Community Approaches to the Climate Crisis

Communities

Life in Cooperative Culture

Summer 2020 • Issue #187

CLIMATE JUSTICE THROUGH COMMUNITY

On the Road to a Solar Future

Kinship, Climate Justice, and COVID-19

Community Inventory in Transition Times

Urban Homesteading for Climate Resilience

Centering Blackness in Our Soils and Our Souls

We Believe Everyone Has the Right to Live Creatively, Sustainably, Intentionally

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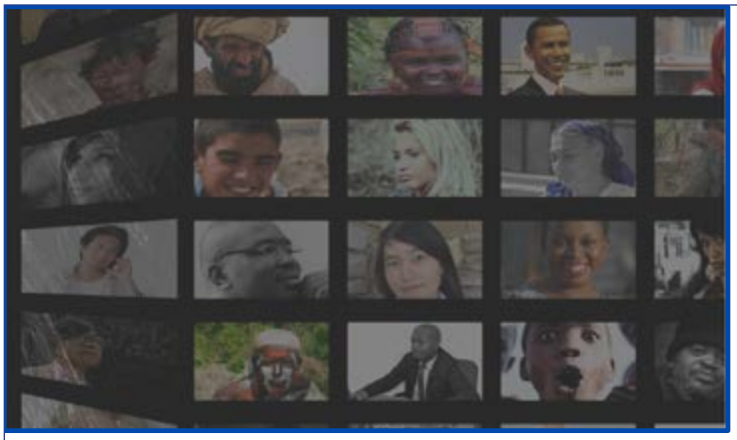

DEEPENING COMMUNITY THROUGH CHALLENGING TIMES

As we work together, as a nation, to flatten the curve of the global pandemic, we find ourselves at a unique crossroads. We have been working hard to find solutions to a problem whose scope is beyond anything communities have ever encountered. However, it is in communities that we will find the strength to not only persevere but emerge stronger and more resilient than ever.

Tamarack Institute's Vibrant Communities – Cities Deepening Community is a movement and network aimed at deepening the sense of community across Canada. We work with cities and neighbourhoods to create a movement that provides conditions that make deepening community a priority.

Visit ***deepeningcommunity.ca*** to learn more about the Cities Deepening Community network.

> Creating deeper communities is THE opportunity of our time. As we learn the skills to transform our neighbourhoods, we restore our capacity to care for one another.

Cities Reducing Poverty | Cities Deepening Community
Vibrant Communities

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6 REASONS TO FOCUS ON COMMUNITY

- Strengthen connection and combat loneliness.
- Leverage the assets of the whole community to drive long-term change.
- Promote citizen-led multi-sector engagement and develop a common agenda.
- Build systems for belonging and community safety.
- Develop and implement neighbourhood or city-wide strategies for change.
- Strengthen neighbourhoods.

LEARN

Annual National Gathering of Cities deepening Community – ***Celebrating Neighbours-Measuring the Impact of ABCD***. In June 2021, we will explore the impact of Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) and leading neighbourhood and community revitalizing strategies.

Webinars - Deepening Community hosts a variety of dynamic webinars with leading thinkers or practitioners on a wide variety of topics.

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Join over 6,000 learners to deepen your understanding of Neighbourhood development in one of our Communities of Practice.

Neighbourhood Leaders Forum – Connect with cities and organizations interested in building strong neighbourhoods.

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Citizens and Emergency Preparedness – Connecting cities that are advancing citizen engagement in disaster preparedness.

ACT

Join 18 cities and neighbourhoods working to deepen the collective understanding of the power and possibility of community by developing strategies at the neighbourhood or city level. We are accepting members from across Canada and the United States. Contact Heather Keam at ***heather@tamarackcommunity.ca*** to learn more about the network and membership.

Issue #187
Summer 2020

CLIMATE JUSTICE THROUGH COMMUNITY

ONLINE ONLY

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

ON THE COVER

Participants in the Protectors of the Salish Sea movement (organized by Paul Chiyokten Wagner; see his article on page 21) on a prayer walk through Volunteer Park, beginning at the waters of Lake Duwamish (Lake Washington) and on the way to blessing the waters of the Salish Sea at Myrtle Edwards Park. See *protectorsofthesalishsea.org*. Photo courtesy of Ryan Flesch.

Communities
Life in Cooperative Culture

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Letters

Don't Forget the Winged Dinosaurs

Hi Chris,

I've finally had time to go through the entire issue (#186—Picking Up the Pieces: New Beginnings) and found the stories to be compelling and heartfelt, so many good intentions gone awry! And yet, as you point out in your own poignant article ("Dinosaurs, Asteroids, Gardening, and Community"), putting things together can come following breaking apart, even as the pieces are rearranged in often surprising and novel ways. And don't forgot those winged dinosaurs who became birds! They followed three precepts that can help us today: adapt, cope, survive. Excellent issue.

Johannes Zinzendorf
The Hermitage
Pitman, Pennsylvania

Best Ever

I wanted to let you know how wonderful your current issue is! Best ever in my estimation, but perhaps that is because it covers topics near and dear to my heart. I love the short story format, I can actually get through most of the articles! And then again there is that one long one that I tore through because it was so interesting and so personal. ...

Hope you are thriving through this crisis,

Jeffrey Mabee
Belfast Cohousing and Ecovillage
Belfast, Maine

News from Our Partners

Notes in Passing Blog Post #3: "CERES, For a Living Planet"

At a moment when immediate matters of life and death compel our attention, it may be worth noting the possibility that the present pandemic gathering both frequency and potency is, like the fire storms and rising seas, collateral damage to the warming of our planet. If so, humans may be just one more species headed for oblivion—with the dubious distinction of piloting Space Ship Earth by consulting cross-eyed a manual of arrogant denial.

I prefer, however, to recognize our capacity for systemic change. In that endeavor, I present a story of a bold, yet nuanced initiative which affected the trajectory of corporate America towards a more sustainable future—or at least gave us a better chance. For sure, we could use a better chance. Thus, from the perspective of one who was there from the inception, I give you the first decade or so of the CERES Coalition, as a lesson for how positive change can happen when it's well thought-out, resourced, and executed.

There are many ways to tell a story. **Here's a YouTube link to a 15 minute version of the video I made for CERES on the occasion of our 10th anniversary in 1999, "CERES, For a Living Planet": www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZcsKgYz2UbM.**

If you prefer a more historical and anecdotal approach, or just more of the story go to: **exemplars.world/2020/04/07/paul-freundlichs-blog-notes-in-passing/?fbclid=IwAR2-_o_2PKAdjijYq0EHqKC7ev9aSadSrku3v-aiXJ1ude7-MjvMCZbwzOk.**

—Paul Freundlich

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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. 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.

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We also appreciate **tax-deductible donations** to help us cover the costs of relaunching the magazine and improving its accessibility and outreach. Subscriptions alone do not generate enough revenue to publish this (or almost any) magazine. We exist because of the generosity of those who can afford to pay more and who believe in our project.

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 a supporter of COMMUNITIES!

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All subscribers, print or digital, now receive full access to all of our digital back issues, 1972 to present, for online viewing and/or download. **If you subscribed before we had this system in place, and haven't received information about how to access this archive, please email subscriptions@gen-us.net for simple instructions. Please enjoy this resource!**

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 contributions that profile community living and why people choose it, descriptions of what's difficult and what works well, news about existing and forming communities, or articles that illuminate community experiences–past and present–offering insights into mainstream cultural issues. We also seek articles about cooperative ventures of all sorts–in workplaces, in neighborhoods, among people sharing common interests–and about "creating community where you are."

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

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

Submissions Policy

To submit an article, please first request Writers' Guidelines; email *editor@gen-us.net*. To obtain Photo Guidelines, email *layout@gen-us.net*. Both are also available online at *gen-us.net/communities*.

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What is an "Intentional Community"?

An "intentional community" is a group of people who have chosen to live or work together in pursuit of a common ideal or vision. Most, though not all, share land or housing. Intentional communities come in all shapes and sizes, and display amazing diversity in their common values, which may be social, economic, spiritual, political, and/or ecological. Some are rural; some urban. Some live all in a single residence; some in separate households. Some raise children; some don't. Some are secular, some are spiritually based; others are both. For all their variety, though, the communities featured in our magazine hold a common commitment to living cooperatively, to solving problems nonviolently, and to sharing their experiences with others.

Notes from the Editor BY CHRIS ROTH

Transition Times on Planet Earth

Welcome to Communities' first pandemic edition; you may notice some changes. COVID-19 has hit our finances just as it's hit almost everyone else's: following a promising initial influx of renewals, new subscriptions, and donations upon launching our new subscription service in March, we hit a spell of 19 consecutive days without a single order as the world went into lockdown in April. While income is again flowing, we haven't caught up yet. We've responded to this setback by a) reducing the size of this issue by eight pages compared with our typical issues (some material appears as online-only posts instead); b) reducing our print run of issue #187 to what is absolutely essential (we'll use excess of issues #185 and #186 as samples in coming months); c) switching to a new printer who can give us better pricing at flexible issue lengths and reduced quantities; and d) cutting all staff compensation until our income can once again come into balance with our projected expenses, and instead spending only on non-negotiable items such as printing costs, postage and shipping, internet fees.

We appreciate that many of you who have been subscribing anew or renewing have perhaps sensed our situation even without our articulating it, and have subscribed at a higher Supporter or Sustainer level, and/or added donations to your order, or purchased print back issues to supplement it. All of these have buoyed both our morale and our finances, as well as our prospects; we are optimistic that we can navigate these perilous financial times as long as readers are "voting with your dollars" for this project. Staff are finding ways to get by, at least in the short term, as some pandemic-related economic assistance is fortunately now available to the self-employed. The future is of course unknown, but please know that keeping this magazine publishing seems to us even more important during this time of great transition, and we are committed to doing that in the absence of actual hell or high water that may prevent it.

The majority of the articles in this issue on "Climate Justice through Community" were completed before the pandemic surged to the front of everyone's attention. Some later-arriving articles do include or even focus on the pandemic and its relation to climate issues. We could potentially have replaced the older articles with new ones entirely coronavirus-related, drawn from the many online posts in the last couple months from communitarians about how they are adapting. However, in this ever-evolving situation, we've decided to move ahead with this issue focused mostly on something *other* than COVID-19, much as the coronavirus is at the forefront of all of our consciousness. There is no dearth of material right now to read about the pandemic; yet our planned theme concerns issues that in both the short and long term are at least as consequential, likely ultimately more so. And the two are certainly interconnected, even inextricably interlinked. We plan more in-depth articles about the impacts of COVID-19 in our Fall and Winter issues, as we all gain more insight and wisdom about the meaning and best adaptations to be derived from this unprecedented event in our lives.

I intended to write an introductory piece for this space, entitled something like "What Do Indigenous Genocide, the Holocaust, COVID-19, and Climate Change Have in Common?" Indeed, they—and especially attempts to ignore or deny them, to turn a blind eye—do have an immense amount in common, which I hoped to

Nancy L. Roth,
March 30, 1936–May 9, 2020.

demonstrate while suggesting how we may best respond to their reality. However, as if the article "Dinosaurs, Asteroids, Gardening, and Community" in the Spring issue wasn't finished with me yet, not only did the biggest "asteroid" in my lifetime on a society-wide scale then hit, but the biggest-ever asteroid in my personal life did too, dwarfing all those setbacks listed in the article, which now seem minor by comparison. I know that as with those other "disasters" I described, new life and opportunities for growth will come from the initial devastation felt upon the passing of a parent. I can't help but feel that this particular parent was extraordinary—because she was, and is. I am surprised that I was able to squeeze out this Editor's Note at all, because for days I've been thinking I'd need to leave this space blank, so empty of words (except about her) have I felt—and so unable to put even those words together into something coherent without being overcome by emotion. Grieving will be a long process, and fortunately it is also accompanied by immense gratitude for everything my mother has contributed to not only my life, but to those of countless others.

I will not attempt to write more here, other than a "thank you."

Chris Roth edits Communities.

Subscriptions: A Doorway Not Only to the Future, but to the Past

Your subscription to Communities, whether print or digital, gives you complete 24-hour access to our digital archives, viewable online and downloadable by anyone with an active account. You can access those archives by logging in with your account number (shown at the top of your mailing label) and zip/postal code at **simplecirc.com/subscriber_login/communities**. This site is also linked from **gen-us.net/back-issues** and **gen-us.net/subscribe**. You can find an index to all 3500+ past Communities articles at **gen-us.net/communities-index**, and then easily navigate to the issues/articles you want to read. For example (to choose a slice of that index, not unrelated to the rest of this page):

Roth, Nancy. "Monasticism, Community, and 'The Great Work'." COMMUNITIES: Life in Cooperative Culture, No. 154 (Spring 2012): 32-33, 75.
Roth, Nancy Moore. "The Lenox Place News." COMMUNITIES: Life in Cooperative Culture, No. 152 (Fall 2011): 45-47.
Roth, Nancy. "Remembering Jane Owen: New Harmony's Joyful Elder. Jane Blaffer Owen April 18, 1915-June 21, 2010. New Harmony, Indiana." COMMUNITIES: Life in Cooperative Culture, No. 149 (Winter 2010): 32-33.
Roth, Nancy. "Strangely Warmed: A Homeowner's Adventure with Geothermal Energy." COMMUNITIES: Life in Cooperative Culture, No. 161 (Winter 2013): 46-47.
Roth, Nancy. "The Virtues of Unsettling." COMMUNITIES: Life in Cooperative Culture, No. 176 (Fall 2017): 75. Review of Mark Sundeen, The Unsettlers.

Please consider subscribing and gifting others with subscriptions—not only to take part in cutting-edge conversations about unfolding issues within the communities movement, but to gain access to the wisdom of the elders and elders-to-be who have contributed to this archive of collected experience and insight. Individually, none of us will be around forever. Yet across generations, the unique contributions that we make to one another and to the future can endure and continue to influence those who follow.

Modeling Urban Homesteading for Climate Resilience in Portland, Oregon

By Rachel Freifelder

Before I tell you about my intentional community, let me tell you about my *community*.

I'm walking back from the Cully Urban Farm Store with 50 lbs. of duck feed in the wheelbarrow, when I meet my neighbor Carolyn on her way to get a newspaper from the corner store. She asks if I've heard about the emergency preparedness meeting next month, and if I would be willing to translate the flier into Spanish. (Of course I will.)

Since there are no sidewalks in the Cully neighborhood, I have twice the chance of running into a neighbor walking down the middle of the street. Our street is paved; some of the streets a few blocks away are still dirt, a holdover from when our neighborhood was an unincorporated rural area of the county. The city of Portland annexed Cully in my lifetime, some parts as recently as 1993.

I ask Carolyn how her blueberries did with last summer's record heat, and how she thinks this winter's lack of chill might affect fruiting. Though I'm an experienced gardener and landscape professional, Carolyn and her husband Bruce have mentored me on the finer points of Oregon fruit growing. They just celebrated 40 years at their half-acre urban farm, and they've seen some changes in the neighborhood and the weather.

• • •

When people ask where I live, I tell them, "When you look at the map of Portland, just south of the airport you'll see an area where the streets are far apart." Cully's large lots, small houses, and more affordable housing prices have attracted urban farmers like Bruce and Carolyn for decades. I might add, "Cully is the place for folks like me who wish we lived in the country but have a reason to be in the city."

Blueberry is a beloved fruit in Oregon, a significant share of the local economy, and the name of the intentional community I live in. We are intentional neighbors in three independently-owned houses, each on one-fifth-acre lots. The first house was purchased in 2006, the two flanking it in 2007. The front yards flow together without fences. The backyard fences were here when we arrived, and they keep Chris and Pat's chickens out of my vegetable beds. My household, Chickpea Cottage, is a four-bedroom collective with 1300 sq. ft. of vegetable beds, 12 fruit trees, many berries and medicinal and native plants.

The organic process extends beyond our three houses as well. Five years ago a family moved in to the west of us, and we put a gate in the fence so the kids could come visit. (Pro tip: the gate swings into our yard, so we didn't have to get their permission.) Another three houses across the street have taken down parts of their backyard fences, and a fourth neighbor bought an adjacent house because his son is in first grade with the six-year-old who is now next door.

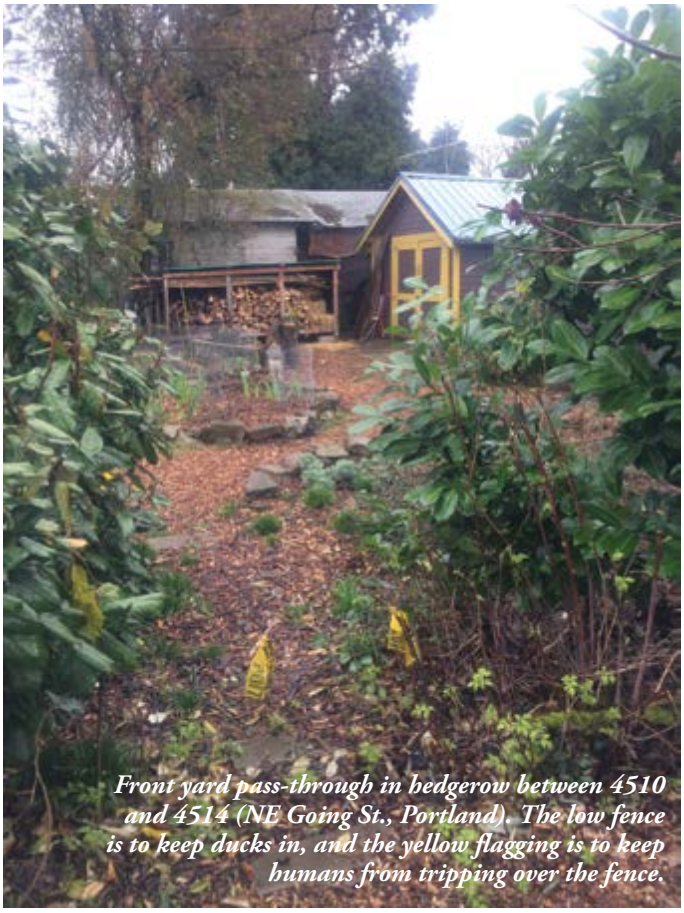
• • •

I roll the wheelbarrow into our yard and greet my housemates. Tania is replacing the fittings on one of our rain barrels. We've graduated from two 55-gallon drums on one downspout to that much on each of two downspouts, plus five 275-gallon totes behind my detached bedroom at the highest point of our lot. Eventually we will have 3700 gallons of rain storage capacity, enough to get us through our summer irrigation needs. Tania was once a market farmer in rural Washington. Now she's a civil engineer specializing in water quality, so she's naturally taken charge of both the rain catchment and the greywater system. She aspires to plumb the rainwater through a potable water filter and back into the house. So far, we use both the rainwater and greywater for irrigation, and for cleaning things like shovels or root vegetables. Rainwater is much better for the duck pond than chlorinated water. And the rainwater often goes into the washing machine, the tea kettle, or the stock pot. It's easier to boil rain water than filter out chlorine. Sometimes I use it cold out of the barrel to wash my face.

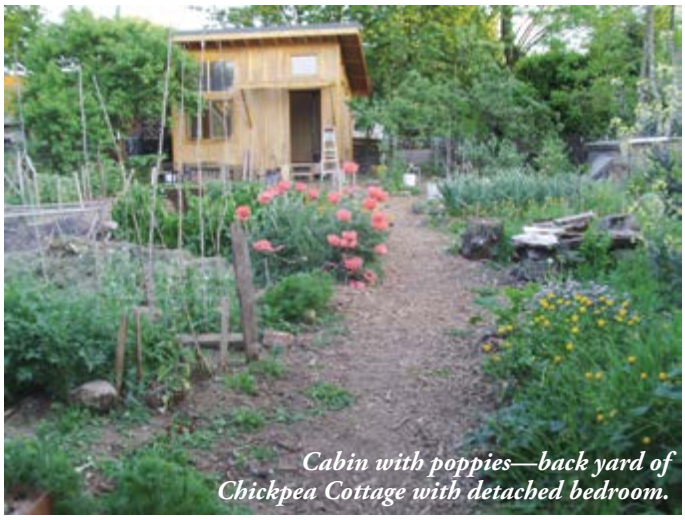
Bobby is sawing firewood for next winter. Heating with wood reduces our dependence on fossil fuels, but we're aware that it also has an impact. We're careful to season our wood and burn it as cleanly as possible in an EPA-certified stove. When we feel cold, we put on warmer clothes before we make a fire. The last person to bed opens the draft rather than damp the stove down, which would make black smoke from smoldering wood. Most of our wood is from the local waste stream and gets here without motor vehicles, in bike trailers and cargo bikes. Some is dropped off by arborists in big trucks, which were already on the road and would have taken that wood to the dump. As with everything we salvage, we know that someday demand will be higher and there will be less free firewood on the curb and in construction dumpsters.

I park the wheelbarrow and carry the two buckets of feed back to the duck house. Ellie, five, is riding her bike in her back yard and sees me. "Rachel! Rachel! Can we come over and visit the ducks?" Her brother Ethan, three, rolls up on his trike. "Hi Rachel—can I feed the ducks?"

"If it's ok with your mom." I wave to Diana, working on her



Front yard pass-through in hedgerow between 4510 and 4514 (NE Going St., Portland). The low fence is to keep ducks in, and the yellow flagging is to keep humans from tripping over the fence.



Cabin with poppies—back yard of Chickpea Cottage with detached bedroom.

Rain barrels hold 55 gallons each.

Totes hold 275 gallons each.

A path winds across the property line between 4446 and 4510. The pink flag, left by a surveyor, marks the legal location of the line.

Garden tour sign.

Ducks at Blueberry.

Photos courtesy of Rachel Freifelder

Each bay of the woodshed holds a different age of firewood.

Garden workshop: a student practices digging technique.

The author demonstrates tool sharpening in a back yard gardening class.

laptop on their back deck. She waves back and nods. "Come on in." I open the gate and they run in.

After Diana calls Ellie and Ethan home for lunch, I harvest a basket of mustard greens and take them down to Ralph and Velma. When I moved in, they brought me raspberries and green beans from their garden. Now both past 80, they live on Social Security. The only crop they still plant is tomatoes, and they really appreciate fresh organic greens.

• • •

Cully is one of the lower-income neighborhoods in Portland. Our surplus garden produce rarely goes to the food bank—it's easier to put it directly in the hands of a neighbor whose survival is at risk.

Blueberry's mission is to model a way of living on this land, in this bioregion, and in this city, that keeps our footprint small and our own survival more likely. Over the 13 years of Blueberry's existence, we've hosted around 100 classes and tours. Native plants, drip irrigation, fermented foods, composting toilets, soil building, urban livestock, wild salads, winter harvesting, fruit tree pruning, and of course various aspects of vegetable gardening are just some of the topics.

What does this all have to do with climate change? Well, everything. Some of the skills we practice and share are directly related to keeping our carbon footprint down. Plenty of our food travels zero miles from garden bed to fork. That's a lot of diesel fuel not getting burned.

Methane (CH_4) in the atmosphere is far more powerful than CO_2 at raising global temperature.[1] Sewers[2] and landfills[3] release a lot of methane. Thus our composting, greywater, and humanure systems not only save water, but reduce our contribution to methane in the atmosphere.

Transportation. Most Blueberry folks are bicycle commuters. We don't have rules against owning or driving a car; each of us has access to some motor vehicle for road trips or hauling really big things, but chooses to mainly get around by bike and transit. Our community culture supports biking. We have secure and convenient parking for our bikes and bike trailers, we go places together by bike, we have a dedicated bike repair space, we help each other work on our bikes, we're friends with our neighborhood bike shop, we have a few loaner bikes (with locks and helmets) for out-of-town guests, etc.

Other things we do in the interest of sustainability may not make you think immediately of carbon, but all the aspects of the ecological footprint are related, as are all aspects of community resilience. How about knowing our neighbors?

Any cooperation will nearly always reduce the ecological footprint without even trying. Many people live together out of economic necessity, and the economies of scale start with sharing rent and utilities. This means that the amount of land, building materials, heating fuel, and electricity consumed per person is smaller. Our three houses share internet service, and for a while shared one washing machine for nine people. Anna can use my table saw any time, and I can use her band saw, so no need for duplicates.

Salvaging. In any US city one sees a shocking amount of per-

fectly good stuff in other people's waste streams, enough that we risk clutter if we rescue it all. We wish there were less waste; for now, the more we salvage, the less we buy, and any brand new purchase has a footprint. Lumber is one thing we rarely buy new. In Oregon, logging is the single largest contributor to climate change, even worse than the burning of fossil fuels.[4]

Community networks like Freecycle, Buy Nothing, Craigslist, and the rich tradition of the free pile mean that we rarely climb into an actual dumpster. We get building materials from several salvage yards as well.

No Trash! (or very little). Our community culture limits our waste stream as a group. We support each other in keeping our personal waste streams low. Shared meals and homemade treats reduce food packaging. The neighborhood buying club lets us order beans and grains in 25 lb. bags, oils in five-gallon jugs. The household I live in is the most hardcore: all food we buy as a group is in bulk, minimally packaged. If a resident buys themselves a packaged treat, they take responsibility for getting the package off the property, and there is no kitchen trash can. The only trash (or recycling) receptacle in any common space is a two-gallon bucket in the workshop; in a building project there is often some widget that can't be obtained without a plastic blister pack, even with our best efforts to find used parts. There is also a tiny paper bag under the bathroom sink, for dental floss. Visitors have told us that our low-waste program has inspired them to reduce their own waste stream. That makes it feel so much more worthwhile; maybe we can slow the growth of the oceanic island of plastic.

Urban life. Most folks here have *a priori* reasons to be in Portland: jobs, school, family, community. I am the exception: In my 20s I was a founder of a rural community whose mission is to model ecologically sustainable living. I moved back to the city because I believed I would contribute more by doing this work in an urban setting. I also benefit from urban life: cultural diversity, a walkable neighborhood, activist community, a great music scene, and the ability to access it all without ever driving a car. I was car-free for 20 years, as are many urban residents.

Activism. We consider Blueberry to serve an activist mission, but we also put effort into the outside mission of the global climate activist community. I volunteer with Bark, a forest defense nonprofit, monitoring timber sales and leading interpretive hikes. Some of us are musicians and performed at the Climate Emergency rally (350.org and Extinction Rebellion). We all volunteer in our larger community.

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At 2 pm some neighbors come over for a tour. They are part of an activist collective called Anarres Infoshop, planning to replicate our food growing and water harvesting systems. I suggest they also contact Carolyn and Bruce, who have a permitted potable water system connected to their 4000 gallons of rain storage. Ten years ago I would have shown them our DIY cold frames made of salvaged windows, but the last few winters have been so warm that we never set them up. After photographing the rain barrels they gather around the garlic bed for some weeding, the barter we had agreed on. I send them off with a few bags of kale.

Making our own fun. Dinner is by the fire pit at Alex and Anna's house tonight. I dig up a few leeks and trim the leaves. The good parts of the green leaves go in the wok with an armful of chard. The tender white shanks go on the grill alongside new potatoes and marinated tofu. Tania picked up the tofu direct from the factory, to avoid the plastic package. Chris and Pat bring a bowl of steamed nettles. Duck confit that Anna made from last year's drake rounds out our meal. None of us are vegetarian; instead we are mindful of the sourcing and quantity of meat that we consume. After dinner, Anna tunes up her fiddle and Alex sets up the washtub. I run and grab my guitar. Tania cracks open a bottle of her home brew and pours everyone a glass.

Rachel Freifelder was a cofounder of Blueberry (2007) and Dancing Rabbit Ecovillage (1993) (www.dancingrabbit.org). She has lived collectively almost continuously since 1986, with a few short breaks. Rachel studied ecosystem ecology, global climate change, and atmospheric chemistry as a graduate student at Stanford from 1990-93. She sings and plays guitar in radical folk duo Unincorporated and the jarana jarocha with Colectivo Son Jarocho de Portland.

All the people and events described in this article are real. Some names have been changed to protect privacy. All the events occurred, but not on the same day; the combining of all into one day is poetic license.

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The author's kindergarten class at neighborhood school.

On the Road to a Solar Future

By Debbie Piesen

On I-40 West in New Mexico, 200 miles from our destination, Cheryl blew a tire. Cheryl is our trailer, and she was heavily loaded down with the solar equipment that we planned to install in Tsaile, Arizona, in the Navajo Nation. When we pulled over we noticed that Bert, our '97 Ford Explorer, was smoking like a chimney. Cheryl and Bert had decided they had enough, leaving us stuck somewhere in the New Mexico desert, almost 2000 miles from our home at Living Energy Farm in Louisa, Virginia.

I've lived at Living Energy Farm (LEF), an off-grid intentional community, for about 10 years. In this time we have developed a uniquely simple, inexpensive, and reliable off-grid solar energy system that we call a DC Microgrid. This system is what brought Bert, Cheryl, and our four women crew—Onyx, Stephanie, Jessie, and me—to break down under the New Mexico sky. In 10 years, our lights at LEF have never gone out. We have been able to live so well off the grid that we thought we should try our best to promote this system far and wide as a viable alternative to grid power from coal, nuclear, and frack gas.

Convincing Americans to go off-grid, however, is no easy task. There's a lot of stereotypes and assumptions about off-grid living, even among progressive people and people living in intentional communities. The bad reputation of off-grid living is largely due to the bad design of conventional AC-based solar systems. Even though we have had some small successes in convincing our fellow communitarians to adopt our DC Microgrid, the going has been slow and frustrating. So we decided to turn our attention to rural communities living without grid power involuntarily, who we thought would be more receptive to our energy model.

Our research told us that the largest numbers of people without access to grid power in the US live in the Navajo and Hopi reservations. Many people do not have the money to connect to the grid, are denied grid power for political reasons, or choose not to use grid power because of their traditions or environmental values. We contacted several organizations in the Navajo and Hopi reservations, including Dineh Water Users, which promotes sustainable agriculture in the Tsaile/Wheatfields area. (Dineh is what the Navajo people call themselves.) They offered to host us and facilitate the nonprofit distribution of our solar lighting and charging kits to their community.

It was a noble vision. Broken down in New Mexico, our crew had the tools, the equipment, the skills, and the drive, but not the vehicle. We called up the office of Dineh Water Users, to let them know that we would be delayed due to car trouble. Much to our surprise and gratitude, they offered to send their farm

truck and 30 ft. trailer, and haul us the remaining 200 miles up to Tsaile/Wheatfields.

As our Dineh saviors, Emerson and Darron, ratcheted our rig onto their trailer, our crew helped out or yelled encouragement, "Goooo Bert!" Finally on the road to our destination, Emerson told us that Bert and Cheryl were loaded way over capacity, and asked us how long we had driven the rig.

"Four days, almost 2000 miles," we told him.

"OK, another question, are you crazy?"

Emerson and Darron cheerfully delivered us to our destination at the Dineh Water Users office. They helped us get situated and offered to work on our vehicle. In the meantime, they said, we could use their farm truck to get to our installations.

Here on the reservation, the idea of driving 400 miles to help a friend you barely know, and working on their truck for free, is totally normal. So is living in community, living modestly, and living without grid power. The pace of life here and the way folks relate to each other has a lot in common with the network of communes we are part of in Louisa. Even the dirt roads, which connect many people's houses to the main road, are reminiscent of our community back in Virginia. It's funny to drive 2000 miles to feel very much at home.

We started installations the next day, bright and early. Since then, we have been learning a lot about the electrical situation out here. There's a lot of abandoned equipment, dead batteries, and other failed attempts to go solar. The truth is that the solar industry has largely failed the poor rural people who need alternative energy systems the most.

Conventional off-grid solar systems supply AC (alternating current) in order to run "normal" appliances. But solar panels produce DC (direct current). Inverters are needed to turn DC into AC. Inverters drastically reduce efficiency, and require a large battery bank. AC-based systems typically use lead acid batteries, which don't last more than five years or so (lithium might last eight or 10 years, but is much more expensive). These systems require a steady stream of investment ($1,000-$2,000 per year is typical) to replace dead equipment. As the batteries age, they are less able to power heavy loads like refrigerators, meaning the system is likely to shut down during cloudy spells. Most people living off-grid rely on generators to keep their batteries topped off.

The DC Microgrid model represents a powerful, simple, accessible solution for addressing climate change.

Photos courtesy of Debbie Piesen

A DC Microgrid, the system we developed at Living Energy Farm, eliminates the need for an inverter, so battery banks can be smaller and still be effective. We use nickel iron batteries, which last 40 years or more, to power lights and electronics at night. To minimize demand on our batteries, we run high-wattage appliances as "daylight drive." Daylight drive (sometimes called direct drive) appliances run directly off of photovoltaic panels when the sun is shining. We store daylight drive energy as hot or cold thermal mass or pressurized water, which is cheaper and more resilient than electrical storage. We run a refrigerator, washing machine, and shop tools; our house stays warm all winter; we can take a hot shower whenever we want. We don't own a generator, because we don't need one. Our system works so well because it prioritizes efficiency, conservation, and direct use of solar electricity. And it is not expensive. We estimate our electrical expenses at Living Energy Farm at about $50 per year.

So why does the AC model dominate off-grid solar design, when it is so expensive, and doesn't even work well? One reason is that people are used to thinking about energy in terms of production, instead of thinking about conservation and timing of use. The AC model perpetuates the illusion of unlimited energy at any time, which is not actually possible with solar, but fits with the way people like to think about energy.

Another reason the AC model dominates is that it's not profitable to sell durable equipment. Wealthy people want batteries that are lightweight and power dense, and don't mind if they last only a few years. Corporations are very happy with this planned obsolescence model, which is obviously more profitable for them. So what if it leaves poor people in the dark, when they can't afford to replace their batteries?

AC off-grid solar design has failed as a scalable solution for climate change. Another inconvenient truth is that the green dream of a solar-powered smart grid is probably never going to happen. Industrial solar and wind production is only cost-effective when an equal capacity of fossil fueled production exists for when the sun isn't shining or the wind isn't blowing. And sorry Bill McKibben, but industrial-scale lithium battery storage is a pipe dream of the wealthy: lithium is expensive, short-lived, reliant on scarce conflict materials, and no cost-effective recycling process exists.

The DC Microgrid model represents a powerful, simple, accessible solution for addressing climate change. People just need to use it.

Many others have pointed out the irony that the people who have done the least to create the climate crisis are suffering from it first and worst. There's another irony, which is that those who have done the least to create the environmental crisis are probably going to be the first to embrace the tools that can get us out of it. Because living on solar energy is actually really easy, if you are willing to live modestly, share resources, and prioritize conservation. You might have to charge your laptop during the day to save your battery capacity for lighting at night. Maybe you'll have to use an efficient chest refrigerator instead of an upright, and have oversized storage tanks for water, so you don't have to run a pump at night.

For folks out here on the reservation, these "sacrifices" are not a big deal. People are so happy to get our systems and go solar. We've raised the funds to donate 50 lighting and charging systems, which we are installing in this month (March 2020). Dineh Water Users is interested in becoming a distributor for our lighting and charging kits, DC refrigerators, and the parts and accessories for these kits. It can be an income stream for their organization. While folks here are poor by mainstream standards, many of them have the resources to afford our systems (or upgrade the ones we are giving away). Our kits range in price from $300 to $1400, which is much more accessible than a $30,000 conventional off-grid kit, or the $12,000 that the local utility charges to hook up rural home sites to the grid.

When my community first considered the idea of doing nonprofit installations on the Navajo and Hopi reservations, I admit that I was resistant to the idea, because I really didn't want us to fall into the white savior mentality. But now that I'm out here, I'm so glad we're doing it. Because the tools exist right now to live without coal, nuclear, and frack gas. The challenge of a sustainable future lies not in the technology itself, but in finding the willingness to use it, to live joyfully with the rhythms of the sun. This is one of the many lessons that the Navajo and Hopi people can teach us.

Like Bert and Cheryl, Euro-American culture is broken down on the side of the road, unable to move on to a solar-powered future. In the meantime, indigenous people will show us the way forward, if we are willing to listen.

Debbie Piesen is a cofounder of Living Energy Farm, an off-grid community of a dozen people in Louisa, Virginia. When she's not installing solar electric systems, she manages her community's organic seed farm. She has two kids, aged eight and five, who are both named after persimmons.

Kinship and Climate Justice

By Hilary Giovale

One frosty winter morning, a group of people gathered at the foot of a sacred mountain. A clear, azure sky framed snowy peaks in the distance. The mountain's name is *Doko'o'osłiid* in the Diné language, *Nuva'tukya'ovi* in the Hopi language, and *Wiihaagynpacha* in the Havasupai language. She is a Grandmother, a being of *K'é*, kinship.[1]

The Original Peoples of this Land sat with the United States Forest Service. The parameters were tightly set, and the time limited to one hour. The purpose: to hear objections to the proposed expansion of a ski resort that was first built on the sacred mountain back in 1938. The existence of this resort has always been controversial due to the objections of Indigenous peoples. For the last eight years, the controversy has centered on the City of Flagstaff's decision to sell reclaimed wastewater to the ski resort at the rate of 1.5 million gallons per day, to manufacture artificial snow.[2]

In other words, old growth alpine forest was cut, pipelines were built, and toilet water is being pumped to the sacred mountain and sprayed onto ski runs throughout autumn, winter, and spring. Why? In recent decades, unstable climate made the ski resort's business model less profitable. In 2005, the Coconino National Forest Service approved the ski resort's proposal to manufacture snow from reclaimed wastewater.[3] Despite multiple lawsuits that raised concern about environmental harm, Indigenous religious rights, and cultural significance of the mountain, artificial snowmaking commenced in 2012, nearly quadrupling the number of skiers who had visited the resort during warmer, drier years.[4]

In the small room where we gathered, Forest Service officials sat at one end of the table. On the other side of the table, filling most of the room, were Indigenous Elders, spiritual leaders, and community organizers of various backgrounds, including Diné, Havasupai, and Mohawk. Several had traveled long distances to attend this meeting. Somewhere in the middle, I sat: a ninth-generation American settler of Scottish, Irish, and Scandinavian descent, in solidarity with the Indigenous community.

For one hour, I observed a tug of war between two worldviews. A Diné medicine man opened the meeting with a prayer; a Forest Service official then declared that she would start the meeting by

reading ground rules. A Forest Service official asserted that water and culture were not relevant to today's discussion; multiple Indigenous speakers then shared cultural teachings about Water as a Sacred Power, and their longstanding cultural relationships with the mountain. A Forest Service official proclaimed that only those seated at the table could speak; a Diné grandma then got out of her seat, walked to the table, and chastised the Forest Service for their disrespect, and for prioritizing capitalism over all else.

At the end of the hour, the Forest Service announced that the meeting was now finished. The Diné medicine man offered a closing prayer in his language, and a Havasupai Elder stood to offer a song in her language. She reminded us that we are all two-legged people, and that we have to learn how to live together. At their end of the table, some of the Forest Service officials had tears in their eyes.

Later that day, I went for a walk in the snowy woods. I had never attended a meeting like this before, and it was unsettling. I was agitated, but the agitation had no name. Finally, I sat in a sunny patch underneath a tall pine tree and cried. I had just received a taste of the Colonial Paradigm of Control: the mindset Indigenous peoples have been dealing with since the first Europeans arrived on this continent over 500 years ago. As a descendant of settlers, I was acculturated into this worldview for most of my life. But in this time of climate change, it is becoming apparent this Western mindset is clearly pathological.

The Colonial Paradigm of Control likes to make rules, set time limits, and compartmentalize issues into little boxes. It insists that business can only be conducted in the English language. It commodifies land and water for profit. If a ski resort puts sewage on one percent of a sacred mountain, the exploitation of that one percent is justified, for profit and recreation: "we're in the business of providing fun."[5] The Colonial Paradigm of Control asserts the rights of "the public" on "public land," because it has forgotten that these lands were stolen. The original members of the "public" were punished for being, and forced onto reservations and into boarding schools.

I had just received a taste of the Colonial Paradigm of Control: the mindset confronting Indigenous peoples for over 500 years.

There is a glitch in the program of the Colonial Paradigm of Control: despite genocide, the Indigenous peoples of this land are still here. They know that the land does not belong to anyone; we belong to the land, and what we do to the land and animals we do to ourselves. For a long time, they have been trying to get the rest of us to wake up and remember that.

I am a white woman who regularly sits in Indigenous spaces to support Indigenous-led grassroots social and environmental justice work. Through observation, I learn. These spaces have taught me that time is running out for the Colonial Paradigm of Control, which provides "freedom of choice" for members of contemporary culture, while marginalizing everyone else. It abuses mountains, waters, animals, and plants, and takes them for granted. It refuses to comprehend *everything* as interdependent and related. It actively ensures rights to economic development and ignores the healing power of relationship. It doesn't take the time to recognize the long-term and far-reaching implications of its actions. When something sacred cracks its controlling demeanor, it ends the meeting and walks away. It does all of this with an attitude of condescension, upholding a mythology that this is "normal."

The Paradigm of Colonial Control is at the root of climate change. It is hurting all of us, because we are all connected. Its mechanistic, individual-centric patterns of consumption and commodification have enabled privileged humans to live far beyond our means. It marginalizes Indigenous communities and communities of Color, who are disproportionately affected by climate change. Since the beginning of the colonial project, the voices and viewpoints of these communities have been suppressed most often and most violently. However, these communities have the expertise to offer much-needed solutions, and they are stepping forward to offer life-affirming alternatives. The question is:

will we have the humility to *listen*?

Artificial snow is being manufactured on the sacred mountain because warming temperatures and reduced precipitation render business less profitable. Sometimes I wonder how our community might have reacted differently to these early warning signs of climate change. What could we have learned from cultural perspectives that value relationship with sacred landscape more than profit and recreation? What might have unfolded in our region, if our institutional policies followed the leadership of the Indigenous cultures that have been living with this land since the beginning? What type of healing could take place if our community were to perceive the kinship teachings of the Mountain herself?

In this time of climate change, plants, animals, insects, and other than human beings are being forced to adapt or perish. We two-legged people need to adapt as well, by changing our worldviews and behaviors. We must respect the Indigenous peoples' understanding of *K'é* to relearn how to get along with each other and the rest of Creation. Those who are settlers on this land could begin by learning our history of colonialism that underpins the current climate crisis. There is still time to embrace what I consider to be the most important adaptation for the well-being of all: respecting our Mother Earth and the rights of Indigenous peoples.

Postscript, April 2020:

Within a few days of the COVID-19 global pandemic, the ski resort closed, in compliance with City of Flagstaff public health regulations. Indigenous Elders of this region often say that abusing sacred sites like *Doko'o'osłiiid / Nuva'tukya'ovi / Wiihaagyn-pacha* leads to unpredictable, serious consequences for all life. Instead of viewing the resort's closure as a temporary business decision necessitated by this human health crisis, I regard it as a natural consequence for unbalanced human behavior in relation to a powerful being of kinship. Will our community learn from the changes generated by the COVID-19 pandemic, alter our course, and change "business as usual?" I hope so.

Thank you to Cora Maxx-Phillips, Shawn Mulford, and Dianna Uqualla for their tireless climate justice advocacy, and for giving input on this article.

Hilary Giovale is a ninth-generation American settler of European descent. Influenced by her relationships with Indigenous peoples, worldviews, movements, and places, she is the author of a forthcoming enthnoautobiography about her process of decolonization. She has been a contributor to Yes! *magazine and* Dark Matter: Women Witnessing. *See her website, www.goodrelative.com, for more information.*

How might our community have reacted differently to early warning signs of climate change? What could we have learned from cultural perspectives that value relationship with sacred landscape more than profit and recreation?

Pete Giovale

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How to Live Collectively in a World without Balance

By Else Marie Pedersen

We live in a world without balance. A world out of balance is open to bad compromises and dangerous illness.

It is our task to bring the world into a balance that closes doors to both. Dangerous illnesses include Ebola, Cholera, Malaria, HIV/Aids, the novel Coronavirus and other contagious disease-causing agents thriving within the human body out of balance.

Some of us have chosen to live in a community setting, sharing our lives, because we are aware of this unbalance. Collective living keeps us focused on what is important in life. It is easy to go astray in this information- and misinformation-saturated age—especially in the middle of a pandemic.

A community is based on togetherness; the COVID-19 is forcing us to find new ways of being together. We see this all over the world—using modern technology and not excluding anyone just because we have to socially distance.

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St. Vincent and the Grenadines used to be more self-sufficient, but the globalized economy put a stop to that. To provide an alternative, we showcase several models of sustainable farming and healthy food production at our Climate Center.

Richmond Vale Academy is "Another Kind of School," rooted in collaboration. The school was started in 2002, and the current leadership started with it in 2007, so we have more than 20 years of experience built on the idea that a collective with an essential outward purpose can manage to work with and put aside all differences to take up big challenges and make a change!

The 10-year program "St. Vincent Climate Compliance Conference" was one of these challenges with the aim of making a small island nation like St. Vincent and the Grenadines "Water and Food Secure," "Energy Secure," and "Ready for Climate Change."

Different events, including a hurricane and numerous floods, led to this 10-year program built on cooperation within teams of 10 to 30 participants with different backgrounds, ages, and aspirations, all coming together because they believe it is imperative to make an example in this climate crisis. (See www.youtube.com/watch?v=hExsSLsYQqY.)

When this virus turned up we were in the middle of making 20 home gardens in the community of Barrouallie, one of the towns in St. Vincent. We had students living in the community, working with the families, immersing themselves in the culture of the people they worked with—as far away from "Physical or Social Distancing" as you could ever imagine.

We had to call everyone home—end the projects in the community and tell the hopeful home garden owners that we would be back. We also had to put a hold on meeting each week with several Farmers' Cooperatives, in order to boost the cooperation amongst them, but we truly believe that they will still support each other in every way they can. Once people can see the advantage of working together they will strive to do so by solving issues and sharing advice. (See issuu.com/richmondvaleacademy/docs/issuupromoting_food_and_water_security.)

The team working with the home gardens had to leave a month before scheduled in order to get a flight connection, and still six did not manage, but were "stuck," which they didn't mind at all!

As we terminated the projects we had to finish the reports for the trust we had re-

ceived money from and return the rest of the money. We had worked so hard to get the grant and still we had to do what was necessary to stay safe.

So here we were, 24 people—16 students and eight staff—at the school, plus 20 other staff working in the farm, gardens, and much more.

We had to make some hard decisions like closing the hiking and diving center, which we run to earn extra money for the programs, letting some people go, even though we knew they needed the money more than ever.

We lost income left and right and had to create a very tight budget for the next three months—a survival budget to bring us over to the other side.

Up until then we had only one reported case of COVID-19 in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, so it was hard to take it seriously. The numbers have since increased, so even though St. Vincent and the Grenadines is called the Country of the Blessed we could not escape!

We started half-heartedly implementing some of the WHO advice, but then we decided to take this seriously and within a week we turned everything around.

We had to come to terms with this, look at everything we did, and solve the situation in a practical manner:

1. We analyzed all the traffic coming to the school and put a hold to all of it, except a few persons like a driver and a guard with whom we made exact agreements to avoid contamination.

2. We made separate areas for each team—living with their teacher. Separate bathrooms, terraces, and much more. Everything in the school was divided up so each group of eight has their own area, fridge, washing machine etc.

3. The only common area is the assembly hall, with each group at separate tables with their specific plates, utensils, and food.

4. We keep a physical distance between the different groups—a horse length—easy to remember.

5. We invited our cook to live in with us and luckily she said yes, with a kitchen team replacing her usual helpers.

6. Dishwashing for all is still done within the groups, because you have

Photos courtesy of Else Marie Pedersen

your hands in soap, so no infection possible there.

It took a lot of effort to reach consensus. We did not vote but kept discussing till we were in agreement. We held a lot of Staff and Team meetings as well as several Common meetings.

The news from around the world hit home and everyone agreed to follow suit with other countries to keep this virus out.

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So how do we manage?

Much of the food available locally is imported and full of chemicals, evident in the synthetic additives now commonly placed in our food. This is neither environmentally nor financially sustainable, as much of this food is unhealthy. As a country, we used to be more self-sufficient, but the globalized economy put a stop to that. We showcase several models of sustainable farming and healthy food production at our Climate Center.

At the school's garden farm, we produce meat, eggs, vegetables, staples, and fruits, supplying a big part of the food we eat. All dairy products consumed at the school are imported and we also buy some local meat. We aim to become 100 percent sustainable with local and ecological food.

We produce eight to 14 piglets per year; we want to double this production so we can eat two pigs per month. We started out with five sheep in 2018, that now have grown to a herd of 20, and we plan to double up to a herd of 40, so we can eat two to four sheep per month.

We have always been aware of buying as little imported as possible, but now we decided to cut even more.

We decided to take this as an opportunity to change things around on the one-acre Garden Farm, boosting our production of vegetables and root crops. One group took it upon themselves to do that as well as deciding to make a nursery with vegetable seedlings, to be ready for when we again could work in the community. These seedlings will be given to people in order to boost the area's food production.

We also produce passion fruit and bananas, using ecological methods. We have a small-scale juice and pulp production from passion fruit along with collecting and selling some other fruits like banana and sour sop. There is a potential for expanding the production, so we decided to put efforts into this. A group of three Staff decided to go for that.

The March Team is working on setting up a passion fruit field with 150 plants mixed with trees using peanuts as ground cover. This will go on the whole of April after which they were supposed to work in the communities, but they have instead come to terms with working on projects at Richmond Vale Academy if that is necessary to stay safe.

We are lucky to live in one of the most beautiful countries in the world, close to the beach, fresh fruit at all times, possibilities for diving to see fish and coral reefs, hiking the Volcano La Soufriere and numerous other trails in the rainforest, listening to parrots.

We are planning to start new teams in the autumn to continue our work, making this country ready for climate change, whatever it takes.

We will overcome this virus and be an even stronger Collective after this!

Else Marie Pedersen is in charge of Marketing and Enrollment at Richmond Vale Academy. Danish by origin, she has lived and traveled all over the world, including 12 years in Massachusetts. She has spent the past seven years in St. Vincent and the Grenadines promoting the Climate program and enrolling people from all over the world.

Community on Turtle Island

By Paul Chiyokten Wagner

As a traditional WSÁNEĆ Coast Salish person I feel we currently have a lot of work to do here in the place known as Turtle Island in relationship to community. Our First Peoples also understand how much work we need to do for our Mother Earth related to her water, ecosystems, and Climate Systems, as she cries out for us to give respect back to her in order for her to continue to respect us Human People. For tens of thousands of years our First Peoples here have given words of sacred promise to a small group of medicine plants, which are a family and a community in themselves. These words that are still given by some today before taking the life of any living being equate to what I call "a good relationship."

We have had a good relationship with water for these many thousands of years, giving words of respect to the SA,LI of XA'XE KWA (spirit of sacred water) before interacting with it, much as you would want someone to speak to your spirit or soul and you to theirs before interacting—otherwise the interaction would be more like rape. We have to realize that community is not only a human phenomenon but it is a universal fact in which all life exists.

We need to go all the way to the beginning of relationship: How do we treat water? How do we treat the Tree and Plant Peoples? How do we treat the Animal People? How do we treat the Human People? And how do we treat our Mother Earth? We will forever have a difficult time creating harmonious and peaceful community in the human realm if we continue to believe that we are separate from the community of nature and treat nature without the intention of good relationship. In other words, we must decolonize our actions.

True community will eventually return to these sacred lands here in our Salish Sea as we deconstruct and rebuild the governmental systems of dominance, racism, and oppression that have crushed true community here, leaving us with a world where we have to get into our cars or for some their bicycles and drive for miles to join what they call a community, but is it truly a functioning community? Do the people physically and spiritually interact daily? Do they absolutely rely upon each other's gifts and generosities to thrive?

For now we fight for Climate Justice and for our Mother Earth with a prayer in order to return to a way of living that held equity for every living being, and in which everything is alive because everything has a SA,LI (a spirit). We do this to honor our ancestors, to honor indigenous native governance and education which allowed us to not kill even one ancient Ancestor Cedar tree here, leaving the Animal People with an unmolested and undestroyed home, an ancient ecosystem forest. Our indigenous native governance has one extremely important element, which the colonial Puritans witnessed in their observations of the Iroquois' government but could never allow their white male patriarchy to utilize, a council of traditional elder women. And one of the most important roles of this council was to guide society into life and never towards death, as our world has sadly moved into.

Our education systems were flawless for placing the Circle of Life teachings into a sacred place within each child, allowing each and every one of them to understand inside of their spirit that their role as a human being is to lift up the circle of life. This was from thousands of years of elder wisdom keepers raising every child...never the parents raising them because the parents were young and didn't carry nearly the amount of wisdom and understandings of what a human being should look like and what their actions should be to continue thousands of years' deep respect for the circle of life.

The time is now to move into community with the intention of decolonizing our actions and intention to create wellness for the one who gifts us every single thing that keeps us alive…our Mother Earth.

Paul Chiyokten Wagner is a member of the WSÁNEĆ Nation of the Coast Salish peoples and is founder of Protectors of the Salish Sea.

Photos courtesy of Paul Chiyokten Wagner

The Resilience of Traditional Unintentional Communities

By Colin Doyle

Resilience is a key attribute of successful response to climate change. While this magazine focuses on intentional communities, I see traditional *unintentional* communities as better positioned to respond to shocks and challenges. Villages have survived to the present day specifically because they persisted through eons of uncertainty, proof of their resilience.

Meaning of terms

By "traditional communities" I mean villages where they still exist, mostly in the Global South. Think "hill tribes" in Thailand, herders in East Africa, Polynesian fishing villages, or *campesinos* in the Andes. This style of living is quickly going extinct in a modernizing and urbanizing world, but the flame has not yet flickered out. And let's hope it doesn't.

The reason I call them "unintentional" is because individuals don't *choose* to be there—they are born into it. Intentional communities are overwhelmingly located in the Global North where family ties are weaker and there is high physical mobility. These folks gather around shared values and settings, and essentially try to become family with strangers. This is quite different from the tight blood family network of rural villages in the Global South.

Elements of resilience

First off, traditional peoples grow, catch, or gather most of what they eat and use. They don't go to Costco and Home Depot for their food and shelter. I experienced this in two indigenous villages where I lived in Venezuela for close to a year, 2003-2004. The Orinoco Delta is a maze of rivers, so the indigenous Warao catch and eat lots of fish. Moriche palms provide thatch for roofs and the raw material for the versatile hammocks women weave. Tamiche palm is good for flooring, palm hearts to eat, and the plant has a spiritual/shamanic connection. There are animals to hunt and occasional wild fruits to collect. Most transport is by dugout canoe, which a skilled man can carve by hand in two weeks (my friend Estepha made one for me, in a trade). One day is all it takes for a teen or man to make a paddle, and I've seen children as young as three years old paddle a full-size canoe on their own.

In a place like this life is pretty consistent day-to-day, and does not revolve around money (which is handy, because Venezuela's national economy has melted down recently). People who grow their own food (mostly taro there) are not dependent on huge trucks bringing it from California or Iowa or Florida as most Americans are. This was especially evident during a manufactured economic slowdown in 2002 (sometimes called "the oil strike"), when the old guard of Venezuela's elite tried to squeeze out upstart president Hugo Chavez. Paraphrasing my family mate Gualberto, in the city he was visiting at the time he said the first day the beer was gone, the second day the juice was gone, the third day the sugar was gone, etc. In a village, at the edge of the market economy, it was no longer possible to get things at shops—there was simply no supply. Warao families that no longer grew crops had to scramble to get enough food. They were successful because they still had nearby relatives with fields and so ate from them until the two-month national slowdown eased off and the full flow of goods returned. Families

with fields were not greatly affected because they were not dependent on many outside resources for day-to-day living.

Writ large, climate change is and will be disrupting lifestyles around the world. Storm events like Katrina and Sandy will become more common, supply chains will be less reliable, and monocrop agriculture (dependent on finite synthesized fertilizers) will fail more often. Many other events can be analogs for climate change disruption—one example is the recent unprovoked bombing of a facility that processes half of Saudi Arabia's oil. Challenging change can originate from nature, humans, or human-induced natural events.

An additional reason traditional "unintentional communities" are better suited than we are to respond to tough times is because people are accustomed to having few resources. If the electricity goes out, that's normal—electricity is not a core part of everyday life, but rather a recently-arrived luxury (or not there at all). People are used to living on the proverbial dollar a day, and making it work, even if that means sacrifice and discomfort. This breeds hardiness. It also spurs creativity, something that resource-rich people have partially lost when they can purchase whatever they need/want from a company (in person or online). Paying to outsource solutions is an option for only a slice of the world's population.

Centralized governments providing social programs for their citizens—such as pensions and specialized care facilities—is a fairly new phenomenon. Traditionally tribes have leaders/elders but no government per se. People take care of each other, a solidarity referred to as *asabiyyah* in Arabic. When a house is destroyed by a bad storm, the residents don't appeal to an insurance company in a distant city, they get help from their neighbors. These people are usually family also, as was the case in the Warao villages where I lived. Bounty is shared. When someone in the family unit where I ate caught extra fish on a given day, they usually provided some to Anna Teresa's family a few houses away. When her teenage son had luck another day, the favor would be returned. Without refrigeration, the best way to ensure future food is to support each other, and spread the reward or hardship.

Because of the tendency in the Global

People are used to having fewer resources and little money. This breeds hardiness and creativity.

Photos by Colin Doyle

Counterpoint

The author has an overly positive view about how village folks will manage with climate change. I think there are some clear reasons why they will actually have a *harder* time than people in the Global North, whether in intentional communities or not.

First off, many people in the United States can relocate if they need to. If Miami or New York slowly gets swallowed by the rising Atlantic, the residents can move to Tennessee or Pennsylvania or somewhere else—Americans move so much nowadays it wouldn't be much different. Fishing villages in coastal Bangladesh—where climate change is predicted to really bash them—can't just pick up stakes and move to Nepal where they'll be out of the way. They don't have the resources to buy themselves out of that problem. They'd probably also feel crushed to move from their ancestral land and change their whole way of life; I read that tribes flooded out in recent decades by big dams such as the Sardar Sarovar in India and the Three Gorges in China were *not* happy to move to camps the government provided.

Also, traditional cultures are very slow to change behavior. Culture usually carries on as it has for thousands of years. For example, part of the reason trash ends up everywhere is because things like plastic are new introductions and people are used to everything they use breaking down on its own, for example fish bones, palm leaves, wood, bamboo chopsticks, or fruit peels. It takes a few generations to learn to throw things in a can or separate them to be recycled at a big, distant factory. Because culture is slow to change, it seems that it will be harder for people in "traditional unintentional communities" to adapt to an evolving reality, especially one they've never seen before (such as drought every year, not just occasionally).

This also makes responding to the coronavirus really hard. Social distancing is the opposite of traditional cultures, where everyone's so comfortable being close to each other. If you've ever traveled in a Third World country, recall the packed minibuses where six inches of space would be glorious, let alone *six feet*. Plus in traditional societies there is sometimes distrust for Western medicine, with people commonly citing spiritual explanations for death. ("It wasn't cholera, it was black magic.") Because of climate change or global travel, pandemics like COVID-19 will probably increase in the future, and traditional societies will be especially hard hit.

To sum it up, there are strong reasons to believe traditional unintentional communities will actually be *worse* off from rising sea level, viruses, and other global challenges than us gringos.

—CD

South to take care of one another, I saw no homeless people on a recent six-week trip through southern Africa. Even when I worked for an HIV/AIDS program in the country with the highest infection rate in the world, I saw no uncared-for people living behind buildings or under bridges. Family takes care of itself. This can be a drain for the uncle with a strong salary who supports up to a dozen people on it, but it ensures no one falls through the cracks. The same can't be said for the United States, where a partial breakdown of family support adds to factors like substance abuse and mental illness to result in thousands of people trying to stay fed and safe on cold, wet streets.

Finally, people in traditional unintentional communities are well suited to be resilient in the face of climate change because they are generally accustomed to pain, occasional food shortage, and death. These phenomena won't be shocking or new to them if they result from upcoming global rumbles. Outbreaks of disease, crop failures, and death at any age will likely be more emotionally disturbing to people in the Global North, where modern medicine has made it so the biggest dangers to life are cigarettes, poor diet, not moving the body, and vehicle accidents. I believe the mental adjustment to a more uncertain future will be easier for people in traditional societies—they deal with that regularly anyway.

To summarize, resilience is built into traditional *unintentional community* life. Because they produce locally most of what they need for food and otherwise, are accustomed to tough conditions, support each other throughout, and are relatively independent of the market economy and governmental support, traditional societies are inherently more ready for the disruptions of climate change than intentional communities and others in tenuous industrialized societies.

Colin Doyle has lived at Meadowsong Ecovillage in Dexter, Oregon since 2011. He runs the Holistic Sustainability Semester at onsite Lost Valley Education and Event Center. He has lived on four continents and been to 40 countries total. He enjoys geography, uncommon languages, craggy mountains, and extremely long hikes.

The author's back yard incorporates extensive features to produce more food, energy, water on site. Four people share a modest suburban home.

From Five Earths to One

By Jan Spencer

This article explores some thoughts seldom discussed or written about even among people who are all for progressive, deep, fundamental changes in our society and economy. This article may be unsettling to some people. Good.

What if the world we say we want to live in requires us to make drastic changes to downsize our own lifestyles?

Many of us have a vision or ideal for a world we would prefer to live in. In my vision, our lifestyles, society, and economy would fit within the boundaries of the natural world, and our lives would be far stronger in "civic culture." In this future, the natural world would support purposeful human needs while also maintaining its healthy ecosystems.

The goal of our culture would be to bring out the best in positive human potential. The economic system would serve those uplifted goals. Nice!

Meanwhile, back to reality, the existing economy has squandered untold trillions of dollars; global market capitalism has delivered to us climate change, a global pandemic, failing ecosystems, along with extreme social, economic, and political inequity.

Our consumer culture is a socially engineered product of market capitalism, an economic system that cares little about the natural world and public health.

No doubt, millions of people in our country would say they dream of living the paradigm shift. But would they choose to live the paradigm shift if their own personal lifestyles had to adjust to, say, a half, a third, a tenth of the affluence, convenience, and mobility they have now?

Disconnect

I think there is an enormous disconnect between the affluence many of us are familiar with and the downsizing called for by the sustainable world many say they dream about. I don't think people realize a sustainable future will need to be, in all likelihood, vastly downsized, and far less money will be available.

On the upside, the sustainable future will offer unlimited opportunity, more time, and more incentive to build community and social cohesion. Positive human potential is our greatest renewable resource.

Advocates of the Green New Deal claim their plan for a socially and environmentally responsible economy and society would include hundreds of thousands of good-paying new jobs.

I am all for a socially and environmentally responsible society and the Green New Deal might be a good start, but I do not think parts of the vision are grounded in reality. Yes, there would likely be millions of new planet- and people-friendly jobs to serve a regenerative and sustainable society but they will not likely be high-paying jobs by today's standards. (What would Green New Deal and paradigm shift pioneers do with all that money from high-paying jobs anyway?)

Preview of the Future?

Recall how you might have read a human interest story, maybe in *People* maga-

zine or *Vox*, about some person living a life with a remarkably small eco-footprint. The person doesn't have a car, he/she rides a bike, grows a lot of their own food, is vegetarian, buys and wastes very little, is active with various progressive community groups. They might live in some kind of utopian commune with others in blissful harmony and they all share everything.

We might have thought, gee, that story is really out there. They have a lot of commitment to their ideals. Kind of goofy but good on them. Maybe they know something we don't.

That story might also describe, more or less, an average lifestyle five, 10, or 15 years from now. With luck.

Would middle-class people, even with progressive values, be willing to downsize from a four-bedroom house with two residents to sharing that home with four or five other people or moving to a tiny home or co-op to help save the planet? Would wealthy people who care about inequity pass up the two weeks on the Amalfi Coast and stay at home instead, to spread around the jet-set wealth and volunteer at the local food bank or community garden?

Below is a social and economic assessment I have not seen articulated quite this way before, that might add significantly to the conversation about what the future might look like and how we can move in that direction. I hope this information will give readers the kind of jolt it gave me.

Eco-Footprints?

Most of us are familiar with the concept of the eco-footprint. The term is a measure of the quantity of nature needed to support a given amount of human activity such as a lifestyle.

The footprint concept goes back to the early 1990s, and since then has evolved to better describe how lifestyles of individuals and societies affect the planet's capacity to both provide for its human cargo and maintain its own well-being.

Footprint calculations can help tell us how sustainable or not a lifestyle or society is, and, in a more nuanced way, they also suggest how vulnerable an individual's lifestyle or entire society is to disruption.

We have known for decades that the US has a large eco-footprint, evidenced by this alarming statistic: with just over four percent of the world's population, the US consumes about 25 percent of the world's resources.

Personally, I have traveled a good deal, through about 35 countries on five continents over five years, and can say with certainty the United States has more wasteful affluence than anywhere I have been in Europe or New Zealand, not to mention countries from Kenya to South Africa and a half dozen countries in Latin America.

Note: A resource-intensive society includes high levels of car ownership, larger home size that is often suburban and "larger than needed," diet heavy on animal products, fast and processed food, and extensive automobile transportation infrastructure along with resource-intensive recreation and entertainment.

In 2003, the Global Footprint Network was formed. The Network is a science- and data-based think-tank that researches and calculates ecological footprints for over 200 nations based on information gathered by the United Nations. The goal of the Footprint Network is to advocate personal and societal sustainability, a condition where a person or society lives within its environmental boundaries.

The Network addresses many issues. In the realm of lifestyle, to reduce eco-footprints the Network suggests that we have fewer children, quit using cars, adopt a plant-based diet, and stop flying.

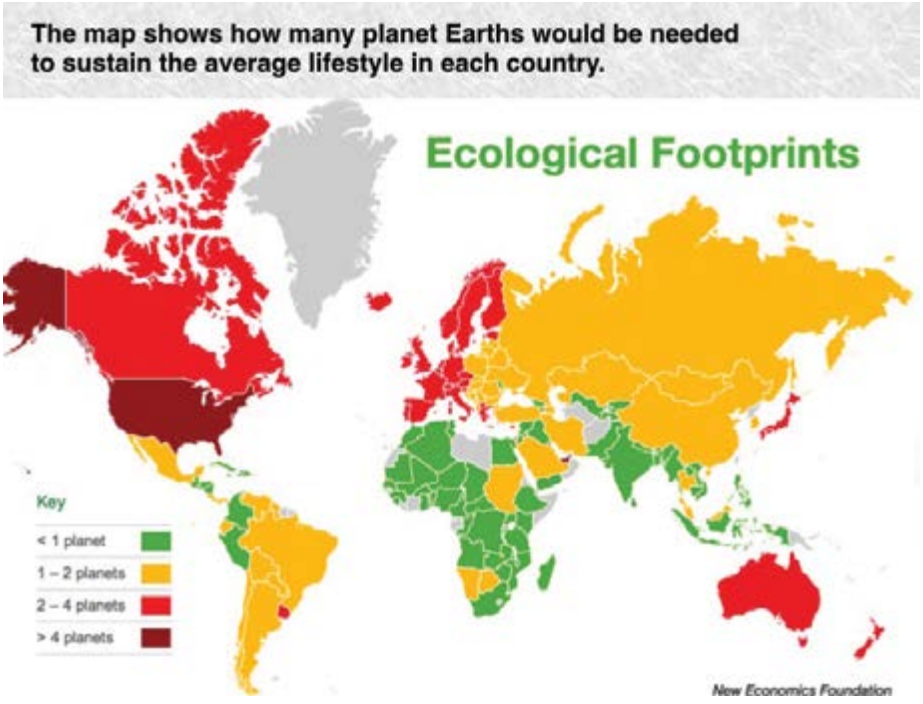
How Many Planet Earths?

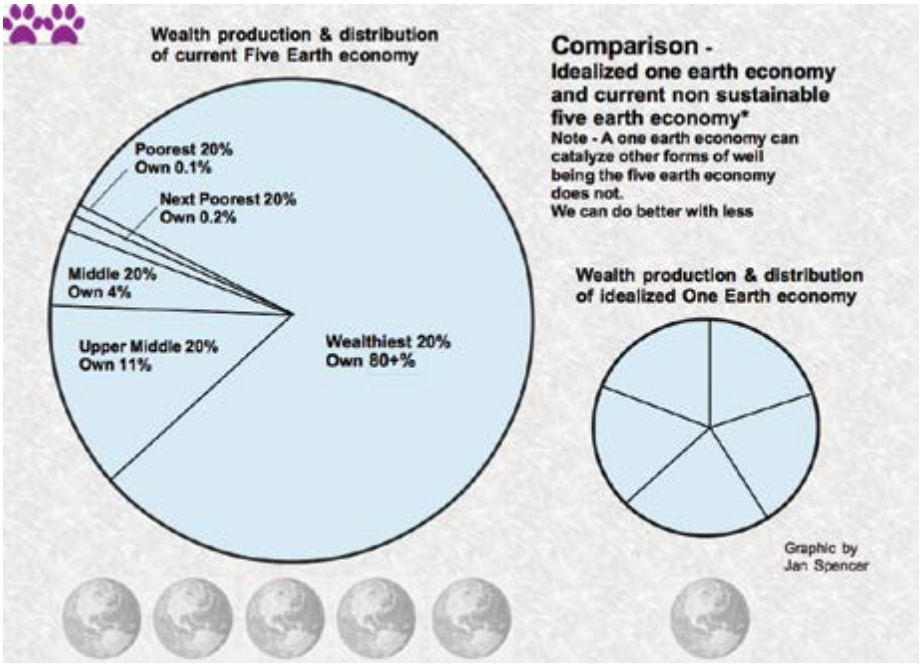
Every year, the Network updates its assessment of national footprints. The unit of measurement the Network uses to describe the size of a footprint is one planet earth. The assessments identify how many planet earths would be needed for everyone in the world to live at the resource consumption and waste production level of the average person in a given country.

Every new assessment indicates that we are moving further from sustainability.

Here are several countries and the number of earths needed if everyone on planet earth

Every new assessment indicates that we are moving further from sustainability.





consumed resources and produced waste at the same rate as the average person in each country: Brazil, 1.8 earths; Japan, 2.8; Germany, 3.0; Australia, 4.1; United States, 5.0.

A number of countries, including Ecuador, France, Germany, Japan, Korea, the Philippines, Russia, Switzerland, and the United Arab Emirates, have used assessments from the Global Footprint Network in their own policy making. The concepts and calculations from the Network are widely respected.

How many planet earths are needed at the current level of consumption for the entire world? That figure is about 1.6—even though many hundreds of millions of people live in poverty or close to it, their footprints only a fraction of one earth.

The wealthy and middle class of the world, herded along by billions spent on advertising, are leading the way in overconsumption, depleting the earth's capital and not living on its interest.

Some might say, no problem, there's plenty of oil, a critical commodity, thanks to fracking. That kind of thinking deserves to be corrected. A system's capacity to function is determined by its weakest link. A large boat can sink with a small leak.

The weakest link for the current global economic system is not available energy; rather the weakest link is that planet earth cannot clean up the pollution caused by humans fast enough. CO_2 and climate change is only one example.

Many people assume that we can make the current economy and our lifestyles green and life will go on pretty much as we know it without too much disruption. We just need to get down to 350 parts per million carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. Maybe we take a train instead of driving or flying or have a veggie burger instead of beef.

That is wishful thinking. It's clear humans are in major overshoot already and the growth needs of market capitalism to make a profit regardless of the cost are, with few exceptions, completely at odds with a healthy natural world and a sustainable society.

A growing number of people know the current level of human resource consumption and waste production is not sustainable but still, most eco-friendly popular opinion fails to appreciate how far we are from sustainability.

Two Circles

What is big news for me is a new understanding that a sustainable global future will require billions of people to massively downsize their entire lifestyles in terms of food, shelter, what they buy, and mobility. That's not only the one percent. That's middle-class people as well.

In the United States, my guess is that 95 percent of the population will need to downsize. Of course, the more affluent a person, the more they will need to downsize.

A sustainable global future will require billions of people to massively downsize their entire lifestyles.

I made a simple graphic. You can do this at home with a scrap of paper and pencil. I drew two circles that represent the financial and economic output of the United States. One represents the current five earth society; the smaller one represents a one earth society. The larger circle has a surface area five times the smaller. Remember your geometry: the surface of a circle is pi times radius squared; so the larger circle has a radius (and also diameter) about 2.35 times that of the smaller circle.

Comparing the two circles was a jolt! Wow! This image makes visible the idea that we have some major downsizing to do. Think of the implications!

For the five earth circle, I also identified the current ownership of wealth. For example, the richest 20 percent of Americans currently own something like 80 percent of the country's wealth. The poorest 20 percent own about one tenth of one percent.

In an April 18 guest opinion in the *New York Times*, Bernie Sanders wrote that the richest three people in the United States own as much wealth as the bottom 150 million people. These numbers are approximate but, more or less, commonly found with a bit or research.

For wealth distribution in the one earth, smaller circle, I simply divided it in equal fifths. I don't expect such a future, but divided the circle that way just to make the point.

Again, I knew these numbers, have seen all kinds of statistics, graphs, creative illustrations, read articles, contemplated the issue during my most clear-thinking early morning hours. But to see the numbers turned into a simple visible graphic, I was shocked, and it has changed my thinking about the condition of our society, myself, friends, and thoughts of the future.

I have read uncounted articles about sustainability, even from progressive thinking sources like the Green New Deal, Naomi Klein, City Lab, Bloomberg, and the *New York Time*s, and am amazed that they seem to assume, with all their resources of smart and well-meaning researchers and talented writers, the future will be, for the most part, a green version of what we have now.

I urge them to take a closer look at their assumptions for the future because they have enormous influence that can be used to help motivate their readers and followers to move themselves towards a more appropriate downsized lifestyle.

Again, even downsizing by a half would be hard to imagine at home or in the wider society, but the numbers say the need is to downsize far more than by half. We are up shit creek.

It's important to note that the one-fifth fraction does not translate into one-fifth food, travel, comfort, education, or other positives. A conscious, purposeful one earth lifestyle and society can lead to many, many benefits. A forthcoming sequel to this article will go into more detail.

One Earth Lifestyle?

What might an intentional, exit-from-the-middle-class, one earth lifestyle look like? I have used the footprint calculator (again, it's not perfect) and my own lifestyle comes out right at one earth. I drive rarely, maybe 200 miles for an entire year; a bike is my primary transportation rain or shine. I am vegetarian, almost vegan. I don't buy much of anything. No showroom home furnishings, new clothes, or fancy recreation. Minimal travel out of town and that mostly by train in recent years.

I rent three rooms in my modest, never-been-remodeled 1500 sq. ft. home. Four of us share a fridge, washer, and dryer. One bathroom. We are all vegetarian. No one has a job with health care or benefits. This kind of lifestyle is not the aspiration of the average American, much less those in the one percent. The household is pretty close to one earth.

To my thinking, the footprint calculations show we have a near unimaginable amount of work to do for moving towards a sustainable society; at the same time, there is a severe shortage of realistic discussion, let alone policy and strategy, about what moving from five earths (or 10, or four, or three) to one earth entails. We are on an adventure with a road map our leaders made up to fit their needs. The map does not take into account rivers, mountains, and coastlines.

Market capitalism is not an ally for addressing climate change or for creating a peaceful world that lives within its environmental boundaries. The planet says giant downsize needed pronto; the mainstream economy says consume more now. Still, market capitalism has provided us with many assets and tools we can repurpose, that will be useful for a greatly downsized way of life.

The one earth assessment and footprint calculator and deepening trends tell us: make use of those tools and assets sooner than later. The longer we wait, the fewer the choices.

Prepare for Change

The culture and economy we will need for long-term sustainability will mean millions of new jobs but few if any of those jobs will be high-paying in today's terms. Many of the products and services people spend excess income on now will not exist in a sustainable way of life. Tens of millions of familiar jobs will not make the cut to a sustainable society. And the ones that do will not pay close to what they pay now.

I used to think we could transform suburbia; we could downsize, create community cohesion, and with luck, transition our economic system so it serves society's positive ideals and aspirations. I see that challenge will be much greater now.

The coronavirus and the mayhem it is causing in disrupting the economy and our way of life provides us with an idea of what massive downsizing might look like: a lot less shopping, spiking unemployment, staying a lot closer to home, a lot less spectator sports.

The upside: more people making time to regenerate local communities.

For sure, we can still transform our homes and neighborhood by our own initiative. We can certainly create community cohesion with our friends and neighbors. There are many people already "living in the future" who are pointing the way. The more the better. But as a whole, we are not even crawling in the right direction when we should be sprinting towards sustainability. Planet Earth will not indulge human inaction. A future article will explore individuals and groups who are taking action.

Jan Spencer goes into great detail about market capitalism, one earth lifestyle, transforming suburbia, pushing back on cars, and ecovillages with his podcasts at player.whooshkaa.com/shows/creating-a-resilient-future. Check his website, too, for more content and links to YouTube videos: www.suburbanpermaculture.org. And check his YouTube channel at www.youtube.com/channel/UCIIooiYJZvCxb2ruWOodrUg?view_as=subscriber or a one hour slide show documentary with many graphics, images and illustrations, explaining the one earth concept. Look for a second article from Jan in the Fall 2020 Communities *where he will describe "actions, allies, and assets" for paradigm shift, picking up where this article leaves off.*

Tour group visits East Blair Housing Co-op, Eugene to see small footprints.

Ecological Sustainability in Community: Lessons from COVID-19

By Graham Ellis

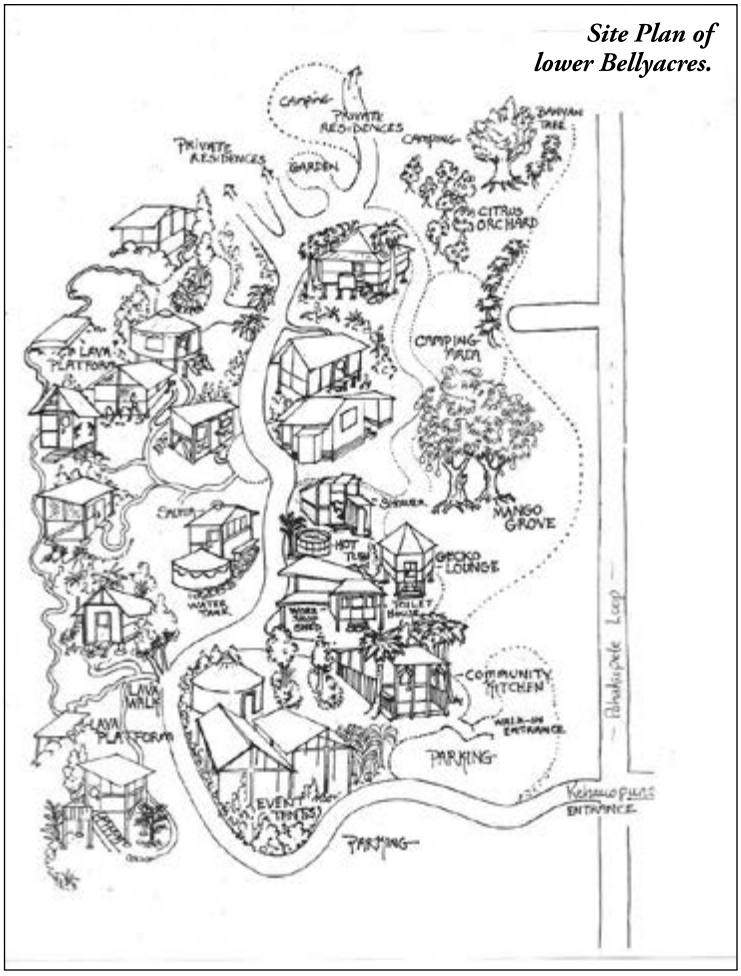
Breaking News: The State of Hawaii Closes All Airports and Harbors Indefinitely Due to COVID-19!

During our recent pandemic this extreme action didn't actually happen although there was a strong possibility it might have become necessary. COVID-19 showed everyone how vulnerable our supply chains are in this age of globalisation and how important it is for us all to become more self-sustainable.

I wonder how many more would agree that there's a strong probability that Hawaii's airports and harbors **could in reality** be closed at some time in the future? The reasons are many: a pandemic, a volcanic eruption, a tsunami, a devastating hurricane, a major earthquake, or perhaps a consequence of climate change.

Back in 2004, sitting around a campfire, our circle of 20 or more ecovillage residents agreed then that all of these events were serious possibilities. Unanimously we agreed that there was a probability that at some time in the future our remote Pacific island would be cut off from external supply chains.

Accepting this probable future scenario raised lots of questions. How would our island obtain its basic needs like food, water, transport, and health care? We lived in a society where 92 percent of all consumer products were imported and supermarket shelves would be empty within 11 days if not restocked. How would people cope with all the shortages they would face? Life would become radically different very quickly and people would need guidance regarding ways to live in a more ecologically sound manner. It seemed clear to us then that the wealth of knowledge accumulated by ecovillage members would become invaluable in such circumstances.



Site Plan of lower Bellyacres.

Since I believed strongly that ecovillages provided the best opportunities for research and educational experiences, sustainability then took on a different and deeper meaning for me. I embarked on a 10-year journey in a more radical pursuit of all that it embraced and decided to see how far I could go with my experimentation. Although our particular focus was on serving rural neighborhoods in Hawaii, I was convinced that the lessons we learned had something to offer sustainable lifestyle advocates everywhere, even if it was only inspiration. COVID-19 has made this even more apparent.

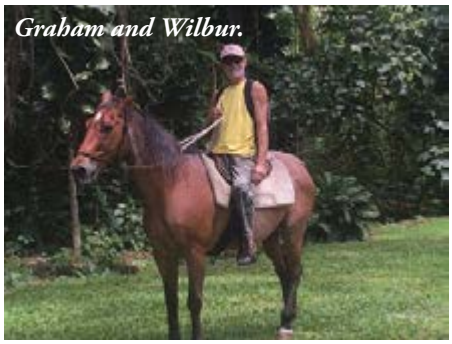
Almost everyone has their own idea of what sustainability means. For some people, living more sustainably can simply mean turning off unnecessary lights, growing a bunch of kale, or recycling a bit more. For others, it can be a whole lifestyle paradigm shift. COVID-19 has shown us this is essential if our society is to build the resilience required to

Preparing ohia posts harvested from our land.

Solar powered circus kids.

Audience at a S.P.A.C.E. event.

Constructing a greenhouse.



Graham and Wilbur.

survive future potential crises.

In 1987, when we started our ecovillage, we had no potable water, no grid power, no telephone service, lots of rocks, and very little soil. We had to learn how to build, grow, and produce power all off-grid and all with a very low budget.

As with most ecovillages, our core values were based around the pursuit of an organic and renewable energy lifestyle using permaculture principles. However, there was a whole lot more. We constructed family homes, cabins, and community buildings, featuring natural ventilation and natural light. They were all off-grid and solar-powered and whenever possible we used local building materials harvested from our land. We planted construction bamboo for future building projects. We dug latrines, then added composting toilets and later a few cesspools.

We installed rainwater catchment systems and once our water was safely secured in the tanks we built, it had to be pumped out to service our plumbing systems. Pumps are big power users and have to be used consciously. Rainwater requires water filters which have to be changed regularly. We had to use double sediment filters for our basic water supply, plus carbon and ultraviolet filters for our drinking water. To conserve water, we shared washing machines and used greywater for irrigation, when possible. Flush toilets typically use a lot of water so we introduced the practice of "if it's yellow, let it mellow."

When our water supply issues were less problematic we attempted to eliminate our dependence upon imported toilet paper. It has always amused me that one of the first items supermarkets sell out of when disasters like COVID-19 happen is toilet paper, yet much of the world manages without using much of this product at all. In the pursuit of a more radical sustainability solution, I installed hand-held bidets/water sprayers in all our toilets.

We used locally-appropriate sustainable farming practices—mostly agroforestry—harvesting food from over 100 diversified fruit trees and also added bee hives, chickens, goats, and eventually horses. We experimented with vermiculture and drought-resistant landscaping and learned how to built soil and maintain organic permaculture gardens.

We had a fully self-sustainable chicken program, with about 80 fertilized-egg-laying hens. We bred our own chicks by brooding hen or incubation, which produced roosters for chicken broth—as a medicine and health booster—as well as egg-laying hens. The chickens also helped by eating grass, keeping weeds and bugs at bay, plus scratching and pooping around the fruit trees as they hunted for worms and other critters growing under the rotting green manure that we placed there.

Our two horses provided considerable support for our sustainable systems. They gave us a constant, daily source of top quality manure, and replaced gas-guzzling lawn mowers and weed-whackers by attentively munching on the assortment of grasses and vines growing on our jungle land. In fact, we subsequently sold our fossil-fuel-powered mower and weed-whackers as we didn't need them at all during the seven years we had horses.

The horses also moved constantly around our land applying about 250 pounds of pressure with each hoof step—compacting the rocks and cinders that formed our substrate—encouraging better grass production and soil building. Daily, we collected almost all the horse poop, which either went to feed the worms, was spread around fruit trees, or was placed in three separate large compost piles and mixed with weeds and other green waste. They enabled me to develop my vermiculture experiment by providing a daily source of nutrient-rich, partially-digested food source for the worms.

Earthworms became a huge part of my horticulture regime. Aristotle called them "the intestines of the earth"; Charles Darwin wrote a whole book about them; and I believe they are a gardener's best friends. For the organic gardener, they are the single most important element in the program of building rich, healthy soil. Our worm bins produced large quantities of red wiggler worms, worm tea, and also worm castings. Critical for the creation of healthy soil is the breakdown of organic matter which is best accomplished by indigenous microorganisms (IMO's). I regularly sprayed IMO-rich worm tea around the land and buried colonies of worms and worm castings and spread pondweed around the drip line of plants.

Our days of buying expensive organic fertiliser imported from faraway factories ended as I researched and implemented sustainable local alternatives. In addition to our worm products we used aged chicken poop and chicken compost, washed up coral from beaches, and crushed oyster shell from a local oyster farm, and spread them all around our trees for nitrogen and calcium. We also made a habit of taking the wood ashes from our fire pits and our sauna and spreading them to provide micronutrients, phosphorus, and potassium.

For 1500 years before colonisation, Hawaiians produced all the food they needed. Their diet was mainly agroforestry foods and rootcrops supplemented with fish. I soon realised that sustainable

Garden.

Sustainable food consumption requires us to love the food that loves to grow where we live.

Wilbur, Polu, and friends.

Farmers' market at S.P.A.C.E.

Bellyacres in 1990.

food consumption requires us to love the food that loves to grow where we live. Eating sustainably starts with using the foods already growing locally. Food is a deeply-rooted cultural practice and it's a fact that people today tend to eat foods from many different climates as a result of globalisation. This was how Hawaii went from being fully self-sufficient in food production to importing 92 percent of its food by 2008. COVID-19 will hopefully help us see the folly of these ways and understand the wisdom of indigenous people and modern sustainable food practices. Eat Locally!

In Hawaii, the locally-appropriate food production methods for our particular climatic zone are all agroforestry-based. Tall canopies of breadfruit, mango, and avocados; lower canopies of papaya, banana, and diverse exotic fruits; with a ground cover of ginger, turmeric, peppers, taro, cassava, and pumpkin. These are perennial crops—requiring little maintenance, drought-resistant, and very sustainable. Temperate crops are annuals requiring much higher maintenance; in fact, they need daily (sometime twice daily) watering, and are not nearly as sustainable in this location. I learned that it's important to adopt a diet that suits your environment and your philosophy in order to truly be a practitioner of sustainable food production.

We constantly researched and utilised new technology as it became accessible and affordable.

At our ecovillage we constantly researched and utilised new technology as it became accessible and affordable. We replaced incandescent bulbs with fluorescent tubes, then compact fluorescent bulbs, and eventually the long-awaited LEDs. We replaced oil lamps with solar-charged LED lamps, laundry trips to the nearest laundromat 14 miles away with energy-efficient washing machines used only when the sun was shining. We erected clothes lines and learned the ancient art of pinning clothes out to dry on a line.

We started by heating water with black bags hanging in the sun; next came the on-demand propane heaters; and then we installed solar water-heating systems, saving us and the planet from the consumption of huge amounts of propane gas. Originally all our kitchens had propane-burning gas refrigerators, but as our solar installations improved in capacity we were able to replace them with modern energy-efficient fridges.

Our energy systems developed slowly over the years as we added more solar panels, expanded our battery banks, replaced old charge controllers with more efficient models, and upgraded our inverters to 24V. Our seven separate stand-alone solar systems varied in size from a small 700-watt 12V system to a 2.2-kW 24V system powering three homes to the 5.6kW system installed on our community pavilion. At that point, we were able to run larger power tools, blenders, cordless phones, bread makers, bigger sound systems, and even electric kettles; but never microwave cookers or dishwashers!

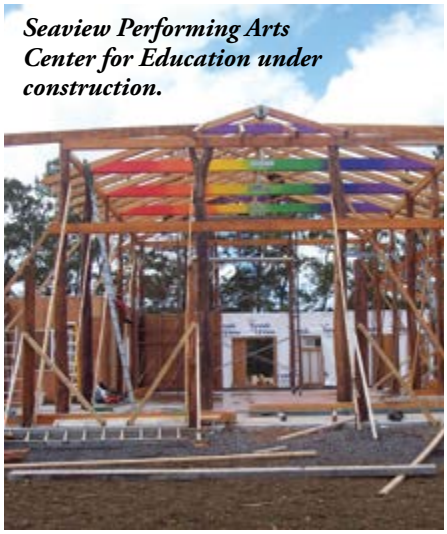
Presently, we have solar panels purchased from 1987 still in use in our hybrid systems, which speaks a lot to the efficacy and practicality of solar power. Being solar energy pioneers we paid a high price because equipment is now much cheaper and more available. Fortunately, newcomers to the solar power world have benefited from the innovations made possible by the commitment of original buyers to support this new form of energy. We must support sustainable innovations even if they are more expensive.

Transportation based on fossil fuels has been a huge contributor to climate change. My radical experiment was to collect vegetable oil from restaurants and make biodiesel

Solar powered golf cart.

"Kafka" solar power plant.

Author's daughter with Arakana chickens.



Seaview Performing Arts Center for Education under construction.

to run three of our vehicles. We also bought four used electric golf carts to replace our farm vehicles. The energy to charge the batteries came from our solar systems so was "guilt-free" and, apart from being work vehicles, they were great for rounding up runaway horses or missing kids or just for going on joy rides.

We also expanded our ecovillage bike fleet to about a dozen working bikes. It was fairly easy to get donations of old bikes—and even purchase a few cheap deals. They invariably came with maintenance needs so we would regularly assign our most mechanically-minded volunteer to do thorough overhauls.. The bike program was a success and became an important and very sustainable transportation option.

In my view, a sustainable community exists first and foremost for people, and its primary objective is to improve the quality of life of its residents—not just physically but also socially, economically, psychologically, and spiritually. The aim should be to achieve this ecologically sustainable quality of life in a fair, open, and democratic manner.

At Bellyacres, after building our 10,000 sq. ft. community center, we pioneered a model with lots of community participation and buy-in, a highly developed volunteer support system with networks of people and collaborating organizations working towards a shared vision for social change. We hosted a public charter school, a thriving twice-weekly farmers' market, arts workshops and classes, plus a variety of community events and performances. Our plan also became a perfect incubator for the growth of new businesses that supported a healthy and sustainable community. We even developed plans for the creation of self-sustainable community health and welfare services organized at a community level using community resources.

Our ability to run S.P.A.C.E. on a tiny budget was due to the extremely low financial overhead we had because we lived extremely sustainably. We had no electric, water, or sewage bills. We had no need for air conditioning or heating. We dried our laundry in the sun and we grew much of our own food. We were conscious consumers and became serious adherents to practicing the six R's: Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, Repurpose, Repair, and Refuse. Our recycling program was highly evolved and had nine separate sorting bins at one point.

We organized a neighborhood carpool and shopped for one another on a daily basis to further reduce our transport needs. At S.P.A.C.E., we reused linen hand towels and tablecloths, and always used reusable plates, cups, and cutlery. We incorporated recycled building materials into our structures, always bought recycled tools and equipment, and even recycled the performance costumes we used for over 30 years. Before buying anything new, we always checked to see if we already had something that could be used, and often modified our plans accordingly.

An excellent example of how our style of sustainable development worked was our kids' playground—which we built for a meagre $1,200 with material donations and volunteer labor—while a similar sized playground installed by the county cost taxpayers $150,000, and was far inferior in style and creativity to our community-built alternative.

Our model provided a solution to the lack of community centers and services in remote rural areas. In the uncertain economic times predicted to follow events like COVID-19, many communities may not be able to rely on governments to provide any community facilities and services beyond the most basic. I believe that ecovillages and small-scale communities through their own radical sustainable experimentation can and will be a huge source of guidance to rural and urban communities by serving as sustainability demonstration models.

For more information on the Bellyacres Sustainability Project, see **www.youtube.com/watch?v=kzYa9YSpDFQ** *(9:28 minutes).*

Graham Ellis cofounded a workers collective in Victoria, Canada and a community development project in St. Lucia W.I. before moving to Hawaii. In 1987 he founded the Bellyacres ecovillage on a 10 acre jungle lot with a vision to experiment with sustainable community living practices. In 2010 he became the founding president of the Hawaii Sustainable Community Alliance after Bellyacres was issued a cease and desist order, and spent the next four years promoting County and State legislation to legalize sustainable living in Hawaii. In 2017 Graham was deported back to the UK where he now lives with his wife and family seeking a return to the values and joys of communal living.

Crafting a Verdant Future

By Shaelee Evans

Trades from a local farmer.

Climate justice is bought with our time and dollars as we invest in practices and products that are designed with earth stewardship in mind. From the activities we engage in, to what we consume and produce, we create this shared reality through active or passive reinforcement of the systems that make it up. For all our options, the economy of food is a daily vote for the world we live in; our actions determine the patterns that make up life on earth. Now more than ever we feel the need for localized food systems. We support these systems just as much as they support us! Investing in our own gardens and small farms means that when mainstream society is shaken, we have solidarity with our community and within ourselves.

Five years at the farmers' markets have shown me how wonderful specialization and trade can be, and have taught me a lot about regionalised economies. We don't all have to master growing and making everything we need to live. It's okay to get really good at just braising greens, tomatoes, or cheese making. There are neighbors (and friends!) who will be focusing in another direction, and we can trade. Even if our day job is as a seamstress or techie, choosing local food ensures that local food options will be there when we need them. As a farmers' market vendor—not selling vegetables but herbal teas—I have been able to purchase and trade for quality fresh seasonal vegetables grown by people I have grown to know and trust. It's shown me that I don't have to do everything—I can trust some things, like carrots and tomato starts, to farmers who have the ability to nurture those seedlings better than I can.

A few years ago I was selling at the market when a woman ordered a cup of soup. I served it to her in a paper coffee cup, with a pair of chopsticks. "Can I have a spoon please?" she asked me. "We serve soup in a cup so it's drinkable, and offer chopsticks for eating the bigger bits," I replied with a smile. "There aren't any good alternatives to plastic spoons right now, so this is how we do it at Goodness Tea!" She thanked me, and walked over to another vendor and asked for one of their plastic forks. Next time though, she tried it with chopsticks. Sometimes I was met with enthusiasm and joy as people tried eating soup a new way. Sometimes people simply said "no thanks" and walked away. More often than not though, I made a friend, as saying "no" to plastic opened a discussion on how our collective actions make a big impact.

Food draws us together through sharing time around the table; the economy of cooking funnels resources directly to those who most interact with the land. Chefs who choose local give small farmers the income to steward the land, while discount diners support mass industrial agriculture and its degradation of regional watersheds. As consumers, we build up systems by using them, or starve them out by refusing to participate. The power of consumer interest is evidenced in how organic agriculture has become mainstream. Almost every grocery store and mass market now has a sizable organic section with a fair number of options. Even fast-food chains are following the lead by choosing paper straws and compostable cup lids. It's not big businesses who are responsible to present better options—it's up to us to ask for them and do what we can within our scope of influence.

According to a December 17, 2017 article by researcher Darrin Qualman (www.darrinqualman.com/global-plastics-production), globally we produce four million tons of plastic a year. People use a million plastic bottles *every minute*, only nine percent of which are recycled (see *Forbes*, June 26, 2017: *www.forbes.com/sites/trevor-*

nace/2017/07/26/million-plastic-bottles-minute-91-not-recycled/#12cd06df292c). Think of all that bulk which has been produced since then (nearly 1.5 trillion unrecycled plastic bottles over the past three years) filling landfills, burned into the atmosphere, or cast out into the ocean. When we eschew that plastic bottle and spoon, our action may seem insignificant, but taken together with others' it's huge. Food we get at the store or take-out is one of the biggest culprits of plastic-waste and garbage there is.

One radical thing we can do to combat climate change is to choose nearly packing-free locally grown goods, and support businesses that do too while choosing plastic-free packaging alternatives. Seasonal eating means our food doesn't need to travel more than a few miles. Consider the impact on the environment of how far your food travels. Even if we carpool and bike-commute, plant trees and use refillable water bottles, do the veggies and berries we eat come from Mexico; is that rice from China? The more we consumers raise the standard for climate consciousness, the more industry and businesses will respond. As a small business owner I see the power of this choice having a profound impact, as the packaging decisions we have made with Goodness Tea are pushing the industry to provide better options. It has been challenging for me to find packaging and sourcing that fully resonates with an ethic of earth care. But it is possible and getting easier every day. Rather than plastic, I use cellulose made from sustainably managed timber. This is a great alternative as many of the plant-based options are made from corn and sugarcane that are GMO or otherwise responsible for industrial pollution. We choose backyard-compostable non-plastics that are genuinely sustainably produced, and let our suppliers know why it matters. For sourcing, we base all new recipes around what herbs and fruits can be grown within our region, keeping exotics like ginger and cocoa as more minor ingredients in our blends. These strategies work together to keep our footprint as small as it can be, and funnel income to suppliers that are mindful to be responsible stewards of the land.

I encourage you to get involved in your local food system. Collaborate on a farmers' market booth, start a garden, learn about what you can forage, and have preservation parties with your friends. Place-based economics, family tables, and local trade build community that we can depend on no matter how the earth responds to the amount of carbon in the atmosphere and plastic in the ocean. As we all do our part to take an increasingly radical stance for climate justice, we make a big change. We may be told that the entrenched mainstream is the future, but I see another pattern developing. Our actions are creating channels that deepen and widen as we reinforce them with our habits. The energy given to organizations that deplete the environment is now being given instead to those in restoration work through our collective choice. I see the stream of power jumping channels; the new mainstream is a river of life. It looks like being witness to flowers blooming more days than not and knowing what is ripening throughout the year; it feels like a block party and satisfies the soul.

Shaelee Evans lives, farms, gardens, and adventures with friends and family on the north Olympic Peninsula. She began studying permaculture and northwest ecosystem management at Peninsula College and McComb Road Nursery 2004, now stewarding land in Port Angeles and Sequim. She delights in crafting delicious therapeutic teas and snacks for her community through her work with Goodness Tea, a company dedicated to regenerative practices. To educate and uplift the area, Shaelee has volunteered for the Northwest Permaculture Convergence since 2016, presently serving as president. If not in her garden, you can usually find Shaelee at dances, farmers' markets, song circles, and along trails in the Olympic region. Shoot her an email at Shaelee@goodnesstea.com if you'd like to connect.

Wild salad blend: chickweed and miner's lettuce.

Bounty from an apple glean.

Treasures from a mushroom hunting party in the woods (chanterelles).

Photos courtesy of Shaelee Evans

RURAL REPORT: Community Inventory in Transition Times

By Tomi Hazel and Megan Fehrman

The Little Applegate Valley (LAV) in southwestern Oregon has been through a lot since the Dakubetede (Athabaskan speakers) were removed and Beaver before that. The human social fabric exploded through the gold rush with many thousands of miners camped, tearing apart the stream beds and tunneling along quartz seams. There even was a Chinese community who built the China Ditch and were not treated as badly as elsewhere. A silent film was made of downtown Sterlingville, of which no trace remains. Buncom (now a ghost town) was a small city. Even Crump had thousands of miners shacked up all over the place and several small businesses.

After the gold rush of the mid to late 1800s, the settlers who stayed were the ones who had started farms and ranches to feed the miners. These few white families filed homestead claims as well as mining claims and held grazing permits. There were several small sawmills in the valley and almost every ranch did some of everything to extract value from the landscape. The farmed soils were poor to begin with and only got worse, the mining ditches used for irrigation became less reliable, and the forests close by did not grow back very fast. This is a dry valley with steep slopes and metamorphic soils (alkaline and dominated by magnesium) that has not been friendly to settlement based on extraction. Many ranches have gone bankrupt more than once.

Over time, layers of settlement have included old families, new money, a few miners, firewood cutters, hunters, off-road gladiators, and counterculture folks. Starting in the early 1970s, back-to-the-land folks (hippies) found abandoned homesteads for relatively cheap with reliable water and no building codes.

Since the late 1970s a drought has set in. Tree ring records in the Sierras show 60-year drought cycles. The LAV has been through droughts and good years since the 1850s. The Ecotopian settlers have brought environmentalism and farm rescue into the story and resisted the latest extractive efforts of timber corporations. The industrial-scale clearcutting that became the norm after 1980 in the Pacific Northwest is even more disastrous on our brittle landscape.

Meanwhile, in the late 1980s small organic farms started to operate, and the first renewal of community organizing other than forest defense bloomed. By the early 2000s, land speculation for country homes had ballooned, and now plenty of fancy cars are on the roads.

The Grange movement, founded 1867, had its day during the 20th century. Now new nonprofits and cooperative marketing have entered the community. There is a flavor of culture here; the late 19th and the 20th centuries' LAV never had churches—there were dance halls and schools. The neighbors always have cooperated on cattle roundups and barn raisings, and next-door kids have married each other, forming ties between ranching families.

The newest layer of settlement of small farmers has brought more Ecotopians to the valley and we now have re-emergent culture. A critical mass of young people have settled or visited to allow cultural institutions to rise parallel to the more business-like nonprofits. A competition of sorts began between farms after small musical bands showed up at Siskiyou Cooperative CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) farm celebrations. This gelled as the Battle of the Barn Bands. We have had at least four of these hosted by different farms, sometimes even in a barn. Then a private community center started to host a yearly social event called Cabaret, where folks put on skits and acts playing with themes wide and challenging. A local wildcrafting winery hosts tastings with entertainment and catered food.

Reading groups and clothing exchanges, seasonal themed parties and volleyball at the local county park materialized. Some of the farms built businesses such as a multi-farm CSA, bakery, brewery, daycare, massage, a couple of creameries, a couple of small sawmills, and seed saving. Farms and businesses learned to cooperate and got acquainted. Several farms hosted educational events and courses. Environmental protection work has continued, and now we are figuring out how to live and work with the Cannabis industry. The LAV reached a level of population and commitment that suggested even more integration, and so the idea of community inventory and mapping as a shared group effort rose up.

Inventory Rolls In to Great Acclaim

In the spring of 2014, a couple of neighbors met a few times to plan a series of community meetings to map our resources. We came up with a recipe. Thirty folks showed up to our first meeting from various neighborhoods and farms in the valley. Hazel used some accumulated skills and posters from permaculture courses to set the stage, while talking the group through the concept and plan of community asset mapping (explained below). To reduce fears that local specifics would go viral, exposing sensitive information to whomever, we emphasized that none of these lists and compilations was to be photographed or posted online.

Diagram by Siskiyou Permaculture.

In a second meeting, we reviewed the project, brainstormed what was missing, identified what actionable projects emerged out of the information and where we would go from here. We discussed external challenges to our valley. We began to think like a community council. Several committees formed to work on delicate questions, new categories, or to move forward with the obvious projects. A bulletin board at Buncom, a ride-waiting shelter at the Crump mailboxes, and a serve-yourself farm store at the bottom of Yale Creek got attention. Several small businesses in our valley talked about sharing bulk buying and recycling byproducts between operations.

There was a lot of enthusiasm for this community inventory process and some of the projects have seen some progress. We had our third meeting in mid-June 2017. With our assembled bundle of posters and lists divided into three categories, we reviewed our story thread with 22 folks, again—half of them new. Systems posters hung about to keep us oriented. We sorted into mapping, big ideas, and public services.

At this meeting, we realized how little we know about the wide range of folks living in the Little Applegate Valley. We discussed putting flyers in rural mail boxes but were told there would be complaints, as that is not legal. So we thought of organizing dead-end side roads with phone trees for fire evacuation, but encountered obstacles here as well: there are few land lines in the valley, no cell phone coverage, some expensive satellite dishes for internet instead, but no list available of phone numbers or email addresses. Moreover, many neighbors don't welcome unsolicited knocks on the door. No straightforward way was found to get to know all of our neighbors. Little by little, however, from then until now, we are finding ways to meet more of them through community organizing, public information and educational events, and social outings.

Moving ahead in that third meeting, the mapping group suggested we assemble a map bundle all to the same scale, allowing us to overlay them so we could think

Photo courtesy of Megan Fehrman

design. This library would be accessible and include geology, timber, mines, trails, wildlife, water, and fire—data we'd collect, organize, and interpret. The big ideas discussion reported the lack of housing, the need for family support (daycare and education), interest in cooperative projects (barn raisings and cleanups), and concern about food insecurity even with all these farms. The public services group focused on communications and connectivity trees, the well-being of our community, and the organizing of emergency response.

We now celebrate a community calendar online, volunteers organizing creek drainage (neighborhood) phone trees, progress on the ride-wait shelter, and ongoing interest in sharing. There is energy for perhaps three council meetings a year. All-age educational evenings are popular; we have had two "report nights" hosted in local homes where a queue of presenters get five minutes each. Much fun is had. This whole storyline is deepening our sense of place.

Eventually, the word spread about our process, and there was interest from other Applegate Valley neighborhoods. This article is meant to lend encouragement and enable other community inventories; the practice is equally valuable everywhere. A Greater Applegate Economic Road Map process got rolling separately with similar goals in 2016. And now the two groups are meeting to exchange information and identify any possible synergies.

2019 Update

The Little Applegate community has continued to sponsor local events, courses, parties, and sporting events such as volleyball in the park and an annual softball game. Now we have expanded into the greater Applegate Valley with the formation of an economic, environment, and social development nonprofit organization. Megan is currently working with A Greater Applegate to proliferate these ideas. In September, the Little Applegate community hosted the first Neighborhood Listening Session that will be rolled out to several other neighborhoods in the very complicated set of side valleys and communities of the main Applegate Valley.

The Neighborhood Listening Session was based loosely on our Little Applegate experience with Community Inventory and of the 20 folks who showed up, perhaps half had been to one of our previous LAV meetings. Very similar interests and concerns were voiced and the new posters that we filled in will go to an archive that will guide A Greater Applegate towards compiling the common interests of the larger Applegate Valley. A lot of the comments heard in the listening session were about local governance and representation. The Applegate Valley has no common governance and is vulnerable to the whims of the county commissioners of Jackson and Josephine Counties. The institutions of note are the volunteer fire department and the three or four churches. The Granges are more active in Josephine County (downriver) and the Upper Applegate Grange has been dormant for a few years now after an attempt at resuscitation.

The economic issues predominate so far, as folks are trying to expand economic activity and improve interconnectedness to keep dollars circulating locally. But the crisis issues of wildfire danger, control of power sources, environmental protection, and climate refugees keep getting put on the back burner (so to speak). It will take a while to find a way to coordinate input from and discussion with the nonprofit sector, the business community, the churches, the homesteaders, the overlapping government jurisdictions, the corporate land stewards, and the visionaries.

Looking Back, Looking Forward

There is a thread of continuity in the story of the last 170 years in our valley. There is rarely any government. Those institutions are remote as we are remote. There is barely ever any law enforcement. Too far from the coffee urn? Too small a tax base? We as a community have mostly been on our own. We have succeeded and failed on our own wits. Through all of this the land has taught us. We have learned from place. Some responses have remained and some have been left behind. The Dakubetede were right to call themselves "the people of the beautiful valley." We are along for the ride because we love being here.

An earlier version of this article was published in Permaculture Design Magazine *and in the local* Applegator *newspaper.*

Hazel, aka Tom Ward, is a long-time resident of the Southern Oregon bioregion and has been advising farms and teaching Permaculture for over 35 years. They have BS degrees in Forestry and Botany from Syracuse University and have taught at Laney College in Oakland, California, D-Q University in Davis, California, and at Thlolego Learning Centre in South Africa, among many other institutes and communities. They are presently managing a Social Forestry experimental station in Little Wolf Gulch near Ruch, Oregon, demonstrating natural building, fuel hazard materials utilization, multiple products woods-crafting, wildlife enhancement, and desert forest water management. Hazel is a member of the Siskiyou Permaculture collaborative team, who teach the PDC and advanced courses in Optical Surveying, Social Forestry, Design, and Ethnobotany, They hold permaculture diplomas from Bill Mollison's Institute, as well as from the Permaculture Institute of North America. Hazel is currently working on a book on Social Forestry. To find out more about internships or courses, go to siskiyoupermaculture.com.

Megan Fehrman grew up in the heartland and earned her undergraduate degree in Agricultural Economics at the University of Wisconsin before heading West. After exploring several aspects of community organizing, sustainability, and education, Megan earned a Masters degree at Portland State University, focusing on Community Food Systems and Agroecology. The last several years, Megan has lived in the Little Applegate Valley on an 86-acre ranch with her brothers as they establish their farm business and creamery. She has been a statewide advocate and organizer for socially responsible agriculture in Oregon and the Education Program Director for Rogue Farm Corps, a nonprofit that aims to help train, educate, and assist the next generation of farmers and ranchers. Megan has served on the Sustainable Agriculture Education Association Steering Council and was a 2013 Toyota Together Green Fellow. Megan is currently an independent contractor working as a Rural Community Builder. When not at work, Megan likes to dig in the dirt, walk in the woods, visit the city, take in some music, and spend time with family and friends. She can be reached at mefehrman@gmail.com.

When Love Ignites a Creative-Waste Revolution

By Rob Mies with Cara Judea Alhadeff, Ph.D.

In early 2018, my career took an unexpected turn and I was looking for a way to start a new life. I had spent the past 25 years as a conservation biologist and was now prepared to live closer to my environmental convictions and ethical beliefs. I wanted to direct my life path away from mainstream over-consumption society; I wanted to re-envision my life with love and compassion that would extend to my every decision and action.

I was ready to build a new life, and then I met Cara…

Cara was already living her ethics—never owning a house, a car, even a smart phone or credit card. She was looking for someone who shared the same deep understanding of caring for ourselves, our community, and our ecosystem. We met while she and her son, Zazu, were living at Ithaca EcoVillage. Based on her book on climate justice, *Zazu Dreams: Between the Scarab and the Dung Beetle, A Cautionary Fable for the Anthropocene Era*, Cara had organized a series of science and storytelling panels. (Little did I know that one day soon we would be performing together about living our ethics.) She invited me to share my perspective on creative eco-conscious collaboration. We found that we shared our ecologically-inspired passions (along with so many interwoven layers of being in the world), and fell madly in love.

Cara and I, along with our three kids, were ready to take on an exciting challenge: merge our families and create a home from all discarded/reclaimed/repurposed materials. Our adventure turned out to be wildly successful, and all was completed in only 30 days! Even though utopia translates as "no-where," we knew we were going to manifest the impossible and together electrify our mini-utopia!

Our 210 square-foot tiny home began with a 2004 International diesel school bus destined for the junk yard. The Delphi Community School Corporation retired the bus with only 119,159 miles due to decreased student population in their rural Indiana area. I called the lead bus driver to discuss the details of the auctioned vehicle and was told that the bus was in great shape, but most likely someone would buy it only to remove the engine and scrap the rest of the bus. That night, we won the auction, spending $3,500 (compared to $85,000 new) for a 66-passenger school bus that would soon become our home. Motivated by connecting our hearts with our actions, we knew it was time to put our values and passion to work!

Photos courtesy of Rob Mies and Cara Judea Alhadeff

The first challenge was to pick up the giant vehicle that was four hours from Pontiac, Michigan where we had recently finished renovating a 99-year-old dilapidated house in an historic neighborhood. So that we didn't have to drive two vehicles to pick up the bus, I arranged for a family-owned hitch installation business near Delphi, Indiana to pick up the bus and install a tow package under the back bumper. Once that was finished, I rented a vehicle tow trailer and set off to pick up the bus. The real fun was had when I hooked up the trailer to

the bus, drove my car onto the tow trailer, and set off for home—the first time I ever drove a bus! Mac, our eight-year-old rescued goldendoodle, was on board to keep me company. Our fluffy mascot goes everywhere with us—his gentle lovingness was a big part of our restoration process. Mac was, however, not keen on the bus drive, passing most of the evening nervously pacing the narrow bus aisle and staring out the front glass door as the world sped by at 50-65 mph.

Once the bus was in our driveway, it was time to get to work. Step one was to remove all the seats—sounds easy but it turned out to be an entire day of hard work. Each seat was bolted into the frame six times (three through the floor, and three through a side rail under the windows). Many of the bolts were rusted and broke in the process of removal. Others took immense effort to loosen, and some would only come out by cutting and grinding. This was actually fun using the angle grinder with sparks flying!

Cara and I were deeply committed to repurposing everything possible that we removed from the bus. We brainstormed daily how each of our actions could grow from a symbiotic relationship to our natural environment. We placed two of the 22 bus seats outside the bus for use as a kids' reading area, and later Cara turned them into a yoga prop to do "headless headstands." The other 20 bus seats were donated to a motorcycle clubhouse in Detroit. We worked tirelessly to remove the plywood flooring and were able to salvage all non-rotten pieces for use in lining our aging open trailer. We removed bulky plastic covers above each side of the windows that housed long bundles of electrical wires. Most of the wires were removed since we didn't need them for driving a converted bus. We later used the wires to tie in the solar panels, connect the batteries, and hook up the DC mini-refrigerator. Screws, washers, and various other hardware were used in the construction process as needed. We traded the heaters to friends in exchange for their assistance removing the seats.

Now that the school bus was gutted, the real fun began.

Cara and I have spent endless hours exploring how we could embody our dreams; how our actions could align with the laws of nature; how we could build from our hearts—lots of drawings, lots of lists, lots of funky ideas. We stayed up late scouring the internet for free stuff or goodies we could barter, and although we were baffled and dismayed (to say the least) how so many items could be on their way to landfill, we were delighted to find most of what we needed for our bus conversion: cedar and pine 2"x4"

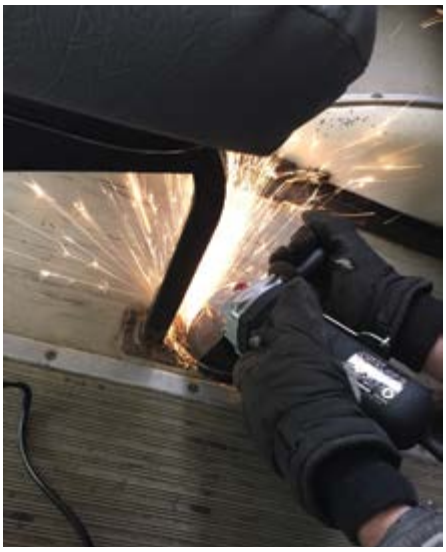
and 4"x4" boards used to ship factory machinery from Asia to Detroit were to be used for framing the subfloor, walls, counters, outdoor table, and solar supports on the roof, pine 1"x6", 1"x10", and 1"x12" boards were used as the subfloor, wall covering, shelves spanning above all side windows, and counter covering, closed-cell foam insulation 2" thick salvaged from a warehouse being demolished was installed under the subfloor and behind the side walls, weathered cedar 1" and 2" thick boards previously hottub covering and children's treehouse were installed as insulation and accent above the doors and dashboard, and we used wool Army blankets for insulation and seasonal window coverings. We were so grateful for all of these materials, and put them to use in a compassionate way that felt ethically balanced.

We connected with other school bus-conversion enthusiasts online via chat rooms and blogs by people who were in the process of converting their vehicle into a living space or had already done so. Most were simply using traditional methods of building and acquiring materials (big box store mentality and reality). Since Cara and I were committed to ecologically-ethical building, we questioned each process and looked for alternatives at every opportunity. We brainstormed how to obtain and reuse scrap and discarded materials from industrial and consumer waste; and, fortunately found videos online that detailed ways to use them—offering us more designing and constructing ideas.

While we were thrilled to find so many building materials for free, installation took an unexpected turn—freezing rain, snow, ice, stomach flu! Toward the beginning of our 30-day process, the whole family was stricken by several days of illness. This was a very frustrating time. At the same time, cold fronts came down from Canada bringing frigid weather. The bus, of course, was not heated, but we were determined! Layers of long underwear, sweaters, wool hats, insulated gloves, and thick jackets kept the momentum going. We tracked down unwanted billboard graphics and repurposed them as giant 45-foot-long tarps to cover our materials and makeshift workshop, and also to protect the bus from leakage.

We acquired 250 square feet of 1"x4" oak flooring. A young couple had bought a house to remodel and decided that they wanted all the wood floors to match, thus listing "free hardwood floors; pick up immediately or it will go to the dumpster." Cara and I sprung into action and spent a week prying up the oak flooring, removing hundreds of 3" nails, and cutting and reinstalling over our bus's reused foam insulation and pine subfloor. Another great find was 1" thick granite countertop that was being given away from a recent kitchen remodeling job. I learned to cut the incredibly hard material with a used diamond blade attached to my father-in-law's circular saw. The process was deafeningly loud and unbearably dusty. In the end, the granite served as a beautiful hearth around our used wood-burning stove and gorgeous countertops. As rustic accents around the hearth, on the front of counters, and along shelving, we recouped century-old wood lath from the historic house we had previously renovated for barter.

Although we couldn't find everything we needed for free, we discovered that lightly used items were significantly less expensive. Reused items like a four-burner stove, stainless steel sink, oil lamps, and



propane tanks were 10-20 percent of the retail cost. We found a Jotul 602N (best-selling woodburning stove in the world) for only $300 ($1,600 new) that would heat our tiny home with ease, and a 3.3 square-foot AC/DC Norcold refrigerator for $70 ($1,200 new) to keep our food fresh, and six 100-watt solar panels and four deep cell batteries for $700 ($3,500 new) to run the refrigerator on DC power. We mounted the solar panels on wood framing that is attached to the roof and the batteries are housed in the outside luggage compartment on the driver's side. We brought these unwanted items into our loving home and repurposed them with attentive hands and hearts.

Everyday Zazu spent many hours helping with the bus conversion. He was seven years old at the time, and we were homeschooling him. Building our home spurred an amazing hands-on opportunity to teach him about co-responsibility and living wisdom. We called the learning opportunity "Adventures in Ideas; Adventures in Action." The word *educate* means "to draw out." Our bus-to-home transformation began with curiosity, and further built on body confidence and creative experiments. We taught Zazu how to question, think relationally, research ideas, and problem-solve using unexpected or unusual challenges—like not having electricity in our home. Our topics of study included math, chemistry, art, geography, history, current affairs, writing, reading, creative visualization, inquiry-based challenges, and much more. We explored how to live with a sense of playful responsibility through deep empathy.

Each morning, we explained the daily plan that included demolition using crowbars, picking up reclaimed materials, designing furniture, measuring and cutting pine and oak boards, installing floors using hammers and drills, etc. On the weekends, my teenage daughters, Georgia (18) and Madison (16), helped with home construction and teaching Zazu. With our whole family inspired, our love and energy emanated throughout the spirit of our co-creation.

At the end of each day, we reviewed what had been accomplished with a series of questions—What did we do today? What did we learn? What questions do you have? For example, if we used a circular saw we asked how does it work? Where does the power come from? What are other options or different choices we could have made? Another series of questions came from the materials we used—Where do the objects come from? Are any of the materials toxic to humans and/or the ecosystem? What are the pros and cons of buying new and reusing? To answer these questions, we spent time reading old encyclopedias, library books, and talking to many other activists, educators, and adventurers. The concept of embodied energy was central to how we encouraged Zazu to explore his imagination.

Although caulk, plumbing supplies, and a toilet seat were purchased from resale shops like Habitat for Humanity, and the tankless water heater and non-electronic wood stove fan were bought online "slightly damaged" but still in good working condition, we did have to buy a few new items that just weren't available to reclaim: rust sealer and construction-grade screws and nails from the small local hardware store, and chimney pieces that were available only from a specialty shop.

We were downsizing from a 900-square-foot house to a home just over 200 square feet. We had bartered a ton of our stuff for other people's used items. Because of spatial constraints, a lot of tiny-home owners need to get rid of their previous furniture. We figured out how to creatively reuse much of our own personal items. These included handmade cedar log furniture I crafted over the past two decades (queen-size bed, six-drawer dresser, coffee table/kitchen table). For additional insulation, we reused rugs, curtains, blankets, etc. that we had acquired over the years at swaps. Also, we used a lot of the materials from the deconstructed bus to reconstruct it. So that everything wouldn't go flying when we eventually hit the road, we secured the furniture to the bus walls and floor using repurposed heavy-duty seat brackets taken from the bus seats.

In the end, we spent about $2,000 for all materials needed to create our tiny home. If we had gone the traditional route

of buying all new, materials would have been around $20,000. Not only is repurposing materials economically beneficial, it is also ethically responsible and ecologically necessary for our shared vision of living lightly in our world. We set out to create a loving home rooted in justice and connected to the laws of nature and we succeeded—in only 30 days!

We relocated our tiny home to the forested mountains of western North Carolina, living in an off-grid ecovillage with about 100 other people looking to share lifestyles that have the potential to live in harmony with the land. The only power we consume is from the used solar panels for our used mini-fridge and charging batteries. Our Jotul keeps us warm during the winter. We find downed trees to cut up for firewood and we cook on the propane stove and wood-burning stove. We use a beautiful outhouse constructed from maple and pine saplings we needed to cut down for our home site.

Our revitalization project was about love and redefining productivity. No longer do I gauge productivity on the number of meetings, emails answered, phone calls made, conferences attended, grants written, or reports submitted. Now I celebrate books read, trails explored, organic meals prepared, and connections with friends and loved ones. When I revisited my family in Metro Detroit this past spring, one of my sisters asked, "When will you get tired of camping?" My answer: "Never!"

Our life practice isn't about a short-term experiment. It is about a deep capacity for creative cooperation; integrating and living our ethics, teaching our children, and being an example for other people looking for alternative ways to energize their lives and inspire a home.

For Cara's side of this story, please see ***Permaculture Love Story, A Dung Beetle's Perspective*** *by Cara Judea Alhadeff, Ph.D., posted at helenzuman.com/love-story-a-dung-beetles-perspective-guest-essay-by-cara-judea-alhadeff-phd.*

Wildlife ecologist and international educator Rob Mies currently crafts handmade furniture in his new business: Menagerie Woodworking. He creates his art through the micro-hydro-powered artist cooperative at Earthaven Ecovillage in North Carolina. With his partner, Cara Judea Alhadeff, their son, Zazu, and their bat-service life-long-companion goldendoodle, Mac, Rob and his family built and live in their converted school bus using only repurposed materials. See www.furnituremagician.com, www.carajudea.com, www.zazudreams.com.

Dr. Cara Judea Alhadeff has published dozens of books and essays on environmental justice, spirituality, philosophy, performance-studies, and ethnic studies journals/anthologies. In numerous museum collections, her photographs/performances have been defended by freedom-of-speech organizations. Former professor at UC Santa Cruz and Global Center for Advanced Studies, Alhadeff teaches, performs, and parents a creative-zero-waste life.

One Step at a Time

By Chuck Durrett

Vancouver Cohousing.

Oakcreek Senior Cohousing.

Silver Sage Village.

Photos courtesy of www.cohousingco.com

Here's the deal. I find that if I come out of the gate righteous or holier-than-thou about climate change, then I, like everybody else, pretty much becomes a non-voice. I find this true in just about every cohousing community that I design as well. But if we walk through each line item, one at a time, and in a deliberate fashion, then I/we can go far.

In Nevada City Cohousing (where I live) the average household was using about 364,000 gallons of water each year before moving in. But after moving in, their usage dropped to 70,000. In one conversation, after we got to know each other, one future resident raised the question, "Has anyone here walked through a clearcut forest lately?" She continued, "What happens to the habitat, the watershed, the air quality, is rather sad." She made it meaningful to people, like us, who live in or near the forest. Twenty minutes later, we conceded to buying all Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certified lumber at a $2,000 per house premium. My highest heating bill while living there has been $20/month and my electric bill averages less than zero each month (thanks to a 1.2 KW photovoltaic system).

My goal is to get people out of wasteful neighborhoods and into villages.

I'm motivated to get people out of their inefficient, single-family homes and into a village—but I find that not walking in that direction too fast keeps people from tripping over themselves along the way. Because I've designed a few strawbale buildings, I sometimes go to those conferences. People instantly talk about R-30 walls, or R-35 walls. How about R-infinity walls? Because that's what you get with shared walls—that, and shared meals. It's a lot cheaper to boil one gallon of water for 20 households than it is to boil one half gallon of water for 20 different households.

I was having dinner in a senior cohousing community not long ago and a resident said, "Chuck, you might want to know that when I lived in a single family home in this town for 20 years, I bought five to six tanks of gas per month. Since I moved into cohousing five years ago, I buy less than one per month." We carpool, we socialize here in the community.

My goal is to get people out of wasteful neighborhoods and into villages. And I find that folks want to do the right thing when presented with the questions one at a time. Questions about solar panels, FSC lumber, and similar issues, are great examples. But people don't want to be guilt-tripped and they don't want to be talked down to.

Recently, one woman said out loud, "No one will be touching my smalls. So no, I will not be using the community laundry." However, it's the best place to capture gray water. And just like the common rock in a river in South America, it brings a lot of community to the table.

But what we need to understand is that what she decided is okay. She'll still be using 20 times less of the earth's resources than she did before living in cohousing. Using the state-of-the-art common laundry just won't be one way she contributes. In her case, and like with most people, I'm more likely to chase her out of cohousing than to entice her to stay if I start talking about climate change and guilt-tripping her into using the common laundry. I said to her husband later that she'll watch a couple of videos about Greta, and then she'll be leading the charge.

That's the way that I believe it has to go—one step at a time. We'll get back to "the smalls" later, once more of us are inside the village.

With his wife, Kathryn McCamant, Chuck Durrett is credited with coining the English term "cohousing" and introducing the cohousing model to North America. In recent years he has focused on cohousing for older persons. He is author of The Senior Cohousing Handbook: A Community Approach to Independent Living *(2009, 2nd edition), and is coauthor with Kathryn McCamant of* Cohousing: A Contemporary Approach to Housing Ourselves *(1988) and* Creating Cohousing: Building Sustainable Communities *(2011). Visit McCamant & Durrett Architects at www.cohousingco.com.*

A COMMUNITY APPROACH TO THE CLIMATE CRISIS

The ZEGG community in Germany finds its place in the climate movement

By Annik Trauzettel

With hotter and drier summers in Germany in recent years, we realized once again how the climate crisis was something that concerned us all. With all the steps for sustainability we had taken at ZEGG, we were still part of an environment that faced drastic changes. A hundred mature trees, mainly pines and birches, died in the years 2018 and 2019 on our plot of land. Around us a new international climate movement emerged, with Extinction Rebellion and Fridays for Future among its manifestations. Where was our place in all of this? Was it still okay to sit around in circles and put time and energy into someone's troubles with his or her relationship? Communication has always been our strength. We had created and shared the method of ZEGG Forum not only in our community, but worldwide. It meant not just sitting around in a circle; it was a deeply human experience to be able to offer a secure space and to see both the uniqueness and the universality of a person's own journey. And it was our contribution to being the change we want to see in the world. But was it still enough?

Near a small town in Eastern Germany, 80 kilometers southwest of Berlin, ZEGG was started as an ecovillage almost 30 years ago. Formerly used by the secret police of the German Democratic Republic, the place had scarce vegetation and lots of concrete. Decades after, it has changed a lot—it is now visibly greener, with more trees and plants, a healthier soil, many different wild animals sharing the space with the 110 human inhabitants. From the beginning of the project, ecological questions were discussed and solutions implemented. Solar panels were installed long ago; the heating is based on woodchips, designed to be both highly effective and low on emissions. A very important point is water—the Brandenburg region, where ZEGG is located, is a dry area. Therefore, the sewage system is plant-based, with the water trickling back into the ground. All these measures were taken while establishing the community—building a new culture, personal growth, community-building, and ecological measures always being important at the same time.

With so much attention on the climate disruption in the last years, we wondered if we could do more. We were seeing and experiencing a drought. While planting new trees we discovered that a few centimeters below ground the earth was still dry even after heavy rain. What could our contribution really be? We were already living in a far more sustainable way than many people around us, but would that in the end "save the world"? How could we contribute part of the new climate movement? And so we took a closer look at exactly those questions.

Are we doing enough?

When we look at how many resources any one of us is theoretically allowed to consume, we do not live in a sustainable enough way in ZEGG. We would need more than one earth to sustain our lifestyle, even though we have a smaller footprint than the German society on average. We decided to take the matter seriously and had a discussion about ecological measures we wanted to introduce. As mentioned above, we already have "green" energy and heating, an almost closed water cycle. On top of that, our main kitchen cooks vegetarian and vegan dishes for our guests and community members, we grow a large part of our food, we use permaculture, we share washing machines and cars, have a gift table to exchange clothes and other items. On a community level

Photos courtesy of ZEGG

we try to lead a sustainable life. But so far we never dared to determine what community members do in "private."

There are around 30 private cars—that is still pretty good for 110 people, but why would we need those fuel burners anyway? Also peeking into private refrigerators has been a strange experience at times, revealing meat and animal products of non-organic origin. And people do fly, be it for recreation, be it for work. How do we deal with that? Is flying okay, as long as we spread ZEGG Forum around the globe? Is it all right to visit your relatives in a faraway country? Where is the red line for justified flights and can a flight ever be justified?

So we decided to look into individual decisions also. More than once, we addressed the topic in our community intensive periods. Those take place a few times a year when we come together for days or a week to focus on community-building and our seminar business. We let people propose what they thought were feasible and effective measures. Some months later we had a meeting to give ourselves precise rules based on those proposals. It was a heated yet successful debate, with 10 of 11 points passed in the plenary. For example, we introduced two vegan days a week in our main kitchen serving the community as well as the seminar guests, and we decided to document private flights and talk about our travel plans beforehand with other members of the community.

We are already living more sustainably than others–so let's show it

We have established good connections to our neighbors and work together with other people interested in change, but we still have the problem that we are often regarded as an island. People come here for a retreat from busy city life or for the courses we offer, but does that really make a difference on a greater scale? We realize more and more that it is not enough to offer good organic food to our guests and use ecological detergents. We also need to present our answers to environmental questions.

So we made a list of things we already do to post it on social media. We wrote articles about the trees we plant. We participated in conferences where we exchanged ideas with other communities and individuals. We marched in protests holding banners for a culture change that we see in ecovillages and intentional communities. This also means that we take part in the current movement of Fridays for Future and Extinction Rebellion, among others. Last September, 45 members of our community went to Berlin for a global climate strike day. And we are not only supporting the emerging movements on the street. With an alliance of ecovillages (Global Ecovillage Network) we offer retreat spaces for activists taking a time out from their protests. We invite speakers for our camps and festivals, giving the ecological crisis an important place in our agenda. We want to reach more and more people by actively showing what has been important to us over all these years.

System change means inner change

Culture change, a change of paradigm, has always been important to us, going hand in hand with ecological measures. We want to let go of the old patterns of thinking. We work on inner change and relationships, building community among humans—this is the core work of ZEGG and a necessary base for outer change. While looking at the climate crisis we realized once again the importance of our work. To build healthy relationships means that we do not need consumption to fill our needs. To work on thankfulness allows us to see a rich world around us, one that consists of the gifts of nature and all the beings around us. We choose simplicity over a never-ending stream of products, information, and ideas when we enable ourselves to focus on what is really important to us.

The world needs immediate action, as the dying trees have shown. We need to think about our lifestyle and consumption of resources. AND we will we need to have a culture change towards a more empathetic world, towards a new sense of community, towards more awareness. So in the end, we realized what the world needs is the new culture we are building in ZEGG as well as in many other intentional communities worldwide. Ultimately, that is how we can best contribute to a sustainable future. So yes, sitting around in circles was and will still be important—for the sake of our children and grandchildren.

ZEGG has scheduled an international Summer Camp from July 22 to August 2 entitled "Experiencing and Living Culture Change." It offers the above-mentioned combination of looking into the necessary outer change and work on the needed inner change. For more information, have a look at sommercamp.zegg.de.

Annik Trauzettel worked with young people and migrants, in journalism and in project management, before she joined the ZEGG community. There she seeks a life that is both more balanced ecologically and more connected to the people around her.

In the Balance

By See

On Friday, September 20th, 2019, many students in my Permaculture and Ecovillage Design class skipped a couple of hours in the afternoon to bike or carpool (six humans plus a dog in my Prius!) to a street corner in Dexter, Oregon, a couple of miles away from Lost Valley Education and Event Center. We stood on the side of the road with handmade signs. We danced, waved, chanted, and hooted and hollered at drivers who passed by, exhorting them to…?

To honk at us and wave back, basically.

I felt the love and support from the 30-foot luxury RVs towing four-door lifted pickup trucks in the base of my spine. The trucks hauling two tons of freshly cut lumber spread their enthusiasm through my skull. I vibrated with joy down through the soles of my feet when a guy hauling a fancy speed boat waved and grinned at us.

We joined people all over the world to participate in the global Climate Action campaign. We woke up the sleepy little town of Dexter, for sure—a white-haired gent hopped out of his car to film us for the local news. Someone else dropped off a variety of pamphlets encouraging us to protest against chemtrails—the real threat, according to him. The organizer of the protest in Eugene wanted the photos we took.

One guy flipped us off as he cruised by driving something blue and unremarkable.

I flipped him off back, while grinning like a fool.

In the following seconds, minutes, then hours, I came to regret that reactivity. I don't think I ruined his chances of understanding the importance of our message by fighting anger with anger. I don't actually think whether he supports us, or our message, even matters, nor do I have any strong need to persuade him to the rightness of our cause (which is, uh, what, exactly? Oh right. To get people driving fossil-fuel-eating-machines to honk at us.)

My cynicism is showing. I don't think any semester-long program, challenging and thought-provoking as it might be, is going to be able to eradicate that.

In a world that's beyond my control in so many ways, in an environment that is starting to dry out, shift, destroy, and burn, what am I left with? What can I do?

So little, in the grand scheme of things. So much, for myself. The response to climate change (and all of the many lesser challenges ahead), for those of us who understand what is happening, lies only partially in efforts to avoid hypocrisy in our daily lives. Lost Valley is a part of that, for me—just living here is lower impact than many modern American lifestyles (though my many international plane trips this last year require a hell of a lot of vegetarian meals and compost toilets to compensate for the footprint I've left).

The real response lies inside. There is a quiet grief—not yet understood, or realized. I cling to cynicism, a touch of nihilism. We're just a layer of dirt on a spinning rock. Stories give our lives meaning; the planet will be just fine without the content we color the world with. I take refuge in denial. It is fine for my mother to fly to visit me; it's not *my* footprint. *My* hands are clean.

Beyond the grief, the cynicism, the nihilism, the denial, lies the balance I seek. The self-mastery. The See-of-That-Story does not extend middle fingers to those who provoke her, even when they needle at her passions. Perfect mastery—mental, physical, emotional—comes in the gap between stories. I seek the gap between action and reaction.

The world (as we know it) hangs in the balance. So do "I."

See grew up in Colorado buried in books and snow. After joining the military and seeing the world, she moved to Oregon to dwell with the last lingering Oak trees of the Willamette Valley. She lives in an intentional community outside Eugene, Oregon with her corgi-dachshund mix, Chewy, and a rotating cast of hippies who light up her life. She was a student in the Fall 2019 Holistic Sustainability Semester at Lost Valley Education and Event Center in Dexter, Oregon (lostvalley.org).

RETHINKING COMMUNITY: Bioregional Reinhabitation

By Nat Taggart

Photos by Chris Roth

The concept of community is something strange to me. I don't much like people, aside from my wife, my parents, a few friends in different cities around the world, and then some colleagues and online acquaintances I share some political perspectives with. Never have they all shared the same space. For most of them, we might see each other less than once or twice a week. What's worse is that my own perspective, something akin to a green, Christian, anarcho-primitivist point of view, is so obscure most such conversations are immediately derailed, since I seem to come off either pessimistic, cynical, or nihilistic to them.

To be honest, they might be correct. Because my analysis suggests civilization is inherently unsustainable and will necessarily collapse, there's little to do that is able to adequately respond to the threat and reality of climate disruption since most projects end up reaffirming a paradigm that itself needs to be disrupted rather than greenwashed. Someone shared the comment (paraphrasing here) that the scale at which individual actions would need to be taken to make a difference would make individual actions irrelevant, which I always thought funny. The typical framing of the environmental movement is individual sacrifice: *hopefully* we'll all voluntarily sacrifice at the scale needed to make a difference.

Sorry, but I call bullshit.

Unless certain communities, dependent on carbon industrial emissions, stop their activities, certain other community actions won't mean much, if anything, apart from self-congratulatory virtue signaling, and perhaps a sense of experiencing life undefined by fossil fuel—which, don't get me wrong, I think is important. I just also think if you deconstruct it a bit, you'll inevitably find degrees of complicity that undermine the virtue being signaled.

At this point, it seems we (collectively) need to live in ways where carbon emissions are net-negative. What does that even mean? What does that even look like? There are so many contradictions to consider and I am not sure those people charged with "overseeing" the transition—those policymakers without whom transition simply won't happen—have even worked it out, or care to for that matter.

To me then, "deep adaptation" means an intentional collapse of the modern globalized industrial economy, yet where the infrastructures necessary to ensure carbon capture and negative emissions are the last industries to fall.

I imagine that takes a lot—basically everyone on earth en-

gaged in subsistence techniques and a direct relationship with the land and earth community. This is a problem, especially when you consider that modern cities are not, have never been, and perhaps can never be sustainable, severing any relationship to the land with a layer of concrete and importing all of the resources needed through coercive, extractive industries that we outsource our survival techniques to, thereby becoming increasingly alienated for as long as we remain within the cityscape. In many ways, the idea of an eco-city or ecological civilization seems to be an impossible object—not unlike a four-sided circle.

Perhaps true ecovillages can exist, though it seems that sedentary living arrangements are necessarily problematic, imposing an anthropocentric intention on the land in order to domesticate it for human needs. This requires territorializing land, setting up bureaucratic and legal arrangements that require complex institutions to enforce them—and of course, the extractive infrastructures needed to empower and compel their directives. None of this seems sustainable to me. Worse, the alternative—living outside of civilization—seems undesirable to most, in which case, the probability of voluntary transition seems like naïve fantasy.

So that is essentially the problem. Any imagined refuge will just be a smaller version of the wider power relations that require unbalanced dynamics. And moreover, it is an uncompelling vision for so many; any refuge will be unable to do anything beyond merely *hoping* to make it through. Of course, if (when?) civilization does collapse, there is little chance those refuges will survive for long if they are overrun by urban refugees seeking shelter now that electrical grids have gone dark.

As I said, I'm usually called cynical, pessimistic, or nihilistic, because I challenge the premise that civilization is a) salvageable, or b) desirable. Ultimately, it is probably a mathematical question requiring a degree of complexity far beyond my expertise. But my intuition is that if there is a future for humans, it will tend to resemble the deep past, with any cultures that do endure accreting a level of technology that does not require much specialization or complex supply lines, patterning its lifeways on indigenous examples that precede the Holocene.

How do I even prepare for that? On the one hand, I am in such a privileged position I may be all right for the rest of my life. I did not have children, so I might have very little skin in the game so to speak. On the other hand, I try not to be an asshole, and moreover, I seem to have been indoctrinated with civil values that are hard to shake, so I am left with the puzzling question of what justice means, and how it can best be enacted, especially in a political landscape that I believe will not voluntarily change and will resist sacrifice as a principle. Put otherwise, how to win a war against a destructive civilization when my own community is fragmented, if not altogether nonexistent?

My impression is this can perhaps only be achieved through a breakaway economy that is globally connected, yet rooted locally. Various authors have spoken about this, and I have speculated elsewhere as to what I think would be especially resonant—the gamification of large-scale civic engagement and citizen science projects that prefigure an ecological future by acting it out in the present. And yet, such a feat would require both technical expertise and community organizing skills that I don't have. Someone once told me I'm great at conceptual design—but what good is a concept if it isn't embodied?

These are the questions I've been considering as I reflect on community in this new decade, especially as civilization begins lurching to a halt while preserving its most sacred cow, fossil fuel industrial technologies and infrastructure. Ultimately, I believe it comes down to identifying core principles one feels compelled to live out in shared experiences, discovering or organizing events, activities, or projects one finds joy participating in. This I think is the best strategy for building communities to effect the future I hope to one day see, even if I am not as optimistic as others it will materialize. As bioregionalist Peter Berg once said, "If we win in the cities, we win." I imagine cities are an unwinnable battleground, but it doesn't mean losing the war can't be fun, or won't be important.

Below are 198 methods of Bioregional Reinhabitation to ecologize urban landscapes, through which we might build the relationships and communities necessary for any post-collapse lifeway.

198 Methods of Bioregional Reinhabitation

PRINCIPLES:

- Community self-sufficiency decentralization
- Eco-centric/bio-centric perspective
- Bioregional identity
- Cooperative organizing principals
- Sustainable economic practices
- Nonviolent action
- Respect for biodiversity, including human multicultural values
- Social/environmental justice

METHODS:

Education for Sustainable Future

1. Learn about ecology, systems thinking, and natural sciences!
2. Determine your ecological footprint through an ecological assessment and take steps to lessen it.
3. Map your bioregion, paying attention to plants, animals, natural features, cultural components, best and worst practice regarding human activities...
4. Set up bioregional study groups that meet regularly.
5. Create a climate/bioregional action plan to catalyze transition.
6. Engage in eco-pedagogical praxis through project/service-based learning.
7. Establish partnerships between education groups and green businesses.
8. Set up monthly gatherings to teach principles of sustainability.
9. Hold forums for presentations and discussions.
10. Organize gatherings, summits, teach-ins, and major conferences on specific topics (renewable energy, responsible construction, sustainable regional economies, infrastructure design, sustainable communal well-being, sustainable life-place culture…).

11. Offer seeds, saplings, and appropriate tools for those without them.
12. Provide technical assistance to those without it.
13. Subsidize classes that promote bioregional awareness.
14. Publish a directory of urban gardens and gardeners.
15. Solicit neighborhood visions of futures and integrate them into action plans.
16. Encourage teachers to develop courses in local bioregional health.
17. Teach bioregional information and sustainability as required subjects.
18. Offer points of entry for the public.
19. Provide a source of general bioregional information.
20. Provide organizing skills.
21. Create annual organizing conferences.
22. Provide concrete lifestyle examples.
23. Cultivate bioregional arts.
24. Create a worldwide presence on the web.
25. Develop an online sustainability map.
26. Develop an online green calendar for public events.
27. Establish databases with bioregional information.
28. Establish a skills exchange database.
29. Assist local organizations in bioregional activities.
30. Do outreach at schools and universities to present bioregional perspectives.
31. Establish a speakers' bureau from different bioregions.
32. Learn navigation techniques and survival skills.
33. Provide free basic ecological education universally (MOOCs—massive open online courses).
34. Generally explore and play nature games!

Local Food System

35. Redesign your meal plan to become independent from industrial systems.
36. Forage your food!
37. Begin a compost.
38. Plant a garden.
39. Locate all of the local organic, unprocessed, whole foods coops/collectives in your area.
40. Establish a neighborhood food distribution/trade network to share garden harvests.
41. Redistribute surplus foods to food pantries.
42. Discover all of your local farmers' markets within a 100-mile radius.
43. Find every Community Supported Agriculture that delivers fresh food in a 100-mile radius.
44. Organize local community meals with neighbors.
45. Establish local composting centers to provide parks and gardens.
46. Initiate programs that involve communities to grow food through small-scale agriculture.
47. Convert unused lots to garden plots and community spaces.
48. Organize guerrilla gardening and urban planting projects.
49. Convert city parks into food forests.
50. Plant native species in median strips, sidewalks, etc.
51. Open up spaces for gardening—e.g., rooftop and balcony gardens.
52. Renovate former manufacturing and storage spaces for growing food.
53. Restore water purity of rivers, creeks, lakes, wells, etc.
54. Reuse filtered greywater and establish greywater systems in buildings.
55. Develop new sustainable ways and techniques to better satisfy basic human needs.
56. Employ indigenous subsistence techniques where possible.
57. Establish permanent subsistence zones where possible.
58. Establish nodal networks of gardens and permaculture subsistence zones where possible.
59. Learn preservation skills.

Green Building and Renewable Energy

60. Decrease energy use.
61. Build a sustainable cob house out of natural elements.
62. Retrofit homes to be off-grid.
63. Install solar roofs and solar water heaters.
64. Install living/vegetated roofs.
65 Install native plant landscaping.
67. Demonstrate and make accessible cost-saving applications of renewable energy.
68. Design new buildings to be LEED Platinum.
69. Find clean sources of energy.
70. Commit to zero net energy development.
71. Sponsor energy education programs.
72. Subsidize low-income energy retrofits.
73. Conserve land through dense clustering.
74. Locate and convert greenhouse gas emissions towards carbon neutrality.
75. Pass ordinances requiring homes and apartments to be weatherized/retrofitted when sold.
76. Redesign building codes to remove restrictions for renewables and ensure their use.
77. Install utility meters that show dollar cost of energy and raw consumption data.
78. Convert city waste into energy, assuming environmental quality and recycling options are not compromised.
79. Research how biomimicry can be used to supply a region's

energy needs and implement strategies.

80. Institute curbside pickup of separated recyclables.

Land Use and Transportation Alternatives

81. Commit to going car free.

82. Convert your car or vehicle to use and recycle renewable energy (veggie fuel/biodiesel).

83. Set up a ride share.

84. Set up a bike share.

85. Install city-wide bike racks and encourage public use.

86. Establish car-free zones.

87. Reclaim common areas for public use.

88. Rewild large tracts of land.

89. Establish, expand, and connect wildlife corridors.

90. Reintroduce rare species.

91. Require developers to set aside areas as plantable space.

92. Require companies to shoulder transportation costs.

93. Adopt mixed use zoning policies to enable homes, workplaces, and entertainment to be near each other.

94. Discourage sprawl and housing-only subdivisions and suburbs through zoning policies.

95. Introduce green audits to ensure no public funds subsidize unjust/unsustainable projects and all city/regional planning is sustainable.

96. Emphasize long-term, regional sustainability in planning.

97. Prohibit converting agricultural land into low-density housing.

98. Identify sacred spaces and natural habitat that may not be removed or disturbed.

99. Purchase ecologically sensitive areas for protection or damaging buildings for conversion or removal.

100. Reexamine city activities to restrain toxic chemicals.

101. Require minimal distance between development and habitat.

102. Protect and restore wildlife habitat within city limits through set-asides.

103. Establish mechanisms (taxes, etc.) to fund maintenance of existing urban wild habitat.

104. Create new wild places.

105. Create Departments of Natural Life to coordinate efforts to protect and restore wildness.

106. Restore creeks and streams currently diverted below ground to above-ground channels ("daylight" them) to constitute wild corridors.

107. Redesign parks and open spaces as habitats for ecosystems using wild places as models.

108. Use local native plants whenever possible in parks and landscaping.

109. Restore and conserve natural systems.

110. Eliminate industrial farm subsidies; shift to urban farms.

Local Living Economy

111. Establish a green resource hub and mutual aid associations to provide gardening facilities, tools, and equipment for all citizens.

112. Purchase from fair-trade stores that are sustainably certified.

113. Promote a local network of green businesses.

114. Boycott, divest from, and sanction all non-green businesses.

115. Ensure agriculture is organic, sustainable, biodynamic, etc.

116. Begin a food delivery service.

117. Begin a time bank.

118. Set up gift circles.

119. Begin a local currency.

120. Lobby for green jobs, i.e. remanufacturing, etc.

121. Learn to design and produce clothing from local sources.

122. Set up a place to donate and reuse clothes and items.

123. Design and utilize compostable containers.

124. Organize seed exchanges.

125. Celebrate community ideas about livability by underwriting blueprints for success.

126. Form neighborhood design review boards to require developers to incorporate recommendations.

127. Set up a credit union to fund green or ecological justice projects, or to open and expand locally owned sustainable businesses.

128. Create small business incubators to encourage green start-ups.

129. Establish zoning policies favoring neighborhood sustainable start-ups.

130. Fund neighborhood-scale activities and institutions that carry out local projects like place-making common areas.

131. Use city money, tax incentives, or district levies for urban revegetation projects.

132. Encourage local life-place celebrations to strengthen connections and express cultural diversity.

133. Find ways to express community identification with local natural features and characteristics.

134. Establish metrics and transition plans to increase gross domestic happiness.

135. Develop rituals and spiritual activities that foster a sense of place.

136. Institute "green bans" to prohibit ecologically destructive projects.

137. Protect and restore forests.

138. Conserve and rebuild soils.

139. Regenerate fisheries.

140. Protect and restore biodiversity hotspots.

141. Plant trees!

Alternative Media

141. Promote causes that offer solutions.
142. Focus on positive news.
143. Detail examples of sustainability.
144. Identify destructive practices.
145. Cover festivals of life-place culture.
146. Link local issues to global issues.
147. Engage in case studies of habitats for biodiversity, soundscapes, etc.
148. Produce bioregional documentaries.
149. Set up neighborhood lending libraries.
150. Ensure public access to all materials.
151. Blog about re-inhabitation.
152. Advertise for bioregional solutions and issues.
153. Assist in developing localized media such as murals, newsletters, radio shows, community bulletin boards, etc.
154. Showcase public artwork that stresses descriptions of natural history.
155. Establish media contacts/distribution centers.
156. Share information, beliefs, and experiences from a bioregional perspective.
157. Publish bioregional newsletters.
158. Provide a handbook of ideas for how to organize locally.
159. Prepare a wide variety of stock materials.
160. Compile reading lists from each bioregion.
161. Distribute tapes and conference talks.
162. Develop public sustainability information for citizens in public places.
163. Create bundles sharing critical bioregional information and culture.
164. Set up a clearinghouse/network to contact other bioregionalists.
165. Raise awareness of elements, techniques, and importance of sustainable practices.
166. Create press releases and news conferences taking vocal positions on bioregional issues.

Health

167. Offer free health clinics.
168. Eliminate food deserts.
169. Open organic and health coops.
170. Teach and provide herbal remedies.
171. Exercise outdoors!
172. Offer free birth control and family planning services.

Citizen Activism

173. Boycott, divest from, and sanction dirty industry.
174. Build coalitions, movements, and consortiums to coordinate greening operations.
175. Identify and eliminate point and nonpoint sources of pollution.
176. Research conservation groups and donate to or volunteer for them.
177. Advocate for devolutionary policies promoting local empowerment and sufficiency.
178. Repeal ordinances/procedures that are barriers to planting native species and fruit trees.
179. Use volunteer groups as labor forces for ecological restoration.
180. Levy gasoline, severance, parking, and auto taxes to pay for public transit and other reinhabitory activities.
181. Engage in district elections to improve representation of neighborhoods in municipal decision-making process.
182. Establish watershed councils for long-term ecological planning.
183. Set up bioregional gatherings and continent congresses.
184. Determine metrics to convert urban areas into eco-cities.
185. Initiate participatory government and economics.
186. Set up bioregional committees of correspondence.
187. Get involved in NGOs and ensure they operate according to bioregional standards.
188. Set up Community Sustainability Indicators to reach and improve upon.
189. Set up non-hierarchical informal global eco-regional federation to protect human rights and the rights of nature (natural rights).
190. Establish a comprehensive cybernetic monitoring and analysis system to determine the ecological limits of earth in ways that can be applied to economies.
191. Establish a global reserve to stabilize earth systems and allocate and distribute basic human services and goods.
192. Establish a global trusteeship of Earth's commons to protect earth's life support systems and ensure these are used for the flourishing of the community of life.
193. Establish a global court to prevent the abuse of power and enforce global rules.
194. Learn how to live without electricity.
195. Live without money.
196. Live a zero-waste life.
197. Engage in ecological defense actions.
198. Re-ecologize Gene Sharpe's 198 methods.

My intuition: if there is a future for humans, it will tend to resemble the deep past.

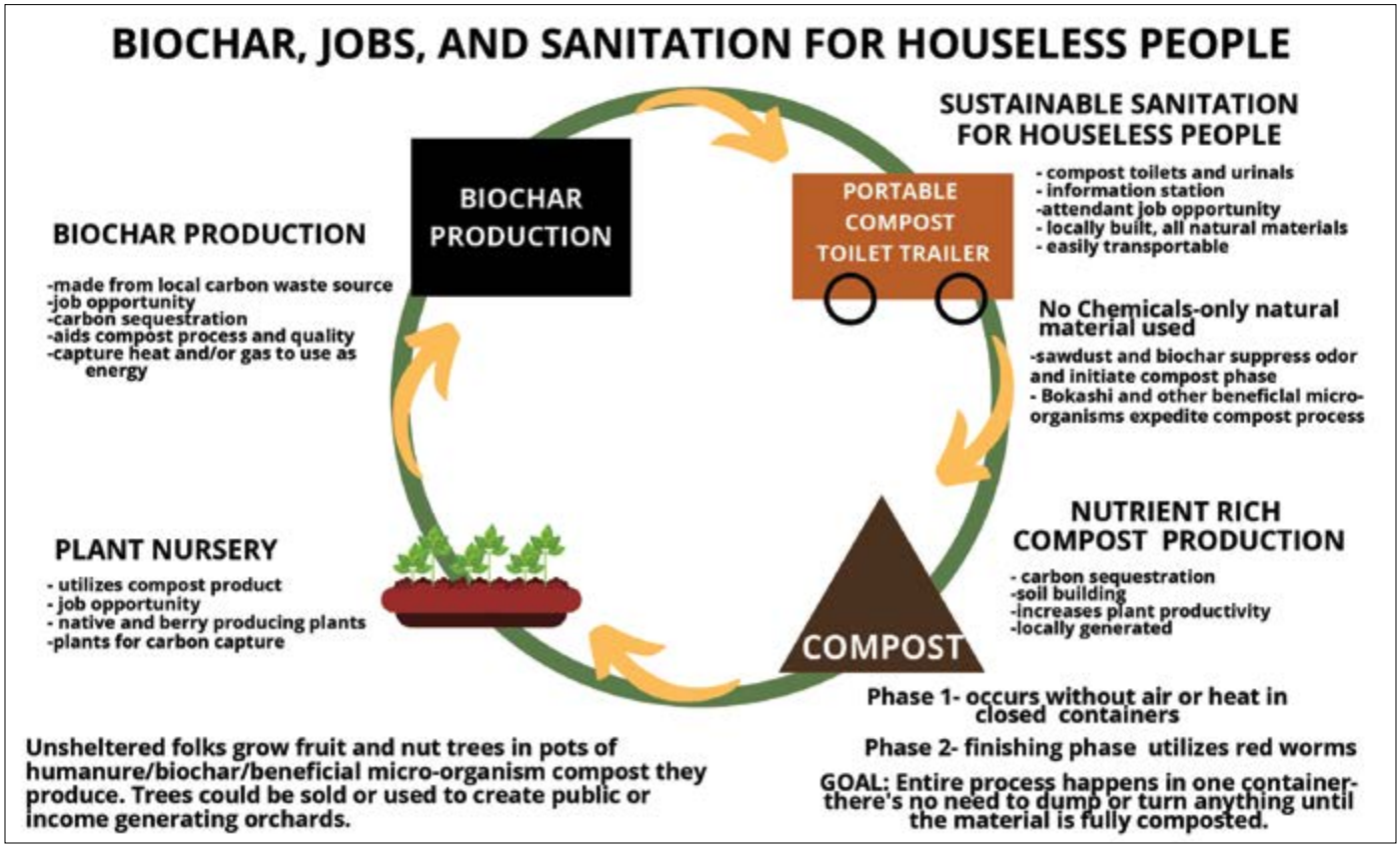
Nathaniel Taggart is a writer, teacher, student, and philosopher who lives, works, loves, and plays in the Shasta bioregion, roughly northern California at the confluence of the Sacramento and San Joaquin Rivers on the North Pacific Rim of the Pacific Basin. His work focuses mainly on ecology, activism, and spirituality, as well as the relationship between environmental scarcity, conflict, restoration, and peace-building. When he's not writing or gardening, he's usually playing with the dog, cuddling with the bunny, or climbing mountains in the Sierra Nevada. Contact him at activefolklore@gmail.com. See also his online article at www.gen-us.net/rewilding-language-dwelling-poetically.

Centering Blackness in Our Soils and Our Souls to Promote Climate Justice

By Melanie Rios

Six years ago a friend showed me how to make biochar, a black substance similar to charcoal, by burning wood chips in biochar-producing stoves made from tomato cans that had been poked with specifically placed holes to influence air flow. I began to make biochar stoves of varying sizes, used them daily to cook food in my backyard in all kinds of weather, and then used the biochar that was produced to make "terra preta" compost. "Terra preta" means "dark soil" in Portuguese, and it was originally produced by Indigenous people who lived in the Amazon thousands of years ago. By composting biochar, humanure, ash, pottery shards, bones and other organic materials, they created enough terra preta to cover about 10 percent of the land mass in the Amazon up to six feet deep. This likely accounts for how the region became densely populated where soils are otherwise poor in nutrients. This soil has retained its fertility for thousands of years, and through reverse engineering in university labs, scientists have taught us how to make similar compost. I recently learned from a returning traveler that biochar is still being produced by Indigenous women living in a remote Amazon region in Peru.

For the next several years I enjoyed participating in the whole circular process of gathering woody material to burn, cooking meals, making compost, and growing food to produce more meals and materials for compost. I offered "Stone Soup" workshops and potlucks to neighbors interested in earthquake emergency preparedness, showing them how they could use biochar to filter water, to compost humanure in closed containers in a process that doesn't require air or heat, and to provide heat outdoors for warmth, cooking, and heating water. I talked about how producing biochar can help to reverse climate change through sequestering carbon in a stable form for hundreds to thousands of years. While burning fossil fuels takes solid carbon out of long-term storage in the ground and puts it into the air as a gas, biochar takes gaseous carbon pulled by plants from the



Melanie and Jade with Kon Tiki Kiln.

Biochar-based outdoor kitchen, bathroom, and shower stations can serve as temporary support for the houseless.

air and locks some of it up for a long time in solid form. The heat produced while creating biochar can be used for cooking, heating water, etc. The carbon that does not become biochar, in addition to providing heat, can also be captured as bio-oil and/or gas, which can then be used to heat greenhouses and produce electricity for homes. These are renewable forms of energy if the source carbon comes from the waste stream by using downed branches rather than whole trees, for example. If biochar were produced and used in a decentralized way on a large scale using waste woody materials as a carbon source, we could address significant global problems such as soil depletion, water pollution, and climate change.

For several years I couldn't envision a path forward for scaling up the production, use, and sequestration of biochar given how few people knew about biochar and because of our business-as-usual world with its lack of economic incentives for doing what needs to be done. I experimented with biochar alone in my backyard, with little access to lay-person information. Most of the permaculture-informed folks I talked to about biochar had never heard of it. Gradually that has changed, with whole tracks of permaculture gatherings now devoted to biochar innovation, and books, webinars, and websites offering abundant useful information. Now when I give presentations and workshops about biochar, most people arrive somewhat informed.

I also see hope for taking biochar to a larger scale because of the economic incentives political measures such as the Green New Deal could provide. The city of Portland, Oregon recently passed a ballot measure designed to funnel about $50 million a year from multinational corporations into projects that promote climate justice, allocating a percentage of these funds to sequester carbon in soils. The measure supports "family wage" jobs for People of Color (POC) and other historically marginalized groups to do work that benefits their communities while also mitigating and preparing for climate change.

Recently I have been participating in beginning conversations with a number of people representing organizations that work on homelessness concerns and emergency preparedness about the potential of creating biochar-based demonstration sites to support everyone who may become unhoused by a massive earthquake. These sites would provide kitchens for cooking and heating water, composting toilets, heated showers, fires for warming cold people and bringing cheer, first aid and rescue supplies, clothes washing stations, solar electric power, water storage and filtration, and food.

In the meantime, the same or similar sites could support unsheltered people in gaining access to all of this plus jobs. As refugees on the frontlines of climate change seek safer ground, and if the economic disparity between rich and poor people in our country continues to grow, these outdoor kitchen, bathroom, and shower stations can serve as temporary support while we work on implementing better and more permanent solutions to houselessness. Jobs performed by people who live or lived on the streets or in villages of previously houseless people could include gathering vegetables, fruits, and other food from local groceries that have been pulled from the shelves; gathering "waste" carbon from arborists, farmers, and construction workers to fuel the biochar stoves and kilns; maintaining the biochar fires, toilets, and showers; making compost; growing vegetables in compost that doesn't include humanure; growing orchard and other trees in compost that does include humanure; offering de-escalation and anti-oppression training to peers; facilitating conversations with neighbors who live in houses; providing peer-to-peer medical and psychological support; and more. We could do all this while sequestering carbon to reverse climate change. The diagram illustrates one way in which a closed loop of resources including biochar could provide many of these benefits.

Technology alone will not promote the "justice" part of climate justice, however. The folks I am talking to about this proposed project are mostly white, and if we are to successfully collaborate with Communities of Color to address wealth inequality and climate change, we will need to dismantle the racism all of us have absorbed from our cultural conditioning. Letitia Nieto, in her book Beyond Inclusion, *Beyond Empowerment: A Developmental Strategy to Liberate Everyone*, describes stages in the development of agents of oppression learning to become anti-racist. In the first stage, white people don't perceive there's much of a problem, or worse, they welcome racism because they enjoy being on the top of the social heap while

reaping material rewards through exploiting others. In the next stage, white people acknowledge racism, but our focus is mostly upon our own confusion and discomfort. In the third stage, we invite Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) to join white-centered spaces without attempting to make these spaces more welcoming. In the fourth stage we begin to understand the pervasiveness, entrenchment, and deliberate creation of racism to benefit some people at the expense of others, and we feel shame, powerlessness, and/or anger. Yet we aren't yet as effective as we could be at reaching the hearts of other white people to help them grow nor to calling forth a more just world that works for all. Finally, in the fifth stage, we become effectively anti-racist through participating in individual, institutional, and structural change that is envisioned and led by BIPOC.

I will describe in the remainder of this article the journey I've been taking through these stages to unlearn my own racist patterns of speech and action. While I still return to some of the early stages at times, I've learned to avoid falling into these traps as often, and to climb out of the ones I do fall into with more grace. According to Nieto's theory, we can't skip stages, an idea that gives me more patience for myself and for working with white folks to dismantle racism no matter how clueless we seem to be.

Stage One: The Naïve One

My journey towards promoting racial justice began in 1966, when as a nine-year-old I participated in a school boycott to protest racial segregation in Seattle. My mom brought me to attend, along with three thousand other students, one of the many "Freedom Schools" that emerged for those two days to teach us about Black history and the civil rights movement. We watched a video of Martin Luther King, Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech that he had given in Washington DC three years earlier, and learned about the "War on Poverty" in a way that seemed to communicate that victory was just around the corner. I felt emotional warmth, beauty, and hope while connecting with the mostly Black people teaching and studying at the Freedom School, experiencing a sense of unity consciousness when we held hands and sang "We Shall Overcome" in rich harmony. I sensed that fighting for civil rights was not only necessary to bring fairness to Black people, but that it might also help to liberate me from the reserved, disconnected, violent, and soulless white culture in which I was being raised. Cultural transformation, even revolution, felt so close during the following few years while I was a young teen. But achieving racial justice turned out to not be so simple as holding hands and singing together. I was just beginning a journey that continues to ask of me humility, personal growth, and persistent hard work.

Stage Two: The Confused One

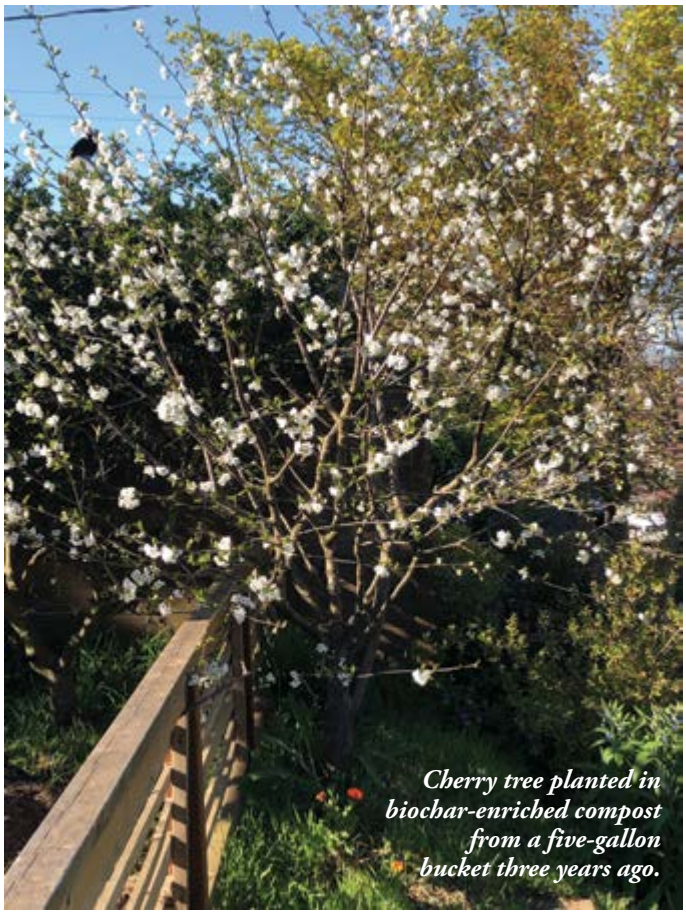
This vision of a unified society offered by the Freedom School motivated me to stay enrolled in my mostly Black neighborhood junior high school a few years later. I was willing to push my Black classmates on the merry-go-round in penance for slavery and all that came after, even though most of my white classmates went fleeing for other schools rather than endure forced labor and occasional beatings. I did skip school on Wednesdays when the Black Panthers arrived with free breakfasts and militant slogans; instead I joined the hippie dancers in nearby Volunteer Park. I took quiet solace knowing that my Jewish heritage meant that I wasn't really the WASP I was accused of being. But I was also confused. Would Jews be burned again? Why were Black girls and boys feeling my breasts, and laughing about my flatness, or about my padded training bra once I obtained one? If Black is Beautiful, does that mean white is ugly? Was me remaining enrolled in that school helping anyone?

There was no one with whom to talk about my shame and fear about being white, being a girl, or coming from a family in which my dad was violent and then left. I had few skills, concepts, words, or community to help me understand or repair the intersectionally oppressive mess in which we were living. And I was focused upon my own troubles rather than understanding that what Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color were up against was of a much larger magnitude than what life was handing me. I was not yet aware that I went home after school to a world that supported me because of my skin color, unlike the experiences of most of my classmates. "Whiteness" was still mostly invisible to me.

Stage Three: The Inclusive One

I left my neighborhood inner city high school not so much because I was giving up on Martin Luther King's dream, but because I stumbled upon an opportunity to create a "school without walls" that was being sponsored by Quakers and the Se-

Melanie cooking dinner on biochar double-burner stove.



Cherry tree planted in biochar-enriched compost from a five-gallon bucket three years ago.

attle Public Schools. The next year I attended Lakeside School on scholarship—a bastion of elite whiteness where my mother's new partner taught school. During the summer of my high school sophomore year I began to teach in a summer program for inner city kids, where one goal of the program was to invite the brightest students of color to apply to attend Lakeside during the school year. This set the pattern for my thinking about racial justice for years to come. Affirmative action was a welcome tool for inviting BIPOC to join and fit into our world of elite schools, intentional communities, nonprofit organizations, and summer gatherings. I gave little thought to what it might feel like for BIPOC integrating our white-centered worlds to be in the minority, to be harassed frequently by bold racism and micro-aggressions, to be uncomfortable with the dominant social mores, to arrive with different language patterns and skills, and/or to be leaving one's people and culture behind. The goal of affirmative action to my mind was for everyone to become successful as defined by our parents, the media, our schools, our communities, and our jobs—and later, to implement affirmative action to recruit BIPOC to join us in liberating ourselves from that conditioning in ways that white-centered folks have invented.

Slowly I gained awareness of the magnitude of racial injustice, and how despite tokenism there was a huge web of institutions and structures still in place to deliberately transform the labor of Black and Brown people into the wealth of white people. I came to understand that BIPOC might prefer to live in worlds of their own creation rather than learning to adapt to our destructive and soulless white ways.

Stage Four: The Angry One

This stage came in three parts, all illustrated by interactions with a man in the sauna at my gym.

1) The Silent One

We were in the sauna together, and he made a blatantly racist comment. My heart was racing, I couldn't think well, and I didn't think of something to say. I left the sauna knowing that my silence was supporting this man in continuing to spout racist remarks. I vowed to do better next time, and began reading books, listening to podcasts, and attending anti-racism workshops so that I would be better prepared to speak up.

2) The Intellectual, Anxious One

Same sauna, and the same guy who this time is echoing our president's racist ideas about Blacks in the inner cities. My heart is pounding again, but I am ready with words. I talk, a lot, with an air of superiority and indignation, about the history of race in this country and our current racist state of affairs. The man stopped making racist comments after that when we were both present, but my sense was that he continued to speak in his old manner when I wasn't around. I vowed to learn to be calm and to speak with less intensity when responding to racist remarks in the hopes of supporting him and others in transforming from within.

3) The Compassionate Warrior

Same sauna, same guy. This time I walked in on a conversation about how he doesn't take it personally when people call him names, so why should others be bothered when they are called names. My heart started beating faster, and I took some deep breaths. Gently, I said, "It probably depends upon who has power over whom. We might not feel so great if our employers call us names." He thought for a moment, smiled, and said "True." Others in the sauna nodded assent, and we moved on to another topic.

Learning to calm our nervous systems and learning the details of how racial injustice operates are two important tools for becoming an anti-racist. But there was still another important step to learn—centering the experiences of BIPOC in my activism work by becoming a supporter and follower of their lead.

Stage Five: The Supportive One

I have found myself interrupting racism with more calm and skill in recent years, as well as leading anti-racism workshops, serving on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion teams, and initiating challenging conversations with white friends in our white-centered communities and organizations. I have also been asked by friends of color to help them advocate for BIPOC-centered projects and to support mediations between them and white people. Here are some things I've learned from them about how white-centered organizations can become more welcoming of everyone, and what we need to do to play a helpful role in supporting BIPOC-centered community groups:

1) State in our vision, mission, and aims that racial justice matters to our organization. Keep reading those statements out loud at meetings, post them on the wall, and publish them in our newsletters.

2) Create BIPOC spaces within our communities to support

them in connecting with each other.

3) Adopt conflict transformation protocols that allow for anger to be expressed intensely during at least some stages of the conflict resolution process.

4) Hire more BIPOC. Pay them a living wage.

5) Fund scholarships for BIPOC folks who participate in our programs. Provide childcare.

6) Create programs that center BIPOC needs and dreams.

7) Train white people to interrupt racism and to teach each other about the history and practices of racism in America.

8) Have white people play domestic support roles such as bringing coffee and cleaning bathrooms to events led by BIPOC, and play mentorship roles when appropriate to help BIPOC gain higher level skills such as accounting and grant writing.

9) Hold trainings for staff about cultural appropriation, micro-aggressions, characteristics of white supremacy, and more. Then change our ways based upon what we learn.

10) Acknowledge that white people of all political and social stripes will continue to say and do racist things for a while to come. If people offer us feedback when this happens, accept it with gratitude and grace, and then move on without wallowing in defensiveness or shame. Put the center of attention on what the BIPOC folks who were harmed need in that moment rather than on white people's feelings and perceived needs.

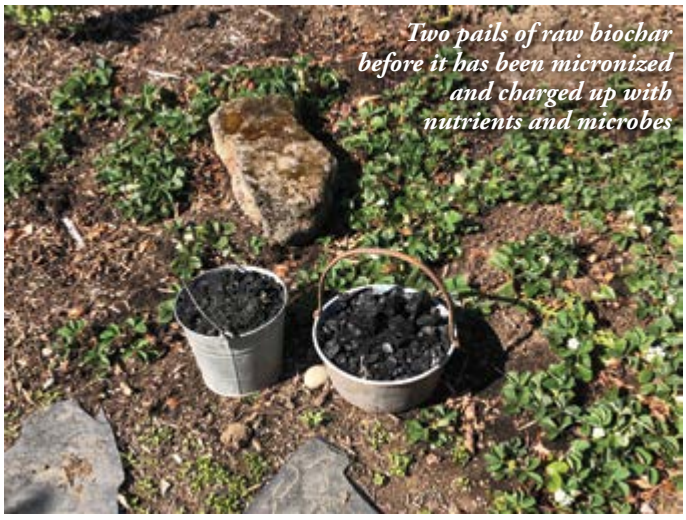
11) Center BIPOC in our financial philanthropy to address realities such as the median wealth of African heritage people in the United States being seven percent the median wealth of white people. This disparity is the result of a centuries of deliberate and systemic actions including ripping Black people from their homes in Africa; enslaving them; lynching them; suppressing their vote; denying them access to capital; segregating them through laws and then housing policies into neighborhoods that limit access to good food, education, and health care; and subjecting them to an unfair criminal "justice" system. Even our philanthropy tends to reinforce wealth disparity, as BIPOC have fewer connections to people with money while also having less of the time and training required to create and maintain nonprofit organizations. Reparations are in order. Please see the following page for a description of one underfunded Black-led initiative called the Chronically Under-Touched Project that encourages young Black men to connect in nurturing ways with people, animals, and the earth.

Next Steps

I still do and say racist things sometimes. Usually I catch myself quickly and apologize, or simply say "thank you" to whoever points out my error. Sometimes it takes a few days of reflection to really understand where I went wrong. Self-love and community are important to this journey. When my heart is pounding and I'm feeling reactive because of something I or someone else said or did, I slow down to breathe. I remind myself that I am strong, that I have support from friends and family to help me think through next steps, and that healing, trust-building, and learning take place one step at a time with occasional regressions. It's better to jump in again to this work after a small break to recover my center than to sit on the sidelines being careful not to offend.

I am excited about sharing the potential of biochar with the whole world, including BIPOC, though I am taking it slow because urgency is one of those white supremacy qualities that I am working to unlearn. (And, as I finish writing this article, the Corona Virus has just begun to support the whole world in slowing down.) I have recently created a business and a website to promote the use of biochar, attempting to be humble in my claims despite early white conditioning to pretend to know things I don't fully understand. I continue to offer consultation about organizational governance and conflict transformation, though I am rethinking how a conflict transformation process that is adequate for addressing conflict with racist overtones might look. I will continue to support my friends of color in their work, and to attend meetings where BIPOC people have invited me to listen to their plans and weigh in on how I might contribute. A nonprofit that I am talking to about building emergency support sites for the houseless community has invited unsheltered people to sit in circles to talk about what they want and need. I am in conversation with a man who created the first permitted humanure system for an intentional community in our city along with others who are supporting the houseless community to find ecological and economical ways to bring toilet facilities to people who are living on the streets. I am working with a nearby community household of seven people in building a demonstration emergency shelter site in their backyard. I hope to let you all know in a year or two how things have emerged towards using biochar on behalf of our planet and all who live here on earth.

Melanie Rios is the founder and owner of Collaborate Northwest, LLC that is also doing business as Cascade Biochar (www.cascadebiochar.net). She volunteers for her Neighborhood Emergency Team (NET) and as Board Chair for the City Repair Project, where she cofounded their Place Justice Program. She lives in Portland, Oregon with her wife and sister, and together they call themselves the "Grandmother Collective" because of the seven grandkids, all local, for whom they care.



Two pails of raw biochar before it has been micronized and charged up with nutrients and microbes

The Chronically Under-Touched Project

I met Aaron Johnson, an African Heritage man who lives in the high desert of California, when he came through Portland with a few of his colleagues offering workshops and song circles that encouraged us to reach for each others' hearts across racial and other cultural divides. Their organization, called Holistic Resistance, promotes their work through sharing stories based in their lived experience, asking heart-opening questions, and singing together.

Aaron also cofounded the Chronically Under-Touched Project where he invites young African Heritage men, often referred by his family's church, to work with him in a deep mentorship program. Aaron writes:

"One key trauma story that I have observed in mentoring African Heritage men is that 90 percent of them would qualify as being Chronically Under-Touched, a state in which African Heritage men have received less than 10 minutes of thoughtful, platonic touch in a 12-month period or longer. These African Heritage men are more likely to express violent behavior towards other African Heritage men as well as women, to have experienced internalized racism, and not be grounded in the earth as a part of their nourishment and recovery from trauma. The Chronically Under-Touched Project is a year-long emotional and recovery touch program that supports African Heritage men in relearning how to reach out and be in contact with others in a nonviolent way.

"In the touch plan that each young man is working on, we include platonic touch with each other, such as hand holding and hugging. The plan also includes deep investigations into what they have survived in being separate from the earth and separate from each other. One powerful part of their recovery touch plan is being close to the earth through the building of earthen structures like earth domes and earthen ovens, and the care of animals on a small farm. Slowly, deep and trust-based community forms."

None of Aaron's mentees have become incarcerated, unlike many of their peers. A couple of them have moved into an informal communal household that includes Aaron's mom, sister, and cousin. Aaron and his wife live in a tiny home nearby.

Aaron has shared with me what it was like for him to grow up African Heritage and male in America. Nurturing touch was cut off for him while he was still a young child. School was effective at dismissing his intelligence and unable to support his academic or emotional needs as a student with dyslexia in a white-controlled city. As a young African Heritage man with dyslexia, he had few opportunities for employment. He continues to be distrusted by shopkeepers and at risk of being arrested for walking down the street. He deeply understands why his peers have often turned towards coveting consumer goods in an attempt to fill the emotional hole created by a lack of human affection and connection with the earth and all its beings. He understands why they sometimes seek access to these goods in illegal ways, and/or attempt to soften their sense of disconnection by using drugs. It makes sense to him when they have trouble establishing gentle and loving relationships with women given their lack of receiving nurturing touch themselves. It is no wonder to him that they don't have the bandwidth to learn or care about climate change.

Yet despite growing up in similar circumstances, Aaron ended up on a life path that has included being part of a performing choir, building earthen homes, creating a community-based homestead, becoming an earth-based racial justice activist, and forming a mutually nourishing marriage. Now he and his cousin, Porsha Beed, are reaching out to mentor others. Their dreams include:

1) Building an earthen structure where folks involved in the Chronically Under-Touched Project can gather inside when the weather is inclement. ($1,000 for supplies.)

2) Creating a series of 10 one-hour podcasts to teach others about Aaron's mentorship methods and the mentees' journey through the program. ($1,000 for technical editing support. More funds would support creating a video series.)

3) Planting a food forest on the land owned by Aaron's family church to provide food for the mostly Black parishioners and to encourage them to connect with nature. ($4,000.)

4) Training a couple of leaders to take the Chronically Under-Touched Project out to other places in the world. It is critical to have other teachers and facilitators to help widen the number of mentees that can be reached. ($3,000 to cover the cost of someone taking a facilitation course from Aaron, and then $20,000 to support newly trained Chronically Under-Touched facilitator teachers in the first year.)

If you are inspired to contribute to the fruition of their dreams, you can donate on the Holistic Resistance website: www.holisticresistance.com/youth-mentorship. If receiving a tax-deduction for larger sums is helpful, contact Aaron (travore@gmail.com) to arrange for donating through his church. A few dollars from many folks and/or a lot of dollars from a few folks would make a huge difference in their lives and the lives of those they serve.

—MR

Ring of Fire

We are now living through a once-in-an-epoch threshold event in planetary history. While inevitable climate catastrophes "just around the bend" will likely make this current pandemic pale in comparison, it seems coronavirus has catalyzed humanity's first truly global experience of our essential vulnerability and interdependence. We are traversing a portal in our evolutionary journey as a species, which is certainly and fundamentally changing our collective consciousness and our relationships with each other, the planet, and ourselves. As one friend put it, we are now living in Season One, Episode One of a whole new series.

In this moment of both collective trauma and collective awakening, it is natural to experience a slew of intense and often contradictory feelings. On one hand, there is fear, worry, anger, scarcity, greed, and despair, especially among the growing millions who have lost work or (God forbid!) even loved ones and among those experiencing injustices due to income inequality. On the other hand, many are also swelling with a sense of connection, hope, gratitude, wonder, compassion, and love, especially among those finding solace in their solitude and refreshing air in their previously polluted cities.

Oh, and did I mention confusion?!

In bewildering times, I often tell myself, "I'd rather be confused than wrong." To paraphrase Greta Thunberg, let us remember that the "normal" everyone is wanting to return to was actually a crisis! We have been profoundly mistaken in how we have treated each other and the planet. So "confusion," to me at least, feels like a huge leap forward.

Having been married to a midwife for almost 30 years, I'm also reminded of the process of childbirth and the phase of "transition" where the cervix progresses from seven to 10 centimeters, sometimes in less than an hour, and marks the beginning of the baby's descent. During these rapid changes, the mother often feels shaky and overwhelmed, scared that the task ahead seems utterly impossible. "I can't do it! Make it stop!" This is the time of grunting, moaning, and wailing we so often see depicted in movies.

The wise midwife, in contrast, often feels relief and excitement at this point, knowing the mother's experience is completely natural; that the baby is about to "crown" and will soon be nursing in its mother's arms. It's the home stretch! Furthermore, the mother may feel an intense urge to push, but the midwife explains that it is not time yet, that the cervix needs to dilate fully, and that premature pushing may result in tearing.

So, perhaps, we are now in our collective time of transition. There is suffering and intense pain! A more beautiful world does feel impossible! We feel an extreme urgency to do something—to do more—but are flummoxed as to what would actually make a difference. We want to cry; we want to scream, especially at men for getting us into this predicament! (I notice a guttural "F#*k you Tr#mp!" often pops out of me unexpectedly.)

And...if we step back and broaden our field of awareness, we might also feel the delicate tufts of hair of a new (way of) being in our global family. With each contraction, or more accurately each expan-

sion, this being moves two bits forward, one bit back, until suddenly and inevitably, something beautiful emerges that changes everything. It astonishes us with its abrupt realness and our hearts explode with a love we never knew was possible.

It is perhaps not a coincidence that "corona" actually means "crown," as in the gaseous envelope of our sun that we can see most clearly during a total solar eclipse. Similarly, during birth, the burning sensation of the labia and perineum stretching to its limits is often called the "ring of fire." Imagine, staring into an eclipse (wearing proper sunglasses of course) and seeing, in the darkness, a birth canal through which a new consciousness is being born. I swear, I'm not on drugs right now.

Seriously though, this is a huge, dare I say cosmic time to be alive. So, let us stretch beyond reason and embrace, or at least accept, the mystery of the moment. Let us cry out in pain for all the suffering and injustice and loss of life in the world. Let us welcome our confusion and our fear. Let us have compassion and deep care for the tearing of the very fabric of our being. And let us slow down and trust the perfect timing and inevitability of what is emerging.

Dreaming into this new being, I imagine an indigenous, Aquarian girl with rainbow hair and fire in her heart. Although born post-term (extremely overdue in fact!) and very weak after a prolonged and arrested labor, she quickly grows into her strong feminine presence, drawn to love, relationships, and spiritual transformation rather than power, money, and control. But she is also very much in touch with her masculine side, especially with regards to freedom and technological inventions that support and nourish our developing global being. She is a champion of climate justice and the well-being of all life. She emanates a deep love for our planet as our home, which inspires humanity to shift away from duality and self-centered thinking towards a more ecocentric perspective that recognizes our fundamental oneness. She is Mother Earth incarnate, Pachamama made flesh, Gaia embodied.

I imagine this new being in an ecovillage where empowered citizens are designing and implementing pathways to a regenerative future, where people are striving to live high quality and low impact lifestyles together. Being well ahead of the curve in researching deep adaptations to the coming crises, the global network of sustainable communities may well serve as birth centers for this emerging psyche. William Gibson, the science fiction writer who coined the term "cyberspace," once said, "The future is already here—it's just not very evenly distributed." So, perhaps, ecovillages are like the tiny toes of a footling breech, trying to find solid ground, while also aware that the bulk of its being, especially its head, remains perilously lodged in the birth canal—in danger of asphyxiation and ensnared by old stories of separation and "power over." Unfortunately, we do not have the possibility of delivering by Cesarean section; there is little hope for a Deux Ex Machina to save us. We have to reach deep into our very being to turn things around. We must find the courage, care, and resiliency to do this naturally, unassisted, and with no precedence to guide us.

Our whole lives, the whole evolution of our species...the planet...the universe... has led us to this new beginning. And here we are! We have the awesome privilege of simultaneously being the birthing mother, the baby, and the midwife in this time of global transition. Yes, it is a painful birth with loads of complications. Our umbilical cord seems wound around our neck and we can barely breathe. The outcome is far from certain. But there's no going back now. Not only can we do this, we are doing this! We are finally awakening to our fundamental interbeingness with each other and all life. The time has come for us to join the global family.

(Shout out to Monique Gauthier, a homebirth and cultural midwife, for co-holding this vision.)

Newcomer in Auroville, India (2020) and living part-time in North America, Daniel Greenberg, Ph.D. served on the Ecovillage Network of the Americas Council 2005-2015; GEN Board and President 2015-2019; GEN-US Council 2019-2020 (2015-2019 ex officio). He is the Director of CAPE Consulting (Custom Academic Programs in Ecovillages; www.cape.consulting); and Director, Earth Deeds (www.earthdeeds.org).

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COMMUNITIES WITH OPENINGS

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VALLEY OF LIGHT is a community for Cultural Creatives that rests along the New River in the Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia. With $2 million invested, our 23-acre campus is debt-free and includes 7 homes, 5 new building pads, campground, barn, garden, "Peace Pentagon" conference and community center, and other amenities. We share our campus with The Oracle Institute, an educational charity that operates a spirituality school, award-winning press, and peace-building practice. We seek co-founding members in five Paths: Native (farmers, animal & land stewards); Scientist (health & tech); Artisan (art, music, construction); Peacemaker (teachers & activists); Oracle (spirit seekers). Visit: www.TheOracleInstitute.org/about-our-community & www.PeacePentagon.net; Contact Info@ValleyofLight.org.

COWEETA HERITAGE CENTER AND TALKING ROCK FARM are located in the mountains of Western North Carolina in a beautiful and diverse temperate rainforest. CHC is looking for others who would like to join together to form an Intentional Community embracing the principles of Voluntary Simplicity and Healing the Earth and Each Other. Simply put, we wish "to live simply so that others may simply live." It is a recognition that nature provides us with valuable services and resources that we can use to enrich our

lives. Utilizing local resources, appropriate technology, and working cooperatively, we can discover creative ways to meet our needs as "directly and simply as possible." Come join Coweeta and learn how to live lightly on the land and enjoy the Earth's bounty! Contact Coweeta for more info or to schedule a visit!! Contact Paul at coweeta@gmail.com. Visit Coweeta on the web at www.coweetaheritagecenter.com

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COMMUNITIES FORMING

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on communal groups worldwide, past and present. Located on the campus of the University of Southern Indiana in Evansville, the Center encourages scholarship, meetings, public understanding and learning about historic and contemporary intentional communities.

ARCHIVAL RESEARCH COLLECTION: We invite researchers to use the Center's Collection of primary and secondary materials on more than 500 historic and contemporary communes. Our Collection is housed at Rice Library and has over 10,000 images and a reading room with an extensive library. Online resources may be found at www.usi.edu/library/university-archives-and-special-collections. Email the archivist at jagreene@usi.edu for information.

REGIONAL RESEARCH: The CCS is part of a rich array of historic communal resources within a 30-mile radius of Evansville that includes the famous Harmonist and Owenite village of New Harmony. New Harmony's Workingmen's Institute Library and the State Museum collection also offer unique research opportunities.

PROGRAMS: The CCS sponsors lectures, conferences and exhibits. The Center sponsors a minor in Communal Studies at USI.

WEBSITE:The CCS website (www.usi.edu/liberal-arts/communal-center) serves scholars, students and the interested public.

CENTER PRIZES AND RESEARCH TRAVEL GRANT: The CCS annually awards a Prize of $250 for the Best Undergraduate Student Paper and a Prize of $500 for the Best Graduate Student Paper on historic or contemporary communal groups, intentional communities, and utopias. Deadline for submission is 1 March. The Center also annually awards a $2,000 Research Travel Grant to fund research in the Communal Studies Collection. Applications are due by 1 March.

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.

FREE GROUP PROCESS RESOURCES at Tree Bressen's website: www.treegroup.info. Topics include consensus, facilitation, conflict, community building, alternative meeting formats, etc.

QUAKER CURIOUS? Learn more about modern Friends at Quaker.org. Watch short video interviews at QuakerSpeak.com. Or dive deep into Friends Publishing with daily, weekly, and monthly Friends Journal articles in print and online at Friendsjournal.org.

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COMMON COMMUNITY QUIRKS

(continued from p. 68)

• Communication: Whether you're adopting more hours in your schedule for email or taking notes at weekly meetings, you will be communicating more in COMMunity than the average cashier. It's good for us, and we can accomplish bigger feats, but it can be a painful transition sometimes: saying something regrettable over text because someone felt hurt, being snubbed for taking an unpopular stance, being that person to revisit sensitive topics when you know other people are emotionally heightened. You're not responsible for every typ'a way others feel! You can only do so much to cater to insecurity, fear, anger that is inevitable for the human experience. It's not on you to do a dance for people with unmet needs for entertainment or drama. Learn to provide yourself empathy first, figure out what you really want, then communicate through the best avenue to accomplish your goals. Once you're calm, request empathy face to face to unpack highly emotional content, giving yourself and others room to grow. Transform unwieldy emotional content into what you want to see and be willing to work to get it!

• Community room/lodge/living room: This place might host meetings, gatherings, parties, and have resources like projector, drawing board, tables, and chairs. All these items are important for some functions and in the way of others. Be prepared to move and shift. Get savvy with tech whenever possible. You'll likely have mundane work in the way of hosting that party, but more hands are around! Ask for what you want and be prepared to be amazed at how much you're given. Think of answers for the question: "How can I help?" And always lend a hand when it's your turn.

• Name changes: Maybe this has already come up. Someone gets the idea that a name for a system or place in the community could be more accurate or better-loved with some tweaking. This is usually an uphill battle. Grab the snow shoes and ice pick 'cuz it's a long journey to the top. You can make it though, you just need something called buy-in and unanimous consent. Go forth and conquer! Anything is possible!

• Meetings: Go to them. Plan for them. Help people know what you care about through a clear request about your cause. You can facilitate meetings, write agendas for them, tell people they're happening, tell people when you can not attend them. When we don't participate at a steady level, "outsiders" happen. It's easy to get behind-the-times and promote a lack of faith in governance structures. We know you're tired and prefer to eat first. Bring a quiet snack, learn some hand gestures, bring proposals in writing, take on action steps, humbly look people in the eye, breathe deep, and speak in turn. It's more fun than Facebook.

Amber Jones lives with her children Terra and River at East Blair Housing Cooperative in the Whiteaker Neighborhood of Eugene, Oregon (www.eastblairhousingcooperative.com), and is former site manager at Lost Valley Education and Event Center in nearby Dexter (lostvalley.org).

Common Community Quirks

Life is different in intentional community. You'll see big differences between caring for one small family or your individual self and the level of accountability asked in a group full of needs and preferences that don't always match yours. You'll see sudden changes in your environment that either help or deter you, recruitment for causes that others care more about than you, and things you want but can't have because of objections from neighbors. But, damn! Having the invites, collaborations, and diversity of resources is a huge boon for your sense of belonging and overall well-being. Be prepared going in, though. Here's a list of some recurring quirks I notice in many residential communities:

• **Communal Food Storage:** Our first tragedy of the commons. What is not seen for some time becomes entombed in the back of a refrigerator. Overly abundant tea stations get cluttered with unusable herbs and spices. Keep in mind, we all contribute to clutter at some point, but eventually someone will want a change, maybe urgently, perhaps aggressively. Bypass any and all aggression with your best effort. Try tackling the project as a form of yoga that you have the pleasure of participating in, making more efficient space through your service to shared spaces. Then, add it to a chore wheel. Your initiative will be rewarded in unexpected ways.

• **Free room: A pinnacle of success!** The community that has an established area to move well-loved or "still good" items for reuse, upcycling, home- or system-improvement often has a high quality of life. Keeping unwanted free stuff (trash) moved-along will become a challenge in our junk-abundant world. "One person's trash is another's treasure" is quite subjective and always applies to "free rooms" for better or worse. And maybe someday, you'll be gifted that little yellow dress you wanted three years ago and you'll be absolutely delighted to wear it in the talent show. Who gave it away, I wonder?

• **Domesticated non-human animals (Pets):** Just as some people don't enjoy the presence of young children, some feel triggered by the presence of pets or behaviors of animals that attract unwanted nuisance, poop and pee in shared outdoor spaces, or pose threats to local wildlife. Pets will always be a contentious issue that gets brought up at random points in your community journey even if you sign on to create a "pet-free" community. Get used to it. No group completely agrees about the management of four-leggeds or wings inside cages. Just look for common ground and make it work for a while.

• **Children: Same as pets?** These two topics in one sentence will have people laughing at some point, but really, these two topics of contention have a lot of similarities. Kids will eventually do things that do not meet the needs of adults who think they're "running the show." Adults will eventually get annoyed, perhaps severely. Kids need advocates at the community level, but commonly this responsibility gets left to the parents who might already be overwhelmed with the commitments to their health and development. Community members should definitely go the extra mile to consider impacts to young and old. Be aware of your taboos, logistical hurdles, and your own selfishness. We're all selfish, no shame or judgment there. It's part of being human. Having kids is maybe the most natural part of community development but poses many obstacles in an overly individualistic society. This conversation also has no end. Most times a compromise is best.

• **Cleaning/clutter:** Everyone has a different opinion of clean. I've lived in many communal spaces, managed my own community houses, and offered maid services for over 30 homes. Toilets, tubs, sinks, counters, floors, pantries, porches, and that place in the yard where all things go to mold are all ticking time bombs. If we can find pleasure in the process of providing ourselves peaceful, clean areas by cleaning them ourselves regardless of who contributed the most to their unkemptness, then things are super chill, but be prepared for chore wheels, rotating work, some version of occasionally doing the obnoxiously recurring work that no one wants to do.

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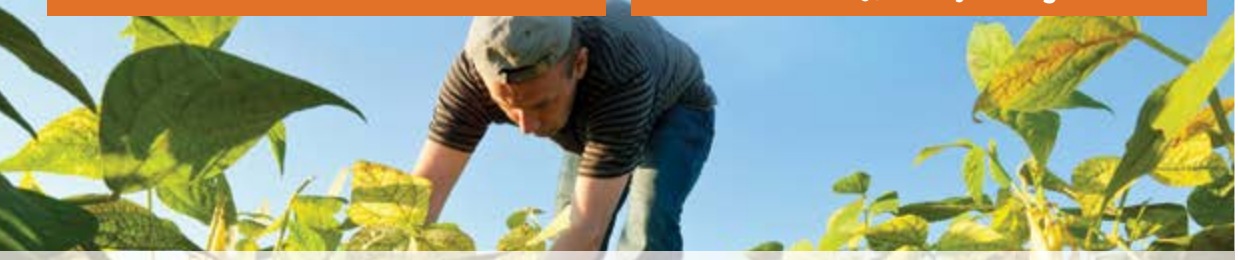

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