I see a few societal changes that might account for this:

1. American student debt has become so unwieldy that most college grads cannot afford to volunteer for a year.
2. The internet has offered so much competition for volunteering: one can easily find hundreds of options.
3. We humans seem far more complicated and carry more baggage than I can recall from past decades. I will leave it to social scientists to figure out why depression and anxiety are being treated at alarmingly (to me) high rates these days.

I seem to find change a little harder to embrace in my 60s—probably a normal piece of the aging process.

In passing the torch, I have been very lucky in that we started the process early. Innisfree has known my retirement plans for a year or two. We got started early in the process of seeking my replacement and I was given an equal place in our leadership team in the advertising and choosing my replacement. It was December of 2018 when



we chose Julie Freeman Mullins as our top candidate. She was able to start in February of 2019—an amazingly generous overlap of five months. Teaching Julie the aspects of my job made the end time very precious as I was able to tell many a story of my time as part of Innisfree Village. In the last month, I was able to clean out my space in a leisurely way, be on hand if questions arose, and watch as Julie was able to very capably take my position and make it her own. The process was smooth and pain-free even though bittersweet at times. Now it is time for the “next generation” at Innisfree Village and I wish you many years, Julie, filled with all the warmth, challenges, and smiles that Innisfree has to offer.

Julie:

Until 10 months ago, I had never heard of a community like Innisfree Village. When I found the job posting for a volunteer recruiter online, I knew that it was my next career step. Having been a volunteer in various capacities over the years, I was excited, yet somewhat apprehensive about my new recruiting role. When I began my training with Nancy, I once again knew that I was in the right place. I felt like a sponge, absorbing all that I could, learning new skills, dreaming up new ideas. Nancy was always patient with my questions and would brainstorm with me about future possibilities. I knew that Nancy’s expertise was invaluable to my training and a sign of my hopeful success after her retirement. It was comforting to know that she supported my new ideas and was confident in the role I was developing for myself. In just a few short months at Innisfree, I knew that this was more than just a job, it was my journey in finding where I belonged as part of the community, and it has been a blast!

Nancy’s background also helped to add an extra layer of understanding and interconnectedness that defines the unique values of Innisfree Village. It helped me realize the need to develop innovative strategies to recruit, engage, and support volunteers. My time with Nancy has allowed me to keep moving forward, through the twists and turns that change requires of us, respecting the knowledge of those before us, and building on that foundation for a successful future.

Undoubtedly there will be challenges along the way. In recent years, it has become more difficult to find individuals who have the time to volunteer. More people are looking for short-term, local opportunities. Another trend is that most young millennials are now, more than ever, focused on volunteering, but they are instead seeking “more adventurous” options overseas. Another issue has been turning away possible volunteers, simply because their home country has limited the number of visas they approve for entry into the US. One solution to both of these issues has been in partnering with other volun-

teer organizations in the US and overseas. These groups work as intermediary organizations, finding young people seeking long-term volunteer opportunities. These partnerships have proved invaluable to recruitment and I look forward to continuing these successes for years to come.

The joys, thankfully, far outweigh the challenges. Witnessing the endearing and meaningful connections developed between the residents and our current volunteers helps inspire me to continue my recruiting efforts. The future is bright for Innisfree Village, and Nancy’s support and legacy will live on in me until it is my turn to pass the torch. For now, I will continue on my path that finds its way to the beautiful community of Innisfree Village. 🌸

Nancy Chappell joined Innisfree Village in 1992 as a single mother of one son. Previously she had done a variety of volunteer positions in Chicago, Belfast, and Sierra Leone as well as earning a B.S. in Geography from Temple University. She is currently new at retirement and planning some more overseas adventures.

Julie Freeman Mullins joined Innisfree Village in February 2019 as the volunteer recruitment coordinator. Her previous experience includes over 18 years in nonprofit camp ministries in East Tennessee and Georgia. With a B.B.A. from East Tennessee State University and a graduate of the Rel Maples Institutes for Culinary Arts, she strives to use her education and experiences to be a positive influence in the world. She is so proud to be part of Innisfree Village and is excited for what the future holds with this organization.



Photos courtesy of Innisfree Village

Handing Over Twin Oaks' Garden Managership

By Pam Dawling

After 25 years working in the Twin Oaks vegetable gardens as a major part of my life here, with over 20 years as the manager, I tackled the difficult question of when to hand on the role. I love growing vegetables! Obviously I couldn't continue until I dropped dead in the broccoli patch! It's not about whether I could putter around as an 80-year-old, it's about how to crank out produce to feed 100 people year-round, training and supervising community members almost every day. I had become exhausted physically, mentally, and emotionally! Clearly it would serve the community better to make a planned transition and leave the role with someone younger. In the farming world this is a current hot topic—how can farmers pass on their farms, especially when they are not handing them on to their children? I have no regrets about retiring when I did, and Brittany, the new manager, has hit her stride! Two years after the transition, I can happily say we were successful.

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In April 2016, at the age of 64, I started seriously thinking of retiring as garden manager. I was becoming more aware of how tired I was, mentally and physically. I had been waiting for the perfect right person to come along, but it wasn't happening. Twice there were people I would have been happy to hand over to, but they had other plans for their lives. I decided that it was time to retire and let the right person grow into the job, rather than waiting for the perfect, very experienced person to offer to take over!

I did some careful thinking, reading of self-help books, websites about retirement, and material for farmers passing on their farms. I thought about which garden tasks I'd be interested in continuing with and which I definitely didn't want. I posted a paper asking for some help in thinking it through, and decided to ask for a Clearness Group to help me tackle my big questions. A Clearness Group is a group of friends appointed to help a focus person (who is unclear on how to proceed in a big concern or dilemma) reach clarity on whether to move forward with a matter, wait, or take other action (see atlan-taquakers.org/_site_pdf_docs/clearness_committees_and_their_use.pdf). The idea and method come from the Quakers (Society of Friends). My Clearness Group met twice, a month apart, and in between I met with the Garden Full Crew (the six people who worked most in the garden, and more importantly, shared responsibilities such as leading the shifts, joining in the planning and organizing, sharing the care of the hoop house and the seedlings in the greenhouse in spring, doing specific off-shift tasks like rototilling). After my second Clearness, I met again with the Full Crew, because we still had things to talk about. Then we followed our plan, and I retired!

For my Clearness Group, the Garden Crew, and the Community, I listed my Reasons to Retire:

1. I've been garden manager for about 20 years. I'm tired of trying to keep all the plates spinning, covering all the gaps, fixing all the problems. It's stressful and takes a lot of mental energy. The day-to-day reality of being garden manager is no longer much fun.

2. The costs and emotional toll are too high to continue for much longer. I'd like

I decided that it was time to retire and let the right person grow into the job, rather than waiting for the perfect, very experienced person to offer to take over!

more time for myself, and energy for friendships and for serving the community in other ways.

3. The work is physically demanding and I am past the peak of my physical abilities (strength, flexibility, resilience, stamina). I have heel pain and arthritis. I ache.

4. I feel dispirited by the community's recent shortage of energy for the garden. Being garden manager is a large task; it's only OK if the support is sufficient.

5. I'm tired of being so professional—"performing" for every shift, setting my personal feelings aside, being "on," giving it my all.

6. I'm very aware of the increasing gap in age and experience between myself and almost all the other crew members.

It is less fun for me to work with so many new people and so few experienced people.

7. I feel very tired of member turnover and of teaching new people and supervising. Teaching is not my vocation. I get grumpy, my patience is short. I don't want to be running "gardening school" or "gardening therapy"!

8. I haven't got enough "pioneering spirit" left to cope with climate change.

9. I took on extra work (writing a gardening book) a few years ago to help pull the community out of austerity. I'm tired of doing so much extra. Sometimes I feel resentful.

10. I could do a better job of my writing and speaking work if I wasn't also the garden manager.

11. I don't want to be paralyzed by my current inability to see a way to retire. I want a plan, not a panic. That is, I don't want to wait till I go bang!

And my Reasons for Not Retiring Yet (some are about How It's Difficult to Retire):

1. I do enjoy growing food, and working outdoors. I don't want to lose all my opportunity to work in the hoophouse, the greenhouse, or the garden.

2. I do enjoy planning and organizing, trying for continuous improvement. I enjoy research, learning new things, trying them out.

3. It's a high value to me that the community has healthy homegrown food.

Hoophouse worker transplanting spinach Tokyo bekana.



Wren Vile

Planting garlic in November.



Brittany Lewis



Alexis Yamashita

About Twin Oaks Community

Twin Oaks is an intentional community of 100 people living on 500 acres in rural central Virginia, sharing values of cooperation, nonviolence, egalitarianism, and feminism. We are income-sharing, work-sharing, cost-sharing, and mistake-sharing. We live together and work towards our goals of greater economic and environmental sustainability. We are secular, but spiritually diverse.

Since we were established in 1967, we have organized our work and decision-making in a decentralized way. Managers of areas, whether income-earning (like our tofu business) or domestic (like the garden), work within money and labor budgets set by the community, to provide specified products or services for the community. Managers are responsible for recruiting, training, and supervising workers for their area; deciding work priorities for that area and organizing the work to achieve those goals; allocating the money to cover the tools and supplies for the area; and dealing with unforeseen challenges affecting the area. We pool our labor, and one hour of management time is rewarded at the same rate of one labor credit per hour as one hour of showing up and following directions. To the surprise of some people who don't live here, it can be hard to find people willing to be managers. Our situation is rarely one where younger people are clamoring to take over the managementships.

We are seeking visitors and new community members who are interested in community living, perhaps including garden work. We offer regularly scheduled tours and visits, and are looking for new members. (See www.twinoaks.org.)

Hoophouse worker harvesting mizuna in January.



Wren Vile

Twin Oaks gardener with lettuce.



Wren Vile

How can I make the transition as painless as possible for the crew?

4. It's important to me that T.O. has a solid focus on self-reliance, rather than just earning and buying.

5. I still do a *good* job at it, even if not as good as I once did.

6. I don't see an obvious successor, and I doubt one will show up.

7. I'm not sure how to make an effective and graceful transition. In that way it's easier to postpone retirement!

8. I'll find it very hard to bite my tongue when the new managers make decisions I don't support. I don't want to make life hard for my successors.

9. Staying here while giving up the managership will be hard, but I don't want to go away for an extended period.

May 2016 Clearness

In May I invited a small group of people who knew me well, were able to speak their minds respectfully, and didn't currently work in the garden. I wanted their thoughts based on what they knew of my

strengths and challenges. Questions I wanted to consider: Should I retire this winter? If not, when is the best time? How can I retire gracefully, and make the transition as painless as possible for the crew? Will I have to take a clean break for a season, or can I work in the garden without being a problem for the new manager(s)? Could the Clearness Group offer strategies for biting my tongue, which I recognized I would need to get better at?

My Strengths and Challenges

The six of us in the Clearness Group met twice. At our first meeting, my valiant friends commended me for retiring in an organized fashion, listed my strengths (being clear, strong, documenting our work, and being well-organized). The group asked me to name my patterns that are helpful and those that are in my way, when I consider retirement.

I'm good at focusing on something else when I need to turn my attention aside. It is hard to accept that people aren't stepping up to grow all our own food when it is possible. I feel resentment about people not doing their share. I feel sad that garden is smaller and less integral to community at the end of my watch than it was in my prime. I get grumpy when I'm tired and things are not going according to plan. The group predicted that my biggest challenge would be to "bite my tongue" and not interfere. Other challenges they could foresee included how to let go graciously, how to pass on documentation, and getting distressed about "why don't people refer to documentation." If someone can say, "I forgot, sorry," that is easier for me.

What is my Worst-Case Scenario (Catastrophic Thinking)?

A crop fails due to something the crew could have done but didn't. Or I see in the moment that the honcho is making a wrong choice, and that's *really* not the time to discuss it! Worse: the community changes, gets away from taking care of itself, gets into more of a work, money, buy it type of community, not what I want.

Contingency Plans and Mantras Suggested by the Group

Plan for future available time (so as not to be over-conscious of every garden activity)! Be prepared for bumps, learning curves, chaos, even hell. Plan for dealing with sadness, disappointment, frustration, resentment, and dismay. Don't carry the burden of things I can't control. Put whacky ideas in the whacky ideas bucket. Praise, don't

criticize, Don't gossip or vent in public, Don't roll my eyes. Be kind to new crew.

What will it be like if people really don't do it as I would, or do something I know won't work? Ask, "Do you want to hear my ideas?" Maybe they will. "Here's why this didn't work last time." "If it were me, I'd do this, but it's up to you now. I'm letting go." "I don't have a good feeling about this because Could we do instead?" "That's quite a problem you have." I still have to let it go afterwards. Can I have my say and then step back?

Have "reminder phrases" for handling difficult situations; mantras for myself. "New managers are a type of weather system, outside my control." "If X happens here's my plan...." "It's not my job any more to try to make it all work." "I won't be the person dealing with the consequences."

Concrete Suggestions, Next Steps

The Clearness group made concrete suggestions, such as the winter being a good time to retire, or else mid-July, before the fall planting. The biggest step is to say you're doing it. If you don't leave, no one will step up. Be upfront about being worried about stepping on toes. Then everyone knows and can deal with that.

Identify designated venting people for stress relief; be prepared for moments of sadness. Have a crew person who is the person to go to when you see something amiss. Is there a person on the crew who could have some intervention role? Have a phrase for people to say when they want you to back off. (We didn't formally do these last two, but I think it worked OK.)

Say what parts of gardening you'd like to continue doing. Maybe have your own small garden, or join a different garden project like our Seed Growing business. Don't go to meetings, because people keep looking to you for leadership. (Maybe people would speak up who don't usually because they think you might not like their ideas.) Don't ask to be a full crew member for a year or so.

If I can "hold my tongue," the next managers might be more willing to consult me. Maybe they need to make their own mistakes. Do they want consultation help, managing help, nothing at all? I don't want to lurk, or to have people feel like I'm lurking.

By the end of the first Clearness, I'd pretty much decided I would retire the next winter, if I could make that work for the crew. I told the Garden Crew before announcing it to the community as a whole, as I wanted them to hear it directly from me and not via a rumor mill.

Changes would need to start happening within the next month, to get the transition

underway. This could mean even more work for me; how to be prepared for that?

I wrote a letter to community on June 10, explaining my decision and who the new managers would be, and letting them know to expect a smaller garden and the need to buy more produce.

Two Meetings with the Full Crew in June

Interleaved with the two Clearness meetings, I met twice with the five other members of the Garden Full Crew—my pool of future managers—the more-experienced gardeners, who took on extra responsibilities, such as managing shifts, sharing some of the organizing, and doing extra solo tasks outside of shifts.

I told the crew I was serious about retiring as garden manager in the winter 2016/17, and that I wanted to hear what they thought would be the best way to go about it. Who would be the manager?

**If I can
"hold my tongue,"
the next managers
might be more
willing to consult me.**

Gathering the sweet potato harvest.



Nina Gentle

Two Oakers weeding kale.



Photo courtesy of Twin Oaks Community

What would be my new role?

I said I didn't actually want an extended time away at this point. Staying home while giving up the managership will be harder in some ways. But I have plenty to keep me busy. I'll remind myself that the garden is not my responsibility any more. If the crew needed me to take a clean break from the garden for a while, in order to make it work, I'd do it.

I admitted I might find it very hard to bite my tongue when they make decisions I don't support. I am committed to doing my best to do that. I don't want to make their lives harder.

I don't want to be a lurking spider popping out every time I think the web is disturbed. I would like one of you to offer to be the person I can talk with if I'm seriously worried about how things are going. I don't want to be randomly bugging everyone.

I'm concerned about treading on their toes, and anxious I could get grumpy and bad-mannered if I'm worrying about how things are going. I'd like us to agree on a warning phrase to tell me to back off. I do not want us to fight, especially in public.

I am a bit worried that if I'm still around, it will be tempting to some of them to look to me to continue more involvement than I want. I'm committed to doing my best to give training in good time, and sort out the files before my retirement date.

I wanted to be clear with the crew and all the community and not feed a rumor mill. I intended to be a good team player to the end, and work towards an orderly handover. I wanted each crew member to be able to get any training or info from me that they'd need to take over the management. Although we would need to go through the normal process of advertising the job vacancy, I was pretty confident that the



Watering hoophouse transplants in October.

Wren Vile

community would be overjoyed if there were members of the current Full Crew willing to take it on.

I asked the Full Crew:

1. Which of you are willing to be part of the future Garden Management? Are you thinking of a solo manager, two co-managers, a team, or what?

2. I think that stepping down in early spring 2017, after the winter garden planning would be best, but I want to hear when might work best for the rest of you.

3. How can I retire gracefully, and make the transition as painless as possible for the crew?

4. You will need to decide how you want to handle this. Can we plan a step-by-step transition, so we don't leave anything out or get too stressed? Monthly meetings? Training sessions? Previewing (or post-viewing) shifts with honchos? What training format does the crew want?

5. I want to be available as a resource when my thoughts, ideas, suggestions are wanted and not otherwise.

6. If dynamics with me are difficult, maybe someone could be an intermediary.

7. The transition has to work for both me and the crew.

8. How do you see my role after retirement? Gone? Mentor-on-request? A phased withdrawal? A garden helper? Will I need to take a clean break for a season or more, or can I work in the garden some without being a problem for you?

9. Are there particular loose ends you'd like me to tie up?

10. Are there things I want to do that you don't want me to?

11. Other things you are hoping I'd do?

12. Are there other aspects of retiring that you want me to think about?

I Spelled out Some Tasks I'd Be Happy to Continue if it Worked for the Crew:

1. Winter crop planning 2016/17.

2. Hoophouse day (I'd willingly do more than one day), and hoophouse meetings.

3. Greenhouse (seedlings) work in the spring (I'd willingly do more than one day).

4. Transplant shifts, one a week if after dinner, two if before dinner.

5. If you grow them, paste tomato string-weaving once a week, by myself if necessary.

6. Seed crop harvesting and processing. If the crew decides against growing watermelons and paste tomatoes, I might be interested in growing a small plot myself, on garden land, for seed sales. I could do it as Outside Work, perhaps, and the income from sales would go into my Outside Work fund. [I haven't done this.]

7. Helping new managers figure out what to do if you ask for help. Being a resource if you ask.

8. Possibly special projects, either research or production, at your request.

9. Possibly helping with big pushes, e.g., tomato harvests, when you post a note on the Today board.

I Listed the Things I Would Stop Doing:

- Honchoing garden shifts.
- Working on the main garden shifts in 2017, maybe longer.
- Participating in garden meetings.
- Making agendas and task lists.
- Weekly communication with Cooks, Food Team, Food Processing, tractor driver.
- Dealing with feedback (complaints) from people about garden.
- Recruiting for crew; talking with crew who are not meeting the job description (our expectations).
 - Ordering supplies and cover crop seeds; keeping us within our budgets.
 - Fixing broken equipment, or getting things fixed.
 - Running irrigation; setting out drip systems.
 - Dealing with vegetables in storage.
 - Trapping and killing pests like groundhogs; figuring out what to do about deer and doing it.
 - Being here for all of May, June, and August; only taking summer vacation in the last two weeks of July.
 - Keeping all the plates spinning; being the person where the buck stops.
 - Doing the jobs no one else wants to do.

At the first Full Crew Meeting the crew gave their initial reactions and we discussed who wanted to be part of the manager team.

Brittany said she did, and that she prefers that I let them make mistakes—it's easier for her to learn that way. Wren expressed her interest, saying she wanted meetings/tutorials. The other three were not available for management, either because they were planning to take extended time away or because they had already taken on a heapload of other responsibilities. Two other main garden workers were not available for management either.

It was generally agreed that we'd need to downsize the garden, and tell the community in good time. I said I'm generally happy to be asked questions, knowing what people want to know. Would it be better if I avoid shifts and meetings? Would it be OK if I do some solo tasks? Brittany said yes, two others said I could also work on their shifts (although I haven't taken them up on that for the first two years).

I added that I am committed to doing my own work to make a successful transition. I'll do my utmost not to gossip about how the new managers are doing. I'll work on my own Stuff. I won't encourage others to bitch about new managers. I'll be loyal.

At the second Full Crew Meeting one week later, Brittany and Wren agreed to share the manager role, and we agreed the transition will start immediately and Pam will stop being manager March 1, 2017 after the winter planning. The planning will be to design the garden the new managers want! Pam will be more of a technical adviser for that, not pushing her preferences. Retirement in spring fits with budgeting as well as with planning and starting a smaller garden.

We made a list of what aspects to focus training on. It included gardening principles; planning and spreadsheets; budgets; ordering supplies; how to choose cover crops; cover crop seed inventory and orders; when to use rowcover; hoophouse main-

Pam's Happy Retirement List, October 2016:

Live, Love, Learn, Leave a Legacy

- Engender a smooth transition between me and the new managers; be a good team member to the end; give every Full Crew member the training they want; maintain a supportive approach to my successors.

- Plan for how to spend my time, re-examine my skills: look for short-term work projects, not a new career; list and replace the important parts of my garden manager job; volunteer, mentor, continue learning; become more politically active beyond Twin Oaks.

- Keep a sense of purpose: write my second book; continue the bits of garden work I enjoy, as long as the others are agreeable to that; find other plant-growing opportunities; serve Twin Oaks in other roles.

- Pursue three-and-a-half hobbies; spend more time on vacations and conferences; enjoy free entertainment.

- Continue to live within my means; maintain my happiness; stay physically healthy.

- Focus on things within my control; abandon perfection.

- Maintain a sense of humor; keep alive culturally; enjoy being; cultivate social and emotional support.

- Practice gratitude, compassion, generosity, and kindness; look for the good in experiences and people.

- Prepare emotionally:

- List my hopes, dreams, regrets, and resentments.

- Decide on my boundaries around being asked garden questions by the crew, by other Oakers.

- Recognize that I have no control over the relationship of the crew to the garden; prepare strategies for difficult times; write and learn reminder phrases for those times; expect and prepare to deal with sadness.

- Ask other retirees for tips; get support for listening and strategizing, for venting if needed; reconvene the Clearness group in the fall?

tenance; setting up drip systems; dealing with bugs, nematodes and other pests; greenhouse seedlings work January-May.

We decided to have a party for my retirement, at the hoophouse.

In September, I wrote for myself. I was feeling sad, with a sense of loss. The productive garden I had worked so hard for could not stay the size it was. The experienced and enthusiastic crew I had hoped to work with long-term and gradually transfer work to had moved on. I was definitely “rusty” of being the energizer bunny, teaching new people, including a monthly group of visitors with variable interest levels. I was burned out from trying to keep the garden productive in the teeth of a revolving cast of workers. I made lists of Hopes, Fears, Resentments, and Regrets, and then one of Needs. It helped settle my spirits. I read some self-help library books and websites about retiring, even though my situation was far from the mainstream one they covered.

After Retirement

The first season after I retired I did sometimes have to curb my desire to offer unsolicited advice. I tried really hard. I did occasionally “rescue” little disasters-in-the-making (badly leaking hoses, rowcovers blown open) but I also walked by some things that would have short-term bad consequences. I did feel sad about the vegetables they decided not to grow that year, and the ones that didn’t produce, even while I empathized with the need to cut back. I did a little bit of moaning and eye rolling with a few close friends. But I never once had any regrets about retiring, which was a relief. I did find myself defending the new managers when others complained about aspects that didn’t turn out well. I answered lots of questions about gardening!



A Twin Oaks crew weeding spinach.

Wren Vile

I was kept occupied by writing my second book, *The Year-Round Hoophouse*, and by going to conferences to give workshops promoting my books. I enjoyed starting my days with a slow cup of tea before even leaving my room. I got politically active again and joined the newly formed Indivisible Louisa. Amongst other things, we did door-to-door canvassing, which was initially hard to do, although I think my experience of giving workshops helped me appear outgoing with strangers. I joined Spread the Vote, a group doing voter registration and restoration of rights to ex-felons. I finished my bed quilt, started maybe 12 years earlier. I joined the Twin Oaks Economic Planning Team. (For years I had turned down all requests to serve the community in other roles, as I had no spare time.)

I plain did less work, and found I had more time to chat with people on random occasions. I like this more than the super-focused garden manager I was previously. I did have to make a point to get outside on the days when I had no garden tasks, and I did have to shift to eating less, now my lifestyle was more sedentary. I have maintained my work in the hoophouse and the greenhouse, but I have not yet wanted to ask to work on garden shifts again.

Wren left the community during that first year, but fortunately Brittany decided to become the solo manager. The second season was easier. I think we all gained confidence that I wasn’t trying to ghost-manage the new manager. Everybody’s horticultural skills improved, and I was even sometimes able to offer carefully worded advice. It was easier to have discussions about possible reasons to do things one way or another. 🌱

*Pam Dawling has lived at Twin Oaks Community (www.twinoaks.org) since 1991, after 18 years in intentional communities in the UK. She worked for 20 years as the manager of the T.O. vegetable gardens, helping feed the community year-round from 3.5 acres. She has written two books, *Sustainable Market Farming*, and *The Year Round Hoophouse*. She writes a weekly blogpost on her website: www.sustainablemarketfarming.com.*

Taking On Twin Oaks' Garden Managership

By Brittany Lewis



I had joined the Twin Oaks garden crew in 2011 as a new member, working under Pam and others in the beginning. In 2013 I became more deeply involved in leadership myself. The leadership team knew Pam was thinking about retiring, and so from time to time, some of us imagined which of us would take over from her. I never imagined at those times that I would be one to take over, so it was a little bit of a surprise when she made her official announcement. It was clear to me that I had the right intersection of willingness and experience, so I volunteered. At that time, two of us volunteered to be co-managers, I think neither feeling like we could shoulder the job alone. It's certain that I didn't want the job, but I cared about the garden, I loved the work, and I couldn't stand aside doing nothing while the job went unfilled.

The initial transition was eased by long notice (one agricultural season) in which Pam trained me and my co-manager in all the details that yet evaded us. We tried to learn everything we'd need to do it ourselves, and Pam was deliberate in taking the time to pass the information on, instead of doing things herself. Wren and I were able to support each other, both as students and as co-managers. Other crew members gave us crucial support, even though they were not bottom-lining the

responsibilities. When Wren did eventually leave the community and I became solo manager, there were a few years of gradual transition behind me, during which I'd gained in knowledge and confidence. Each year, I understand another process or another spreadsheet column more fully; I internalize some new important thing about managing people or managing time. In retrospect, there isn't a discrete edge between Pam's managership and mine, no stop/start break, but a series of slow changes.

My emotions were a large presence in the transition process. From the beginning, I had a fear of everything crashing and burning. Pam had so much more experience than we did, and more of a passion for the work as well, so our taking over felt laughable and hopeless at times. What if we turned out to be utter failures? Sometimes I projected that stress outward onto Pam, becoming irritated with her. I might not like something that she was asking us to do, and I might not do it, or I might do it and grumble about it. There was definitely a temptation, as a new manager, to spring out in new freedom and change everything! Finally we had the power, now that Pam was officially out of the way! I don't think we actually wanted to do anything rash, but our "out with the old" attitude was born out of the stress of this transfer of power and responsibility. To manage my stress, I had a personal mantra: "It's not going to be the same as when Pam was manager, but it's going to be fine. We're going to make mistakes that she wouldn't make, but it's going to be fine." That self-talk really helped me in the first year, and variations of it help me still.

Building in a formal emotional buffer also helped in my stress management. Early on, I let Pam know that I didn't want her on work shifts with me, a topic thankfully initiated by her. I did not want to be watched closely or criticized. I knew I would make mistakes, and I much preferred to have space in which to make them and learn from them. I do not regret asking for that space, and I am so grateful for the work Pam did to make that space. But I found myself, this year, reversing my request, and asking Pam if she wanted to come back and start working garden shifts again. Over time, my insecurity over my effectiveness as garden manager has eased. She still has more wisdom and knowledge than I do, and I make continual mistakes, but I can handle that now; I'm less fragile. I compare the process to the differentiation phase between parent and adolescent child—the separation was a necessary phase, but I'm warming up to her again. I hope that she feels appreciated by me again.

After three years as manager, I understand better the choices she made, having faced the same stressors and burdens now myself. The frustrating trends Pam describes as contributing to her retirement have not gone away. In moments of exuberant affection, you might catch me saying, "Pam was right about everything!" and otherwise singing her praises. It's not that there aren't any more difficult moments between us, but I enjoy emphasizing our collaboration across the managerial and natal generations. We continue to live and work together, especially in the hoop house, and we continue to grow into our new roles relative to the garden and to each other. I'm not sure there will ever be an obvious end to this transition while we both live together in this community. 🐦

Brittany Lewis has lived at Twin Oaks Community for eight years. She finds gardening and community to be metaphors for each other.

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A Fistful of Sunflowers

By Joanne Poyourow

Azita brought me a fistful of sunflowers yesterday. Those sunflowers were planted for Peter, because to Peter and me, their cheery yellow faces symbolized hope. When I left the Community Garden at Holy Nativity it was a logical decision. Eleven years of my running it was long enough. The Garden needed—no, it deserved—new energy. When Peter left Los Angeles for faraway Washington State, I resigned, leaving Azita to fill my place.

A Change-Making Garden

The Community Garden at Holy Nativity is located on the grounds of an Episcopal church, on a residential streetcorner in urban Los Angeles. The Garden grows vegetables and fruits which are donated to Food Pantry LAX to feed needy members of the broader community. The Garden has no gates; it is open to the general public 24/7/365.

Each Thursday, year-round, volunteers gather to tend and harvest the Garden. Sometimes the volunteers come from the local neighborhood, other times from nearby high schools or colleges. They've come from Boy Scout troops as well as corporate "community service" teams. Occasionally they are from the church.

Peter and I founded the Garden in 2008. We orchestrated the building of it, phase after phase, low-tech, hands on, with an evolving team of volunteers. The Garden became a place of education in how to grow vegetables, how to live more sustainably. In addition to the vegetable beds, we built rainwater harvesting features, a miniature orchard, pollinator and herb gardens, and a cob-and-adobe bread-and-pizza oven. The Garden became a place where people could connect with like-minded community.

Through the years, gatherings included speakers and movies; Cluck Trek, a tour of local chicken coops; Seed School, a multi-day seedsaving workshop; and trainings for the international Transition Movement, helping communities bridge into a post-carbon world. One year we crafted solar cookers from mylar windowshades. Another year we made prayer flags in solidarity with Standing Rock. Ed Begley, Jr. was one of our guests, and Vandana Shiva visited our Garden.

The Battle of Head over Heart

So much of me is in that Garden: Ideas, design, delightful experiments. Sweat, hair, skin cells. There are also the memories: 11 years during which my children grew from tiny grade-schoolers and left for college. When I look at old photos of Garden construction days, I see my kids and their friends—digging at the groundbreaking, standing beneath towering sunflowers, cradling a basket of rattlesnake green beans. Growing, growing, gone.

It was a logical decision to leave the Garden, but it is a battle of head over heart every time I drive by it. I know it was the right decision, but it rarely feels right. I still feel the tug of that soil.

I still see the Garden with a manager's eyes, automatically running the to-do list: Weeds by the telephone pole. Harvest that cucumber. The chayote is escaping into the pathway. It's like a knee-jerk reaction. It is very hard to break away.

Trust Your Successors

Azita is very capable. She has more diverse gardening experience than I did when I started. She has Ashley to help her—Ashley who worked alongside me for at least a year before I left. Together they make a great team.

My lesson is in trusting them: trusting them to hold the Garden together, trust-

I still see the Garden with a manager's eyes, automatically running the to-do list: Weeds by the telephone pole. Harvest that cucumber. The chayote is escaping into the pathway. It is very hard to break away.

ing that their way is a good way, is okay, even if it's different than how I would have done it.

Value the Differences

That difference is important. Already—and it's been only five months—I see a different crowd of volunteers. I see younger faces, more diverse faces. These were goals Peter and I had aspired to, but we weren't the right people to bring those goals to fruition. Azita and her team accomplished it effortlessly.

She is charismatic in a way I never was. She twinkles with excitement, and people are infected with it. She's young enough to be my daughter, and so are her friends. They bring their babies to the garden, babies who are even younger than mine were when I started.

The Spirit Will Continue

Paul continues to hold the monthly gatherings at the Community Oven, stoking the wood fire and inviting the public to bake pizza and bread. The harvests continue to flow to the Food Pantry. The Garden is more integrated into the local seed-saving community than ever before. The Garden continues, richer, better than Peter and I could have ever imagined.

Is it the same? No, I see the subtle differences. I wouldn't have put squash in that particular spot. I had my reasons for never planting corn. Too many trellises for my aesthetic taste. At times it no longer feels like Peter's and my garden. But deep within its bones, it is.

The peach tree John planted gave lots of fruit this year. There are still bees in the steeple. Steve's mural is still magnificent. They've replaced Jeri's shed, but Kirk's new one is awesome. Margey's pineapple guava is still in place, as are Gene's tree collards.

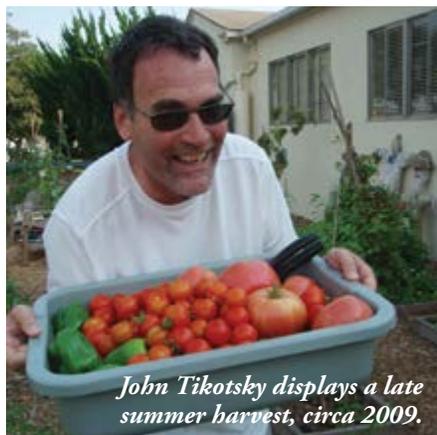
On the corner of Dunbarton and 83rd Street in Los Angeles, sunflowers still dance. And my amaranth will probably continue to sprout, generation after generation, from now till eternity. 🌻

Joanne Poyourow is a sustainability educator in Los Angeles. She writes nonfiction and fiction about community-building and shifting to a post-carbon future. You can read more about her various projects at Change-Making.com.



Joanne Poyourow

Peter Rood, circa 2013.



Christine Budzowski

John Tikotsky displays a late summer harvest, circa 2009.



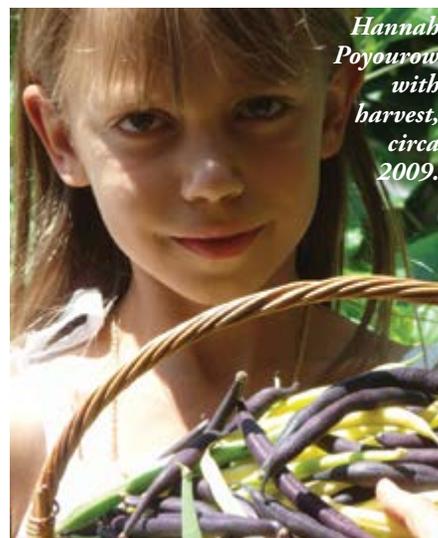
Christine Budzowski

The Community Garden at Holy Nativity, circa 2014.



Photo courtesy of Joanne Poyourow

The Community Garden at Holy Nativity, circa 2014.



Christine Budzowski

Hannah Poyourow with harvest, circa 2009.

Seizing the Torch

By Chris Roth



Fir Ridge founder (not really) during happier days.



Fir Ridge founder (not really) developing love of wild edibles as youth.

I was part of several groups in which the generational torch was not so much “passed” as “seized.” Circumstances, motives, strategies, and outcomes varied, but in each instance this process of torch-passing-under-duress involved both collateral damage and transformation.

In one case, the younger group’s actions seemed part of a necessary reinvigoration, the only way of escaping deepening ruts and a continuing descent into communal oblivion. In another, quite different case, the torch seizure itself almost led to communal oblivion.

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Fir Ridge community (not its actual name) benefited from the clear vision of its charismatic, quite assertive leader—until it didn’t. In fact, conflicts had apparently commenced almost immediately upon the group’s pre-communal founding (as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit with a public mission), and by the time of my arrival, five years into the project’s land-based phase, a full-blown case of founder’s syndrome had already developed, with only the founder, his partner, and one close ally remaining from the early years.

From my perspective as a 24-year-old joining my first residential intentional community, Fir Ridge had existed nearly forever on this land, so well-established did its culture and hierarchies seem upon my arrival. The five additional years that passed before the board served an eviction notice on the founder, and the additional year-and-a-half consumed by legal proceedings and his court-mandated exit, would seem almost like an eternity—not only to me, but to those who struggled through the difficult dynamics during that time.

In the years preceding the eviction notice, waves of people

arrived and left, some of them openly rebelling, and many of them reporting feeling that the work they did for the group, the projects they proposed, and their own identities as human beings were being disrespected, invalidated, shut down by a founder who could not tolerate any vision different from his own, or any accomplishment that bore someone else’s stamp, or any person who did not seem to serve his own goals. Initially drawn by the strength of his vision and the force of his personality, they eventually found that they had surrendered, or he had taken, too much of their own power for comfort.

As long-term friends and supporters of the group came to recognize the patterns besetting it, they attempted a series of interventions with the aim of preserving the community and his participation in it. These included a coastal retreat in which, in a relaxed setting, some of his closest friends and strongest “believers” from the immediate and extended community tried to convey to him the gravity of the situation and the necessity for some changes in communication style and behavior if the project and his part in it were to have a chance to survive. They offered open hearts and listening ears to hear about the difficulties he himself must be experiencing. They offered whatever support he might ask for in navigating the changes they were counseling. They emphasized how important they felt it was to have open conversations about community members’ concerns, and to listen to one another in a supportive setting, in order to transform the dysfunctional patterns and power dynamics that seemed to be making not only others, but the founder himself, miserable.

Unfortunately, he would have none of it. Nor did he respond positively to other attempts to resolve difficulties before they became crippling to the group and ultimately to himself. After the failure of many attempts to find an alternative which would allow him and others to live and work together harmoniously,

the governing nonprofit's board of directors concluded that no viable future existed with the founder still living on site.

Predictably, the founder did “not go gentle into that good night,” and raged, raged against the dying of the light he'd been carrying for the group. He mistook the eviction-notice-posting board member's ponytail for a bell lanyard (a costly mistake, it turned out, once the incident reached civil court), he mistook a coterie of his most ardent supporters for the full membership of the organization (in a hastily and secretly convened “membership meeting” to which only they were invited), he mistook the group of people they elected as their “board” for the actual board of directors, he mistook \$50,000 that had been given early on for the purchase of the land for \$50,000 that could be retained in the nonprofit's bank account only if he were guaranteed a position as lifetime steward of the land, and must therefore be returned in the interim to the granting organization in another country. And, with only a few people remaining on site after these developments, he mistook the rest of the recent residents, as well as the wider membership of the organization, including many others who had left over the years, for a group that *would* go gentle into that good night, that would “move on” as all previous configurations seemed to have done after trying unsuccessfully to make changes in the group.

He also mistook the lawyer he and his supporters hired (to force the legitimate board of directors to resign under threat of lawsuit, which they were certain to do since they were no longer backed by any money in the organizational bank account) for a more competent, more clever lawyer than he turned out to be. And he mistook the lawyer hired by supporters of the legitimate board for a lawyer less competent, less clever than his own. He mistook the legitimate board members for people who would not think to appoint successors as they resigned (with his lawyer not anticipating this possibility and therefore not present at the meeting), and he mistook two of his former-friends-turned-nemeses for people who would not report a \$50,000 theft of organizational funds to the State Attorney General, as they duly did upon becoming the new legitimate board members.

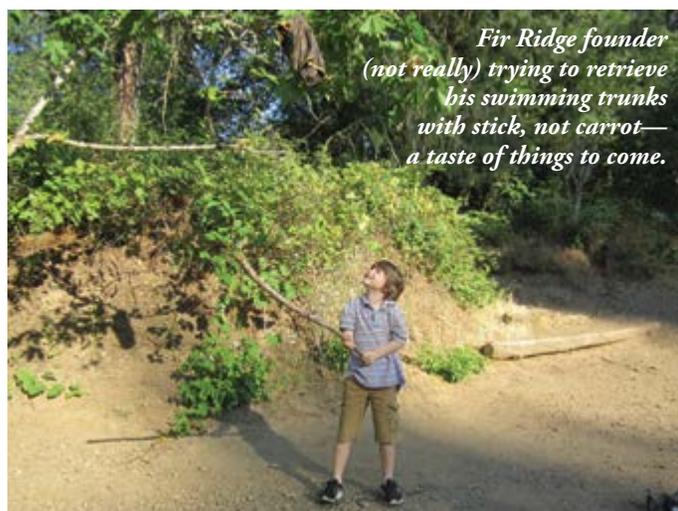
It is never easy to sit in courtroom opposite a few people who used to be one's community-mates, but it is easier when at least 10 times as many former community-mates and community-

friends sit on one's own side of the aisle as on the other. And it is also reassuring to hear, from one's crowdfunded lawyer, that the judge has told the other side's lawyer, in response to his arguments on behalf of his clients, “Not to put too fine an edge on it, but it's springtime, you're on thin ice, and the ice is melting.”

Having lost the case, the founder negotiated a several-month period of packing up and exiting the site. (By that time, he had barricaded himself behind a locked entrance gate with his partner and one intern, who, no doubt, was initially as thrilled as many of us had been by the chance to make a difference in a mysteriously depopulated place with so much potential and with such a visionary, charismatic leader.) The departure of the founder and his companions cleared the way for the new crew (some of whom had also been the old crew, before their departures) to return in the spring and pick up the still-flickering torch. The efforts of many had prevented it from being snuffed out entirely in hands gripping too tightly, no longer able to carry it alone but also unwilling or unable of their own accord to share it or pass it on.

This was not the end of the story at Fir Ridge, and not everything became “better” after this torch-passing. Some of those newly empowered seemed prone to the “baby with the bathwater” phenomenon, rejecting strict adherence to the group's traditional practices and worldview simply because these choices and values (such as prioritizing seasonal, organic, homegrown foods, avoiding new, industrially-produced building materials, aspiring to be a group of planetary citizens first, rather than just a more eco-friendly version of mainstream America) had been

Predictably, the founder did “not go gentle into that good night,” and raged, raged against the dying of the light he'd been carrying for the group.



Fir Ridge founder (not really) trying to retrieve his swimming trunks with stick, not carrot—a taste of things to come.



Fir Ridge founder (not really) becoming a target, early on, for those who dislike gardening.

associated with the founder and his strong vision. Moreover, the cautionary words of one board member who'd resigned rather than sign his name to the eviction notice—"If you get rid of the top rooster in the coop, another rooster will just take his place"—sometimes seemed prescient, although recurring problems with hierarchy and power never again required an eviction notice to help solve them. In fact, several "golden ages" followed during which power was much more equally distributed and both morale and mission-fulfillment were high.

After the group's memorable and troubled first decade on the land, a complete collapse had seemed likely without significant positive change. Fortunately for Fir Ridge, the subsequent "seizure of the torch" opened up the opportunity for that change—which happened in various ways, in large and small increments, and occasionally in reverse, and is still ongoing more than 25 years after the rumors of the place's death first turned out to be greatly exaggerated.

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Maple Creek community (also not its actual name) experienced its own "seizure of the torch" from the founding

The founder's most strongly held values had to do with consensus, connection, and shared power—the elements of community culture and governance that had kept it from being taken over or dominated by the power-hungry or by anyone else.

generation, though almost every detail and nuance was different in this case from that of Fir Ridge. Maple Creek's founder had a much quieter, more subtle charisma, and while not afraid of being outspoken when the topic seemed to merit it, was perhaps more prone to err on the side of not being assertive enough rather than too assertive. Having seen the initiators of other communities fall victim to founder's syndrome, she took many steps to try to avoid that fate, including often refraining from commenting on or objecting to plans that would not have been her first choice. She was conscious that her own words could carry extra weight in others' perceptions, and wanted to be sure other community members felt empowered, rather than oppressed by her seniority.

Maple Creek was always more egalitarian than Fir Ridge, with a distributed leadership structure from the outset, and a high value placed on full consensus. (By contrast, at Fir Ridge, the group's process of "consensus-minus-one" often proved a vehicle for the founder and his partner to marginalize outliers and always get their way—something also reliably accomplished, when the first tactic didn't work, by storming out of meetings, since everyone knew that nothing could happen without the founder's buy-in.) Maple Creek's group process, honed over many years and aided by weekly group well-being meetings and various shared personal growth and compassionate communication practices, became a success story in the communities world, featured in a well-known book about creating successful communities and even (with some humorous inaccuracies and exaggerations resulting from different ways of interpreting and translating the word "love") in the French edition of *Rolling Stone*.

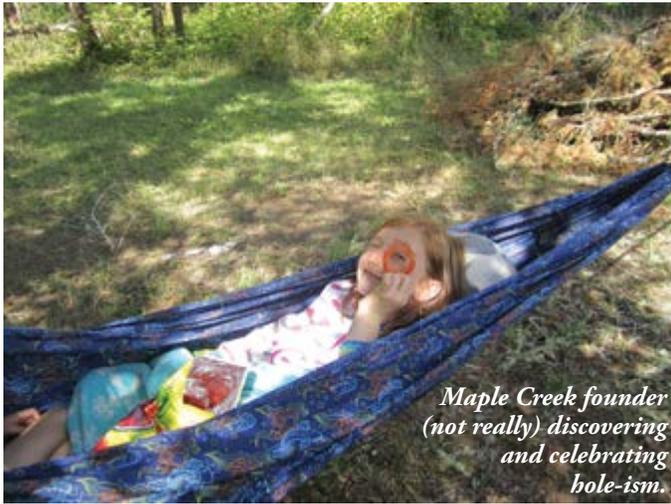
Though she was the sole remaining original community member (turnover was high early on), the founder for many years functioned as an equal peer to other influential members in the community. Had she held the "founder" reins too tightly rather than inviting in new energy and initiative, the group would have collapsed within a year or two of its founding, as physical and economic conditions on the site were quite challenging at first. As a result, those who came and found useful roles in the community generally felt empowered rather than oppressed—no one had power over anyone else. The founder's experience and perspective were valued, but did not overrule



Maple Creek founder (not really) learning that she is small in relation to the universe.



Maple Creek founder (not really) developing the first tenets of her eco-spirituality



*Maple Creek founder
(not really) discovering
and celebrating
hole-ism.*



*Maple Creek founder
(not really) recognizing
that life can be
bloody difficult.*

those of others—nor was there much occasion for this to happen. The group that I joined (in my mid-30s this time) was remarkably unified, partly through respect for one another’s diversity and partly by shared values and practices. Everyone had a valuable and valued role, whether that was in managing events or in coordinating childcare, gardening or doing maintenance, teaching or leading cleaning parties. It was, in many ways, a community of leaders.

For various reasons, over time, different members of the group that had been so unified left the community—usually not from an onset of “Maple Creek fatigue” but because family, career, or transportation difficulties (e.g., shuttling growing children to and from activities in town) led them away. Those who arrived to take their places had not been part of this community history, and perhaps had never experienced the kind of shared power and group connection that distinguished Maple Creek’s “golden age.” Often, they came from backgrounds in hierarchical institutions, and were accustomed to there being authorities who needed confronting, rebelling against, or replacing.

The founder continued to try to avoid being perceived as more powerful or influential than anyone else, and spent significant amounts of time on travels away from the community, reinforcing the impression that her hands-off approach was a genuine, conscious choice. At the same time, ironically, her most strongly held values had to do with consensus, connection, and shared power—the elements of community culture and governance that had kept it from being taken over or dominated by the power-hungry or by anyone else, whether they be founders, “experts,” elders, the young, the wealthy, or the unusually charismatic. These same fundamental community values seemed to be increasingly under threat within the group.

In the perfect storm that followed, some newer arrivals viewed the founder’s advocacy for egalitarian principles as a roadblock to their aspirations and a threat to their views of how a group should be structured. The founder felt equally strongly that the community’s culture was worth preserving. Yet that culture depended on community buy-in, and many of those who shared that cultural view with the founder had either left or did not assert themselves well in an increasingly conventional, competitive governance environment.

Many of the newer residents came from backgrounds in hierarchical institutions, and were accustomed to there being authorities who needed confronting, rebelling against, or replacing.

A newer resident who’d been a government bureaucrat believed that the membership process, including the visitor weeks organized and led by the founder, was deeply flawed, and successfully lobbied the group for its suspension while he designed something “better” (this decision was made easier by the fact that the community was already full with residents, and even had a waiting list, so couldn’t accept anyone new into the membership process anyway). A newer resident with legal background critiqued the community’s culture of transparency, and believed that most community members were not qualified to make decisions about legal or financial matters; she successfully pushed a resolution to make the board of directors self-electing rather than elected by the full group of members. A newer resident with aversion to personal growth work, joined by others for whom this was also new territory, lobbied against continuing the personal growth workshops we’d been hosting. And a group of those pursuing new visions for how the group would operate decided that the founder needed to be disinvited from participation in some of their processes, in order for them to feel as if they had free rein.

Some who especially valued the founder, her contributions, and the cultural elements she upheld were deeply disappointed by these developments. She was the sole remaining member of her generation within the community, and a particular inspira-

tion for younger members who felt attuned with and hungry for the earth-based spirituality, ecofeminism, and elder Crone wisdom she embodied. Eventually, given the prevailing tide, most of those who appreciated her and what she stood for left the community, as did she, to give her energy in places where it was clearly valued rather than seen as a threat by some.

The new generation who emerged victorious from this “coup,” now holding the torch that they imagined they’d wrestled from her (in fact, I believe she was a stand-in for the more cooperative, open culture that she’d been part of manifesting in the group), unfortunately did not know how to hold it. Despite any contradictory impressions that this condensed retelling may suggest, her sidelining and departure had actually happened “not with a bang, but a whimper,” and this is how the wick of the new group’s visions burned out too.

The ex-bureaucrat never did complete a draft of his new membership plan, and the community was left without a membership

process to use once it had openings again (as quickly happened once these changes commenced). Decision-making became increasingly secretive within a closed group, and trust and morale within the community as a whole sank. Without the presence of personal growth workshops or those who’d considered them most important, the group culture reverted to one of more personal stagnation and interpersonal distance and tension, sometimes erupting into terrible conflicts that were never resolved. And without the presence of the community’s founder and elder, many in the wider neighborhood and community were left feeling disconnected from Maple Creek, puzzled by what the group had become, disconcerted by the disintegration of a culture that had once so inspired them.

Soon thereafter, I left too. Within two years of the founder’s departure, all of those newer members who’d precipitated these changes had decided to do something different with their lives and departed as well. Yet, miraculously, the torch they’d seized still burned, rescued from extinction by some other friends of the community who’d seen its promise.

In subsequent years, this newly arriving, multi-generational group was largely able to resuscitate, restore, and even expand upon that promise, despite the predictable and unpredictable setbacks that confront every community.

How that came to pass is another story for another issue: hopefully the next one (#186, Picking Up the Pieces: New Beginnings). Additional cases of torch-seizure, torch-rescue, and collapse and rebirth rather than smooth transitions will feature in that issue too. At the risk of breaking the fourth-and-three-quarters wall separating author, editor, and reader: please join us then! 🐾

Chris Roth edits COMMUNITIES.



Fir Ridge founder (not really) preparing to push tree onto Maple Creek founder (not really) and friend.



Fir Ridge founder (not really) falling prey to macho culture as Maple Creek founder (not really) and friend look on.

Living in Multi-Generational Communities May Empower Everyone

By Rev. Jacqueline Zaleski Mackenzie, Ph.D.

In early 1994, Don Mackenzie (53) and I (47) began a two-year adventure exploring ecovillages in the US that were willing to take on new members. Traveling together made sense because for many years we had each had the same dream of relocating to an eco-community. Also, we both needed to heal from our separate, failed, long-term relationships.

After serving in Vietnam in the late 1960s, Don had lived in an off-grid community in Hawaii and another in Belize. In both cases, he felt both healed and empowered by those rural extended-family lifestyle options. His experiences, knowledge, energy, passion, and stories all seemed to offer him a sense of self-worth. Younger members welcomed a mentor willing to provide advice when asked for some. Additionally, medical staff for disabled war veterans had suggested that living rurally in a natural setting, as opposed to city life, was the best option for nearly any combat-damaged individual.

I needed the security of sharing my life with others in an ecovillage; my background as an only child left me longing for an extended family lifestyle. My father had examined the “space junk” that landed in Roswell, New Mexico, in 1947; he told the authorities what he saw. Within a short time, the government recalled him into military service. His missions away from us were always long, dangerous, and unusual: we moved 22 times in 22 months between my first and third grade. In adulthood, I longed to “put down deep roots” into a natural rural setting.

Both of us had spent a part of our childhood living on small family farms. We agreed that those memories were some of our best. Maybe that is why we, individually, were reading *COMMUNITIES* in the 1980s and planning for a future shared with others who were dedicated to honoring our environment.

Since our period of exploring ecovillages together preceded the internet, we always traveled with the *Communities Directory* on board. From 1994 to 1996, we used several paperback FIC references as we traveled in an RV. Our goal was to locate an eco-community to be our only home.

Many of my friends teased me about “traveling with a much younger man.” At the time, I looked fit and healthy while also appearing my age of 47, but others thought Don was only 38, not 53. He looked the role he had been in of a USAF Captain. He was fit, reliable, and determined to build an eco-friendly space in which to live. As we crisscrossed the bottom half of the US, we found several places we’d have liked to have called home; by then we had fallen in love and wanted to share a new life together. However, each location where we applied turned us down as “too old.” Apparently, there was an overall agreement, among the ecovillages at that time, that age 55 was the absolute limit for any new member.

Looking back, I wonder if our reception would have been different if I had mentioned that, as the president of a religious order, I had an inheritance that was earmarked to secure a home for me. I never said it, since “buying into” an ecovillage where each person owned the property under his or her home had only been mentioned years before when I visited a site in North Carolina with my former husband. However, the cash I had in 1994 made it possible for us to start our own community together instead of allowing our disappointment to smash our dreams entirely.

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Volunteers, us, one owner, and staff outside one dorm in the volunteers' village.



Construction process.



Setting Up a Community

I imagined buying about 200 acres with a river, stream, or another water source; Don wanted at least 300 acres and not in a wet location. As we had both lived for years in Florida, I could see his point. We finally settled on buying 1,227 acres of Arizona desert, along the southern border of Mexico, purchased for only \$143 an acre. The entire northern border was US National Forest; that made all the difference for me as there would be privacy.

Before closing on the land sale, we stayed overnight, sleeping inside a Ford Bronco. We made a campfire, looked, and listened. We both fell in love with the quiet, lack of lights, brightness of the stars, and sounds of coyotes and other desert creatures. The legal supervisor over us agreed that to locate the religious order there was a positive move. With Y2K only a few years away, all the members of the order might need an essential place to live.

The raw, rural, desert land leading into our newly purchased place had been chopped into tiny long-narrow strips. No previous landowners had ever moved onto their properties. Despite assurances at the beginning that we had two legal entrances onto the land, it turned out we did not. Also, no water, power, or phone services were available, as utility easements had never been issued. In fact, there were many ingress/egress issues. Years of legal

hassles followed, but we finally got a dirt road named after our religious order: Summerland Monastery. Thereafter, we installed solar power and wind off-grid for our utilities. As the average rainfall was only 11 inches a year, we revived two old water wells for our water sources.

Our first building, “The Sun Casita,” was a sod-roofed square of strawbales about 15 ft. x 20 ft. We built that alone, but as volunteers began to arrive and later, a few Y2K survivalists, we received help with all our projects. For the center of the community, we built a 1,500 sq. ft. dining hall and kitchen, also from strawbales but no longer by ourselves. By then, we had become a community. Together we had made the commitment that all buildings would be at least 60 percent recycled materials. Using FIC references, we learned how to thrive in the desert on the food we grew or wild-harvested. It was a harsh climate for growing food, but we succeeded at it. What was not as predictable was at least one “uninvited guest” a week, whether it be rattlesnake, Gila Monster, skunk, scorpion, bear, or other predator. Both of us wore Western-style pistols on our right hips, with snake shot as the first round.

On December 31, 1999 (Y2K), we had 11 residents on the land; a short while later, we were down to six. It was just too easy to “go to town” and see that life offered other options, especially after the computer glitches anticipated from Y2K did not materialize.

As the economy sank in 2007, and I wanted to complete my doctorate, we sold and left that land. We moved the religious order to an indigenous village in Central Mexico; we had been volunteering as teachers there for four previous summers. As we loved it, we moved there for another six years. That space was within a Mexican family community homestead. The legal supervisor over our religious order refused our request to purchase land, but agreed to help economically marginalized people there, including landowners. So we built a community center, rebuilt a house, and remodeled a homestead. One of our former household members still resides there in that lovely village.

Finding Eco-Community in Ecuador

Don is a Purple Heart-awarded 100-percent-disabled Vietnam Veteran; every move we have made was because the location was supposed to ease his service-connected health challenges. In September 2013, on the advice of seven Mexican doctors, we moved again. After two strokes and several hospital visits with heart issues, Don was advised that Central Mexico was too high, too cold, and too dusty. Therefore, we moved to Ecuador just over five years ago.

Once again, we asked more than once to join an existing community here, but until last fall (2018), no one saw the value of grandparents in an eco-community. The three absentee owners (they live in the US) where we are now were hesitant, for about a year, to say “Yes” but we feel blessed that two finally did. The dozen-plus Ecuadorian employees were initially concerned about “Gringos” living among their work environment; no one lived on the land full-time back then. Also, we were not fluent in Spanish, but we do speak the language and are learning more every day. We deeply respect and honor those who share our lives here, and we never forget that we are guests in their country. (Side note: Since for five years Mexico was our only home, we each have permanent resident cards in Mexico. In Ecuador, we each have our own permanent visa and cedula; that makes us Ecuadorian citizens with the right to vote.)

For nearly eight months, we shared every breakfast and lunch in a communal kitchen. It was hard to adjust to eating at least three carbohydrates at every meal and to eat in silence most days. In general, Spanish-speakers are polite and respectful; devoted to their families; reserve leadership roles for older relatives; learn by observation (personal trial and error—parents rarely use verbal instruction); tend to avoid conflict; and are proud of their heritage. If they are not fluent in English, rarely is a word spoken.

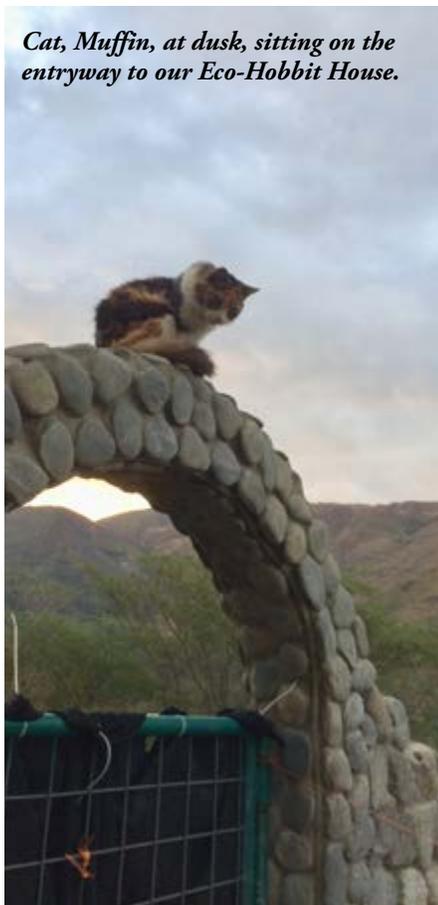
Also, according to academic literature, social scientists have discovered that respect for the legacy of monolingual Spanish-speaking ancestors has limited second-language learning in Latin American countries. Even if a Spanish speaker is bilingual, few will use that skill. If they do, not being totally fluent may cause embarrassment and further suppress making an effort to converse bilingually. Understanding this research, we began to explain these facts to the 50+ volunteers from 17 countries who passed through while we lived in the village. We found that we had a role! Too often, staff members’ overall quiet appreciation of not being the center of attention can be misinterpreted as avoiding instructing volunteers or answering their questions. We began to answer their questions, but as we do not speak the languages of 17 other countries, it’s been a learning opportunity!

Challenges for Volunteers

The land where the ecovillage is located is 1,300 acres (500 hectares), about seven miles from a “hard-top” road; it’s very isolated. As mentioned, the landowners are absent. Due to the enormous size of this land, volunteers often think they are alone, but there is staff a mile away. This ecovillage has 12 to 15 Ecuadorian Spanish-speaking-only staff—employees who typically go home every night. We found that, in general, the volunteers were lonely after 4:30 pm when everyone has left the village center until 8 am the next day, and from 4 pm on Friday to 8 am on Monday, when staff are also absent.

Usually, staff say nothing to any volunteer; they just go home. When the kitchen

We found that we had a role! We began to answer volunteers’ questions.



Cat, Muffin, at dusk, sitting on the entryway to our Eco-Hobbit House.



Early in the Eco-Hobbit House construction.

Photos courtesy of Rev. Jacqueline Zaleski Mackenzie, Ph.D.

is bare of food or the auditorium locked, the volunteers feel even more isolated and lonely. Occasionally, a staff member will stay overnight in the village center, but that is not the norm. When they do stay, they still rarely say anything to the volunteers. The secure house, with two employees 24/7, is about a mile away by dirt road; the rotating three humble male staff members only come into the village center, feed the animals, and then leave. They are shy and rarely speak to anyone. When we arrived, these had been the employees' patterns for the five+ years they had been employed.

Volunteers go to the village center when they arrive, but often there are few or misunderstood instructions on what to do or

not do; nothing is handed to them in writing. The living space has two dorms for volunteers. Both have two bunk beds and storage shelves for belongings owned by volunteers. There is a triplex of cabins; two are for administrators to use if they stay overnight, and one is often rented to visiting professionals; all three rooms are about 200 sq. ft. each and have two double beds. These are not for volunteers, but that fact has to be figured out, it's rarely mentioned.

There is an auditorium, completed in the spring of 2018, that easily holds 50+ people. The auditorium is near the dorms and cabins. If it is unlocked, the volunteers often do their yoga in the auditorium. Usually, visitors are outside on the surrounding patio; also, some volunteers or staff use the eight hammocks surrounding the auditorium after meals. Below the auditorium are three showers, a washing machine, two handwashing spaces, and four dry composting toilets. Often volunteers don't know how to pay to use the washing machine; there are few written instructions any place in any language.

Across from the auditorium is the community kitchen. It will hold 25 people easily but frequently serves 35+ as students often visit at lunchtime from a university an hour away. Rarely does any volunteer know that someone is arriving to volunteer or visit for a few hours. Meals are typically served at 7 am, 12 noon, and 7 pm; all meals are served to everyone at the same time. There is a cook for the first two, but usually, dinner is prepared and served by the volunteers, who are not sure which foods they are allowed to eat. Most meals are Ecuadorian cuisine sans meat; about once a week a single chicken is served to about 20 people. White rice appears at every meal as that is the main staple in Ecuador. Usually, the food is vegetarian and often from our own organic gardens!

Finding a Role as "Grandparents"

All employees are dedicated to making this working farm the best it can be. As with any farm, the staff has enormous demands every day as animals, plants, buildings, roads, fences, and more require qualified people, each are subject to unforeseen emergencies, and these factors all need lots of attention. Staff members have only a few minutes of "free time" after eating their noon meal. Most rest during those limited "off-duty" minutes instead of engaging in work-related conversations with the volunteers. The person assigned the roles of overseeing the volunteers is usually a long way away from the village center as the demands of his job include frequent trips off-site; sometimes he is gone for several days.

Volunteers tell us that they come here to learn what it takes to manage 1,300 acres (500 hectares) using permaculture: an organic method of humans interweaving the cultivation of plants, animals, and learning from nature. However, so far we have heard each one who is not fluent in Spanish complain that there is no teaching; learning only



This is inside; the entire home is only 600 sq. ft.



Eating in the main dining room with volunteers and staff.



Two young visitors enjoying a hammock.

The outside wall of one dorm for volunteers.



Staff helping several young visitors to make temporary beds in the auditorium.



Cheecho and Selva dancing at the house blessing, March 2019.

by observing seems to frustrate them. Clearly, *we grandparents discovered that we could be of service!*

Therefore, now we have a role: to empower volunteers to get the best out of their coming to a permaculture village to learn. Most come because they have unanswered questions about permaculture and about themselves; we all know that travel is the best teacher. When we invite new volunteers to dinner the very first day that they arrive, answer any questions, encourage them to understand the employees, work closely ourselves with the employees, respect, honor, and adore the employees, then we *create a community* regardless of the amount of time we have with each volunteer.

Our Eco-Home is our living classroom; the outside walls are stone, the same that we see indoors. The inside walls are adobe dirt, cow manure, sawdust, and left naturally-colored. Our ceilings, beams, ceiling joists, and floors are all sustainable Amazon woods. Our bathroom uses the humanure method of dry composting. Our shower is outdoors; we have no heat or cooling of the air or water indoors. Water for our three gardens that sustain us and the village below us comes from a natural underground spring. Our lower land lies between two rivers. Dirt covers two walls of the house and the entire roof; dirt—not a concrete slab—also lies under the floor, creating no carbon footprint. Many critters call our sod roof home.

Looking back on the challenges, over the last three decades, we'd do it again. That is

because the sounds of voices and footsteps on the dusty dirt roadway just outside our Eco-Hobbit House, as volunteers approach our home each Monday night to share a meal, makes us so happy!

We ask them to arrive a few minutes after 5 pm; perfect timing since, here in southeast Ecuador, we have only a seven-minute window year-round, around 6:30 am or 6:30 pm, for sunrise or sunset. We have time for “settling in” before enjoying dinner and what is usually nature’s multi-color display as the sun sets in the Andes Mountains.

Each group walks uphill from the volunteer dorms, organic gardens, spring-fed pond, library, and community kitchen in the ecovillage center, passing only the goat house on their way to the “Abuelos”

(grandparents') Eco-Hobbit House. "Win, Win" is the only way to describe acting as faux grandparents to over 50 volunteers from 17 different countries who have shared this community space dedicated to permaculture living, and our daily lives, over the last 10 months.

During the eight months living with Spanish-speaking employees—only one is marginally bilingual—we both learned that "a great deal is lost in translation." As we are guests in this country, it is we who must adapt or not have the most ideal lifestyle—for us—that we could ever imagine. We "retired" teachers are having a ball helping the volunteers to be happier, wiser, and more empowered.

Each Monday, I spend the entire day baking and cooking. Some of these adventure-some souls have encouraged me to keep trying to make meals that I've never made before, as they understand what a thrill I get. Therefore, one Monday we had Oaxaca Mexican Chicken and Vegetarian Mole, fresh fruit (cherries and pineapple), fresh veggies (carrots and avocado), fresh kale, fresh arugula, fresh baby lettuce salad with homemade dressing, and spiral pasta. For dessert, I made a Viennese Cherry Cake with a creamy pound-cake-like texture and sweet cherries. The volunteers often ask how to make various foods from scratch. Comments made it clear that our efforts are received with joy.

Most volunteers can "swing" their conversations with ease between French, English, German, or Spanish. Knowing we are all "just passing in the night," as they usually volunteer for only two to four weeks, their questions or statements are often rich, deep, and insightful. Addressing a topic and not being too dull to the other person seems to be not hard for us, due to our long and colorful lives. (We are both retired from public/private school teaching and as college professors, and have traveled over much of this planet. Additionally, we have over 25 years of off-grid living experiences, have a 53-year-old daughter who is the provost and Vice President of a university, several of our "faux" grandchildren in Central Mexico are in their 20s, and we were raised on farms.) We find it easy to join into conversations on just about any subject. We are also pretty much non-shockable and considered non-judgmental. Usually, the volunteers stay late talking to us and to each other; it's lively on our patio!

It is not uncommon to hear back from a former volunteer on WhatsApp or Facebook or by email. We have found some of the most robust emotional connections of our lifetimes by aligning with appropriate answers to questions asked over the last few months. We are experienced in ways to reply that are empowering for them. Our dream is to send them away with all they wanted to learn about permaculture—especially more about themselves. We always encourage them to travel more, listen, and ask questions, taste everything, and stay safe.

*The mission of the Church of All Worlds is to evolve a network of information, mythology, and experience that provides a context and stimulus for reawakening Gaia and reuniting Her children through tribal community dedicated to responsible stewardship and the evolution of consciousness.

Our faith rests on honoring our Earth as Divine. Our religious order, Summerland Monastery, Inc., CAW, is under supervision by The Church of All Worlds*, a US 501(c)(3) nonprofit. Summerland focuses on assisting volunteers from all over the world to learn how to protect our planet's resources by learning how to live eco-sustainably.

We hope that this article will awaken other communities, especially the ones that turned us down nearly three decades ago, to the concept of the many forms of diversity: multi-generational, multi-cultural, multi-lingual, and multi-faith. 🍷

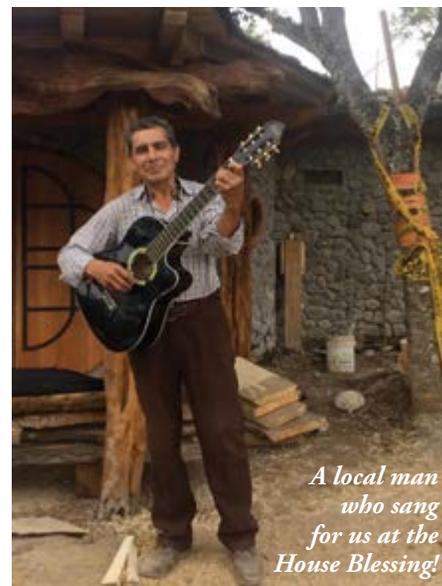
Jacqueline Zaleski Mackenzie has been a nonprofit administrator continuously since 1986 and an advocate for organic farming since 1972; she is also an educator, mother/grandmother/wife, social scientist, and author of 14 books. Specializing in Business Systems Management, she earned her M.S. and B.S. from the Florida Institute of Technology. She later earned a Ph.D. and Ed.S. in Special Education, Bilingual Education, and Sociocultural Studies from the University of Arizona. Her passion for protecting our Planet is reflected in her position: she has the highest Clergy Status in The Church of All Worlds. Her dedication to our environment as Divine drives her to locate NGOs, civil organizations, or missions with the same goals and to be of service to them.



Several of the men who built the Eco-Hobbit House.



Volunteers enjoying a meal inside our home.



A local man who sang for us at the House Blessing!

Winter Circle

By Stephen Wing

Under the Winter Solstice moon
the sky glows and the city glitters
like a land unpromised,
undiscovered,
altogether unexpected till this instant
between breath and breath,
this pause in the nervous racing
of the clock

as the tilted Earth swings
into its new season

We stand together gazing out
at our starry cocoon
through the smog, holding hands
while the amphibians die off
and the aquifers go dry,
gazing into the cracked and cloudy
crystal of our hearts,
trying to read the inscrutable
present

as the Northern Hemisphere spins
into its new season

Under leafless branches
for miles around our little circle,
the Tree of Life
is blinking in a million windows,
powered by burning coal
and decaying uranium,
inflated Santas and candy canes
pulsing on and off
beneath the steady silent gaze
of the moon

as the Georgia hills lean into the wind
of their new season

Our prayers merge and rise
with the smoke and noise of cars,
the wailing of children,
the coughing of the sick and wounded,
drifting and dissipating
up through lightyears of cold space
into every corner of this moment
as vast as the darkness, quick
as light

all of us stepping together
across the threshold of our new season

Into our circle we summon
the lost and missing
and merely lent,
breathing their names out
into the winter chill
with our separate little scraps of fog
while between our interwoven fingers
and warm palms
we clasp this planet's
only future

all of us unwrapping together
the gift of this new season 🐦



Stephen Wing is author of Free Ralph! An Evolutionary Fable (www.WindEaglePress.com, www.StephenWing.com), about which Taylor Stoehr, professor of literature at University of Massachusetts, writes, "An utterly convincing philosophy of evolutionary ecology is the deepest layer of this profound and hilarious book."

Passing the Torch at Earthaven

By Arjuna da Silva



Debbie cuts the cake she baked for Founding Day, as we gather in Council Hall.

Photos courtesy of Arjuna da Silva

Twenty-five years ago this week (on September 11, 1994), a circle of visionary Baby Boomers, half of them female, laid their hands one upon the other, in a pledge to take the vision of a land-based intentional community, grounded in respect for the Oneness of all life, into the next millennium. *And here we are!* Earthaven Ecovillage has survived economic, social, geographical, and political distresses that might have taken us the way of so many communities that falter after a few years, had our original star not been so bright nor the people who came so stalwart.

I'm proud of this endurance. And, as one of only four of the 18 founders still engaged in the life and work of our second quarter-century adventure, I'm also sad to be without our original cohort, and miss my galfriends especially (though I'm still able to cavort with some of them from time to time). Yet even without their help, I have turned into one of our community grandmas, and in this my 73rd year of life, I'm getting to take steps back and out of many committed ways I've been contributing to the values and creativity, process and perspective, as well as a fair amount of dissension, to the ever-evolving whole.

By the time I was a teenager, I had figured out I could be the kind of woman who, given population explosion, would rather be an adopting parent, when and if a solid partnership developed. While none of my relationships, however deeply cherished, turned into such a firm container, or evolved in a setting that promised the kind of stability I'd want a family to have—and since I recognized my fiery temperament could lead to a deep regret, were I to be responsible for the emotional fabric of a child's upbringing—I was happy to remain free to travel the country, study deeply (psychology, metaphysics, and political philosophy), and help start a couple of land-based intentional communities, each of which blossomed and eventually faded within a couple of years, leaving me with lots to ponder and the next adventure to pursue.

I wanted to live by the ocean, but...

Two of my best friends from the urban, multi-household intentional community I was part of in Florida in the '80s had become part of the team that led to the

founding of Earthaven, so when I arrived in the Blue Ridge in July '94, they easily drew me into the project. It was a magical time. Our Remembrance Covenant, though lacking in lyrical grace, guided us for more than a dozen years, as our population grew and, eventually, our understanding of what it's possible for us to accomplish became clearer.

Earthaven went through an especially difficult challenge this last decade as our diversifying population discovered we were no longer aligned in our commitment to the "one for all and all for one" motif we'd been founded on. Some folks, less radical in their lifestyles, wanted more protection in cases of liability, and some wanted less constraint from the Full Consensus governance model that had guided us that far. Through a process independent of full-group consensus, we wound up spending a whole lot of our precious capital on legal fees to redesign and reinterpret our model, in order to protect the less confident among us, comply with State and local law, and have an overall organization that would make sense to our original values. Today

we are 12 separately deeded residential parcels organized into 11 legal entities we call “pods” (at my last count, five housing co-ops, five LLCs, and one nonprofit “religious society”), looped together as members of a Homeowners Association in common ownership of the majority of our forested property, including a growing number of “sacred spaces,” Hidden Valley celebration ground, and the Village Center with its campground, Council Hall and Plaza, and Village Green.

One of the ways I taught myself to tolerate the painful changes I felt were being forced on us was to see myself as a co-parent of a dynamic and unruly child—teenager, really—and help myself to see parallels in what parents have to let go of when their children begin to follow their own minds, as well as other mentors, in ways that unsettle or even destabilize the family. While the “restructuring” period was dragging on, bringing out the best and worst in people as these kinds of tempering fires do, I was often unsure how I was perceived by many of the residents on “the membership track.” I found myself able to cultivate closeness with just a few of them, leaving it to the others to show me if they were interested in knowing me better. It was obvious to members of Council that we had some very special folks (some still in their 20s back then) watching and waiting for the gates to open so they could step forward into Full Membership, and we were aware we could lose their interest or even their respect, the longer we took to recreate ourselves. And yet, doing the best, most meticulous job of pouring the elements of the Earthaven vision into several new legal vessels needed all the patience and sharpness we could muster. Happy to say, despite much work still to be done to update sub-protocols that have developed from our original premise, the atmosphere in the community seems upbeat and healthy, though of course the issues of the day—diversity, racial equality, the ills of the patriarchy, and more—are right up there with all our business item agendas.

The way forward...

On Founding Day this year, “medicine wheel” mobiles were presented to the seven new Full Members who were finally able to step through the gate (the first in about a decade). They have all been living with us for years, many having taken major administrative roles within their neighborhoods or on behalf of the whole community during the long wait. We are lucky not to have lost them, and several more are waiting for their own six-to-18-month Provisional Membership terms—during which they’ll become eligible to take responsibility for decisions that will help Earthaven through its next 25 years.

And yet, given all the changes we’ve been through, how to relax and trust that these intelligent, dedicated, sensitive, hip 30-somethings and 40-somethings will have what it takes to carry the vision on, without losing the baby during one of their bathwater refreshers? It would have been great if a few rich folks had also come along, but so far most no one who arrives (in what could still be called their youth) is anybody’s version of a rich kid, even though some have had generous family assistance. They have to work hard onsite, online, as consultants, or at part-time jobs offsite; in their gardens, on their rustic abodes,, to create farms and businesses, to homeschool their children, to show up for community meetings and emergencies—just to have a place to live out their vision

of healthy community life. And they do it! In fact they do it so well that my doubts recede, leaving me with energy to work on creative projects outside the routines of collective governance.

With these remarkable humans at the helm, our founding dream of building something worthwhile for generations to come, within the shadow of a climate emergency, is holding its ground. And yet, the fact is there’s so much left to do that we elders can’t just look away. Yes, the work new members are doing—fielding proposals, managing requests for information, and investigating areas of conflict—is usually dependable, clear, and often inspired. They are also leading Council in a deepening exploration of our official mission, vision, and goals. And still there are details—sometimes subtle and sometimes not, that, if overlooked, could wind up obstructing core values and, eventually, essential community practices—details which someone who’s been around for less than a decade might be unable to notice. So in addition to celebrating the blessings a new cohort of active, capable members provides, there is a need to honor and include the kind of memory-based intuition we old-timers have, even if from the back rows where we are beginning to sit.

Recently, I inaugurated an elder circle to investigate what our oldest members might offer as well as learn from the younger generations, and to conjure a picture of our own current and future needs. There are a dozen of us older than 70, most in good health and, though only seven have been showing up regularly, over the next few years several more folks will turn 70 and our circle may endure and flourish. In the meantime, we



Circling up on Founding Day on the Village Green.



Presenting “medicine wheel” mobiles on Founding Day.

are getting to know each other in different ways than just socially or in meetings. We may find a common purpose in what we would like to share with younger members, and we may also be able to assist one another in making connections that will allow our individual contributions to be of help to the community for as long as possible.

Getting personal...

I'm from New York. I grew up in a household and in a neighborhood where people spoke loudly, often just to be heard over the noise in the street or the next apartment. As we children grew, we learned to shout and carry on just like our elders, and some of us learned how to stay on topic until we were sure we had made our point. Fast forward to today and this is still how I behave, although some amount of NVC has helped me understand what to add to my rants so that others will know I'm thinking of them too.

As my relationships with some of the younger members of Earthaven mature, a sweet dialog arises about best methods for meeting more needs, not just to be heard but to encourage engagement. When I lost it at the start of an important public event last year, we sat down for a few hours* in order to look for a way through the energy jam that was causing a disruption of connection and communication. After two sessions of calm, yet emotion-packed exchanges about our motivations, disappointments, anxieties, and hopes, we created an agreement that any one of them could tap me on the shoulder (or leave me a voicemail or email) with the word "Bingo," to which I agreed to immediately respond, "Ono!" "Bingo" would be notice that I had gotten too worked up to be heard or appreciated, and my replying "Ono" would mean I got the message and would chill out.

This past week some arguments escalated in an online listerv, which was originally set up for our broader social community to connect over events, ride shares, and various other offerings and requests, but had once again morphed into a platform for presenting and sometimes debating the issues of the day. I let my exasperation at what some folks were putting into the public sphere push me near the limit, and I sent a couple of short notes to a few people that were (ahem) highly critical. I knew it right afterwards: Bingo!

Though it turned out that no "Bingos" were sent to me by anyone else, I was able to feel the importance of stopping myself by taking a breather from the online wrangle. I put on my favorite music, hung out in the kitchen fussing with food and, later, was visiting with a close friend when I got a call from two of our "youngsters" asking to come see me for some "wisdom" and "advice." My visiting friend and I both sensed that Bingo was on its way after all.

These two women, both major players in the social, administrative, educational, and relational life of the community, soon joined me over a big, scrumptious local peach. We talked about those of us with stronger voices and how that plays into the online challenges (Ah—I'm not the only one they worry about!), and about the importance of all voices being heard. We wondered, together, how best to walk our collective way out of the

current logjam of issues and temperaments, and especially how to make sure we all stayed calm enough to enjoy the anniversary week ahead. They talked about their need for elders, for ongoing mentoring, for the assurances not available in our fractured culture—that we will abide together. Then they acknowledged they couldn't remember the word we'd chosen to highlight exasperated communication on my part, but had come to make sure I got the message. I told them I'd taken it on myself to call "Bingo!" and step away from the heat of the moment.

They were visibly relieved (as was I) to find we were aligned about the importance of acknowledging the edge I and several others had come to, and recommitting to the better ways we've learned for contending with our rough edges. If I had come into the meeting with some uncertainty regarding our mutuality, I came out deeply touched by the respect, appreciation, and love I felt in their presence.

Walking in generational rhythms...

When I began to realize I was looking forward to passing the torch to newer members, I had to take some deep breaths and accept the need to step into that mysterious abyss called the unknown. I cannot know what will happen, but I can do my best to recognize issues that need attention before they become muddy or wither from neglect. I can recall that a lot of what complicates our issues is inter-generational. I've written in COMMUNITIES before about the "generational crossroads" work that counsels us to keep in mind, when working with mixed generations, that we have different reference points, different stressors, different ways of relaxing and feeling safe—and we forget these differences at our community's peril. We need conscious and conscientious attention to what helps each generation feel that their needs will be met in the outcomes we consent to. We need to recognize those differences and account for them.

It's time we circle up around some promises Earthaven made to itself a quarter century ago, about spiritual unity, agricultural diversity, and bioregional engagement. I can see that many of our current challenges are actually logical steps in those directions, and probably essential conditions for developing the kind of vision and maturity to help us reach those goals. These promising conditions and the great vibes that filled the Village Center during the 25th Anniversary celebration—when many founders, friends, and neighbors joined us to relax, engage, remember, dine locally (and deliciously), and dance our fannies off to our favorite marimba band—are the reassurances I look to when I catch myself wondering how the future will treat our village.

In fact, here—take this torch.... 🌿

Arjuna da Silva has been a counselor, writer/publisher, and community member for much of her adult life. She is currently engaging with local (western North Carolina) teams of the Extinction Rebellion movement. She practices qigong, yoga, belly dance, and The Practice of No Problem meditation to counterbalance her tendency to carry the weight of the world on her shoulders.

*We used the Restorative Circles model, as it's evolving at Earthaven, for navigating community conflict.

Community Grief

By Lee Warren

A toddler died in our community. It was a tragic five seconds that changed the course of everyone's lives.

Rowan's mama loaded her car with all the materials needed for the ritual that was to take place that day, overnight, and into the next day—an annual ritual, in which our community honors life, corn, and the spirit world. This ritual, brought to us by several community members who have studied indigenous teachings, happens in May of every year.

She couldn't see out the back window because her car was loaded down. And going in reverse is tricky for the best drivers among us. Down a steep slope, backwards she went. Trusting that her child was with his father.

But he wasn't.

Rowan was behind the car. And those fatal five seconds led to an ambulance ride, his heart stopping many times, emergency surgery, and ultimately a death that left the community devastated, heartbroken, and in shock.

Most people who hear the sketch of this story are immediately horrified and heart-sick as they imagine the agony of the parents. The stupefying grief mixed with horrendous guilt is certainly part of the story.

But the story doesn't end there.

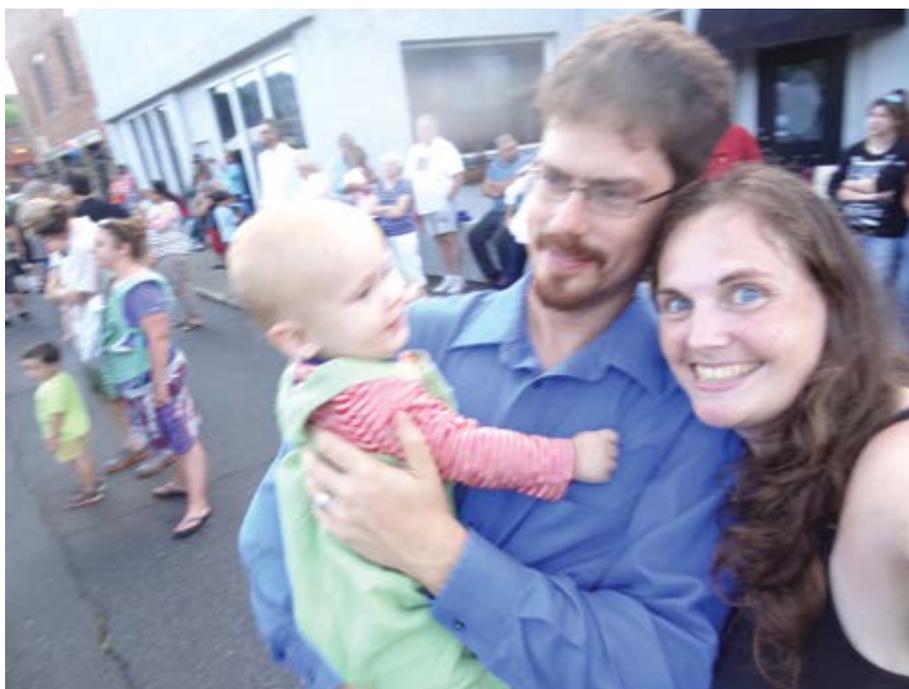
Because what happened next is something that, in my 20 years of living in intentional community, I have never seen. It is something so exquisite that it might just offer a glimpse into reconciling the unthinkable tragedy. What happened next is nothing short of miraculous. And probably rarely seen outside of a deeply integrated traditional culture, one so intact that they still know how to grieve, how to be with the dead, and how to be with the mystery.

Maybe it was caused by a perfect storm—an upwelling of important elements coming together. One element being the pure, innocent, and tragic nature of the accident. Another element being that the community was already in ritual space. Combine that with the fact that the parents are long-term community members and leaders who have, over the years, graced our group with their public ceremonies: her ordination ceremony, their wedding ceremony, their blessingway (baby shower) ceremony. Something, somehow, created a vortex, an opening that allowed our most powerful selves to emerge.

As much as anything can be, this is a recipe for sanity; healing for a small patch of the global and cosmic wound. It's what we got right. And it contained these ingredients:

• **Offer Support:** The parents were immediately surrounded by close and beloved friends who didn't leave their side for the following days and weeks. Caregivers rotated in and out, but at any given time, especially in the first few days, there were a minimum of three people support-

What happened next is something that, in my 20 years of living in intentional community, I have never seen. It might just offer a glimpse into reconciling the unthinkable tragedy.



Photos courtesy of Lee Warren



ing each parent. Starting with the ride to the ambulance (we live very remotely and the initial ride was to meet the ambulance 20 minutes away), the wait in the hospital during surgery, and that first evening without Rowan, the friends and beloveds gathered. They held the parents, cried, supported, reflected back, held, cried, and supported some more.

•**Create Space for Grief:** The altars were erected the day after the tragedy: the black altar for grieving and in preparation for Rowan's body, the blue altar for forgiveness, and the red altar for the ancestors. They were decorated beautifully with matching black, blue, and red candles that didn't stop burning for days, with sacred objects, and with flowers, so many flowers. For five years many of us had been coming together to study and practice "Grief Ritual" with the Dagara Shaman, Sobonfu Somé. In Somé's West African tradition, the grief ritual is intricately woven into tribal life and is crucial to healing spiritual wounds. Over the years, in our training with her, we've learned to make the altars, to set the physical environment, and to be with the grief in ourselves and each other. The day the tragedy happened, one of our members was on the phone with Sobonfu, getting coaching on the specifics of our situation. By the next day our already grief-ritual-experienced members went into action, setting up the altars, lighting candles, gathering flowers, and most importantly encouraging the grieving. The meaning of the altars and of the importance of grief was communicated to each wave of visitors who came, and all were introduced to the phrase, "never grieve alone."

•**Employ the Advocate:** Our nearest town, Asheville, North Carolina, boasts lots of progressive people. One such person is Ruth, a Buddhist and a home burial advocate. She helped our group retrieve Rowan's body from the morgue and instructed a small group of close friends to tend to his body in a ritualistic and sacred way. She taught this circle of six folks to lovingly bathe the body, bless and tell stories over the body, dress and wrap the body, arrange the body on the altar, and pack ice around the body. The process, which took nearly four hours, was deliberate and deeply honoring of the life of Rowan as well as his upcoming spirit journey. The result was apparent, his small and beautiful form was so delicately and impeccably laid out on the black grief altar, with one hand showing, for grieving folks to touch and hold.

•**Know Your Clergy:** The first person I texted when I heard the news of the accident was Byron, a friend and long-time priestess, teacher, and ritualist who has been facilitating public rituals for more than two decades and is passionate about spiritual ceremony, including grief. She was also the one who officiated the ceremony of marriage for Rowan's parents before he was born. She is a beloved treasure to many of us and works much in the way a wise woman, minister, or priest of old would work in rural communities—she visits the sick, tends to the heartbroken, officiates unions. She is a midwife of life's passages. On Friday, the day of the accident, she was there for the community that evening. On Sunday she came to visit and grieve, and on Monday, she officiated the funeral procession and the burial. To have someone so well known, trusted, and close to so many of us be guiding us as we grieve is a blessing beyond measure. That guidance is crucial at a time when most of us are in the underworld of the grief process or supporting the deeply broken.

•**Welcome the Feelings:** Our community subculture honors emotions much more than the average modern person. We're not perfect at it, but as much as possible folks tend to welcome the whole range of feelings, including the challenging ones like anger and grief. One of the most powerful moments I had during the three days following the death of Rowan was sitting between his parents at the fire circle. They both had other support people around them but I happened to be in the middle and got to witness them grieving at the same time. Each had their own flavor, the mom riding the waves of grief as they rippled through her body, feet grounded on the earth, whimpering some, wailing at times, and then falling silent—over and over like ocean waves coming in and going out, some strong, some soft. Embodied grief comes to us in waves. The contractions of death are much like the contractions of birth. On the other side of me, Rowan's dad was talking. Talking and rocking and crying all at once. Sometimes talking to himself and sometimes talking to others. Trying to make sense and puzzle out the unfathomable. Since there is no right way to grieve, all of it was welcome. All of it was perfect. This spaciousness let all grieve in their own ways.

•**Enroll Everyone:** From time out of mind women have been the central support systems for events like these. And this was no

exception. Food appeared from nowhere to feed a crowd of 50 (for days!), caregivers were rotated with symphonic perfection, rides got coordinated, calls made, and tasks assigned. Everyone who wanted a role got one, which made for an involved, engaged, committed group. Many of these women work together, planning events and putting on conferences throughout the year. Their flow with each other is long established, each one having gifts and stepping into roles that fit them best. The men too stepped into pivotal positions as keepers of the fire that didn't die for the next four days, as builders of the coffin, as keepers of the sacred smudge to send the grief to the heavens. Even though we live in the same community, mostly our individual lives and households are separate. But during these days the flow was effortless, the gears turned, and all things got attended to. And best of all, we did it together, a sense of deepening with each other in the midst of and because of the task at hand.

• **Exist Between the Worlds:** One of the greatest gifts of all was the opportunity to step out of ordinary reality into non-ordinary reality. Maybe it was because these days spanned a weekend, or maybe everyone cleared their schedules, but for four days, time seems to have stopped. Folks came and went from the central location of the fire circle and altar spaces. Villagers put things aside and devoted time to being present, grieving, serving, and tending. It created a ritual container that allowed the mystical to emerge. We were cocooned in the deepest of ways.

• **Tend the Fire:** During our three days together in ceremonial space, the fire never went out and the Rowan's body, lovingly laid in altar space, was never left alone. This created a container of immense safety and trust. Most of the caregivers were able to sleep some and everyone got a chance to rest. Our homes are close to each other, so people drifted in and out all through those days. Yet whenever anyone arrived, there was wood burning, sacred smoke spiraling, and someone to hold space for grief. It was the most sacred of environments in which to drop in to the experience of the moment.

• **Encourage Public Grieving:** Getting all of the support systems in place would have been less fulfilling if we didn't have access to the heart of the grief, which was contained in Rowan's parents and family. Had they been different people, they might have gone away, seeking privacy and protection. That would have been a fine choice, but it would have left the community to grapple separately. Given who they are, they grieved right in the middle of everything and everyone. They gave us that immense gift. Being part of that process was incredibly magical. There was no pretense, no masks, no pleasantries. Just pure, raw, and full-on grief in plain sight. It was an honor to touch it, feel it, see it, and share it. They led the way and we supported. And we grieved. All of us. Being witness to such real human experience took us all to altered space. It alchemized everything around it.

• **Bring the Traditions Together:** One of our community tenets is "To encourage an atmosphere in which diverse spiritual practices can thrive." Our group holds a wide range of spiritual

beliefs and they all came together in such a beautiful way during these days of grieving together.

- The Dagara tradition informed the altars, the teachings of our ancestors, the welcoming attitude towards the grief process, and the idea that no one grieves alone.

- The Mayan tradition was woven in the body preparation, the storytelling, and the corn that had been grown for Rowan's birth and was incorporated into every aspect of the ceremony.

- The Lakota tradition informed the fire circle and the ongoing smudge smoke of cedar which was present throughout the three days.

- The Buddhist tradition informed the body preparation and the deep honoring of Rowan's life and death.

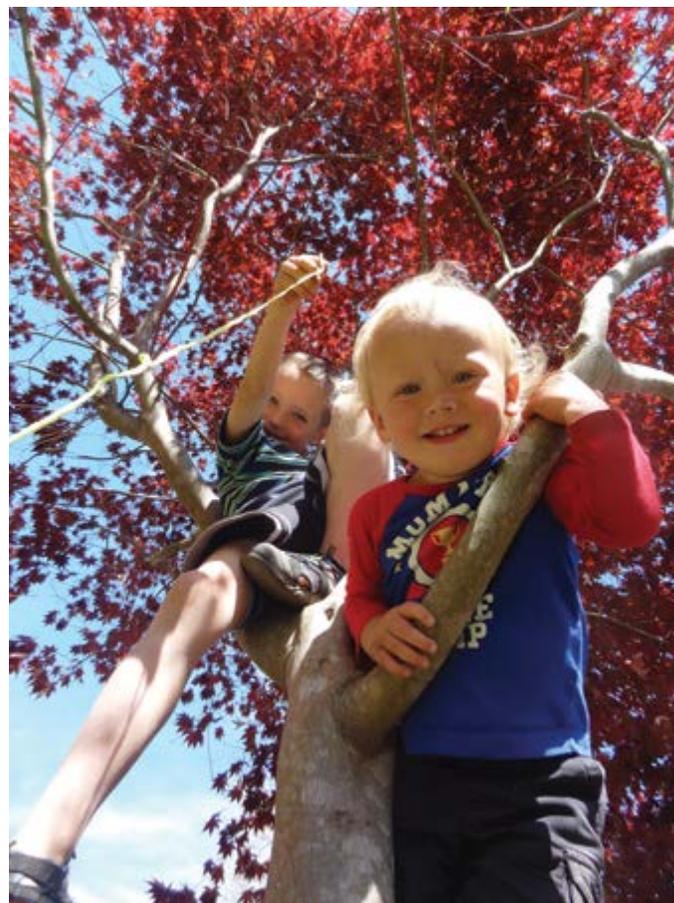
- The Wise Woman tradition informed us all to be in our bodies and our emotions, and to deeply nourish each other.

- The Hindu tradition informed the harmonium, chants, and ritual songs.

- The midwifery tradition informed the words to the songs that were sung.

We are blessed to be alive at this time in history when these esoteric mystical traditions from around the world, which have been hidden and guarded since time out of mind, are now so blessedly available to us. We saw these deep truths blended here in the best possible way, none in conflict and all in concert.

• **Open the Gates with Song:** At one point, two days into the grieving process, two talented women neighbors broke out the instruments—harmonium and djembe—and played for hours.



Photos courtesy of Lee Warren

They were in the middle of the altar space, surrounded by villagers who were either grieving or supporting others who were grieving. A nearby pile of teenage girls supported each other, learning from those around them. The chant wove and circled, taking us all deeper than we thought possible.

Mother of my heart , mother of my soul, sweet mother Mary, she's calling us home.

So take my hand, we'll walk this together.

Let go of this illusion, this fear of separation, nothing can hide the light that we are.

She says you're ready now, ready now, ready now, ready now, my sweet child.

She says you're holy now, holy now, holy now, holy now. Yes you are.

Love is the key, turn it and see, it's right there inside you.

At one point during the chanting, Rowan's mama came in and sat in front of the grief altar, surrounded by the music and beautiful lyrics that seemed to be encouraging Rowan towards the great beyond and surrounding us all with deep

**Of the people
in that room that
night, we will never
be the same.**

love. The heartbroken and grief-stricken mother was immediately surrounded by 30 people, rocking with the music, crying, and holding her as she wailed. The music crescendoed and so did the group. There was not a dry eye in the house. We were transported to someplace so cathartic, and so ecstatic, that most of us now speak of it with reverence and disbelief. It was wild and earthy and magical and transforming. Of the people in that room that night, we will never be the same.

•**Grieve Together:** In the Dagara tradition, no one grieves alone. The moment someone goes to the altar to grieve, someone is behind them: sometimes gently with no touch, sometimes a hand placed gently on their back, and sometimes in a full-on body hold. The intention is to be present with each other, to offer support, and to honor these beloved traditions of our Dagara teacher, who tells us that this is so. In the process we train ourselves, despite our cultural upbringing to the contrary, to move closer to each other in the midst of difficult things. In the process we also trigger our own grief, find our own healer, and grow community—right there on the floor in front of the altars.

•**Honor the Caregivers:** It has been calculated that 2000+ hours of service went into making those days as sacred as they were. So many people dropped in, without question, to the tasks at hand. Some tasks were mundane and some were profound, but all were necessary. As the days and then the weeks passed, we honored each other with appreciation and support, words of encouragement and acknowledgement. Life went on and normalcy crept in, but we were forever changed by the immensity of what we had done.

The result of these ingredients was an other-worldly experience: a coming together, in unity, of our entire community to create something not only important but beautiful and healing. I'm sure it's rare to use the word ecstatic when describing a wake and funeral, especially of a young child taken suddenly. But it was exactly that.

On Monday, the day of Rowan's funeral, 100 or more people showed up at our village who hadn't been there during the weekend. They came to honor the parents, the village, and the impossible tragedy that no doubt troubled and unnerved them. Upon arrival, they looked stunned and stricken and shocked. They didn't know what to say or what to do. It was clear that they cared but it was also clear that they hadn't had the opportunity to integrate as we had. After our weekend together, we had metabolized





*Home Funeral
of Kimchi Rylander.*



*Beside the
grave.*

much of the grief. We had purged much of the horror. We had asked the hardest questions. We touched the center of the grief. And we had done it together.

Many of us move to community because of a deep longing for a oneness of experience. Ecovillages are the place where we get to practice. And it's becoming apparent over the years that where we let ourselves be informed by the wisdom of indigenous cultures, we relax. The richness, clarity, solidity, and certainty of these practices inform our actions and let us turn off our worry, just a little, and move into a rightness of being and into existential ease. This in turn allows our leadership to emerge and our hearts to take over. As we continue to build our lives together and create a model of possibility for our nearly ruined world, these sacred days allowed us to add important threads to the fabric of our community. It will be the new high bar of what's possible—a glimpse towards our very best selves.

There's no doubt that Rowan's parents are on a difficult journey for years to come. They will likely go into spiritual valleys that none of us can touch or even imagine. The reckoning will be arduous. But if they are setting off on a canoe journey across the ocean of their grief, we've pushed them off in a very good way.

Postscript: It has been three years since Rowan's passing. Rowan's parents have been in the deepest and darkest of places as they struggled to continue living beyond the tragedy of losing their child. Much of that they had to do alone. They are beginning now to emerge topside into more active roles in the world, having integrated much of the pain. They continue to grieve but are also still surrounded by the community who celebrated Rowan's birth, life, and death—together. Community members who were involved in the weekend refer to it as the moment when our community, then 22 years old, was initiated into a higher level of connection, intention, and integrity. Rowan's death, while unwelcome, served as a significant blessing to so many of us.

Postscript regarding photos: Since Rowan's death, we've had four more deaths in our community. All were elders. Three died at home and all four were tended and buried at home. It's been an unfolding process of receiving and embracing death and all its blessings. The burial and funeral photos herein are part of Kimchi Rylander's death process. Kimchi was much beloved in our community and felt strongly about using

**We touched the
center of the grief.
And we had done
it together.**

her death process as an educational opportunity. You can track the journey on the Positive Deathing by Kimchi Facebook group. She was buried on her 57th birthday on February 20, 2017.

(First written May 2016; postscript added April 2019; photo postscript added July 2019.) 🌸

Lee Warren lives at Earthaven Ecovillage near Asheville, North Carolina in the great southeastern forest. She helped to found, design, and build an off-grid, hand-built, Cohousing Neighborhood and five-acre pasture-based cooperative farm at Earthaven Ecovillage. She is also the founder of SOIL, School of Integrated Living, which teaches organic agriculture, regenerative systems, and community living. She is an educator, herbalist, writer, conscious dying advocate, and food activist with an avid interest in rural wisdom and sustainable economics.

“REMAIN TRUE”: 300 Years of Passing the Torch in the Amana Community

By Jonathan Andelson

Students of historic intentional communities often ask ourselves whether any of the things we have learned about past communities are relevant to today’s communities—whether current communitarians can learn something from the successes and failings of their predecessors. To the extent that “human nature” or cultural continuity is real, our studies should be relevant. Seeing the relevance of an historic community to contemporary ones always involves an act of translation, either by the historian or by the current communitarian, if not by both. What follows is my attempt to translate the experience of “passing the torch” in one historic intentional community—the communal Amana Society—into a contemporary idiom. I should add that, although I lived in Amana as an anthropologist for a total of a year and a half in the 1970s and 1980s and visited frequently during the last 48 years, I am not an Amana native.

The Amana Society has existed at its present location in east-

central Iowa since 1855. For a dozen years prior to that the same group dwelt in upstate New York, near Buffalo, as the Ebenezer Society. For 129 years before coming to America the group that built Ebenezer and then Amana lived in scattered congregations amidst the general population in portions of Germany, Switzerland, and Alsace. They called themselves *Die Gemeinde der wahren Inspirations* (The Community of True Inspiration), best described as an association of religious separatists from the state church, the *Evangelische Kirche*, known in the English-speaking world as the Lutheran Church. Persecution by religious and secular authorities caused the Inspirationists’ emigration to America.

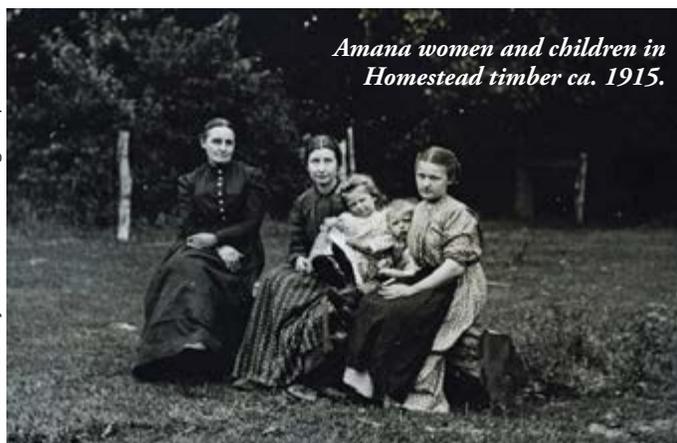
“Passing the torch” in intentional communities is about keeping alive enthusiasm for community living from one generation to the next. In 2014, members of the Amana community observed the 300th anniversary of its founding. If we accept the recent calculations of Donn Devine¹ and use 33 years as the aver-



Bringing food from communal kitchen.



Amana woolen mill ca. 1910.



Amana women and children in Homestead timber ca. 1915.



Homestead school room ca. 1910.

Interior, Amana Church.



Tourist business, contemporary Amana.



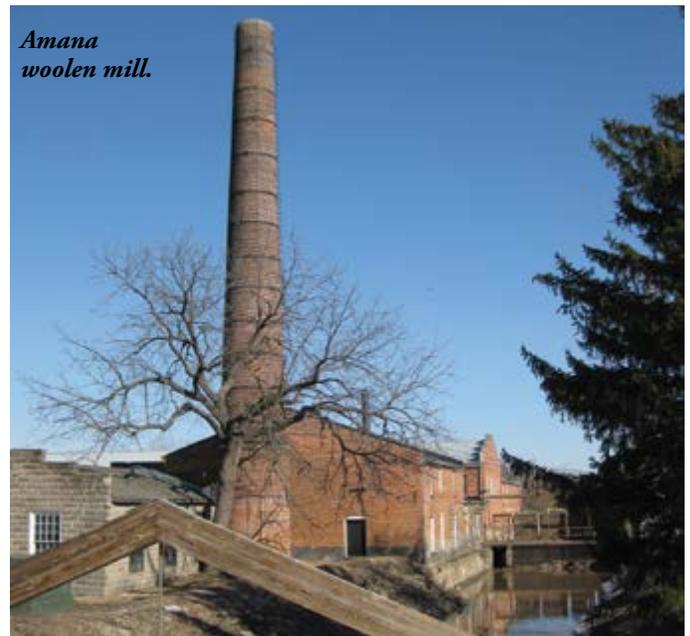
age length of a male generation in Western Europe and North America (three generations per century) and 29 years for a female generation (3.5 generations per century), there have been nine male generations in Amana's history and 10.5 female generations. We can't really count male and female generations separately, and in reality generations do not come "chunked" like this, but in the Inspirationists' case we could loosely say the torch was passed from one generation to another eight times in the last 300 years. How did they do it?

Inspirationists in Europe

In Europe, the Inspirationist church fostered allegiance among its adult members in a number of ways: through the power of the conversion experience, through biblical and other lessons imparted by the church elders in sermons and in writings, through the performance of rituals and hymns, and in particular through the words of *Werkzeuge* ("instruments"; the singular form is *Werkzeug*), individuals chosen by God to deliver divinely inspired and seemingly spontaneous exhortations and reprimands to the members. Ten *Werkzeuge* (male and female) were active in the 18th century, all but one in the community's first few years. Since the *Werkzeuge* spoke directly from God, their words carried great weight with the faithful. All of these sources stressed belief in God and in the divinity of Jesus, personal piety and humility, simplicity, equality, and obedience to the inspired word of God as spoken through the *Werkzeuge*. Inspirationist congregations were led by lay elders (always men); the group had no ordained ministers and could be fairly free-form. During this period scores of Inspirationist congregations formed, most of them in central Germany.

The last *Werkzeug* of the early period died in 1749, a year that marked the approximate transition from the founding generation of Inspirationists to the second generation. The transition appears from all accounts to have been smooth, so we can conclude that the aforementioned ways of instilling allegiance were effective across generations. We do not know much about how the Inspirationists raised their children during this period. We do know that, early on, the community published two books for their spiritual improvement: *Children's Voice or Instruction for Youthful Praise and Youthful Exercises for Children...* (first published in 1717) and *Jesus Songs for His Followers, Especially for the*

Amana woolen mill.



Photos by Jonathan Andelson

Young and Innocent... (first published in 1720).² It is impossible to imagine the Inspirationists building allegiance at this time in the absence of religion.

For the rest of the 18th century, Inspirationist congregations continued to operate in the manner established by the founders. Toward the end of the century, however, as the second generation gave way to the third, commentators within the group began to notice a decline in membership (through death and defection) and in members' degree of commitment to the community. We all know there can be many reasons for a decline in group solidarity. In the Inspirationists' case, I think the absence of any *Werkzeuge* for half a century deprived the community of a renewable source of spiritual enthusiasm ("the living presence of God"). The religious teachings—sound though they were—perhaps began to feel stale, or to seem less different from those of the mainstream churches. Furthermore, in the absence of a *Werkzeug* to champion their cause, antagonism from state institutions (religious and secular) gradually eroded loyalty to the group. By 1800, with only a few congregations barely holding on, a neutral observer would have forecast the community's imminent demise.

Amana homes.



*Weaving machine,
Amana woolen mill.*

But life has a way of delivering surprises. In 1817, first one and then a second and a third new *Werkzeug* appeared, the first two coming from outside the community. In this case, new blood appears to have been essential for a revitalization of the faith. These two individuals had heard of the community and came seeking an understanding of their own inner spiritual promptings.

Some of the old members accepted the outward manifestations of those inner promptings as evidence of true divine inspiration. Significantly, neither of these individuals (one man and one woman) tried to take the community in a new direction but rather slipped into a well-known but long-vacant role. Their presence then triggered a revival among the community's younger members, including one who became the third *Werkzeug*, a 25-year-old man by the name of Christian Metz. In 1819 the first two new *Werkzeuge* quarreled and the man withdrew from the community. Subsequent to this, the woman married a member of the community, and when she did so she suddenly lost the "gift of inspiration," leaving Metz as the sole *Werkzeug*. With the help of some able and dedicated elders he continued the process of rebuilding the community, traveling to the sites of former congregations and also to new locations. Within a decade the group had grown to hundreds of members. The Inspirationists called this the "reawakening." It is more accurate to characterize the reawakening as rekindling (rather than passing) the torch.

Inspirationists in America

Metz helped greatly to rebuild the Inspirationist community, but his particular contribution lay in taking it in altogether new directions. In the 1830s, facing persecution in many locations for their heterodox beliefs, Metz called the members to gather onto four estates in the more tolerant principality of Hessen. A few

years later, in the face of continuing oppression, a divine command issued through Metz instructed the group to emigrate and settle in America (Ebenezer, New York). Shortly after that, Metz (again backed by divine command) led the community to adopt a communal order in which the members pooled all of their assets. The leaders justified this step by citing as precedent the apostolic community described in the Book of Acts. Private property was limited to personal possessions. The members worked in community enterprises (particularly farming, woolen manufacturing, and craft shops such as broom making, basket making, cabinetry, shoe making, and baking), lived in community-built and -assigned residences, and ate in communal dining rooms food that was prepared by the women in communal kitchens. Community doctors and dentists served the members, children studied in community schools through the eighth grade, and the deceased were buried at community expense. The Inspirationists truly had cradle-to-grave security.

The torch metaphor is somewhat strained by these developments. Clearly, the Inspirationists in America lived in a much more tightly-knit community than they had in Europe. In fact, by Timothy Miller's definition of intentional community³, the Inspirationists would only be considered as such after they settled in America. While we can say that a torch was passed to (or rekindled by) a new generation of Inspirationists after 1817, under Metz's leadership that torch was soon dramatically reconfigured. And while the Inspirationists of 1843 claim complete continuity with those of 1714 and 1817, the reality is that after 1843 their "community" included economic, political, educational, and residential features that it had not previously and that added up to a more intensive community life. Passing the torch means continuity of community, but it can entail great discontinuities of organizational structure.

The communal system continued after the Inspirationists relocated to Iowa in 1855 and lasted until 1932, a total of 89 years. For those years, the community existed well outside the American mainstream. The elders oversaw the community's spiritual and economic life. The Inspirationists attended church services 11 times a week. They were pacifists, swore no oaths, did not participate in elections, had their own schools with their own teachers (though state-certified), and tried as much as possible to

remain separate from the rest of the world. No other denominations existed within the seven Amana villages. Virtually no outsiders were accepted into membership, and if a member married an outsider he or she had to leave the community. This social system was designed to create and maintain allegiance to the community and a boundary between it and “the world.”

Christian Metz’s generation—most of those who had been involved in the reawakening of 1817 and made the move to America—successfully passed the torch of community to their children, many of whom were born either on the estates in Germany or in Ebenezer. As adults they mostly took their places in the community alongside their parents’ generation. Metz died in 1867, after seeing the move to Iowa successfully completed, and most of his generation followed him to the grave in the next decade or two. One of those, Barbara Heinemann Landmann, was the woman who had been a *Werkzeug* at the beginning of the reawakening but lost her gift upon marrying. One of the surprises in Inspirationist history is that in 1849, after an interval of over 25 years, Landmann regained the “gift of inspiration” and became a *Werkzeug* for the second time in her life. She joined Metz in leading the community (although the records indicate that she always deferred to his “higher gift”) and outlived him by 16 years. Her death in 1883 brought an end—for the second time in Inspirationist history—to divinely inspired leadership.

The generation after Metz and Landmann maintained the community in much the way that Metz and the elders had set it up in Ebenezer until the turn of the 20th century, when they passed the torch to the third generation (counting from the reawakening, or the sixth generation, counting from the group’s beginning). Then, in an eerie parallel to events a century earlier (when the commitment of the original third generation began to erode), the commitment of the sixth generation (the third after the reawakening) also began to erode. The reasons for this are too numerous to discuss in detail. Suffice it here to list a few of the factors: the lure of the outside world and its moneyed economy, a growing reluctance to work on behalf of the community, the stresses of World War I and anti-German sentiment among their neighbors, a disastrous fire in the community’s woolen mill in 1923, and the Great Depression. In the first three decades of the century nearly a quarter of the members, especially young

people, left the community for the world, creating a labor shortage. To those who remained, it became increasingly evident that the current system could not be maintained. In 1931, after many meetings and conversations, public and private, in which the matter was discussed and many opinions aired, a vote was taken on whether to continue the old system or to seek a new way. Seventy percent of the members voted to reorganize the community. Amana’s “Great Change” took place the next year, 1932.

The Great Change and its Aftermath

The new system that emerged separated the Amana church entirely from the Society’s businesses, which were to be operated as a for-profit joint stock corporation to be called Amana Society, Inc., under the control of an elected board of directors. The corporation continued to run the Society’s farms, the woolen mill, general stores, and some other businesses, and it began a furniture making business, a central bakery, and an appliance business that eventually was sold to outside interests and became Amana Refrigeration, Inc. The communal kitchens all closed and so did the less profitable or redundant craft businesses (for example, there was no longer a need to have a basket maker or a butcher shop in each village). Every member of the old community received shares of stock in the corporation. Stockholders could redeem some of their stock to purchase their residence or could rent from the Society. They could find employment with the new corporation—some of them even performing their old jobs but now for pay—but everyone was free to (and some did) find work outside of Amana or in one of the new privately-owned businesses that began in response to increasing tourism, notably wineries and restaurants.

The newly-named Amana Church Society continued to operate under the control of the elders. Church services remained basically unchanged except for the discontinuance of a yearly spiritual examination of each member by a committee of elders and, over time, a reduction in the number of weekly church services to one. Every church service included the reading of an inspired testimony by one of the *Werkzeuge*. The Church Society “owned” the church buildings and the cemeteries. Church members did not have to be stockholders in the corporation, and stockholders were not required to be church members. The schools—distinct from both church and corporation—within a



Modern loom,
Amana woolen mill.



Interior, communa-era kitchen house.

few years added a high school, and many young people went on to get a college education.

Once again, as in 1843, passing the torch to a new generation meant continuity of community but great discontinuities in organizational structure. Given the nature of the reorganization in 1932, it is clear that the Amana people did not want to remain a communal community, but equally clear that they strongly wanted to remain a community. They could have decided to liquidate and divide the community's assets among the members and let everyone go their own way, but instead they chose to remain together, to attend the same church, to operate many of their traditional businesses, to honor their collective past, and in some ways to return to an earlier version of their community, only more localized.

The generation that engineered the reorganization of 1932 passed the torch to a seventh generation in the mid-1960s. Tourism expanded significantly at that time when Interstate 80 was completed a few miles south of the Amanas and Amana earned a designation as a National Historic Landmark. The number of tourist-oriented businesses increased steadily, and by the 1980s it was claimed that Amana played host to as many as one million tourists a year. Much of the tourism was based on elements of traditional Amana, including the sale of woolens and furniture, a meat shop, generous "family-style" meals in the restaurants, rhubarb wine in the wineries, and a broom and basket shop. Other new businesses had little to do with old Amana, such as a chocolate shop, a candle store, a women's clothing boutique, a theater company, and an annual Oktoberfest celebration. Tourism became central to Amana's economy. A few years ago one prominent tourist sign proclaimed, "Amana Welcomes the World"—a striking departure from the attitude of communal Amana.

The seventh generation adapted to these changes and made some others. The church added English-language church services—for a time in parallel with German-language services, but eventually almost completely replacing them. Later, for the first time in the community's history, it allowed women to become el-

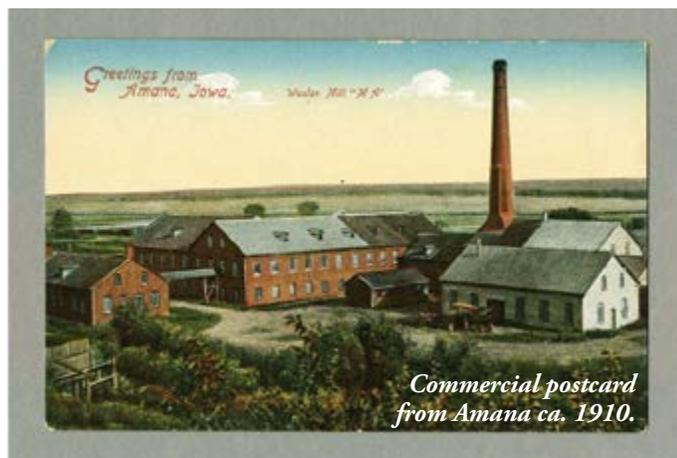
ders. The school district was compelled by declining enrollments to merge with a neighboring district. The corporation allowed non-residents and non-descendants to own Amana Society stock. Against this backdrop, increasing numbers of "outsiders" have moved to Amana for jobs, business opportunities, or retirement and may comprise half or even more of the population. Today perhaps 20 percent of Amana residents belong to the church (although still no other church has a formal presence in the villages).⁴

In the face of these changes, groups of Amana residents, concerned that Amana's traditions were eroding, formed the Amana Heritage Society (which opened an excellent historical museum), the Amana Arts Guild, and the Amana Colonies Land Use District. The Amana Church Society underwent its own modest revitalization in recent years. All these are potent forces in the community for cultural preservation—for keeping the torch lit. Much more could be said about all this, but it is time to bring this narrative to a close.

Looking Back and Forward

As of this writing, it is 87 years since Amana's Great Change, just two years shy of the length of Amana's existence as a communal society. In other words, Amana is not defined only by its communal era. Rather, the defining trope of the group's entire 300-year history has been the persistence of church and community accompanied by periodic changes in structure and organization along the way. In this it might be said that for 300 years the community has been living up to the name that Christian Metz originally wanted to call the new settlement in Iowa: *Bleib treu*, "Remain True." The torch is now being passed to the ninth generation. If past is prologue, other changes are likely in the offing, but what they will be is anyone's guess, for events intrude on both human plans and societal trends. 🐦

Jonathan Andelson teaches in the Department of Anthropology at Grinnell College and is a member of the Communal Studies Association (www.communalstudies.org).



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2. Lanny Haldy, *An Annotated Bibliography of Inspirationist Publications in Germany and America, 1715-2013*. Clinton, NY: Richard W. Couper Press, 2017.

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4. Jon Childers, Amana Heritage Museum, personal communication.

Connecting through Generations at the Bruderhof

By Marianne Wright



June 2020 marks the centenary of the Bruderhof, a Christian communal movement that today is home to around 3000 people of many nationalities living on 26 communities in the United States, Great Britain, Germany, Austria, Australia, Paraguay, and Korea, with small mission outposts elsewhere around the globe. The Bruderhof's founders were inspired by the teachings of Jesus and the example of the first Christians in Jerusalem, who shared all their possessions. We do the same: Bruderhof members take life vows of poverty and obedience—each of us owns nothing, and we promise to dedicate ourselves to work within the community in whatever capacity we can best contribute. We live like this because we believe that trying to create a society where love and justice are a reality is the best service we can do for our fellow human beings.

My family—my husband Kent and I with our five children—live at Woodcrest, a community of around 300 in New York's Hudson Valley. (There are smaller communities in cities.) Like other rural Bruderhof communities, Woodcrest has an elementary school, dining hall and community kitchen, medical and dental clinic, community laundry, and income-earning departments. Our family starts the day having breakfast together, joined a couple times a week by single members of the community. We then walk to school or work—I do administrative work for the community school, and Kent is part of the design team for Rifton Equipment, a Bruderhof business that manufactures mobility equipment for the disabled. We meet at noon for lunch in the community dining hall and then go back to work (for the adults) and afternoon activities (for the children). Evenings may be spent having dinner with our family, or—once the kids are in bed—going to a worship or community meeting, joining an all-hands-on-deck project in the factory or garden, or just spending time with neighbors and friends. Daily life at the dozen smaller communities in cities throughout the world is organized differently, although every community meets daily for meals and worship. Some of the city communities run small businesses, while at others people have jobs, volunteer with local charities, or attend college.

There are five generations in a hundred years, and my children are fifth genera-

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Gretchen Hidel.



tion Bruderhof. Like me, they were born into community life and know the community's history as their own. They also know that Bruderhof membership is not a birthright: each person, whether or not they grow up here, must choose whether or not to become a member. Communities are made up of individual people, and when our children were born Kent and I chose to name them for people who will, we hope, be a source of inspiration for them as they and their generation come of age. The names of our two daughters reflect the connections between generations.

Our first daughter, Gwen, was born in June 2015 almost exactly a year after the death at age 92 of Gwen Hinde. Grandma Gwen was a tiny woman, untiringly gracious, perceptive, and forthright, and extremely fond of her noisy pet canary Aled Jones. She had lived at the Bruderhof since 1949 when, at the age of 29, she traveled from South Carolina to Paraguay, to which the Bruderhof had fled from Nazi persecution during World War II. In 1959 she married John Hinde, an Englishman who had worked at Lloyds of London before himself making the perilous wartime sea voyage to Paraguay; horrified by wartime suffering, he was looking for "a life that removes the occasion for war." At the time they joined the community, there were only a handful of elderly people—most members were in their 20s and 30s. By the time John and Gwen moved to Woodcrest in the 1990s, there were a number of older members on each Bruderhof community. Since the Hindes had no children, they were cared for by a succession of younger couples who lived next door to them, helping them with household duties, providing an arm as they walked to communal gatherings, and sharing each other's company on weekends and in the evening. Living with someone of a different generation is an education (for the young) in the skills that make community life possible: humor, persistence, and humility. "This life is a life of daring," John liked to say. "It's the life here itself that is the adventure."

Gwen's second name is Margaret, for Kent's mother (who has been known all her life by her second name, Erika). At 75, Grandma is incredibly energetic, walking and swimming, baking and canning, and passing on her love of music to her violin students, including Gwen. My guess is that she was named for her grandmother, Gretchen Hidel, a single mother who died a year after the birth of her only child, Rudi. Left an orphan, he was brought to the first Bruderhof community in Germany in the 1920s. He and the other community school children fled Germany in the 1930s when threatened that a Nazi teacher would come to take over the little Bruderhof school. They lived briefly in Liechtenstein and then moved to a farm, the Cotswold Bruderhof, in southern England. It was here, some years later, that Rudi met his future wife Winifred. She cycled to the community from Oxford, where she was an undergraduate, looking for a way of life "worth living and dying for." Neither Rudi nor Winifred had relatives on the community (hers disowned her when she decided to join, although they later reconciled). The community became their family: as singles, they joined other families for meals, holidays, and weekend activities. When they were married there were hundreds of people to celebrate with them, and later to rejoice in the births of their five daughters, to grieve with them when their son was stillborn, and to share all the other unexpected joys, sorrows, and frustrations of life. And in their turn they provided the same to others with their faithful friendship, generous hospitality, and unmatched ability to entertain—no one could tell an anecdote like Opa Rudi.

Our second daughter, Dorothy, was named for my grandmother. She and my grandfather came to the first American Bruderhof, Woodcrest, in 1958 with their young family (my dad is their oldest child). Woodcrest had been started a couple years before in response to a wave of interest in communal living among young Americans, many of whom, including my grandfather, spent the war in Civilian Public Service camps as an alternative to military service. (Over a dozen ex-CPsers eventually came to the Bruderhof.) They too believed that war is ultimately caused by the selfishness of an unjust society and they joined the Bruderhof because it offered a real, full-time alternative. Throughout their lives, though, they also found



Erika Wright.

Dorly Albertz.



other ways to quietly erode inequality, visiting and corresponding with prison inmates, tutoring children from disadvantaged homes, volunteering in a food bank, and welcoming wayfarers of all kinds into their home.

Our daughter Dorothy was also named in honor of Dorothea “Dorly” Albertz, who lived downstairs from us the summer Dorothy was born. (Bruderhof families generally live in houses with several apartments—each family has their own living space but the kitchen and commons areas are often shared.) Dorly was a kindergarten teacher who came to the Bruderhof during the 1950s as a single woman. She later married George and they had three daughters. That summer of 2018 their house was full of children—ours, their four grandchildren, other small neighbors—who were welcome to come and go, with or without their parents. There were games of Monopoly and roll ball with George, board and card games appropriate for the five- and six-year-old crowd, and a fascinating doll house with tiny china dishes that Dorly had grown up with. She was regal in her reclining chair, happily observing the children spread around the room. With her years of experience as a kindergarten teacher, she guided imaginary play in exciting new directions, adjudicated squabbles, and told stories of her own childhood on a family mill in a little German village. Without ever moralizing, she taught important lessons: fair play, honesty, creativity, how to be a good loser, and, as summer went on and her cancer progressed, courage. She died in October when our Dorothy was four months old.

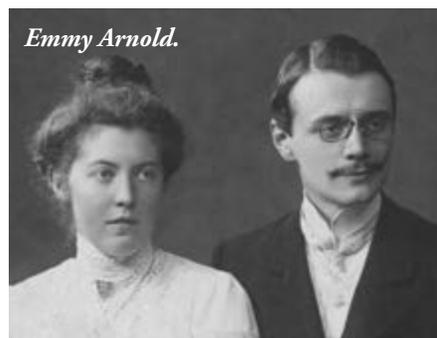
Dorothy’s second name goes right back to the beginning of the Bruderhof—it was also the second name of Emmy Monika Arnold, cofounder of the community along with her husband Eberhard and sister Else von Hollander. Emmy Arnold lived to be 95, faithful to the inspiration which led her and her husband to turn their back on his career as an academic and public speaker, sell their home and life insurance, and move with their five young children to a remote German village to try to put into practice Jesus’ words in the Sermon on the Mount. Eberhard Arnold died unexpectedly in 1935 during surgery for complications to a broken leg, and for her 45 years of widowhood she remained faithful to him. I remember her as a very old person in her lawn chair under the trees; I remember her beautiful smile.

My mother, Emmy’s granddaughter, got the name as well. Mom is an old-fashioned family doctor, which means that I grew up watching her respond to her pager at all hours of the clock, often leaving her eight children in the middle of a meal to suture a cut or treat an asthma attack (my dad was very good at managing the chaos while she was gone). She is still working at the community medical clinic and she still responds to her pager and does house calls, so her grandchildren have her example of unhesitating cheerful service, plus they get a lot of stickers and lollipops from her office.

Our children also have namesakes that are not members of the Bruderhof. Gwen likes to hear about St Gwen of Brittany, known as “saint-bearer” because she was the mother of many saints. It’s hard to be interested in community in the 21st century and not be inspired by Dorothy Day, the founder of the Catholic Worker Movement. And anyone who is interested in how a spiritual heritage can be passed on will look to Augustine’s mother Monika, who famously prayed for her wayward son. There are a lot of St Margarets.

So that’s it. Two girls, four names, and a lot to live up to. There are other names we could have chosen: Sibyl, Ellen, Annemarie, Norann, Nina, Edith, Christel. And if my daughters decide to become the next generation of the Bruderhof, there will be many more names, people who agree with Dorothy Day that the only solution to the “long loneliness...is love and that love comes with community.” 🐦

*Marianne Wright lives at Woodcrest (www.bruderhof.com/en/where-we-are/united-states/woodcrest), a Bruderhof community in New York’s Hudson Valley. She has edited two books for Plough (www.plough.com), the Bruderhof’s publishing arm: *Anni, Letters and Writings of Annemarie Wächter* and *The Gospel in George MacDonald*.*



Emmy Arnold.



Monika Mommsen.



Winifred Hidel.

Photos courtesy of Marianne Wright

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inghouse for information and as 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.

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LOCATION AND CONTACT: 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.

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REDUCING CONFLICT WITH A "RIGHTS OF RENTERS AND OWNERS AGREEMENT"

(continued from p. 76)

time re. continuing to live on the property, or to be evicted from the property.

Renters specifically don't have these rights: 1. _____. 2. _____. 3. _____.

The template for this agreement included Responsibilities of Renters (and responsibilities renters explicitly *didn't* have), and the same for owners. If you'd like a copy of this template for your group, email me at diana@ic.org.

One of my clients created the following agreement for his shared group household in Canada, which the group has used successfully ever since.

Rights and Responsibilities for Renters and Owners

RIGHTS of Renters:

1. To live in their room site for the duration of their lease of that space.
2. The following utilities provided by the owner(s): • heating • electricity • dishes • laundry soap • wifi.
3. To have full use of the following parts of the buildings and grounds with the other tenants and residents: • kitchen • upstairs and downstairs living areas • laundry room • garage • backyard • front yard • storage space.
4. To have the following specified uses of these specified parts of buildings and grounds with the other tenants and residents: • N/A.
5. To have first option to renew their lease with the owner unless the owner and/or other residents and/or renters don't want them to for various reasons, including but not limited to the following: • amount owed on rent • illegal activities • difficult unresolved behaviour.
6. To participate in the group governance process and have full decision-making rights in the following kinds of decisions re. living on the property: • cleaning schedule and responsibility • noise policy • events policy —*and*—
7. To participate in the group governance process and have the right to offer ideas and give input to the owner(s) on the following kinds of decisions about the property and their living on the property: • vision and mission • membership process • training requirements (NVC, Sociocracy, Restorative Circles) • fee to join as a members • co-owning agreement • choice of renters • property development • double occupancy • children living on the premises • animals living on the premise • guest policy • use of the money coming from the sixth bedroom.
8. Specifically to have input on the owner's(s') decision for another renter or resident to be "put on probation" for a specific named period of time re. continuing to live on the property, or to be evicted from the property.

Renters specifically don't have these rights:

1. Decisions about development of the property.
2. Fixing the rent price.
3. Final decision on selection of other renters.

RESPONSIBILITIES of Renters:

1. To pay the money they agree to pay in their lease for rent, the cleaning deposit, etc.
2. To do the following tasks/chores for their room, etc.: • empty bin • clean windows • clean walls, floor, etc.
3. To do their individual part of the following tasks/chores in the house/on the property (about 15 to 45 minutes of work every week): • clean upstairs and downstairs bathrooms • clean upstairs and downstairs living rooms • do weekly cleaning of the kitchen • do daily kitchen maintenance, maintenance of the yard (sweeping, grass, snow in the winter).
4. To follow the rules and agreements of the shared living space and/or shared property as described in the OCIC agreement document.

Also possible:

5. To pay no amount of repair and maintenance of the property, including buildings and grounds.
6. To pay 0 percent of liability insurance for property.
7. To pay 0 percent of city property taxes.
8. To pay their rent on or before the 27th of every month.
9. To provide 30 days notice before leaving, during which they continue to pay rent.

Renters specifically don't have these responsibilities:

1. To be fully responsible for paying land payments and the mortgage.
2. To be fully responsible for repair and maintenance of the property's grounds and buildings.
3. To be fully responsible for paying liability insurance for the property.
1. To be fully responsible for paying annual property taxes.

RIGHTS of Owners:

1. To make decisions on the use of the surplus funds derived from rental income from the house.
2. To develop plan and make decisions on long-term development of the ground and the property.
3. To make final decisions on the selection of renters.
4. To develop the functional circles (Sociocracy).
5. To select the governance method (Sociocracy).
6. To determine amount of rent to be charged for each bedroom.
7. To terminate rental agreement following the provisions included in the rental laws.
8. To gain access to a bedroom for inspection within 24 hours of informing the renter.
9. To sell the house.
10. To define the key aspects of the intentional community using the guidelines offered in the book: *Creating a Life Together* by Diana Leaf Christian.

Owners specifically don't have these rights:

1. To tell renters what to do inside their room, unless what they're doing af-

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fects the well-being of other people or the property.

2. To use the common area in the property for their sole use unless agreed to by the renters.

1. To require participation in meetings.

RESPONSIBILITIES of Owners:

1. Total responsibility for all land payments, including principal and interest, for any mortgage(s) or liens on the property.

2. Total responsibility for all repair and maintenance of the property, including buildings and grounds. Paying 100 percent of all repair and maintenance of the property, including buildings and grounds.

3. Total responsibility for all liability insurance for the property which include paying 100 percent of all liability insurance for the property.

4. Total responsibility for annual property taxes,

5. To clean the rental room after renters move out.

Owners specifically don't have these responsibilities:

1. To clean the inside of the rental units when they're rented and occupied by a renter.

2. To offer financial assistance to renters in any form.

3. To modify the property to match what renters may want.

Renter's signature: _____

Date: _____

Owner's signature: _____

Date: _____

Diana Leafe Christian, author of Creating a Life Together and Finding Community, speaks at conferences, offers consultations, and leads workshops and webinars on creating successful new communities, and on Sociocracy, an effective self-governance and decision-making method. She lives at Earthaven Ecovillage in North Carolina. If you'd like a copy for your group of the template for this Rights and Responsibilities of Renters and Owners Agreement, email Diana at diana@ic.org.



Reducing Conflict with a “Rights of Renters and Owners Agreement”



I want *every* kind of intentional community to succeed and thrive, including when owner-landlords share their rural property or city home with renters as fellow community members.

Using a specific kind of Renters and Owners Agreement can reduce if not eliminate one kind of wrenching conflict that frequently arises between onsite owners and renters (I called these “feudal lord and serfs communities” in *Creating a Life Together*). This kind of agreement clearly states the specific rights and responsibilities of renters and of owners, as well the rights and responsibilities that renters and owners explicitly *don't* have.

Conflict in renter-owner communities significantly declines when renters have decision-making rights along with the owner in decisions about (1) selecting the new incoming tenants they'll share the property with, (2) basic behavior agreements about how people should treat each other and treat each other's children, (3) policies for pets, parking, quiet hours, and agreements about visitors, guests, and sublet arrangements, (4) policies about how to evict people who disrupt the group in various ways, and (5) renters being guaranteed a certain amount of notice if the owners want to or need to sell the property. And owners have less frustration when renters share in the annual expenses of property taxes, liability insurance, and repair and maintenance of the property and buildings, for example.

The group makes two copies of the Renters and Owners Agreement for both renters and owners to sign, with the renter keeping one copy and the owner keeping the other. Having signed copies of everyone's rights and responsibilities can help prevent misunderstandings and conflicts between renters and owners in the future.

Here's an excerpt from a template for a Renters and Owners

Agreement I drafted several years ago for my workshops.

Rights of Renters:

(1) To live in their room/apartment/cabin/house/campsite for the duration of their lease of that space.

(2) To have the following utilities provided by the owner(s): _____.

(3) To have full use of the following parts of the buildings and grounds with the other tenants and residents: _____.

(4) To have the following specified uses of these specified parts of buildings and grounds with the other tenants and residents: _____.

(5) To have first option to renew their lease with the owner unless the owner and/or other residents and/or renters don't want them to for various reasons, including but not limited to the following reasons: _____.

(6.a) To participate in the group governance process (if applicable) and have *full decision-making rights* in the following kinds of decisions about their living on the property: _____ —and/or—

(6.b) To participate in the group governance process (if applicable) and have *the right to offer ideas and give input to the owner(s)* on the following kinds of decisions about the property and their living on the property: _____.

(7) Specifically to have full decision-making rights—or—to have input on the owner's(s') decision for a new individual renter/household/family to live on the property.

(8) Specifically to have full decision-making rights—or—to have input on the owner's(s') decision for another renter or resident to be “put on probation” for a specific named period of

(continued on p. 74)

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—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.

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