

URBAN ON UNITY

This issue of Communities derives from the experience of individuals and groups trying to survive and grow humanely in our cities. We are living together communally, raising our kids cooperatively, building collective economic structures. To develop practical relationships with each other is hopeful, painful, demanding. To work out relationships with the rest of a society which often seems self-destructive and oppressive can be downright difficult.

Community as it's used in this issue as much as possible refers to practice (people are really doing it) and intentionality (we know we have something on together which extends, limits and mostly results from our choices).

You'll find relatively little about the spiritual community of the universe (though the extrapolations are implicit). At the other end of the spectrum, we're light on personal growth trips-the human potential movement as it's been recently characterized. Between the universal and the personal is a social and cultural reality which the groups and communities represented are remaking in what we feel is more nearly our own image.

Taken together, we represent, perhaps, a community of direction. But any representation of consistancy is misleading: few groups are at the point of lifetime committment; within cities, coordination of coops and groups may be tentative or non-existant; as a network, we are only barely at a stage of mutual awareness and interest. We've found value in breaking down the scale of a mass society and many of us are not in that much of a hurry to coordinate it all back together again-until we know how to do that on some kind of participatory, decentralized basis.

Not only are we just learning about each other, and learning from the commonalities, but many of those who work and live in similar ways may have quite different ideas as to why, and these differences sometimes lead to different

1. SEEING COMMUNITY AS AL-

TERNATIVE IN NATURE: We are presenting an alternative to an on balance unsatisfactory society. They can take what we have or leave it alone-mostly we wish they'd leave us alone to build our own world. We welcome those who wish to join us-observe with interest our friends around the world, with some curiosity about useful networking and coordination.

2. COMMUNITY AS THE LEADING EDGE OF SOCIETY: The USA will have to change, given crowding as a mental health problem, decline in energy resources due to waste and loss of economic colonies. A series of small, but significant experiments are being performed by some of the more adventurous types on the new frontier of our cities. By utilizing modes of cooperation instead of competition, by practicing economies of scale and consumption and by learning to deal with interpersonal issues, we are defining a new set of practical futures for an urban nation-doing more with less, living closer and more efficiently and liking it. We wish to be taken seriously by the society and in fact, recognized for this experimental role. We seek ways of creatively working with the established society-when and if it can understand that coopting us is self-defeating for a common good of productive social change.

3. COMMUNITY AS OPPOSITIONAL IN NATURE: America [Amerika] is fundamentally corrupt, and we will only escape our part in that by embracing feminist and socialist principles and joining with the oppressed of all lands in a struggle for social justice and economic survival. We wish to point up differences, which means confront the society both with its own inherent exploitation and the reality of our humane practice.

4. COMMUNITY AS WHAT WE DO: People can work together and live together without much conception at all-except it feels better than how we were living and working before. We need to learn what we can do before possibly knowing what we should do. Being in community is our politics.



Although the design and coordination of issue #19 has primarily been carried out by Paul Freundlich in New Haven, the conception involved almost the entire network represented in these pages (and David & Will at Twin Oaks who aren't) developed through much travel and many phone calls. Production was accomplished courtesy of the US Mails, the CPC West collective in Oregon, and with the support in New Haven of the Advocate Press, Training for Urban Alternatives, Community Cooperative, the graphic talent of Pony Shea and Heather Tunis, the time, criticism and forebearance of many friends.

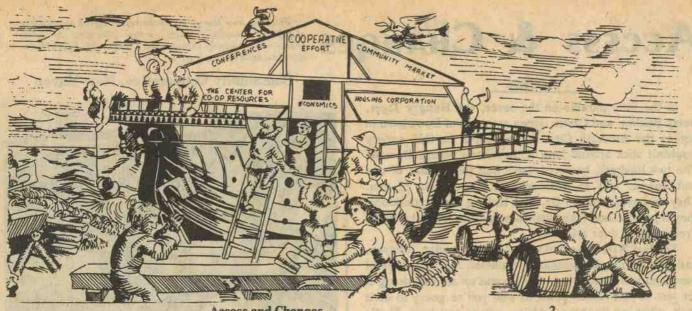
Most important, this issue is more than an exercise in creative myth-making. The design was only an outline without the articles contributed: The conceptions involved are only possible because of the work we are doing, the lives we are leading.

In a small way, then, this is a report on the state of urban intentionality as of early 1976. Whether it means anything, given where power sits in this world, probably has less to do with our talent and seriousness, than whether we are allowed the time to experiment. Whether it means anything to you, probably depends on who you are:

-if you're involved in coops or community, much of what you read will sound familiar. Hopefully, there'll be a few useful ideas, and you'll be strengthened in your struggle.

-if you're thinking about changes in your life or in this society, we hope you'll have a better idea of what's involved and where the best point of access/organizing might be for you.

-if you've passed by the coops and communes as leftovers of the hippie, revolutionary sixties and gone on to the serious business of career, politics, government, academics, business-take another look:



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Access & Changes

People in New Haven have been exploring the possibilities of cultural transition through practical experience for a few years—most recently through the Community Cooperative. Here's a little of how it goes:

ACCESS

In the little parable on the cover, the Hungry Tiger, Betsy Bobbin, and Carter Green want out of Downtown to get to the Emerald City. Most people in this society wouldn't stick around long if they knew where Oz was. The two Rashers, however, have had their share of ups and downs, and so dear readers, have most of you. They've never been to Oz, and lacking that experience, they'd just as soon take what they can get from the Indus Tree. And so dear readers...

The last Wizard we had was probably Lyndon Johnson, and the last magical kingdom, Camelot. So if the idea of community is interesting, don't count on anyone doing it for you. It just comes down to who you're going to do it with, what are the best vehicles, where and how. That's

Fortunately, in most places you don't have to start from scratch. Look for a food coop or the women's center, or the local health food store. In some of the larger cities there are Switchboards. Write MNS and see if there's a local affiliate in your area. Look at the people around you and see who else is looking for a way out. You might get some ideas from this magazine.



Community Cooperative, New Haven



CHANGES

or

How Can I Really Be Sure Glinda Is A good Witch?

Changes = behavior reflecting new cultural expectations. You may be carrying around a load of junk, but you accumulated it to survive. You learned it wasn't safe to cooperate, be open, trust. You probably were right. Even in Oz those cultural expectations would probably control your perceptions and behavior for a long time. In new cooperative environments, you'll mostly be interacting with people as unsure as yourself, doing weird and inappropriate things out of defensive expectations.

But it's not hopeless (probably). You're not totally down the drain or you wouldn't be reaching for something better and neither are the others. Then there's almost a generation of people in some places who've been living and working differently and they might be some help.

Training for Urban Alternatives in New Haven has been exploring the possibilities of cultural transition through practical experience for a few years. Here's a little of how it goes:

A marriage is breaking up. They're both in their thirties, with two kids. She goes to the Women's Center for advice, tunes into a Divorce and Separation rap group. Among the notices on the board are a Conference on Single Parenting and a description of the Feminist Credit Union. She files them for future reference.

A month later, she's alone in her house with the kids and money is tight. She's heard about the Food Coop and joins, saving about 20% on her bills for the one hour a month and the small dues she contributes. The idea of getting a job sounds good, but that would mean daycare for her younger child. There's a notice for a coop child care center so she checks

that out.

The Single Parents Conference takes place and puts her in contact with others in her predicament, including some men. She takes the idea of shared custody back to her husband, and after some initial resistance he begins considering the possibility.

Another month, with the lives of

her married friends seeming more distant and the coupled parties more difficult, she begins to explore social possibilities such as community parties where people mostly come as individuals and much of the dancing is in groups; visiting houses where people live cooperatively in extended family, often with kids; or a CR group that spills over into tea and getting a little high; thinking about who she is and what she's doing long and she has a new life without exactly having planned it. Sometimes she misses the security of her marriage. If another man came along, maybe . . .? But it's a question now, instead of just waiting for another Mr. Right. There are still bad times for which she lacks either the personal resources or a fully developed support network, but she knows more of the categories now, and has a line on survival and maybe better.

Through the Food Coop a man learns of a community volleyball game. It's a mixed situation, as much social as physical Soon he's playing twice a week-a regular, and hearing occasional announcements about events, picking up the monthly community calendar.

Friday evenings after volleyball most people go to a community dinner at the cooperative restaurant. He begins tagging along, kicking in his two dollars for a full vegetarian meal, ignoring most of the propaganda on the walls, but enjoying himself. One night after dinner there's an evening of cooperative play, mostly adaptations of kids' games-another time there's a community sing. There's a lot of talk about cooperation and social change and some of that makes sense. He learns he can't come on to women in a condescending way or he gets ignored (at best). Not all of it he likes, but the people are lively.

He visits a few houses for dinner. attends a few parties, spends half a Saturday at a workshop on communal living. It's still tentative. If his job moved him, he might look for similar situations, but still lacking the skills to initiate...so it would depend where he went and how much was going on there. If a big romance came









along with a woman not in this world, it would probably move him out of it. But he talks less of California for a next step. His curiosity is engaged.

"At some point the possibilities of living collectively became apparent and appealing. Think of all the money I would save while selling typewriters and calculators, by chipping in with four or five people on food and rent. Think of all the time I would save by cooking and cleaning only once a week. And think of the loneliness problems I'd solve-out of five people somebody would listen to me. Me. Me. Me."

"Five months into communal living and the changes aren't easy to assess. Oh there are the obvious ones. My credit debts are almost paid up and I haven't been in Macy's since September. I haven't worn 80% of my wardrobe. I rarely eat meat. I live with two unrelated children-an impossible thought last summer."

"Less obvious changes are happening. Imperceptible sometimes, except that I know I smile more and mean it. I know I touch more and am touched. I sense in this community a human understanding, a spiritual readiness, and support for my strengths-and my weaknesses. Here are the struggles worth struggling for, the relationships worth relating to, and the ideas worth creating. The dream of a cooperative restaurant. once I was able to understand that term co-operative, keeps me working and comfortable."

I guess I felt much like a wide evedchild those first four or five months. Never had I experienced or even imagined that people could actually live and be "Successful" in any non-competitive way. It still astounds me occasionally when I see tense situations worked out by cooperative give and take, warming and cooling, and respect for each other's needs and feelings."

In New Haven, there are many ways to live, and like everyone else, the groups living together in houses and apartments are scattered between inner city neighborhoods of varying pretensions, suburbs, country and shore. But the expectations aren't necessarily of linear, material progress or of stability. While remaining within a community generally oriented to cooperation, social change and feminism, it's possible to ? move around a good deal (or bad deal).

On clear days, the rising sun cuts a streak of light across the waves and flashes in the East windows of the sprawling beach house. The rocks pushing against the tide, the gulls wheeling above the beach slow the patterned pace of the nearby city. Every day or two, a family of swans cruise out of the wetlands; in the worst of the winter, their stately passage almost lost among the floating ice.

The house is on the shore of Long Island Sound, about ten miles out of New Haven. People have been living in it communally for almost six years, with always some carrying over the summer when the owners move back in. Timothy, who is almost eight, has lived there since he was a baby, along with his father, Paul. His mother, who was part of the house the first two and a half years, is a frequent visitor.

Deborah recently returned from six months of traveling to the West Coast with Marcia. They both lived in the house last year (and Marcia the year before) and now Deborah is visiting for a few weeks till she can find another good house to move into.

Liz, Barty, Mary, Margie and Henry moved in the fall for the first time, though Henry had lived in one of the other coop houses on the shore for several years. Liz and Paul are two of five owners of a small sailboat, as are Susan and Ginny down the street and Lee, whose house in the country Deborah might move into.

Barty's puppy has a security blanket she leaves around the house. Liz's kitten still thinks she is living dangerously. Maybe she's right.

Timothy goes to the neighborhood public school around the corner. Margie, who is six, attends a coop Child Care Center in town, where her mother, Mary, puts in two turns a week and Barty at least one (part of the patchwork of day care turns and temporary labor with which he's trying to support himself).

Deborah will probably take a Vista working with families of prisoners, and reinvolve herself with community work; Henry is finishing his dissertation in Psychology at Yale; Mary is receiving unemploy-







ment and involved in a difficult custody struggle which is keeping her from moving to the Farm in Tennessee; Liz is on unemployment and is busy with the coop restaurant, communal housing support and staffing at the Women's Center.

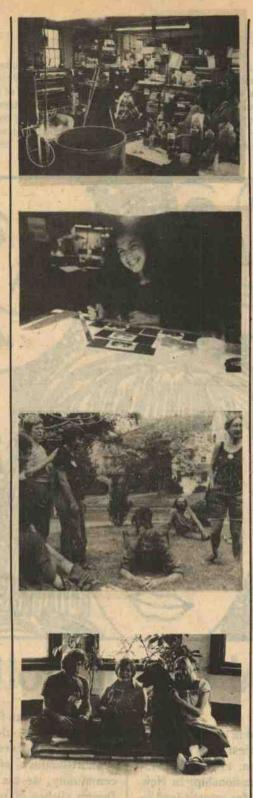
Barty is from Tennessee, having dropped out of Vanderbilt for at least a year. He also works on the restaurant. So does Paul, who draws a small salary for his community work through Training for Urban Alternatives.

Everyone has their own bedroom. There are two bathrooms, a washer, a dryer, and bizarrely enough, an elevator (which was used to store coats at a mid-January party for about ninety. There was some speculation about taking the elevator down to the basement, dumping the load, then running it up empty to mass confusion—but more sensitive heads prevailed.)

Mary, Paul and Deborah are divorced. Liz, Barty, Henry and Deborah are in their twenties, Mary and Paul in their thirties. Two of the people are involved in primary relationships, two in multiple relationships, one has a special friend, one's been out of town so long it's hard to tell, and one's still recovering from a heavy love affair last fall. (If you counted more than six categories, take a gold star.)

The house has its own patterns, reflective of the lives of its inhabitants. The week begins and ends on Mondays. Timothy comes back from being with his mother on Sunday and Margie from her father on Monday afternoon. The kids tended to be scattered with the changes, Monday afternoon from about 5:30 to 6:30 is game time. One of the favorites is Sardine. (One person hides and everyone tries to find co. As people find the hiding place they hide along until everyone is together. All done in the dark, of course, searching through the dozen or so rooms.)

On Mondays, everyone is there for dinner, which is the regulars, plus anyone who might be involved in an experimental two-week living program in which the house participates. Dinner begins with a simple medi-



tation—always interesting to see if the kids will join the ritual. It's their choice, though if they opt out it can mean some awkward stretching among the dishes.

After dinner, Paul and Mary separately put their kids to bed, usually ½ to one hour of very personal and private time between parents and children...reading stories, lying down together. Sharing this time was tried; so was the kids sharing a bedroom, and this year it just didn't work. Perhaps it's because so much of their lives are open.

At nine on Mondays, the adults gather in the living room and for the next few hours share what's important in their lives-diving into childhood, swimming in a rich sea of experience. Usually the time is noncritical, but if there's stress between individuals it comes out. Pressure seldom builds up to explosive levels, partially because of these meetings; certainly a lot has to do with this particular mix. (It hasn't always been that way: The previous year, Paul, Deborah and Marcia left the house in mid-year rather than continue to live with a woman who would not consider moving.)

After the sharing, any necessary business gets transacted—putting together the shopping list; seeing what cleaning needs to be done and finding time to do it; filling out the cooking and washing schedule.

Tuesday, one or two people drive into the New Haven Food Coop (5,000 members, one hour work per month per adult). The Coop carries a full range of goods and is sort of a community meeting place in an old A&P (The A&P quit when doing business in a ghetto wasn't profitable enough.)

Tuesday and Thursday are good evenings for guests. Wednesday is an early dinner, with Barty, Paul (and now Deborah) going into volleyball. Mary stays home with the kids Wednesday night, while Paul covers Tuesday or Thursday. Fridays, Barty, Liz and Paul are involved with preparations for dinner at the restaurant, and Mary and Timothy usually join them for the meal.

Saturday is often a community party at a house. This particular Saturday, there's a benefit for the Women's Center. The singers include Ginny, who is Barty's older sister, and Co-director, with Paul, of TUA. There are about 50 people present and to describe the complexity of working, living and social relationships could occupy an entire issue of Communities in itself.

Some sense of the richness of life's texture in the community has been communicated—presenting two composite people and one real person out of perhaps a thousand, one house of about 60—it remains to speculate why. Two of the strongest themes which make for the speciality of community in New Haven are the strength of the Women's Movement and the early(6 years ago) development of several, strong coop childcare centers. The following article by Dr. Marcia Holly, a feminist and parent, is excerpted from her forthcoming book on the New Haven community, and presents atleast one coherent analysis.



THE PERSONAL CAN BE POLITICAL

by Marcia Holley

The alternatives are not easy to find in a society which uses sex and sexual war in the unhealthiest ways possible: to sell products, to express aggression, to condone violence, to replace friendship and companionship. In New Haven, all the alternatives we have so far created lead to the broader alternative of community. Because we are still in a formative stage, and still living in a patriarchal, capitalist state, we still have problems. At its best, our community offers stable emotional commitments, easy socializing, genuine caring, and minimal economic stability through economic alternatives. At its worst, it is insular, incestuous and exclusive and we sometimes hit the extremes while generally living somewhere in between.

The communal/community answer is the only life

affirmation we can find in an increasingly bureaucratized, soul destroying, depressed, corrupt, pollutant ridden society. We are developing a community as an affirmation of individualtion, elan, self-liberating potential. Without community, we are indeed caught in all those American Dream cliches of rat race, dog-eat-dog, survival of the fittest.

The confluence of a strong, early women's movement, shared custody, and a number of disaffected people within the 20-40 year range has created a relatively stable community within the larger city of New Haven. The stability was a result in particular of joint custody which has reduced the geographic mobility of numerous adults. But the community extends outward to non-parents and has become an affirmation of life rather than a dismal compromise.



To visitors from other areas, one of the more remarkable features of our community is its spontaneous and warm socializing. After several years, women and men have learned to play together, and to play without the usual sexual ploys and competitive dating oneupsmanship. Communards from other places often complain about the continuance in their communes of sexual power-relations; singles continue to lament their playing adolescent dating games. We are hardly free from all those negatives and we have a long way to go, but it is safe to say we have come a long way in a few years.

The integration of the sexes has been a six- or seven-year process. At the end of the 1960's, with the blossoming of the current women's movement, New Haven became a primarily separatist community. Separatism served important tactical and political purposes. Women became strong and independent, able to work together without men, able to live full lives and rid themselves of dependency and the belief that they must relate to a man to be whole. Separatism brought women together and taught us the selfrespect that was a by-product of respecting other women. It also helped us discover and articulate the decades-long repression of anger which had been the only way we had been able to live with men.

We learned to express anger both among ourselves and to men. There continued to be ostensible contradictions. Many of us were politically separatist, but had to work with male colleagues; others were continuing in marriages or sexual relationships in spite of their newfound fury. Unquestionably, it was a difficult time because our anger was often immoderate and focussed too entirely on individuals. Although individual men were (and are) exploitative and our struggles had/have to be with individuals, we also need(ed) space to struggle

against sexism in the broader arenas-a space that was impossible to find when we focused all our anger on the man we were living with. Separatism was a way of removing ourselves from those individual struggles so that we could win the right to legal abortion, fight for equal wages and anti-discrimination bills. Separatism was a way of making broad political changes for all women. But we also believed the personal is political which meant continued struggle on individual bases. So, concurrently with the separatist movement, married women were struggling with husbands around equalized childcare and when those couples separated there was an obvious need to continue relating on some level in order to maintain that equalizing.

Because of the two fronts on which we fought, feminism became not an ideology to be tacked onto socialism after socialism was achieved, but the only way any alteration was going to take place. Men were forced to confront their individual and collective sexism because women generally had stopped working with and relating to them. The only political activity for several years was coming out of the women's movement. Men who considered themselves political had to integrate that reality into their political consciousnesses and their lives.

While there are still strong reasons in favor of feminist separatism, the reality of most of our lives here makes it impractical and unrealistic. Many of us have children and must continue relating to their fathers because we have determined our children should have at least two parents. Some of us also find the company of men pleasant, and others feel that though women must remain in leadership positions broad social change will come about only if women and men can work together within a feminist-socialist framework.

The integration of the sexes has now taken place, but with considerable differences from exclusively monogamous communities. Although we no longer have a specific women's community, the social network is still tightest among women. But there is also a larger social network which enables all of us to socialize freely, to experiment with our sexuality in order to discover our own real desires. There is a general looseness about going somewhere without a "date" or an "escort". Couples behave nonexclusively, only occasionally going out by themselves, women often go with other women and men with other men. When a woman needs an escort (for that faculty cocktail party or office dinner) she can call on any number of male friends

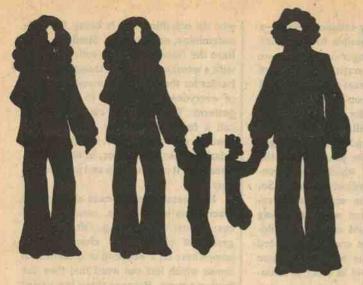
who do not think she is being forward, unfeminine, or flirtatious. Similarly, men have the freedom to visit with or go out with a woman or women, though it is still harder for them to call a woman because of everyone's sensitivity to old dating patterns. The men who can most easily call a female friend for a movie or a concert are those who are in couple relationships: it is clearer, in those situations, that it is friendship and not a sexual play.

In general, there is ease about going places: parties, dinners, concerts, dances, or just out drinking. Often, it is a group of people who choose to go somewhere on a weekend or a communal house which lets out word that they are having a party. Because there is a varied social network, individuals are at ease attending the social activity because there are bound to be friends or acquaintances there.

Most of our socializing is done in groups. There are pot-luck suppers, dances to benefit one cause or another, large and small parties. Within our community are musicians, actors, craftworkers, dancers. Recreation often means going to a concert, to a bar at which a friend is playing, to a craftshow or a dance or theater performance. But eroticism is hardly verboten. Though we might go to an activity with two or three friends, we might just as likely go home with one. The current key is ease and flexibility.

However, we have not always been so free. We are a rather small community (200 people, give or take another 50), and there have been some implicit imperatives. These have varied, but never before have they effected our lives more significantly and often painfully.





During the separatist stage, the imperative was lesbianism and numerous women found themselves in a sexual limbo. They defined themselves as political, severed most of their ties to males, yet did not want homosexual relationships. They often felt guilt-tripped and escaped into themselves. Celibacy became as much a defense as a principled position.

When women began relating to men again, there was a strong imperative against monogamy and in favor of multiple relationships. The situation then became enormously trying, emotionally and in purely banal terms of scheduling all those relationships: Mary had meetings every Sunday and Thursday, could sleep with Bob on Monday and Friday and with Bill Tuesday or Wednesday. But then she had no time to see Joan, because Saturday was kept free for Harriet and Corinne. And Bill was sleeping with Ann on Tuesday and had his men's meeting Wednesday; Monday was out for Bob who was sleeping with Martha that night. And so on ad nauseum and until the phrase multiple relationships became anathema to most of us. It became anathema for other, more serious, reasons as well.

Because too often it was an imperative (from some unknown, unnamed, undefined place), many of the people trying to live out multiple relationships were devastated by them. They were not prepared—in their gut—to live that way, though intellectually they had accepted it as correct.

Then there came a period of open discussion about multiple relationships and the verbalization that it wasn't working for most of us so why should we keep trying to force it. Further, because our community is predominantly female, the multiplicity was generally one man relating to two or three women. We began to feel we had boxed ourselves into a new form of messing over women, of creating competition and jealousy after years of struggling consciously to free ourselves from female competitiveness. It was like the 60s realization that "sexual liberation" merely meant women had lost the freedom to say no or the awareness that "better" contraception meant not only were women still responsible for conceiving or not conceiving but that they now ran the risk of cancer from one more source. Many men were also feeling they could not

meet the demands placed on them for emotional/sexual commitments. In the last two years, the imperatives have been discarded. With greater acceptance of flexibility, there are now bisexual and homosexual women (most of the men have not related sexually to other men), monogamous relationships, and a different kind of multiple commitment.

"Multiple commitments" has become a way of understanding and describing the experience of our lives. Some of us engage in sexual relationships with more than one person, but neither cavalierly nor imperiously. We are building a community of intense and sincere friendships, which sometimes means we sleep with more than one friend (alternately; we are not given to orgies which are the opposite of friendships). But the multiplicity may include sexual exclusivity. A couple may maintain sexual fidelity but does not rely on itself for friends or social activities: each of the twosome also has separate friends and separate activities, plus friends and activities in common.



We are trying to develop relationships which are meaningful but not all-consuming. We develop bonds of friendship-comradeship-love and make ourselves vulnerable to more than one other person; sometimes, we find that vulnerability was a mistake and we get hurt, but more often we are rewarded by loving closeness.

If nothing else, we have learned to talk to each other. Frequently a man or woman wants their friendship to become sexually intimate while the other wants it to stay non-sexual. Rejection is always hard, but we are learning to be sensitive to one another's feelings so that turning down the offer of intimacy is not outright rejection of one's personhood and is almost always done in a context of caring and concern. We have matured beyond the level of picking arguments as a way out of a relationship or a way to avoid deepening one. Instead, we try to be conscious of our real feelings and to articulate them. "My sexual life is complicated now, and I just can't deal with another involvement," or "I've spent six months seeing a shrink to sort out my sexuality and I'm still not ready for a commitment," or "I like our friendship, I want to stay close to

you, but another sexual intimacy will simply confuse me now when I'm trying to work out my relationship to Phil (or Mary)." Both women and men have initiated such discussions and for the first time women are learning what adolescent boys go (went) through. We are learning how to be refused.

Non-sexual love between women has its difficulties, too. A person with whom we want to be or were close sometimes changes in ways that make closeness no longer possible. Sometimes, just as we become intimate, we realize our attitudinal differences are so vast that we cannot communicate. Those rejections, too, are painful.

We frequently have a "primary relationship" which means we are working closely with one other person to keep our lives together on the same path, to keep that relationship as stable and secure as possible, to make changes together that will keep us together. In addition, we have friends to whom we commit ourselves, with whom we maintain a mutual level of trust and devotion but with the recognition that that friendship might not be per-



manent. We have comrades with whom we work and socialize and theorize but with whom we are less deeply committed. Each of these relationships is important, we hope that each is stable in spite of disagreements or changes in circumstance. And in each, there is a level of trust which enables us to call upon any number of lovers, friends, comrades when we are in need or when we sense they are in need. The ongoing relationships with former spouses is often more complicated because its ups and downs, its tenuousness around trust, effects not only the self but our immediate interaction with our children. A dispute with or anger at a former spouse can often temporarily effect the way we feel about our children.

But in spite of the difficulties, we have a socializing community which takes its personal bonds seriously and which is building towards communal trust.

But we are building, and though the blueprints may be ideal, the structure has some flaws. We are small and-not by design-exclusive. Because our intimate (sexual and non-sexual) relationships generally stay within the community, we verge on incestuousness which too often means we are unable to talk about current intimate relationships. Hence we fail sometimes to get necessary outside help working out a problem. The hesitancy to talk openly stems from the fact that one's current friend/lover was the past year's lover of the friend to whom one is speaking. Occasionally, women are hesitant to discuss their love problems because they believe that they're just getting what they should have expected by relating to a man at all. Fortunately, this latter difficulty is being ameliorated now that we have recognized its existence.

The final problem is less a problem than a description of all chemical compounds (which changes the metaphor, but makes our lives somewhat more comprehensible). The entry or exit of every and any individual changes the tone (dynamic, synergy, whathaveyou) of the community. If someone leaves the area or drops out of the sub-culture we all feel it; it shakes up the remaining molecules and creates some insecurity for all of us. When someone new enters, again the molecules must readjust and again there is insecurity until it all reforms somehow. Similarly, when communal houses or couples break up, the total structure undergoes change. Unlike traditional divorce, however, no one feels called on to choose sides. It does mean some realignment of particles. Less metaphorically, it means finding new houses for people and new people for houses; it means some number of people opening themselves to deeper friendships with a person whose primary relationship has fallen apart; it might mean losing touch with someone who was important because she/he has moved into a contiguous concentric circle and out of your immediate concentric circle.

These shake-ups are not unbearable, though they always seem so at the time. Rather, they probably indicate that we have indeed developed some form of community, which is what we are optimistically attempting.

(The article is an excerpt from Ms. Holley's book on lifestyle alternatives forthcoming from Belladonna Publishing, New Haven.)

Whether all the intersecting circles add up to a community, a network or a granfalloon can probably be best answered by, 'All of the above.' Certainly there are no tight boundaries except for specific work groups; many of the centers for community activity and cooperative work draw people from quite different communities, cutting across lines of race, class and ideology. Still, even if everyone means something different when mystically invoking community, with one Women's Center, one Food Coop...one in fact of almost everything, there is necessarily some level of agreement and people see a lot of each other.



take HEART— all those in the struggle

MULTIPLE RELATIONSHIPS

words by Michael Zwell to the tune of Sillouettes

I love Peggy and George and you And you love me and Bob and Sue And Peggy loves George and Sue and Ralph And Helen wants Bob all for herself You know we've got the Multiple Relationship Blues

CHORUS

Multiple, multiple...(17 times)...Relationships.

I was pacing up the floor
much uptight
Deciding who to be with
to spend the night
It's so hard to have to choose between
the four of you

CHORUS & BREAK

We love each other, it's plain to see
Why did he choose her instead of me?
We love each other all the same
I wish you'd stop calling me by his name

Who will it be? Maybe him or her or me.

I found someone new to love
Oh, hooray
I know you will like him so
Go Away
Let's spend some time together soon
Perhaps in early June

He and I are so happy together CHORUS

Cynthia Arvio

New Haven is a small city and Philadelphia is a large one. There are many communities in the latter, and even those with some level of intentionality may have little mutual awareness. But in the case of one community, the Philadelphia Life Center, there is the advantage of clear internal agreements and clear definition of membership.

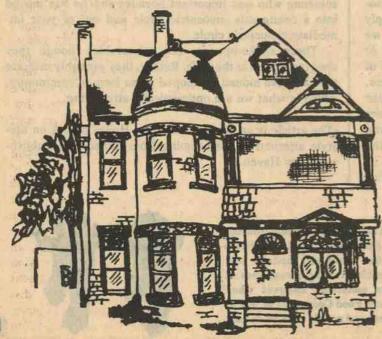
Between the complex of networks in New Haven and the Life Center there's been considerable flow in the last year and a half. Several people from New Haven have been down for Movement for a New Society [MNS] training programs [given at the Life Center] and MNS presentations have been offered in New Haven. Not only are there common themes, but some common problems.

Mike Zwell was part of the Community Exchange Cooperative in New Haven, and when work took him to Philadelphia, moving into the Life Center and joining MNS were logical steps. Cynthia Arvio represented MNS at a meeting last summer of Intercommunities, a network of intentional rural and urban communities on the East Coast, to which New Haven's TUA also belongs. So it goes.

Intentionality is essentially clarifying — or essential because it's clarifying. The decision of a committed group to move to a section of West Philadelphia effected the potential for community in the neighborhood.

The Philadelphia Life Center is a grouping of 18 communal houses in a rundown section of West Philadelphia, loosely linked, warmly associated, many of whose residents are part of a wider social change network, the Movement for a New Society. The Philadelphia community, large and diverse, is not typical of Movement for a New Society groups across the country. With its many working collectives and its concentration of "training" activities, it's an important part of MNS. But because one of the basic tenets of MNS is decentralization, in another way Philadelphia is no more important than the MNS houses and collectives in Durango, Colorado; Ann Arbor, Michigan; Minneapolis, Minnesota; and other places.

I am a resident of one of those 18 houses and also a member of two MNS collectives. I want to tell you about all of them, but that's hard to do because, although they are so closely intertwined, they are not the same thing. The best way to tell the story would be to talk first about Movement for a New Society, its beliefs and practices, and how it came to be; and then to describe life in Philadelphia, not as a typical example but as what I know best.



MOVEMENT FOR A NEW SOCIETY

Movement for a New Society is a network of small groups connected by a similar radical analysis of the problems of society; a vision of what a new society can be; and a strategy of nonviolent direct action to help bring it about. Its member groups are engaged in different kinds of grassroots. social change action, from neighborhood organizing to pressure to eliminate the military. Many of these groups live communally.

MNS members sometimes debate whether to use such phrases as decentralized socialism or communitarian anarchism to describe our vision of the society we would like to see. If you like such terms, fine; if you don't, it doesn't matter, because it's not the terms but the society we're working toward and the strategy we use that make the difference. We believe in taking charge of our lives and starting to live the revolution now, creating new institutions alongside the old, developing new forms of human relationships; but we acknowledge that as this happens the old order will feel threatened and confrontation will be necessary. We are pledged to do this nonviolently because violence only begets more violence. We believe that soldiers and businesspeople are people, not to be destroyed; but we are prepared to struggle with them and to use nonviolent direct action to change them and their institutions.

MNS COLLECTIVES

Collectives are the working units of MNS, groups of 2 to 12 people who work at a project relating to our overall strategies. For example, the Peace Conversion collective in Philadelphia is working on a long-term campaign against militarism; the Namibia Action group is joining with others in efforts for self-determination for South West Africa; and collectives opposed to nuclear power have carried out actions in several parts of the country.

I'm a member of a feminist collective. These women's support groups in Philadelphia and several other places are dedicated to eliminating sexism within MNS, relating to the larger women's movement, and providing emotional support for their members. Men's groups are meeting for somewhat the same purpose.

The Macro-analysis Collective wrote, sells and constantly updates a manual for a self-directed 24-week study course now in use in about 60 places in the U.S. The manual contains a list of readings on such subjects as ecology, domestic and foreign policy, women's struggles, and hunger, as well as a detailed plan for an egalitarian process for the course. Macro-analysis manuals with specifically British and Australian readings are now being written.

Another type of collective is an economic institutions which earns a livelihood for its members (as the "political" collectives do not). Here in Philadelphia the Community Associates Printing Collective is one and the Fatted Sprout, a catering collective, another.

An internal communications collective, now based in Ann Arbor, mimeos a monthly newsletter which is a vehicle for the dissemination of information and ideas within the network. Other collectives, like Outreach, of which I am also a member, work on spreading information about the movement and encouraging new groups and individuals. And a "transnational" collective carries on correspondence with radical groups in other countries.

Training is a very important part of MNS program. Several collectives in Philadelphia now carry it out. Training is a word broad enough to cover a multitude of experiences in learning: individual change, group process, community living, and organizing and carrying out nonviolent action campaigns. Orientation week ends are held each month in Philadelphia. Two-week sessions being held four times a year for those who have already had some experience in organizing in their own localities and want to be more effective in. for example, community action organizations, women's rights groups, or alternative economic institutions. Long-term training involves two years of living and working here with

a group bent on absorbing as much as possible in order to become active in nonviolent social change work elsewhere. Trainers are those who have been through the process themselves, not experts from anywhere else. Though the Philadelphia Life Center has become a center for such training, MNS philosophy of decentralization is leading to the development of training programs in other parts of the country.

Each working collective (not necessarily the members of one house) is independent but responsible to the wider MNS network to communicate what it is thinking and doing and to provide help to others in a crunch. We agree to be egalitarian in our group structure; to work nonviolently; to analyze society from a radical perspective; and to relate our work to the work of other collectives. The people in each group are closely associated in their personal lives as well. More and more, community living and radical action seem to exist in combination.

GROUP PROCESS

MNS is becoming known among movement groups for its group process. In brief, we use facilitators, a role which each of us fills from time to time; a planned agenda, modified if necessary by participants; and agreed-upon amounts of time to discuss separate items, e.g. 5 minutes or 20 minutes. These result in meetings which are productive, seldom drag and cannot be dominated by one or two vocal individuals. Everybody, not just the facilitators, is responsible for good group process. People frequently tell each other: "That isn't on the subject; that belongs at another meeting; I think your strong feelings are getting in the way of clear thinking here; etc." Someone may suggest, "Let's appoint three people to come back next time with a specific proposal." Starting meetings with excitement sharing, with an emphasis on the positive, helps bring us in contact with each other without sinking us under somebody's distress. An evaluation after each meeting-what went well and what could have been improved on-helps people to state what they think about the process (not the content) of the meeting and not to go away grumbling behind the scenes.

DECISION-MAKING

Decisions are made by consensus, which works best when people know and trust each other but can be used even among newcomers as long as basic rules are adhered to and no one is allowed to dominate the meeting.

Equal time is given each individual for discussion of the proposal. Basically, no decision is made until everyone feels comfortable with it-but seeking for agreement rather than winning points is the goal. When people are thinking of the good of the group as much as of their individual wishes, compromise is easier to find. If decisions have to be made in a large meeting of say 50 people, we break into smaller groups for discussion and report back to the whole with friendly amendments or major objections. New proposals to overcome objections send us back into smaller groups, and the process repeats until consensus is reached. If no agreement can be found, former decisions stand until more work and thinking can be done. Because we don't vote, no one is left feeling in the overruled minority or in the victorious majority. After taking part in this process at a national meeting of MNS last spring in Kansas, I was amazed to find a description of almost the same process used in the land reform movement in Chinese villages in 1947-48 (William Hinton, Fanshen).

COUNTERING SEXISM

Our meetings are good places to notice sexism in action and to counter it. One woman counted the number of times men and women spoke during a brainstorm and suggested the five and ten now widely used: after one person has spoken, women count to five and men count ten before the next person speaks. Another tool for encouraging women's participation and curbing the over-zealous male 12 speaker in large meetings is the buddy system, in which you sit down with a buddy of your own sex who, through a squeeze of the hand perhaps, can provide the support to speak or the restraint to wait and see if others want to speak. We feel that both men and women should work on breaking sexist patterns; we don't expect women to take all responsibility for initiating change.

These and many other group process suggestions will be published soon in a "Monster Manual"-watch for announcements. "Monster," incidentally, refers to the size of the manual and not to the type of person it is addressed to!



THE NETWORK IS GROWING

One of the most exciting developments of the past year has been the organization of regions within MNS which have their own gatherings and are working on outreach in their own areas (notably the Northeast, the Southwest and the Midwest). (A MNS Directory costs \$.25 and is available from MNS Outreach, 4722 Baltimore Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19143. Other literature includes the New Society Packet and a Manifesto for Nonviolent Revolution (each \$.30), and a flyer describing the orientation week ends in Philadelphia. Strategy for a Living Revolution, by George Lakey, is \$2.95 in paperback. A literature list is available.)

MNS is aware that it is a tiny movement and that it is a sister to the many other alternative groups which are growing in this country. We rejoice in the multiplicity of food co-ops, collective farms, women's centers, people's health clinics, and small political groups, to name only a few, which are making up not only a counter culture but also the beginning of a genuinely new society in the United States-"within the shell of the old," as the old IWW preamble stated. Our great hope is to be in contact with these groups and networks more and more, to interact with them, to cross-fertilize and rejuvenate ourselves from them, to build together in a non-centralist, organic way.

GENESIS

How did all this happen? A long time ago (it seems like a hundred years, but actually it was 1969-70) an anti-war organization called A Quaker Action Group existed. Its members had been activists for a good while. They had a national office, a contributors list, paid staff (mostly men), secretaries and other helpers (mostly women), and demonstrations in Washington and other places which sometimes landed their leaders and followers in jail. The wives and children of the staff kept the home fires burning.

At some point they began to say to each other: "We're working for a new society, but we're living an old society! What we need is a community-based movement for the long haul, because this revolution is going to take the rest of our lives, and we intend to celebrate along the way."

So, in the fall of 1971, several families and single people bought three old houses in West Philadelphia and the community began, specifically formed to be a support for radical activists but also to provide the integration of their lives that people had been missing. At the same time a group in Eugene, Oregon, did much the same thing and the Movement for a New Society was born.

THE PHILADELPHIA LIFE CENTER

Sex Roles

At first, there were all kinds of difficulties. Though the houses were set up to be operated by equal adults, the old sex-roles died hard. It was so easy for women to remain in the roles of helpers, soothers of hurt feelings, nurturing the men and children. It was so easy for the men to make speeches, write papers, make decisions at meetings. But more and more, women began to speak up,

demand time, demand that men stay home with babies while they too traveled, spoke, organized. And people in such close community began to relate to each other as individuals, not just as members of couples. People stopped asking John what Mary thought, and went directly to Mary. They stopped asking Mary to smooth something over with John, and went directly to John. Both John and Mary began to feel more whole, more valuable. And John and Mary's children began to relate to the other people in their house and the other people in their community instead of to their nuclear family alone-for bread? What are your political visions and strategies? Are you willing to change?" These are some of the questions that may be asked at a clearness meeting, which is not an inquisition or board of admissions but a mutual exploring of the problems and possibilities for the newcomer. Then, if a house will accept you as a member, you can move to the Life Center. If a collective will accept you as a working partner, you are a part of MNS. Perhaps, after having lived here for awhile, you may question whether this is the right place, the right time, the right work-and ask that a clearness be arranged again.



fun, for solace, for learning and growing experiences.

Clearness

Such a supportive community inevitably attracted needy peoplethose who have so much distress that they cannot contribute strength to an enterprise but merely drain it. The Philadelphia Life Center began to use a process called clearness (borrowed from Quakerism) to help people decide whether to join, or whether to stay. We began to speak of "autonomous adult human beings who take charge of their own lives and their own feelings." There is a great difference between sharing feelings with an equal from whom you can also obtain support and listening to the constant outpourings of somebody on a one-way basis.

"What are your needs? What can you contribute to the community? How do you expect to earn your

Usually, the clearness committee consists of some people you feel quite secure with as well as others with experience who are not as well known to you.

Counseling

In spite of the resolution to be an "autonomous adult person," the depressions and the angers come, the feelings of being sunk, the uncertainties and fears, the sadnesses. The tool most of us here use to deal with our feelings is called Re-evaluation Counseling. Unearthed, discovered, invented in the 50's by Harvey Jackins of Seattle, it's a simple human process which allows the feelings to flow freely and the head to clear and think rationally again. It's based on the concept that everybody is healthy and creative but has been hurt to some degree. We have been taught to bottle up our hurt, and so it is still hurting us. Allowing it to flow uncorks our creativity and energy.

Although there are classes to teach this method and workshops for ongoing co-counselors, it's essentially a peer method with two people exchanging the roles of client and counselor, usually one hour at a time each way. Unlike the traditional idea of therapy, co-counseling is not perceived as curing one, but is a tool which can be used for the rest of our lives to discharge the pain, gain insight into ourselves, and live in the present. It helps us to be aware of what is happening now and not confuse it with what happened a long time ago.

Counseling can be a scheduled thing once a week for the same two people, who get to know and trust each other as time goes on, or it can be something arranged in a moment of need: "Joe, can you spare me a half hour? I need some counseling." If Joe has a meeting or has to cook supper, he may say No, secure in the knowledge that someone else canbe found who has the time. Joe will help if he can, but it's my responsibility to work on my feelings, not Joe's responsibility. This is what is meant by autonomy.

Physical Warmth, Sex, and "Relationships"

But this is not a cool community. It is one in which each individual has many friends to turn to, to share good times, to work with, to counsel with, to (in some cases) pray with. We are aware that most of society looks on physical contact, touching other human beings, as taboo unless they are children or lovers. We consciously contradict that feeling by giving each other warm hugs of support, sitting with our arms around each other, allowing our human feelings to flow. Sometimes it's hard for those of us who have been well schooled the other way to believe this! We want, too, to be aware of what we are doing and not substitute the mandatory hug for the mandatory handshake. But physical contact is a very affirming, validating thing. If people want to touch me, I must be all right

We think that all of us have been . put down so often that we need extra 13 affirmation that we are, indeed, valuable human beings, capable, lovable and useful. We try to give each other as much of this kind of nutrient as possible and find it an immensely strengthening thing. Thus it is easier for us to give and accept negative feedback when it's necessary.

Naturally, with all this warmth and closeness, sexual feelings arise. Sometimes this results in multiple relationships, that is, sexual relationships with more than one person-or the agreement to end one sexual relationship and begin another. A great deal of effort is made to be intentional in these things, however: never to allow them to drift, never to allow someone to be left feeling abandoned or confused. Couples sometimes ask a third person to sit in on their discussions about their relationship, to act as a listening ear, a support, to make it safer for the individuals involved to tell the truth about what they need. Since many of us feel that the strict limitations of heterosexuality are not natural, there is support in the community for gayness and bisexuality. We are also working on the idea that many times a wish for sex is really a wish for warmth, closeness and caring from other human beings, which a non-sexual relationship can provide.

If it sounds from this as if we have these things all sewn up, we err: just because this is an area around which there are so many feelings, so much anxiety, a lot more work needs to be done on it.



The Community and Its Neighborhood

We are mainly middle-class white; but there are a couple of black members; and there are a number of people spending time here from countries such as Japan, Germany, Australia, England and New Zealand. Though the majority are young adults, there are people here of all ages, from babies to sixty-year-olds. Houses are made up of combinations of nuclear families, single-parent

families, couples and single people.

The Life Center is part of a neighborhood which is partly white (various older ethnic groups) and partly black, on the edge of a ghetto which spawns drug addiction and other crime. We try to be aware of this as we organize our blocks for safety: as we say hello to the people we meet on the street; and as we philosophically report, "Our house was robbed last night." Some training in street safety has been done; more is needed. As a member of the Block Association says, "There will be more, not less crime, as the depression deepens. We must learn to deal nonviolently with this crime, as we cannot eradicate it until society is entirely changed." (See article by Pamela Haines elsewhere in this issue.)

Life Center houses

Each Life Center house is autonomous, choosing its own members and developing its own rules but relating closely to the wider community. The atmosphere or emphasis in each house is unique. One may be somewhat child-centered, another composed only of adults. One may be made up of people to whom a regular group religious meeting is important, another made up of those who don't find that meaningful. The atmosphere of one house may be serious; of another, often rollickingly funny. The people in one house may all be active in collectives which are working on direct action or outreach projects, while those of another may be involved primarily in neighborhood organizing or in a repair collective. Change is always possible: moving to another house, starting a new house. Philadelphia thus has an advantage over smaller centers because people who want a different atmosphere or emphasis can reshuffle themselves without leaving the Life Center itself. (Smaller MNS communities don't have this advantage, but they are often fertilized by a flow of MNS visitors from other parts of the country.) From time to time, people leave the Center, to go to college, to relocate, perhaps to start the seed of a new community elsewhere. New people are constantly arriving, especially in the fall when the Long-Term Training

Program begins.

The house I live in is called Youngest Daughter. (Other names: Trollheim, Kool Rock Amazon, Rainbow Race, Sunflower, the Gathering, the Tree House). We have seven residents who share upkeep, clean, cook, shop and meet for house business on an equal basis, without sex role differentiation—as a matter of fact, with



an intentional bias against such role playing—and with day-to-day support for each other's work and each other's feelings. We have agreed to point out, in a caring manner, any patterns of behavior that get in each other's way and to accept such feedback and use it constructively. Additionally, we're all friends—we like each other!

Houses usually meet once a week to solve problems and make decisions about living together. Since such decision-making often brings up feelings of conflict, it's important to affirm each other also. The weekly meetings in our house almost always start with personal sharing, on how we are feeling now; things we have been doing; something about our pasts; or what we feel about our community. Though personal sharing is not always positive and sometimes deals with painful feelings, it brings us together, starting us off in understanding, making it easier to deal with our business in love, not irritation.

Costs and Sharing

It's possible to live on rather little when living communally, especially in an old, rundown section of a city like Philadelphia. We are handy to public transportation. The rent in our house is \$55 per month per member -some houses are higher. Food costs range from \$6 to \$8 per person per week. Most of our houses eat a vegetarian diet and are members of a food co-op which is housed in the basement of one of the Life Center houses. The Life Center Association owns this building, Stone House, which is also used as a meeting place and the site of the orientation week ends. The Life Center Association also owns another building, which houses the print shop and our Outreach Collective office. Individual houses are sometimes rented: sometimes owned by a member; and sometimes owned by a non-profit corporation set up for that purpose.

We don't, most of us, do income sharing or hold all things common as some communitarian groups do. Rather, we do expense sharing, paying our share of the common expenses but keeping our own separate bank accounts or stashes from our own employment. Because most of us work part-time, this does not make for great differences in income. We do share many things, though not completely: people with cars lend them rather freely, for a mileage charge to cover costs; people with tools lend them freely-and usually they are returned! People in the community share skills: one is a plumber, another an electrician; they will fix something for a price, but they'll also show us how to do it the next time ourselves. A couple of people are nurses: they freely share their knowledge and refer us to friendly doctors when necessary. (A couple of men are in training to be nurses; and women take part in carpentry and repair collectives loosely associated with the Life Center.)

Bread-winning work, commonly called bread labor, is almost always part-time, based on the philosophy that if each member of the movement supports himself or herself, no one will need to be paid salaries for movement work. Therefore, parttime

jobs for money and political work for love is the usual pattern. These jobs range from the alternatives mentioned above, through work for local Quaker organizations, to strictly proletarian supermarket and nursing home type jobs. Some Life Center members earn their bread by speaking or writing; others by doing workshops on group process for the more affluent (also, let it be said, they do free workshops for the less affluent!)

Lifestyle

In true simple living style (a philosophy with us), we get most of our clothes from thrift shops or rummage sales and most of our furniture from the street where other people have discarded it or from the Salvation Army. People are informal in dress: most wear blue-jean and T-shirt attire, but occasionally one sees long, colorful skirts or embroidered shirts. Houses are orderly and practical. Nobody is houseproud but everybody is organized and fairly clean. (Some houses with little children have the usual peanut butter and jelly decor.)



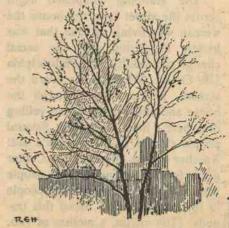
Children in the Life Center have the advantage of being part of a larger, caring community which takes some of the emotional burden off their parents. Many houses have children as residents; some do not. Children usually go to local schools, but some are enrolled in an alternative school in another part of the city; and some are part of a nursery school in a nearby church staffed almost entirely with Life Center members. Children are treated as members of the community, having a voice in the decisions of their houses and being treated with respect.

The Life Center is a ferment of ideas, forums, workshops and parties. Frequently someone will have an idea, object to something, or want to report on a trip or development

and will mimeograph enough copies to go to all the houses and scattered individuals. (These mimeographed sheets and posters on house bulletin boards are the main method of information-sharing with everybody. We use the phone a lot, too!) Forums are often arranged to discuss ideas which have been circulated, such as socialist-feminism or bread labor. Skillsharing workshops spread knowledge more widely among ourselves. And parties: well, almost any occasion calls for one, from a birthday to Thanksgiving. A party usually includes a mix of games, songs and rock dancing, with a little beer for looseners.

Any of our meetings, large or small, can include games, songs, hugs, dances. Games are non-competitive, stressing joy and cooperation, bringing laughter and release. (Games for short breaks in the meeting, called Light and Livelies have been gathered in a booklet For the Fun of It, written by Life Center member Mara Harrison and available for a dollar from Friends Peace Committee, 1515 Cherry Street, Philadelphia, PA 19201. | Some meetings are specifically billed as celebrations, for we are delighted to be living with each other-why not show it? This philosophy is expressed in the words of a song by P.J. Hoffman. who lives in our house and whose guitar is present at many a meeting: "Take heart, all those in the struggle, our lives are where it begins; so celebrate through the hard times, for we will win ... "

Our dream is that "we will win," but whether we win or lose, this is the way we want to live.



TAKING BACK THE NICHT

pamela haines

Darkness had fallen. A woman was walking alone on the street. A boy in a neighboring house saw a man following her, then they both disappeared from his sight. Moments later a scream ripped the night.

A familiar story, repeated in city after city, night after night. Usually the story doesn't go much farther. The victim, whether seriously hurt or not, will never be quite the same. The attacker is caught, or not caught, but in all likelihood the circumstances that led him to do it remain unchanged. The surrounding neighborhood is swept with a wave of fear, if fear hasn't been set in so deeply that they are already numb.

But this story reads differently right from the beginning and nobody knows where it will end. It is a story from a neighborhood which includes both an active block organization and an organized social change community, and it illustrates some of the potentials for building community in an urban setting.



The stabbing happened right across the street from the house the woman was living in, one that was loosely associated with the social change community, the Philadelphia Life Center. When Carlos heard the scream, he ran down through the house and out into the street velling that there'd been a mugging. Several people rushed to the woman's aid. Another woman phoned a Life Center group for counselling aid-for people who could come to support the people in the house as they faced this tra-6 gedy. (The victim, a mother of two,

died before reaching the hospital.) Two women accompanied a house member to the hospital, then downtown to police headquarters. Others gathered at the house to help deal with the police, tell the children, call relatives, listen to the tears. One man spent time on the street listening to neighbors, looking for people who were scared or hurting or angry.

The next morning, Friday, an ongoing Life Center group scrapped their agenda. How could the community respond creatively to the incident? How could it be used as an opportunity to gather the neighborhood together in a common concern for the quality of life? They mapped out a possible progression of events to culminate in a large community memorial/meeting Sunday afternoon and initiated work on them, drawing in other Life Center members and community people as they went.

About fifty Life Center women and their friends gathered that evening to think together about how they could respond to this latest threat to their safety on the streets. Some worried that the meeting would be an

occasion for people to reinforce each other's fears and feelings of anger toward men. But it was planned and led skillfully. Though fear was clearly there, people reached through it to their good thinking. They came away with a sense of power and solidarity, as well as a wealth of specific ideas of things to do for mutual support and street safety.

A flier announcing the Sunday meeting was printed and on Saturday dozens of people canvassed the neighborhood, handing out fliers, and explaining what had happened. Establishing personal contact was invaluable in helping people feel connected and motivated to reach out. [That afternoon also, one woman, after finally wresting permission from the police, took a bucket, a scrub brush and a friend, and washed the blood off the sidewalk.]

The meeting Sunday afternoon at the big Methodist church was a careful blend of memorial and community builder. People gathered to the sound of homemade recorder music, moving up to the gallery as the downstairs filled up, till three or four hundred were assembled. Several community leaders did the welcoming, and there was a simple accounting of the facts of the stabbing for those who had heard only newspaper reports or rumors. A woman who had spent time with the family told about the victim's life, her growing up, her work, her hopes and dreams, so that those who hadn't known her personally could mourn for a real person rather than just react to an anonymous death.

Following five minutes of silent reflection, attention was switched to the neighborhood and the future. First people had the opportunity just to meet each other, to introduce themselves to those sitting near-by whom they didn't know and discover what they had in common as neighbors. The whole room erupted into animated talk as dozens of small groups of people shared names and addresses, excitements and concerns. Then there was a chance in the large group for individuals to tell of ways they were learning to reach out to others, and things people in the

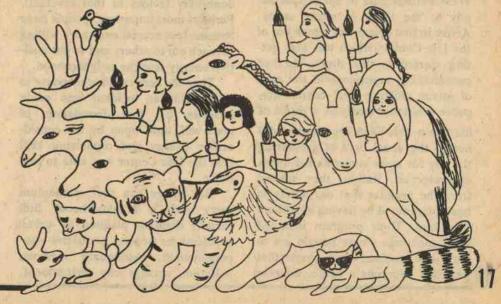
community could do together to make it a safer and better place to live.

This was the most exciting and moving part of the meeting. One person after another, of all ages, sex and race, expressed pride in the community, an appreciation of simple human contact as a basis for collective strength and security, and an understanding that no neighborhood could find solutions to its own problems in isolation from the larger society. It could have gone on for hours, but night was approaching. Still to come was a candlelight walk through the local streets, symbolizing the community's refusal to be paralyzed by fear, their determination to take back the night. So the meeting adjourned and everybody thronged out, each picking up a candle at the door. People were still feeling high; they laughed and visited in clusters, sang, drew in curious but uncertain bystanders, shared candles, and went home with more sense of hope and power than many had had in a long

And still the story was not over. Important information concerning the woman's death was privately volunteered at that meeting and during the next several days by a number of concerned neighborhood residents. Other neighbors helped pull this information together and offered support to those who were afraid to speak up. All of which led to the arrest, on Tuesday, of a young local man who subsequently confessed to the stabbing.

On Wednesday an ad hoc group of people from the Life Center and the Block Association who had been involved met to evaluate what had happened so far, share new information, and think about possible next steps. In response to the needs, both witnesses who were being threatened and of members of the woman's house, a more organized and on-going support system was worked out. Ways of making contact with the assailant's family were discussed. One person took on the role of communicating with the police. Two others agreed to serve a central communications function-receiving and disseminating new information, coordinating responsibilities, thinking about the overall situation.

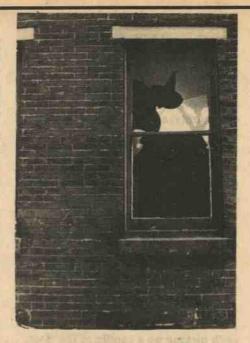
All through the neighborhood ripples were being felt. Interest in block organizing was higher than it had been in years and block meetings began happening all over. The three adjoining blocks that housed the victim, the assailant, and several important witnesses held a joint meeting that crossed old racial lines and provided the first opportunity for many people on those blocks to meet each other. It also brought up several real issues that people wanted to work together on: re-instituting a neighborhood walk-a friendly presence in the streets during high crime times; cleaning up the local park and doing something about youth recreation; campaigning to close a bar which was a focal point for a lot of trouble. Groups from the womens'



meeting continued to meet; one began making plans for a neighborhood workshop on street safety. The idea of a community Christmas celebration began to take shape. Concerned members of all the important groups in the neighborhood met together for the first time to think about possible shared goals and directions, and discovered an unexpected wealth of commonality. A follow-up letter from the big community meeting, pulling together much of this information, was hand-delivered to all who had attended, surfacing yet further indication of interest in being more actively involved in the neighborhood.

What made all of this possible? What kind of a neighborhood is it anyway? It is an elegant old section of West Philadelphia with tree-lined streets and big three-story duplex and row houses. A fifty-block area, bounded by the university community on one side and fairly solid black ghetto on the other three, it includes an old Catholic working-class community centered around a large church and parochial school; a new group of young white professionals and some students; middle-class, home-owning blacks; and poorer, more transient apartment-dwellers.

Three or four years ago it had one of the highest crime rates in the city, declining property values, and all the indications of a deteriorating neighborhood. In reaction to a series of rapes, some concerned local citizens established the Block Association of West Philadelphia to speak specifically to the issue of street safety. Active in that group was a member of the Life Center (which was also getting started at that time). He had considerable experience in the area of street violence and communitypolice relations. Partly as a result of his vision, this block organization did not go the usual path of pressuring the city for more conventional forms of protection. Rather, they started from the premise that our safety is best guaranteed by having neighbors who care. Their program included block meetings where people got to know one another; block charts that b provided everyone's name, address



and telephone number; the neighborhood walks, a system by which block residents took turns maintaining a friendly and observant presence on the streets at night; the use of freon horns, both to scare off attackers and to call neighbors onto the streets to see what was happening.

As a program, it has been very simple and inexpensive, using people as their own best resources, and remarkably effective. Crime rates have dropped dramatically in organized areas. Real estate values stabilized, then began to climb (though the development of the Life Center, with twelve to fifteen households of community conscious whites, as well as the continual expansion of the University of Pennsylvania were also undoubtedly factors in that reversal). Perhaps most important, people have become less scared and more willing to reach out to others and to put positive energy into the neighborhood.

Thus the very creative response to this particular incident was made possible by that foundation of good-will, built upon by the considerable energy and organizing skill that the Life Center was able to mobilize.

But where can that momentum carry such a neighborhood? Still racially divided; plagued by urban problems far beyond its control-unemployment, inadequate services, pollution, corrupt city government, drug trafficking—to name just a few: with virtually no industry of its own-how much more control can such a neighborhood take over the quality of its life?

Nobody has provided the answer yet, but the question is being considered more actively and by a wider variety of folks than ever before, and some clues are beginning to turn up.

It won't come with big government money, says an emerging consensus. Reliance on federal funds tends to lock people into status quo solutions, breed dependency on outside authority, and disempower people in their daily lives. It will come with people reclaiming their love for and responsibility to themselves, their families, and their neighbors. (As a white person who had grown up with that vision of a human economy of caring I had always been distrustful of the tendency I perceived among many blacks—as well as white liberals-to go after government funding. Yet at a recent neighborhood meeting I found a roomful of blacks who had grown up with exactly the same vision and same distrust, but who perceived that it was the white people who looked to big money for solutions. It was an unexpected but delightful discovery of a vitally important commonality.)

It will come with the provision of human services that people can participate in and benefit directly from. A barefoot doctor approach to medicine is being started in the neighborhood. One person on each block is trained in basic first aid and health maintenance skills and backed up by a professional medical team. (Block-by-block screening for high blood pressure, for example, requires a minimum of expertise and expense

while speaking to one of the most prevalent medical problems among urban blacks.)

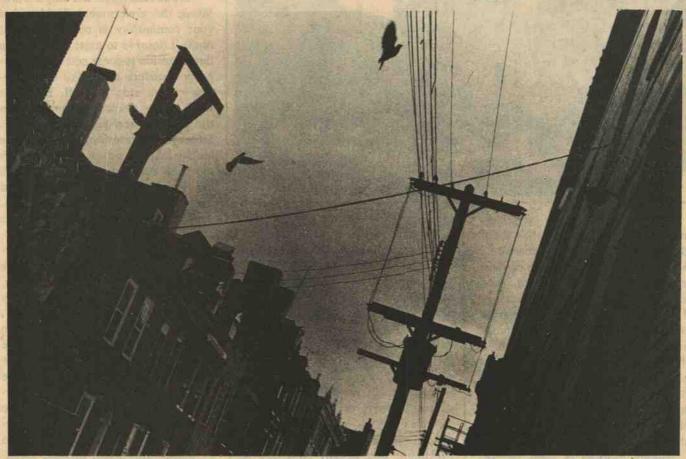
It will come as people find the opportunity and the safety to think critically about their environment. Good clear thinking, that is connected to the reality of everyday life, is one of the most basic and powerful revolutionary forces that exists. A local parents group was initially focused

around a shared interest in their childrens' education. It became a friendly and supportive enough place that members came to use it as a forum for thinking together about a wide variety of common concerns. A dream that is floating around the neighborhood these days is of a roving road show that could visit blocks. It would have a participatory theater and puppet shows and who-knowswhat-else, creating an atmosphere that would enable and excite people to think about their world.

It will come as neighborhoods find issues about which they are personally concerned, around which they can unite, and which illuminate inequities in the larger social and economic structures. (In the absence of the latter, little reforms can be won without changing the status quo, and

people will be deceived about the nature of the struggle and continue to focus their energy shortsightedly.) In West Philadelphia the police are a major source of tension and concern, but potentially a very divisive one, as white people tend to be on the receiving end of their brand of protection and black people of their harassment. There is a move now in the neighborhood to focus that concern and articulate the interests that cross racial lines. Everybody, with whites in the lead, would communicate with the local police district that real protection does not come with harassment of black youth or with police cars swarming through the streets; that on the contrary, each time a black person's dignity is violated in that way, the streets become more dangerous for everybody else, women and children in particular. The challenge to the neighborhood is to clarify that societal forces which breed economic crime cause a conditioned response of police repression, which is part of a destructive cycle.

· It will come as people move out and take risks with their neighbors, and as they, in turn, are supported in their risk-taking. As one person volunteered the information that set off the chain of events leading to that arrest, others spent time listening to her fears, assuring her that she was not alone. As a varied group of professional people-helpers absorb distress at work, they meet with each other to share insights and experiences and be supported in turn. As I step through my fear to smile and say hello to people I meet on the street, I know that others are doing the same.

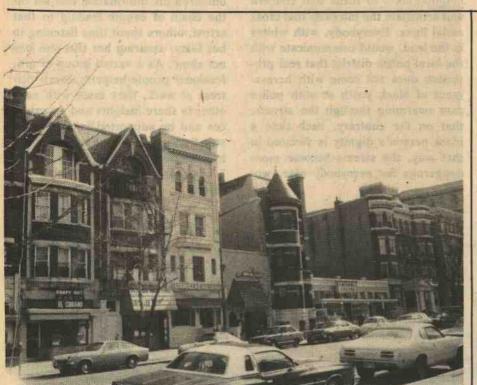


There are no magic solutions. All this is nothing more than individuals and groups of people loving and thinking about their neighbors and their neighborhood as best they can. And it may not work—the isolating, dehumanizing and blight-bearing societal forces that are working against urban community may simply be too strong. One of my neighbors has made a banner of a city, rich in texture and color, and underneath it the words: "Bloom where you are planted." This neighborhood is growing, will continue to grow, rich and beautiful only to the extent that people are willing to dig in and bloom for themselves and for each other. If the alternatives are to love and think and struggle with no assurance of success, or not to love and not to think, then the choice seems pretty clear.

Neighborhood and localism can be developed by responding intelligently and humanely to crisis. We can also prepare ourselves to engage in the practical politics, economics and technology which structure our environments. [If we don't, someone else will.] One of the groups most seriously involved in the later task is the Institute for Local Self Reliance, and their primary community and laboratory is Adams Morgan. David Morris is co-author of Neighborhood Power (The New Localism Beacon Press, 1975, \$3.45).

by david morris

Adams Morgan



The Adams Morgan neighborhood in Washington, D.C. has about 30,000 people, and is approximately ¼ of a square mile. It is not a student neighborhood. Rather, there is a mixture of three races, and a mixture of incomes as well. Katherine Graham, publisher of the Washington Post, lives there, and within a block of her live a number of welfare mothers. Most of D.C.'s Spanish speaking community resides there, and on one street there is a proliferation of shops and stores catering to latino tastes.

Adams Morgan is right on the edge of the downtown business district, which has been slowly growing larger, sucking up blocks, and then entire neighborhoods as it oozes outward in an ever-widening circle. Five blocks from the middle of Adams Morgan, three blocks from its edge,

office space brings the highest price per square foot in all of D.C.

Adams Morgan used to be almost all white, in the late 1940's, when Washington itself was mostly white, and Adams Morgan was a place of aristocratic buildings and aristocratic people. But in the early 1950's the exodus to the suburbs began, and by the end of that decade the inner circle of the city was mostly empty of whites, except for the most courageous, or lazy, or poor. The three commissioners, who then ruled Washington by appointment of the President, and usually consisted of three retired military officers, decided to make Adams Morgan an urban renewal area.

The community rose against this intrusion in its affairs. Citizens organized in block associations, and drew up a competitive development

neighborhood development

plan, to save their neighborhood and improve its character and services. After months of meetings, with the plan ready, they went to the House of Representatives to tell the chairman of the District Committee what they desired. This, of course, was only a few years after the blacks were permitted to eat with the whites. The committee chairman gave the citizens only two minutes.

Urban remewal is not only a word. When the government decides that your community is so poor that it doesn't deserve to exist any longer a deterioration process sets in. All property transfers cease. All rehabilitation efforts stop as well. Everyone waits for the government to condemn the property and pay compensation. Structures deteriorate. Absentee landlords, who never put very much into their buildings, put nothing at all in. People begin to move, and boarded up buildings dot the streets.

The urban renewal plan was halted, partially through neighborhood action, partially through bureaucratic inaction. By the middle 1960's Adams Morgan was a slum. By calling it a slum this is not to say that it was no longer a community, but that cohesion had broken down to the point where it was no longer safe to walk the streets at night. Crime rates were among the highest in the city. The 1968 riot paralyzed any further property development and the main street was lined with used furniture stores and liquor outlets. In 1970 the Ambassador theater, standing in the heart of Adams Morgan, where four streets intersect, and where Norman Mailer made his famous drunk appearance on the eve of the March to the Pentagon, was torn down to leave nothing but a hard dirty corner.

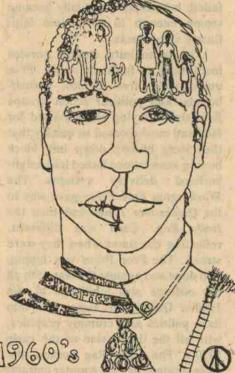
In the middle and late 1960's, on the southern fringe of Adams Morgan, the counter culture moved in. This section was known as Dupont Circle at the time, although even then there was sense of not belonging. Many called themselves North Dupont Circle. And still others began talking of the alternative community with no geographic foundation. Members of this immigration were not students. But they were young, representatives of the 1960's protest movements.

The alternative community was a strange one in D.C. No one worked for the government. Washington, D.C. is a company town. You either work directly for the government, or you are hustling the government. There is no other industry, except, as we shall see, real estate. We were never a part of it. Yet we were in the nation's capital at a time of deep hatred and passion against the federal government's policies overseas. People came to Washington to protest, and the community was constantly refreshed and replenished by visitors coming in and staying for awhile. People didn't, I think, travel as much to other areas of the country because by staying at home, tending to your own affairs, people from the rest of the country would wander through.

Meanwhile at the northern end of Adams Morgan, the neighborhood struggled to control its public schools. Two elementary schools, Adams and Morgan, were located two blocks from each other. They had been the first to integrate in the middle 1950's when both principals decided to break down the race barriers. In the late 1960's this same commonsense attitude caused the parents to demand that they have a say in how their children were taught. After a long struggle the Board of Education acquiesced. One school was given over completely to community control. The other school was only partially granted this right. The second struggle occurred after gaining control. Antioch College was invited in to lend a hand in fashioning a curriculum and a structure. It didn't help. Chaos reigned, and then the alternative, too much discipline. A

community board was developed. though, and managed to give the school a coherence and a direction that stabilized the situation, and by the early 1970's things were moving smoothly.

On the southern end of the neighborhood resided the Institute for Policy Studies. It was housed in a nondescript building, very near Dupont Circle. It was established by dissidents from the Kennedy administration, disenchanted liberals who opposed Kennedy's armaments policy and believed the Cuban missile crisis was an act of supreme madness. They first saw their role as educators of their federally employed colleagues, breaking these policymakers out of a way of thinking that had begun with the McCarthy purge of all liberals and activists from the government in the late 1940's and early 1950's.



So many years ahead of their time, it was no wonder that as Johnson succeeded Kennedy, and the Vietnam War exploded, IPS would turn away from the federal government as their prime focus. They began a program of bringing in "students". People were paid \$50 a week to do pretty much whatever they wanted. The Institute at that time was like a decompression

chamber, in which people from the civil rights and anti-war movements caught their breath, and stopped to analyze where they were personally, and the movements in general, were going. Or, in the other direction, it was a place where graduate and undergraduate students were dropping out, bravely deciding there was an urgency in public affairs that reguired immediate action, not further study.

The Institute grew, and as it did it became a modest funding agency. Its students often lived near the building, and just as often were involved in some community affairs. If a group needed \$1000 to start some enterprise, some "social invention" as Marc Raskin, co-director of the Institute, dubbed these new institutions, they could get him to call up a benefactor. The list of organizations that were started with critical help from Raskin is a long one. But this was not the only service played by the Institute. It was a central point for political discussion and a meeting place for wandering activists. There wereh haphazard seminars, with people stopping in from around the country, and the world, to talk about what they were doing.

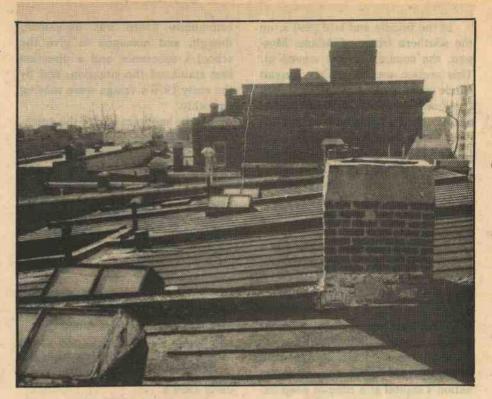
As the community grew in activities and strength around the Institute it received less and less assistance from the Institute. In the 1970's fewer travellers came through to discuss their work. But by then the community itself was becoming enough of an attraction that there was no need for political seminars or small handouts at the Institute. Within a few years very few people know of the role the Institute had played in the creation of many of the organizations in those early years, although its connection with several leading activists was still strong.

In those years contact between the counter cultural/political community and long term residents was minor. There was a difference in race, and of values. But perhaps more importantly, there was a difference in geography. However, as the counter cultural community grew in size, and as downtown inexorably moved northward, communes in the 71 northern section of Adams Morgan were occupied by these people.

The townhouse architecture in the Adams Morgan neighborhood, and, indeed, in much of downtown Washington, was attractive to group living. Seven bedroom houses rented for \$200-300 a month. By living collectively people could reduce expenditures, and in addition gain the psychic income that makes cooperative living such a bonus. With the help of several people, twenty communes sprang up in the late 1960's, and a fledgling commune newsletter was formed. Although the newsletter lasted only a few months, the commune network flowered. One day a few people sat down and traced the commune geneaology from the first two group living situations and discovered that from the original 12 people there were then about 15 communes with more than 100 members. By the early 1970's there were over one hundred communal living arrangements in a neighborhood which was only about 20 blocks wide.

The living density helped in many ways. We could walk to shops, to political protests, to jam sessions at neighbors' houses, or to parks for recreation. Many times during a day there were innumerable small contacts to reinforce the sense of community and growth.

The communes created a critical mass and acted as a catalyst for many experiments in institution building. One day Michael Schreiber while out on his motorcycle came upon a bakery selling day old bread in another section of Washington, and brought back a dozen loaves for the houses. The next week he took orders before he went. Shortly thereafter the first buying clubs began. Steven Brown, a medical doctor, tried to interest several communes in starting a health insurance system, taxing themselves for access to his services. When this failed he and others created the Washington Free Clinic to service a wider population. In one house a peanut butter operation began. In another a newspaper struggled on. In still others day care cen-27 ters proliferated. Some of these



failed, but others eventually became strong enough to move into legitimate store fronts.

The community created service institutions to fulfill its needs. Free universities, free clinics, switchboards, and political action groups flourished. Buying clubs started for food and mushroomed so quickly that they were broken down into block buying associations linked into neighdelivery systems. The Washington Free Press gave way to the Ouicksilver Times and then the Daily Rag. Each was different, reflecting the times when they were strong. The Free Press was hippie, into dope and against the war with all the outrage and jubiliance of the 1960's. Quicksilver Times was into hard politics and crummy graphics, with all the depression of the early 1970's. The Daily Rag became the closest thing that the counter cultural community had to a geographical community newspaper. It brought the community closer together psychologically. It finally failed from a variety of factors, including an inability to define itself as a community newspaper or a metropolitan newspaper, an ambivalence that was reflected in content and economic underpinnings.

In 1973 Steve Clark was working

for the Daily Rag. He and Ski Clark, his wife, worked with the buying clubs, and in this year helped to open Stone Soup, the first retail food store. It was established as a workers collective, not a consumers cooperative. Full time, paid staff would own and operate it based on collective decisionmaking. After six months the opening of Stone Soup had totally changed the community. This was not a hippie craft store. It was a very serious operation. It was not based on volunteers but rather had a paid staff which undertook political studies once a week. After six months Steve found a larger store up the street two blocks and found people to move in. Fields of Plenty was born. Afterwards came the Community Warehouse, which opened during this period of euphoric growth, when the community was stunned and excited to discover that it could actually operate the retail level of the economy efficiently.

The Warehouse stored food for the two retail stores, in order to be able to gain the cost reductions in bulk purchasing, as the buying clubs had done for individual consumers (the buying clubs continued to grow during this period). It was a premature decision, since the volume in the two stores was only around

\$14,000 total per week, and it made for some very rough going during the first few months, but it stabilized, and became another institution although with fewer members. Then a trucking collective was established, to distribute the produce and buy it from Baltimore, and later, from the New Jersey Cooperative Warehouse. A restaurant followed, Out to Lunch, which was to fold within six months because it refused to define itself in the beginning politically, and chose too small a space from which to operate. A restaurant opened out in the Maryland suburbs, and tied into food groups through buying arrangements.

The Washington Food Federation was created to oversee the operations of this system. Each group is individually incorporated and autonomous. Each collective chooses one person to represent it in policy discussions as well as participating in political study groups. The Food Federation assisted in loan policy, buying decisions, and began to extend contacts to farmers in the area.

Since retail and distribution outlets were available, other operations sprang up. Two people started a nut butter factory using one grinder located in their basement. (There was a very democratic dispute in the pages of the Daily Rag about whether peanut butter was good or not-rumor has it that complaints forced the manufacturer to use a higher grade peanut afterwards-whatever, the complaints died down and Apocalyptic peanut butter stayed on the shelves.) A Women's Bakery formed. and captured the hearts and purses of the community with their oatmeal raisin bread. The Institute for Local Self-Reliance produced about 180 pounds of alfalfa, mung, and lentil sprouts in its basement and sold these to stores inside and outside the neighborhood.

By 1975 an interesting development had occurred. From a community of people which had forsaken the dollar as the criterion of success there had developed an economy which supplied jobs for over 120 people with a gross sales income of over \$4 million. Print collectives, silkscreening operations, recording operations all joined the economy. Salaries were low, and as people grew older and children came, and lifestyles matured, the nagging questions concerning equity growth and financial security in middle age were gradually spoken of.

By this time the northern end of the neighborhood was by now heavily populated with counter cultural folks who had grown older, and put down roots. A few years before Marie Nahikian and Therese Hess had established the Adams Morgan Organization, the first elected government in D.C. It was a fascinating step. Here was a city which had no elected officials, and here was a neighborhood which calmly, after many months of deliberations, split itself into five autonomous entities called communities, and gave each one several positions on the Executive Board. Committees were formed and neighbors worked together. The Adams Morgan Organization had no power, and for the next few years remained a polite fiction. It did, however, make the neighborhood more visible, and with the influx of different classes of people the neighborhood became a powerful force in municipal politics, often to the chagrin of less organized but more needy neighborhoods surrounding it.

By 1975 Adams Morgan had developed retail, distribution and even production systems. It had a neighborhood government. And it had people beginning to talk about the neighborhood as something important, something special.

The success of Adams Morgan was clear. But it was a precarious success in that it was based on hard work and sacrifice, not on equity or real political and economic power. As the neighborhood made itself more attractive to its inhabitants it also became more attractive to the economic forces in our society that breed on the success of such community development efforts. In D.C. the only industry outside the government is real estate. Great fortunes are built on rapid property transfers. Everyone who has a little money, from city council people to senators and supreme court judges, own several houses or are partners in larger operations. In the early 1970's several factors made Adams Morgan prime speculation property. It was close to downtown and downtown was moving northward. A subway station was to be opened in early 1976 within a few blocks of people living there. The Maryland suburbs had declared a sewage moratorium several years before, effectively halting significant residential construction. The high cost of money drove the



total price of new house construction skywards, when financing was even available. New houses in the Washington suburbs cost, on the average, \$65,000 in 1975. And the energy crisis made the upper middle class conscious of how much commuting was costing them. Meanwhile the pressures on housing increased as the federal payroll expanded, even under Nixon and later, Ford.

Speculation is a common practice in all of Washington, D.C. In one study it was found that 40% of property transfers occurred within 6 months of purchase. In Adams Morgan this situation was even worse. While blocks were bought up by multinational corporations to be converted in the future to high rise construction, several of the neighborhood's residents, who had been pushed out of other D.C. communities as a result of urban renewal programs, saw their homes threatened again by natural market forces rather than by governmental edict.

itical autonomy to D.C. and all the appointed officials tried to curry favor from future voters. Adams Morgan residents joined by many others around the city, also proposed a tax on speculation which would heavily tax property transfers which occurred within a short time of purchase. And there was talk of a community land

Within this situation tensions grew. The counter-cultural and political community was also being pushed out of the neighborhood. But this community was mainly white. Many black and latino residents saw the alternative economy as a threat: it brought in its wake the immigration of richer people who could affect property values and rents. It is a difficult time although organizing activities, if anything, go on at an increased pace at the moment.

In late 1973 a number of people came together and decided that the process of self-determination and

The neighborhood fought with fervor. Through its elected representative to city council, it lobbied for extensions of the rent control bill and the moratorium on condominium conversion. Both the bill and the moratorium had been enacted when the federal government, after one 74 hundred years, restored a quasi-pol-

community based economic development which was going on in Adams Morgan could be pushed still further. Although institutionally in the process of attaining self-reliance would be a slow one, possibly spanning decades, intellectually the process was fairly easy to perceive and to accelerate. The concept of neighbor-

hoods as productive entities, not only as a sum of consumers who work outside the area, was taking hold. Karl Hess spoke of the neighborhood as nation. There was talk of fish in the basement, tomatoes on the roof, machine tool shops, and the like. The energy crisis hit, and everyone discovered technology.

The Institute for Local Self-Reliance was born from these developments. It explored the concept of the neighborhood as an autonomous unit, and developed the localist framework for viewing development. Staffed by people who had worked in the neighborhood at first, it explored the next steps in the process. David Morris worked on the question of energy resources, exploring the implications of solar energy on neighborhoods and found they might well be energy exporters in the near future. Neil Seldman explored the area of vast utilization and discovered that we could reduce most of our wastes through common sense and could use the rest within the community as resources. Gil Friend grew tomatoes on the roof, using a soilless medium that weighed only 2% of regular soil and made it possible to think of utilizing weak residential rooftops for large scale vegetable production. Mike Connor established a large scale composting operation, feeding off the food stores, and composted upwards of 200 pounds per week, to establish whether composting would attract rats and dogs. It didn't. Jim Taylor and Mike Connor set up the sprout operation, after David Morris and Mike Connor had failed to produce the bountiful and profitable mushroom crop that was expected. Bill Batko brought his computer programming ability and systems research skills to analyze the financial situation of the food stores, the community, and, finally, the city itself. He is working with the City Council to establish a city owned bank which would act as a central bank, with neighborhood branch banks having autonomy and giving to its depositors, the neighborhood residents, the right to decide where money should be invested and loaned. Patti Connor

went to every store in the neighborhood to compile a detailed sketch of the retail economy, comparing chain stores to owner operated stores, in the community.

Just as the alternative economy had spilled over the perimeters of the Adams Morgan neighborhood to D.C. and eventually the metropolitan area, so the Institute staff became involved in city affairs. David Morris began working with the Federal City College Cooperative Extension Service, persuading them that the city could be seen as an energy producer. He convinced them to fund a Solar Energy Center which would educate politicians and consumers alike to solar energy's potential. Gil Friend worked with the National Capital Housing Authority to build a greenhouse on their senior citizens' apartment house to prove that the elderly can feed themselves. Neil Seldman at first tried to get seed money to develop a pilot project around waste collection in Adams Morgan, to prove his theory that community recycling operations, based on compulsory household separation of waste materials, were more efficient than city run sanitation departments. Later, as the bureaucracy proved recalcitrant, he fought against D.C.'s supporting a huge resource recovery system. It would have undermined the concept of local self-reliance and made the entire metropolitan area dependent on large volumes of waste matter. Jim Taylor worked with the Citizens Neighborhood Council Coordinating Committee, trying to make D.C.'s newly created Advisory Neighborhood Councils a genuine instrument of neighborhood power.

Other cities became interested in the Institute's work. Neil Seldman made contacts with and helped to extend a fledgling federation of organizations involved in community recycling. David Morris worked to accelerate solar cell development for electricity generation with a consortium of states. Gil Friend spoke and educated many cities about the concept and workability of urban agriculture.

Several movements were intersecting around the country, and as this piece is being written, the integration of disparate values and organizations is becoming more apparent. The environmental movement had gotten its greatest boost with the energy crisis, and there were growing numbers who were examining the materials shortage situation as well. Americans of every stripe realized that America's empire was ended. Some viewed this with terror, seeing the outside world as a horde of mostly primitive savages, threatening the security of the United States. Others saw it as the victory of the developing world against the imperialism of the industrial countries. Established economists worried about its implications, and Project Independence was transformed into Fortress America.

The youth movement had given way to activists involved in politics at every level. In their middle thirties now, they proliferated in middle level positions, and were even in the U.S. Senate and in executive positions of corporations. They had gained skills and organizational ability. The energy crisis hooked them up with disaffected technologists and scientists.

The Institute staff has begun to examine the concept of viable city states. How far can we go toward self-sufficiency? Because by doing this we can measure how lightly we can tread on the natural environment, and how far we can stop living off the rest of the world. Ecology means interdependence, but it also means independence; humans and nature living in harmony, but not necessarily people living in complete interdependence on a global scale. Small is the scale of nature.

Would a steady state economy mean that the community could mine its present materials for future needs? Bucky Fuller once noted that the same amount of copper was used in our communications systems in 1970 as in 1920. Yet the same diameter copper wire now carries far more communications. We have become much more efficient in our use of resources. If people use lead acid batteries for storage of electricity, and if the lead in the batteries is already 100% recycled, could we not, with a slight input of energy, keep a constant amount of lead? If we



eliminated our flush toilets, which use almost half of the total water in the house, and narrowed the pipe diameters, and replaced our blowyou-away showers with fine mist Japanese showers which clean so well, then maybe we could use the rain water for all of our needs in many places. Plastics can be made from plant matter, as Henry Ford proved during the late 1930's. Food can be grown in small spaces. Silicon solar cells are made from sand. Solar collector glass is made from sand. New batteries use molten sand. Ceramics which now can substitute for iron and steel in several applications, are made from sand.

How do we get from here to there? And how to do this with the minimum amount of social dislocation and psychological wrench? That is the question which Institute staff is exploring, working with groups around the country which are involved with an aspect, or several aspects, of this problem, and opportunity. It provides where possible technical assistance, a philosophical framework, and demonstration models for those interested in moving along the path toward self-reliance on a community scale.

When I saw David in July before traveling out to the Midwest, he recommended Missospells as a particularly interesting city and Common Ground as the best local magazine in the country. Both conclusions are born out in this reprint from Common Ground, Winter-Spring, 1975. (Due to space limitations, we've reduced the format to a (hopefully) still readable size.)

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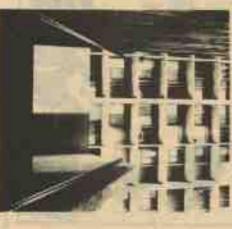


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COMMON GROUND

Magazine

Ken Meter

Perhaps in some decentralized future, the neighborhoods will be the crucial economic, political and social units, linked where necessary by functional agreements. In the meantime, not only are neighborhoods usually looked at as parts of a city, but they get treated that way so often it's mostly the reality. In any case, many of the networks and communities which exist within a city cross geographical lines.

To try and make sense of all those networks/communities in terms of one city would obviously be clarifying. But even from the somewhat limited perspective of intentionality, the task seemed beyond the reach of anyone for this issue. As an ongoing function, however, Common Ground is looking at community in all its aspects in the twin cities. Ken Meter is one of the editors.

Common Ground is a quarterly magazine covering neighborhoods in Minneapolis and St. Paul. We try to present in-depth reports from community organizations from the residents' viewpoint, in an attractive and cheap format. We don't carry advertisements. We count heavily on non-professional people writing about their own lives, their own neighborhood activity. We focus on current events, histories, and reviews.

We are a non-profit, tax exempt corporation with two full-time staff, an advisory community board, and a group of energetic volunteers. As you might expect, we rely on donations to keep going.

Included in our first year of publishing were issues focusing on neighborhood history, open space and parks, community councils, neighborhood economic development, and community arts.

Important to our editing is our perspective. We aim to edit community writers' articles primarily for stylistic concerns, rather than to change the content of what they say. But, yes, we do have biases, and we like to make those clear at the outset.

We aim to present practical information. We have toyed with the idea of calling ourselves a "workbook." People should be able to use the magazine directly in calling up their councilmember, or in shoring up their own neighborhood organization. Our politics emerge distinctly from our practice. We seek to empower the reader-not to take their money, not to be a consumer vanguard, but to offer clear skills and direction to people in controlling their own communities better, in working for themselves as a group. This means:

—We work to help neighborhoods to be less reactive, to initiate their own plans. Otherwise, an association of volunteer neighbors can be crushed under the weight of their own frustrations while complaining about the plans that are handed down by outside interests. We encourage people to work together, to find systems that enable cooperative planning and economics on the local level.

—We aim to minimize parochialism. A broad inter-neighborhood and national coverage is pivotal to this effort. (We welcome reports from other cities, if someone out there would like to write them.)

—We seek to enable people to build perspective on what they do. Our quarterly schedule is an effort to allow all of our writers and editors to be thoughtful about our work.

—We try to build a climate supportive to the growth of the community-controlled economic institutions. Open recognition of problems, a sense of honesty, and a willingness to constructively criticize oneself and one's neighbors are crucial to this climate.

One of our main functions is to carry ideas from one neighborhood to the next. When you work closely with a group of neighbors, it is easy to lose sight of the world around you. A few people, in coordinating or bureaucratic positions, are able to remain in contact with people from several areas of the city; they are often able to command undue influence. The magazine can enlarge that group of people having access to such an overview, by publishing a clear, concise amount of the progress one neighborhood has made towards, say, developing a local governing structure.

Writers are encouraged to point out the weaknesses of their programs along with the strengths, to help other groups avoid the same pitfalls. Conversely, a program which is successful in one area can be spread to other areas (with the appropriate modifications for the local neighborhood) more quickly. Since the articles go into some depth, they often can be used directly as a resource by a neighborhood organization in planning their own program—there is no need to go through the "coordinating" specialist.

We carry a second thrust of cooperation. We hope to build a common ground between the "alternative" community and the more traditionally-minded neighborhood activists. Clearly, some of the most energetic and challenging plans for restructuring our economy and society are arising out of cooperatives, radical organizations, and intentional communities. Often, however, the push for drastic change is essentially threatening to other residents, either because they have their own positions of power to protect, or because they cannot share the revolutionary rhetoric. By steering clear of confusing or abstract rhetoric, we are able to build, patiently, the groundwork for the more radical steps of the future. Our magazine seems to have helped seed the idea of community development corporations promoting coop housing and community-owned businesses in two neighborhoods already.

More tangentially, we fill several smaller needs. We are a historical document of the progress of this movement towards local control. As such, we are the only source that is likely to present any accurate and sensitive image of the people involved in the building communities in the Twin Cities.

We hope, also, that we are able to improve the confidence and determination of the people who are fighting so hard for their turf in a battle that is stacked against us. Original artwork, poetry, and photography which is politically engaging-expressing our unified strength, making a tradition of our local character, or reminding us to keep active, helps keep our leisure time both relaxing and inspiring.

Another strong element in building our own culture is to acquaint ourselves with the history of our neighborhoods. History is popular nowadays, even if it is usually followed as a foggy, nostalgic path. We print histories that are politically shrewd and useful in the present; they help us develop a better sense of realism.

By bringing our ideas to people who are more settled, and by building bonds between neighborhood groups, we begin to develop a love for our turf. Someday, our love may need to be strong enough that we can hold on and fight for that common ground.

Subscriptions to Common Ground are available for \$4.00 per year [\$10.00/ year for institutions and high-income subscribers]. Write us a 2314 Elliot Ave S, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55404.

Two other interesting publications in the Twin Cities are the Minnesota Leader, an old socialist-labor journal and SCOOP, the publication of the food coop network. Reprints from both publications [again reduced] concern the takeover of the People's Warehouse by a faction of the coops. Read on:

Anyone from the outside trying to make sense of the coop struggle is probably going to come away glad to come away. But the strength of the many coops and the reality of their working model should survive the present trauma [comforting for you folks in Minneapolis-St.Paul, I'm sure - but shared in solidarity because the summer before some of us went through struggles in New Haven in their own way as intense]. The extent of the network is demonstrated in the map overside - and is one way, a coop way, of looking at a city.

THE Minnesota Leader

Dr. Buffalo Drops in on win Cities Food Co-Ops

Remember the old TV westerns? Dr. Buffalo, a shread peddler, would pull into Dedge City with a wagon full of snake oil (or bottles of guaranteed good health, depending on your point of view). He'd start yacking and waving his arms hoping to gain some attention.

Pretty quick he'd have a nice little crowd together. Everyone would be listening carefully.

"Friends," he'd roar, "Friends, gather around and learn how you can change your whole life. As we all know, discase is running wild. And it won't be long before misery, suffering, and death, yes death itself, stops at your door---if it hasn't already pmid a visit. Now friends, i know of only one sure way to protect yourself from the emesies of well-being. And that way is by daily consumption of Dr. Buffalo's Nonder Hemedy. A small amount swallowed overyday will wipe our rheumatism, lumbago, pneumonis, the common cold, hangnmil, and tired blood.

"Now who among you will be the first, the very first, to step right up and exchange a few coins of silver for a longer, happier, and healthier life?"

while his eager customers would gain bottles of worthless swamp water. Not long after making his last sale, the doctor would be high-tailing it out of bodge City before the locals caught on to his little con game.

I had thought the likes of Dr. Baffalo and his magic smake oil were locked away in the lost legends of the Wild West. Or at least to the movie sets of Hollywood.

Lo and behold, right here in the Twin Cities a jurred-up snake oil revival is underway! Instead of one peddler there's a whole bunch of peddlers. They're all pushing the same product, a mysterious cureall call

TRANSFORMATION is the code word some people in the Twin City food co-ops are claiming will recharge the co-op system. Instead of being a haven for hippies, food purists and young intellectuals, the co-op would be run by and for the working class (after TRANSFORMATION does it trick), they claim.

Instead of being recreational fun-time for an every grow-ing number of people, the co-ous (after TRANSFORMATION) would find themselves on the cutting edge of the revolu-tion, they say.

After TRANSFORMATION the co-ops would be run under a plan called democratic centralism. It means power will be delegated to a central body who will supposedly be ac-countable to the masses.

This TRANSFORMATION business is nothing more than a 1975 version of Dr. Buffalo's Wonder Remedy. Proponents of TRANSFORMATION areo't really trying to help ordinary people, they're after power. Quite simply, the TRANSFORMATION line with all the revolutionary lingo accompanying is being used to push aside one group and put a different group in control of the co-op system.

Because the co-ops are swarming with young intellectuals the debate over TRANSFORMATION looks more like a battle of wits and words than a typical power struggle. It's dawn hard just reading all the mimeographod statements, fact sheets, notices, position papers, and every other

form of combining words on a sheet of paper, which have come out on this controversy. If the TRANSFORMATION forces win, I hope they'll take my advice and shorten their sentences and use small words so ordinary people can read their propaganda without choking on all the 79¢

But why would they choose the Twin Cities co-op system? What's so alluring? To answer that, let's go back for a short history of these co-ops. That might offer some

It started with a single store called North Country Co-Op. It opened on Minneapolis' west bank in 1971 and sold bulk foods, particularly whole grains. It branched out into solling dairy products, vegetables, and spices and herbs. Clientele was mostly counter-culture hippies and U. of M. students. It survived by under-pricing the big chain stores and by carrying items not found in the super market. Volunteer or under-paid labor provided the energy. No advertising and minimum packaging out costs further.

Today, there are more than a dozen such stores (several dozen counting stores ourside the metro area). Middle-people with exotic names like the Cheese Ruszlers, the Green Stalkers, the Red Star Apothecary, and the People's Warehouse company help keep the food moving. Three bakeries now supply bread to the stores.

The system does a million bucks a year in sales. Peamuts compared to the multi-million dollar business of Red Ow1; but to the hundreds of cheese cutters, sweepers, orderers, and co-op users, the smallness, the friendliness, and the quality of foods handled in the co-ops far surpass the coldness of a Red Ow1. The difference in volume is im-

But the sloppiness of the stores, the casual bookkeeping, and the loose organization eventually caught up with the co-ops. They became vulnerable to manipulation. One could ask, "Just who's in charge here?" and not get a very good answer.

The hapharardness of the co-ops was foreign to many or-dinary people. They didn't feel welcome in the co-ops. There was no order. But, in the past year, that's been changing, most notably in Powderhorn Food Community in Minneapolis and in the Selby Co-Op, St. Paul.

Yet, the changes were not coming fast enough for some. Some wanted action, and fast. They wanted something they called TRANSFORMATION. These people were young intellectuals. Many had been around the co-ops for years. They read Marx, Stalin, and Lenin. They were serious.

They formed the Co-Op Organization (CO). Then, a few of them assumed control of the Beanery, a little co-op on lyndule Avenue just south of Lake Street in Minneapolis. The Beanery had fallen into neglect. It needed a drastic face-lifting. It got it. The new management revamped the operation, tightened up the finances, and infused the place with a bit of discipline and politics.

A document called "Who's the penns," without saying who wrote it. It stirred wide spread discussion. The main focus of the paper was to joit the co-ops out of a comfortable, satisfying fantasy world. The paper said the co-ops should be serving the working class, not an elite group of food purists and hippies. 33

turn to CO-OPS, page 2

one of the most concise reports of the troubles was printed in National Food Coop NOOZ, primarily consisting of material earlier printed in SCOOP.

Adapted and updated from an article in ACP NEWS, Vol. II, No.

by John Dickerson

The north county coops began five years ago when some people set a bag of flour out on their back porch. They invited neighbors to come over anytime and get some-so long as they paid for what they got. From these funky roots has grown the countries largest new coop community movement in terms of people affected and economic activity. Today in the twin cities are 14 or more neighborhood storefronts, 4 bakeries, 4 collective restaurants, some community bars, a bike coop, collective garages and People's Warehouse.

Federation hasn't gone down too well in Minneapolis. In fact, there is very little ongoing and organized activity on any level larger than either that which occurs within groups or that which results from normal business relationships between groups. There is no longer sharing between gropups. There are no "community funds" which encompass more than one group. Much of the reason for this, I believe, has been the strong tendency of those who also claim anarchist views to distrust any organization which is not under one's immediate observation.

Because there has been a void on the level of the larger community and, I believe, because people feel the need to relate to each other on the larger level, the warehouse has somewhat filled the role of the federation. The warehouse is incorporated in the state of Minnesota. The "policy body" of the warehouse is a "policy review board (PRB)". Representatives from each group that uses the warehouse attend the PRB. A working collective runs the warehouse on a day to day basis.

In essence, because of the lack of a politically defined federation, a quasi-economically organized federation has emerged. The warehouse is the center of this organization. Therefore, it is an important center of community power.

People's Warehouse in Minneapolis, the country's largest "new co-op" people's warehouse, was seized early Sunday morning, May 4th, by a group of militantly organized co-op workers. This action is the most visible event in a rapidly mounting struggle in the north country.

This struggle has been coming for a long time. It has just recently become rather obvious. About three months ago, workers in the Beanery, one of the storefronts, issued a paper titled "The Beanery Policy". The bulk of the paper dealt with their interpretation of the history of the co-ops and the proper political context that the co-ops ought to take.

Summarizing: The co-ops in the Twin Cities grew out of the anti-war and anti-imperialist movements of the 60's. But the leadership was more of the anti-war orientation. The leadership was "college graduates, college students, and college dropouts which composed the hippie cult. Although most of the hippies came from lower middle class, their leadership came from the middle and upper classes." Also since "the white working class was a big recipient of the benefits of imperialism, and was not to the point where conditions would have led them to question the basic principles and economic laws of capitalism", the "middle-class leadership of the hippie movement proceeded to organize alternative structures foremost for themselves - the co-op stores because they were unable to rally the working class." The anti-imperialist element of the co-ops is evident in the co-op policy, i.e. the support of the lettuce and grape boycott and the ban on goods from countries that don't respect the rights of their workers.

"Having established the fact that the co-op stores have a political context-anti-imperialism-we must raise the questtion, do the co-op stores' politics correspond to its political 34 context? In other words, do the actual practices of the co-ops fit

the 'intellectual understanding' of anti-imperalism? The answer is NO.

The Beanery Paper goes on to say that "from the inception of the co-op stores, they took on the class character of their leadership which was and is upper class snobbishness, elitism, and upper clas domination of the lower classes," They have alienated the working class by their "approaches to solving problems (illusory community meetings), establishing its priorities (do your own thing and eat organically), in short its world outlook.

The response to the Beanery Paper was almost immediate. Two workers at Mill City, another co-op store, issued a paper which seriously questioned much of the alleged history of the co-ops given in the Beanery Paper. They argued that a grounding in the colleges and universities does not disqualify one as a revolutionary. They rejected the idea that the co-ops are nothing more than when first started. They argue that there were "many mistaken tendencies" at the outset but that there has been a maturation "reflecting criticisms and analysis and serious understanding of what we are about." The paper went on to say, "We reject any analysis of social change based on pure economic determinism. The socialist state can still be a bulwark if racism and sexism..." The response also critisized the tone and language of the Beanery Paper.

The "Co-op Organization" emerged as the hard core proponents of the Beanery Paper position. From reports, the Co-op Organization was militantly organized, somewhat secretive group of 15 theorists and 40-50 hard cord activists. Gathered around them were scores of other co-op workers and community people who are deeply concerned with the progress of the revolution.

Workers in Mill City, because of their fast activity and their quickness in answering the Beaner Paper, were singled out as leaders opposing the Co-op Organization.

There was a Policy Review Board meeting scheduled for the weekend of May 2-4 to discuss policy for the warehouse. Many people attended, including some from out of town. About half way through the first day a woman stood up and said that she wished to read a paper presenting the views of the Co-op Organization. She proceeded to do so. The paper was in the recent tradition of heavy revolutionary political struggle. The people from out of town were especially blown away. Not having kept up with the progress and intensity of the struggle, they were not prepared for the paper. They demanded that the paper be delayed until the end of the meeting and they won their way. A little late about 40 members of the Co-op Organization walked into the meeting and surrounded the chairperson. They demanded that the paper be read and heard. It was and it was

The next morning, Sunday, at 3 a.m., about 30 people entered the People's Warehouse. A group of ten that had volunteered to stay in the warehouse in case anything happened were driven out. According to the Mill City News, the following

'On Sunday, May 4, a self-styled Leninist-Stalinist political organization called the Co-op Organization (CO) announced that they had taken over the warehouse, seized the books and \$6,000 in the account. This group is comprised of old co-op workers many of those who formed the old co-op leadership, and 7 of the 14 members of the warehouse collective. They claimed the warehouse and co-ops were controlled by class cliques not serving the needs of the working class, and announced their intention to transform the warehouse, reorgainzing its structure and stocking the 'kinds of food working people eat.'

"Immediatedly the PRB selected an executive board of officers and instructed them to take steps to return the warehouse to the control by the co-ops and maintain the legal ownership by the PRB. Co-ops around community held meetings to discuss responses to the take-over.

"Wednesday, May 10, over 90 people gathered at the store (Mill City) to discuss the situation. A spokesman from the CO was there to answer questions. The consensus of opinions expressed at the meeting was that there are areas in which co-ops need to change and loosen up in regards to their food policy and their educational outreach to the neighborhood, but the tactics, narrow analysis, and dirisive rhetoric of the CO was denounced. Many people spoke up, identifying themselves as working class and expressing support for the store. Three resolutions were passed at the meeting:

 By a narrow five vote margin, with several abstentions the PRB executive officers were encouraged to employ civil legal action as a last resort to return the warehouse to the co-ops.

 A unanimous decision was reached to boycott the warehouse until further notice and to buy food from the Ad Hoc Distribution Committee that was set up to keep the co-ops supplied with the kinds of food the warehouse supplied.

3. An overwhelming vote passed to cut off the utilities, including telephone, in the warehouse and to support an informational picket around the building at 26th and Stevens Avenue.

"Since then, several developments have occurred. 12 out of 14 Twin Cities co-ops are boycotting the warehouse. Areawide, over 25 co-ops have joined the boycott. A mass demonstration has been planned for Saturday May 17."

The CO-op Organization responded with the following: "We are being obstructed by legal maneuvers, threats to call the cops, having the bank freeze the money, violent attacks, and a vast outpouring of lies and capitalist propaganda.

."We can begin immediately to get cheap meat, canned goods, and many other items that are now forbidden by the co-op purists policies, and create jobs and services for many more people."

An ad hoc coalition of people who are active in community groups such as the New American Movement and the Woman's Union but not particularly active in the co-ops composed the "Third Force" in the discussion and struggle. They took the position that the co-ops are the most viable form of radical organizing in the Twin Cities and that they are the results of half a decade of shared work by thousands of people. The co-ops should not be torn apart by an insider's fight that the broad "masses" of people in the Twin Cities community can't really know what the issues are. They feared that the people will only see the ugliest aspects of this struggle and will be turned off to the whole notion of political struggle in general. They feared that the movement, broadly defined, could be set back seriously by these events.

The Third Force sought a non-violent solution to the situation. One that would allow full expression of the issues but would avoid the militant confrontation which had developed.

On May 13, a "Joint Statement of the Policy Review Board of the People's Warehouse and the Warehouse Occupation Forces" was issued. The statement came out against "all systems of producing and distributing food based on exploitative and imperialist government systems." The need to expand the co-op system to include more people, and the need to restructure the PRB was declared. A restructuring procedure was stated and an interim operating procedure for the warehouse was agreed upon. Later the Occupying force turned over the Warehouse and the CO dissolved as an organization.

The struggle continues in mass discussion and public debates. The issues that have been raised are not unique. We must all face them.

(Updated and edited by Jim Pryor and Gary H. Newton)



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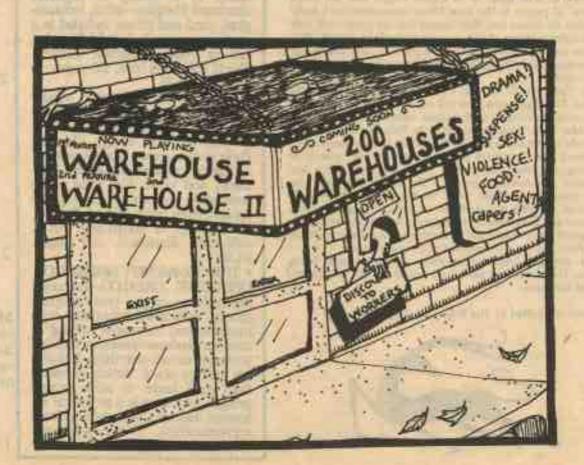
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Where Does A Warehouse Come From?

Where Does A Warehouse Go?

by Aggie Fletcher



The large and growing network of co-ops in the North Country region is of great benefit to everyone who comes in contact with them. Working together for ourselves, growing strong through co-operation--it's a revolution, social, economic, political. It transforms everyone it touches - slowly or quickly, but surely.

However, as in any human situation, the questions of dominance and control must be faced. In every co-op the regular workers, whether paid or volunteer, make daily decisions about who the store is run. For everyone in the co-op community the awareness of power and influence, accountability and responsiveness, is vital. Do the regular workers make decisions that fairly represent the wishes of the other cooperators, and if so, how do they know that they are making representative decisions?

These questions are being asked in many co-ops, about relations between the regular workers, volunteers, and shoppers. Who is in control? Does an informal decision-making structure necessarily mean the regular workers will dominate decisions? Does a formal community decision-making structure have to deprive the workers of the freedom to work, replacing initiative and worker-control with the community as boss, with a community committee to act as police force?

Who makes decisions, and why?
These possibilities - the tyranny of
the regular workers, the tyranny of the
majority, the tyranny of the minority
(in consensus situations), the tyranny
of the community - are debated with
great energy in co-ops across the
country.

But, for us here in the North Country, the grand debate, the debate to end all debates, has been the debate over control and accountability in the People's Warehouse.

Where did the People's Warehouse come from? The co-ops, obviously. There is no argument about that fact, to my knowledge. The co-ops were growing; the practice of warehousing stock in the stores was driving workers and shoppers crazy, and the advantages of combining our buying power were obvious. So then, a people's warehouse, organic birth.

But, where does the warehouse go? In a co-op, when there is disagreement about policy, about work or financial procedures, about workers or collectivity, it is hassled out in various ways. If there is a minority, it either exists within a compromise, or waits for a time to become the majority, or leaves to become part of another co-op. That is in fact how a number of Twin City co-ops were started. Independence and individualism are valued here in the North Country, and new co-op ventures are often started by a group splitting off from an established one. That is in fact how a number of Twin City co-ops were started. But at the warehouse, the debate was crucial: until last week there was no warehouse alternative, and the minority loses too much, if it loses at all.

Decisions about stock and pricing, about credit and expansion, about politics and the profit margin, made in the warehouse should involve every co-op in the region. This summer, for example, several basic foods were discontinued, canned foods were added at a lower

mark-up, the mark-up to the two new out-of-town co-op warehouses was raised, health food stores were invited to buy from the warehouse, and politics were endorsed which caused at least one supplier to refuse to deal through the warehouse.

Co-ops which disagreed with any of these decisions had no adequate means of input but were nevertheless affected by them. Many co-op people still wanted organic brown rice and seasalt, did not want to subsidize canned foods, did want to support a lowered mark-up for the young Duluth and Winona warehouses. They did not want to help the expensive health food stores, and did not support the political line coming out of the warehouse. What serious means of input did these co-ops have? There was the PRB (People's Warehouse Policy Review Board), a formal body set up in 1974 for co-op warehouse input. Two reps from each co-op using the warehouse met at quarterly meetings to review and guide PW policy. It was a first step towards responsiveness and accountability, but it was not enough.

The PRB was an awkward group, with not enough information and too many wordy opinions. As the warehouse workers became more and more frustrated by its inefficiency, they were also growing more and more involved with extreme leftist politics. The Co-op Organization (co-op and warehouse workers following the Marxist analysis of the co-op system) attacked the PRB last May, calling it illegitimate, and barricaded the warehouse building, rejecting co-op control over warehouse policy. (See Scoop #9, June-July issue) The PRB, as an all co-op decision-making body, never recovered from the split, and in general, the situation never really got better.

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2 Warehouse S...

TIME TO MOVE FORWARD NOT BACK

TAKE THE STRUGGLE HOME TO YOUR CO-OP

A re-cap of the PRB meeting by the warehouse collective

The People's Warehouse was established because of a material need that many co-ops had for a centralized store house and an entity that could buy large quantities of goods and distribute them to co-ops on credit. As this warehouse grew, so did the need for a structure for communications to co-ops and between co-ops about the problems and successes they were having. This communications need has never been met.

The weekend of Sept. 27-28 saw another meeting of the Policy Review Board (PRB). The PRB was established when it had become very apparent that the All Co-op Meeting was not working. It never met the needs of the out-of-town co-ops and only served the interest of the old co-op leadership who used it as their arena.

The meeting was made up of 3 distinct groups. The first group, the warehouse collective and allied co-ops, has been working to expand the services and food line of the co-ops so that they could better serve poor, working class and rural communities and to develop the co-ops into a political move-A political movement that will build for changes around the real pro-blems in people's lives - employment, schools, food prices, etc - helping people to understand the roots of their exploitation. The warehouse collective had come to the PRB principally to share with others the results of their recent expansion of co-op services to poor and working class people and changes that had been made to make the warehouse and the other co-op operations more efficient and stable. They also came to discuss the grievances of other co-ops and admit errors where they had occurred. This group had not prepared any proposals, but did prepare one on Saturday during the course of the meeting.

The second group that came consisted principally of out-of-town co-ops and some in-town co-ops. This group came not because they were interested in the PRB but because they saw the gathering as a place to exchange information about the operations of their stores. They are interested in such problems as getting and using credit, childcare, relating to farmers and neighborhood working people. They came to find solutions to some of their problems, ideas on how to expand and learn a little about the struggle of the city co-ops. This group was not interested in the PRB as a parliamentary ruling body but as a place to exchange information.

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MAY WE HAVE THIS DANCE ?

a statement of purpose from the new warehouse

The weekend of September 27-28, the first chapter in the continuing saga of the North Country Cooperating Community vs. the Co-op Organization (CO) came to a joyful conclusion. In that adventure, the community was fractured by the advent of a Stalinist faction, the CO. The CO took the warehouse, gained control of a couple of storefronts and a bakery. With that much solid support, plus the usual amount of confusion, the faction was able to completely disrupt the meeting of the Policy Review Board (PRB), of the People's Warehouse. meeting was disrupted to the point where the first decision of the two day conference came on the evening of the second day. The decision was to set up a committee to look into the possibility of PW becoming a legal cooperative (really!). It was not reached until after the decision was made to set up an alternative distributing alliance. Thus was born the Distributing Alliance of the North Country.

The revolution we are living is a multi-sided revolution. The material and political questions that the CO puts forth are a vital concern to us all and we look forward to further struggle on

continued on page 24

A RESPONSE TO "TIME TO MOVE FORWARD"

by Barb Jensen of the Scoop

It is with hesitation that I lay out the type of "Time to Move Forward". Though the paper would seem to read easily enough to someone relatively uninvolved, I feel it deliberately avoids facts and misrepresents the events and people involved in an attempt to gain the support of the out of town coops. I was one of the people involved in organizing the PRB and the plans to assert the cooperative communitys ownership of Peoples Warehouse. I feel no need to defend getting together with other coop workers to defend the warehouse and coop system we have worked for years to build.

I maintain there has been widespread concensus in our community that it is fair and just to reclaim the PW. This is demonstrated in the May PRB when we selected a committee to do just that, and in the surrounding activity when many, many people crawled out of the woodwork to organize a resistance to the CO's takeover. Last May the takeover took the form of an open declaration ("The Coop Organization has taken over the Peoples Warehouse, the PRB is an illegitimate body."). This summer and fall the CO's move for power has taken the form of hassling non-CO warehouse workers out of the collective and disrupting the PRB so that action could not be taken to defend them.



Introduction

The June 21-22 Policy Review Board, the legal governing body of the People's Warehouse, was serious and as momentous as the previous one, held May 3-4 on the eve of the Warehouse occupation. New structures for the cooperative movement of the region were debated, and ultimately approval was voted for the creation of a new body, the All Coop Assembly, with several working committees and a coordinating committee. Yet several important problems or questions were left unanswered -- through oversight, necessity, or calculation. What will become of the PRB? Should the takeover tactics have gone unmentioned? Will the new structure successfully incorporate non-food coops? Will it, through the working committees, be able to represent the coalition of differing interests and views that clearly exist within the coop system?

This meeting and the restructuring it debated had been called for in the agreement signed by all the People's Warehouse workers and by the PRB executive officers. The Joint Agreement of May 15 ended the 10-day occupation by members of the Coop Organization, which had disrupted the previous PRB

meeting, challenged its legitimacy, then walked out. The four PRB officers had been chosen at the end of that meeting to deal with the crisis.

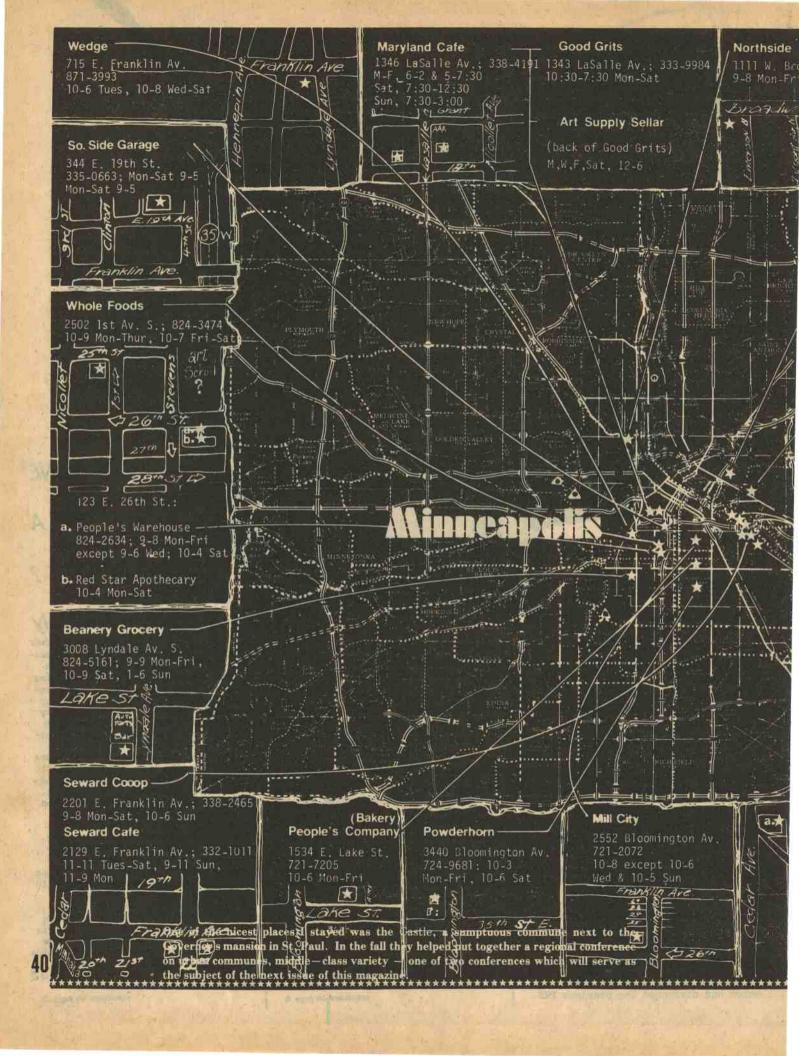
The agreement, besides calling for the June 21-22 PRB, called for proposals for new bylaws and endorsed a June 1 community conference on restructuring the coops. In response to this, a number of persons active in the coops developed a very extensive set of proposed bylaws in preparation for the upcoming PRB. In the turmoil throughout the coops during this same period. two other major proposals were put forth: a "decentralist" structure and the Coop Organization's work committees. The decentralist proposal focused on what many regarded as one of the main weaknesses of the local coop system, the concentration of many intercoop activities in the building and personnel of the People'sWarehouse (PW). Developed out of discussions at an anarchist study group, the "basic principle" of the proposal was that "workers should have direct control over their workplace," and that the warehouse should function as autonomously as the other coops do. Acceding

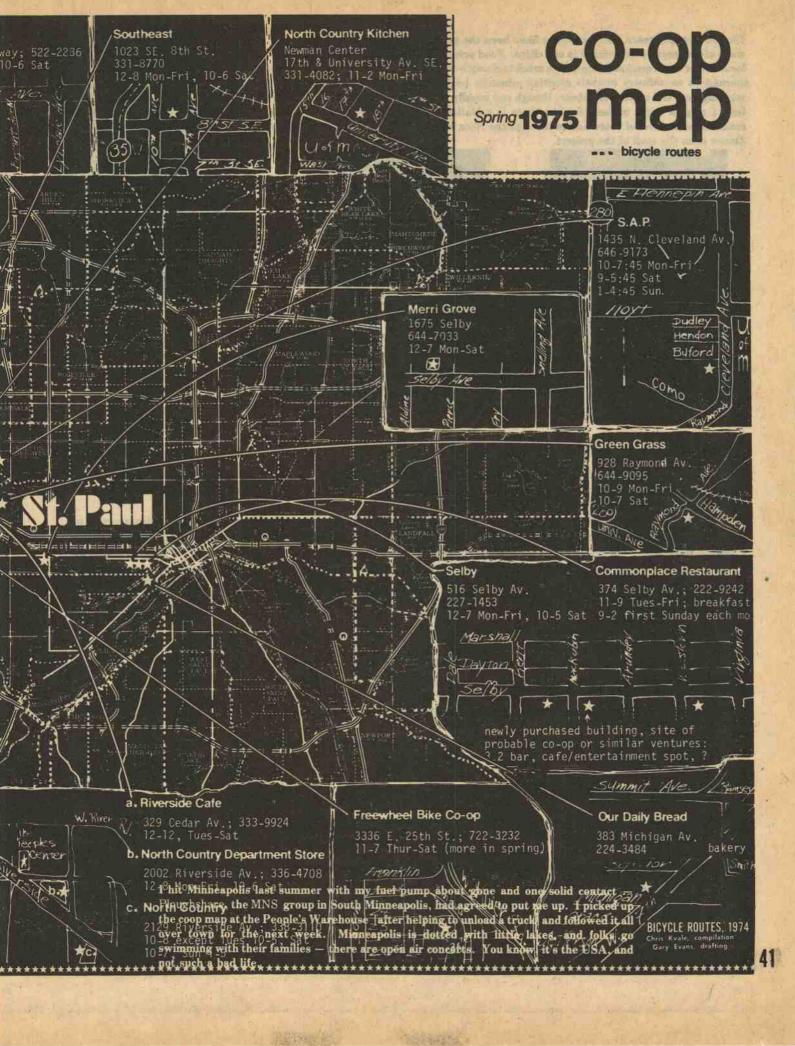
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-- Aggie Fletcher

The Provisional Coordinating Committee of the All Coop Assembly has been meeting weekly, since June 22, planning the organization of the work committees and the All Coop Assembly. After much discussion, there emerged the majority position that the most important task allotted to them by the proposal adopted at the PRB was the initiating of good working committees, to be the core of a highly efficient, informative All Coop Assembly. There was general agreement that all-coop meetings have been discouraging to most participants, and that this new Assembly must be welldeveloped in order to revive coops' interest in and commitment to working together. It was decided at the Prov. CC meeting on July 3 to postpone the ACA until mid or late August, depending on out-of-town site reservations available. (The Flandrau State Park neg. New Ulm has been reserved for August 23-24-25). This will allow the working committees to work together for a while first, to get themselves ready to have good ACA workshops, and to better decide whom of their members to send to the ACA as nominees for election to the next Coordinating Committee.

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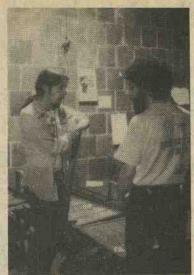




For the last few years, the food coops have been the principal training ground for a new wave of cooperative experience in our cities. Food prices have been outrageous, and your local corner supermarket doesn't have much to do with community. Most stores started as alternatives to ordinary markets, stocking primarily health foods. What they should be stocking now is a matter of debate, though not usually so strong as Minneapolis. There isn't a map of coops nationwide, but there is a National Food Coop Project trying to maintain some level of coordination through the Nooz and the National Directory. Dave Zinner is on the staff of the project.









THE ANSWER IS YOU CAN FEEL IT

Dave Zimmer

The Food Co-op Movement is a network of information, people, co-op buying clubs, co-op stores, co-op warehouses, trucking runs and farmer sources. A national Directory listing many of the co-ops and a national NOOZpaper help communicate the information.

The movement is often hidden and overshadowed because it is part of a building of economic alternatives. Any new movement trying to change the American economy will have minor impact for a long time—and will have major impact only if very successful. The movement is often missed because it's so decentralized; there is no one group that can speak for all food co-ops. Not only the people in the co-ops, but the co-ops themselves have varying emphasis on varying purposes. So why are the 1500 food co-ops listed in the *Food Co-op Directory* and the 40 or so co-op warehouses and the trucking runs and the Directory and the Nooz a movement?

The answer is that you can feel it.

- -When you move from one city where you belonged to a food co-op and you find a co-op in the new place.
- -When you go to a conference where you meet other food co-op people.
- -When you travel and visit co-ops around the country, exchanging information and discussing problems.
- -When you read articles about other co-ops' successes and failures.
- —When the truck comes to your co-op and the truckers bring news from co-ops along the run; just knowing where that truck's been emphasizes a common bond.

Many people who belong to food co-ops never experience this feeling. This is a problem co-ops must struggle with. Co-ops often fail to involve all their members in the decisionmaking of the organization. To make it worse, it's usually these same co-ops which do little to help educate their members. The two problems seem to be connected. In 1844 when the principles of cooperatives were first written, two of the most important were democratic control and continual education.

In 1976, in the struggle for co-ops to survive and grow economically, attention to these principles remains critical. Or, if you can't feel it, it's no answer.

REGIONAL CONTACTS (CAPITALS SIGNIFY WAREHOUSE FACILITIES)

NEW ENGLAND FEDERATION OF FOOD CO-OPS (NEFCO) Communications and Directory Assistance c/o Don Lubin 8 Ashford St.** Altston, MA 02134-(617)a-living

Numerous Area Federations In the New England Area

MAINE FEDERATION Box 107 Hallowell, 'ME 04347 (207)623-1722

NEPCOOP Box 247 Plainfield, VT 05667 (802)426–3878

Good Food Distributors 249 Mt. Kemble Morristown, NJ 07960

DIRECT SUPPLY 3903 Cannon Pl. Bronx, NY 10463

CLEAR EYE WAREHOUSE 367 Orchard Rochester, NY 14606 (716)235-1080

PHILADELPHIA FEDERATION OF FOOD COOPERATIVES 3300 Race St Philadelphia, PA 19104

COMMUNITY WAREHOUSE 2010 K endall St. NE Washington, DC 20002 (202)832-4517 Forte Foundation Box 403 Virginia Beach, VA 23458

PEOPLES SOUTHEASTERN WAREHOUSE 501 W. Madison Tallahassee, FL 32304

Good Foods 314 1/2 S. Ashland Lexington, KY 40502

COMMON MARKET WARE-HOUSE Box 8253 Columbus, OH 43201 (614)294-0145

MICHIGAN FEDERATION OF FOOD CO-OPS/PEOPLES WHEREHOUSE 4111 Jackson Ann Arbor, MI 48104 (313)761-4642

BLOOMING PRAIRIE COOPERA-TIVE WAREHOUSE 529 S. Gilbert lowa City, la 52240 (319)337-4471

INTRA COMMUNITY CO-OP 1335 Gilson Madison, WI 53715 (6Q8)257-6633

PEOPLES WAREHOUSE 123 E. 26th Minneapolis, MN 55404 (612)824-2634

COMMON HEALTH WAREHOUSE 1732 London Duluth, MN 55812 PRAIRIE HARVEST CO-OP WAREHOUSE 120 E. Second St Winong, MN 55987

GREATER ILLINOIS PEOPLES COOPERATIVE WAREHOUSE (GIP-C) c/o Food Co-op Project 64 E. Lake Chicago, IL 60601 (312)269-8101

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St. Louis, MO 63108

KANSAS CITY WAREHOUSE 915 E. 30th Kansas City, MO 64110

Ozark Food Conspiracy 347 N. West Fayetteville, AR 72701

PEOPLE BUYING TOGETHER 200 Kirby Hall Southern Methodist University Dallas, TX 75275

AUSTIN COMMUNITY PROJECT 1602 W. 12th Austin, TX 78703 (512)477-6255

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SAN FRANCISCO WAREHOUSE 1559 Bancroft San Francisco, CA 94124 (415)822-8830

K okua Country Foods 2357 S. Beretania H onolulu, HA 96814

PEOPLES WAREHOUSE 3029 SE 21st Portland, OR 97269

STARFLOWER 385 Lawrence Eugene, OR 97401 (503)686-2151

COOPERATING COMMUNITY 4030 22nd Ave W Seattle, WA 98199 (206)283-3777

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MIXED NUTS CO-OP HAMPSHIRE CELLEGE BOX 503 AMHERST. MA G1602

PEGPLES MARKET STUDENT UNION UNIVERSITY OF MASS AMMERST, MA 01002

YELLOW SUN NATURAL FOOD 23 REAR N. PLEASANT ST. AMHERST. MA G1002 (413)250-8401

BELCHERTOWN FUGD CO-OP FAUL BOUNKE 13J9 S. EAST ST. SG. AMMERST. MA 01002

MILL MOUNTAIN THYME CARCE BUGART N. BLANDFORD RD. BLANDFORD, MA 01008

HOLYCKE FOOD CO-OP FRAN WELSOM BOX 105 HOLYCKE, MA 01040

ANOTHER DAY CO-OP 42 MAPLE ST--BHSE. REAR FLORENCE. MA 01060

SHUTE SBURY FOUD CO-OP CAROL MIZAUR BOX 57 SHUTE SBURY, MA 01072 SOUTHWICK CU-UP SHELLA WEBER 16 SEFTON DR. SOUTHWICK, MA 01077

MESTFIELD FOOD CO-OP JOANNE MEYER CLD FEEDING HILLS ROAD MESTFIELD. MA 01085

WYBEN FOOL CO-OP LIGENZIA NORTH RD. WESTFIELD. MA 01085

BRIGHTWOOD BUYING CLUB DEE STAMPS 134 ABBE AV.. SPRINGFIELD. MA 01107

GREAT BARRINGTON CO-OP JAMET SWAIN VAN DE USERVILLE CHURCH DIVISION ST GREAT BARRINGTON. MA

MONTEREY CC-OP 01230 ELLEN BLOUNT BOX 1C4 MCNTEREY, MA 01245

GCTOBER UNION CG-GP HOBIN ASHLEY BOANDMAN ST. SHEFFIELD. MA 01257

BUCKLAND FOCD CO-OP NICKI WOLENTIS CGLRAIN, MA 01340

SOLASH FOGO CO-UP CAROLE DELEVINGNE PO BOX 40 NGNTAGUE, MA .OL350

MONTAGUE FOUD CU-OP MICHAEL NAUGHTUN BOX 207 BARTLETT FARM MONTAGUE, MA 01351 GUR DAILY BREAD BOX 377. 7 W. MAIN OFANGE. MA 01304 (617)544-6202 (TU)

GOOD FOOD CO-OPS RICK STONE 34 WILLIAM ST SHELBURNE FALLS. MA 01370

THE BRUSSEL SPROUT
JULIE LEIGHTUN
28 S. HIGH ST.
TURNERS FALLS, MA 01376

UNITED COOPERATIVE SOCIETY FITCHBURG 815 MAIN ST. FITCHBURG. MA G1420 (017)343-0471

COMMON CO-OP LINDA FALSTEIN AYER HD HARVARD. MA 01451

NORTHBOROUGH FOOD CO-OP MARIANN GORSUCH 1 LELAND OR NORTHBOROUGH, MA 01532

BORCESTER NATURAL GARDEN MS K G ANDERSON OLD CRAWFORD RD. NORTHBORO, MA 01532

COMMUNITY STUNACH 205 MILLBURY ST. BURCESTER. MA 01004 (617)757-6292

NEW SPIRIT FOOD CO-OP BOB SHURTLEFF 1127 WONCESTER RD FRAMINGHAM, MA 01701 IST PARISH FRAMINGHAM CO-OR HEATHER TAYLOR 633 CENTRAL ST FRAMINGHAM. MA 01701

ACTON FOOD CO-OP JERRY MAGUIRE 14 REVOLUTIONARY RD ACTON. MA 01720

BEDFORD CONSUMERS CO-OP PETEY PALAZA 30 BURLINGTON RD BEOFCRD. MA 01730

CARLISLE FOOD CO-OP ALYN & NANCY ROVIN TOPHET RO. CARLISLE. MA 01741

MEST CONCORD FOOD & FRIEND-BOX 32 CONCGRD. MA 01742

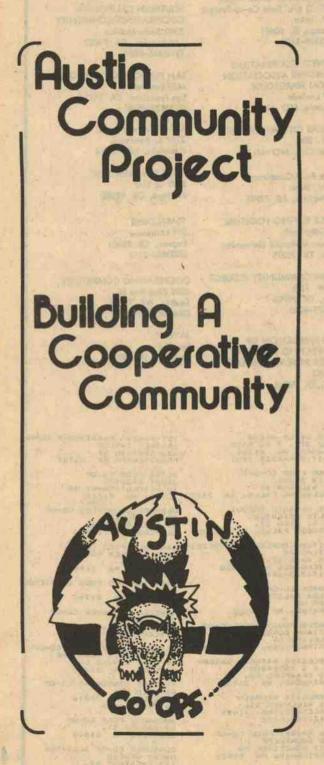
LINCOLN CONSUMER CO-OP MS. ROSS TODU POND RO. LINCOLN. MA 01773

WESTON ORGANIC FOOD CO-OP PAUL & JULIE REDSTONE 45 FICE SPRING LN WAYLAND. MA 01778

ANDOVER CONSUMERS CO-OP 68 MAIN ST. ANDOVER, MA 01810 (617)475-5516

ANDUNDER FOLD CO-OP 62 USGOOD ST. ANDOVER, MA 01810

CONSUMER CO-OP ALLIANCE HARRY BEDELL 123 CHESTNUT ST. ANDOVER. MA 01810 Food turns out to be nice to work with: everyone needs it; there's a reasonable cash flow; jobs get created; stores become gathering places; associated services spring up [restaurants, bakeries, canning]; coordinative functions develop [warehouses, trucking and stable relationships with producers]. One of the most coherent developments of this process has been in Austin.



Austin Community Project is a federation of co-ops, collectives, and organic farms in the central Texas area. Our purpose is to build a cooperative community that is personally and interpersonally satisfying to its members. We want this community to be economically independent and self-sufficient in the following respects: It shall provide us with goods and services we want; it shall provide livelihood for its members; and the goods and services it provides shall be priced fairly, so as to be as inexpensive as possible but still yield enough excess earnings to their producers and marketers for capitalization and expansion of the producing and marketing enterprises. These excess earnings are for the good of the community and not for personal profit. Our community must be ecologically sound in its policies and operating practices, and should replace and replenish the natural resources it uses. We want it to promote a culture based on cooperation, not competition. In order to foster a culture based on cooperation and because we can't do this alone, we shall cooperate with other persons, groups, and cooperative enterprises for our mutual benefit. To provide maximum selfcontrol of our lives together, we shall try to produce, as much as possible, what we consume and to consume, as much as possible, what we produce.

HISTORY

ACP was born in 1972 when a BoTree worker witnessed a local organic farmer pulling up to the back of the vegetarian restaurant. He was trying to sell a box of squash to cover the cost of bringing the produce into town. At the same time, a capitalist producer wheeled away with the restaurant's profits. This experience created the determination to change the ecostructure. Co-ops were seen as an alternative to provide production and distribution oriented around what the community needed. Why not create a situation in which people work together to provide for the community needs rather than working to manipulate other people so that the manipulator gets more and the manipulated gets less!

At first, ACP was to be a collective buying organization for the restaurants and stores, to coordinate buying and try to get as much produce as possible from local organic farmers. Later co-op houses and neighborhood co-ops were added. Now ACP is no longer merely a food buying co-op, but it is truly a community project.

THEORY

Our theory is that to best recreate community we must organize socially, economically, and politically. Socially, we must recreate a consciousness of common needs, interest and cultural values. Economically, we must gain control over the sphere where jobs, services and products are dispensed. Politically, we must re-establish control of the environment which affects us, where decisions are made daily.

The structure we feel can best achieve these community-oriented goals is a federation. A federation encompasses three levels of organizing—the neighborhood, federational, regional, and national. On the neighborhood level we can begin by organizing living co-ops (houses) and food co-ops (conspiracies and stores). By organizing at this level not only do we achieve control over the economy closest to us, but the possibility of an intimacy among members living and working together is a real example of a vital relationship from which community flows. The members of each co-op are primarily responsible for that co-op's health. Also the neighborhood co-op can respond to the needs of its neighborhood more directly as a neighborhood organization rather than if it were a centrally managed enterprise.

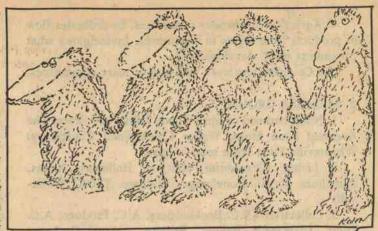
Many functions, however, can only be effectively carried out on levels larger than the neighborhood co-op. A federation of neighborhood co-ops and producer collectives can accomplish these functions. To bridge the competitive gap between producers and consumers, they must be brought together in a federation. In forging this bond between producer and consumer, the competitive, capitalist cycle is weakened, because people stop viewing their actions in isolation from community. Many neighborhoods thus form a community which a producer can serve. Non-exploitive, anti-profit producers can thus survive in a community where consumers are socially and practically concerned about where their money goes. Financing, likewise, is more easily accomplished by a larger, more stable, more flexible, and better known organization. Communication and education is another function more easily achieved at the federation level. Policy decisions which affect the people in the larger community can more democratically be made by the federation where all those affected can achieve a consensus decision.

Regionally and nationally, federations of different communities can maintain lines of communication. Just as important, they can open trade lines. Austin can provide citrus fruits for Minneapolis and Minneapolis can provide cheese for Austin.

Thus, a three-level organization—the neighborhood, federational and national—gives the control and responsibility of activities to the community which is affected.

WHY COMMUNITY

We use community in two senses. In non-geographical terms it is a group of people who are conscious of common interests and needs, who share social and cultural values, and who work together to devise strategies for meeting their needs. A geographical community has all these characteristics, but it also has a local environment where services are dispensed, social and political decisions about living are made, and virtually all types of personal interaction take place. The critical mass of people working for social change will be reached through expansion of both types of community and through creation of new ones. The strength of the entire effort will rest on the strength of



every participant's sense of community and on the combined ability of everyone to inter-relate the various communities of which he or she is a part.

STRUCTURE

A. DECISION-MAKING

We basically believe that decision-making should be decentralized so that those that are affected by the decision are the ones that make it. We have several levels and types of decision-making.

- Assembly meets every 6 weeks roughly and makes two kinds of decisions.
 - a. Budgets (labor and financial): decides what we are using our labor and money to do.
 - b. Policy: decides basic policies of federation.
- Conferences meet as needed. They usually deal with specific subjects. Usually don't make decisions but are primarily for discussion.
- Council Meets twice per month. Makes administrative decisions and operates very much like a Board of Directors.
- 4. Committees meet as needed. Deal with specific areas such as Agriculture, Budget, Fundraising, Newsletter, Labor, Community Development. Responsible to Council. Also do a lot of administrative (shit) work.
- Co-ordinators (Finance, Labor, Education/Communication, Agriculture mainly carry out the day-to-day activities of the federation.

B. ADMINISTRATION

We have centralized administration of those functions which cannot be tied to the provision of specific goods and services, i.e., things that cannot be adequately handled in the marketplace such as education.

- Finance: Pays the bills, raises money, controls cash flow, does accounting.
- 2. Labor: co-ordinators labor between providers (co-op) and receivers (collectives) examines the labor process for creativity and efficiency, does labor accounting. (Note: members are required to do labor each month either in their co-op or for the federation. This may change soon.)
- 3. Education/Communications: answers mail, puts out newsletter, provides various educational activities, does publicity.

 Agriculture: educates consumers, co-ordinates flow of products from farms to consumers, investigates what consumers want, develops farms.

All Co-ordinators work with one or more committees.

C. MEMBER GROUPS

- 1. Neighborhood co-ops (Woody Hills Food Store; The Avenues Food Store; Waller Creek Food Conspiracy) Wheatsville Food Store soon to open)
- Living: (Greenbriar, Halcyon, Holloway, Nexus, Ramshorn, Royal, Stonehenge, Theleme, TLOK, Whitehall)
- 3. Collectives (A.C. Bookkeepers, A.C. Produce, A.C. Tools, Clarksville Bakery, Ecology Action, Garbage, Sattva Restaurant, Canning) [A.C.=Austin Community]
 - 4. Farms (Herb Garden, Mantis Organics, Yegva)
- Possible future members (Yellow Rose Co-op Warehouse, Community Auto Co-op, East Austin Food Store)
- 6. We basically have between 750 and 1,000 people who are members of ACP with several hundred more who shop at one of our stores. The two stores do a combined business of about \$25,000 per month with from 50% to 75% handled by our collectives and about 10% produced by our farms.

D. SPECIAL PROGRAMS

- 1. Labor: all members of ACP are required to do 3 hours of labor per month for one of the co-op food stores or one of the producer collectives. We send crews to our member farms about 3 or 4 times per week and provide the collectives with unskilled labor for many different kinds of jobs such as recycling, produce delivery, produce buying, bakery delivery, & composting. We budget labor on a quarterly (every three months) basis by who gets what labor from whom.
- Direct Funding: we approve an operating budget for the federation on a quarterly basis and a portion of this budget is paid by each member group according to an allocation scheme approved by council.
- 3. Community Development stock: each member that wants to loans \$1 per month to ACP for development of community enterprises. The funds are administered and distributed by a committee of representatives from the various member groups. When a member leaves the community their money is refunded.





GROWTH. We see our

community as a living organism, with the component co-ops, collectives and farms its organs, and the people its cells. We want our community to grow in regular, orderly fashion. Our growth is not an end in itself, but a means to achieving a self-sufficient community. We must, until we are entirely self-sufficient, grow in dollar volume of business enough to maintain our community as a financial, viable entity. To provide for the range of goods and services needed for a satisfactory life and to provide enough economic diversity to be stable in the face of economic fluctuations in the larger society we must expand the number of goods and services we provide ourselves. To reduce our dependence on the larger economy and to provide a maximum of community self-determination we must expand to include the production and wholesale and retail marketing as well as consumption of the goods and services we want. Our growth must be fast enough to achieve these goals quickly and to generate enthusiasm among others for what we are already doing. At all times we'll try to "grow" internally so as to utilize our resources and energies to their utmost rather than rely on sheer economic growth to do it all for us. It is our eventual goal to become economically large and powerful enough to influence the larger society and encourage it to become cooperative and sharing like our own community.

LABOR. All members of our community should actively participate in its enterprises and contribute their labor to the ongoing process of building and maintaining our community. Labor for us is a creative process, a way to use our vital energies to produce something of value for us all. Labor is a way to involve ourselves in the life of our community; it is a way for us to learn and care about all of what's involved in supporting our existence together. Ultimately we want to experience ourselves both as producers and consumers of the goods and services that maintain our life. We shall endeavor to rotate jobs as much as feasible so as to teach useful skills to many people, lessening the dependence of our community on any one person, and preventing the creation of classes of managers, labors, etc. Ultimately each of us should be able to perform many of the tasks needed to maintain our life together.

EDUCATION & COMMUNICATION. We shall make every effort to educate ourselves about the goals and workings of our community, for knowledge about each other is indispensable for cooperating with each other. Our education shall take the following forms: learning by doing through contributing our labor to the maintenance of our community; communicating with each other through personal contact; and using newsletters, media shows and other methods to inform and communicate with each other. We shall encourage each member, new or old, of our community to be maximally involved in our mutual life. We shall attempt to learn and teach each other about the ideas and ideals of cooperation as well as the day-to-day workings of our enterprises. We shall maintain a continuing dialogue with other cooperative groups and people, and we shall educate others about what we are doing so as to promote the idea and reality of a cooperative, sharing existence. We shall do this in word and deed, for a personal life that reflects one's ideals is a more eloquent testimony than any number of words. All our education and communication shall be ultimately directed toward fostering self-sufficiency, cooperation, sharing, caring, and self-determination.

groups so we can all cooperate and feel ourselves truly a part of our community.

CONTROL & SELF GOVERNMENT. It is our goal to exercise control over our own lives to the greatest extent possible. We want each member of our community to participate in the setting of directions and making of decisions for our community. Decisions should be made by those affected by the decisions, and people should have input to the decisions in proportion to how much they'll be affected by them. Workers should be selected and approved by the members of the community; they should be held accountable to the members; and their responsibilities should be defined by the members. We shall strive to establish decision-making procedures consistent with principles of consensus decision-making, membership participation, and expediency, as much as possible. We shall re-evaluate these procedures whenever necessary, recognizing that procedures are only means and should not become ends in themselves.

AUSTIN COMMUNITY PROJECT (and other Austin collectives) Economic structure 10/18/75 Retailers: COMMERCIAL BUYING HOUSES SERVICES: STORES: RESTAURANT: coops in Texas Woody Hills Sattva CLUBS Ecology Action Avenues (recycling) Garbage Collective Yellow Rose Warehouse A.C. Produce Wholesalers: (compost) cheese .ICC (Madison) pasta, GIP-C (Chicago) (Tuscon) Brokers: People's Warehouse Processors: Clarksville Bakers Canning Collective A.C. Bookies (bookkeeping) COMMERCIAL FARMS Producers: SMALL FARMS **ACP FARMS** Fly By Nite Herb Garden (printing) Mantis Organics, Yesua Rage (newspaper) Harmoney

Not only our efforts at education, but all that we do and are, should build a sense of community consciousness in each of us. By community consciousness we mean respect for the integrity and feelings of each individual, recognition that each individual is an integral part of the community, and recognition that the community and the individual do not exist apart from each other but need each other to exist. Community consciousness is the subjective cornerstone of our life together, just as the cooperative production and marketing of goods and services and communal ownership of the means of production are the objective factors that constitute our life together.

PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS. It is our goal to maximize respect, concern, sensitivity and attentiveness to other people. We shall see and meet and touch each other as persons, not as functions or categories or objects for our use. We shall never sacrifice human relationships to efficiency. We shall try to balance reason and logic with intuition and feeling, appreciating all the aspects of each human being. In a spirit of mutual concern and respect we shall work together even if there are disagreements (trying always, of course, to resolve the disagreements), and we shall discourage feelings of separateness between

SOCIAL CHANGE. It is our goal to foster cooperation and sharing and self-determination not only in our own community but throughout the larger society and world in which we live. Therefore we shall not only create our own economy and community but actively oppose the alienating factors in the society around us as well. We shall do this by creating an alternative more attractive to people than the existing society, by becoming economically large and powerful enough to influence the larger society, by uniting with others with similar ideals, and in whatever other specific ways the members of our community shall see fit to utilize.



In November of '75, Madison Community Coop organized a conference on Alternative community Coordination. Not only did we share a great deal about how we do things — searching for commonalities and respecting differences, but we gassed some about what it all means:

Gary [Austin] One criticism I have consistantly of our ACP presentations is that we don't spend nearly enough time examining our failures.

Paul [New Haven] You said them...they're there. But it's like code. If you say, 'There are issues around group process and feminism,' I say, 'Okay, that took six months.'

Gary — But to people who haven't gone through our experience? I mean this Communities issue goes to a lot of people who've no experience in community.

Paul — Then get it in there. There's nothing stopping us from talking about it. As a bunch of people we're totally improbable if people don't know what we've struggled with...the day to day decision making. Otherwis we're setting ourselves up...alienating even people who might like to try some of this stuff out. They're say, 'That person's working 400 hours a week for only 9 dollars. I could never do that.'

Gary — We realize our strength is in the social relationships. If you look at the businesses, we're a failure. This little restaurant we have, it's been perpetually bankrupt. It's a miracle it ever survives, but we always dig up the money. It's a bad way to operate out of the good will of the community.

Jeanine [Madison] It's not a bad way to operate; it's an inefficient way.

Paul -It's an economically inefficient way, if you apply that standard. Obviously it's paying its way somehow.

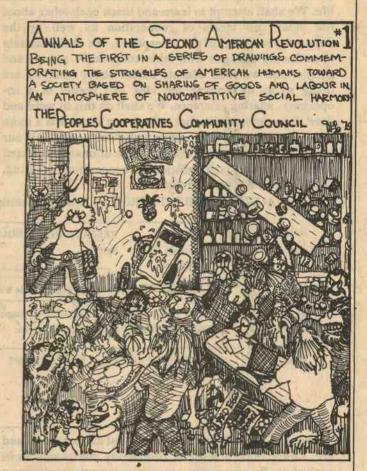
Gary — Did you ever read Invasion of the Stalinoids? It came out in Minneapolis about the time of the takeover [of the Warehouse]. And a bunch of people had been reading it when they came in and they said, 'Oh, no.'

Heather [New Haven] — People need to have a clear sense of options in cooperative leadership. Our Administrative Work Grou (of TUA) brings up ideas for the larger groups. That's just one model. The other thing is that there are certain people who just have something to say at meetings, and it's a little artificial to force everyone to say something. But it's not unreasonable to stop a discussion and say, 'Look, two or three people have been talking. Does anyone else have something to say?' And I think that's a very good and just self—conscious enough way to reduce the dominance.

If you hadn't been wondering about questions of organization and decision making before reading this issue, you probably are by now. Gary Newton has worked with coops in Austin over the last five years. He was Education and Communications Coordinator for Austin Community Project for a year and a half; helped organize Yellow Rose Warehouse and is presently a member of the worker's collective at Wheatsville Food Coop.

ON STRUCTURE AND DECISION MAKING

GARY H. NEWTON



ACP News, May 24, 1975 (Vol. 2, number 9)

When someone talks about governance or government I always think of someone telling me what to do. Therefore I won't discuss governments or governance. What I want to talk about is self-management.

FORMAL VS INFORMAL STRUCTURES

The sixties saw a rejection of the establishment. Structure was confused with hierarchy and bureaucracy

and thrown out with all the bad points of the status quo. Remember the SDS meetings with no chair, an open mike, and endless discussion. The open meetings seldom made any detailed decisions about activities or demonstrations. Usually smaller groups organized the activities and made the detailed decisions. These smaller groups usually were not formally chosen but emerged. In fact, most people at the demonstrations didn't even know who organized them. What the movement of the sixties threw out was formalized structure. Contrary to what we might like to think, there is no such thing as a structureless group. Any group that comes together will eventually structure itself. If formal consciously chosen structures are rejected, then informal structures will emerge. Informal structures are the basis for elitism. Informal structures mean that the rules of how decisions are made are known only by a few and only these few will make most of the decisions. The few who make the decisions under this informal structure are seldom accountable-they are many times not even visible as the ones who make the decisions. For everyone to have access to input into decisions, structure must be explicit not implicit. This is not to say that formalization of structure eliminates informal structures. But it does interfere with informal structures having predominant control by providing a legitimate (recognized and accepted) structure for decision making. With the formalization of structure should come clear definitions of responsibility. Who is responsible for what should be clear to all. If it isn't then there can't be accountability.

WHO SHOULD MAKE WHAT DECISION?

An answer to who should make what decision is important to defining structure. Austin Community Project, a federation of consumer co-ops, producer collectives, and organic farmers, has answered this question at least on a theoretical level. In their proposed goals statement they state, "decisions should be made by those

affected by the decisions, and people should have input in proportion to how much they are affected by them." Turning the theory into practice is where the struggle begins. Ultimately everyone is affected by millions of decisions. Because of the complexities of our world we can never be involved in all of the decisions which affect us. So what structure will allow us to make the decisions on which decisions we would like to delegate.

COLLECTIVES VS. CO-OPS

Two different models of alternative organizations are emerging in the new food co-ops. The authors of *The Food Co-op Handbook* describe the differences:

Some co-ops are highly participatory and others lean toward community service. In participatory co-ops...the work is done by the members, who are also expected to make the decisions for the co-op. Community service co-ops are run by small groups of committed activists... concerned with bringing inexpensive, high quality food to as many of their neighbors as possible and creating a source of alternative employment at the same time.

In practice there are few purely participatory or purely community service co-ops. Paid coordinators or management collectives often run participatory co-ops, and most community service co-ops expect some degree of input from their members. The West Coast has provided some of the most vocal proponents of community service co-ops (they call them worker collectives). They have some very valid criticisms of participatory co-ops (member co-ops). An Ananda Marga co-op group in Seattle criticizes member co-ops:

... experience has demonstrated that member cooperatives eventually either become much like conventional retail stores, reducing individual participation to a token level, or where there is a strong reliance on membership participation, the co-op is weakened by a lack of consistent, competent help. These more participatory cooperatives frequently lack strong leadership or the capacity for dynamic growth over extended periods of time. Monthly or quarterly membership meetings are poor forums for conducting business and making operational decisions. Such matters are better handled by active members and paid workers, who generally have the greater capacity for formulating viable policy than the fee paying members who lack time for, or interest in, active participation. In fact, it is workers who usually show up for meetings and dominate the decision making process.

A West Coast trucking collective criticizes participatory co-ops as being non-political:



...they are compelled to solicit and respond to community demands regardless of how narrow-minded and selfish that community may be. This robs them of any initiative, and restrains them from actively raising community consciousness around issues having political overtones, for fear of alienating their community and losing its support.

This is not to say that cooperatives' only interests are economic, but sooner or later it comes down to that.... Cooperatives do not challenge the basic structure of the old system, and they do not challenge any preconceived notions we have of ourselves and of our beliefs. Since the old system remains unchanged, the cooperatives begin to take on its values and weaknesses, and result in the situation we have today: cooperatives succeed in business but fail in spirit.

David Morris and Karl Hess, writeractivist, encourage community control of economic and political institutions. They note, "The primary problem with worker collectives is how to stop them from becoming extended mom and pop stores, that is self-serving except with ten owners rather than one." But probably



About worker control...



it works.

advocate stickers and just about anything else).

about the advocate press . . .

The Advocate Press is a group of women and men operating collectively to provide printing to movement and community groups. What this means to us is that we provide the highest quality printing we can for the lowest possible prices and that we teach the skills of printing to those who want to learn. We are able to support the cost of movement printing by doing commercial printing and by having a staff which is paid low salaries.

We think that movement printing should be not only low in cost, but high in quality; that appearance makes a difference.

We feel that we must make ourselves available to as many movement groups as possible but that we have not made ourselves adequately known to the movement. Often those people who do know us think of us as "just printers".

We are contributing our experience and skills to the movement and the fact that we work for subsistence wages means that we also contribute financially on a personal level to the groups we print for. Because of this and because we are legally a business and cannot do fundraising, we must ask for the support of the movement we are a part of. We ask that people pay at least the cost of materials and more if they can afford it. And we ask that people try to send business to us (we print posters, cards, stationery, leaflets, booklets,



641 Chapel Street New Haven

the most significant criticism of worker collectives is that they fail to empower powerless people. They are good as far as they go but they don't go far enough. They don't give people the right to have a control over part of their life. David McReynolds, a long-time nonviolent social activist, describes the feeling many people have:

We now have a whole category of Americans who are broken people....A radical black leader lamented to me that even in the office of his organization in Harlem they couldn't keep typewriters unless they were locked up and nailed down-the people stole each other blind. These are people who are taught that they are without worth....But when these people are empowered-the word empowered is crucial here, for we are not talking about our making decisions for them, but creating a situation where the powerless have power and take responsibility. ... The revolutionist should not romanticize people but neither should we underestimate the power of people, given responsibility, to function responsibly.

Even the so called empowered people have very little to say with how things are decided or who decides them. Worker collectives don't solve this powerlessness.

A NEW HYBRID

What is evolving in the food co-op movement is a new hybrid co-op which is trying to answer the criticisms of both the participatory co-ops and the community service co-ops (worker collectives). Wheatsville Food Co-op, a new co-op store in Austin Texas, is one such hybrid. All power in this co-op flows from the community as defined by the membership of the co-op. There are general membership meetings as often as necessary with at least one per semester (the neighborhood served has a large percentage of students). At these meetings the membership sets the goals and directions of the co-op; selects representatives to the coordinating committee; approves financial and labor budgets (there is an extensive labor exchange system in Austin Community Project between the co-op stores, producer collectives, and organic farmers). The general membership has the right to call meetings, initiate policy changes. and recall workers and committee members. The coordinating committee (all members serve on working committees besides their coordinating role) prepare financial and labor budgets as well as other infor-

mation for the general membership; hires collective workers which are nominated by other workers on the collective; reviews the workers collective periodically; and makes emergency decisions which are automatically reviewed by the general membership. The coordinating committee has the right to fire collective workers. The workers collective is responsible for management of the co-op store (they oversee finances, inventory, cashiering, and maintenance). They make day to day operational decisions. They are responsible for all work which needs to be done to operate the store. Working with them are working committees with specific tasks (i.e. recycling, child care, delivering food to the elderly, bookkeeping). Wheatsville's structure is a combination of a workers collective and a participatory co-op. The workers maintain control over their work situation. This co-op is worker self-managed and community controlled. It meets the description which the West Coast truckers uses of collectives:

Fundamental to the collective organization is the elimination of any graduated scale of authority (hierarchy), and decisions are made by those directly affected by them (direct democratic process). In a collective:

An individual is no longer working for a manager, nor a manager working for an owner, rather each of us becomes an integral part of a common work effort necessary to meet human needs, sharing work and decision-making alike.

There are no bosses, and no leaders. Each of us takes responsibility of being our own boss; our own leader. Job functions are equitably distributed. We share those that are hard or tedious, and we share those that are easy and fun, restoring dignity to work because we work for ourselves and decide for ourselves when and how our energy is to be contributed.

Those of us with skills and experience, share with those lacking in them. Those of us without skills learn them, and become accustomed to the responsibility that goes with them.

We engage in vigorous struggle to rid ourselves of negative influences of the past. The selfishness of individualism, the arrogance of eliteism, the terror of racism, the insecurity of sexism, and the mistrust in jealousy.

At the same time the general membership controls the direction of the co-op providing community control. This relationship between the membership and the workers creates a new solidarity. Social capital is also created with formalized community input. The Food Co-op Handbook explains why:

Participation creates social capital. That is, working cooperatively creates positive feelings toward the co-op, which are as necessary to its operations as financial capital is. These good feelings motivate co-op members to relate better to each other and to support the food co-op in bad times as well as good.

When a retired man on a fixed income gives \$50 of his savings to the Boston Food Co-op after it has just been robbed, we can see social capital converting itself to financial capital. When people shopping at the different co-op stores in Minneapolis drop what they're doing to stand in the cold to help unload the delivery truck from the Warehouse, social capital is again at work.

Wheatsville's division of decision making and labor is also beginning to answer the objections to both models presented. The neighborhood orientation of the store preserves a limit to the size of the store. When it grows too large it will split in two. The workers collective provides competence and continuity. The working committees and the workers collective provide the dynamic leadership for the co-op. As long as the workers collective is political and constantly going through a process of criticism and self-criticism they will catalyze the co-op as a whole to become more political by starting dialogue on different issues. Because the collective cannot act on directional decisions without dialogue with the community, the collective cannot become isolated from the community. This new hybrid co-op is a basic change in the way workers relate. It is also a new way in which workers relate to consumers. With the general membership having decision making power they are empowered with control over their co-op. With this relationship with the co-op and the workers collective they are more

likely to question their own work situation. The workers collective provides a model for the members of the co-op to emulate in their own work situations.

There will be many more evolutions and revolutions in the structures of institutions around us. As long as broad input is allowed and considered I don't think bad decisions can be made. As Mao says, correct ideas come from social experience. We are entering a new era in organizations because we are learning from our social experience.

- 1 I have relied heavily on Jo Freeman's "The Tyranny of Structurelessness", MS. July, 1973, Vol. II, No. 1, pp. 76-78 & 86-89, who has a more thorough discussion of this subject.
- ² "Austin Community Project Statement of Goals", December 16, 1974, mimie two pages. Available from Austin Community Project, 1602 W. 12, Austin, TX 78703. Send \$.10 and a self-addressed stamped envelope.
- ³ I have drawn heavily from a letter by Bhudeva (Bill Meacham) to Sectorial Social Security Board Members of Ananda Marga, December 15, 1975, 5 pages.
- ⁴ The Co-op Handbook Collective, The Food Co-op Handbook, Boston, Houghton Mifflin Col., 1975 p. 32.
- Seattle Collective of the Universal PROUTist Youth Federation, "Progressive Cooperatives" (Pamphlet), September, 1975, pp. 2-3, Available from UPYF, PO Box 12233, Seattle, WA 98112.
- 6 Las Truckaderos, "Beyond Isolation: The West Coast Collective Food System As We See It", September, 1975, pp. 9-10. Available from Los Truckaderos, 1600 Woolsey St., Berkeley, CA 94703. Send some money and a self-addressed stamped en-
- David Morris and Karl Hess, Neighborhood Power: The New Localism, Boston, Beacon Press, 1975, p. 57.
- 8 David McReynolds, "Building Our Movement," WIN magazine, vol. xi, No. 40, Nov. 27, 1975, pp. 8 & 11.
- 9 Los Truckaderos, op. cit. p. 11.
- 10 The Co-op Handbook Collective, op. cit. p. 114.

Gary H. Newton has worked with co-ops in Austin over the last five years. He was Education and Communications Coordinator for Austin Community Project for a year and a half; helped organize Yellow Rose Warehouse; and is presently working in the workers collective at Wheatsville Food Co-op.

Now that we've had a solid look at the state of the art of present thinking, and in line with Gary's fears about not examining our failures, here's Madison Community Coop going through its struggles. As of last contact, Ken Perlow was still on the staff of MCC.

YOU CAN'T HOME







ken perlow

This story does not tell easy. Every mixed metaphor is a potpourri of the dreams and sweat of a lot of irretrievable years. People get involved in movements for social and political change for a myriad of reasons, which are fundamentally very personal. It's difficult to keep one's own sense of historical perspective in the midst of an historical imperative, much less communicate it effectively to one's comrades. The field of ideas is a tenuous one to build on. and many a structure ends up a house of cards.

The rise and demise of the Madison Community Co-op is a curious sequence of improbable events and impossible people. It goes back to 1968 when a bunch of hippie-type students at the University of Wisconsin from a few communal living situations got together to shoot the shit. They made two well thought out decisions: 1. to expand their ideal by creating housing co-operatives, and 2. to bring in straight folks (in abundant supply at the U) to run interference on the necessary land deals. They succeeded. In 1969 the inchoate organization, called the Madison Association of Student Co-operatives (MASC), bought its first house on a 15-year land contract (such a deal!), a 45-room sorority-gone-bust on the shores of Madison's beautiful Lake Mendota.

At that point, no one realized what insipid things land contracts are. You agree to pay a sum of money too large ever to scrape together, but sometime in the future, so you don't have to think about it. Now we have a fair-sized empire of ten member houses, four of which we own on land contract. These four, all large ex-fraternity or rooming houses, are slums, inhabited mostly by students and other miscellaneous transients, who arrive with no expectations and leave with no involvement. Long range planning is not done, and perhaps not possible, so even basic building maintenance is neglected. We could try to sell the buildings and get out of the housing business, but the crumbling houses are no longer worth their purchase price, which we owe the respective sellers and could be sued for. And all these land contracts are coming due anyway. Perhaps you're wondering how this all happened?

Madison was the scene of a lot of so-called "student unrest" in the late 60's. Madison also had a very impressive fraternity row-close to the university campus but tucked away on a pretty street on the lake shore. But during the 60's fraternities became unpopular, and many of the buildings closed up for lack of members. Apartment 52 speculators greedily eyed this situation, and a few of the

wealthiest ones were able to buy old fraternity houses from their respective alumni associations at very low prices, promptly slashing the noble interiors into tickytacky efficiency apartments. But most of the land merchants were unable to buy because their usual allies, the banks, would not lend them the money. The whole downtown area was red-lined by the riots. And the beautiful buildings just sat there.

Co-op people got wise to this situation and contacted the frats about renting their buildings. Co-ops were quite the rage of the counter-culture. The frats were overjoyed at the prospect of letting hippies pay off their mounting debts, especially since they would be using the buildings as originally conceived and not gutting the interiors (not intentionally, anyway). Many of these lease agreements had provisions for alumni to hold parties in the houses during homecoming weekend. But as tear gas reappeared with each crocus, many frats ultimately sold their houses on land contracts to the individual groups to whom they had leased.

After the Army Math Research Center blew up in 1970, the political situation in Madison changed. The riots stopped and there was a sudden, glorious dawning of noninvolvement and token liberalism. Buildings became harder to find and harder to finance. A co-op organization designed for shooting the shit couldn't take advantage of the few breaks it got. MASC was reorganized in 1972 in the Madison Community Co-op (MCC). MCC attempted to centralize services and holdings in order to present a respectable front to lending institutions, foundations, etc...

But the independent and anarchist traditions of the member co-ops of the 60's which spawned them made this a difficult task. From the first, Madison rejected the "Ann Arbor model". Co-ops in Ann Arbor are highly centralized under their Inter-Cooperative Council (ICC), which has a large, competent, well-paid staff. This staff essentially cleans up after the co-op members, University of Michigan students for whom the co-ops are expressly designed, and ensures that they never have any real problems to confront. Even house membership is decided at the ICC office; the individual co-ops get no say. Ann Arbor ICC is over 30 years old now and going strong. But professional management is hardly the vanguard of an alternative society.

In Madison, the individual houses make all their own decisions, choose their own members, draw up their own budgets, and control their own finances. In this way the members take the ultimate control and responsibility for their own lives—in theory anyway. Unfortunately, many have absolutely no desire to do this or pay the additional cost of management to do it for them. They are in Madison to go to school. Our co-ops are conveniently located for this purpose, and so affordable.

The community which sprang from the 60's student movement ebbed away from campus to less transient areas of town, leaving the co-operative ark high and dry atop the ivory tower. And here we sit, an organization structured as a representative democracy, perpetually questioning its own legitimacy if not actually short of a quorum (especially at exam time), and perpetually in economic crisis. The hard economic decisions on \$750,000 of real estate have precluded any meaningful dialogue

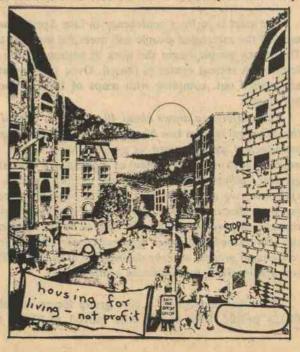
Given the raw materials we've got to work with, MCC has come up with a few damn good ideas, such as that of a staff collective. In the early days, MCC had one paid position (\$100/month, later increased to \$200), that of Executive Director. This person staffed the office, answered mail, was responsible for community relations and day-to-day continuity, etc. Very quickly, the E.D.'s personality became blurred with the co-op's philosophy, as you might expect from anyone insane enough to get involved in such an endless job for such low pay. And said insanity turned off many people. When the second E.D. suddenly burned out, MCC decided to replace same with a three person rotation staff. Besides co-ordinating the day-to-day business, the staff was conceived as cooperatively subsidized community trainees. But to many students, paid staff = management. The \$1.30/month they each so magnanimously shell out for it might as well be spent on dope, or football tickets.

It's curious how students can really turn on to the old exploitation trip. Hungry to identify with all the just struggles of oppressed third world peoples, they zealously litanize about how their co-op is really their enemy. Unlike landlords or other fuedal relics, who extract their dubious due by force (or threat thereof), the co-op movement has relied on conscious humanistic motivation. But students learn early that you get ahead the most by getting away with the most: all our co-ops have accounts receivable from their own current members of at least \$1000, in some over \$3000. You might say that we need more member education, that people's consciousness and sensitivity need to be raised. Our education committee holds regular meetings, and no one shows up. But damn it, is it really too much to ask people to put out not just for their own community, but for their own fucking good?

How do you get away from this petty financial nonsense which is totally destroying a potentially dynamic movement force? Those of us who started these co-ops had visions of something different; a system better than anything capitalism has to offer, a different structure of basic social relationship, models whose very existence gave life to the struggle for social and political change. And we have to organize around these basic alternatives, or we'll have the choice (should we ever get potent enough to matter) of being squashed by capitalism or becoming indistinguishable from it. Look at the rural co-ops of the 30's if you don't believe it.

The idea of banding together through MCC for political and economic survival made a lot of sense at the time. We could not foresee the symbolic manifestations: The MCCowned houses do not own up to their basic responsibilities because all their dealings with the real world go through us. Perhaps a different set-up, in which each house were itself an "office" of MCC and each treasurer an "officer", permitting direct contact between the co-ops and the capitalists, might have worked out. Ironically, it's the independent houses, which MCC sneered at for their unprogressive tendency not to see past their own front doors, the people we accused of having the alternative consciousness of a carrot, which are the most dynamic and viable co-operatives. Many independent houses have failed, and more probably will when their few members with business acumen move on, but it'll be with a bang, not a whimper. They know what they're up against, and they care.

So what's to do? It's absurd to adopt gestapo tactics just to make an organization economically viable. A dyedin the-wool anarchist like myself can't really get it up to play Joe Stalin, and besides, that would totally defeat what nebulous purpose we have. MCC has run out of money and I've run out of energy. The MCC owned co-op houses which were such an integral part of the counter-cultural scene are now a dead albatross around the community's neck. They drain energy and contribute nothing. The few members who care at all philosophize eloquently about the social potential, the economic logic and political necessity of cooperation. But their idea of a real cooperative accomplishment is keeping the living room clean. "Hypocrites! You wear the people's cap on your head, but your underwear's embroidered with crowns! [Marat/Sade].



We almost have enough experience to be writing history. Before this document came in, I'd been hearing about the Ithaca Project for several years, usually introduced by....

WHAT EVER BECAME OF THE

HE PROJECT ?
Boston, Pittsburg, and Binghamton. The size of the com-

9THACA

How it all began ...

The setting is Ithaca, county seat of Tompkins County in the heart of the central New York Finger Lakes region. The countryside is rolling, and filled with water-cut rock formations. Approximately 80,000 people live in Tompkins County, 30,000 of them in Ithaca. Only 7,000 of the 32,000 work force are engaged in manufacturing. The prime business in Ithaca is education. Two large colleges, Cornell University and Ithaca College are located here. Traditionally Ithaca is a conservative town, but an influx of new people over the past few years seems to have changed that. Many attracted originally to the educational facilities here have settled in Ithaca. From them, a kind of liberalradical community has developed which now attracts additional movement people to Ithaca. Many social change organizations are active here. Communes and co-operatives are common in Ithaca and the surrounding area.

The Ithaca Project starts as an idea in one person's head. In March of 1972, posters announcing the forthcoming 'community of communes' are seen in Ithaca. The author of the posters has at this time spent some months traveling around talking to people about setting up a large community, composed of a series of communes, which would have, as one of it's features, an independent economic base composed of a series of non-profit shops. Through the posters, and personal contact, several Ithaca people become interested. There is already a large mailing list of people, mostly in Boston and New York City, who have expressed interest in the idea. A 220 acre parcel of land has been purchased [on mortgage] to provide a place for the Project.

The start is to be a conference in late April at which most of the interested people will meet for the first time. The Ithaca people begin the work of setting up the conference. A retreat center is rented. Over 100 invitations are mailed out, complete with maps of Ithaca. Food is purchased.

The conference draws about 40 people. It is cold and the only heat is from two big fireplaces. Our first night is introduction and greeting as people slowly arrive. The next day sees attempts to meet as a group and discuss the general outline of the Project and its implications. We split into two groups [one in front of each fireplace] to facilitate discussion. The group must decide about the consensual process. Do people want to do the Project? Is this the place? We reach general consensus about the consensual process and the desirability of the land. There is much interest, but uncertain commitment.

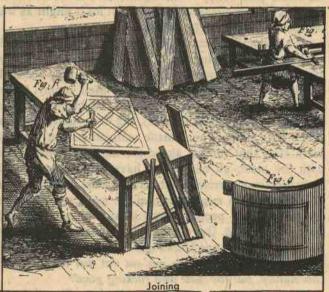
54 Ithaca people, and people who moved to Ithaca from

Boston, Pittsburg, and Binghamton. The size of the committed membership is somewhat fuzzy, but we start with about 18 real members.

A series of meetings begins—often long and harsh. We are a group of strangers trying to reach common ground. Our ability for group interaction is low. We cut each other off, don't really listen. Some people dominate conversations, others rarely speak. In an attempt to hear all views, we institute "going around the room," having each member speak in turn. The word "process" enters our language. When someone shouts "process", it's a call to stop the discussion and examine the way we interact [the process].

During this period, we construct a simple cabin on the land. Construction is sloppy, since this is to be a temporary building, providing a structure to work out of while we put up the main buildings. For many of us, this is our first building experience.

The cabin becomes the setting for some of our longest meetings. Starting at 7 p.m. on Saturday, we struggle until 1 or 2 in the morning, sleep, and renew the discussion on Sunday. Since we live and work in various places, these weekend meetings provide our only real contact. The warmth of summer leads to frequent Saturday and Sunday swimming "breaks" at a local pond.



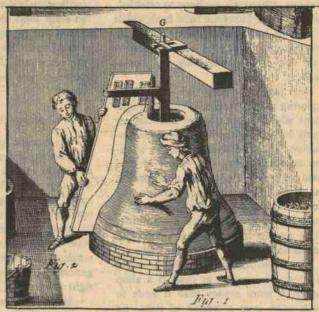
There is much to discuss. The meaning of zero profit, house building methods. What kind of living situation do you want? Where does the money come from? How do we deal with sex? What is the relation of the businesses to the community? Who is a member? How do we select members? The questions go on and on.

It is not just a matter of finding our common ground. Many of us have not formed clear visions of what we want. The search for individual identity and direction makes group direction and identity difficult.

One point of easy agreement is the need for money to launch the Project. We investigate possible funding sources, but the early results are disappointing.

From the start, the assumption has been that major living structures would be built this summer. In late summer, we reach a point of reality. There is no real money available. This is not just a problem of a lack of success in finding outside funding. It reflects the continuing uncertainty of commitment. Few members are willing to dig hard for personal funds, and thus financially lock themselves in the Project.

It has been easier to discuss the more concrete business proposals and concepts than the questions relating to communal living. Much of the basic business philosophy has been developed this summer. People have proposed starting three businesses. One group is interested in woodworking. Another considers setting up an auto repair shop. The third intends to start an electronics repair shop. In addition, a group has been working on the development of an alternative school as part of the project.



The original concept was to have the shops and school located as part of the community on the land. The uncertainty of that community, at least for this year, now makes that unlikely. In addition, some have come to feel a good business location in Ithaca is important. There is still interest in a land community based school, but that seems at least a year away. The free school people are now getting involved in helping to set up a school, in Ithaca, that is not directly involved with the Project.

The great real estate search begins! The shops need a place to happen, and we have decided to rent a house, in the country, big enough to let us all live together during the coming year.

Shop space (at the necessary low price) is hard to find. There are no available large houses in the country. For a time, we wonder if all our communal and business plans will be frustrated. After many false leads, a small shop in a local shopping center is secured. This will be divided and shared by the woodworking and electronic repair shops. An in-town location for the auto shop does not appear, and the auto shop people decide to start in a poor, but available location, an out-of-town garage owned by one of its

members. We end up with two houses in town for living space. This requires splitting into two groups. The split is difficult, and leaves no one totally content with the living situations.

The first alternatives fund meeting is held early in September of 1972 at one of the houses. We begin to develop a meeting form. The chairperson and agenda model formulated in our earlier community of communes meetings is used. A legal research committee is set up. Fund meetings occur once a week. At about this time, there is a break through in fund raising. We received funds towards the businesses from a Quaker sharing meeting: a \$2,000 grant and a \$5,000 loan. It's less than we had hoped for, but comes at a crucial time in the development of shops.

A division between the community of communes and the alternatives fund grows. Some people in the fund are no longer interested in a land based community. Some who are interested have doubts that the specific community here is the one for them. On the other side, community of communes people, who are not involved in the businesses, feel the direction of the fund is moving away from the original concept of supporting a land based community. There are still a number of people who feel strong interest and involvement in both aspects of the project. Feelings of resentment and distrust run high.

Agreement is reached that the fund and the community of communes group will no longer be considered to have direct ties. The only connection the fund has to any specific land community is through its members who may be involved in that community.

The nature of the project has changed in many ways in its first summer. The direction has become less communal and more economic.

WHAT IS THE FUND?

The Alternatives Fund is a kind of business league of what we call "zeroprofit" shops. The membership of the Fund consists of workers in these shops as well as other people who share in the values and concerns of the Fund. The shops are not Fund-owned. Rather they are each autonomous collectives who pay a 4% self-tax as dues to the Fund.

The Alternatives Fund is a tool in our strategy for social change. It serves several purposes. It provides members with a bi-monthly forum in which to exchange ideas and advice about shop operation

and to discuss socio-political ideology. Further, we hope to direct grants and loans to others wanting to start zero-profit shops. Ultimately we hope to establish an alternative economic base from which to support local social change and selfhelp groups. So far we have helped to fund the Ithaca Vocations for Social Change.

The path to change we have been exploring is the creation of business situations which do not provide financial rewards for making the business more productive. The traditional business situation encourages the very traits of personal competition we seek to overcome. It was hoped that we could remove the pressures relating to production and performance in a competitive system that cause people to treat each other and themselves in a less human manner.

A zero-profit shop is one that provides its goods or services at cost. If a shop generates more money than it neds to break even over a period of time, its prices will go down. That cost includes regular operating expenses (rent, utilities, advertising, etc., and in our case the 4% dues to the Fund) and salaries. What makes us different from other small businesses is that the salaries are based on individual need rather than skill level or what the market place demands.

Several assumptions led us to this form. Patterns of limitless consumerism are viewed as destructive. Our world resources are finite and we cannot have everything we wish. In addition, it was agreed that the "rat race" to profit had forced business people and customers to distrust each other. We believe that as long as a worker could receive only his or her needs, regardless of how much money the business could generate beyond those needs, there would be no personal reason to "rip off" the customer or engage in destructive competition within the business.

In many traditional small businesses. the owners do in fact receive limited salaries. However, this can be misleading since their "profit" is often tied up in the acquisition of inventory and/or equipment which at some point can be liquidated. One of the important functions that the Alternatives Fund provides is a structure for dealing with the ownership of the means of production and this not-too-visible, but often substantial, form of personal profit.

In our case, the equipment and assets of the business are used just as though they were the property of the business, 56 but in the event that it ceases operations,

the remaining assets (after debts have been settled) revert to the community through the Fund (in trust). One point of clarification is that assets acquired before the shop joins the Fund, or those purchased with personal salary, do not revert to the Fund. Only those assets acquired with community funds during zero-profit operation are considered communityowned.

In summary then...

The intentions of the zero-profit business are shown most clearly through its structure: at-cost operation and salaries based on need. These ideas are communicated by posting our salaries, keeping open books, figuring rates or prices not by what the market could bear but by what it really costs us to provide services, making our decisions collectively, and generally trying to be as open and forthright as possible.

All of the foregoing is done so that people coming in contact with us can see that there is a viable alternative to their present life. One that doesn't force one to be a hypocrite. One that provides a reasonable standard of living. And one that instead of being destructive to development as a person, is congruent with and augments that development.

So far, most of what has been said pertains to a zero-profit business. The alternatives fund comes in when one wants to actively promote this idea and encourage things a bit with combined economic clout. The 4% generated by the businesses helps start new businesses and provides a means of support for some other social change activities in the community. The Fund also provides a framework for interaction between the business and the community.



Developing Bylaws

Much of our first year was spent developing the bylaws of the Fund. We formed a "legal committee" which worked with a university lawyer and some graduate students at Cornell, Several of us learned the basics of legal research or how to use the law library. The first thing we learned is that there is no such thing (legally) as a not-for-profit business. Nor are there any lawyers around who are familiar with corporation law and also interested in social change projects. We invited a lawyer from a radical law collective in Boston to Ithaca to present a week long training seminar in paralegal research. Several groups in Ithaca took advantage of his knowledge. But there is a long way to go in finding a legal framework to support our model.

· Out of our limited legal research we were able to incorporate the Fund with a not-for-profit status and develop a form for our bylaws. The process of creating the bylaws led us to explore, define, and further define our model.

Decision Making

Translating into leagalese can be a disappointing process. You can take a fine subtle organic concept and in trying to describe it for the bylaws turn it into a skeleton of a concept. For instance the bylaws read: consensual decision making means that a resolution will pass if no one has strong objections to it. If the individual feels her/his objections are strong enough to justify not allowing the decision to pass, then s/he withholds consent.

Consensual decision making is a skill. Each person participating in the decision must learn to distinguish between a decision which s/he objects to strongly and a decision which s/he objects to so strongly that s/he is willing to negate the decision of the great majority of the Fund. For this method of decision making to be effective each person learns to weigh the value of the ongoingness of the Fund with her/his own conception of the ideal Fund. The Fund has set up a mechanism to deal with any deadlocks that occur. If after three consecutive meetings a unanimous vote on an important issue cannot be passed, then in the following meeting any member can ask for a vote and an 80% majority will pass the vote. By requiring three attempts to reach a consensus, it is hoped that all viewpoints will have a chance to be thoroughly explored. We have never yet had to resort to this measure.

The Shops

The first year also the three shops in the Fund began operation. Shop problems were demanding and frustrating. Many of us were naive about business and the amount of work and struggle the shops would require. For the first time some of us unexperienced "bringing the shop home" at night and feeling constant pressures. Could the shops provide a satisfying life style, or were we exploiting ourselves? Those of us with more business experience were frustrated by the naivete and seeming lack of dedication of others.

A lot of our problems have been due to the lack of business and/or technical expertise in two of the beginning shops. Perhaps a better approach would have been to have had as a first goal the development of skills rather than actively opening shops. Another approach might have been to try to work with already established "alternative businesses" to form a community fund. Probably with a less defined model. The Fund has talked about allowing more flexibility in the model.

The three shops that have belonged to the Fund since it began are Woodworks, making furniture; Sage Auto, fixing cars; and The Circuit Tree, doing electronic repairs. Sage fought for a year before dissolving under the pressures of building a business. Woodworks has suffered from an initial lack of experience, knowledge and financing and the resulting hardships has caused a high turnover among workers. They've also been forced to move twice, an expensive process. But they are resurging and the future looks better. The Circuit Tree, grounded on experienced people and a low capital need, has been the most stable of the businesses. Meanwhile, one member of the Fund is working towards the establishment of a zero-profit recording studio. And two other local businesses are interested in joining the Fund.

Expectations

Some of us expected to see change soon. We expected a working model with successful shops contributing steadily to the Fund which would in turn be starting new shops, attracting and converting established ones, funding community services, etc. All within a year or so! Some feel that we can only establish rapport with the community with the presentation of a "successful" fund to the community. Most of us feel, however, that our original goals will take a long time to achieve



and are comfortable with being in a process of moving toward them.

Public Exposure

Originally, many of the people in the Fund were not from Ithaca so we were operating at a disadvantage. However, since Ithaca is a small, liberal college town, the "straight" media was receptive to us. We received favorable coverage from all four local newspapers, plus some radio and TV time. Our early public image was self-righteous and naive and we suffered from it, especially in terms of relating to other local social change groups. However, slowly the damage is being undone. The Fund is not seeking publicity at this stage. Public outreach occurs in several ways as individual members of the Fund becoming involved with other alternative groups in Ithaca such as an alternative newspaper, alternative radio program, neighborhood center, food co-op, etc. Also the larger community receives information about the Fund and the business model through contacts with the shops. Quality service, open books, explanations of pricing procedures, etc. are some of the best forms of publicity for the Fund. The shops distribute information about the Fund and the shop model to all customers. Also we have maintained good working relations with other business people that the shops interact with (i.e. suppliers).

INFLUENCE OF THE SHOPS ON THE MODEL

When the shops first started, we had a rough model and many ideas on how a zero-profit business should be run. The shops began operation in September of 1972, working out their problems as they came up, adapting to New York State laws and practical business methods. The Fund continued to work, with the model, developing bylaws and refining the model, working mostly on a theoretical basis. The result was two somewhat different paths: the day-to-day operation of the shops and the ideal as worked out in Fund meetings.

The problems that arose when trying to implement a strict model were varied. One concerned the idea of community ownership. Another involved the process of group decision making. A third had to do with pricing practices. Each of these is described below.

One of the ideals of our model is that businesses be "community-owned." That is to say, they belong to all the people in the area to whom services are available and that the workers in a shop are in this sense "employed" by that community to render such services. In actuality, the shops were set up so that members of the shop had legal ownership, although the Fund was to act in trust for the community should the shops dissolve.

A problem arose when some of the workers, who had invested life savings and many, many hours of work building a business so that it was stable, began to feel that they really owned something. After some intense discussion and much thought on the subject, the problem was resolved. The workers involved began to trust the Fund to act in the best interest of the community. Furthermore, from these discussions we had come to realize that this aspect of our model was lopsided: There was a mechanism for the Fund (the community) to assume assets, but not the liabilities and risks involved in running a business. We are working on ways to solve this discrepancy.

Another aspect of the model that faced difficulty in its implementation is the important ideal that each member business use a group decision making process (preferably consensual). From the poor choices available for legal structures, two shops chose to set up as partnerships. Since all partners were equal by law and shared equally in the consensual process, it was assumed that all partners were expected to work equally and to share equal responsibility. In practice, it was found that some shop members only wanted a part time commitment. The pressures of trying to establish a stable business enhanced the conflicts over discrepencies in commitment and responsibility.



Tension caused by this situation in one shop was resolved by reducing the partnership to two members (from an original three) and having those people act legally as employers for the other members. (This then had to meet NYS law concerning withholding tax, compensation, and minimum wage). The other members of that shop still participate in collective decision making. However, it has been recognized that the two people holding the partnership (i.e. legal responsibility for all business matters) can in reality override a decision.

The other factor that forced the shop to accept a legal relationship of employeremployee, was the need for new people to join the shop. It seemed unwise to accept into a legal partnership a person before s/he had worked in the shop for a while or if s/he planned to work on a temporary basis. Unfortunately, NYS makes it illegal for non-partners to work for pay unless the situation meets all employee laws, thus defining an employer-employee relationship (status).

The present situation, while far from ideal, seemed the only way to work at this time. We are exploring other legal structures that will more closely fit the model in terms of collective responsibility. That is not to say that a shop cannot be run as a collective if it has other legal structure. On the other hand, the present legal structures do not protect or encourage the consensual decision making process.

The third problem area concerns pricing practices. This is an area ofmuch discussion both in the shops and at Fund meetings. The concept that theprices for 58 all goods and services be proportioned equally at their exact cost is very difficult to put into practice. And, as we are coming to realize, it is more difficult in some kinds of businesses than it is in others.

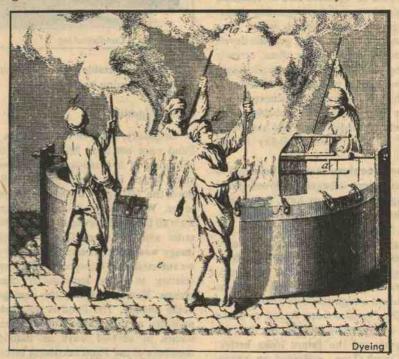
The electronics shop has found that a simple 30% mark-up above actual cost on parts seems to be very close to covering expenses incurred in stocking and selling them. Every effort is made to make the labor charge reflect the actual amount of time spent on a unit. There is no flat rate charging.

In a production business, such as the woodworking shop, the process is much more complicated. It is very time consuming to calculate the cost of an item

from start to finish. However, the woodworkers have tried to do so, in order to make a fair proportional charge for products. In their retail outlet, the mark-up is 30%, which covers the cost of operating the store.

In both shops, the underlying motive is to have each customer pay as closely as possible his/her fair share, and not to subsidize someone else's purchase.

These are some of the ways the model has been bent or stretched, so as to meet sound business practice or legal requirements. Most of us feel that the model is a good one and we are looking into different legal structures which will allow us to follow it more closely.



WHERE WE MIGHT GO FROM HERE

Following are some issues we have begun to consider concerning our model and the changes that it may endure. As with most questions that social activism presents, the solutions we reach may include only some of the possibilities. Other groups may reach other conclusions.

Some of the issues originated with questions about the structure of the shops. For instance, what legal form should the shops take? Businesses that have joined the Fund have either been proprietorships or partnerships. In New York State, producer co-operatives are not allowed, except ones that are agricultural in nature. We have been toying with the idea of the shops incorporating, in that this would reduce the risk of personal liability. However, businesses are not eligible under the law to be included under the category of non-profit corporations. Some of us have been in touch with a local group concerned with workermanaged businesses in hopes of developing a structure akin to producer co-ops, but in compliance with state laws.

A second issue involves the legal relationship between the Fund and member businesses. As it stands now, the shops are autonomous collectives in terms of shop operation and finances. The Fund is a kind of business league, and does not "own" any shops.

Although we are still firm in our belief that the collective should remain autonomous concerning its internal functions, we have begun to discuss the issue of financial responsibility.

Basic to our model is the idea that assets of the shop purchased by funds generated by community money, in fact, belong to the community (this of course does not include assets purchased with personal salary or items already owned by a shop when it joined the fund). If a shop should cease operation or leave the Fund, the Fund has the discretion to hold such assets in trust for the community (as described earlier).

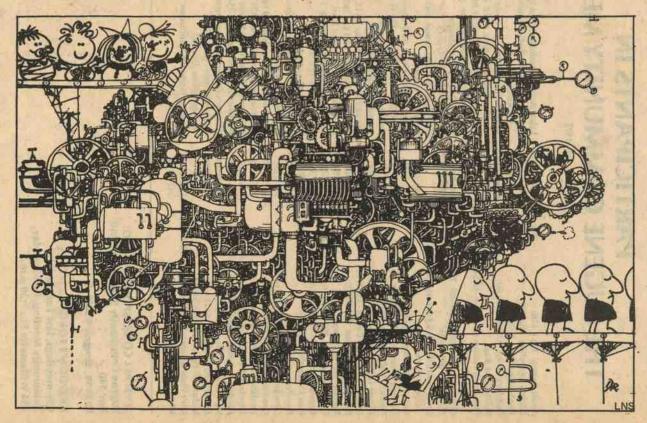
A contradiciton found in our present model is that while the "community" receives all the assets, it bears none of the risks of business operation. In our present structure, the members of a collective bear all responsibility for debts and other sacrifices involved in making a business work, while receiving none of the benefits of personal ownership (i.e. promise of future wealth, return of assets through liquidation, etc.). Furthermore, should a worker, after years of dedicated effort, decide to leave the shop the model does not provide that person with the means of starting in some new method of livelihood. At this point, we are discussing the issue and moving in the direction of finding ways in which the Fund (community)

can provide some sense of security for workers, as well as bearing some of the risks of business operation.

A third issue we ponder regards the rigidity of our model. At times we wonder if our model may be too strict to attract other businesses, and there are differences of opinion among us as to how flexible we should be in admitting other businesses. Although we ourselves are still in the process of examining the implications of our model, we are firm about certain principles basic to a zero-profit business. How do we relate to "alternative" businesses that may embrace some, but not all, of our principles? In what way, if any, can they participate in or contribute to the Fund? What prerequisites should exist regarding consensual membership?

In our urgency to effect societal change, it is easy to forget that *change* is a process. Writing an article such as this forces us to momentarily step outside our efforts and to view them with more perspective, more patience and hopefully, more persistence.

It is this kind of perspective that allows us not to be dumbfounded or defeated by frustration, fatigue or other stumbling blocks. It allows us to renew our energy and to plunge ahead, merging our ideas with the knowledge we have gained from experience. In essence, we are conducting an experiment. Each attempt to test theory through practice presents us with new situations, which in turn challenge that theory. The question than becomes one of perception—how to know how to stand firm and how to be flexible and open to new ideas and modifications.



Sustaining funds seem like a natural means of self-funding community. One of the bost models is the Eugene Sustaining Fund in Eugene, Oregon. The material is from their flyer, which is reduced in size.

THE EUGENE COMMUNITY MEETING **PARTICIPANTS IN**

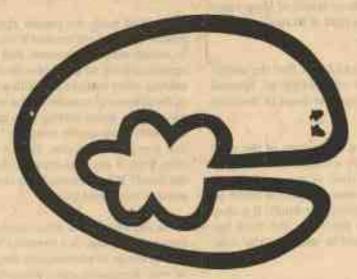
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Sugene Companity Sustaining Fund SEND ALL CORP. ESPONDENCE TO: Eugents, Oregon 97401

CSF meetings, last Tuesday, Community Meeting, first Tuesday, 454 Willamette St., 7:30 p.m. AND DON'T FORGET

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OUR FIRST YEAR





WHAT CSF IS

The Eugene Community Statistics Fund ended 1974, its limp foll year of extreme, with a history of slew bug storady accomplishment Duning the year, a storal of \$1,750 to wes collected by the Fund, of which \$2,327.70 was spend CSF contributions to community storage matter on \$2,275.00 or that amount while \$76.70, or \$3.74, was community and one receives any satisfactor by contributions on administration. No one receives any satisfactor payment for CSF work.

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HOW THE FUND WORKS

The articles of interporation set forth the purpose of the Sustaining Fund. To organize and sustain in abstractive community based on cropping or and personal modernments and support allumative community services. To out in CF enterth voluntary domains from many sources, parameter alternative journesses and their customers. Some meethants and a support of the price of their goods and services in Community Organ others as their customers for a voluntary contribution, while others domain descript trent these own income, (in December, week begans to urganize a coupon book good for

discounts at community states, the local will be sont for \$3.65 - a possible day 3.65 possible traphanning activities are encloseded.

A fine-therefore located administrate the funcness of the Sustaining hand Representatives are elected in consynar terms at the Community Meeting, the superprobables in August and three or following it a wardency occurs, a new representative associated at the resid Community Meeting. A new election for the postpare of any expresentative amount in hold of a recoil position agreed by 25 perglis a submitted.

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THE COMMUNITY MEETING

The Engine Costinuous Meeting is held the first logistic of each month, 454 williamitte. 7 Ag p.m. More than 30 gauge from the Community identity, which delives used as a union of services and organizations and alternative enterprises which delives used and personal chairs. For a lift, see both page 20 pm to everyone survives of the community the meeting with people shore information and plan cooperatively for the titure. The exercise care deal with any community concern, as well as COF Phot to patient in previous are notified by photos, as well as publicity throughout the community.

WHERE IT WENT...

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Community Health & Education Center \$0.00
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IT'S YOUR FUND

In the past war the Community Sustaining track has changed from a droper mice a resulty. It is beinged many strangiling group, borst dark thousand a strategy of the based with impoperated such their money or thousand are with impoperated such the continuous. It is a surely of the merchants which to continuous in CS (listed above) are think supporting the confirmation. If you think they be doing a good job, let them know by solling them and good job, let them know by solling them and good job, let them the solling them your hypothesis.

To deal with economic questions usually means capital resources. Raising it from within the community seems obviously preferable. The leader of one of the strongest urban ethnic communities in the country, Corky Gonzalez in Denver, maintains that if you can't develop the resources within, you should do without. But the Crusade for Justice forged a community out of the strong common bond of having faced oppression, and the shared values of a racial heritage. For the heterogeneous gringos among us, it remains to define community and you have to start someplace.

The Women's movement obviously has done some of that definition, so the development of feminist credit unions useful not only to women but also others working toward social change has been a strong, recent development.

The Feminist Economic alliance, (FEA) a national organization of feminist businesses and services, currently representing over \$2,000,000 in assets had formed. The Alliance is concerned with building a grassroots economic system through the Feminist Credit Unions and regional feminist enterprises. For more information contact:

Linda Maslanko, NY FFCU, 23 Cornelia St., NYC, 212 255-9664; and Susan Osborne, CFFCU, 170 York St., New Haven, CN, 203 777-6330.



In Minneapolis, one group chose the availability of federal funds to seek to take the tax money of the people and return it to the people.

Southside Community Enterprises

NEW TIMES

a monthly newsletter from Southside Community Enterprises



Advocates of cooperatives, community and employee-owned businesses usually think of the government as the last place to go for startup capital. In Minneapolis, Southside Community Enterprises, a non-profit, community development corporation, took the plunge and received \$75,000 in venture capital through Community Development Revenue Sharing. How SCE went about getting the funds, and some of the implications should provide some interesting insights for groups around the country wishing to develop community-based economic networks.

Southside Community Enterprises is a non-profit CDC, whose membership consists of people who live or work in South Minneapolis, a central city community of about 50,000. It is a kind of *People Development Company* that (1) employs community people (2) provides services to the neighborhoods (3) is owned by members of the community (as individuals, consumers in coops and workers). In its first year of oper-

ation, SCE provided financial assistance to three community businesses and technical assistance to another seven. Included were an employee-owned sewing factory, a native American construction company, an SCE owned commercial cleaning business, a worker-owned garage, and a native American cabinet making business. In addition, SCE is assisting four neighborhood groups to convert apartment buildings into cooperatives.

The key to SCE's ability to develop a significant economic base is the acquisition of venture capital. Venture capital, or front-end money, is in scarce supply these days for everybody but the bigshots. In low income communities, it is especially scarce. Without it banks won't look at a loan applicant. No money down, no money on time.

Cooperative stores and alternative businesses have raised capital through fund raising events, selling of shares, no-interest loans, and grants from rich relatives. None of these can be counted on to provide the kind of capital to really make a dent in a neighborhood's unemployment rate (though the Food Co-op system in Minnesota has demonstrated that it is possible to develop a mass marketing system with capitalization of the home-grown variety).

The community board of South-side Community Enterprises made an early decision that it would seek to build on a significant enough scale to make what the bureaucrats term an appreciable impact on unemployment in the community. The Board is currently discussing a three year goal of \$400,000—an amount that could be invested in five or more community based businesses, with a total of eighty to one hundred jobs created. Obviously, that kind of money has to come from external sources.

The decision to concentrate on getting a sizeable amount of venture capital leads to a second decision to approach the task politically. Politicians, more so than foundations, can be pressured. The CDC, as a community organization has the community base to do the pressuring. And the logical place to begin that job is the local level where aldermen have the important business of getting themselves elected every few years.

With these considerations in mind, SCE chose as its first funding target the locally administered Community Development Revenue Sharing Fund. The city of Minneapolis had 16.7 million dollars to divide up. The Housing Authority would get the bulk of it, and the rest would go to other community groups providing services to the community: child care, senior citizen advocacy, health care, recreation, and economic development. What's more; citizens groups in Minneapolis had mobilized to gain considerable say over what projects would get funded. Neighborhood elections had been held to elect a city-wide Revenue Sharing Advisory Committee that would review all proposals, prioritize them, and fight with the city to see that the priorities were ultimately accepted.

The organizing strategy suggested itself rather clearly from Minneapolis's particular set of circumstances. First, coalesce with the neighborhood groups, social service projects, etc., and elect some community control advocates to the City-Wide Advisory Committee. This done, educate the Committee on community-based and cooperative forms of development. Following the high rating that would result from an effective educational effort, lobby the City Council to make sure they abide by the citizen's recommendations, and appropriate the Revenue Sharing money accordingly.

SCE unfolded precisely this strategy at every stage. A coalition of progressive neighborhood groups calling itself the Grass Roots Caucus was organized and dominated neighborhood elections for the City Wide Committee from the Southside. Educational material and suggested criteria were sent to the specific subcommittee that reviewed economic development proposals. The Committee adopted SCE's suggested criteria for choosing between various development approaches; criteria that stressed cooperative forms of ownership and community based decision making. As a result, SCE got the highest rating of all economic development proposals and sailed through City Hall with nary a whimper.

So, should cooperatives, and community groups trying to build cooperative economics relate to the government? Was the \$75,000 (and

more that will be coming) worth the effort? What about the strings that come attached to government checks?

There are no categorical answers to these questions. SCE's experience indicates only that in one community a fairly radical experiment in economic self-determination got a handful of cash from the City government, and we learned some political lessons in the process. The capital that will go to community ventures, the new jobs created, the opportunities for learning more about how to create and nurture community enterprises are all positive offshoots of SCE's efforts.

But asked in the broader context of the tactics of resource gathering. these questions assume a more relative place. Ultimately the building of economically viable central city communities comes down to redistributing the wealth and power held by the corporate elite of the country. Short term tactics such as getting money from local government can be worthwhile only if they contribute to the creation of a politically conscious community organization. They can be self-defeating if the energy that goes into obtaining the cash comes at the direct expense of creating these kinds of organizations.

At Southside Community Enterprises, the jury is still out.

-Tom O'Connell

How you see the impact of government funding depends to a great extent on an analysis of social change in this country: SCEsees money flowing through certain channels and says, We want some of that for our purposes. First TUA in New Haven and then Strongforce in DC found an interested government agency whose interpretation of mental health ecompassed community approaches, redefinition of work and involvement in decisions governing one's life. Through NIMH's Center for the Study of Metropolitan Problems each received 3 year training grants for projects of their own design. It may seem far-fetched that a government agency concerned with mental health problems in our cities should be interested in creative, cooperative, anti-profit, feminist and communitarian approaches, but at least one analysis is - As we move beyond the rhetoric of social change to create real living and working styles, environments, institutions and communities, we are going to be of increasing interest to Americans, including on all levels of government. That interaction can be anything from useful to a disaster. But it shouldn't be all that surprising. Those of us living and working in cities are by nature interdependent with the society - whether that includes getting our garbage collected or creatively using tax money.

TUA connects the work of groups developing cooperative alternatives in the New Haven area. The program is funded for three years through an experimental training grant from the National Institute of Mental Health, Center for the Study of Metropolitan Problems. TUA supports projects in the areas of Child Care, Health, Communications, Education, Housing, Economics and Community Cooperation.

Each project forms an environment of group work and learning, with responsibility for the struggle shared by the participants. These environments help people prepare to live and work together for mutual well-being.

Governance of TUA is itself cooperative work, organized to maintain the preconditions for participants to feel in control, and to discover their own ability to meet their needs in non-oppressive ways. Solutions to problems are viewed in a non-violent perspective which puts the well being of people before money as the work grows. By supporting the development of projects relating to all aspects of urban living, TUA hopes to create new possibilities for living coherently in an urban community.

THE WORK GROUPS

CHILD CARE supports the development of coop child care centers through the work of the Child Care Task Force (Patricia Loving, 776-2010).

COMMUNICATIONS supports work at the Advocate Press involving community use and training on a Compugraphic Composer - and the development of a newsletter for the 5,000 member New Haven Food Coop. (At the Press, Vicki Guidici, 777-0900 / At the Coop, Robin Wood, 777-0587)

ECONOMICS supports the work of the Connecticut Feminist Federal Credit Union, a feminist savings and loan coop. CFFCU works to provide economic self-help for individuals and coop groups. (Susan Osborne or Karen Moore, 777-6330)

EDUCATION supports the work of the New Haven Street & Children's Theatre in their work within and without schools. The Education Task Force is a working group supportive to innovative groups. Judy at 389,0131

ENTRANCE & FACILITATION supports the work of the Community Cooperative (CO) a working group on cooperative process and community building. Concentrating on communal housing support, the development of a restaurant, coop play, puts out a monthly calendar and has supported the struggle of single parents, but is open to any coop approach which will empower people in important areas of their lives. Offers workshops, including opportunities to live communally on an experimental basis. (Don, Deborah, Liz, John, Peggy, Paul, Rita, 776-0451)

HEALTH supports the work of Women's Health Education in developing workshops and helps in the ongoing work of several women's health projects. (Rosemarie at 878-3716 or Mickey at 776-9658) HOUSING supports the work of People Acting for Change (PAC) in building block associations in a ghetto area, and in the development of a Tool Cooperative. (Robin Lee at 787-3626)

STRUCTURE OF TUA

Work Groups are the funded projects which operate in the seven areas of the grant. Their work is what TUA is really about, and their structure, objectives, methods and membership are self-determined. Each group has full authority over its work, subject only to fulfilling a minimum level of responsibilities to the project as a whole.

The Minimum Amount of Work (MAW) is an agreement between the working groups to responsibly document their work, be fiscally accountable and provide a minimum level of ongoing cooperative participation to support the coordinative efforts of the AWG:

The Administrative Work Group (AWG) is a management cooperative, working to maintain the integrity of the project. Membership is open, contingent on participation in ongoing work tasks, and usually of about eight people. Specific functions are to facilitate information flow within the project; coordinate the MAW; deal with the administrative and fiscal questions of the grant; provide liason to NIMH and general publicity; make recomendations on policy issues to the Community Advisory Board.

The Community Advisory Board (CAB) is the forum for policy. It now meets quarterly, although special meetings can be called. All significant decisions are by consensus. CAB membership is the AWG, two representatives from each working area and other community particapants.

Task Forces are ad-hoc groups gathered once a year from among people involved in the development of cooperative alternatives. They set priorities for TUA funding in each project area. Each Task Force solicits, encourages and discusses proposed projects from community groups, then passes on its priorities and reccomendations to the CAB for approval. In some cases, Task Forces have ongoing work responsibilities.

A TUA office, meeting and workshop space is maintained at 829 Orange Street in New Haven, with a telephone (776-0451) and an answering machine. Each project has \$420 per month salary and \$128 for program development, travel and materials (lots of luck). The grant is for slightly more than \$60,000 per year.

Although the Administrative Work Group operates in an increasingly collective manner, there remain some designated work responsibilities. Members of the AWG and their functions are: Dennis Pearson (publications) Ginny Bales (project co-director) Heather Tunis, Lee Kane (program coordinator) Marcia Holly (finances) Mike Vozick (documentation) Paul Freundlich (project co-director). Outside evaluation of TUA: Linn Shapiro and Phil Werdell.

STRONGFORCE

Criteria for Loans

1 BUSINESSES SHOULD BE ANTI-PROFIT

When we speak of anti-profit businesses, we mean that the primary intention of the business is to serve the community, not to make a profit. In capitalist America, most businesses place the drive for profit above the well-being of people. Any surplus funds that are generated by anti-profit businesses should either be shared with community projects, should be shared with the consumer by lowering prices, should be used for enlarging stock, etc. Surplus funds should not be hoarded by individual members of the business collective although cost of living wage increases should be provided.



2. BUSINESSES SHOULD BE DEMOCRATICALLY MANAGED BY THE WORKERS

We believe that workers are most satisfied when they are their own bosses by making decisions in businesses in a collective manner. Recent studies in America, such as the HEW report Work in America conclude that a great deal of worker alienation is present in America today due to a lack of worker control over management and profits. Most businesses in capitalist America today are very similar to the military with a precise chain of command. We seek to help create businesses that are democratically operated by the workers giving everyone a say in their workplace and thus more control over their lives.



3 RUSINESS MEETINGS SHOULD BE OPEN TO THE COMMUNITY

We feel that the idea of community-worker control is very important. Businesses should have regular public meetings as a channel for community input in decision making. Worker control is most important, but if workers close out the rest of the community they can become isolated in their outlook.



4 BUSINESS FINANCIAL RECORDS SHOULD BE AVAILABLE FOR THE PUBLIC

5. BUSINESSES SHOULD BE ECONOMICALLY VIABLE AND CAPABLE OF REPAYING LOANS

Our \$20,000 community fund is loaned so that a constant supply of funds is available for new alternative businesses. All loans are 100% repayable in monetary terms. Interest is negotiable and we seek to explore alternative ways of interest. Printing collectives can perhaps print leaflets instead of paying interest monetarily. Additional youth worker-apprentices can substitute for monetary interest, such as was done with our loan to Stone Soup. We seek to be flexible and arrive at terms that are not forced on businesses, but are mutually agreed to by both of us.



6. RUSINESSES SHOULD PROVIDE A NEEDED SERVICE OR PRODUCT TO THE COMMUNITY

Since our fund are limited, we wish to concentrate on helping businesses that meet important needs of the community. Essential items such as food, clothing, etc. are given priority over luxury items. Community businesses should serve practical community needs.



7. BUSINESSES SHOULD SHARE SKILLS AND RESOURCES WITH PEOPLE IN THE COMMUNITY AND SHOULD TAKE YOUTH APPRENTICES

In profit-oriented businesses, skills are often not shared with the community. Skills are kept secret and are religated to "licensed professionals" so competition will be more effective. Patents keep new ideas secret, isolated and controlled. We believe that alternative businesses should help share their talents with everyone in the community. In this manner people in the community become more knowledeable and grow. Business operation become simple, so businesses can be operated by anyone. Fields of Plenty shop with its rotating coordinators serves as not only a business, but as an educational center for the community. Skills can also be shared with volunteers, through classes, etc. It is also important that alternative businesses that we help fund accept young people (14-21) as members of the worker collective. Not only can young people learn valuable skills in this way, but the whole process of alternative political economy and lifestyles is shared with future generations in a realistic manner, when it is practical. Strongforce will assist alternative businesses in setting up such youth skill-sharing programs and will help locate young



8. BUSINESSES SHOULD ESTABLISH THEIR MEANS OF PRODUCTION AS COMMUNITY ASSETS.

Often if a capitalist business is successful financially it may be sold by its owner(s) for a profit. We are not interested in assisting such a process. If the people who help establish an alternative business leave, new members of the community should take over the operations. We do not believe in private ownership of businesses or property. Our present economic system, that is based on private property, has encouraged Americans to rob valuable resources from all over the world and live in luxury, while many starve. We hope soon that America will have a new economic system that is more cooperative and less selfish with the world's resources. Businesses should be incorporated with a statement in their bylaws that the assets of the business will be community assets. Royalties for any publication, recording, film, or like media funded by Strongforce over and above the budgeted overhead, loan repayments and staff wages will be treated as a



9. BUSINESSES SHOULD DEMONSTRATE COMMITMENT TO ANTI-SEXIST, ANTI-RACIST, ANTI-CAPITALIST PRINCIPLES AND SHOULD ACTIVELY BE INVOLVED IN POLITICAL EDUCATION

Cheaper prices should not be over-emphasized instead of the more important aspects of the businesses such as their anti-profit nature, worker control, quality products and services, community ownership, etc. Businesses should take anti-racist, anti-sexist and anti-capitalist positions in the community or else our ef forts for social change will be limited



2121 Decatur Place, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20008 - (202) 234-6883 or 234-6947

We don't have maps for Milwaukee, Wisconsin or Cincinatti, Ohio, but we do have presentations which give some sense of intentionality in those cities, and which raise some questions as well.

Milwaukee Reports leo Reiss

The city of Milwaukee, like most other large cities, is the result of many movements and forces which have occurred over the course of its history. Milwaukee, for example, is unusual in that its government was led by Socialists from 1910 all the way into 1960.

The "counter-culture" in Milwaukee has also been characterized by a unique set of developments and influences. During the 1960's many different groups and movements existed, often unaware or unconnected to each other-"hippies", political activists, religious activists and so on. Some political lobbying/activist groups still exist, such as the Wisconsin Alliance and the Milwaukee Alliance of Concerned Citizens. However for the purposes of this article, I am going to concentrate on co-ops in Milwaukee. It seems as though over the years, many "counter-culture" groups and some "establishment" groups have found a common purpose and a common vision, in working to develop co-operatives. The rationale for this seems to be that once all the rhetoric is said and done, we still need to develop specific structures which will fulfill our basic needs in a human way and carry out our common philosophical goals. Co-ops seem to be the most feasible route to achieve these objectives; control over one's economic and social environment, personal interaction and interdependence, bridging gaps between different segments of society.

In the late 60's a number of attempts were made at developing food co-ops. They all failed. They failed for the same reason that co-ops always fail: poor management, weak financing, no member education, no resource reserves, no rapport between store and neighborhood. In one case, the store folded because a group let political ideology get in the way of maintaining a good store and began restricting and losing members.

Following this period of failure, Milwaukee began to see the establishment of a number of stable (and hopefully successful) co-ops, based on knowledge so dearly gained by previous experience. Among the existing co-ops are:

CRAFT-RAFT CO-OP, which was begun through the efforts of a group of nuns, in their attempts to deal with the forces which were tearing apart the near Southside of Milwaukee. It is a producer co-op where neighborhood people sell their handcrafted gifts.

CENTRAL CITY CO-OP, an optical co-op, whose membership is mostly black. It is a form of local self-help, without government financing which at the same time attempts to deal with some of the developmental, visual problems that confront "disadvantaged" children.

GORDAN PARK FOOD CO-OP is a neighborhoop store which was taken over from the previous owners when they retired. It is now owned and operated by local people from the neighborhood.

OUTPOST NATURAL FOODS CO-OP is the largest food co-op in Milwaukee with over 2,000 members dealing specifically with natural, organic foods.

Other co-ops include: MILWAUKEE CO-OP FOODS* BITS & PIECES FOOD CO-OP* MILWAUKEE COMMITTEE FOR CABLE COMMUNICATIONS* housing co-ops and day care/baby-sitting co-ops.

Based on the experience of co-ops in Austin, Texas, Madison, Wisconsin and other "co-op cities" we began to recognize the necessity of having a coalition of co-ops, or a "co-op of co-ops" where ideas could be traded on mutual concerns and goals. As a result various people from the "co-op movement" in Milwaukee began coming together to lay the groundwork for Milwaukee Area Co-operative Services [MACS]. Although still in its formative stages, we have found MACS a valuble asset to the community. It has been able to take up many of the educational tasks which often get neglected by the individual co-ops. MACS is also fostering the development of an "energy co-op", which hopefully will soon be supplying families with heating

Perhaps the greatest benefit of MACS is that it provides a link between the 'new

wave', urban co-ops and the older, well-established farmer co-ops which have a strong tradition in Wisconsin. For example, Equity Co-op in East Troy provided Gordan Park with a large, interest-free loan and Midland Co-op has provided much of the expertise and some of the resources for development of the energy co-op.

Of course problems exist in the development of co-ops. In conclusion let me mention just three.

One, how do we maintain an enduring successful co-op without sacrificing local control? In other words, how do we guarantee that control remains in the hands and interests of the people rather than a small, dedicated, but aggressive group?

Two, how big should co-ops or any organization be? Art Danforth of CULSA once commented that "co-ops must be big enough to dent conglomerates and monopolies and not just little buying clubs, although those are alright in their own frame of reference." I would tend to agree with Danforth, but at the same time I would really hate to lose sight of the beauty of localism and decentralism. I think Danforth feels the same. It would be terrible to lose the personal aspect which has been a traditional characteristic of the newer co-ops, as well as the older, farmer co-ops. Schumacher comments on this in Small is Beautiful: "the fundamental task is to achieve smallness within large organization" (pp 228); in other words to develop the right scale or organization for the project undertaken.

Three. This is not really a problem, but rather a matter of attitudes. Whether we like it or not, co-ops are businesses and they have to survive as businesses, within certain reasonable and moral limits, of course. In regard to this last point, I will close by quoting a local food co-op manager:

"They (co-ops) are very small businesses and have no leverage whatsoever in the wholesale market...Co-ops (in Milwaukee) have the image of a bunch of hippie kids playing store...Co-ops are a way of doing business that involves consumer control. What is different about a co-op, even if it looks like Kohl's (a large Milwaukee food store chain), is who controls the assets...a co-op can be an asset to a neighborhood as it can recycle dollars back into the community."

Cincinatti Reports

MARK REEVE

What is happening in Cincinnati? An average Midwestern city, on the banks of the Ohio River, with a German and Catholic heritage—little exists to make this city of half a million people stand out geographically or culturally.

Over the past five years we have seen the number of communal houses grow from a few hippy crashpads to several dozen stable neo-families of six to twelve people each. The story is the same here as, I suppose, in many other cities. People have grown discontent with the anonymity of the city: They have grown discontent, too, with the existing choices: expensive houses in the distant suburbs or shoddily built apartments in a complex of hundreds of units all just alike. Yet the city has much to offer: culture, diversity, and convenience. There is work to be done in the city, too, and the social conscience of many will not allow them to abandon the city people to their plight.

Cincinnati is a city of beautiful houses in its old, close-in, residential areas. Some areas have become radical-chic and liberal enclaves with rehabbed onebedroom apartments renting for\$300 and up in Mt. Adams (Cincy's attempt at Greenwich Village) and 80 year old homes selling for \$50,000 in Clifton. But many majestic houses, with ceramic tiled fireplaces and stained glass windows, exist in areas with a ghetto reputation. The aesthetic attraction of these old houses, and the privacy afforded by their spaciousness, has been a facilitative factor in the rapid growth of the communal movement in Cincinnati.

It is in this ecological nitch of the city-large inexpensive houses in rundown neighborhoods-that many communal houses have sprouted. As in most cities, the communards have been almost entirely white and fairly young. (I would judge the largest cluster of ages to be 23 to 33.) People got together around what I would expect are the typical focal points: a Unitarian Church, a Friend's Meeting, and various political projects. In particular, Peacemakers, a 25 year old anarchopacifist group which has published its newspaper from the Cincy area for many years has been a focal point for several communities, including one in nearby Gano, Ohio. The house in Gano was subjected to IRS seizure last year because of the tax resistance efforts of the last remaining residents, Ernest and Marion

Bromley, and the Peacemaker Movement. The house has since been returned to Marion and Ernest following disclosure of the illegal surveillance activities of the IRS, FBI, and other federal agencies. (the peacemaker will put you on their sample mailing list for free; write 1255 Paddock Hills Av., 45229.)

Several food coops exist in the city, with the largest of the natural food coops now having a membership in the hundreds. [Cincinnati Food Coop, 245 East McMillan Av., 45219). A collectively-run vegetarian restaurant, Seventh House (1028½ Delta Av., 45208), has been successful enough to open a second restaurant, and a bakery which spun off from the restaurant is also doing quite well.

Two free schools provide alternative education for Cincinnati young people. The New School, #3 Burton Woods Lane, 45229, provides a unique meld of Montessori and "free school" curricula for preschool and elementary school people. The New School Learning Workshop has begun manufactory and marketing nationally Montessori learning materials for preschool and elementary levels.

New Morning, the high school, has nearly been killed by its own success. It has been in existence for four and a half years. After its first two years as a "school without walls", the Cincinnati Public Schools picked up the design, along with three of the seven staff members and many of the students. Since then independent New Morning has been beset with high staff turn-over and low enrollment. Meanwhile it is apparent that the public school version has watereddown the original radical design of New Morning, demonstrating once again the ability of "the system" to adapt and coopt under pressure. New Morning can be reached at 65 West McMillan Av., 45219.

Access to the media is a key in creating a new society. WAIF, community radio, 1.6 kilowatts at 83.3 FM, provides direct and real access to radio for people and organizations who do not have access to the existing broadcast media and cannot afford to buy it. Music on the station runs the gamut: blues, bluegrass, jazz, folk, classical, Indian, Japanese, and some that defies categorization. With the largest radio broadcast studio in the city, live performances are a regular part of the programming.

But WAIF is also a forum for issues

affecting people's lives. Local issues are given particular emphasis on news and commentary programs. And then there is just plain entertainment: science fiction readings, poetry, humor, cooking, and so on.

WORT in Madison, Wisconsin came on the air about the same time as WAIF. WYSO in Yellow Springs, Ohio has been on the air for years. There are others, particularly on the coasts. Together these stations form an informal network of "people's radio stations."

The "regulars" around the station are there to help people produce their programs. "How To Get It On" is a booklet prepared to assist the nonprofessional who has something to say, play, do, or tell.

While the station has pursued foundation funding and other sources of major funding, the "mere lack of money" has not been a major deterrent to putting the station on the air. The staff of WAIF is (at this writing) entirely volunteer. Support comes from the community—the friends who listen—and the station goes on. WAIF can be reached by writing Stepchild Radio of Cincinnati, Inc., 2525 Victory Parkway, 45206.

No formal ties exist among these alternative institutions, communal houses, and the various left-ish political groups in Cincinnati. Few people have felt the need for such an organization, and a climate of individualistic anarchism here probably inhibits the growth of such formal organizational ties anyhow.

Yet the "counter-culture" community here is close. In many ways Cincinnati is a small town. Friends see one another frequently: shopping at the food coop, in women's (and more recently men's) consciousness raising and support groups, study groups, picking up offspring at the New School. And, of course, most recently we have begun to hear one another on WAIF! Perhaps because it is too small to afford them, there have been no major "ideological splits" in Cincinnati, and even "personality conflicts" have caused remarkably little deterrent to the general growth of the movement here.

I believe it is to the "average cities" such as Cincinnati—cities without major universities and without large liberal establishments—to which we must carry the struggle for change. If we did as well in other cities as we have in Cincinnati, the movement would be doing well indeed.

The issue began with a warning that there wouldn't be much about our relation to the universe nor our personal development. In Toronto, a working community [a hard working one...I washed dishes in their restaurant when I visited] sees personal growth and interpersonal struggle as the positive, crucial basis for serious social change.

Toronto Report

Bill Holloway

One of the goals of our commune in Toronto is to stimulate the growth of humanistic community around us. We have yet to learn how to begin this task, and we are still asking the question: How can a humanistic urban commune effect the surrounding area?

We currently do have an effect on the public in that they know that our two successful downtown vegetarian restaurants are collectively owned and operated, but their interpretation of this fact leaves them far from knowing what our commune is all about.

The public has its own notions of what is "obvious", and this closed system of thought acts like blinders. Their first question is "How do you make sure you won't get ripped off?" They can't conceive of the idea that "collective" means no one is into ripping off to the degree that s/he can't be confronted on his or her exploitativeness. To them, it is obvious that every human being is unchangeably individualistic, selfish and untrustworthy. Of course, it is their real experience that tells them this. So in the context of their obvious, our "sharing" must be a better way of being, like them, out for ourselves, and doing essentially the same as they are but in a slightly modified form. In their context, we must have numerous bureaucratic rules and contracts to guarantee that no one "shares" less than others. Or we must be in a totally different world from them; we must be silly, selfless, religious people who bliss out and have no individuality.

It's very difficult to impress upon people who are locked into the conventional obvious that we are not merely pulling off a shared exploitativeness (which they would condone) through a kind of group capitalism and a new form of group marriage. We haven't yet made concrete to them the concept of developing a responding character, and the necessity of doing it. We haven't yet got across to them the non-bureaucratic nature of our cooperative living and working, and the extent to which it's based on freedom and trust. We don't know yet how to put in their terms the depth of the changes we've had to make in ourselves to begin our community developing—much less the meaning this has for their lives. Even if they do get an inkling of what we are talking about, they say it's idealist and impossible; the good old obvious does its job again.

We want to become able to instigate the realization that not only is a limited degree of economic cooperativeness possible, but also full respect, knowledge and trust among people can be produced. Human relationships, in a radical humanistic context, can replace government and moralism.

On a very limited scale, we are beginning to do this beyond our own group. We've been selling hundreds of copies of our newspaper Alternative to Alienation in our restaurants, many of them to middle-aged family types, professionals and businesspeople. Probably the Toronto dailies will carry more articles about us, and perhaps we can get more into them than just the mention that we are a collective.

For those who go so far as to join the commune, we are an educational center leading to a new life-experience. It is the direct contact occurring in the commune that stimulates this development, and in the future I hope our direct contact with people can expand. Possible projects in this regard include a humanistic liberation educational/community center and a local weekly newspaper. We want to instigate ideas and activities which get people together and provide situations in which they can begin to change themselves.

In order to do this, we must each have the capacity to spontaneously relate to people who might be quite different from ourselves. We need to overcome our own self-alienation as fully as possible and become strong and sensitive enough to do this kind of work effectively.

The thrust of our communal lifestyle and philosophy is developing the capacity to relate, through which trust becomes the basis of social organization. We know from our experience in this group of 40 people that this is not a hopeless ideal, but also we know that the complex, long, slow process of change toward a cooperative character is extremely difficult and is not for the faint-hearted. With that in

mind, the idea of effecting people outside our commune seems rather remote, but the point is that it too will take a lot of work and persistence.

In our working at changing character, we confront the inner feelings, in ourselves or in others, which we notice expressed in behavior or symbols, and we bring out the relationships of the feelings to the character, seeing how unresolved feelings and continued withdrawal result in further self-alienation. Confrontations occur when one person feels that another is unconscious of character dynamics which are working against inner strength, activeness, individuality, cooperation and spontaneity. Confrontation should be done for the benefit of the person being confronted. It should include working through the feelings resulting from the confrontation by bringing them out fully.

Other means such as yoga and deep massage to work on body tension and character armor are used by people in the commune. We are concerned about developing ways of getting ourselves out of our intellectual control and into our spontaneity and feelings. We stress the subjective side, and feel that if objectivity is separated from emotions, it is destructive. Becoming rooted in the emotional side, the moon side, our intuition and feelings, is the most natural way for humans to be, and is the way we can become moral in the most radical sense without needing to follow an externallyimposed morality. In this way our community will be based on responsibility and trust rather than on government and

Our living and working situation encourages spontaneity and freedom. None of us are paired off in exclusive relationships, and we try to relate openly to everyone else in the commune. As well as sharing ourselves, we share virtually all our material things. We rarely hold meetings, and when we do, it is usually to confront non-productive group character dynamics. We have no bureaucratic organization to get things done, and we rely on individual responsiveness.

Individual work on character is extremely important. We place great emphasis on self-education and self-development, encouraging people to develop useful skills which will bring them closer emotionally to others. We also encourage people to work on centering themselves and developing concentration. The goal is to become able to work freely and with feeling at any job needing to be done.

In our vegetarian restaurants, which are presently our only means of support, we work with a mixture of voluntary scheduling and flexibly responding to particular situations. Everyone in the commune works in the restaurants, some more, some less, according to how they feel, and most people help with publishing Alternative to Alienation. We encourage everyone to learn and do all the different jobs in the restaurant and with the newspaper, and to take on a sense of responsibility-it's our restaurant, and we do not have managers or policymakers to take over in place of everyone else's activeness.

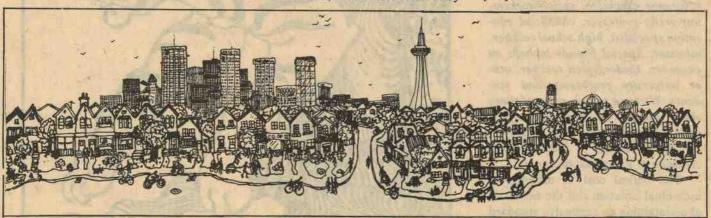
Yet with all the encouragement, the

opportunity, and the freedom of our structureless environment, character liberation is still difficult. Our rootedness in the emotional mud of the past is relatively secure. In the end, it is up to each person to get him or herself out, with help from their friends. A committment and constant effort to become responsive and giving is necessary. Responsiveness is freed from its restrictions by a consciousness of letting go; letting go of externalized identities and the desires to be reflected and substantiated in others, and letting go of our safety walls.

A related self has no walls. We are individual initiators and separate, yet we are in one anothers' worlds. As conscious, living organisms, we need an environment of vibes which allow our growth and freedom but give us contact. The related solution does not in any way imply a loss of individuality or sacrificing our own feelings or needs in order to "respond" to others. It means opening our consciousness and activeness to include those around us, so we can be included by them and be able to make more of ourselves by applying our individuality to creating the physical and emotional environment we need.

As we move further along this path, we are able to do more. We've just started a typesetting business, which moves us closer to publishing more and gives us more work. As the commune evolves and the people discover that there is no mother to take the place of our own responsiveness, we trust our energy, our initiative, and our effect, both among ourselves and beyond the commune wil increase.

The Alternative commune welcomes people who want to learn more concretely about us by visiting. We are open to new members, and recommend staying with us for a short time in order to get a feeling of our community and analyze goals and values. Come to the Spice of Life Restaurant at 830 Yonge St., Toronto, write Box 46, Stn M, Toronto M6S, or phone [416]961-7315 or 925-8908.



In Greensboro, North Carolina, a community which in many ways is dealing with same whole lot going on in Greensboro. problems as are we all, has at least two removed - why and with whom.

beth mckee & pat conover

We are intentionally a small Christian urban community, living in Greensboro, North Carolina. Most of us have been friends for years, dreaming occasionally of a network of relationships built upon common beliefs, hopes and efforts to serve people. The dreams developed momentum and we declared ourselves to be serious about forming a commun-

There was consensus almost immediately about the form such a community would take, for the inter-

section of the directions of our lives made it clear that we would remain in our families and our professional careers. Now, however, we would have new family relationships, new energies for those careers, new expression for the common hope in Jesus Christ. We would be a church, with a covenant before God to a lifetime sharing interpersonally, materially, responsibly. On May 5, 1975, the seven of us became Shalom.

Like a lot of Southern, sort of medium-sized cities, there's not a

There's a Friend's Free School in town...an on and off Food Coop. There is a more radical, political kind of thing happening here which Shalom doesn't have much interest in-not because we're opposed, but we don't see it as effective.

All of us had been raised in church-going homes, and we reacted with varying degrees of dissatisfaction to the Sunday church-goers and manuevering church leaders that are part of the average church. We felt that most church folk are not the 'people set apart," the people sharing deeply with each other and working with hope towards God's Kingdom on earth as we felt the true church should be.

If we'd like to we could start a 69

couple other things like Shalom. We'd rather have it grow in that sense than have it get bigger and bigger.

Because we're lifetime covenant members, we feel we can tolerate a lot of people being on our margins, without making them declare whether they're in or out. People can sort out their relationship...take it at their own pace. In fact, we've tried to make sure we did not attract more covenant members than we know what to do with. It takes a lot of energy to take any one person seriously.

Although some of us would have preferred a rural environment, our expertise and training are predominately in the helping professions. We were unwilling to relinquish this committment to serving human needs in ways consistent with being close to an urban center: insurance executive, social workers, university professor, childhood education specialist, high school teacher, minister. Special friends include an engineer, kindergarten teacher, other university professors and students. We hope to turn some of these skills towards a common effort, rather than all remaining employed by the "outside": But we will continue to use these resources.

The typical cost of urbanity is individual isolation and the necessity of maintaining an expensive standard of living. We have rediscovered friendship rather than acquaintanceship. We have given up geographical and some aspects of professional mobility, but we have overcome anomie, anonymity and alienation, or are moving in such a healing direction.

Our collective isolation in Greensboro is reduced by the many networks we participate in or are aware of. Shalom is a member of Intercommunities, a network of a dozen strong communes and intentional communities, primarily in Virginia and North Carolina; connected to Well-Being, a network of Christian individuals and groups; have newsletter or personal contact with a variety of Christian communities in the South; swim in a vast sea of infor-Ill mation and publications...catalogs,



underground newspapers, PYP's, books, pamphlets and magazines... far more than we can assimilate. Awareness that several movements around the country are in high gear provides a certain kind of morale and identity that's hard to understand, but easy to appreciate.

We're also moving toward a longterm solution to a more spacious setting by having bought some beautiful land within easy commuting distance of Greensboro. We walked numerous pieces of land and talked for many hours about personal preferences until we found the perfect purchase.

It took only two days for all to agree, for we had learned in the walking what each other wanted. The money was decided easily too, for each put in as much as possible from savings and income. Other decisions about what to build and interim living arrangements, and how to get along when we all do live in one place [we're presently divided in several households] will be more difficult. But consensus will come; the committment to making community work for each individual and for the whole is strong. It is our whole lives.

The changes we are going through are profound. We are tested every day to the limits of our prior conditioning. We are in a situation of constant potential overload because the impulse is to rationalize our lives according to newly won insights. For those of us in community in urban America, there remain significant areas beyond our control, where we will be, perforce, interdependent with a society which goes along stubbornly operating our of hierarchy and chauvenism. That means we will continue to be torn between developing our own internally consistant systems, and struggling in the free market place of ideas for political and economic power [knowing of course that on questions of any importance, institutional power blocs use every kind of manipulation to reduce that free market place to abstract theory.]

Well, we have our own problems. Consensus and cooperation can be hard disciplines. Sometimes it's difficult to remember why we're going through so much struggle. Sometimes the absurdity of the human condition or the awareness of other's more dramatic plights take us out of our continuity. Sometimes we just get tired.

The only reason I think we have a chance is that like the folks at Shalom, we have our whole lives. If we can't answer all those overwhelming questions at once, then there is much to sustain us, including those occassions when we can look around at our co-workers, families, tribes, communities and say, 'We've done something. It's real'

In Black Elk Speaks, the Oglala Sioux medicine man is working through his visions with one part of the tribe, while on the other side of the hill, the rest are being wiped out by the US Cavalry. Seven years ago, reading that book, I doubted whether it was possible to experience that richness in the USA [I'd already seen some of it in Africa and Latin America]. Now I know it can happen, but the dues may include being wiped out by the Cavalry.

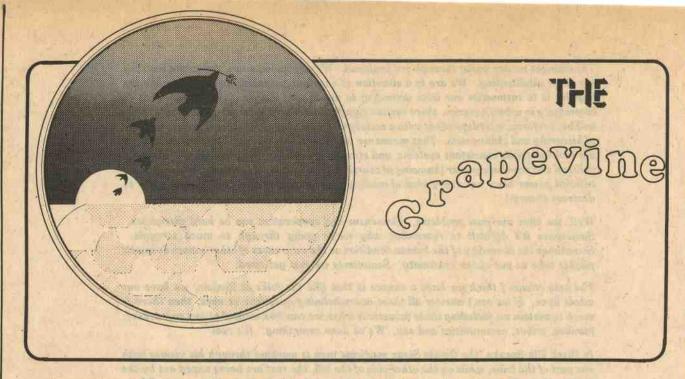
So it goes something like this: We need situations in which to break prior conditioning [cooperatives, communes, collectives]. By working together in a new practice we develop a structural and personal understanding of our new world [community]. The ways we relate to this new world are our culture. The events which become emphasized and agreed upon as significant take on a symbolic content [ritual] and that symbology relates the culture to the universe [and we might even derive a religion].

If we're to do it successfully, it will be with great attention to scale: There is a size which is appropriate for any communal extended family, tribe, community, working group; the point at which the organism has a life of its own, but not too large to oppress the needs of its individual components....

That's enough rap. The real contentment/challenge is to do it. Ive enjoyed guest editing this issue of Communities. Rather than take me out of my community, the experience has extended the form within which it's possible to work and play — to live an unreasonably full life as a human being.

With special recognition to some of the human beings who didn't write for this issue but certainly influenced it: Corky Gonzalez in Denver; Susan Osborne of the Feminist Economic Alliance; Reverand Embry Rucker, Pat Kane and the late Rodney Smith in Reston, Virginia; Millicent Freundlich in Safety Harbor, Florida and Tim Lavelle, formerly of Agua Caliente, El Salvador.





Alternate Current, Miccosukee Land Cooperative Route 7, Box MLC Tallahassee, FL 32303

Two tips selected from the MLC newsletter #24:

1 • "Council encourages MLC members to transfer savings and checking account to Capital City First National Bank. To get our big mortgage loan (\$125,000 at 10% on the declining balance), we pledged Capital City we would get them \$20,000 in new accounts."

2° Tom Kelley wrote an article inspired by looking thru a copy of Biological Control by Natural Enemies, by Paul DeBach, and said, "...Mainly what I want to point out is the desirability of allowing a significant area of land to remain under natural vegetation.... If you eliminate a particular flower from the environment (by either eliminating the natural vegetation or by keeping it mowed(you may eliminate the food necessary for the survival of a particular wasp which controls a particular insect which could become a pest in your garden....Many predaceous and parasitic wasps require free water for their survival. So if you keep a shallow dish of water in your garden you will keep them around and also our friends the toads."

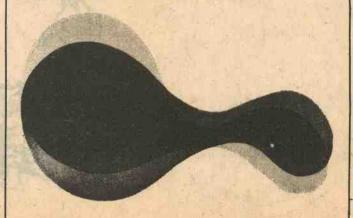
Arcosanti, c/o Cosanti Foundation 6433 Doubletree Road Scottsdale, AZ 85253 [602] 948-6145

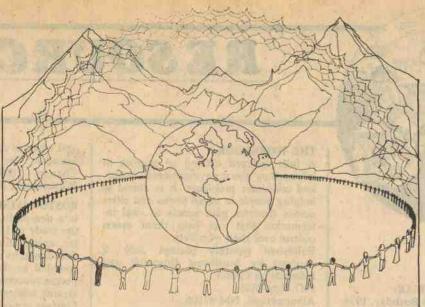
Arcosanti is a large-scale but compact urban structure (20 stories high, covering 10 acres) designed eventually to serve the living/working needs of 3,000 people. Heavy construction in reinforced concrete has been proceeding since 1971 under the direction of the urban architact Paolo Soleri. So far more than 1500 people have contributed time and money on the construction site, and 15—30 people live permanently at the site, with others coming for 6 week periods on workshops. The Arcosanti site, at Cordes Junction on I-17 60 miles north of Phoenix, may be visited daily from 9 AM to 5 PM, and the Cosanti Foundation grounds in Scottsdale are open during the daylight hours. No overnight visitors without prior arrangement. Workshop information/application 50 cents. (See Communities #11, P. 32; #15, P. 26)

Ananda Apprentice Program

Ananda Cooperative Village is again offering its Apprentice Program, and opportunity for serious seekers to participate in the spiritual activities of the community and to work with Ananda members. The 1976 program will run from May 1 through Sept. 31. Areas of apprenticeship include carpentry (rough, finish & cabinet), biodynamic gardening, organic dairy, publishing, beekeeping, mechanics, welding, maintenance and repair, foodstore work, healing, work with children, and vegetarian cooking. Apprentices will live as group within a small tent village within the community, take their meals together and handle chores cooperatively. There will be a strong emphasis on group spiritual practice (meditation 3 times and postures twice a day, with evening satsangs and classes) and on learning to live a balanced life of meditation and selfless service. Those accepted are expected to be on a spiritual path (though not necessarily our own) and to practice meditation. Apprentices will need to bring tent and sleeping bag, and clothes suitable for the work they are doing. Minimum length of stay will be 2 months, and cost will be \$90 per month.

Because there will be many more applicants then places, preference will be given to those applicants who show the greatest interest and willingness, and who are able to come for atleast 2 months—especially if they are coming with the intention of working toward potential membership. We want to attract energy for specific areas of learning and working, and so will be looking for those who want to learn a particular skill. For further information and application forms, write Prakash, Ananda Box 900, Alleghany Star Route, Nedada City, CA 95959





When this country was established, it was envisioned as the light and hope of the world, as a place where any of the world's people could gather and live in freedom.

Admission to this gathering and all food and services will be Absolutely Free. No selling please! There is no electricity at the gathering, but acoustic music is completely welcome. There will likely be insect pests. Pennyroyal oil & greens, tansey or eucalyptus are good as natural repellents. There are absolutely no dogs allowed in the park.

Come first to the contact center (see map) for directions to the parking area and any last minute news. We will begin to gather at the base camp on June 15th. If you come this early, have it together to help set up the kitchens, parking, greeters, a center for newcomers, supply depots (for food, tools & materials), Kid City, alternative energy demonstrations, herbal & Western medical stations, puppet theatres, fire-watch, Shanti Sena, a Public Library, a bakery, a Community Diaper Service, etc.

The hike into the base camp

RAINBOW FAMILY TRIBAL GATHERING

on july 1, 1976, at waterton-glacier international peace park there is going to be a gathering for all people of the invitation reads:

we, who are Brothers & sisters, children of humankind, calling ourselves rainbow pamily tribe, humbly invite all races, peoples, tribes, communes, men, women, & children. -- out of love.

all nations & national leaders - out of respect.
all religions & religious leaders - out of faith.
all politicians -- out of charity.

to join with us in gathering together for the purpose of expressing our sincere beside that there shall be peace on earth, harmony among all people, and to council to betermine the paths & ways whereby we may be able to live in preedom, and to hold open, worship, prayer, chanting or whatever is the want or beside of the people for there bays, but upon the fourth bay of july at noon to ask that there be a meditative, contemplative silence wherein we, the invited people of the world, may consider and give honor & respect to anyone or anything that has aided in the positive evolution of humankind & nature on this, our most beloved & beautiful world -- asking blessing on we people of the world in hope that we people can effectively proceed to evolve, expand, & live in harmony and peace.

amen -

is more than half a mile. Nights will almost certainly be cold. It'd be a good idea to bring plenty of warm sleeping gear, rain protection, adequate footwear, water containers, a bowl to eat out of, food enough for your stay and extra food to share with others.

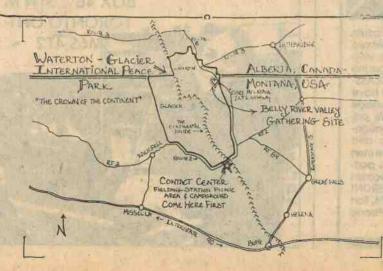
In the tool department we will need: shovels (and other digging tools), bow saws, axes, tarps, rope, water buckets. In the cooking department: large "canning" pots, grates for cooking on, mixing containers, utensils and bread pans.

On or around July 1st, we will proceed on foot from the base camp at the Belly River to a high camp taking only our essential supplies—bedding, fresh/raw foods and basic necesseties.

We hope that people who cannot come, but who feel in harmony with this event, will gather in Spirit with us wherever they are and that those brothers and sisters confined in prisons or hospitals will join us in this prayer and know that we are working together for the time when the doors will be open, the sick made well and all people freed.

For Information Contact:

Box 2565 Missoula, MT 59801





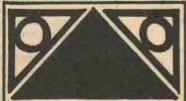
RESOURCES

LOVEJOY'S NUCLEAR WAR:

On George Washington's Birthday, 1974, Samual H. Lovejoy toppled a 500 foot nuclear power plant tower. Lovejoy his act of civial disobedience in court as "self-defense" and was ultimately acquitted. Lovejoy's Nuclear War presents a cross-section of the many and varied points of view about nuclear power, civil disobedience, and the politics of energy that were drawn together by Lovejoy's act. The arguements and sentiments of all sides are included in this thoughtful documentary of the nuclear dilemma. The movie fucuses on a single act in one small New England town, but it is also the story of the drama taking place in the halls of Congress and in the backyards of the United States.

16mm, Color, 60 minutes, Basic minimun rental: \$50.00 (or 50 % of gross reciepts, where admission is charged).

Write or call: Green Mountain Post Films Box 269 RFD 1 Montague, MA 01351 tel: 413 367—9374



UTOPIAN FAMILY of three adults would like to grow to 24. We are intellectuals and artists who publish UTOPIAN EYES magazine and THE STOREFRONT CLASS-ROOM newspaper, and have plans to develop an eco-village in Northern California. We are polfidelitous (nonmonogamous) within our group and would like to find two more men and one more woman as partners on our way up to 12 women and 12 men. Write: STOREFRONT CLASSROOM, P.O. Box 1174, San Francisco, CA 94101; Phone (415) 752-0773.

THE WORKBOOK:

A fully indexed catalog of sources of information about environmental, social, and consumer problems. It is aimed at helping people in small towns and cities across America gain access to vital information that can help them assert control over their own lives.

Published monthly (except July & August) by Southwest Research and Information Center

P.O. Box 4524

Albuquerque, NM 87106 Rates: students—\$7.00; individuals— \$10.00; institutions—\$20.00.

MONITOR:

Monitor is the Federal Programs Information Service of the Center for Community Change, a non-profit, tax-exempt organization which assists local community development corporations in low-income urban and rural areas of the U.S. An important resource for helping community organizations understand the how

and when of acquiring federal funds.

Monitor, The Center For Community
Change, 1000 Wisconsin Av. N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20007

BOSTON WIND:

is a non-profit, educational institute for the study of Life Support Systems (shelter, energy and food production). In the first 6 months of existence, they have responded to the informational needs of people concerned with both environmental and economic aspects of the future. Courses are conducted on topics such as wind power, solar heating systems, aquaculture, and food production. In addition to these education services, they are a clearinghouse for information on environmental problems, and plan to conduct reasearch leading to the actu la demonstration of simple, cost-effective alternate energy systems.

Boston Wind, 307 Centre, Jamaica Plain Massachusetts 02130

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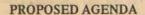
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OF HUMAN LIBERATION
SELF-ALIENATION AND OVERCOMING IT
SOCIAL AND INDIVIDUAL PSYCHOLOGY
COMMUNITY PSYCHOLOGY
SOCIAL CHANGE AND POLITICS
12 ISSUES: \$4, U.S. \$4.50



RURAL COMMUNITIES CONFERENCE

a working conference for full-time living groups in rural settings





In order to share the experiences gained by various communities over past years. we are arranging a gathering for the purpose of exchanging ideas and solutions to some common problems. The gathering is limited to rural groups to maximize our commonness. Also, it will be limited to 40 participants, to encourage deeper sharing. A person with experience will focus the key questions for each session. There will then be discussions both in the full group and in smaller groups.

This is a tentative agenda. All participants are urged to make suggestions and additions.

- ***Group identity, goals & cohesion—who are we & why are we together?
- ***Legal & economic organization: the nitty-gritty of taxes and land ownership.
- ***Governance: How we organize for decision making and operation.
- ***Work: Its place in our lives, distribution, specialization and sex roles.
- ***Supporting Ourselves: Practical and philosophical questions.
- ***Planning: How to use money and energy.
- ***Spirituality: In the individual and the group.
- ***How we relate: Families, children & various modes of relating within the group.
- ***Interpersonal problem solving.

***We are welcome to tour the farm and worship with Ananda in the dome Temple on Sunday morning.

TIME: From thursday evening, August 12th through monday morning, August 16th.

PLACE: Ananda Cooperative Village, by Nedada City, CA.

RESERVATIONS & INFORMATION: As the size of the conference is limited, it would be well to decide early. More than one representative of a community will be allowed as space permits, in order of applications received.

FEE: \$22/person includes meals and camping space.

LAST DATE FOR APPLICATIONS IS JULY 1st.

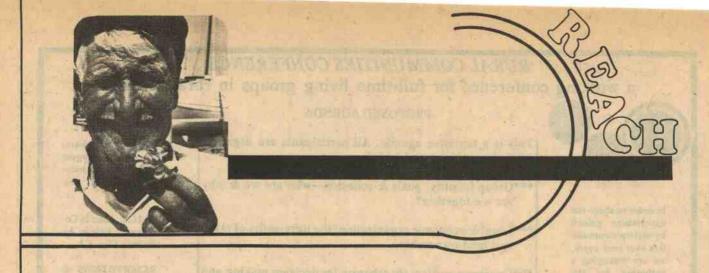
Co-sponsored by Alpha Farm, Ananda Cooperative Village & Communities Magazine. For reservations and information, write to COMMUNITIES CONFERENCE c/o Alpha Farm, P.O. Box 465, Mapleton, OR 97453

In cooperation with a Pennsylvania Community, three Penn State Architecture graduates have developed Rural Commune Planning Manual—a step by step guide to choosing land, building sites, land use.

\$7.50 postpaid JULIAN WOODS Julian, PA 16844

AGGESS

NATIONAL ALTERNATIVES MINIZINE Ads & Notices by, from, for, to, and about people whose interests in ALTERNATIVES generally and in ALTERNATIVE COMMUNITIES particularly leads them to the need for THE ACTION THAT CREATES PROGRESS Ads: \$2/100, Subs: \$10/year (includes a free ad), \$5/6 issues. Samples: \$1. Being is Doing... ACCESS! Box 86 Cobham, VA. 22929



CONFERENCES

COMMUNITY CONFERENCES [1976 Bicentennial Year]

9 Day Walden II '76 at Twin Oaks April 17—25
10 Day Walden II '76 at Twin Oaks May 1—11
3 Day Homesteader & Community Conf., at
U & I Ranch May 15, 16, 17
10 Day Walden II Experience, Aloe June 1—11
2 Week Walden II '76 at Twin Oaks July 6—20
11 Day Walden II Experience, Aloe Aug 11—22
NeWorld Fair—West Coast—Summer, 1976
Intentional Communities Conf., Twin Oaks—
Labor Day Weekend

The bicentennial year seems a particularly propitious time to assert our independence to choose a lifestyle we really believe in. Addresses for registrations for the above conferences & NeWorld Fair are:

Walden II '76 (Pi & George), Twin Oaks, Louisa, VA 23093

Walden II Exp. (Barb & Sierra), Aloe, Rt. 1, Box 100, Cedar Grove, NC 27231

U & I Ranch (Ann & Kitty), Rt. 1, Eldridge, MO 65463

NeWorld Fair (Sunrise & Bruce), 998 Sanchez, San Francisco, CA 94114

Intentional Communities Conf. (Wayne & Glo), Twin Oaks, Louisa, VA 23093

To register send your name, address, phone #, expected means of transportation, & \$15/person to the appropriate address above. ENCLOSE A SELF-ADDRESSED ENVELOPE. Directions, maps, schedules & more details will be mailed to you. Total costs vary from about \$22 for the 3 day conf. (\$20 if you register before May 1) to as much as \$75 for the 2 week Walden II '76 at Twin Oaks. All participants will need camping equipment, including rain gear, eating utensils, flashlight, etc.

At the May and Sept. conf. there will be a workshop format & meals will be provided. At the smaller Walden II '76 Exp. (W II'76-X), participants will put money into a communal treasury (\$55—\$75/person) & will engineer their environment to make sharing & caring an immediate reality, setting up a W II'76 community kitchen area, preparing group meals, & making ALL expenditures from the communal treasury (including food, laundry, phone, gas, emmergencies, etc.). Members will state their preferences of course, & economicial groups

may choose to refund \$20—\$25 to each person on the last day provided no emergencies have occurred.

Each W II'76 -X will be 9—14 days of practice forming a working model of a new community of 12—25 persons. Common agreements will include equality, cooperation, positive reinforcement, & the use of a planner-manager system of government, a labor-credit system of distributing work, & a communal treasury to distribute material goods. To gain realistic community-building experience, groups will choose work projects which will have a positive long-term effect benefitting the sponsoring community as if they were going to continue to live there. (Indeed, Aloe is in a position to accept W II'76-X "graduates" as visitors & new members.)

NO ILLEGAL DRUGS & NO PETS at Twin Oaks or Aloe. Please plan ahead for your pets' care elsewhere. No children at the April, May or June W II'76-X's. One condition for including children at a July or August W II'76-X will be that atleast one parent or guardian of each child has attended one of the earlier Walden II'76 Experiences & has helped with children's facilities. Children are included in the plans for the NeWorld Fair.

Are you willing and able to help create an alternative culture/society? Come join our efforts!

GROUPS FORMING

I am looking for a group of about 5 other individuals, 3 women and 2 men who are interested in, and have some talent for publishing a newspaper. I would prefer non-smokers, and no children, and non-meateaters, but am not so rigid as not to accept someone if they are human and beautiful in other ways. All should have some small income to share expenses. I am now a publisher of the NEW FRONTIER, Philadelphia's "think" newspaper, and I want to share the paper with the commune. My intention is to find compatible loving persons for the intention of forming a group family, polyfidelity being the form of internal structure. The location would be in the vicinity of Philadelphia but need not necessarily be urban. Write: The New Frontier, PO Box 16037, Philadelphia, PA 19114.

I am looking for 4 or 5 people (or more?) to share land with. Also vehicles, subsistance gardening, and animals (not necessarily shelter or incomes). Common beliefs I am receptive to are: Love, Peace, Freedom, and Harmony. Sharing and cooperation as norms. Common feelings of openness to individual diversity as well as a willingness to accept group consensus. People who see change or growth, and complete openness as central to their own "self-actualization".

I own no land and have no financial resources. I have had 2½ years of experiencing living with the land and living as freely as i can—surviving in rural America.

Acquiring land and developing whatever would be an evolving, working together process.

I welcome your interest: Will Burge, Rt. 1, Box 28, Troy, ID 83871.

GAY HOUSING AMHERST HOP BROOK COMMUNE

Gay male collectives forming near U. Mass/Amherst Reserve now for June and September openings. Box 723, Amherst, MA

PEOPLE WANTING HELP

Man in prison with no family or friends needs help to keep from losing himeself in lonliness. Mail call is the lonliest time of all.

Those who care please write to: Nicholas Zachartchuck, #140-527, POB 787, Lucasville, OH 45648.

REWARD to person(s) who offer information as to the whereabouts or who return series of lris Mountain pictures and slides sent to Communities mag about 2 years ago. They are some of our best pictures and we'd like them back. We'll pay postage from anywhere in the U.S. plus \$5 to the person who will go to the trouble of returning then to us. And if they are forever lost, we'd appreciate a note from the party who misplaced them, just to let us know, and we'll stop hunting.

IRIS MOUNTAIN COMMUNITY SCHOOL Unger, WV 25447

GROUPS LOOKING FOR PEOPLE

Prema Dharmasala is an ashram community of househoulders and renunciates founded by our Guru Vasedevadasji and his wife Devaki-Ma for the purpose of creating an environment wh ere deep spiritual growth can take place and the highest goal of life (to realize the Divine nature of all existence) can be realized. Under the inspiration of Vasudevadasji, Prema provides an ideal environment for the balanced development of the body, mind and soul for child and adult alike.

We are presently looking for three individuals well-trained in the Montessori Middle School who would be interested in spending a month this summer at out Ashrama to share their knowledge, training and experience with our staff in exchange for free room and board and the opportunity to live the ashram life and learn about Prema's work with the Method. We would like to have one such guest for each of the 3 summer months June, July, and August, 1976. These individuals should have a sincere spiritual interest, as they will be expected to participate in out yogic ashram daily schedule. Accomodations will be modest but comfortable, and an excellant, natural vegetarian diet will be provided.

Write us and tell us about your training, experience, and why you are interested in participating in the Montessori exchange program at Prema

PREMA DHARMASALA & Fellowship Asso. Rt. 4, Box 265, Bedford, VA 24523

We are 11 adults and 5 children of diverse nature who, together, make up the Harmony Farmstead Co-operative Society. We are presently paying for and not yet living on, a 300 acre piece of land 25 miles from a town of approx. 5,000 in southern British Columbia. We hope to become a self-sufficient farm based on organic techniques and alternate energy sources. We are seeking to balance our individual needs through private homesites with our needs for group cooperation that stem from holding land in common. We are looking for more members, so anyone seriously interested may write us at Box 1866, Grand Forks, B.C.



The Aga-Pae Guild Inc. & Youth Hostel of San Francisco, California

The Aga-Pae Guild, Inc. and Youth Hostel is a non-profit organization chartered by the state of CA. The Aga-Pae Guild Inc. was founded and exists to provide an environment for people of diverse backgrounds; artists, craftsman, musicians, professional people and "self-seekers" to creatively interact, giving and sharing experiences and expertise.

The Aga-Pae is modeled on the renaissance and medieval experiences. We welcome those who come to our doors, offering them the warmth of our hearth and the openness of our hearts.

The Aga-Pae operates the worlds' most unusual hostel for travelers and people relocating to San Francisco. We charge \$3.50 a night for sleeping accommodations, and two substantial meals, vegetarians are welcome and we do much homebaking and preparation of natural foods.

The Aga-Pae will assist those in need and will put them up. However, we will not open our doors to "drug disoriented people". Pets are not welcome unless people are prepared to leave them in their cars. As of yet, we don't have accomodations for children either. In all other respects, we try to be liberal and tolerant and we expect others to respect the rights of all in the hostel. The hostel prefers that people call first. Phone 415 584-1636 or 415 239-9075.

The Aga-Pae Guild Inc. is looking for people who wish to reside on a permanent or temporary basis in the hostel and who have artistic or professional abilities or who wish to learn and later teach others in turn. The Aga-Pae Guild Inc. is or will offer Music Appreciation, Dress and Everyday Clothing Making, Tailoring, Photography, Painting, Automechanics, Foreign Languages, Herbology for Humans and Animals, Fine Cuisine, French and other European, Pizza Making, Home Baking and Interaction with others.

MAILING ADDRESS: pob 77022, San Francisco, CA 94107

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READ-BACK



To the editors:

We felt that your issue on "Family, Marriage and Sex in Community" (No. 17, Nov.—Dec. 1975) failed to provide an adequate perspective on the problem of loving many at once. As your editorial indicates, the difficulties entailed in living together communally often reach the point where, despite many misgivings, separation seems to be the only viable solution. However, a more informed vision of the issues involved would reveal a meaningful path away from this dead end of disengagement. We have explored this area extensively and would like to share our findings.

What destroys communities is the maintenance of secrecy of feelings for which no one wants to take responsibility. People are afraid to be truthful primarily because of a deepseated fear of the unknown. We so much want things under our control that we hide much of our inner chaos, hoping that if we pretend everything is okay, then it will be so. Instead, we find ourselves in a senseless world which we feel powerless to change. It is our own lies which create the chaos, and only absolute truthfulness will provide the information necessary to realize the limitlessness of our selves and our real conections with one another which is the Godhead.

People everywhere are too fearful of emotionally threatening consequences either to show the extent of their competitive and jealous feelings or to express openly their love, curiosity, and sexual attraction for one another. Thus, who makes love with whom become a matter either of rigid legislation or of calculation and stealth, both crippling to the human spirit.

Some groups attempt to avoid chaos by pretending that their members can be sexually, emotionally, and spiritually satisfied with one mate. This cannot work because of the God-Force within us that impels us to explore many, towards the eventual goal of loving and being loved by All. When we stifle or try to redirect our positive impulses because we are afraid to experience our own or other people's negative feelings, we are putting shackles on our spirit and limiting our potential to expand and grow. We are not meant to put boundaries on our love. The qualities that

we find loveable are not inherent in any one individual; in fact, they can be found in any individual expressed in a unique way. These qualities must be nourished and encouraged whenever and wherever they are found.

On the other hand, there are groups that pretend to be open sexually, but without the mutual truthfulness and sensitivity whereby individuals take responsibility for the pain they cause one another. People are afraid to express jealousy and ask for confort from the ones that evoke it because they fear the pain and humiliation of rejection. Thus, they either hide the pain and withdraw into invulnerability, or else seek relief by inflicting the pain on others and trying to prevent them from loving. In such an atmosphere of unresolved negativities, all real love and compassion must die.

There is a way that transcends these unsatisfying ways of relating. Truly authentic relationships must abide by the understanding that every thought and attitude be shared by all. This means being candid about sexual impulses and loving feelings whenever they are felt, and to be equally upfront about whatever jealous, competitive, and destructive impulses arise, giving comfort to those who are upset and asking for comfort when we ourselves feel needful. If people sacrifice their integrity and bend the truth, hoping thereby to achieve their own ends, the community suffers. Pollyanna positivity, plastic smiles and hive-like routines may, for some time, pass for closeness; but, in the long run, they will never achieve the intense intimacy gained through total honesty. By having the faith, patience, and courage to expose our underlying emotional reality of the moment to collective scrutiny, we are able to determine what it requires of each of us in order to implement the greatest good for the greatest number. Only by taking up this challenge to forsake secrecy and cooperate in the discovery of our real selves will we come to the realization of our essential oneness that is the inherent promise of the Aquarian Age.

Thoughtfully,
The members of
The Middle of Silence Gallery
65 Carmine St.
New York, NY 10014



Two items widely separated in the article by John Mowat in your issue 16 ("Energy Production at Cerro Gordo") somehow merged in my mind overnight after I read it, and I awoke eager to point out a special advantage that communities on a large area of land have over the ordinary individual in our society, so far as the use of wind power is concerned.

John says (page 36, column 1) "In the Northwest all large scale resources of hydroelectric power have been tapped..." and (pages 36-37), "Because both wind and demand for electric power fluctuate, a means of storing large amounts of electric charge is an essential part of a wind generator system. Batteries require lots of energy for their production, use vital resources, tend to have short lifetimes, and require a good deal of maintenance."

If one lived on a 100 ft. x 100 ft. lot, batteries might be necessary with a windmill. But consider the uses of windmills about 200 to 300 years ago-when no one knew how to use electricity. They were used to raise water (or to grind grains and a few other special cases). They drained the North Sea out of the Netherlands, and they brought water from far underground in our Great Plains.

One does not raise water only in order to dump it overboard, as in Holland, or in order to drink it, as in Kansas. Here along the Connecticut River, our local electric company uses electricity generated in "off-peak" hours to raise water to a reservoir in the hills, and then in "peak" hours it runs this water down again through turbines that make electricity, thus avoiding building extra-large generating capacity to serve peak hours only.

The intentional community that has several hundred acres, including a considerable difference in altitude, and that has a water supply from a natural source (which usually means a stream and a pond) could well investigate the possibility of pumping the water to a higher pond by wind power, then generating current when current is needed by letting this water run downhill through a dynamo. The labor/energy needed to produce the upper pond (and any necessary small canal to move water laterally while saving on amount of pipe to be bought) would of course vary from location to location. This would be suitable for the research effort John suggests on page 37.

The windmills of Netherlands, incidentally, were built as things of beauty by people skilled in crafts like woodworking. They used sails which had to be spread or furled, just as sails on a sailing ship, and this required a certain personal attention. This labor would have to be included in the planning.

Sincerely. Francis Holmes 24 Berkshire Terrace Amherst, MA 01002



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There is a country called Ecotopia that lies along the North-western edge of the American continent, stretching North from San Francisco to Vancouver and West from the Sierras to the Pacific. Though formerly thought to exist only in the imagination or in the future, Ecotopia exists here and now as an infant society; a succession forest growing toward climax from a thousand clearings.

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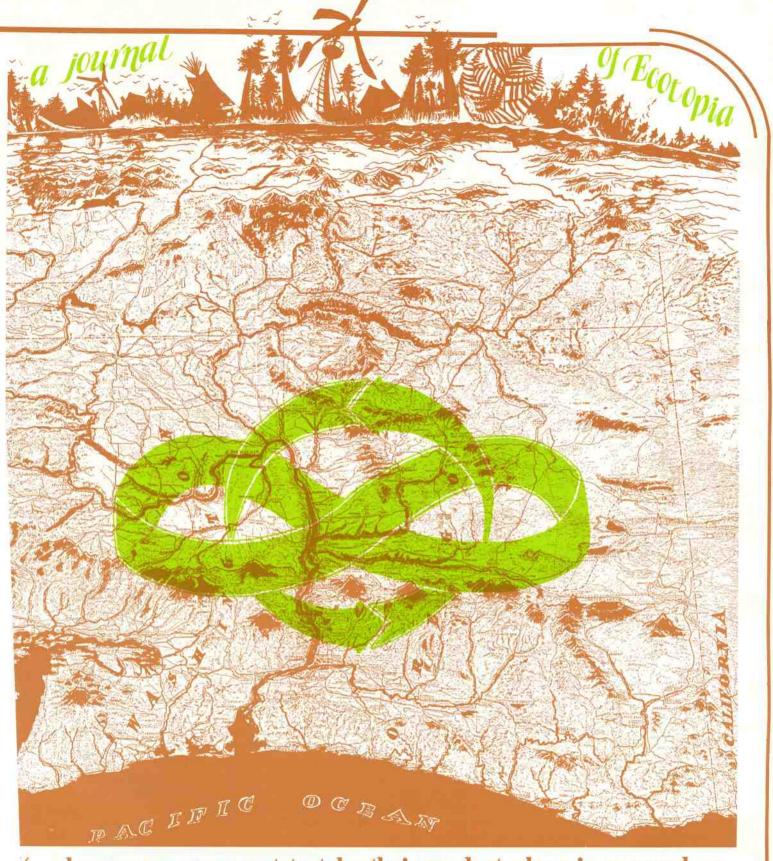
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