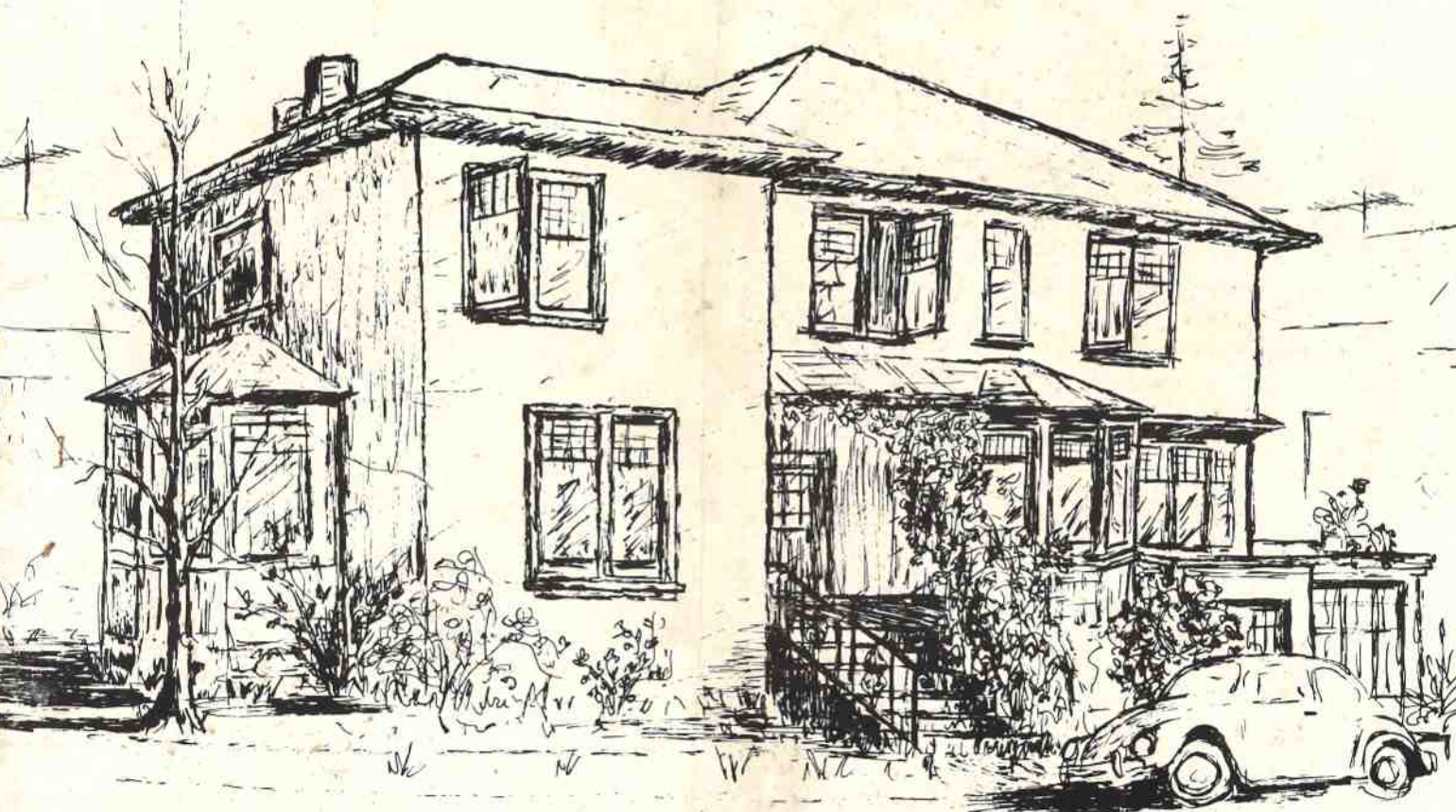


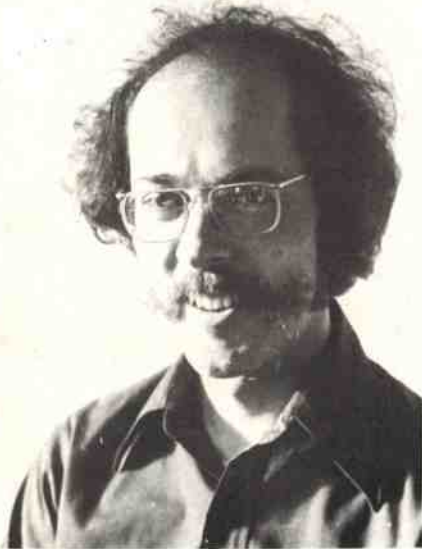
# COMMUNITIES journal of cooperative living

No. 20 \$1.25



## MIDDLE CLASS COMMUNES

# middle class community



Everyone who reads the newspapers knows about rural communes and spiritual communes. But many people are surprised to learn about another kind of commune, one whose members remain part of the society and hold on to some middle class values they think are worth preserving. Although they have received little attention from the news media, middle class communes have existed for about six years in cities and suburbs across America, and now number in the thousands.

Unlike their communal cousins in the country or in ashrams, most middle class communalists do not pool their incomes, and do not subscribe to any common ideology or teaching. Most, but not all, uphold monogamy. The typical middle class commune member has a job. Many are psychologists, lawyers and other professionals. Many others have taken advantage of the great economy of communal living to leave unfulfilling careers or boring, 9-5-to-five jobs. These members switch to part-time employment, or to personally rewarding but low paid self-employment such as craft production, freelance writing, leading growth groups or doing work like body massage.

Middle class communal households are small. They have from four to perhaps a dozen members. Some groups consist mostly of married or unmarried couples, some have mostly single people, and many have a mixture of couples and single people. When a group includes children, they retain primary ties to their parents. Middle class communes tend to be located in pleasant residential neighborhoods, although they are barred from some neighborhoods by discriminatory local zoning laws. Many groups own their own houses.

This communal lifestyle offers a chance to move away from negative qualities in middle class existence—away from loneliness and alienation, personal rigidity, insensitivity to others and consumption as an end in itself. The advantages of this lifestyle include closer, more fulfilling relationships; personal growth; unlearning of sex roles; and a chance to rear independent, socially-skilled children.

There are also environmental advantages. Three families living together need only one house, one stove, one set of living room furniture, one TV set, one newspaper subscription. This represents a tangible saving in resources and energy, but the more important environmental gain is intangible. People learn they can live more happily than before, with fewer material things.

It would be false to suggest that these advantages can be obtained without effort. Life does not always run smooth in middle class communes. There is likely to be conflict, especially at first, around structure and chores. Members often have differing expectations about how close the group will be and how much people will do together—another common area of conflict. Adults in our society have learned varying child-raising methods that often come into conflict in households that have children. If some members don't know how to express resentments directly and honestly, any minor annoyance can escalate into conflict. In successful households, members have learned how to work these conflicts through. This issue of *Communities* is filled with what they have discovered through hard experience.

Middle class communes usually make no attempt to create a group that will spend a lifetime together. Turnover is an accepted fact. A member who leaves to pursue growth in some new direction is replaced by someone else the group chooses to live with. Some households become institutionalized in this way. Over the years most of the original members move on, but the house itself remains a commune. Dennis Jaffe describes one such commune in this issue.

The commitment that people give one another in a middle class commune is to be honest with one another and to work through conflicts rather than withdraw. As Claude Steiner and Gabrielle Haddad point out in their articles, there is also a commitment to uphold the group's traditions, rules and agreements. Traditions and rules about how the group will admit new members, how the housework will be accomplished, and so forth are essential if the commune is not to fall apart in mutual recrimination. Another binding force is respect for differences, which makes it possible for people with different backgrounds and viewpoints to live together harmoniously.

Communal households tend to be strongly egalitarian. The members quickly discover that to make it possible for everyone to share equally in the housework, chores must be defined, and either rotated or assigned in some other way. Couples who are struggling to go beyond sex roles find it much easier to share the housework whole living in a communal group. They receive psychological support from the other members. Also, because more hands make less work, housework is easier in a communal house, and men adjust to doing it more readily.

I'll close this introductory page with a personal note about Pooh's Corner, the middle class commune where I live in Oakland, Calif. The folks in McMinnville, Ore., where *Communities* is printed, were once under the impression that a whole flock of us here were guest editors for this issue. They didn't know there are only four of us humans, and that Pooh Bear Freeman himself is our dog. We got the idea to name our house after him from a house in Berkeley called Costello's. Costello is their cat. Anyway, Pooh wasn't much help with the magazine, but the insightful people who wrote the articles have made an important contribution. So did Al Wengard of Hillegasse House in Oakland, who took most of the photographs. We hope you like the issue.

—Eric Raimy



Communities is \$6 for one years subscription, and \$11 for two years subscription. Single copy price is \$1.25. Communities is published 6 times / year in January, March, May, July, September, & November.

Photo Credits: Al Wengard  
Dave Lang, p. 25  
Guest Editor: Eric Raimy

## departments:

Reach 42  
Grapevine 48  
Resources 51  
Social Science 53  
Readback 55  
Bookshelf 56

Copyright © 1975 by Community Publications Cooperative. All rights reserved. Printed in U.S.A. Opinions expressed by authors and correspondents are their own and do not necessarily reflect those of the publishers. Movement groups may reprint with permission. *Communities* is published 6 times a year from offices at Twin Oaks Community, Route 4, Louisa, VA 23093. Second Class postage permit at Louisa, VA with additional entry at McMinnville, OR. Send contributions of editorial material to: *Communities*, PO Box 117, McMinnville, OR 97128. Address correspondence regarding subscriptions, advertising, business matters to CPC, Drawer 426, Louisa, VA 23093. Member APS, COSMEP.

- 2 **Middle Class Commune: a case study** by Sterling E. Alam
- 4 **A Family Commune** by Dennis T. Jaffe
- 8 **New Community I** by William O. Smith
- 11 **How to Survive Communal Living** by Gabrielle Haddad
- 14 **Cooperative Living** by Claude Steiner
- 17 **Articles by Eric Raimy:**
  - How to Start a Communal Household**
  - Interpersonal Skills for Communal Living**
  - Closeness**
  - Boundaries**
  - How to Get the Dishes Washed**
- 29 **Open Relationships** by Robert N. Whitehurst
- 31 **Teenagers in Communes** by Susan Stern
- 33 **Communes and the Law** by D. Kelly Weisberg
- 35 **The Urban Cooperative Block** by Ken Norwood
- 38 **Monte Toyon photo story**

# MIDDLE CLASS

The word "commune" is no longer a popular one even among some of those who reside in them. This may be due to the fact that the mass media has burned out the term by linking it primarily to spectacular counter culture and retreatist groups. If so, I feel this is unfortunate, for it is in fact a venerable term incorporating both old and new group living experiments of fantastic variety. Some may fit the popular media stereotype. Probably most do not. The two things all communes, though, have in common are: 1) Some degree of economic and functional cooperation going beyond what is routinely expected in the modern family, and 2) A degree of interpersonal intimacy and commitment, which sets it apart from primarily business arrangements such as boardinghouses. I would like to preserve the word "commune" as a broad term within which one can distinguish a wide spectrum of sub-types.

What I am here calling the middle class commune is a sub-type of communal living arrangement, which is specifically not rejecting the larger society, but rather using the communal form to achieve society's normative goals. The hallmark of the middle class commune is the fact that the members hold jobs in the larger society, and these are central to their lives. Thus my use of the term "middle class" is not meant to have the precise meaning found in stratification research. It rather refers to the life style of the broad majority of Americans in contrast to the so-called counter culture.

The core membership of the middle class commune described in this case study consisted of three couples and their seven children. They lived together for two years in a small midwestern university community. Three other persons lived with the group for shorter periods. Soon after the commune split up, the author was invited to interview them in order to record their experience while the memory of it was still fresh. We met

and formulated a methodology consisting of an unstructured interview schedule, the composition of which was a joint effort. All interviews with the six adults and their children were taped, transcribed, and duplicated. They were then shared among each other and a joint session was held to compare impressions and clarify facts. These interviews averaged about three hours each. Interviews were also held with friends and neighbors (including a few antagonistic toward the commune). I recorded the impressions of temporary residents, clergymen, colleagues, students, businessmen, a school teacher of the children, and a babysitter.

The idea of forming the group originated when two of the couples began discussing an article by Margaret Mead in a Catholic publication. The group eventually formed consisted of whoever among their acquaintances responded enthusiastically to the idea and had the courage to follow through. All were young, attractive, and competent professional people, from different backgrounds, but sharing a relatively liberal outlook on life. Two of the men were professors, one a clergyman. Their professional involvements were central to their lives. None of them had any intention of giving them up. Like many people, they had initially assumed that communes necessitated a rural way of life far removed from middle class society. They stated to each other that they were urban, professional people who saw many intriguing possibilities for themselves in communal living, but saw no reason for retreating to the country. Although they had no pattern to follow and thought their idea unique, what they set out to do was to adapt communal living to their own life style. The women also had, or were seeking, professional occupations. They were all mothers, but had no intention of playing only the housewife role. One was a former college professor returning to

school to obtain a teaching certificate so that she could be more flexible in job seeking. Another was a parochial school teacher; the third an undergraduate student. One major benefit of the commune for them was that it freed them both financially and in terms of time to pursue these goals. Thus, like many people of their ages and occupations, they wanted to change and improve their world, but were not in outright rebellion against it. This is crucial for understanding the kind of commune they dreamed of and eventually established.

Why, then, did they form the commune? Sheer adventure was part of it, "...Just a wild exciting trip." To be able to say "We did it! We actually made it work for two years." There was also a strong desire to recapture some of the values of the extended family, to demonstrate that life could be lived without excessive materialism and ecological waste, and also to establish really close personal relationships. These goals, though, were of differential salience to different individuals, which gave rise to some conflict.

There is not space enough here to describe in detail all aspects of their living together so let me just summarize a few of the things they did fairly successfully and a few that they did less well. They succeeded easily in the pragmatic aspects, such as the house, the budget, and everyday work. One of their highest periods was when they were redecorating the house. Once this was done and they were living in it, they began asking why they were living in it. This was a harder question. They surmounted even the problems of privacy in a house not designed for communal living and they turned the neatness of their redecorating into an effective public relations point to win the confidence of the community. They had a chart on the refrigerator and every adult signed up for one day to do routine daily jobs such as

# COMMUNE: A CASE STUDY

*Sterling E. Alam*

cooking and dishwashing, as well as for weekly jobs such as laundry. The most popular job was dishwashing since that was a two-person job and provided companionship. There was little problem getting these things done. This system meant that the work was done on non-sexist basis, and role sharing continued in each of their homes after the commune ended. Certainly this was an unintended consequence on the part of some of the men, but it was one of the more permanent outcomes of the group living experience. They did have a unique financial problem, what to do with the surplus money, since it took less than one third of their combined incomes for communal living expenses.

As the group matured they found themselves less concerned with pragmatics and more involved in the more formidable questions of their basic goals and personal relationships. For some people their success in pragmatic tasks were enough to justify the experiment. Others felt that the reason they were living together was to achieve deeper personal relationships. From the beginning they agreed to keep the group monogamous and they did not immediately work out any mechanisms for handling more general interpersonal tensions. The result was a tendency to dump all negative feelings on one's own spouse or to take out one's frustrations on the child of the offending adult. They soon saw the destructiveness of these habits and began working on more honest communication.

One big dissension that remained was the question of what form intimacy should take, a crucial issue for some members. Should it include sexual intimacy? Their original contract said no, but one woman in the second year of the group, impressed by Robert Rimmer's books, said, "Maybe we ought to talk about sharing sexually." As they talked about it, one of the things that shocked

the group was how enthusiastic this woman became. The most shocked person of all was her husband, who turned out to be the most conservative member of the group on this question. They didn't reach agreement. They never got around to talking about it again, and subtly the wives in the group were never quite the same once this fateful question had been raised.

Another major topic is children. I had the distinct impression that this group was basically an adult institution. They were likely to mention the children under the heading of "the living hassle" more than they were in terms of "we entered the group in order to promote the welfare of the children." The parents disagreed on child rearing. Some wanted to be strict, one couple wanted to be very *laissez-faire*, another couple wanted to go by Dr. Spock. They had some real problems there, plus the fact that they never developed a really good way of working out interpersonal relationships between the adults, and sometimes the children became pawns. Nevertheless, in fact the children did seem to have fared pretty well. Even some of the neighbors who were violently opposed to having such a thing as a commune in the neighborhood nevertheless admitted it was good for the children. The children seemed to develop independence. They seemed to develop an ability to relate well to other children and to adults. Some of them though had a hard time reorienting back in the nuclear family situation after it was all over with.

Visitors were both a problem and an opportunity. The combined number of friends was considerable plus the curious from the community and college classes. Also, the group itself had so many interpersonal relationships to work on that they lost track of previous friendships. Yet they did want to share their experiment and those who did actually visit the house usually left impressed. Only those who stayed away remained

critics. This applied, by the way, to both neighbors and to members' parents.

The most outstanding result of the group living experience was that virtually everyone said that they had experienced considerable personal growth, both in terms of sex roles, in terms of jealousy, and in terms of the effects on their nuclear family. Though the commune lasted only two years they did not view it as a failure. It was a good two years.

Overall, we must conclude that this commune was a success in its own terms and a viable alternative family form. Longevity, Utopia or rebellion were never its goals, but it did strive for personal growth, intimacy, commitment and the values of the extended family. As an extended family, it did provide a wider fellowship and an efficient mechanism for meeting pragmatic tasks of daily living. The children seem to have been major beneficiaries here. On the other hand, as in the extended family, there were problems of privacy and individuality, particularly with respect to external relationships. Also, the complexity of interpersonal relationships was a problem never fully resolved.

The middle class commune is not so spectacular, perhaps, as its country cousins, but its effects may be just as profound. In a quieter way, a way more acceptable to some people, it definitely calls into question our society's materialistic values, and the exclusiveness of our personal relationships. It does provide for the children at least some of the advantages of multiple adult and peer relationships. It provides an opportunity for personal growth to those who are discontented with conformity, but not yet so alienated as to seek another society.

(This article is an abridgement of "Middle Class Commune: A Contemporary Model," *International Journal of Modern Sociology*, Spring, 1976. Reprinted with permission.) □

# A F A M I L Y C O M M U N E

What happens when four middle-aged, middle-class married couples and a divorced woman invest \$20,000 each in a suburban estate and live communally, along with their 14 children?

The lives of all involved change fundamentally, according to family therapist Dennis Jaffe, who spent a summer with the group while researching a Phd. dissertation on middle class communes. Six years after its founding, the commune has gone through major changes, but remains in existence. The nine adults who founded it took the English manor as their model, and set out to realize a vision of affluent gentility. They quickly found themselves enmeshed in an unexpected experiment in personal change.

This case study points to many of the possibilities and pitfalls that await middle class people who live communally. Seen from a traditional point of view, the experiment failed. Five years after the commune's founding in 1970, only four of the original members — two adults and two teenagers — still lived there. Viewed from a less conventional perspective, the experiment is a success. Members have left, but others have moved in to replace them. The commune endures; it has become institutionalized. At the five-year mark, the community has three married couples, two unmarried couples, two single women, and a number of children.

Members grow in many ways. By sharing housework and observing other members, they unlearn sex roles. Afraid to disclose themselves to one another in the beginning, they eventually became open enough to participate in weekly encounter sessions. Men who joined the community begin looking beyond unfulfilling careers for something to give their lives more meaning. People who had placed great value on material things and appearances are happy to live with worn furniture and a certain clutter.

Jaffe suggests that the marriages of two couples ended because weakness in their marital relationships were forced to the surface by communal life. This explanation fits with a study of couples in communes by Rosabeth Kanter, Jaffe, and D. Kelly Weisberg [see *The Family Coordinator*, October, 1975]. The researchers found that couples tend to break up while living communally if their marriages are held together by dependence or obligation, or if they have unresolved sex role conflicts. Couples that did not break up while living communally resolved their sex role conflicts before joining the commune, and had relationships based on strong liking and mutual esteem, rather than dependence or obligation. For many couples, the Kanter study suggests, living communally can be a growing experience in which the partners develop individual identities while remaining coupled.

The following is a condensed version of Jaffe's case study [from a forthcoming book.]

"A small group of families living together now has an opening. We own our unusual home, share expenses, not incomes - we all hold outside jobs. We're beginning our fourth year of vegetable gardening. We tend toward organic methods and healthful diet. Membership requires no initial monetary commitment. Operating and food costs are billed monthly. If you are seriously interested in exploring community living as a more human life style call us. On Friday nights we often have charades, poetry reading or candle-making. Saturdays - harvesting potatoes, building or splitting logs."

Every year or so you can find an ad like this in the *New Republic* and other national magazines. Those who answer are invited to visit a communal settlement which defies almost every counter-cultural stereotype. About twenty people - toddlers, children, teenagers, unmarried and married couples and a set of grand-

parents - live on a lovely estate in a wealthy suburban town. The families who started the commune had the same conventional roots as their neighbors, yet in five years the consequences of their decision to set up a joint household has been a chain of events which has altered every aspect of their inner and outer lives.

Woods seclude the ten acre farm from the main road and its two neighbors. The fifteen room main house, where kitchen and common rooms are has nine bedrooms. Outbuildings contain several more bedrooms. A study, originally built for the previous owner, a judge, is now a guest room, quiet space, and repository for several libraries.

The entrance leads to the nerve center of the house, the huge kitchen and pantry area. To feed more than twenty residents and uncountable guests, the kitchen seems to need two of everything: pantries, refrigerators, freezers, stoves,

dishwashers, sinks, washers and dryers. The pantry shelves are neatly labelled and stocked like a small grocery. Pots are usually steaming on both stoves, cooking dinner, yogurt, and maybe dye for clothing; there is usually bread baking in the oven or cooling on the side. Notes all over the cupboards carry messages, announcements, job rosters, menus, guests expected and a few pictures and cartoons. This is where people hang out, from the first coffee at six a.m. until after midnight.

Breakfast, dinner and cleanup are done each day by the people who sign up to do them on the weekly job list. Despite the low weekly meal charge of \$11 per person, the garden, buying wholesale and in bulk and other economies make it possible for the household to eat substantially.

The community calls itself a "family commune," which differentiates it from other urban communes. Five suburban families - nine adults and their thirteen children - bought the property in the summer of 1970.

The idea for the commune was born when Derek and Betty Pennick saw a movie that reminded them of some English families they knew who shared an old estate. The Pennicks (names have been changed in this account) thought they would like to live like that, and discussed the idea with another couple, Glenn and Toni Warren. Soon another element was added to their vision - the community would incorporate a school where their children would have continuous exposure to the moral values they learned on Sundays at the Unitarian Fellowship.

To their surprise, everyone they approached with the idea was excited, and they quickly swelled to a core group of six families (one of whom dropped out before the farm was purchased.) The youngest couple, Dave and Joan Linden, were so committed to the idea that they drove 200 miles to attend the group's meetings, held one weekend per month.

Eventually the idea of starting a school was given up as too ambitious. If they could succeed in living according to their values, that in itself would be the kind of education they wanted for their children, the families decided.

Each family committed over \$20,000 in cash and loan to buy the Farm. Zoning was no problem, since they had acres of land and several buildings, each zoned for a family. Nor was community hostility an obstacle - all the families were pillars of the church and town; Glenn had even been Jaycee of the year.

In the first months they spent \$10,000 to improve the place. With the cream of the furniture of several families, in its first year the house had the elegant look of the English manor which was their model. The fourth family, Roger Godfrey, at 75 a vigorous, retired demographer, and his wife Inez, had made their living by buying, living in and restoring old houses, and offered their skills. Thus, at the start the commune was more an unconventional assault on a vision of gentility than a radical experiment in personal or social change.

The five families and their fourteen children, ranging in age from five to eighteen, divided up the rooms and moved in. The Warrens had five teenagers; the Pennicks had three, ages five, seven and ten; the Godfreys had three very young children; and Lorraine

the same time that members discovered a new sense of community. Glenn talks about these simultaneous discoveries:

"Initially I had two distinct feelings. One was that I was losing my family. I was afraid of that. I liked the family setup, the closeness to the children. I felt that the nuclear family feeling, closeness, was going to be gone forever, and that turned out to be true. The other feeling was one of camaraderie. Here were many families who I loved, setting out on a frightening, glamorous, together thing. We had a chance of really experiencing a close friendship that we couldn't get in other ways. So there was fear and optimism at the start."

Another difficulty was their differing commitments to nuclear family and traditional couple patterns. They were



Fine, a recently divorced schoolteacher, completed the contingent with three, ages 5, 10 and 13. Dave and Joan Linden, who were younger than the majority by at least ten years, had no children. Everybody took turns in meal preparation and cleaning, although it took a while to evolve a workable system.

Their honeymoon lasted a few months. Every meal was a candle-lit banquet, every conversation intense and meaningful. They wanted to build on the closeness that had grown up during the planning year.

But soon they also ran into the difficulties, which, in one way or another, are faced by any new domestic commune. Most striking, each family noticed a sudden shock as the commune reduced their physical and psychic space, and their control over their environment. The traditional family boundaries were roughly and suddenly open to other people, at

not rejecting the nuclear family, living together seemed to be a catalyst for questioning and changing their customary ways of relating.

Almost immediately traditional sex roles began to change, and with them the couple relationships. The commune was founded before the women's liberation movement, but from the start they began sharing sex roles. It was simply assumed that cooking and cleaning would be shared equally, although all the families came from households where that was primarily the wife's work. Some of the women wanted to learn house repair and construction, and donned dungarees and participated in that from the start. Two of the men, Dave who was disillusioned with college teaching, and Roger who was retired, did not have regular jobs, and they became involved in daily work around the house.

By the end of the year they were

joined by Derek, who was laid off from his engineering job, and Glenn, an executive who became disgusted with business. Since each family needed less money, living on unemployment was feasible, and quickly led each man to question why he worked at such an unfulfilling job. Work became less important, because home was a community of friends and people to share things with. The men soon found that it was more fun to stay home than to go to work. The women, often for the first time, not only received help with household tasks, but also found the home a place where they could grow, rather than a lonely and stifling place.

Each couple reacted differently to the demands of the new environment. The Godfreys found the unexpected conflict stressful to themselves and their children, and were disappointed that the closeness and intimacy of the community was not maintained. They left after six months.

The Pennicks quickly found that the commune's values conflicted with their very traditional sex roles. They often withdrew into their room with their children, forming a nuclear family within the commune. But the presence of other people with different values observing their relationship pressured them to change. Another of the women details one perspective on the process:

"Derek would be very critical of Betty, put her down, and she tended not to stand up for her position very strongly, because after all he was a Ph.D. The whole relationship was that he was superior to her, especially in thinking, so her opinions weren't taken as seriously by either of them. She became aware of this, as she talked to others, and as she saw some of the other couples trying to relate differently. She began asserting herself more, confronting him. They had to come to terms with their relationship. The women would get together to talk, and she discovered that they reacted to Derek's autocratic ways in some of the same ways she did. This gave her support for standing up insisting that she be considered. She saw other ways of dealing that she could adopt. Other people came down on Derek, helped him to see some of what he was doing, so she didn't have the whole job of changing the relationship. Because other people objected to the same things, he couldn't say it was her trip. It was difficult for him I think."

The Pennicks moved out at the end of the second year. But soon Lorraine and her children began living with them. The Pennicks and Lorraine shared a desire for a more structured, neater household, and

were not comfortable with the looser, more laissez-faire attitudes evolving in the others.

Collective living very quickly exposed difficulties and contradictions in the marriages of the Lindens and the Warrens. Both couples soon drifted apart, and by the second year both had separated. The Lindens found themselves in a process opposite to the Pennicks. They became totally immersed in the community, not taking time to tend or to nourish their couple relationship. Joan Linden recounts how differences between them, and the satisfactions of the community, led them apart:

"Dave was particularly concerned with privacy when we were having a discussion or argument or anything personal between us. More so than I. And he didn't really want to go into the conflicts we were having, but just to sweep them under the rug. Since both of us were pretty involved in community things it became harder to nourish our relationship. We didn't work at it hard enough. Our expectations and our interests diverged. We looked in the community to each follow our separate interests, so we didn't have to share. That was happening so nicely that we were spending less and less time together. Our time together would be with other people around so it wasn't time for us but for community, and didn't help our relationship. It became a substitute for the relationship."

At the same time the Warrens began to discover that after 22 years of marriage and involvement in church, children and community activities that they shared less than they thought. While neither had ever entertained even the thought of separation, living communally soon brought up questions about their relationship.

For two years prior to the commune, the Lindens and Warrens had experienced a growing closeness. As the couples began to come apart, each spouse found support and common interests with a member of the other couple. Living communally, the four people were able to keep their interrelationships fluid and ambiguous, and work them out over time. When the commune had been together nearly two years, Dave and Toni left for six months of travel. When they returned, their new relationship as a couple was open and accepted. Within the next year, Glenn and Joan moved out, each to live separately nearby.

The first year of the commune had been marked by the tension of members gossiping about other's behavior behind their backs, unwilling to share their

feelings openly. The tension grew to a feeling of crisis when the two couples split up. In the fall of the second year, a weekly sensitivity session was begun when the Farm hired a clinical psychologist to help the group share feelings and improve communication.

The meetings were strained at first. People talked very little about their feelings and conflicts between each other, despite their desire to do so. Few of them were used to talking openly about such things. After a while some people began to discuss personal issues of their lives, their couples and the community. Glenn and some of the others turned to this group for help during their personal crises.

The meetings soon became a central focus of the community, and openness about conflict and feelings became the norm. Issues of child-care, couples, outside relationships, personal conflicts in style, work feelings, drugs, and commitment are all aired. There is crying anger, sharing of fantasies and interests, and discussions of values and beliefs. Through experience, the residents have learned to express anger. They have discovered that it is helpful for a conflict or tension to be dealt with openly, with the people involved talking openly and honestly about their feelings, rather than covering it up and hoping things will get better.

The group seems to be the commune's method for problem solving, one that is necessary in such a large family because there are no traditional or established patterns of communication. The meeting seems to be an advance on encounter weekends or consciousness raising groups in that the members of the group also live with each other everyday. Rather than being isolated from the daily world, the group is an integral part of community life, enabling them to practice honesty and personal growth. Through the creation of the house meeting the commune moved toward a more open community, away from the isolation of individual families and denial and avoidance and conflict.

Children are a likely focus for conflict in communities that have them. The initial impulse behind this commune came from a desire to create a better, freer, more creative and expressive, less repressive environment for children. But couples that agreed philosophically and knew each others' kids socially and in Sunday school found that what they meant about freedom, sharing, discipline and responsibility was different in practice.

While some of the families felt that



kids should do the same amount of housework and chores as adults, the Warrens believed strongly in individual freedom, so their kids should join only if they wanted to. The Warren's children were used to doing what they wanted, while other children their age had been heavily regulated. There were weekly business meetings in which these issues were aired, but it was difficult for any of the families to drastically alter their styles.

When the oldest Warren son came home from college during Christmas vacation with his girlfriend, they stayed together in the study. While this was fine with his parents, some of the others were highly upset. Feelings between the more liberal and the more traditional families continued to be a sore spot. It was hard to compromise because the commune never intended to collectivize childrearing. Parents remain the final authority for their children, even if that leads to conflict.

Unlike their parents, the teenagers did not choose to live in the commune or make an explicit commitment to the others. Each of the families had one child who was against the move, while the others were positive but cautious. It is hard to convince teenagers who have not chosen the commune to share responsibilities of membership.

While they are urged to sign up for jobs and usually do them, there is conflict about whether adults other than their parents should pressure teenagers when they do not do their jobs. Since they are not in encounter meetings to be confronted, often conflicts between teenagers and adults remain simmering and unresolved, just as they do in traditional families.

The younger children seem to enjoy the commune more. There are other children of all ages, and also adults, to spend time with. They are encouraged to help out with chores, which, including working in the garden or feeding the animals, are opportunities to do things with adults and learn exciting things. When a parent goes out, there are usually others at home who can act as sitters. Thus, while the parent or parents are still full-time, there is support and help from others. People with no children (and no previous contact with them) participate in a facet of family life that was closed to them, enriching the children's lives as well.

As some of the original families left, they had to be replaced to fill the house and help pay the bills. For a while, the commune had a difficult time finding new members, because of the prohibitive cost

involved and because they still were looking for "families" rather than individuals.

But they did find some people like themselves, older and part of families, who wanted to live collectively. At one weekend conference they met Bert and Mary Sawyer. They were in their 50's, their children had grown, and they were in a difficult life transition period. They bought the Godfrey's share of the commune with the money from selling their house.

In the second and third years other new people came, and the commune began to be more open and flexible in its definition of membership and family. When the Pennicks left there was no new family to replace them, so a new category of resident, temporary renter, was created. People in periods of transition lived there for a while. A woman whose husband was away, a young man recently discharged from a mental hospital whose therapist knew of the commune, a high school girlfriend of one of the teenage residents, and a recently divorced man all lived there for a few months. Because the commune was not explicitly set up to help people in transition, the others felt burdened. They began to ask for a longer-term commitment.

Other new people have included four single women, three with children. The commune represents another type of transitional community for them. They had been recently divorced, and found living alone difficult, lonely and lacking in companionship for them and their children.

Accepting renters caused the commune to redefine the initial contract it asked of new members. The expectation that families move in and buy a share proved unrealistic. Not only did few people have the money, but it was hard to ask a person to make such a financial sacrifice before they were sure the commune was the home they wanted. The residents found alternate ways of meeting payments, by increasing the mortgage which is paid by monthly assessments (around \$75 a person a month, less for children). If after a few months a new person has the means and the interest in investing in the house, they are then welcome to do so. But all residents, whether renter or owner, are considered full members.

The most recent renters are two young unmarried couples, and a family with four children. The Kimbles were looking for a communal house or farm that had other older children. Like the Sawyers, they had become dissatisfied

with their suburban existence. Also, Bob Kimble had growing moral objections about working for his company, and was tired of 9 to 5 commuter work. He found a job with flexible hours, which could largely be done at home, at a cut in pay. By selling their house they could afford to live on much less. The others helped them fix up their house for sale, and moved them a hundred miles to the commune.

The appearance and feel of the commune is much changed after four years. It has lost its look of middle-class tidiness, and has more of the clutter one would expect from twenty-two people following their separate interests. The furniture is older and more worn.

The way things get done has also loosened up. Initially there were weekly business meetings to reach consensus on all issues, from who was neglecting chores to whether to buy a new can opener. Some people felt frustrated and powerless because a lone dissenter could block a decision, and endless hours were spent on minor details. As the people became more trusting of each other and more in general agreement as to how things should be done, people began to take the initiative to do things on their own. Currently, if one wants to do something, like build a bicycle shed, have a party, or rearrange a room, a person asks around if there are objections, and if not, simply acts.

The commune has changed nearly all aspects of family life - household structure, sex roles, childrearing, openness about conflict and feelings, work vs. home life, community involvement, values and friendships - for the people who live there. While there has been stress, conflict and the breakup of couples, these have taken place in a context of adults struggling to grow and change the way they live. The membership was not drawn from adherents of the counter-culture, yet over time their lifestyle has moved toward these alternate values. The commune seems to have created some viable structural alternatives to aspects of the nuclear family that have recently been under attack. It offers a structure for building more equal sex roles, sharing family and work responsibilities, developing more intimate personal relationships, decreasing one's consumption and cost of living, furthering personal growth, and building a meaningful community. It is one of the longest-lived and successful communes I have studied, but many of its characteristics are shared more generally by other urban communes. □



# New Community I

*William O. Smith*

A dozen families are camped together at Russian Gulch State Park. Two fathers yell, "Who wants to play ball?" Several other adults and a horde of kids respond for a good old fashioned softball game. Meanwhile, several other kids find the creek less crowded and continue their fishing, while a number of adults sit around sipping coffee and carrying on congenial conversation, unhampered by guilt feelings about not entertaining their kids.

This was one experience that led eventually to creation of New Community I on 15 country-like acres within commuting distance of San Francisco. During the late '60s and early '70s families participating in Valley United Church in central Contra Costa County spent several days each year camping together. At these times, life seemed more enjoyable and relaxed — not so much from the vacation

stand-point, but from the perspective that for a short time we were more than nuclear families.

In the fall of 1970, a number of families from Valley United — which is a house church experimenting with non-traditional ways of affirming value and worth in life — got together to talk about new ways to structure our lives by building upon these camping experiences. The rural commune movement was much in the press, but almost to a person we decided against a commune in that sense. We were not interested in that drastic a lifestyle change, but we wanted more than what the nuclear family offered. We primarily espoused middle-class suburban ethics — liberal in social thought, monogamous in our marriages, but not uptight about others who lived by differing principles. We liked some of the privacy of the nuclear family, but we also

longed to overcome its isolation.

About seven families decided that they would be interested in a model that preserved the best of the nuclear family while offering the best of the extended family. Some of these were single-parent families, as well as couples. We asked, "If you could move your present house and place it next door to a dozen other families who you really like and have something in common with, would you do it?" We felt that this arrangement would place us in an environment where we could develop a deeper sense of community.

We spent some time dreaming about possibilities: For our kids to have more than one or two adult models to relate to, for adults to have others to share their hopes and fears with, for ecological ways to develop land, for community gardens, buildings, food conspiracies, etc..

With a vision in mind, we proceeded to seek a piece of property to accommodate about twelve family units. The seven core families expected that once we had a piece of property, at least five more people would join us and make the community complete. These families were not confined to Valley United Church, but were families seeking a new experience of community living.

Seven families agreeing on one piece of property was not an easy project, but after six months of searching we finally settled on a 15 acre parcel in Orinda. We secured an option, hired a site planner, and proceeded to seek county approval for a planned unit development which would have grouped our homes on about four acres and left the remainder in open space.

We encountered neighborhood opposition. For three years we fought neighbors who wanted to keep their fifteen acre backyard, were afraid of this new group of multi-racial, multi-age group, and were afraid of the new values that might be introduced into their neighborhood. This neighborhood opposition did two things for us:

1) It solidified us into a working unit to defend ourselves against a common enemy; and,

2) It delayed us significantly so that it became more expensive to develop, and eventually caused some original members to drop out.

Trying to ward off the opposition, we abandoned our cluster plan and came in with a traditional half-acre lot development. However, we included certain things in our covenants and restrictions that made this different from most sub-divisions, five acres of open space, no fences, architectural control, natural wood exteriors, minimum grading for house sites, etc. These things would make it obvious to others that these homes belonged to each other.

The new plan was more expensive in money and more damaging to the environment (more asphalt, grading, etc.). Here we lost some of our original families — some because they didn't want to raise their kids in the bigoted atmosphere that some of the neighborhood opponents displayed, and some because they could no longer afford the additional financial burden. Losing someone from the partnership was always a painful and traumatic experience for the group, but usually there were other pioneering souls ready to pick up where the originals left off.

There were subtle changes that began to take place when new partners joined.

The original core group were committed much more to the idea of an intentional extended-family community with this group of people. The most important thing was a commitment to these people and the establishment of a new style of community life together. Once we purchased the beautiful view property, however, many of the new partners were committed to the property more than the extended family ideal. The "fantastic property" and a "nice group of neighbors" perhaps influenced the choice of several partners who replaced the original ones. Even though this was not recognized at the time, this factor has had a determining influence on the quality of community that is unfolding.

We developed the property by putting ourselves together in a general partnership of fourteen partners. Most businessmen felt that we were crazy exposing ourselves to each other's debts, but we completed a \$350,000 development with all of the families making decisions. We

knew each other's financial worth and spending habits before it was over. We had a sense of trust in each other, and no one abused it.

The development phase was also not without problems. None of us had experience in land development — we were predominantly teachers and lawyers. We had difficulty with our engineers, one fired for inadequacy, and the second, who bled us financially. The general contractor took a year to do what he estimated to take 60 days. There were numerous hassles on over-costs, what was in the contract and what wasn't, settlements on settlements. During the development phase we had two common enemies — the neighbors and our general contractor.

With the development phase behind us, half of us started immediately building our homes. Some hired builders to do most of the work, some did much of the subcontracting and work themselves, and one family did almost all of their own building. This was a hectic time with





everyone primarily concerned about getting their own home liveable, and there was very little shared labor on the houses.

However, there were many work parties to clear brush, dig water lines, landscape, and so on. Most of the families shared in these experiences and found themselves getting "closer to the land." At the same time we also took time to play with each other. Pot-luck dinners, picnics, trips to Mendocino, helped us to maintain our sanity during trying periods, and kept alive the vision of what life would be like when we finally moved together.

Now that half of us are in our new homes, what are the results? At the present time the greatest benefit seems to be for the pre-teen youth. There is great fun and good relationships between the kids. Parents never have to be concerned about being the only one to look out for their kids — everyone assumes responsibility for them.

There are good feelings between the adults and the kids. In a broad way the pre-teens are experiencing some of the benefits of the extended family.

On the other hand, most of the teenagers and adults are at a different place. This group is discovering that the good friends we knew when they lived across town are a bit different when you live next door. It is almost like getting married — you thought you knew your

partner well, until you moved in together! One discovers little idiosyncracies and irritations that could produce a family break-up — but if you work on them and try to resolve them, it is possible to deepen the relationship. New Community I is presently in this stage, and working out a relationship 14 ways is definitely more complicated than two ways.

At the present time the level of community within the group is what might be described as "country club." Most families have first loyalty to their individual piece of real estate and the other physical things that we will build together. We plan a swimming pool, picnic area, cabana, volleyball and basketball courts, etc.— all of the amenities of a country club. On the other hand, we hold our bi-weekly pot-luck meals, plan our major social activities together, and elect our officers, just like a country club.

Most enjoy doing things with the "club" (even work parties), but there is reluctance to give up too much of one's privacy or individuality and there is fear of entering deeper intimacy — again characteristic of the country club crowd. There is a hesitancy to give top priority to the community. The tendency is to extend help to others in the group, but only if it does not inconvenience one in doing so. This is much closer to the "country club" philosophy and a far cry from the extended family. The fear of self-disclosure and

reaching out to a whole group in intimacy is perhaps too much to expect in less than six months.

However, there are small evidences of some non-country club characteristics developing. The group is talking again about sharing their half-acre lots to plant fruit trees, berry patches, a vineyard, a garden — whatever lends itself to the landscape. Each family is contributing some part of their lot for the good of the community. New Community families are trying to get their "food conspiracy" going too. This sharing of economic interests is different from the country club mentality and suggests a transition which is closer to the expanded family ideal.

What are the chances of developing a community life style that preserves the best of the nuclear family and brings back the best of the extended family? At this point it is difficult to know. Experimenting with deeper relations with others exposes one to deep hurt. Unless a basis of trust can be developed within the group, it will be too tempting to remain country club. However, commitment to a higher ideal is a motivating force to keep trying. The next few months will tell whether the group will indeed become New Community I, or remain a middle class country club. My hope is for the former. □

# How To SURVIVE COMMUNAL LIVING

*Gabrielle Haddad*

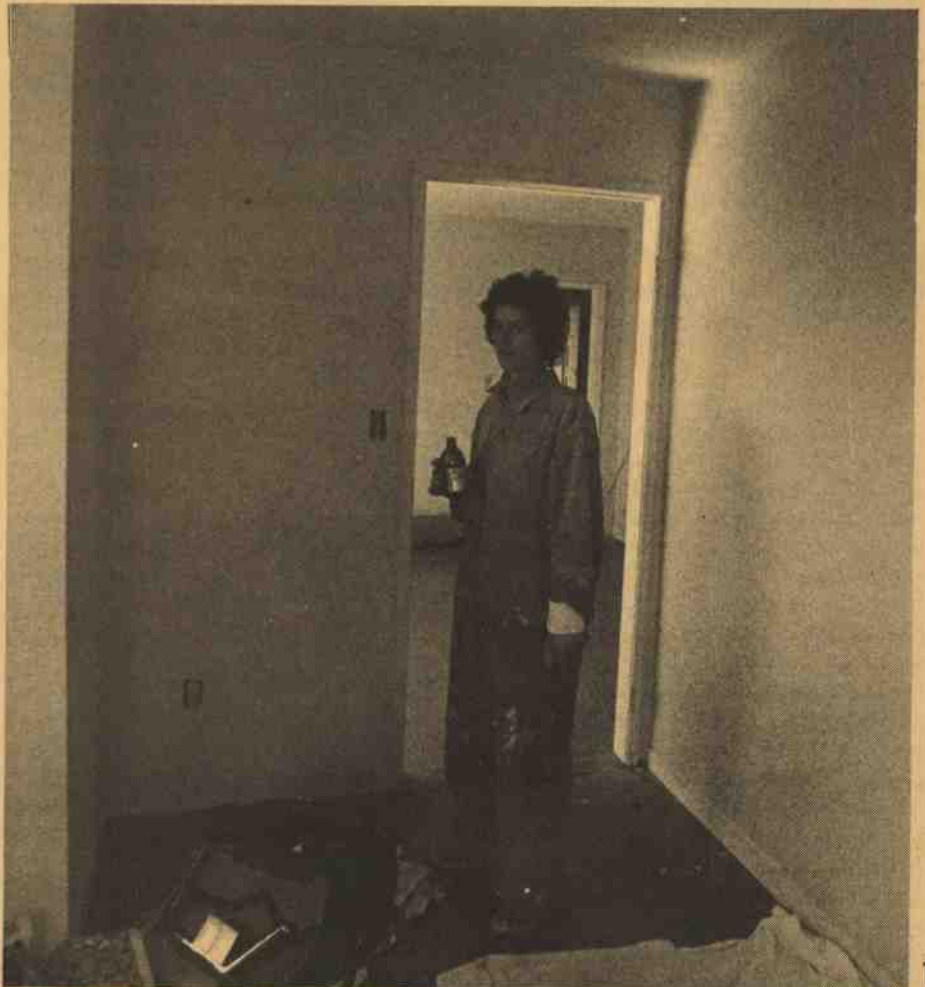
Four years ago, another woman and I were full of excitement at our decision to form a commune. We stayed up nights talking about what we wanted out of communal living and what kinds of people we wanted to live with. Our vision of future commune members ran something like this: People who do not play sexist roles; who are at least adequate musicians; who are vegetarians and like to cook; who are kind and attentive to children and want to participate in child care; who have a sense of humor and are easy to get along with; who are politically and culturally astute; who are exceedingly interesting, if not brilliant, and have lots of groovy friends.

Today, tired and wiser by 1,460 days of communal experience, I can state that, on the whole, communal living suits me fine. However, we now talk about the acceptable rather than the ideal living situation. And our expectations are decidedly mundane. An honest advertisement describing our expectations of a new house member would read: We are interested in living with you only if you have a generous attitude toward sharing in housework and are ever so responsible in doing chores; are quiet in habit; don't smoke; are tolerant about children; are accepting of people's trips, are neither righteous nor humorless about your own, and don't try to lay yours on others; are sensitive to the rhythm and flow of the household and willing to be a part of it; are usually likeable, mature, and independent; and are able to accept relationships according to how they evolve, without expecting built-in intimacy. We have also learned (the hard way) the importance of being clear about what we

expect of house members, and what they can expect, at least minimally, from us.

When we feel positive about the group living experience, we point with pride at those four years as proof that we're doing something right. When our feelings are negative, memories, even

the fact that we have history, give us strength and perspective—it's almost as if our household exists in spite of all its members past and present. Two out of five founders still live here. Besides the four adults and one child who now share the house, "we" includes an extended



family made up of many former commune members. This network is as important to our sense of community as the house itself.

No longer neophytes, we can speak with authority about what works—at least for us, at least for our kind of household. The potential for warm relationships, we have discovered, is greatly diminished when practical matters run awry. The rest of this article discusses some of the practical ground rules that have helped us survive.

### Purpose

I have been told that living groups fall into two categories: those that engage actively in performing some activity in the world, and those that serve as retreats from the world. Our group is the latter type. Activity oriented communes usually form around a set of principles or an organization, such as a brand of spiritualism or a political movement. Our retreat also has a focus: the house itself. Concern for the welfare of the house and the people who live in it centers around us, makes us "communal."

Consistent sharing concerns housework and food. Whether or not our one-to-one relationships are particularly meaningful or deep, it has been essential to acknowledge that we live **together**. Of course, our relationships are more complex than this description implies. But, it is also true that our attitudes, our ways of communicating, our poses in the world, have needed no larger stage for expression than the petty world of running a household. The issues that bind us together or tear us apart inevitably revolve around house business.

### Agreement

In time, every group forms its own peculiar lifestyle, which is another way of saying that at least some collective agreement is reached. Part of our settling down process has been learning **what** we needed to agree on to live together without strife.

To some people a house is just a place to park one's body at night. We have found, however, that most people are sensitive to their home environment—its quality affects their health and their spirit. Various environments can be full and enriching. It took us awhile to realize that what is nourishing to some does not feed others nearly as well. Quietness versus loudness and crowding versus space were issues that, once solved, helped to determine our household's lifestyle.

Each of us moved in equipped with

our individual living standards. In the beginning, we believed that others couldn't be expected to agree on any standard, much less our own. When the record player blared continuously I said to myself, "That's the breaks of living with other people," and thought about moving. Occasionally, guiltily, I asked that the music be turned down (or the partying end), but mostly, I tried to drown out the noise by staying in my room and concentrating on purer thoughts. Most of us went around silently bearing our grievances. Until, one day the tension became strong enough for some of us to complain. How surprised we were to find that all save one **hated** music at a high decibel! There is strength in numbers—thus, an immediate reduction in loud music.

Noisiness is easier to come by than quietness. To balance out the desires of noise makers and quiet seekers, we stressed the idea that quiet was the opposite of noise: un-noise; and in a dichotomized world, it deserved at least equal time. New housemates have been chosen partly for their desire and ability to thrive in a fairly quiet atmosphere. Everyone is miserable if some fundamental environment isn't agreed on.

We also found a collective standard regarding overcrowding. One house member moved in with an entourage whose status became as good as permanent. Add a few other visitors, and at one point, ten people were sleeping under a roof designed to shelter no more than five. "What right do I have to throw out all of these nice and deserving people on the street?" each of us thought. Everyone was afflicted with the "good person syndrome." Our self-images were at stake. We all knew that people living in communes were unhesitatingly generous to those in need. Complainers would be dubbed uptight, unmellow, ungroovy, hard-nosed.

Then, a fateful incident: A "guest" asked a paying house member (politely) to leave the room so that she could talk **privately** with her boyfriend. A house meeting was called and we claimed our right to a house free of poachers. It turned out that even the popular housemate was relieved to see her friends go!

This experience taught us that it was very important to agree on and pursue what we wanted. Furthermore, we had learned how to say "No" collectively and had survived. Our self-images had improved; now, we knew the difference between being kind and being suckers.

These incidents show how house traditions are born. Gradually, we have

reached agreement about which behaviors are barely tolerable and which are essential. If a great deal of unresolvable disagreement occurs, the only alternative I know of is for those in the minority to move out. Even with these high stakes, we have found that sticking up for important preferences is an easier course than trying to hide them. If we have not found complete agreement by airing our grievances and searching for solutions, so far we have reached palpable compromises.

Lesson: One reality isn't necessarily better than another. It is, however, essential to agree on the nature of the reality you wish to create.

### Chores

Attitudes about chores have been given more thought and discussion than any other subject. This is the one vital area in which we **must** share to survive. For at least the first six months, commune members agreed that chores should be done as needed, by anyone who felt like doing them. We assumed that we were equally committed to sharing work, and that a daily awareness of who had accomplished what would help to balance out the work load. This free-sharing method worked as long as we were intent on making good impressions on each other. But, as things settled down into routine, it became evident that some of us did much more work than the others. Some people appeared to be unaware (intentionally?) of how much effort was required for even minimum upkeep. Others excused themselves from tasks on grounds of distaste or incompetence. Still others considered themselves transient and felt little commitment to the household. To complicate matters further, we could not agree on a standard for neatness or cleanliness. Those with lower standards felt compelled to do it. Obviously, free sharing had considerable merit for those who did few chores! The workers, on the other hand, resented the "drones" and became martyrs to their cause.

Many collective discussions helped us to alleviate this unpleasant state of affairs. The majority agreed on an acceptable standard: Most of us liked things fairly neat and clean. Our task was to convince the messy minority that they too were responsible for the group standard. We established that because everyone disliked housework (so far that's one thing we have all agreed about!), no one was exempt from it. We did away with free sharing, replacing it with compulsory chores. These decisions have ended

excessive martyrdom, given us another house tradition, and made doing chores tolerable.

House mates **notice** when chores aren't done, and backsliders can expect reminders. We have scheduled chores in various ways with similar success. The key seems to be that they **are** scheduled. Once we rotated chores weekly according to area. We made a chore wheel out of paper plates, printing our names on the moving inner plate and the chores on the rim of the stationary outer plate. There were five chore areas for five people: clean kitchen; clean living room; clean hall, stairs, and bathroom; shop for groceries; work in yard. Every week we



rotated the wheel—no one had the same job to do again for five weeks, thus relieving some of the boredom. Another time, familiarity was favored over variety, so we all kept the same task for a month, then rotated. The current system is to divide cleaning into teams. With four house members, six team combinations are possible. Thus in every six weeks, each of us cleans half of the house three times. The advantages are sharing the work and more time between assigned chores.

Our household has almost always bought food collectively and eaten dinner together. Mealtime is the one time we can count on being in one place at the same time. When cooking was done in

free-sharing style, a few people did most of it. We have been most comfortable with semi-free styles. At one time, everyone was expected to cook at least one meal a week, but with no fixed times. Now, we each cook on a scheduled evening, leaving three nights open to whim.

Everyone's commitment to the household differs. This is expressed by the special projects we do: building a closet, painting a room, working in the yard. We have found it best not to expect help in carrying out our pet ideas; not every project generates enthusiasm. Projects are considered creative because something **new** is accomplished; in that sense, finishing a project has its own re-

ward. Which is why projects and chores have been differentiated: Chores are repetitive and reap little pleasure; therefore, they must be shared equally.

### Responsibility

In a closed situation such as a household, people who are irresponsible automatically oppress the people around them. Not doing one's share in a commune has **always** pointed to some problem with acting like an adult. Our demand that house members act like grownups has helped a few people to face oppressive attitudes and behavior.

Putting a premium on responsibility has meant that childishness, in the form of not performing one's equal share, has

not been encouraged with a parentlike indulgence. For instance, one man consistently offered his help, then either did not keep his promise or was frustratingly slow at getting around to it. I don't think he ever understood why people got so mad at him! Consistent laziness about doing one's share has also been considered a syndrome of childishness. Who wants to become the surrogate parent who picks up after the spoiled child? Furthermore, how can the child learn to be an adult if he or she is not asked to act like one? Attitude seems to determine whether someone is childish or smugly inept or insensitive. A child is not someone who doesn't know how, but rather someone who isn't willing to learn.

In contrast, housemates are easily forgiven their lapses if they indicate a willingness to participate and a genuine commitment to the general welfare of all. For instance, one of our housemates worked part time and studied full time. Even under these pressures, she did as much housework as she had time for. We translated her gestures as pure love and gave her the benefit of every doubt.

Another cause of irresponsibility has been sexism. Besides being philosophically disagreeable, the practical result of sexist role playing is that it forces certain tasks onto certain people. Some female chauvinism has occurred, such as not wanting to do yard work or take out the garbage. But, male chauvinism has affected us the most seriously. For example, when one man was asked to cook, he would say, "Don't ask me to cook—I don't know how." When asked to participate in housework, he would respond that he hated it, was insensitive to his surroundings anyway, and felt incompetent because he'd never done much of it. He traded his refusal to do menial jobs by doing gardening and maintenance work. In other words, perhaps unconsciously, he did work that he considered "fit for a man." Finally, the rest of us, who, of course, hated housework as well, rebelled. As a result, this man cleans house quite adequately and has learned to turn out very tasty meals.

Ideals and fantasies have their place in communal living. They are the fodder out of which grist is grown. They help to determine the direction a group is headed. But the all-important next step is practice. Principles must be converted to action. I believe many a commune falls apart because its members do not face the challenge of creating an agreeable reality. □

# COOPERATIVE

The possibility for collective living offers people great economic and emotional advantages. Not only is it much cheaper for six or more to live in a large house together than it would be for them to live separately in apartments or homes, but in addition, there are clear and often unexpected emotional benefits from a satisfactory collective living situation.

Unfortunately our individualistic and competitive upbringing as North Americans has built into us a large number of tendencies and attitudes which make collective living very difficult. Most people hesitate to commit themselves to collective living due to valid fears regarding the trials and tribulations of such a life. Large groupings of people who live together (unless they belong to a hierarchical, authoritarian movement such as a religion) tend to fall apart within six months or a year of their organization for lack of knowledge about how to live collectively.

When people decide to live together in groups they usually have no body of rules and traditions which applies to their new living situation. Very often an attempt is made to live together without explicit agreements or rules on a "You do your thing, I do mine" basis. People enter into living arrangements with no understandings about the desired level of cleanliness, about who will do what chores, about what regulates noise and privacy and so on. Where there are no specific rules people tend to assume that their preferences are the rule. In such situations provisions are seldom made for house meetings in which these matters

can be discussed and taken care of and very soon people slip into the worst uncooperative behavior. One can usually judge the state of affairs in such a living situation by making a tour through the bathrooms, kitchen, and common areas which will be either empty of people and messy, or peopled by resentful women who are doing the chores for the men.

Yet group living can be successfully achieved. By living in a large house with shared facilities we can make our lives a great deal easier and more pleasant than life is for the average isolated individual who has to make do with their own car, toaster, washing machine, kitten, all cleaned (or fed) and paid for and maintained by him or her exclusively. In a cooperative household, food is shopped for collectively, and people are available to each other in times of emotional need, or in the everyday necessities such as babysitting, answering phones, or pinch hitting.

I have lived in a cooperative living situation for about five years. At the same time I have been in touch with a number of people who have made attempts, successfully and unsuccessfully, to live collectively. I want to share my experiences and ideas about how to make a group living situation work.

## House Meetings

The most important decision to be made when people decide to live collectively is, in my belief, that rules for living together are needed and that these rules need to be constantly clarified. To do this it is necessary to have regular meetings. These meetings should start

before some of the essential decisions such as buying, signing leases, distribution of expenses and rent are made, and they should continue on a regular basis. In an established household where such decisions have not been made it is beneficial to make them as soon as possible. Besides regular meetings *ad hoc* meetings can be called by any person in the house with the assumption that if anyone wants to have a meeting, others in the house will respond in a cooperative manner.

It sometimes happens in group living situations that people who have power are reluctant to respond to the idea of house meetings because they realize that in such a meeting power can be challenged and decisions can be made which may go against their interests. So, from the beginning, people wanting to live collectively might find that the institutionalization of house meetings in which the rules of living are discussed will be either overtly or subtly resisted by some. Such resistance is often due to desire to prevent the people with less power from organizing a source to meet their needs.

## Rules

A number of banal or as we call them "Mickey Mouse" rules are relatively easily arrived at such a meeting. For instance: shall the house be locked at all times? Shall dishes be done after every meal? Shall quiet hours start at 10 p.m.? These matters are easily brought up, discussed, dealt with, and are a very important part of the smooth functioning of a collective household.



# LIVING

*Claude Steiner*

On the other hand, there are a number of other questions not so easily raised and not so easily dealt with such as: shall people living in the same situation have the freedom to initiate sexual relationships with each other? Shall the food eaten collectively be organic or shall it include junk food? How clean is clean? Should the rent structure be rearranged? What do we do about Jack's drinking or Betty and Mary's fighting? Shall a certain person who refuses to cooperate be asked to leave the house? How do we deal with our feeling with the way that Sally is raising her son John, — is she spoiling him or mistreating him?

In order to arrive at cooperative collective decisions on more complex questions the usual loose, unstructured methods that govern most house meetings are not sufficient. Very often unsolvable confrontations and disagreements are arrived at and negotiations break down; invariably when negotiations break down things will deteriorate into warring camps or scapegoating. I want to suggest a set of rules which I call Cooperative Rules which have proven very effective in the management of the majority of problems which we have confronted in our living situation.

## **Rules for Cooperative Living**

### **Equality.**

The very first and most important rule for a cooperative living situation is the assumption of absolute equality of rights for all members living in the collective. This means that people have to be willing

to deal with their sexist, ageist and couplist behavior which invariably exist in all people and which introduce into their lives gross or subtle assumptions of inequality. Sexism is the most obvious form of inequality and as in all other forms of unfairness it is usually shared by all involved in the situation. Typically in a house where sexism exists, it is not critically confronted by women and they end up doing more of the chores which are associated with cleanliness and the kitchen, while men do more of the chores associated with fixing, repairing and the technical aspects of running a house. Since the women's chores tend to be more in constant need of being performed, this breakdown usually spells more work for the women than for the men except in rare situation where a lot of building or repairing goes on. This type of inequality is not necessarily promoted by men only; women usually fall into it and even seem to prefer it in some situations, at least for awhile. Yet the tendency for inequality has to be confronted and struggled with, or in the end, it will spell tension and difficulty for the house. Likewise assumptions or unequal rights for children (ageism) and for people belonging to couples as opposed to singles (couplism) are equally a source of unfairness and need to be dealt with. Seniority, as well as membership in a couple, or being a man or a "grownup" are frequently the basis for inequality in a household.

One of the important sources of an assumption of unequal rights comes from the manner in which the original lease or purchase of the house is arranged. Very

often one person, or couple, usually the one with the most money, either buys or signs the lease to the house and henceforth by virtue of his (it's usually a man) having been there first assumes and/or is given rights and privileges which spell a basic inequality in a household. It is therefore important to demystify these assumptions and to reach agreement about the rights of signatories of leases and owners of households or people who have been in the house a longer time. Sometimes there is no possibility of completely equalizing such situations, but it is important to at least clarify and discuss them openly. For instance, if a person owns a house in which everyone is living, there is no possibility of equalizing the power since regardless of any discussions, in the end, if push comes to shove, the owner has the power and legal recourse to use it. However, barring such extreme circumstances it is possible for the rights and privileges of members of couples, people with seniority, owners of houses, signatories of houses, and so on to be equalized. It is because of this that it is extremely important from the very beginning to discuss these matters in a cooperative manner. It is also important, if the person owning the house is being in any way generous, which often is the case, that her or his expectations be made clear. Does she expect a family? Does he want work contributed in exchange? Or is she generous just to be generous (a seldom occurrence).

One special circumstance which tends to re-occur in collective households is in relation to who signed the lease. My experience is that who signed the lease is an artificial but very real basis for power struggles. It is best to make an up-front agreement that the signator of the lease has no right over and above anyone else; and that he/she relinquishes whatever legal rights go along with having signed a lease in the interest of cooperative living, so that if it is decided to split up the house, who shall stay in it is agreed on a cooperative basis. This basis must be arranged before the conflict or it will not be accepted. One way is to vote with a coin toss in case of a tie.

### **No Power Plays**

This rule refers to the method used by people to get what they want. A power play is a maneuver very often subtle and unavowed which is designed to bring about a desired result against the will of others. It is very important that no power plays be permitted in a cooperative household—neither crude ones such as

yelling, banging, throwing things around, making threats; nor subtle ones, such as sulking, gossiping, caucusing, lying. Decisions are to be made democratically and without violating anyone's needs or wishes. Yet, a simple majority vote on any one issue is not always sufficient because the minority can be systematically mistreated by the majority. Therefore, it is very important that democracy not be carried out in a callous way but rather in a nurturing, cooperative way which precludes the oppression of others even by a majority vote. Thus, a decision by consensus is preferable in most cases. However, it must be remembered that the consensus approach may be incapable of dealing with certain hard core decisions and ultimately it must be understood that a democratic vote will be abided by. For instance, take the struggles with a very authoritarian, sexist man who made everybody's life miserable in a household where decision-making was first attempted through a nurturing, consensus form: When after months of ineffective struggle the majority decided it no longer wanted to live with this man, the majority voted to ask him to leave. The vote was considered binding even by those who did not agree with the decision.

It is just as important to clearly understand and de-mystify power plays (individual power abuse) as it is to understand and de-mystify sexism, ageism, couplism, or other forms of institutionalized power abuse. Only committed struggle can deal with these destructive forces adequately. Again this is best done at house meetings in which discussions are orderly and disciplined and self-critical.

### No Rescues

A third essential for cooperative living is no Rescues. A Rescue is a situation in which somebody does something they don't want to do or somebody takes more than fifty percent of the responsibility in any situation. The behavior rule is "Ask for everything you want all the time." At first glance this rule appears to be almost antithetical to cooperative living but if examined closely it will be seen that a number of people all of whom ask for 100% of what they want 100% of the time and deal with each other's requests with the understanding that everyone has equal rights and that power plays will not be used creates a situation in which most of the people will get most of what they want most of the time. Being willing, in a nurturing way to compromise what one wants for the sake of others is in fact what

cooperation is all about and the joys of that type of behavior are its major reward. People enjoy living cooperatively and our practical experience with the above rules is that they are helpful to that end.

### No Secrets

One of the implications of "no Rescues" is that people will be truthful about what they want and about what they don't want. Lies and secrets are a very important corrosive influence in cooperative living. Just to what extent people will be truthful with each other has to be decided by each living group but it is advisable that lies, both of commission and omission, not be acceptable forms of behavior in a living situation.

This fourth and final rule is a little more ambiguous and difficult to pin down. It is intimately connected with previous rules. For instance a lie is often used to power-play people, that is to say, to maneuver them into doing things they don't want to do. Lies are also the basis for Rescues. In addition, it is fairly clear that any bold-faced lie or lie by commission will be damaging to any relationship including cooperative relationships. To what extent people should truthfully share their lives with others without omissions — their joys, their sexuality, their concern, their fears, their loves — is something that cannot be set down in a rule. Let me say, however, that the largest amount of truthfulness is desirable in my mind and that even though this is difficult for most people, true cooperative relationships are not really complete until complete truthfulness is included. An important aspect of truthfulness is the expression of negative feelings whenever experienced in the course of the living situation. Because resentments are often held rather than expressed it is useful to spend the first minutes of house meetings giving vent to held resentments so as to facilitate smooth cooperative discussion which would otherwise be hampered by unexpressed anger or hurt. A more complete discussion of procedures and rules for cooperative living can be found in my book *Scripts People Live* (Grove Press, 1974)

Subscribing to these rules from the very beginning of the life of a collective living group will be highly beneficial and heighten the chances of that group to survive. Naturally, these rules, once adopted can be changed in the same way in which all decisions are made, by vote at a house meeting.

Let me now give a brief description of

the living situation that I belong to. We live in a large, spacious home with eight bedrooms. Three of the bedrooms have a private bathroom. The rents of these rooms range between \$85 and \$145 depending on the size and desirability. The house is owned by one of the members of the household whose rent payments are assessed on the same basis as everyone else's, and whose rights in the house are understood to be no different from anyone else's. In the event of a major communication breakdown however, it is clear that the legal owner of the house has obvious powers which everyone hopes will never have to be used. The equity which is accumulated from the payments on this house are distributed to the people who live in the house\* and the initial cash capital investment (down payment) which the owner made in buying the house receives interest (7%) which is part of the total rent. No other profit accrues to the owner.

Groceries are purchased collectively and there are two collective meals a week in which everyone is expected to attend. Other meals are arranged and cooked by members, on their own, in sub-groups of their own choosing. Everyone has a specific chore such as vacuuming the hall, grocery shopping, cleaning the stove, doing the garbage, cutting the lawn, etc..

People who do not have a pre-existing sexual relationship before they live in the house are expected not to enter into any sexual relations with another house member after joining the house without first discussing their intentions at a house meeting. Privacy is considered one of the most important aspects of living in the house and is very highly respected by others. All members of the household have full independent lives. House meetings occur approximately twice a month and are also usually called when needed. The level of truthfulness is very high and Rescues low. After five years of living in this situation it has become quite stable and enjoyable and many people observing how we live have become interested in joining us, or in starting a similar living situation. □

\*When a member proves out, the portion of his or her monthly payments that accrued to equity is repaid as a rebate. Rebates are possible because the owner has sufficient income to make them. — Ed.

# LIVING TOGETHER

ERIC RAIMY, GUEST EDITOR

ON:

*How To Start A Communal Household*  
*Interpersonal Skills for Communal Living*  
*Closeness*  
*Boundaries*  
*How To Get The Dishes Washed*

## HOW TO START A COMMUNAL HOUSEHOLD

Starting a new communal household is an adventure, a step into the unknown. This article contains suggestions for those who want to enjoy the adventure while tempering it with enough deliberation to avoid common mistakes.

Sometimes one or two people buy or rent a house, and recruit others to join them. Until others move in, the founders must meet the full mortgage or rent payments. This puts pressure on them to fill up the house quickly instead of taking the time needed to find compatible people. One successful approach is to find the people first, and then the house.

People interested in starting a household should be selective. That is, they need to take a close look at what everyone wants and expects, and to de-select persons who will not fit in. The penalty for not being selective is usually a high level of discord and membership turnover during the first year or two of the household's existence. The members who remain at the end of this unhappy period then become selective when they choose people to fill the places of those who left. Before you can select anyone, you need to bring together some people who will sit down, talk about what they want, and explore the possibility of starting a household. There are at least three methods of bringing this initial group of

people together.

**First method**—The most frequent method is to recruit individuals through friendship networks and organizations such as churches and alternative schools. Classified newspaper ads and bulletin boards may be used. In some cities, organizations keep lists of people interested in communal living (see box). Once a group of interested persons has been assembled, it meets regularly to see if people like each other and can agree on the shape of a household. This method has produced many successful households. The major drawback is that people have trouble de-selecting one another. After the group has met a few times it may become clear that some people have impossibly divergent expectations or that an individual would be hard to live with. Unfortunately, people don't always find the courage to say it. When this happens, the group is left with two unpalatable alternatives—include everyone, or abandon the idea of starting a house. To reduce the chance of painting yourselves into this corner, get agreement at the beginning that being honest, open and selective will work to everyone's advantage.

**Second method** — This approach makes being selective easier, and may also provide a larger pool of interested

persons. You start an informal, but ongoing, organization that helps people find others they want to live with. At meetings people break into subgroups to talk about what they want from communal living. Individuals and couples move from one subgroup to the next until they find others with similar interests and needs. These compatible persons become the core of a group. When they have attracted additional members, the group looks for a house. Several communal groups that are now living together were formed in this way in San Jose, California, with the help of an organization called Building Expanded Families.

**Third method**—This is a long-term approach that is really a way of life, and only incidentally a method of forming a communal household. The idea is to pursue your interests (social, cultural, or whatever) by joining groups, or better yet by starting your own interest group. In this way you gradually acquire a wide circle of friends and acquaintances, some of who will make ideal housemates. One person who has successfully tried this method is a seminar leader who conducts growth workshops that involve hundreds of people in several cities. "My entire life work," he says, "is casting a net to pull in interesting people." His communal household has a long waiting list of

people who want to move in when there is a vacancy. This is a major advantage of creating a house that is part of an extended interest group—you have a large pool of people to select your original household from, and a steady supply of replacement members who have learned about your house through the interest group. This approach also tends to bring together people who have a lot to share with each other because of their common interests and values.

Once you have assembled a group of interested people, the next step is to decide whether you are sufficiently compatible to live together.

**Compatibility testing**—During this stage in the process of forming a household, individuals get clearer about what they want, and share this information with the group. Differences are identified, and people see whether these differences can be worked through or compromised. Individuals with strongly divergent expectations drop out or are somehow de-selected. People begin to understand each other and feel mutual liking and trust. Finally, they make several key agreements that need to be made before the group occupies its house. Compatibility testing is fascinating because each combination of individuals is unique and has its own emotional chemistry. A good way to get a feeling for what the process can be like is to consider the following two examples from real life.

**The Rogers and the Smiths**—For four months, these two families met once a week to talk about buying a house together. Each couple had three children, so the joint household they created had ten members. It was to last two years. The initial meetings were over dinner, and they were tremendous fun. The mood was euphoria compounded of two things—the prospect of escaping well-worn family routines, and exciting sexual expectations. Both couples had read Robert Rimmer's novels, and they kidded each other at length about group marriage. Only after they moved in did it become clear that the Rogers had serious sexual expectations and the Smiths were interested only in flirting. The two families discovered other important differences that had been obscured by their initial euphoria. The Rogers' childrearing style stressed independence-training, which the Smiths saw as callous. The Smiths had wanted to live communally in large part to provide a better environment for their children, and were disappointed to discover that the Rogers wanted a less child-centered group. Accustomed to the open communication of encounter groups,

the Rogers were disappointed to find that the Smiths preferred less openness and sometimes withdrew from confrontation. In hindsight, it was clear that all of these differences should have been uncovered in the initial meetings and were not "because we were having too much fun and didn't want to see the problems." Had they paid attention to the differences then, they would have decided against their family merger. Nonetheless, when they parted amicably at the end of two years, the two couples believed they had grown in important ways, and were glad they had the experience of living together.

communal food. The presence of children at the dinner meetings brought up a very serious issue when two of them fought constantly. What would it be like living in a household where the kids never stopped fighting? One man worked at a people's garage and believed strongly in a view of business that de-emphasized profits while stressing cooperation and ecology. He was willing to accept people whose views differed, but wanted assurance that others would accept his values.

After a couple of months there was a feeling that some deeper issues had yet to be confronted and might be brought to



**Harmony House**—This is a group that did pay attention to basic differences during the compatibility period. The group de-selected some members and went on to create a harmonious and stable eight-member household that is thriving today. The Harmony group also met over dinner, but it included some serious discussions with the socializing. Eating together raised some of the issues. One woman was a vegetarian, and the group was forced to consider how she could be accommodated in a house where everyone else ate meat. Another woman lived on a strictly limited budget, which required the group to decide how much it would feel comfortable spending on

the surface in a different setting. So the group rented a country house for a weekend. Some members discovered warm feelings for one another and had a delightful two days. The weekend also highlighted serious strain in the relationship of the one married couple in the group. And it revealed unresolved jealousy in a three-way relationship involving a single woman and an unmarried couple. The couple hoped the commune would evolve into a group marriage. The group hired a facilitator to lead them in an all-night encounter to work through these interpersonal issues. When the encounter failed to produce any resolution, the group reached a low point. The

conflicts are real and no solution was apparent. One member recalls what happened at the next meeting:

"We all said, 'I love you dearly,' we practically swore eternal devotion to one another, and then we all came up with the reasons why we couldn't live together. So it was all off. But the next day, I called up Sue and we decided we still wanted to get a house, the two of us would do it and recruit some new people. But then Mike called up and said he wanted to be counted in, and Tom said the same. So then the four of us from the original group were back together."

By regrouping in this manner, the four de-selected the married couple who weren't getting along and their child, who fought with the group's other child. They also eliminated the unmarried couple whose group marriage hopes were threatening to some other members, and who were in an unstable relationship with another member. The four who regrouped found some new members, and after three more months of meeting and house-hunting the group moved into its house. The method of de-selection could have been more honest—instead of swearing eternal devotion, the members might have found the strength to say, "I want to live with you and you, and I can't live with you." On the other hand, there never would have been a successful, harmonious household if the people hadn't managed to regroup at all.

**Retreats**—Living together for a week-end or longer can be quite helpful in testing compatibility. Typically groups rent a vacation house or go camping. People quickly learn who volunteers to cook or pitch tents, and who isn't willing to do a fair share of the work. One group de-selected two persons after a camping trip. One mooched others' food and wouldn't share hers. The other was a helpless type who couldn't tackle the smallest task without assistance. Groups that don't feel like renting a vacation place or going camping might consider moving into one member's house for a couple of days (it helps if it's a big house). Members of one group all got jobs as counselors at the same summer camp. By the end of the summer, they were quite certain they wanted to live together.

**Trial runs**—Sometimes a group decides to live together for a substantial trial period. One group of eight took a six-month lease on a house. Three members dropped out at the end of the six-month trial, and the remaining five bought a house and lived together

without any additional turnover for the next three years. Such a trial run offers a solution for people who own their own houses and are reluctant to sell without tangible assurance that group living will work for them. A person who owns a house can rent it to another family for the six-month or one-year trial period. At the end of that time, the home owner has the option of re-occupying the house, or selling it and investing some of the proceeds in a jointly-owned communal house.

**Issues checklist**—A number of issues need to be explored with some care before you make the final decision to move in together. Groups that don't consider these issues in advance run a certain risk. Pets are an obvious example of this kind of issue. If you don't agree on a pet policy at the beginning, sooner or later a member will bring home a puppy or a kitten, someone else will vehemently oppose this addition to the household, and a first class dispute will follow. Waiting for this kind of question to actually present itself guarantees a big hassle. It is far easier to resolve the issue in advance.

A communal household is almost the exact opposite of a bureaucracy where everything supposedly runs according to written rules. Still, there are a few key areas where it is highly advisable to make some definite agreements or policies. (For example, "We will have only one pet, Sam's dog Snuffy. Additional animals can join the house if there is unanimous approval.") It is even advisable to put a few things in writing. Some of your most important agreements, such as the procedure for admitting replacement members, probably won't be needed for many months. By the time the question arises, members can have differing recollections of what was decided. Most of the issues listed below can be explored without reaching any formal agreement. All you need to do is discuss the topic and notice any seriously divergent expectations.

**Closeness**—Are we going to be satisfied with the degree of closeness that happens naturally, or will we make getting closer a conscious goal? Will we use some kind of group process to get closer and resolve conflicts? Will we have some common goal or interest? Will we expect members to participate in a group project, or will it be OK for everyone to do their own thing? This is discussed in detail in the article on "Closeness."

**Boundary maintenance**—It's essential to establish a policy, preferably written, on admission of new members. Policies

on guests are also important but usually don't need to be written down. See the article on boundaries.

**Level of Cleanliness and Neatness**—Extremely neat and extremely messy people find it hard to live together and are probably better off not trying. One way to discover extreme differences in advance is to visit everyone's home before making the final decision to live together. Even if you have no extreme differences, cleaning is likely to be an important issue in new households. See the article on housework.

**Structure**—This issue is closely tied to cleanliness and neatness because the "cleans" often want a detailed chore structure and "messies" tend to resist structure. People who have a distaste for all structure cause problems in communal households. For example, someone who doesn't even want to discuss rotating chores, "These details all work themselves out".) is likely to sit back and let others do the work.

**Sex roles**—A group is headed for trouble if some members want all the work divided equally, and others expect the women to handle most of the cooking, cleaning or childcare duties. Discuss this in detail, chore by chore, to find differences that need to be worked through or that might be irreconcilable.

**Children**—Do we want children? How many and what age? Are our childrearing styles compatible? How much childrearing will nonparents be expected to do? Will they be compensated for baby-sitting? Will kids be required to do chores? Do our kids get along with one another? Etc.

**Diet**—Vegetarians and non-vegetarians get along fine in communal households if neither persuasion is dogmatic, i.e., if the vegetarians aren't sickened by the smell of meat cooking, and meat eaters also like to eat vegetarian dishes.

**Tobacco**—Some houses forbid smoking or allow smokers to indulge only in the privacy of their own rooms.

**Drugs**—Some people don't want to live in a house where contraband drugs are used.

**Pets**—Often people are unwilling to part with their pets, while others are allergic to them. Make an agreement on what type of pets will be allowed (and how many) to prevent disputes later on.

**Level of affluence**—Communal households accommodate wide income differences. It's common to find a professor or lawyer who earns \$20,000 a year living in the same house as a crafts person who makes \$4,000. This doesn't cause any problems. But sometimes conflicts do

arise when members insist on affluent or funky furnishings. Someone whose heart is set on new furniture, expensive rugs, crystal glasses and real china can be in serious conflict with someone who wants the living room furnished with pillows and Indian bedspreads. (This applies to common rooms only, of course—members work out individual decorative fantasies in their bedrooms.) There may also be a conflict between members who want to spend \$10 a week for food, and others who want to spend \$20, although these differences usually are compromised to everyone's satisfaction.

Additional questions worth considering before moving in are, how large a group do we want? and, what sex balance do we want? In large households (of say, 8 to 10 or more members) there are more hands to do the housework and therefore less work per person; greater economic savings; more intellectual stimulation, excitement, distraction and noise; more constantly available companionship; wider communication gaps; a greater need for structure and a greater likelihood of factions. Smaller households tend to bring about the opposite conditions. Of ten communal groups try to keep the number of men and women equal, perhaps in the belief that members obtain psychological support more easily from others of the same sex.

**House-hunting**—The most important points are:

1) Find a house in a community that welcomes or at least tolerates groups. Some towns enforce restrictive zoning laws and might force you to leave.

2) Choose a house with enough space so that there is a private room for every adult member. Couples sometimes share a room, but usually wind up feeling claustrophobic. When there is only one room that you can call your own, it's better if it really is your own.

3) If possible, choose a house with thick, sound-insulating walls. Bedrooms should not be adjacent to the kitchen, dining room or living room, to reduce noise problems.

4) Some members are sure to move out eventually, and you will need to recruit replacements. Finding replacement members can be a major hassle if your room rents are high or your location is far from the center of things. Try for a central location and reasonable rents.

5) If you are buying a house, pick one you can easily afford. Stretching your finances will lock your group into a continuing pattern of economic and psychological strain. □



## INTERPERSONAL SKILLS

Our society gives lip service to "learning to get along with other people," but that isn't what we learn. Most of us learn to cover up and lie about our feelings, to manipulate others instead of asking for what we want, and to withdraw from conflict instead of working problems through.

After three years of living communally, I am convinced that people benefit immensely when they learn basic interpersonal skills that, so far, are not taught in the family or at school. I have noticed that in communal households where some or all members have learned these awareness and communication skills, conflicts usually are handled easily, and bad feelings are less apt to crowd out feelings of warmth and closeness.

Before explaining what these skills are and how you can learn them, I will concede that they are not the whole answer to communal happiness. Compati-

bility is equally important. Your group may have members with irreconcilable value differences, or problem individuals afflicted with chronic depression, total helplessness, or incurable sexism. The solution to these problems is membership turnover that gives the remaining people a chance to pick compatible new members.

Sometimes people expect that once they get a compatible group, all of their problems will disappear. This, unfortunately, is wishful thinking. There will still be some members who are neater and want more structure than other members. Expectations about how close the group will be and how many things it will do together will not always be the same. Parents will differ over childrearing methods. Minor annoyances like someone leaving the mayonnaise out of the refrigerator will persist. In the most perfect community, conflict is natural and

inevitable. When we accept this fact and stop pretending it isn't so, we can start dealing effectively with conflict.

This view is contrary to our training. We have learned that conflict is unnatural, disgraceful, and to be avoided whenever possible. For example, when husband and wife fight, there may be no attempt to talk through what was so upsetting. The couple simply does not speak until they have cooled down and the fight is "over." Avoiding conflict in this way doesn't work. The same conflict erupts again and again.

This article is about working problems through instead of avoiding them. The terminology I use comes from popular psychology (or the growth movement), and this will put off some readers. All I can say to them is that there is no mechanical route to harmony in a commune. To resolve conflicts — or remove the emotional charge from them, which is just as good — we must pay attention to feelings and be more open and self-disclosing than Americans are accustomed to being.

Although it may be scary at first, this path is wonderfully rewarding. When we work conflicts through, we find out what we are really feeling and discover who we are and what we want. We are also able to get closer to other people, and feel the love and caring that are the greatest joys of communal life.

### **Taking Responsibility**

The place to start working problems through is with yourself. When someone bugs you, ask "what part of this problem is mine?" You will discover that to some extent you are bugging yourself.

For example, let's suppose that Jim, whose chore this week is to take the garbage out, has slipped up. Seated at the kitchen table, I know the garbage pail hasn't been emptied because I can smell it. I remember that Jim had to be reminded the last time it was his turn to take out the garbage.

I'm thinking someone like that is darn irresponsible, and I can feel my stomach knotting. I realize that I am quite angry, and the intensity of my anger alerts me to an important fact — part of the problem must be mine. After all, anyone could forget to empty the garbage, forgetting is not a federal offense. Last week when it was my turn, I had to be reminded, too. And yet I have chosen to become angry over Jim's dereliction. Why?

As I ponder this, I realize I feel that Jim has been inconsiderate of me. He has forced me to sit here and smell the garbage. Therefore he can't think much

of me. Recently I've been sensitive to what people think of me, because I'm not doing well at work right now and my self-esteem is a little shaky. So here I am, feeling hurt and angry because Jim wants to torture me with the smell of garbage!

Having figured this out, I feel a weight lifting from my shoulders. It doesn't make sense to think that Jim is doing something to me. In fact, I happen to know he is quite fond of me. These insights enable me to take responsibility for my anger, and I feel most of my bad feeling dissipating.

Taking responsibility in this way is the first step in handling resentments. I am able to take responsibility more often when I realize that by and large, people don't do things to me. I do things to myself. The concept is easier to grasp when you notice that there are many alternative ways to experience life moment by moment. When I experience something as good or bad, it is usually because I have chosen to experience it that way. And when I become aware that I have this power to choose, I gain the ability to experience events in other ways.

Sometimes taking responsibility will completely eliminate a resentment. Other times, it reduces the intensity of the resentment, making it easier to deal with, but some bad feeling remains. It is then necessary to express the remaining resentment, although we are often loath to do this. We have been trained to feel that conflict is bad and that negative feelings should be kept to one's self. We also know that when we slip and express resentment in a hostile way, an angry response and escalating conflict can be expected.

So we carry resentments around inside ourselves and this is miserably ineffective. When we carry a resentment around, it poisons our feelings toward the person we are angry at, and makes it impossible to feel OK in that person's presence. People who harbor resentments often resort to avoiding the other person all together. If you live by yourself, avoiding people works, although you may feel lonely. In a commune, avoiding others is impossible. This is why commune members who bottle up resentments cause lots of problems for themselves, and for others. The other members are hurt when a resentful person withdraws, when some of the resentment leaks out as sarcastic remarks or other hostile behavior, and when the person can no longer contain the accumulating anger and explodes in rage.

### **Confronting**

There is a perfectly good alternative to bottling up our resentments. We can express them in a caring way, and get rid of the resentment without alienating the other person. This is called "confronting" the person who is bugging you. In general usage, confront means to get angry, attack someone, put someone down. Used here, confront means none of these things. Confront means telling a person exactly how you feel, without provoking a defensive or angry reaction. The first step in confronting has already been described—you get as clear as you can about what is bothering you, and take as much responsibility for it as you can. Then you talk to the other person and say what you feel quite directly and honestly, while leaving out judgments, righteousness, double meanings, and similar impurities that contaminate much of our communication. This is harder than it sounds. Most of us have learned to manipulate others without even thinking about it. We have to learn to say things cleanly.

For example, I could say to Jim, "You're sure getting lax about doing your chores. Why haven't you taken the garbage out?" This statement expresses my resentment — and also attacks Jim. The statement is indirect. The real message, "I am hurt and angry because you didn't empty the garbage," is only implied. There is an attempt to manipulate Jim into feeling guilty by judging his behavior (it is "lax.") The question, "Why haven't you...?" demands that Jim justify his actions and is an invitation for him to respond defensively, with reasons or excuses.

If we had to analyze our talk in this detail, little would get said. Luckily, it is possible to start communicating cleanly right away, without having to analyze everything. An amazingly useful verbal device makes this possible. The device is called the "I statement." It is difficult to manipulate or judge while speaking in "I" statements. To make an "I" statement, become aware of what you are really feeling, and then express it using the word "I".

"Jim, I wish you would take the garbage out. I'm sitting here smelling it, and feeling a little bit hurt and angry with you. I know it's illogical for me to feel this way, because forgetting isn't that big of a thing. I forgot myself last week. And I still wish you would take it out before the smell gets any worse."

In this example, Jim was in a position to solve the problem — he could empty the garbage. Sometimes there is no solu-

tion, and this keeps us from expressing a resentment. "Why bring it up when nothing can be done?" we ask, and proceed to carry the resentment around. People who do this don't realize that simply communicating a resentment often eliminates it. One commune member tells a story that illustrates this. Her chore was vacuuming, and gradually she built up resentment toward another member whose dog shed on the rug.

"Logically, I strongly doubted that I should feel resentful, because she brushed the dog fairly often. But I did develop strong feelings about dog hair, and finally I realized I had to tell her. Just telling her solved the problem. The dog still sheds, but I haven't felt resentful since. I've stopped looking every place for dog hair."

When we communicate a resentment, we discharge the stored-up negative emotion, and this is why it is often

be there, look at the person, and listen without agreeing or disagreeing.

When you listen non-reactively, you give the person a chance to blow off angry feelings that make reasonable discussion of the problem impossible. Gradually the person will become less angry, and give you an opportunity to calmly feed back the gist of what was shouted at you. Feed back is important because the angry person needs to know that you really got what the upset was all about, and that the angry feelings were real. When you finished to the feedback stage you will often find that the problem has solved itself. If not, the person will now be calm enough to talk rationally and work out a satisfactory solution.

#### Group process

So far, this article has talked about resolving conflicts as they occur day-by-

ication or sensitivity training. Sometimes groups that lack this experience arrange to have a skilled facilitator attend their housemeetings for a few weeks to train the members in group skills. When a real interpersonal crisis hits, even groups with facilitators in their midst seek out side help. Members generally are too deeply involved in the issues to facilitate effectively in a crisis.

Much has been said here about the need to be open and honest, and to express feelings and resentments. Sometimes people think the idea is to be "brutally" honest or to pass out as much negative feedback as possible. This misconception can produce uncaring, insensitive interaction that causes more problems than it solves. There is a useful rule of thumb that can prevent this. If you are tempted to help someone by telling them about their personal shortcomings, don't. You probably haven't realized that your true motivation is to undermine — not to help — the person. On the other hand, if the person's shortcoming is interfering with your life, and you want to bring it up because you have a resentment, go ahead.

If you have read this far, you may want to learn more about the topics discussed here. The best way is to practice awareness and communication techniques in a group setting. For example, I learned how to listen nonreactively and express resentments cleanly in a communications workshop at the Resource Center for Human Relations in Oakland. I learned about taking responsibility in a seminar training led by John Enright and George Pransky, who have an organization called ARC, for awareness, responsibility, communication. Similar experiences are available in workshops all over the country.

There are also some good books on these subjects. Two of the best ones to start with are **Parent Effectiveness Training** by Thomas Gordon and **When I Say No, I Feel Gully**, by Manuel Smith. Both are available in paperback. Although intended for parents, Gordon's book is an excellent introduction to direct, caring communication not only with children but with anyone. Smith's book is sometimes wordy, but an extremely useful explanation of how and why we manipulate other people, and how to stop manipulating and start being assertive.

Commune members who attend workshops or read books about interpersonal relations get a special bonus. We can put everything we learn to good use in our daily lives. □



possible to eliminate a resentment simply by expressing it. For this to happen, however, it is necessary to feel that the person we are angry at has understood. And this brings us to the question of how to hear resentments.

#### Non-reactive listening

When people are too upset to communicate cleanly, resentments come out as angry attacks. The method of handling such an attack is called "non-reactive listening." Being a good non-reactive listener takes practice. It isn't easy to listen calmly when someone is shouting at you. The task gets easier when you see that non-reactive listening does not require you to agree with the criticism being flung at you or to give in to the angry person. All you have to do is

day. In some communal households, the weekly house meeting offers a forum to work through interpersonal problems that weren't handled during the week. At Harwood House in Oakland, California, for example, a member can bring up bad feelings during the part of the meeting reserved for clearing resentments. Every one listens quietly and refrains from interrupting while the resentment is stated. Then the person on the receiving end feeds the resentment back to show that it has been understood. If the two people have trouble hearing each other, another member may facilitate the communication.

Interpersonal problems are more easily solved in a house meeting if one or more members have had some kind of group process training, such as commun-



# CLOSENESS

The chance to feel close to others is a major attraction of communal living. Human contact, a sense of family, emotional support—these are among the advantages of life in a communal household.

But closeness is more complex than many people realize when they first join a living group. "How close do we want to be?" and "What **kind** of closeness do we want?" are questions that should be asked (and often are not asked) when a new group is forming. Many interpersonal problems in existing households can be traced to the fact that different members have different expectations for closeness.

How can people who are considering living together compare their expectations for closeness before making the final decision to start a group? How can communes already in existence work through conflicts over closeness? The answers proposed in this article are based on the experience of people in middle class, urban communes. These answers will not always apply to other types of commune, such as spiritual and rural communes.

**Monists and Pluralists**—In many households, conflict over closeness is a struggle between monist and pluralist factions. In its extreme form, monism is the view that reality is one organic whole with no independent parts. Thus monists want activities that involve the whole group. They want people to feel closer, and may favor sharing of personal feelings as a means to closeness. Extreme monists want everyone to share the same social and political views. And some monists find their desire for closeness extending to an interest in sexual sharing.

Pluralism is the view that there are many realities, and that each individual can pursue his own reality while remaining part of a community. Thus pluralists are happy to "do their own thing" whether or not it involves other members. They do not feel a need for shared activities beyond the cooperative effort needed to buy food, cook, eat dinner together, do chores, and so forth. Some pluralists welcome close relationships that happen to develop. Others fear too much openness and intimacy.

So far, two polar types have been sketched. In reality, no one is wholly monist or pluralist. Members fall along a

continuum between the two extremes and may not stay put. Over time, a member can move back and forth on the continuum, alternating periods of heavy group involvement and periods spent. The neat division into monists and pluralists is further blurred because members spend much time relating to each other as individuals. In the typical household, some pairs become close, while other individuals spend relatively little time together.

Despite all these qualifications a division between monists and pluralists seems to be present in all communal households. The division is the central issue uncovered in two independent case studies of middle class communes, by Sterling Alam in Illinois, and Dave and Jane Brown in Ohio.

Alam studied a household formed by three professional couples and their seven children. After the group had been in existence a few months, it became apparent that some members were satisfied with the companionship afforded by the normal cooperative routine of the house, while others "felt that the reason they were living together was to achieve deeper personal relationships."

The division was revealed partly by differing preferences for intellectual versus emotional expression. For example, a member mentioned at dinner that he was upset by a conflict at work over abortion. His comment led to an intellectual discussion of abortion that disappointed those who wanted to help him work through his feelings. The split also showed up when some members wanted to call in a group facilitator to help them work on interpersonal problems, and one member opposed facilitation as "a false manufactured intimacy, a poor substitute for the real thing, which could only develop spontaneously."

Despite these differences, the three couples lived harmoniously for two years, until one of the women read a group marriage novel by Robert Rimmer and suggested the house consider sex between members not married to each other. Her proposal to achieve greater closeness through sexual intimacy was deeply threatening to some of the others, and the group amicably dissolved soon afterward. Lack of agreement on child-care standards contributed to the dissolution, but Alam concluded the most

important factor probably was "lack of consensus on the kind and degree of intimacy desired."

The Browns studied a commune that began with 12 adult members in their early to late twenties and three children. Nine of the adults were university graduate students and one was a junior faculty member. The researchers noted conflict between what they called monist and pluralist camps within the group. Eventually the monists were disappointed when "it became impossible to develop a community-wide commitment to political action or even to attend a party as a group." After two years the household seemed destined to continue in existence, but only four of the original adult members remained. The Browns concluded that competition between the two factions "led to the 'losers' leaving the commune."

Another pair of authors, Jay and Heather Ogilvy, describe "a difference that...often distinguishes members of a single commune into two camps":

"The monists want to find the center which identifies the shared core of the commune, whatever that core may be. The pluralists see a rich communal life in terms of all 'doing their own thing.'...The distinction is felt in many communes with which we've been acquainted."

When they wrote their article, the Oglivys had lived for two years in a middle class commune in New Haven.

**Comparing Expectations**—Closeness becomes an issue in nearly all communal households. People considering living together can compare their individual expectations for closeness to make sure they aren't headed for more conflict than they care to handle. These are some areas well worth exploring before making the final decision to move in together:

1) What group activities will we expect everyone to participate in? Should everyone be together for dinner? How many nights a week? Will we have regular house meetings that all must attend? Do some people envision joint projects (e.g., gardening, remodeling, starting a business)? Do they expect others to join in these projects?

2) Will we agree that it is stimulating and desirable for members to have different interests and viewpoints, and that we will value and respect these differences? Or will we expect everyone to share some interest (for example, in personal growth, politics, community work, crafts, etc.) and common outlook on life?

3) How much personal openness do

we expect? Some people like sharing feelings about inner conflicts, love lives, and so on. Others do not want this kind of intimacy or are frightened by it.

One indicator of how people feel about openness is their attitude toward encounter groups and other growth experiences. If some people want weekly house meetings using sensitivity techniques and others are repelled by the idea, the group may be headed for serious conflict.

The degree of intimacy a group eventually achieves will probably be determined by the least-open member. Because people feel less comfortable revealing themselves in the presence of someone who doesn't reciprocate, the presence of one relatively closed person can severely restrict the level of intimacy in a household of four or six members. The effect is lessened in larger houses, where intimate pairs and subgroups form more readily.

4) What are our sexual expectations? Don't shrink from discussing this, even if everyone in your group is strictly monogamous. Since people often have sexual expectations that they hide even from themselves, confronting this issue directly may avert problems later on. If people seem to have differing sexual expectations, resolve this issue before moving in.

According to some theorists, this issue can be forgotten because an "incest taboo" takes hold in communal families and prevents sexual adventures. There are some middle class communes where this taboo somehow has failed. In many groups, to be sure, sex is never a problem. In others, members do have sex outside of couple bonds, and the group is plunged into a crisis. Often such crises end when members decide that sex with housemates is not worth the pain, or when a couple breaks up and one or both partners move out.

5) What kinds of closeness do we want?

**Kinds of closeness**—Understanding the different types of closeness helps in predicting whether people can live together successfully, and in resolving conflicts in existing households.

**Companionship** is easily obtained in group living. If you feel like chatting or sharing an activity like eating or watching TV, someone is usually there. Companionship places few demands on people. If someone is there, good, if not, that's OK too.

**Friendship** also comes about easily as liking and caring develop, usually quite quickly, out of daily contact. People who get to know each other as fellow

commune members tend to become "good friends" rather than "close friends." Good friendship is nourished by daily contact. Good friends derive warmth and support from their relationship, and feel a commitment to help one another. But when one of the individuals moves out of the house, there is no longer an occasion to spend time together, and the relationship becomes more distant.

**Close friendship or love** fulfills the deepest needs for acceptance, security and affection. It implies a deeper and longer commitment than is ordinarily made to a communal group. Usually lovers, spouses or lifetime friends are the people who can meet these deeper needs. Sometimes close friends form communes together or begin their friendship as housemates. And sometimes two single members become coupled. But ordinarily housemates do not meet these deeper needs.

**Emotional support** is what people need in a crisis or depression. Some people feel this need occasionally, and others need almost constant hand-holding. Communal households generally can provide emotional support, but find it easier to give to people who are not always needy. Chronically depressed members are sometimes asked to leave.

**Status support** is validation for a social status. People who are single, gay, living on low incomes, etc., sometimes live together and obtain status support from one another. Individuals who expect this kind of support from a group are sometimes disappointed, so it is a good idea to discuss these needs explicitly before joining.

**Ideological support** means validation of political or social beliefs. People who are tolerant of others beliefs find it much easier to get this kind of support. People who are insecure in their beliefs, and therefore dogmatic and intolerant, do not get along well in communal groups.

**Getting closer**—Some conflicts over closeness are resolved when people learn how to get closer. This approach works when people want to get close and don't know how. Commune members find it easier to make contact when they have learned basic communication skills such as making "I" statements, listening non-reactively, and clearing resentments in a caring way. Sharing and facilitation processes in house meetings are also a path to closeness. These communication skills and processes are discussed in this issue of **Communities** in the article on interpersonal skills. Closeness can also be communicated nonverbally. Some groups have hired massage instructors

to come to their house and lead workshops. This is a good way to get permission to touch one another while learning how to touch caringly.

Sometimes groups invest tremendous energy in a struggle to get closer. The atmosphere in these households carries a heavy emotional charge. Whether to remain together or split up may be a constant issue. Members of these households forgo tranquility and stability in their pursuit of greater intimacy and support.

**Redefining relationships**—Another way to resolve conflicts over closeness is to redefine what you want from a relationship. This method works when one person wants to get closer and the other doesn't. When you have tried and tried to get closer and all efforts have been in vain, you have two choices. You can keep on trying and feeling frustration and resentment, or you can redefine the relationship. (A third choice would be to look for another commune, but this isn't usually necessary.)

Understanding what you want from a relationship is the first step toward redefining it. You can expect to discover that your self-esteem is involved. You want the other person to confirm your worth as a person by giving you a particular kind of stroke which that person isn't giving you. After getting clear about what you want, the second step is to acknowledge to yourself that the person is unwilling or unable to give you those particular strokes. The third step is to notice the strokes you are presently getting from that person, and appreciate them for what they are. Once you have achieved the self-awareness required by the first three steps, the fourth follows automatically. You accept the relationship as OK just as it is. This acceptance may not come immediately after you get the necessary insights. Sometimes there is a period of adjustment, lasting perhaps a few weeks, before you start feeling good about the relationship.

I have seen relationships in communal houses successfully redefined on more than one occasion. In one instance, a commune member, rejected in her attempts to get closer to another, tearfully vowed to move out. Within a month she had worked through her hurt feelings, accepted the relationship as it was, and happily stayed. In another case, a member of a new group felt depressed when his expectation of closeness with another member was not realized. After two months, however, he accepted the relationship "as is" and discovered that it brought him joy instead of gloom. □

# BOUNDARIES

Middle class commune members view their households as alternatives to the lonely privacy and general uptightness in which many nuclear families live. Communal households are places where people can be themselves, learn openness and trust, and enjoy more fulfilling relationships. This prospect is so appeal-

ing that people living communally for the first time often feel their commune should be open to anyone, anytime.

After a period of trying out this philosophy, new groups realize the drawbacks, and start drawing boundaries around their commune. The purpose of this article is to convey what communal

households have learned about this, and the agreements they have adopted concerning new members, group size, guests, associate members, and lovers. Established communes have explicit agreements, often in writing, covering some or all of these matters.

One reason for the agreements is fairly obvious: there usually are a few insensitive outsiders in the neighborhood or passing through town who, given the opportunity, will treat your house as a public hotel and restaurant. Clear agree-



ments about the presence of outsiders give needed moral support to members who have trouble summoning the courage to tell a visitor, "you are intruding." It is far easier to say, "I'm sorry, you can't stay tonight because we have a rule that all visitors need approval to stay more than two nights."

The other reason for boundary-setting agreements is less obvious and more important. Without prior agreements, members sooner or later will divide over the presence of an outsider or admission of a new member, and there will be no satisfactory way to resolve the conflict. For example, suppose that Sue has been seeing Jim for a few months and now wants him admitted as a new member. Since one or two other members dislike Jim, you have a conflict. Luckily, everyone agreed in the beginning that all new members must receive unanimous approval, and that the comfortable capacity of the house—set at eight persons—can not be exceeded unless everyone agrees to an exception. Sue won't be happy if Jim isn't admitted, but she will know she is being treated fairly, in the same way as anyone else who wants a new member admitted. In houses that don't have these rules, the lover usually moves in despite opposition, and sometimes this works out. Other times, there are continuing hassles and upsets, perhaps culminating in the departure of two or three members.

The two crucial boundary agreements are: 1) What procedures will we follow to admit a new member? and 2) What will be the maximum number of persons living in our house. Other agreements—covering guests and associate members—can be made in the beginning, or later on as you gain experience in these matters.

Taking the time to reach clear agreements will impress on everyone that these questions are highly sensitive. Almost all communal households agree that new members must receive a unanimous OK. This rule gives each member power to veto a candidate. Often there is another rule that candidates must meet and chat with all members before any decision is reached. Some houses admit new members for a trial period, varying from a few days to a few months, and then the group decides whether to make the membership permanent.

Adoption of a membership ceiling is important because once the capacity of your house is reached, each additional person makes it less livable. There is more noise, more waiting to get into the bathroom, less space, less hot water, and so on. When you have lived in the house

for awhile, and have had overnight guests, you may want to adjust your membership ceiling.

The communal philosophy on guests usually goes like this: Each member has a right to have visitors and guests. Because guests can intrude on the rights of other members, the group has the right to limit intrusion. Generally these rights are balanced by a policy entitling any member to have a guest to stay one or two nights. If the member wants to extend the invitation for additional nights, approval must be secured from the rest of the members. The reason is that visitors sometimes show up unexpectedly, making it impossible to check with all members before extending an initial invitation to stay overnight. Requiring approval for extended stays prevents guests from lingering so long as to acquire membership status without having to go through the required procedures. Often there are requirements that stays of a week or more must be approved in a house meeting, that long-term guests share food and utility costs, and contribute to the house payment or rent. Long-term guests may also be assigned chores. Another rule, implied by the ones just mentioned, is that no guest may stay overnight without an invitation from a member.

Sometimes households create a special associate membership status for frequent visitors. Associate members may be a member's love, the non-custodial children of a member, or a member's relative. One household has worked out a fairly ingenious system to ensure that associate members contribute their share of household expenses. Those who stay three nights a week pay \$25 to the house general fund. A five-night stay costs \$40. The assessment covers the cost of hot water, electricity, physical space and emotional space used by the visitor. In one instance, a member who had to share a bathroom with two persons instead of one when a lover visited got a rent reduction to compensate for this inconvenience. The associate member's \$25 fee made the reduction possible.

Some houses specify nights—often the night of their housemeeting—when no visitors are allowed. There are also special nights when visitors are encouraged. These nights may be an attempt to cope with the problem of visitors feeling ignored because house members are usually too busy interacting with one another. On special guest nights members try to listen to the visitors, and restrain the impulse to overwhelm them with enthusiastic accounts of the household. □

# HOW TO GET THE DISHES WASHED

Some amount of conflict over housework is part of life in middle class communal households. Housework becomes an issue for three reasons. First, it's hard to find two individuals who are in complete agreement about what constitutes acceptable cleanliness and neatness. Second, men often come from living situations where cleaning is considered women's work, and may not adjust immediately to equal sharing of chores. Third, members who are not fully aware of their own resentful feelings may express these feelings indirectly by resisting chores.

Everyone who has lived communally is familiar with housework conflicts. For example, some members of a group may operate on the principle that it is most efficient to let dishes accumulate for a day and wash them all at once. The pile of unwashed plates and pans may drive the other members up the wall. To take another example, a man may leave messes in the kitchen, knowing that one of the women will eventually get disgusted enough to clean it up.

The best way to limit such unpleasant housework conflicts is to carefully examine attitudes toward housework when the group is being formed, and when new members are selected. If someone is a confirmed sexist or allergic to structure, these are excellent reasons not to live together, no matter how charming the person may be in other ways.



#### How CLEAN IS CLEAN?

Even the most carefully selected group will have some disagreements about housework. The way to resolve these inevitable issues is for the whole group to negotiate until there is agreement about what is clean, and everyone is committed to achieving this level of cleanliness. In some households, these

negotiations are simple and painless. Other communes get into a power struggle, along lines described by sociologist Rosabeth Kanter:

Proponents of "clean" and "neat" are also proponents of order and collective responsibility. Those who are messy tend to resist order and deny the legitimacy of collective demands. This is a political

issue and not entirely one of differing standards of cleanliness.

As long as the issue remains political, compromise is difficult. Each member has a fixed position as to what is "right." If your group is stuck in this kind of power struggle, try giving up politics and negotiating on another level—the level of feelings. This style of negotiating is a

three-step process:

1) Each member who has strong feelings about housework expresses them fully, and the others give feedback to let people know their feelings have been completely understood.

2) There is a general understanding that members do have strong feelings about housework, and that there are real conflicts in what people want.

3) Everyone realizes that if these conflicts are not resolved, members will continue to feel hurt and angry, and it won't be possible to feel good about one another.

When people negotiate on this level, they are able to let go of fixed attitudes. A member of one household where the process worked describes it like this:

"I got to hear that other people don't even see things that bothered me very much. That it's not a deliberate attempt to hassle me, that there are people who are simply accustomed to more clutter and dirt, and that's very valid for them. The other people got a better appreciation of where I'm coming from. They saw that I'm uncomfortable with clutter and dirt, that my feelings are real. The result of all this is that now I've relaxed a lot and I can accept more disorder. And the men will dust the furniture now and clear off the clutter on tables, instead of just vacuuming and thinking the job was finished."

In some houses, this understanding comes slowly. Often people aren't accustomed to talking about their feelings or to really listening to others. To accelerate mutual understanding, you can try this technique in a house meeting. Give each member five minutes to talk about "where I'm coming from" in regard to housework. No interruptions are allowed. Don't marshal arguments that might convince others your level of cleanliness is correct. Use the five minutes to talk about the personal experiences that have shaped your present attitudes about neatness and order. In this way you will get clearer about your feelings, and so will the others. When people are given a few uninterrupted minutes to talk about why they are wedded to a particular standard of cleanliness, they understand themselves better, and are more able to let go of rigid attitudes. Some of the attitudes that are expressed will be tied to sex roles.

### Sex roles

Members of some student and counter-culture houses believe that their households are unstructured. The housework is accomplished, it is said, in a

free-flowing manner by whoever is moved to do a particular job. In reality, these houses usually do have a pretty clear organization—one determined by sex roles.

When a household resolves to give up sex roles, the most common procedure is to rotate chores among all members. Men cook and clean, and women do yard work and (often) repairs. The role of housewife is abolished. Men sometimes endorse this notion in principle, but delude themselves about what it means in actual practice. They may act as though lending a hand here and there constitutes equal sharing of work. This male attitude can and does change in communal households. Two ways to help it change are consciousness raising, and instruction in new tasks.

Consciousness-raising doesn't have to be a formal exercise in feminist ideology. One approach is simply for the women to stick up for their rights in an assertive way until the men finally get the message. You can also discuss the issue in housemeetings. You might have each member describe how the work was divided in their parents' house. Then discuss whether members want to perpetuate roles that define beauty, order and cleanliness as strictly feminine concerns. Given a little time, consciousness-raising can yield excellent results. One man, for example, gradually came to the realization that

"I get the place dirty too. So if I don't do the housework, that means I turn the women into second-class citizens. This has been sort of the last bastion of my male sexism."

Usually, both sexes need to learn new tasks. In one household, the women insisted that the men teach them how to care for the yard. The women realized that if the grass started turning brown, the group would revert to traditional roles. In another house, the men cleaned the dinner table with a dirty rag. The women saw that the men were saying symbolically, "you women do a much better job of cleaning than we do—you are the ones who should be doing it." The women insisted that the men learn how to clean.

Men who have never cooked have no alternative to admitting ignorance and seeking someone to show them how. They learn quickly in this fashion. But men tend to avoid asking for instruction in how to clean. They believe they can fake it. In one house the women found out that

"If you've never waxed a kitchen floor before or taken off old wax, then someone needs to share with you how to do that. We also had to show the men how to clean bathrooms."

### Coded messages

It's not unusual for unspoken psychological conflicts to surface as disputes over housework. Continuing housework trouble "is usually a sign of deeper conflict around commitment, intimacy or personal needs and boundaries," according to Dennis Jaffe, a family therapist who has studied communal households. When people are not fully aware of what is bothering them, and do not express the problem verbally, they may send a coded message involving housework. For example:

Nancy's own room is the neatest in the house, but she consistently messes up the living room and refuses to straighten it. Her message, decoded: "I don't want the group to have any control over me. I want you to recognize that I'm an independent person who doesn't answer to anybody."

When Joe cooks, dinner is always two hours late. Joe's message: "I feel left out of this group and put down. I want you to pay more attention to me and help me feel like I really belong."

When Frank washes the dishes, he always leaves the pots "to soak" and forgets them so that someone else has to finish cleaning them. His message: "I want you to take care of me the way my mother used to do. You can start by cleaning for me."

Susy can't see the stove pilot light even when someone else is pointing right at it. When she washes dishes, they stay greasy, even after three people have given her dishwashing lessons. Her message: "I'm a helpless person who is incapable of taking responsibility for anything. I want you to give me a lot of help."

Dealing with a coded message can be quite challenging. The best approach is a combination of assertiveness and helpful listening. If you are upset by a member's chore derelictions, let the member know by expressing yourself calmly, clearly, and often. It may also be possible to help the person reach some useful insights. Encourage the person to talk about the problem. Listen without analyzing or judging, and without agreeing or disagreeing with what the person says. This process can lead to insights and a change in behavior. Unfortunately, people change at their own pace. If that pace is too slow, the group may ask the person to leave. □

One of the best-attended workshops at the Monte Toyon communal conference was about sexually open relationships. "Do open relationships work?" was the question that brought many participants to the workshop.

One answer is proposed by Robert Whitehurst, professor of sociology at the University of Windsor in Canada. His findings suggest that "SOM"—sexually open marriage—does work for couples who chose to accept the accompanying pain and anxiety, and who commit themselves to the intense interaction needed to keep their primary and secondary relationships on the track.

Whitehurst defines SOM as a relationship "in which the partners engage in extramarital sexuality, with the knowledge and approval of the spouse." His preliminary findings are based on questionnaires returned by 35 couples living in SOM, including 28 legally married pairs, 19 of which were second marriage. The couples were mostly middle class, professional and career types. Some things they had to say about themselves are included in the following excerpts from Whitehurst's research paper titled "Open Marriage: Problems and Prospects."

# OPEN RELATIONSHIPS

*Robert N. Whitehurst*

The SOM arrangement does not always lend tranquility and event-free living to the lives of those who partake. In fact, people involved in SOM appear to be active seekers of some more or less utopian ideal and willing to pay the price in uncertainty and anxiety and to commit themselves to high levels of interaction to resolve problems.

On balance, we can guess that open marriage is usually a success in terms of certain personal benefits, but sometimes falls short of enabling people to find stability and permanence. People in SOM have thus more or less consciously opted for a pleasure-pain formula for their lives that they calculate will have an enhanced payoff in areas other than tranquility and possibly even stability. Although all seem to want the best of both worlds, stability of a primary relationship and ego-enhancement from outside relations as well, few achieve these as full successes.

It is fair to note, however, that no regrets were expressed by respondents since all placed an extremely high value on the growth experience and were unwilling to give up on the notion of SOM. Its viability as a mode of life was not seriously questioned by those who had tried it. A not uncommon comment, however, was something like "It hurts" when generalizing about the SOM experience. There seems to be a rather universal feeling that there is no growth without pain; thus pain is often understood as a part of the growth process — not necessarily desired but simply existentially there as an inevitable part of the lifestyle of SOM.

Although most couples have worked out a pattern of time allocation for relations away from that pair bond that is

reasonably satisfactory, only a small minority seemed very well satisfied with their agreements. This may no doubt be said about conventional marriages in terms of (usually) husbands spending time away from home, so perhaps too much could be made of this. The model response appears to be one in which partners enter into the SOM relationship with a commitment to work out SOM, but without any very definite idea or contract relating to how to deal with time away from the primary bond...

It is obvious from a fairly large range of response of the 35 couples that there is much variation in the need for autonomy, primaryness, and time away from spouse. Most however tended to work hard at creating a primary bond that was satisfactory, for the average definition was that if this could not be maintained, the SOM would soon go down the drain.

Most SOM partners maintain their own professional identification which eases the pains at least somewhat of being isolated from people and activities. Most were able to cope with alone time by being deeply involved in their own sphere of activity as well as having friends and outside relationships which were not dependent on the spouse. This contingency, although it may not be a precondition for successful SOM, may well prove one of the reasons why it will not become popular in the foreseeable future for large numbers of people. There are simply few women around of the type now apparently into SOM — that is, women with a high level of autonomy and their own careers that give them a strong sense of independence and freedom to operate significantly without husbands creating the structure of interaction.

Most SOM people seem to work hard at being open and honest in their primary relationships, for they value the mutual trust that is built into this assumption and go to great lengths to protect this. There are times however when it is not easy. A husband (aged 37) wrote:

"I found it much harder to face my wife telling me about her first sexual outside relationship than I had anticipated. Although I had many affairs before and we never had (in the present relationship) a fully monogamous understanding, it was still much more difficult to work through than I had intellectually thought it would be. It took me several months of talking with others and examining my feelings to get so I could accept this with any sense of calm and real acceptance that matched my commitment."

He noted that it was at times a continuing problem, but for different reasons now, essentially becoming one of not leaving one partner feeling left out when the other tends to be occupied inordinately with an outside partner.

Thus it is that SOM tends to take much time and energy, not only in making outside contacts and maintaining them, but in negotiating with a spouse the feelings and continuing the supportive work at home to maintain the primary dyad as primary. Many conventional marriages shun such a demanding prospect that SOM requires regarding openness of communications. Most marriages could not operate at all well without significant areas of circumscribed and prohibited topics of discussion. The point may be made (without over-

stressing it) that many marriages hang together because of lack of communications, not because of the adequacy of talk.

Open marriage appears to have many benefits and many hazards. Among the clearest benefits are the ways the process helps people open up their lives to new experiences, people, and awareness of themselves in the world, enabling them to function as more complete, fulfilled, and adequately functioning humans. When SOM works toward goals such as these (without undue problems which the participants cannot handle) it seems to be optimized as an experience.

When SOM adds to the zest of life more than it adds complexities and problems which are unmanageable, it is seen as a good thing. Thus, some people have set criteria, some more or less

"We just simply stop the wheels of our relationship every now and then and say to each other, 'how do you feel about all this?' We thus quite consciously tune into each other's feelings occasionally and run a kind of checkup on the condition of our own relationship as well as (less importantly) a survey of what's happening to us outside. We both sometimes get so busy that we feel we need time to take a breath, get away, and look a little longer and harder at what we're doing."

This sentiment, registered clearly by this person, suggests that many more implicitly felt that SOM is demanding not only of time, but there may be a tendency to drift away from the recognition of the importance of the primary bond if one does not take time to review, take stock and reaffirm the basic

One might well suggest that the origins of this reality for SOM participants are less important than the consequences for the lives of people who share this belief.

If the consequences of such a belief tends to make people in SOM feel closer to each other, then this is a reality in their lives and cannot be questioned as to its validity. Most North Americans, however, would be reluctant to adopt such a belief system readily as this involves a fairly straightforward rejection of one of our most cherished folk beliefs about love — that it can only be good with one person at a time.

A number of other folk beliefs tends to support the persistence of the monogamous ideal as well. One conclusion to be drawn is that SOM types are either not subject to folklore in the same ways as others or that they have become somehow inured to this body of folklore and possibly subject to another. To the average mind in the West, the SOM marriage system is paradoxical, for it seems to give people what our common wisdom says is impossible, simultaneously a more intense and important pair-bond with the primary partner as well as more independence, freedom and autonomy to interact with significant others.

All respondents claimed to have experienced problems in adapting to SOM, but there was likewise wide consensus about the positive elements related to both personal growth and relationship changes. Pain and pleasure seem to be well-mixed in the polarities of SOM. There seems to be no way rather severe pains can be avoided in the SOM setting, but since it is closely associated with growth, it seems acceptable if not desired. People in SOM in fact can probably be characterized as seekers of complexity at a price.



consciously, that lend themselves to evaluation of the changes in their relationship on this basis: does it add more zest, more life, more fun? Is life more interesting now, more worthwhile?

If, however, people tend to use the SOM experience for some less healthy reasons, it often seems doomed to failure. For example, most subjects recommended that the relationship be solidly bound as a pair unit before trying to open it to outsiders. If SOM is seen as a 'bandaid' or some kind of repair kit for a faulty relationship, it seems foredoomed to failure.\* If it is used as a means of escaping an unhappy spousal tie or to speak an ally against a hurtful spouse, or to simply act out vengeful or other neurotic reactions with a spouse, failure is likely. One husband said,

goodness of it.

Sometimes seen as a paradox of SOM is what appears to often be the case; the primary bond becomes at once both more and less important. Western minds are unused generally to thinking in terms of the simultaneous occurrence in one experience of polarities, such as the concurrent development of closeness and apartness, such as the concurrent development of closeness and apartness in a marital relationship; this is, however, precisely what happens in a number of SOM situations.

The experience of going into the world of others outside the marriage seems to enhance and make more intense the primary bond. Whether this is an outcome of a folknorm of open marriage, a self-fulfilling prophecy, is unknown.

"Open marriage is not for everybody, but we have worked it out so we both feel really good about ourselves now." Another respondent: "It was really painful, especially that first year or so when we had lots of rough edges and unexplored feelings to work out, but the growth I have gained in the process has been a fantastic revelation to me (and I think he shares this)." A female respondent: "As a woman, I had developed awareness of problems and many inequities I was not handling well in my life: my open marriage has helped me personally to grow in ways I had not before felt were possible."

The gains made in openness, newly discovered self feelings, and enhanced  
\*This may not be true in all cases, however.



self-esteem are clearly associated with development of SOM styles. Unequivocally, the subjects stressed that they felt the direction of their lives was toward better feelings about themselves in relation to the outside world. This was not always reflected from harmony in the primary relationship; rather it seems to be an outgrowth of the pain and struggle within it. This certainly does not imply that all SOM experiences are successful, at least if 'success' as a criterion is seen in terms of pair stability and lack of confrontation and argument, strain and pain.

People in SOM are independent and often find themselves handling the tensions between possessiveness and belonging on the one hand and autonomy and loneliness on the other. The dynamic tensions set up in these pairs are clear to see; SOM is therefore contra-indicated for large numbers of people who do not feel so ambivalent toward their freedoms and who do not know how to handle as much autonomy and alone time as SOM people sometimes face in their lives. Since many SOM people are professionals, they spend varying periods of time apart from each other, thus facilitating this kind of adaptation to life.

It is presumptuous at this point in time to suggest that SOM is responsible for or in some way 'causes' people to become more open to new worlds of experience; in fact, one respondent suggested that it was her burgeoning awareness of the world and herself in it that created the potential for open marriage.

The tendency seems to be for SOM relationships to define loyalty and fidelity in new terms that do not imply ownership, possessiveness, or exclusivity, but rather involve the notion of primariness of the pair. It is as though SOM people define their relationship in a hierarchy of significant others as being "the most significant other." A priority is thus established which does not preclude other relationships but attempts to keep the primary bond intact.

Among the comments made about the regrets of those in a SOM situation was one woman who said she was truly sorry she could not share information about her life style with her mother and other relatives. Friends and acquaintances must be chosen with care to avoid the disapproval of being tagged a wild deviant. This wariness produces a kind of strain which people in SOM must cope with and attempt to relieve by increased pair solidarity and choosing friends that fit their life-style philosophy. □

# FOSTER CHILDREN

*Susan Stern*

Imagine that your living situation has become intolerable. You leave, and you are breaking the law—a "runaway." Your fate is determined by the juvenile authorities. They return you to the home you ran from, send you to an institution for "treatment," or place you with a family or individual as a foster child.

San Francisco's Alternative Living Program (ALP) now offers another option: commune placements for foster teenagers. ALP is a component of Youth Advocates, an organization created to fill the legal, housing and other needs of runaway youth that flocked to San Francisco in the mid-1960s.

For three years, ALP offered foster placements only in nuclear or single parent households. Last March Sue Saperstein joined ALP to develop commune placements. Sue saw communes as the optimum home for certain teenagers. In many communes, traditional role definitions are changed to fit individual needs. Sue realized that challenging the stereo-typical expectations associated with child/adult and male/female could free adolescents to realize their own unique individuality.

The egalitarian relationships of the commune could ease the friction of parent-child power relationships in the traditional nuclear family. Within the supportive group environment of the commune, there would be many adults with whom the teenager could learn and grow.

Sue brought these ideas to last October's conference of urban communes. When she gave a workshop entitled "Teenagers and Communes," nobody came. She stood up that night at dinner to ask people to explain their disinterest,

and heard two basic responses.

Many said they had joined communal situations because they didn't want to assume ultimate responsibility for any one individual, as in a marriage. They saw an adolescent as someone who would take more than they would give. Other commune members were concerned with being rebelled against. They didn't want to be set up as authority figures, since they saw themselves as rebels.

"We can all be considered teenagers," Sue replied. "We are all in transition, we are all leaving something and trying to establish something similar to what a teenager is trying to establish. That is, we are all learning to parent ourselves and be parented by others in an exchange relationship." Three communes have since accepted foster teenagers and struggled with the power and responsibility dilemmas foreseen by those at the Monte Tyon conference.

Mikal, 16, was one of the first teenagers to be placed communally. Her first communal family was in the country, and there she felt "suppressed" because the commune put her in school rather than allowing her to become a full, adult member. "I was put in the same group with the five-year-olds," she said, "we were all considered kids, from the five-year-old to a twenty-year-old who had been there two years."

Then Mikal moved to an urban commune, where she has an equal vote with the adult members and shares all responsibilities, including working in the money-making venture. "If you don't take the same responsibility as everyone else you are automatically putting yourself in a position of being unequal," she told me.



Mikal asked to leave her first communal family because they showed the unconscious ageism that many of us harbor, even though we are supposedly trying to combat roles and stereotypes. At the opposite end of the spectrum, Tina (not her real name) was recently withdrawn from a commune where she was granted adult status when it appeared her needs for supervision & structure were not being met.

"Tina said she wanted to be an equal member, and they said okay, you're an equal member, and everyone went off to their own affairs. There was no one around to see how Tina was getting along," Sue explained.

Tina ended up lonely and lost. Busted and sent to juvenile hall, she told Sue, "You know, it's not so bad here. It's so simple. I'm so tired. People here make decisions for me, I don't have to make decisions every fucking day. People are taking care of me."

32 The experiences of Mikal and Tina

point up the problem of the teenager's role in the commune, as well as in the society at large. "It's sort of a strange time when you're a teenager," explained Mikal. "You're not a child anymore, and in some respects you're not an adult. When you go to a commune you have to decide which one you're going to be. Do you want to be an adult and take on the responsibilities like everyone else? Or do you want to be a child and enjoy the luxury of being nurtured?"

The conflict translates into a power struggle. Who should make the decisions on such vital issues as sexual behavior and the use of drugs? And at what point does nurturing or "responsibility" for teenagers strip them of power and participation in the commune?

As a result of Tina's experience, Sue has decided that one or more members of the commune should take responsibility for "contracting" with the adolescent. Together they arrive at mutual expectations which will evolve with the role the

teenager chooses and is able to play in the community. Mikal added that the teenager's child/adult role should be determined from the start by the teenager and adjusted as everyone sees what the adolescent is actually capable of.

"When I first came into my house it wasn't set up for me to be an adult," said Mikal, "I had to fight for it."

"So a teenager could just be a teenager in a commune and not take on the responsibilities you have?" I asked her.

"Right," she agreed. "But everyone in the commune should keep an open mind and not lock the person into that role or the other, especially since teenaged people go through changes so fast."

"Sometimes I want to be tucked in bed," Mikal admitted. At other times she has to be a "super adult" or fear her adult role might be denied her.

It seems necessary for communes to let teenagers be nurtured without casting them in a child role. For that matter, why can't everyone receive nurturing, adult or child? Imagine what would happen in your commune if each adult had a chance to be "child for a day"—fed breakfast, dressed and taken to the zoo!

The presence of a foster adolescent in the commune dramatically emphasizes the whole question of "childcare." Who do any of the children, whether natural or foster, really "belong" to? What rights do the children have? And what rights belong to the teenager?

Accepting a teenager as a foster child can spotlight problems. If the commune is not really "together," if there are communication problems or a really supportive environment is lacking, an uncertain adolescent may flounder.

For this reason, ALP provides training meetings for the commune before and after placement. These workshops are designed by APL in coordination with each commune to ease the integration of the new person.

Teenagers in communes is an experiment in communal living as much as it is an experiment in foster placements. The Alternative Living Program is interested in facilitating both experiments by screening and matching teenagers and communes and offering support and group facilitation after placement. Some of the support is financial—communes receive a \$225 monthly expense allotment. If your community is interested in exploring this project, contact Sue Saperstein, 3839 Judah Street, San Francisco, CA 94112, Telephone (415) 731-8244. □

# Communes & the LAW

D. Kelly Weisberg

Although members of alternative families reject the traditional family unit, it is interesting to note that many members of today's middle class urban groups lead lives remarkably similar to those of the conventional family. Many work at traditional jobs. Some individual family members support others. Many have or consider having children. And, many members have considerable material possessions, financial resources and may own real property.

Unfortunately, unlike the traditional family, alternative families have a questionable legal status. Middle class urban communal members are particularly vulnerable because they may have a great deal at stake financially. Legal problems are incurred by the communal family primarily for two reasons. First, the communal family does not fit the legal definition of the biologically-defined, ceremonially-initiated marital unit. In many cases, this signifies that communes do not qualify as legal "single families"—those restricted to marital and biological relationships. This results in problems with zoning. Second, communes often face legal difficulties because they contain a high proportion of unmarried couples living together—a group which faces considerable discrimination in itself.

Legal problems which communal members may encounter range from those which are irritating and inconveniencing to those with civil and criminal sanctions. Landlords or homeowners may refuse apartments or homes to communal members who wish to rent or purchase. While it constitutes discrimination to deny housing on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin or ancestry, there is no law against denial because of marital or family status. Even if communal members are successful in convincing landlords or homeowners to rent or sell, the chosen community may later enforce zoning restrictions against

the group which result in fines or eviction.

Insurance companies may refuse automobile or home coverage policies to communal members. Once it becomes known to insurance agents that several people are to drive a car or reside in a home, they may refuse to grant collision or liability insurance on the car or fire, theft or vandalism insurance on the home. Some insurance companies may grant coverage but charge higher rates. Other companies may initially grant coverage but later refuse to honor claims. Communal members are also usually refused group medical insurance coverage or access to employee family health care plans.

Those communal members in intimate social relationships with other communal residents may find they have even more legal problems. They are generally denied the rights of the legally wed. In addition to the problems previously mentioned, members of unmarried couples may be denied United States citizenship, Social Security survivor benefits or other disability compensation. They are also denied such rights of the legally wed as the right to sue for wrongful death of a spouse or the right to alimony upon dissolution.

Restrictive zoning ordinances exclude communes from areas, primarily upper-middle-class areas, that are specifically zoned for "single family dwellings." A single family is often defined as biologically-related people with restrictions on the number of resident unrelated persons. The difficulty arises because a commune may not qualify as a "single family" under the code of the community where its members wish to reside. If the group does not fit the definition, the community may influence the zoning board to force communal members to move. In other cases, communal members may have to accept classification as a "boardinghouse" and thus, forced to

meet more stringent zoning and building restrictions and to pay commercial rates for utilities.

Middle class communities react differently to the presence of communes. Some communities may not have exclusionary zoning restrictions and may accept communes. Some communities which do have such restrictions may "look the other way" and permit communes in their midst. In other communities with such restrictions, sanctions may be brought to bear only in the event that sufficient residents complain. In other communities with such restrictions, the ordinances are strictly and speedily enforced.

In the case of *Village of Belle Terre v. Boraas* (94 S. Ct. 1536 (1974)), the town of Belle Terre on Long Island has enacted an ordinance restricting family size to no more than two unrelated persons. In 1972 a communal group residing there was found to be in violation of this ordinance and was ordered to remedy the violations (in effect, a way of forcing the commune to disband and move). Instead, the communal members brought a suit to declare the zoning ordinance unconstitutional. The members lost in the lower courts and in 1974 the case was heard before U.S. Supreme Court. Regrettably, the Supreme Court upheld the ordinance as constitutional, saying that zoning restrictions were a legitimate exercise of a town's power to restrict residence in order to regulate population density, noise, traffic and land use. The decision was 7-2, only Justices Brennan and Marshall dissenting (Brennan on procedural grounds). In his dissent, Marshall mentions the key issue of discrimination, saying that the ordinance

"...permits any number of persons related by blood or marriage, be it two or twenty, to live in a single household, but it limits to two the number of unrelated persons bound by profession, love, friendship, religious or political affiliation or mere economics who can occupy a single home."

That is, a grandmother, aunt and uncle, mother and father and their ten children may qualify as a "single family" and not affect density, noise, or traffic. However, a commune of four or five people does not qualify.

Child custody is another problem which members of communal groups may encounter. Consider some hypothetical situations. If a communal member is divorced and raising his or her children, the other spouse may object to the living situation and demand that custody be

revoked. Courts are generally disposed to view communes as "unfit environments" for children to grow up in. Or, in cases where the communal parent does not have custody, the other spouse-parent may object to children's visitation in the communal home. A domestic relations court may then restrict visitation rights to settings outside the commune or revoke custody until the communal member chooses another home setting.

Division of property is problematic in instances of death and dissolution of the group. Many groups or couples do not clearly specify who owns what at the time they move in together. This becomes increasingly a dilemma when possessions are acquired over time and gifts are made "to the house." With no clear idea of what belongs to whom, when the time comes for disbanding, unspoken "agreements" often lead to disagreements.

It is important to keep written agreements about what property belongs to whom. Some communal property may pose interesting dilemmas. For example, who has more right to bookcases and cabinets which both John and Sam worked on for a month? Or, how does one "divide" the kitchen which was remodeled and repainted by several members? In instances of purchases of large items such as appliances, it is generally a good idea to make a written agreement stating who purchased the item and what is the status of the item—is it one person's personal property "on loan" to the group until the group dissolves?

For members of a communal couple who make major financial investments as in real property, automobiles, stocks or bonds, it is advisable to take title under joint ownership. There are three such joint ownership concepts: "joint tenancy" "tenancy in common" and "tenancy by the entirety." Difficulties inevitably arise when unmarried couples purchase property or make gifts to each other under deeds of tenancy by the entirety using the names of "John Doe and his wife, Sarah." In the event that one party dies, it is debatable whether the other party has a valid claim to the property because of the misrepresentation of the marital state. If considerable financial resources are involved, it is wise to consult a lawyer, and perhaps such specialists as accountants or tax attorneys to decide which joint ownership concept is most suitable.

Some practical suggestions for communal members to follow are:

1) Lying about one's living arrangement is not advisable. The penalties for lying or misrepresenting the facts on

written documents may be severe. For example, filing a false joint income tax return (available open to married couples) may lead to a charge of civil fraud and in addition to payment of back taxes, a fine of up to 50% of the deficient amount. Claiming one's roommates or roommate's children are dependents for tax purposes if they are not related may also lead to serious difficulties.

Similarly, when seeking car or home insurance, if insurance companies refuse to grant coverage because of a communal living arrangement, it is advisable to shop around to find a company that will. Lying by signing an insurance policy as "man and wife" OR "sister and brother" may result in nullification of a claim on grounds for cancellation of a policy. Also, taking property under "tenancy by the entirety" (available only to married couples) may also lead to invalidation of a property interest.

2) Written agreements are very important. It is advisable to make written agreements about personal property and personal responsibility. Any gifts to the group should be clearly labelled as such and thought should be given to their status upon the dissolution of the group. Each member's financial responsibility to the others should be spelled out—what percentage of the food, utilities and rent is each person responsible for, is a member responsible to the others in terms of giving advance notice prior to moving out, who is responsible for making sure that the various bills are paid each month.

If one person's name is listed on certain bills, each communal member should signify in writing his or her financial responsibility to that individual. The reason for this is that the member-signer is legally obligated in the event that other communal members default. Each communal member should sign all the written agreements and have copies of all.

3) Members who are owners of automobiles and who intend to let others act as drivers should make sure that they, the other drivers and their automobile are adequately protected. It is advisable for owners to check the insurance coverage which exists on their car to find out who and what is protected and who is liable under what conditions. What type of insurance exists? Do the collision, uninsured motorist, theft and vandalism clauses cover the automobile and driver if someone other than the specified driver is driving? Agreements, preferably written, should be made with other communal

members to determine the extent of their financial liability (do they pay the deductible?) in the event of accidents while they are driving. It may be necessary for the car owner to name other drivers and to add them to the existing policy.

4) Members who are parents and contemplating a divorce should be aware of difficulties that may arise in terms of child custody determinations. It is advisable to let one's lawyer know of the communal living situation in the event that such information is introduced in subsequent hearings.

5) When choosing to rent or buy a house, it is important to find out several pieces of information. How does the chosen community react to communes? Do single family zoning ordinances exist and do they restrict the number of unrelated persons who may reside in a dwelling? Also, it is important to read the lease or homeowner's agreement carefully in order to determine if there is a clause which limits the number of people who may reside in a house.

6) It is advisable to plan ahead. It is important to try to foresee and deal with possible events and contingencies. What will happen to personal property and finances in the event that a member moves out, the group disbands or one member dies? Such contingencies should be included in written agreements.

7) If difficulties arise, it is wise to seek professional assistance. Lawyers will be most knowledgeable about specific legal regulations and will be able to offer advice. This is especially important if considerable resources are at stake financially.

8) It is important to be aware of areas of discrimination. An "it-can't happen-to-us" attitude is not recommended. An excellent way to be prepared to be armed with knowledge of potential legal difficulties. Some suggested texts to read for more information include: **Sex, Living Together and the Law: A Legal Guide for Unmarried Couples [and Groups]**, by Carmen Massey and Ralph Warner (Berkeley: Nolo Press, 1974), **Communes and Common-sense: A Legal Guide for Communities** by Lee Goldstein (Boston: New Communities Project, 1974), **The Cohabitation Handbook: Living Together and the Law**, by Morgan D. King (Berkeley: Ten Speed Press, 1975), and "Alternative Family Structures and the Law," by D. Kelly Weisberg, **The Family Coordinator**, special issue on Variant Family Forms, edited by Sussman, Cogswell and Marciano, October 1975, pp. 549-559. □

# Urban Cooperative Block

*Ken Norwood*

Often people who want community, self-sufficiency, and simple living believe that these goals can be achieved only by moving to the country. There is an alternative way to these goals, right in our backyard — the urban cooperative block.

A group of people committed to intentional community buy, or lease, several adjoining houses and lots, or perhaps a full block, and open up the backyards and houses for the fullest potential use by an urban cooperative community. The land can be used for gardens, fruit trees, chickens and other livestock, recreation, art studios, work rooms, outdoor living space, and more. The houses can be occupied by individual families forming a cluster community, or communal families sharing the land in common; or one house could become the kitchen, dining area and common rooms, with other houses used for sleeping.

There is an ecological argument for redeveloping the city in this way. Country and mountain areas are delicate, irreplaceable resources. They can absorb only so much population increase without harm. The city offers amenities, resources, and a diversity of people not found in rural areas. And so the urban communal family has a choice: stay with the urban, communal house and lot, and the dependencies and complexities of urban life; or brave the risks and initial insecurity of a rural, cooperative community. The urban cooperative block will require as much energy and community building commitment as would be required for a cooperative community in the country. It is not for those who seek an easier path.

The cooperative block is a way to maximize the exchange of resources and energy among the large number of people found in urban neighborhoods. The so-called "planned" urban neighborhoods lack a real sense of community. The cooperative block achieves community because it enables human energies to coalesce synergistically, instead of being wasted in the duplication, conflict and isolation common to most urban neighborhoods. This happens because the residents of a cooperative block are committed in advance to alternative life styles, building community, and communal living.

Self-sufficiency in the city is the goal, and to this end, land around and between the rows of houses is put to maximum productive use. Is total self-sufficiency a realistic goal? No. You cannot achieve it on six or eight lots or even a whole block. But rural people and cooperative communities are not totally achieving self-sufficiency either. It's having a defined goal and the direction of the energies that is meaningful here. So you strive for partial self-sufficiency, meaning you can have choices of a home business or trade; working for someone else, or only working part time; what you go to the store for and what you make at home; what you barter for; what you grow this year.

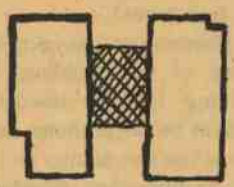
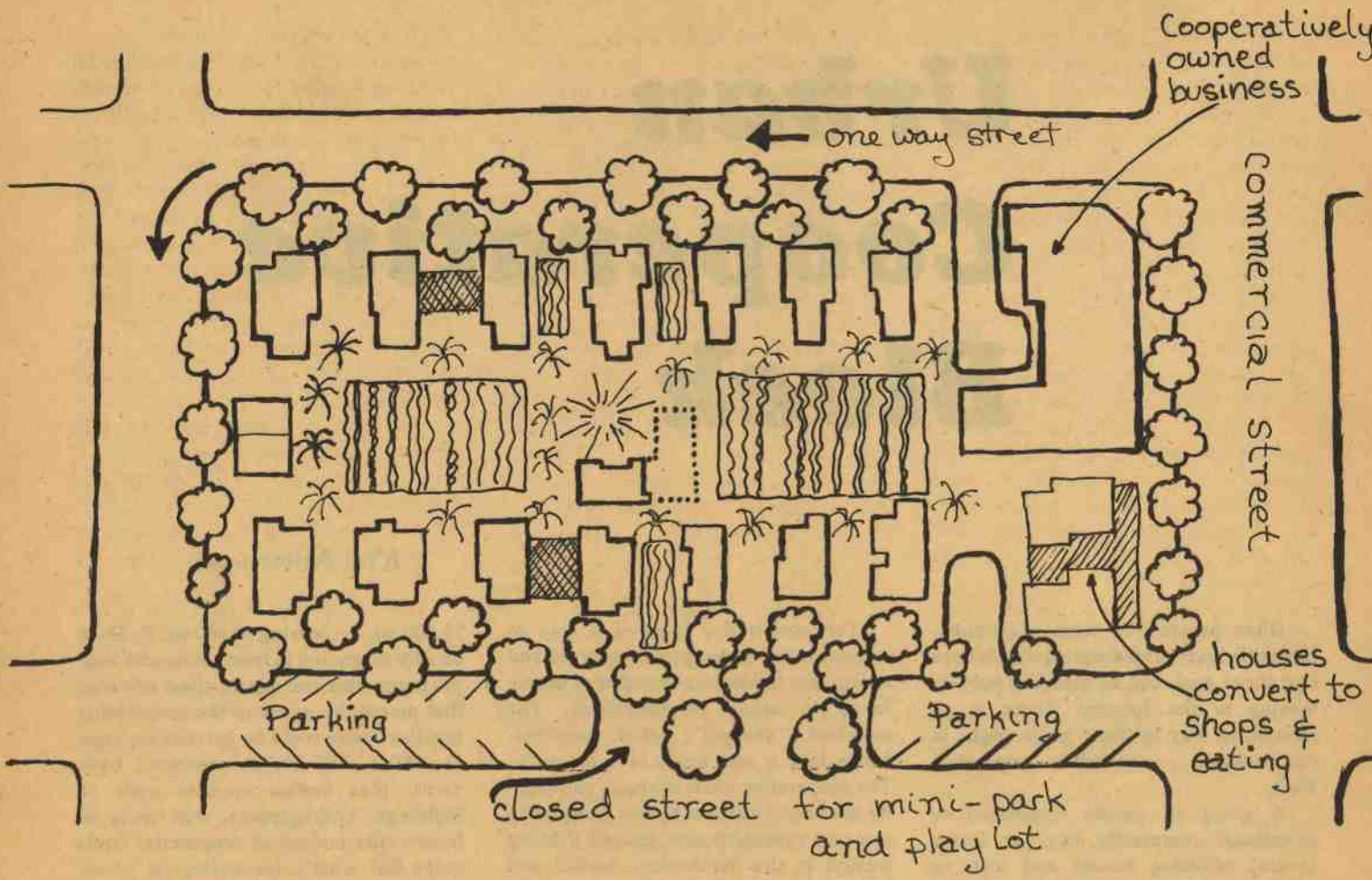
Imagine an urban cooperative community composed of eight lots, which can be better named as an urban cooperative cluster. They may typically be 60' x 135' each, or 64,800 sq. ft. The total area would approximate 1½ acres. Deduct 2,000 sq. ft. average ground coverage for each house, garage, and usable patio for

16,000 sq. ft., leaving 48,800 sq. ft. Over an acre of ground in front, side, and rear yards remains and can be used any way that meets the needs of the cooperative families. There could be gardens as large as 100' x 220' in the combined back yards, plus berries up side walls of buildings, herb gardens, fruit trees in front yards instead of ornamental landscape. But what's un-ornamental about peach, plum, apple, locust, avocado, and other fruit trees?

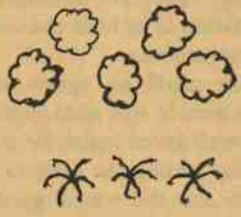
A planning and development program for use of the buildings and all the remaining land is needed to clearly represent the aspirations, needs, and life styles of the community and the personal needs of individual members, children, teenagers, home businesses, and other interests. These are decisions requiring participation or at least the awareness of all the members.

There could be space for compost piles, a garden tool shed, potting bench, and a small green house for starting new plants for setting out early in the spring or ready for the winter garden. Green houses could also go on the roof of the garage or work room. A complete urban cooperative community would include chickens, goats, possibly a cow, depending upon the surrounding neighborhood and the total area of the lots in the cluster. The local zoning and sanitation codes should be checked, although some people may decide to ignore them.

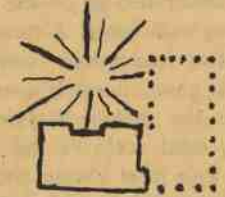
Add to the urban cooperative community, the livelihood sustaining activities of cottage industries, arts and crafts studios, home businesses, and personal services. Take care that intense home business activity does not violate zoning



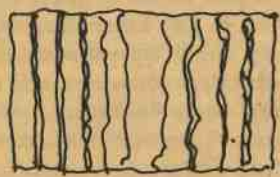
Joining of two or more houses to create larger community commons building or more sleeping rooms, etc.



Plant fruit trees in front yards and around redesigned back yards.



Compost pile, chicken and/or goat pen, garden & tool shop from recycled garages.



Communal gardens

ordinances and the residential character of the adjoining neighborhood. By seeking a block where one side is on a commercial street, retail shops, studios, offices, and restaurants could be a major resource. The second floors of store buildings can be used for personal services, such as massage, classes, spiritual and psychological work, and professional services, for architects, doctors, or attorneys in your group, or for lease. Here is the opportunity to practice alternative approaches to the conventional professions and other businesses that some of your members have experience in. There are other combinations of self-sufficiency, alternative business and self-employment trades too numerous to be included here that can be used as the economic base of an urban cooperative community. This is one major concept for recreating an urban neighborhood, organized around the practices of self-sufficiency, sharing of resources, simple living, and communal styles.

The urban cooperative block can be adapted to serve a wide range of life styles, compositions of people, economic affluence, organizational structures, and objectives. Following are variations in the concept:

**Voluntary Cooperative Block:**—This may be the easiest and quickest way to create a cooperative block, or the most ineffective. The objective is to get adjoining neighbors to voluntarily open up their rear yards, starting with simple cooperative ventures, as sharing of common resources. The level of sharing by individual single families with each other may be limited but, perhaps, with discussion groups, meetings, and setting of a working example, the extent of participation can be increased.

**Mixed Composition Urban Cluster:**—Start with two families with adjoining lots, and then expand to include other adjoining lots, by a combination of voluntary cooperative agreements, leasing, and purchasing when any nearby lots and houses are for sale. By setting an example on your own starter cluster, gain the interest and participation of neighbors, hold workshops and classes on the cooperative block, concept, advertise for interested folks, be open-eared and eyed to house rental and sales in the block. Through a combination of voluntary and intentional participants a neighborhood cluster may evolve and expand to most of your block. But like the totally voluntary approach above, the combination urban cluster may suffer from conflicts in lifestyle and commitment.

**Urban Commune Cluster/Block:**—

Here is an intentional urban community of 4, 6, 8 lots or houses, or a whole block, owned/leased by one group of people dedicated to investing money, self, time, and energy. Assuming that successful circumstances of acquisition, financing, co-ownership, and internal organization and commitment have enabled an urban commune to put together 10 adjacent houses, 5 on each side of the rear property line, let us envision several additional possibilities. A centrally located house becomes the main kitchen and dining hall/lounge, with an office, library, music room and other common space. In the other houses, the rooms are used for each members own private space. Most of the kitchens can be converted to private rooms or become the house common room. Kitchens are especially suitable for an artist or craftsperson. Houses with children may opt to keeping minimal kitchen equipment for children's meals and snacks, or off-scheduled meals. Here again the basic characteristics and aspirations of the group will have to be well understood to determine how close and inter-dependent the communed will be.

**Artist-Craft/Cottage Industry Cluster:**—An intentional community organized around a cooperative home business, or several businesses, in which all members participate, or a cluster of self-employed artists, crafts persons, or home businesses pooling their resources and commonly used land for gardens, work yards, and studios. Here is another opportunity to use the previously described example of acquiring properties with commercial zoning. The community can work and live within a complex of communal residences, work shops, studios, retail shops, personal services, offices, and possibly a restaurant and food outlet. This would be an ideal urban base for an urban-rural network of communes, organized around self-sufficiency within the overall network. Networking between urban communes, and between urban and rural, and between rural communities is beginning and will expand.

**Urban Cooperative Communities in Recycled Commercial and Industrial Complexes:**—Recycling of abandoned industrial and warehouse buildings is no longer an innovation, as most cities are seeing these old industrial buildings being re-used. Some, such as project Artaud, and Project 1 and 2 in San Francisco, used by artists and craft collectives or cooperatives. Combined living and working in the same space is a unique return to the Middle Ages craft and trade guilds that clustered in sections

of European cities.

Abandoned and obsolete commercial structures house an urban commune seeking a diversified and self-sufficient cooperative community in the city. Vacated and obsolete convalescent hospitals, retirement homes, mortuaries, restaurants, private or public elementary schools, supermarkets, discount department stores, are available in most cities. Reconstructing such special-use complexes for commercial use is costly, but the urban commune can use them almost as is, with selected and creative innovations.

Assuming you now have the core people, here are some steps:

1) Survey and select the general neighborhood.

2) Rent and/or buy existing available houses in the vicinity in a 3 to 4-block radius.

3) Move in and begin to know your neighbors. Gain other participants in those blocks or elsewhere by advertising, holding classes, workshops, meetings, on the concept of self-sufficiency, urban clusters, cooperative communities, gardening, and related topics.

4) As houses come on the market or for rent in your blocks, sell the initial nearby properties and buy, or have new participants buy or rent.

5) Keep on with your own community interaction, sharing of resources and skills, and live as a network of cooperative communal households. Some of the houses acquired in adjacent blocks can be rehabilitated and sold for a profit for your community.

The process may be enhanced and the economics of the process leveled out by forming a non-profit housing corporation, or an educational, religious, spiritual, or whatever institute. There may be a plateau in these attempts to form a larger community. The long term result may be a cooperative community composed of two houses on one block, three in the next, four in another, and several single houses in those same blocks. Then there is the prospect of voluntary cooperation or limited cluster lots being formed by other neighbors, and there may evolve a whole new neighborhood spirit and cohesiveness. Add to these efforts possible closing of streets, mid-block playlots and mini-parks, looping and cul-de-sac-ing of streets, walkways down the middle of blocks, children's care centers, etc. Many urban neighborhoods have the potential for satisfying many needs, and given the positive energies of aware and energetic people, much can be enjoyed by staying in the city.

Announcing . . .

# REGIONAL GATHERINGS for URBAN COMMUNAL FAMILIES

October 24-27, 1975

Midwest:  
Camp Frontenac  
Frontenac, Minnesota

West Coast:  
Camp Monte Toyon  
Aptos, California

For three days last October, a church camp in the California redwoods became a big, middle class commune. The regional gathering for urban communal families, held at Camp Monte Toyon in Aptos, was a time to share ideas and resources, and meet people with similar goals. Sufi dancing and New Games (both shown in these photos) helped to generate high and friendly vibes.

The participants exchanged ideas and methods at workshops on childrearing, home buying, conflict resolution, common goals and economics, etc. No outside experts were present. "All the experts in communal living are the people who are living communally," said Pat Durham, one of the conference organizers.

The conference made important connections for many participants, and has resulted in continuing activity. Several participants formed a Communal Media Network preparing a professional slide show to educate the public by counteracting the negative media image of communes. Members of Hillegass House in Berkeley began monthly communal living rap nights that draw about 50 people each time. One member of Hillegass house who had money to invest bought a big house, and other conference participants moved in to found a new communal household.

Two favorable newspaper stories about middle class communes appeared in the San Francisco Chronicle as a result of the conference, and several participants will attend a state conference of city planners to explain what middle class communes are all about.









# Reach...

## CONFERENCES

Of the communities that came together in the late 1960's and early 70's, only a few survive. Community evolution involves much trial and error. From this trial and error comes learning. In order to share this learning, a Conference for Rural Communities is being organized to be held on the West Coast this summer.

Sponsored by Alpha Farm (Oregon), Ananda Cooperative Village (California) and Communities Magazine, the meeting is designed to be small, limited to members of full-time rural living groups, and intense. And productive. The gathering will be flexible to respond to the needs of the participants. A tentative agenda has been drawn up, including such items as group goals and cohesion, legal and economic organization, and interpersonal problem solving. The August conference will be at Ananda Village, but correspondence and reservations should be made through Alpha Farm. (Communities Conference % Alpha Farm, Box 465, Mapleton, Oregon, 97453.

A conference for those ready to make the move to a country community will be sponsored by Sunrise Hill Free School, Davenport, Washington. At least three established communities of the area will be providing input (and recruiting members). These three communities, Tolstoy Farm, Earth Cyclers and Namaste, represent a total of over 18 years experience. Your exposure to these 3 very different lifestyles could provide the information you need to choose or start the right community for you.

Each participant may share house and 2 meals each day with a community family. Lunches will be potluck at the school. A whole family may attend with only one registration if they are self-contained. Participation limited to 90 registered in advance people. We are asking a \$15 donation to the school for each registration.

We will hold this gathering from Thursday evening to Sunday afternoon, June 10 to 13. To register or for more information write to: Rico, Sunrise Hill School, Rt. 3, Box 70, Davenport, Wash. 99122.

NEW WORLD FAIR—A seed family of dedicated persons are centering in the San Francisco area to live and work in order to focus energies on evolving a World's Fair of Alternative Life Styles. The Fair will be on the west coast during the summer of 1976. For more information, contact: New World Fair, S.F. Ecology Center, 13 Columbus St., San Francisco, CA 94111.

Aloe, a Walden Two community in North Carolina, is sponsoring a Walden Two Experience for people who are interested in learning about community through the experience of building one. A lot has been written about establishing communities as an alternative way of life. We believe that if you really want to know about it, there's no substitute for getting in there and actually living in community 24 hours a day.

Each Walden II Experience (W-II-X) will be 9 to 12 days of practice forming a "new community." People who apply will form groups of 12 to 25 persons whose common agreements will include equality, cooperation & positive reinforcement. Each group will work with a planner-manager system of government, a labor credit system of distributing work, a communal treasury & communal "trustery" to distribute material goods. In addition, during your experience building community, you'll choose work projects which have a positive long-term effect benefiting the sponsoring community as if you were going to continue to live there.



From the moment you arrive, you'll be a member of your WaldenII-in-76. You'll be engineering your environment to make caring & sharing a reality. For example, you'll put \$50 into your own communal treasury (in addition to the advance registration explained below) and will then spend NO individual

money during your stay. Some of the \$50 will be emergency money; the rest will be budgeted & spent as your group decides—possibly refunding \$5 to yourselves on the last day if no emergency has occurred—possibly splurging your leftover money on a farewell party....

In general, what you'll each need will be: sleeping bag, tent or van, work clothes (including rainwear & workgloves), flashlight(s) or lantern(s), dishes, towels, a canteen or plastic thermos, additional things wanted if you have them to bring & share; musical instruments, tools (hand & electric), typewriters, first-aid equipment, folding tables & chairs, books, cameras, games, & anything & everything else to make the experience more comfortable & productive. NO PETS. NO ILLEGAL DRUGS. Also, until special facilities are created, no children.

Quoted from a farewell note to Twin Oaks by the members of the 1975 Walden II week: "Walden II Week was a success. One could easily see the smiles & feel the high. During our evaluation we noted that 70%+ of our original objectives & expectations were met during the week. Perhaps the most dramatic measure of success is that a good number of folks who began the week thinking 'maybe community in 6 months or a year' are looking for communities to join...."

W-II-X participants may decide to form a new community, or they may decide to join an existing one. Unlike many other intentional communities, Aloe is in a position to take new members, & W-II-X participants may move directly into a visiting period at Aloe.

DATES: June 1-11 and Aug. 11-22, 1976  
REGISTER by sending \$15 & your name, address, phone #, & expected means of transportation to: Aloe Community [W-II-X] Rt. 1, Box 100, Cedar Grove, NC 27231. Or phone 919-732-4323, to find out if there's still space.

NOTE: An additional date for the Walden Two Experience, August 28-Sept. 6, has now been added. Also, Twin Oaks' Labor Day Conference has been canceled.

### Healing Ourselves

A weekend retreat and seminar is being offered at Ananda Cooperative Village on June 12 and 13, 1976. Seminar focuses intensively on wholistic healing; other areas include spiritual midwifery, macrobiotics, do-in (taught by Jacques de Langre), Sufi dancing and daily meditation. Cost is: \$30 singles, \$50 couples; including meals, seminar materials, camping space and childcare. For further information contact Ananda Cooperative Village, 900 Alleghany Star Route, Nevada City, CA 95959, (916) 265-5877.

**RURAL COMMUNITIES CONFERENCE**—a working conference for full-time living groups in rural settings. August 12 through August 16, at the Ananda Cooperative Village, Nevada City, CA. Limited to 40 participants who are members of ongoing rural groups. Applications must be in by July 1st; fee is \$22 per person.

The proposed agenda includes: Group identity, goals, & Cohesion; legal and economic organization; Governance; Work; Planning; Spirituality; Interpersonal problem solving.

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

The Wolf Lake Refuge Learning Center of wilderness northern Minnesota is offering a multitude of courses in environmental and rural education this summer of 1976. Course offerings during the five week community based session include such topics as: organic gardening; alternative technologies for energy sources; eco-shelter design and construction (eg. log cabin, stud framing, post and beam, pole shed, sod roofs, geodesics, stone masonry, etc.); social change vocations for work with juvenile offenders, the mentally retarded, etc.; canoe trips into the B.W.C.A.; handicrafts; stained glass and many others. For additional information, please contact: *Craig Holden, Director, Wolf Lake Refuge, Box 325 Route 3, McGregor, MN 55760*.

This summer Vinoba Farm will be host to a 10-day camp whose purpose is to give people an experience of simple, rural, community life and to explore the teachings of the Community of the Ark together. We thought you would like to know about it.

Mornings will be devoted to manual labor of various sorts. Everyone will help with the daily work of meals preparation and clean-up. Afternoons will be for lectures and discussion on the various aspects of the Ark's teaching: inner life, non violence, manual labor, the feast, love and marriage; and for meditation and exercise. In the evening we will sing and dance.

Date: June 28-July 7. Cost: \$30 per person.

If you would like to attend, write us for registration form and directions. *Vinoba Farm, Weare, N.H. 03281*.

A summer conference on Interpersonal Relationships in Community will be held on August 6, 7, & 8, by Community Service, Inc., in Yellow Springs, Ohio. Some of the questions that will be dealt with are: 1) How are the members of your community held together by a common spirit, common ethics, values, goals? 2) How do you deal with the variety of values of individuals? 3) What are the main causes of interpersonal relationship problems in your community? 4) What approaches to solving these problems and achieving unity with individuality have you found most effective? 5) How does your community make decisions?

Other ideas which will be discussed include: conflict resolutions, values clarification, and the spiritual aspect of community and interpersonal relationships. For further information contact *Jane Morgan, Community Service, Inc., box 243, Yellow Springs, OH 45387*.

The 1976 Rainbow Family Tribe gathering being held in Waterton-Glacier International Peace Park; The gathering will center around the dates of July 1 thru July 4. All participants are urged to bring warm gear and food—these are essential. Further information contact *garrick, Box 22, Smith River road, Drain, OR [503-836-7056]. Also Box 5577 Eugene, OR til June 1 or Box 2565, Missoula, MT 59801*.



## GROUPS FORMING

Would like to form an Experimental Astrological community based at least in part on astrological principles. Envision community as semi- or quasi-religious but liberal, scientific, and open to change. I believe in personal property and limited community ownership. *James Hollabaugh, 3272 Industry Road, Rootstown, Ohio 44272*.

**Bag-End Community:** Informal and formal studies have led us to believe that five is the optimum number for an efficient, cohesive group. Larger groups change character and have different patterns of communication. We desire to live communally and to overcome the problems inherent in communal living. To do this we decided it would be best to start with a small group and then grow from this nucleus.

We want to live with four other couples with children. We wish to grow, love, play, work, problem-solve collectively. And to raise beautiful children.

Bag-End is a plan to buy a 40-50 acre farm and convert the farm house to a kitchen and school house; on the pre-existing septic tank build a toilet-sauna-wash-house type facility. Orbiting the farmhouse we will build individual bungalow type houses. We will live in the same tree, but have separate nest.

We will combine genius and potential and allot responsibility according to interest. Hopefully, ideally, we might have divergent geniuses and interest. Government: democratic, the small group size might make it effectively possible.

If you are an interested family please write to us. We are a young couple with two infants. This is a tentative plan with a lot of rough edges. We would like to meet on a weekly basis for about six months to a year, but this might not be possible. We believe that there is no man-image creator; we have lessened our consumption of goods and services to toilet paper; we also believe that the next stepping stone in our evolution is community.

Suggestions, objections would be appreciated. Please write for more information: *Roy-Hilda Cruz, 1705 So. Columbus Ave., Medford, Oregon 97501*

We are seeking others with whom we may enter into community. Our purpose is to gain control of our lives and to help others do likewise. We are frustrated and agonized by our inability to implement our ideas with regard to personal growth, childrearing and social change. This is not because they order on the impossible but because our attempts to do so are thwarted by the demands of the nuclear family in particular and by the pressures of society in general. By demands of the nuclear family we mean (1) continuous child care, (2) continuous housecleaning, (3) preparation of all meals, (4) having to work away from home at least 40 hours per week, and (5) having to be available to children 24 hours per day. We must meet these demands whether we are sick, angry, sorrowful or otherwise "out of sorts." This is not to lament our state but that of the kids who are unable to escape the effect(s) of our moods. By pressures of

society we are referring to legal coercion of various types and the omnipresent "don't do that," "do this," "be like everybody else," "buy this," "adhere to your role," "support your government," "strive to be first, rich," "don't question authority," etc., etc. These demands and pressures rob us of the time and confidence which would enable us to implement our ideas—thereby perpetuating our powerlessness.

While we acknowledge that there may indeed be any number of ways in which individuals might wrest control of their lives from society and effectually work toward fundamental personal and social change, our thinking over the past half dozen years has led us to conclude that, for us, it is most reasonable (1) to enter into community with others of like values, goals and strategies for implementing and achieving same, and (2) thereafter, to assist in establishing a network of such communities. The former will enable us to alter our personal lives while the latter will enable us to go beyond ourselves in attempting to bring about change on a larger scale. We think in terms of a regional, if not national, network of communities and the establishment of an alternative political economy and educational system (or non-system), etc.—a society within a society, if you will.

The type of community we would like to become a part of would be one in which:

- (1) decisions would be arrived at consensually.
  - (2) everything would be held in common, including income. There would, however, be safeguards against subtle forms of robbery. For instance, the community might have an accounting system which would enable a person who wished to leave the community to regain the material goods he/she brought with him/her, or their equivalent in goods/services/cash.
  - (3) members would adhere to the concept of "unlimited liability." To us this means that everyone would be responsible for everything. For example, the needs of each would be the responsibility of all; each child, everyone's child; each chore, everyone's chore.
  - (4) members would strive to live "synergetically".
  - (5) education would be self-directed and voluntary.
  - (6) members would strive to live simply and ecologically soundly. By this we mean that members would strive (a) to gather about them only the material things which they considered essential to the means and ends explicit and implicit in this overall statement and (b) to act in accord with the ecological necessities of this planet.
  - (7) income would be derived, preferable from (a) a source within the community or (b) part-time or seasonal work outside the community. Income-Producing endeavors would be such that any or all members of the community might participate.
  - (8) Meals would be vegetarian and consist only of natural/organic foods.
  - (9) the enslaving aspects of the nuclear family would be overcome by the sharing and rotating of time-consuming responsibilities within the larger group.
  - (10) members would lovingly support each other in their personal struggles to overcome the anti-human facets of their personalities, cultivated since birth by the people in their lives and society in general. We are referring to such things as (a) discrimination on the basis of physical characteristics (e.g., sexism, racism, ageism, appearanceism), (b) authoritarianism, (c) possessiveness, (d) competitiveness, (e) inhibition, (f) hypocrisy, (g) exploitation, (h) violence, etc., etc.
- We wish to get under way this spring. We are not tied to any particular area though we would prefer a somewhat isolated, rural setting. Cost will be a major factor in all that we undertake. We have a couple thousand dollars and a car that's been a hundred

some of them gradually. They are outlined primarily to give you a feel for the type of people we are, for we feel that in an undertaking such as this our priorities must be compatible.

If you can identify with the above, please get in touch with us. *Ed [37], Gale [30], Jenny [6], David [1], Ben [1], 47 Harkness Road, Pelham, MA 01002, 413-256-8415*

We are looking for folks who want to be part of a farming community in northern New Mexico. We are long term caretakers of about 100 acres of land, half irrigated. We envision a community of about 12 or so raising their food and some to sell, and we already have a milk cow, rabbits, chickens, bees. If you would like to try your hand at making a long neglected farm a profit producing venture, improve the land and restore badly eroded areas, we'd like to hear from you.

We are not vegetarians but our meat intake is very low. We are dependent presently on hay and honey for our main cash crops, though we sell milk and eggs too. We welcome folks with kids, singles, and couples. As people join us, our ideas of our farm and future will gel. Want to learn to build a fence, grow a garden, harvest alfalfa, make cheese? We are still learning a lot. If you want a small idea of our area, read Peter VanDresser in *Mother Earth News 35*. If you can get by without constant nicotine, drink an occasional beer, don't fall to pieces without T.V., let us hear from you. We have running water, electricity, phone, an outhouse, cook with wood and when money is available a bathroom for showers.

We would especially welcome Spanish speakers or those who'd like to be. Please don't try to convert us, though we welcome various beliefs. We will answer serious queries and our doors are open to visitors who write for a map before they come and let us know when they'll arrive. *Susan and Arthur, Box 19 Dilia Rd., La Loma, New Mexico 87724*

A community is now forming around 326 acres of Texada Island, British Columbia. This abandoned homestead, at the 1400 foot level, has many streams, meadows and abundant timber; it is easily accessible via logging roads. The island lies within the Sunshine Coast climatic zone and enjoys warmth and dryness unique to the Pacific Northwest.

We are a non-sectarian, God-seeking, agrarian-artisans — handies not dandies — looking for a cooperative lifestyle shaped along modified Kriyananda lines. Shares are currently \$2500/ person. We are seeking folks who can visit our present halfway homes as well as the land. Contact: *Rol Morris, 3949 Metchosis Rd., R.R. 1 Victoria, B.C., V8X 3W9 Canada*

This community is located on a small mangrove island in Charlotte Harbor, 60 acres with about 7 acres of high ground (Indian mounds). The land is held in trust by community members, who also hold long-term leases on portions of it (for homes, etc.). Main interests are environmental protection and acquisition of environmentally endangered lands, energy research and experimentation, food production, and community life. Much of the land is devoted to tropical fruit and nut trees and gardens.

By-laws are established to protect the land and also the rights of community members. There will be no bridges, outside power or water lines, or clear-cutting of natural vegetation. Pavement and automobiles are unnecessary. Building is done with an eye to the future—using naturally degrading or re-usable materials.

Fossil fuels (gasoline, propane, kerosene, coal, etc.) are allowed for a transition period but are then reserved for standby use only. This requires ingenuity and patience; but the high consumption era is coming to an end anyway, with the approaching

depletion of the easily obtainable fuels nature made during past ages.

The community is still in its early stages, currently (March '76) with 4 adults and 3 children, plus short-and medium-term guests and potential members. There are 2 dwellings and a large dome community center; a deep well under construction and wind generators in various stages of preparation. Much of the land is in its natural state with wildlife, birds, and abundant sea creatures. Interested people should call or write ahead with further questions and to arrange transportation and suitable times for visiting.

Old MacDonald had a farm, and a group of people who have got together during the past three years through the Commune Movement are planning to recreate MacDonald's Farm, where you'll be able to find those cows, pigs, chickens, horses, goats, sheep and a lot of other things besides.

Since getting together most of us have been living and working in rural Wales, learning to plough, to harrow, sow seed, harvest and conserve; milk cows, manage beef cattle, tend chickens and pigs; grow fruit and vegetables. We are still learning. At the same time we have watched the tractors getting bigger, the hedges being ripped out, the chemicals being sprayed, animals being treated like machines and farmers generally losing control of their livelihoods to the EEC, government and big business. We feel it not necessary to farm like this. With labour intensive, smaller farm units, mechanisation can be reduced whilst increasing the per-acre food output; good mixed stocking and crop rotations cut out the need for most purchased or 'artificial' fertilizers, whilst the feeding of fresh unprocessed feeds and non-intensive management will increase the health and well being of animals. Perhaps most important—an egalitarian, non hierarchic organisation to living and working the farm will help put the control of MacDonald's Farm in the hands of those who are resident on it.

So, what we should like to create on around 60 acres is a farm worked cooperatively by about 10 adults, providing their own food and an excess to sell or exchange. The farm will be as mixed as possible, fertilizer will be based on animal or green manures, and animals themselves will be kept non intensively and medicated herbally when necessary. We also hope the people on it will be happy.

However, the way we want to farm is no soft option from conventional methods, and many of our principles are in direct variance with current agricultural thought. Equally, though our work will be in the country, we do not want to forget about cities, the people who live and work in them and the nature of our society in general—cozy self sufficiency is not one of our aims. Therefore in addition to working the farm we should like to help and cooperate with people in urban areas in ways we are best able to. For a start we want to provide accomodation for groups of kids to stay, where they can become involved with what happens on the farm, enjoy the rural surroundings and get to know who we are and how we live. We'd also like to give people the chance to come and work alongside us—to begin to learn how farms can provide food without recourse to the products of Messrs. ICI, Fissions or Beechams, to see that land can be worked cooperatively and that the country needs lots more young people to give life and energy to our dying farms.

We have produced a short pamphlet which explains in more detail why and how we intend creating MacDonald's Farm—we need people, to join us, learn with us; kids to stay; contact with interested urban groups; finance to help buy land and buildings (we are thinking of making MacDonald's a trust-owned farm); encouragement and interest. If you'd like a copy or can offer constructive help, please send a 2nd class stamp to: MacDonald's Farm, c/o Rhyd Fawr, Llanarth, Dyfed, Wales. We look forward to hearing from you.

## PEOPLE WANTING HELP

**BLACK BEAR RANCH.** We are considering the manufacture of extracts & tinctures of some of the healing herbs that grow in our mountains. We'd like contact with people who have similar or related experience/information, particularly in the marketing & distribution end of it (or any end or any beginning of it). *Black Bear Ranch, Box 7, Forks of Salmon, Cal. Richard, for the 25 (or so) souls at Black Bear.*

Male, age 29, presently incarcerated. Would like to correspond with sincere open-minded people. I am depressingly lonely and in dire need of friendship. All interested and sincere people please write to *Ronald Gibson, #140990, Post Office Box 69, London, Ohio 43140*

We need staff for three short summer seminars for adults. June 19 - July 4; July 10 - July 25; July 31 - August 15. Need a staff for the summer camp for children 8-12 years old. (July 3 - August 15) Also farmers wanted and a tree person. For further info contact Claymont Society for Continuous Education, P.O. Box 112, Charlie Town W. Va. 25414

Male 35 years old wishes to correspond with sincere intelligent people who are willing to share their time with one who is less fortunate than themselves. My hobbies are photography and sports, writing poetry and meeting new people and I will answer all who write to me. *Carl Shelton - 139-794, P.O. Box 69, London, Ohio 43140*

Four friends and myself would like to start a community somewhere in the Northwest, northern California, or New England. If you would share information about the price of land, taxes, growing seasons, and any plots of land to be sold in those areas we would be very grateful. We have about \$5,000 to spend on land. Also if you know of any vegetarian communities being formed in those areas we would appreciate their addresses.

Any efforts will be appreciated. *Edie Feigenbaum, General Delivery, Tucson, Arizona 857901*

I need your help.

Two years ago I began researching the universal phenomenon of the sweat bath. Beginning with the Native American sweat then traveling to Finland (for the sauna), the U.S.S.R. (for the banya), the Middle East (for the Islamic hammam or Turkish bath), and the Far East (the Japanese kama-buro), I visited, photographed and documented the sweat bath of each area.

I have plans for publishing a comparative study of these special baths.

What I need now is information on the use of the sweat bath by different groups in America. Alternative communities are of special interest to me. One of my hypothesis' is that the sweat bath, because of its beneficial qualities, evolved naturally and independently among different cultures. If you have adapted a sweat bath to your life style, where did you get the idea and how do you use it?

I would appreciate having the following questions answered also. Would you please help?

If you are curious about my work — please write, call or stop by...I'd love to talk to you. *Mikkel Aaland, 3934 California Way, Livermore, California 94550 [415-447-4199*

A.) What inspired the construction of your sweat bath?

- 1). The Native American sweat lodge?
- 2). The Finnish sauna?
- 3). The Turkish bath?

4). Other?

B.) If you have defined a ritual that belongs with your sweat - what is it?

- 1). Do you use any herbs?
- 2). Any drugs?

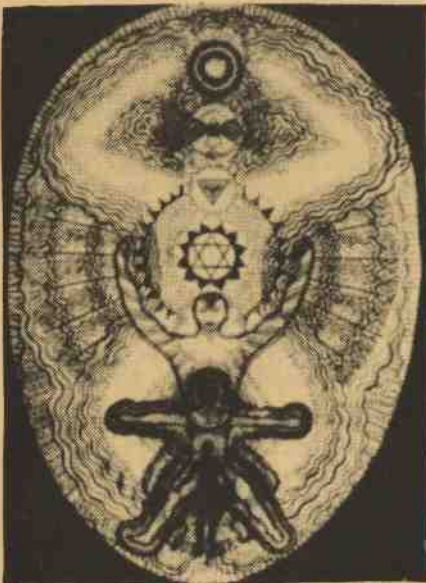
- 3). Is there a special day for the sweat?
- 4). Is fasting part of the sweat?

C.) What do you get out of the ritual or the sweat?

- 1). Social benefits?
- 2). Meditative reasons?
- 3). Health? If so, why do you believe it is curative?

In the history of your group, how important is the sweat bath to you and the rest of your group? If you have any pictures of your sweat, would you please send them?

THE FARM, a community of about 800 people, created a non-profit, charitable corporation called PLENTY. The purpose of PLENTY is "to help share out the world's food, resources, & knowledge equitably for the benefit of all." It does that by aiding people anywhere in the world who are in need because of natural or man-made disasters. Some things they've done so far: Sent several tons of food & 500 lbs. of clothing to Honduras after Hurricane Fifi hit; delivered 250 boxes of baby cereal, 1,000 lbs. of rice, 3,500 lbs. of beans, 2 tons of potatoes & 50 crates of cabbage to Memphis for families in need; eight Farm volunteers helped clean up & rebuild homes after a tornado in Omaha, Neb. PLENTY is trying to buy a small freighter so they can haul food, medicine, trained medical personnel, & volunteer workers wherever needed. This will cost 1/2 million dollars. Anyone wanting to make a contribution (tax-deductible) to PLENTY or get more information, write to PLENTY, the Farm, Summertown, TN. 38483 (615-964-2574).



## PEOPLE LOOKING FOR GROUPS

My name is Garnett E. Perry, I am presently incarcerated at the London Correctional Institution. I am writing this letter to you as a desperate appeal for friendship and correspondence and I am hoping that you will be kind enough to publish it in your paper.

I truly believe that there are concerned persons who are willing to extend a positive thought to someone who can appreciate such, I am sure that we can reach out to these good people.

My ad is as follows: 31 year old male seeks correspondence and friendship with realistic and con-

cerned people, regardless of age. Please write to: Mr. Garnett E. Perry, Serial No. 142-557, P. O. Box 69, London, Ohio 43140.

Resort for sale: No. California; 2 1/2 acres. 10 full house-keeping cabins. Heated pool. Secluded, yet close to small town. Large main house. (8 rooms, 2 baths) Plenty of sun. Special consideration to people interested in children's theatre and/or alternate schools. P.O. Box 1, Rio Nido, Ca 95471

I'm age 30 with 2 smallish kids. Been living in the country with animals, gardens, bees, and people (off and on) for the last 8 years. I have great interest in the wild herbs and remedies and am into using them together with other 'alternative' forms of treatment (acupressure, massage etc.)

Here we ran a craft shop during the summer months. My main experience is in dress design and production but have done pewter work and candle-making. I also have a degree in business studies (10 years old now and rusty)...but I can still manage basics...typing...book keeping...generally running the business side of things.

I don't think I would be able to live happily in one large communal unit for any length of time...and would much prefer to be one of a group of smaller living units pooling energy...even if this meant building by own place.... I have a little (very little) money but could probably raise more if it was needed. I have recently had a reoccurrence of pneumonia and although I'm pretty strong I need to be in a dry-ish...preferably warm climate. When I travelled around the states I really dug the SW....

It feels a little strange giving you all these details...all in an attempt to help you to help me...hope you can...look forward to hearing from you. I would enclose a stamped envelope but I'm a long way from the right sort of post office.

Having re-read the letter I see I haven't mentioned that my idea was to come and live in the States. Thanks, whatever, love and peace to you all, Marian O'Dwyer, Silver Strider Workshop, Star, Llanfyrnach, Pembrokeshire, Wales.

European couple, mid thirties, two children, broadly-travelled, widely-read, now into mellow blend of crafts, homesteading, writing and low-cost adventurous travelling, seek companions for communal venture. We have 20 acres of Canadian Rockies Splendor, we built our own house last summer and are now in the process of clearing gardens and raising secondary buildings. Things that would turn us on in potential future companions: a taste for adventure, practical sense, perseverance, light heartedness and a sense of humor, Utopian open-mindedness.

Things that would turn us off: Irresponsibility (like considering welfare a way of life) a heavy farm-trip (fresh milk is great but the world's bigger than an udder), a heavy prozelitizing religious trip.

Sex, age, race, religion, gay/straight, marital status all irrelevant for right people. Gerard and Collette, Box 174 Slocan, British Columbia, Canada.

I am male, 28, interested in anthropology, crafts, folk music, boatbuilding, sailing, and other things. I am in good health, live an active life and am not too bad looking. I'm looking for an adventurous, open-minded and compatible female to sail north with this spring. She should be about my age or a bit younger, in good health, not smoke tobacco, and be willing to travel light for a few months. I am just completing a 31 foot cutter rigged sailboat and plan to cruise around Puget Sound until spring and then sail up the coast to explore, sketch, and photograph in the Northern British Columbia coast, especially aban-

doned Indian villages. I am also hoping to find an area that would be a good place to live for a small community of people. I hope eventually to live in a small subsistence oriented community on the B.C. coast, but do not have any fixed plans beyond exploring B.C. this summer. If you are interested please write: Dan Leen, 1542 N.W. 62nd, Seattle, WA

I'm 50 years old, have a homestead farmed for 12 years and been in engineering and management of "doomsday machines." Got out. Want to have some intelligent companions—prefer on ocean as I could contribute to the community with under water spear fishing skills (make a living at that too). I could also help with farming skills because I run a commercial farm now. Do you know a coop on the ocean that's stable and organized? Bill McGuire, Route 1, Utica, Ohio 43080.

Name's Tree, I'm a carpenter, 29, Hetero, Aries, fairly straight but mellow, healthy and hard working, intelligent and fun. I have a dog and maybe two or three people with me. Inspired by "Walden Two." Seek a home. Tree, c/o Nancy Hall, P.O. Box 361, St. Helena, Calif. 94574.

We are interested greatly in joining a non-sectarian, vegetarian co-operative farming community preferably in the Colorado, New Mexico Rockies. Would anyone have access to any information about communities in this area or know of a group(s) that would furnish such information? We would appreciate any help you can send us. If you know of communities that sound like what we are looking for in any other area, we would appreciate that info too. We wish to move this spring. Thank you for your help. Linda Kilpatrick, 2525% Hearne Ave., Shreveport, LA 71103

I'm interested in joining a supportive communally oriented living group. My interest in communal living is associated with my view of how humans effectively care and support each other: think, create, educate, validate and play.

About me: I'm a 27 year old man who is delighted with my life. Various things I do well are: caring for other humans and myself; folk-dancing; co-counseling; successfully working through struggles that keep me from being completely who I am; singing; job counseling (that's my job in the bureaucracy); learning to play guitar; reaching out, I have lived in households with 3 children and presently live with 1 young person.

I'm looking for people with information associated with co-counseling (re-evaluation counseling) so I can continue to use this tool. My thoughts on support: The people I join must share similar goals of supporting and appreciating self and friends openly, sometimes verbally—truly noticing how fine we each are.

I'm interested in hearing how I might suit your present situation and goals. Isaac Romano, 153 Bartlett, San Francisco, CA 94110

We, Rose and Steve, both 23, are searching for a spiritually oriented community/commune to share our energies with. We are into yoga, macrobiotics, herbs, backpacking, taoism, working toward the one, transcending ego, living in the now. Willing to relocate to any part of the globe. We're strong physically and spiritually and willing and ready to work. Both of us grew up in rural settings, New Jersey Pines and the mountains of West Virginia. To facilitate further spiritual growth we would like to return to the vibrations of the Tao.

All beings that can help please write. Namaste. Steven Stroud, 928 N. Mariposa S. L.A. Cal. 90029.

## GROUPS LOOKING FOR PEOPLE

Julian Woods is an income sharing community in the mountains of central PA. We began five years ago as a co-operative house gradually becoming more sharing, bought our land several years ago and moved here in the spring of 1975. Since then, we have finished our road, drainfield, septic tank, installed electric, drilled a well, had a righteous garden and extended an orchard. Currently finishing our 2½ floor shop-garage-barn, beginning our cluster housing and planning greenhouse, pond, more cultivation space.

We are building a non-sexist society based loosely on Walden Two and non-punishment. We gather often to plan our future, work out difficulties and further our growth in our interpersonal relationships.

Ecology, alternative energy, organic foods, (not necessarily vegetarians), art, meditation, music, community childrearing are paths for many of us. For income we refinish furniture, repair cars, do odd jobs for neighbors, sell excess produce, and do metal shop work. One of us teaches at a university located half an hour away where many of our cultural needs are satisfied. Also, we are planning a soup oriented restaurant to open soon.

Our ages range from the 20s to the 40s and looking for folks older and younger to join us, especially those skilled in construction, cooking, auto repair, organic gardening, country living, or small business experience. Come and visit. Please include self-addressed stamped envelope for replies. Love and peace, *Julian Woods Community, Julian, PA 16844.*

*Appletree House, 2104 Columbine Ave., Boulder, CO 80302 [303] 443-2817. (Est. 1974)* In the process of becoming a commune we expect to get together with people who have interests similar to ours and we expect to learn the required attitudes and skills through an educational enterprise which is, in its present format, a co-op house. While most learning occurs in the co-op living situation we facilitate workshops in co-op and communal living within the framework of Boulders Community Free School and we organize "open house" potlucks.

Eventually approximately 12 persons. Focus: Family; balance between flow (fun) and structure (guide lines). Financial power over each other minimized. "Outside" society (friends, communes, schools, money, law, politics) of secondary importance. Eclectic: decisions flowing from philosophical middle ground. To re-locate in Boulder county. Will apply for legal identity like non-profit corporation. So far 2 adults with 2 children committed to these concepts; enjoy being together; established co-op house, net worth \$23,000. Searching for kindred spirits. Seeking communal adoption of children; non-monogamous group marriage (reducing couple-ism); open communication (up-frontness, ultimately no secrets, ultimately nothing to hide, scheduled meetings, structured for fun, business, emotional release); communal ownership of all major property; transfer assets gradually to commune; communal sharing of earnings; perhaps collective business; flexible orderliness (labor credits); health foods. Ulee (35, artist, sidereal astrologer, started Appletree Crafts which manufactures macrame pothangers), Vim (41, physicist, learning to let go, co-op theories), Sonja, Nico (9, 7 free school students, dance, piano, electricity, cooking). We like reading *Issues in Radical Therapy* and *Communities* magazines.

We expect that co-op members will live at Appletree House from a few months up to several years and that a small number of these people will eventually become interested in forming a commune with us. The household has averaged 6 or 7 people since January 1975.

**Twin Oaks Expands: 9 year-old co-op rural community now seeking adult members committed to our ideals of equality, sharing, & non-violence. For more information write Twin Oaks, Box 426, Louisa, VA 23093**

Aloe is a Walden Two community established in the fall of 1974 after a Labor Day conference at Twin Oaks. Like Twin Oaks, we have a planner-manager system of government & a labor-credit system of distributing work. Unlike Twin Oaks, Aloe was started by people with young children (almost school age). We currently have 12 members—9 adults & 3 children—and we have a communal children's program. We hope to expand in rapid stages to 100-300 members, & we welcome prospective members of all races & ages. We're working toward establishing a cooperative, egalitarian, & ecologically sound society, using techniques of behavioral engineering to greatly reduce punishment & competition, & to equalize each member's access to our resources (material & non-material). Our material resources include a 230 acre farm. We encourage prospective members to think in terms of contributing money and/or equipment, altho an eagerness to put energy into our social experiment is even more important to us than adding to our material resources.

After a year of trial & error, we've found that it's not advisable for people to bring children with them on their first visit to Aloe. (We've tried making exceptions & have decided there will be no more exceptions this year.) The purpose of your first week's visit is chiefly to observe our behaviorist-oriented adult interactions & our slightly behavioristic communal children's program, as well as taking time to rap with members about our vision & how it relates to our current stage of development (& how it relates to your washing dishes). Most visitors experience a certain amount of culture shock initially. (E.G., we do practice anti-sexism; women's & men's liberation is happening here.)

DO NOT bring pets or illegal drugs to Aloe. If you smoke cigarettes, expect to go out doors to do so. Do bring a sleeping bag if you can.

After visiting Aloe for at least one week, if you feel you'd like to seriously investigate adopting this alternative life-style for yourself & your child, we'll be very glad to arrange a second visit for you, concurrent with a first visit for your child. Our earlier information sheet stressed the consistent, hour-by-hour attention that we wish to give our children. In practice we've found that depends on there being enough adults who want to take on the added childcare. After conferring with our childcare manager, you'll be given a chance to supervise some activities for all the Aloe children. And you'll understand more about the culture shock your child will experience in an almost totally sharing environment after you, yourself, have experienced the merging of the reality & the vision!

Sunday is our day for brief visits. Other than that, NO DROP-INS, please! Write to us (or phone 919-732-4323) to arrange for mutually convenient dates for your visit. Give us a choice if you can. And, yes, we do like self-addressed, stamped envelopes. Plan a minimum of 6 days & a maximum of 3 weeks for your first visit. (We'd like a contribution of at least \$2/day toward expenses.) Ask for a map if you'll be driving; we're a bit hard to find. The closest bus stop is Hillsborough; we can pick you up there, or perhaps at Chapel Hill. *Seth, Aloe Community, Rt. 1, Box 10, Cedar Grove, NC 27231*

Whitten Hill Farm Community: I find writing this

review of who and what we are very difficult, but in order to reach people it must be tried. We are a small group of people living on a 220 acre farm in central coastal Maine. We have come together in the spirit of community and are trying to translate that spirit into reality. In order to see that goal we must grow in experience, patience, understanding, and in numbers, and that brings us to writing this.

The principle of our community is income sharing and democratic control. We believe that people need their own living space, their own possessions, and a sense of themselves, but we also feel that people have a higher sense of community and sharing that can be nurtured and developed in a positive atmosphere. As a result we have drawn up an "idea" for the future that would include separate buildings on the land for families and individuals with a central community house that would house the kitchen, dining room, bathroom, relaxation rooms, and community industry shops. The central house is already built and we have been working on it to provide the necessary spaces. Hopefully in the near future we will be able to start on the individual and family housing.

For income we have started on a 4½ acre strawberry field and are also looking to start on some kind of community industry. In the meantime we are working at whatever will provide us with money.

To fill out our community and our spirit we are looking for people that primarily know and understand the process of living and working with others. We want people who will work hard, are willing to eventually commit themselves to our community, and who are willing to be flexible and patient with their relationships with other members. We would prefer people who are skilled in some area but being able to live and work with others is more important. We are definitely looking for families with children as well as singles and couples.

My space here is very limited and I cannot go into all the details of our community. If you are interested at all or have any questions please write us so we can communicate further. *Whitten Hill Farm Community, RFD #2, Thorndike, ME 04986.*

Horse Farming—Spiritually Centered Commune wanting committed people who seek the calmness-close-to-nature life of remote country. We shall raise all Organic crops permitting Self Sufficient living. Horses supply Non-Polluting power. Sense nature through working the soil of the land. Main energy is communal meditation & meals, held daily. Mahayana Buddhism preferred, though open to varying beliefs. Features main lodge with attached solar green house providing year-round produce. Housing: choice of room in lodge or build separate house. Lodge to have large meditation room, large dining room plus communal facilities.

Land is in southwest Oregon; with long hot summers. A family of people coming to share their love of the land. The area is very beautiful with four seasons though no harsh winters. The people funky & close to the earth. We shall experiment with Wind power. Treat nature with respect. Open to large family living. Plan life time learning. Large Library, Free School, lots of Music, Sauna, & team of horses to ride the large tract of land we envision. Foresee regular, though light work. Encourage newcomers to adopt the wholesomeness of Vegan Vegetarianism.

Those interested in permanent settlement please write at length of concepts of community & where you're at in time/space. We shall send a prospectus. \$2 Contribution appreciated. Hip people please. Write today, if this is what you have been seeking. *Randy Hosking, PO Box 977, Blue Lake, CA 95525.*

The Pine Terrace Nine is a group of eight adults and three children who have been living together for three years. We own our property about twelve miles from New York City and derive our partially shared incomes from outside employment. While one of our

goals is to work together at some income producing activity, right now we are providing for each other and ourselves the warmth and richness of living with others of our own choosing. Some of us were related before we came together. All of us now feel part of something larger than ourselves. We don't have a particular philosophy, religion or political stance. We do feel that we have something worth sharing. If you are interested in talking with or visiting us, please write to the address below. We are particularly interested in hearing from persons who are looking for a deep, long-term commitment to a stable living alternative. *P.I.C.C., c/o Society of Plastic Industries, 255 Lexington Ave., New York, NY 10017.*

A traditional Indian Family living the lifestyle as instructed by our ancient grandfather (Good Red Road) while seeking Miaheyan (total understanding).

A highly disciplined spiritually directed warrior society that lives in daily awareness of our Mother Earth, our Father Sky, and the great Universal Mystery which dwells in all things. Men and women are considered as equal warriors in the battle against fear and ignorance and are expected to act in this knowledge. All people including children (Little People) are expected to follow a path of self-discipline in order to achieve true growth based on high ideals and strong spiritual motives.

Camped at the mouth of 3 springs on a 150 acre tract of land in Central Tennessee, we live in canvas and cedar pole quonset lodges, cook in a central lodge, use a sweat lodge, grow our own food, make clothing, and jewelry for our own use, hunt, tan hides, gather wild foods.

We do not sell our knowledge or skills or time and are not involved with outside work. We teach our children the traditions and customs of Natural Peoples and do not send them to outside school. We live independent of money and wages but do follow the path of the "give away" as instructed by our Father Moneto (Great Spirit Who Is All) and who gives all things to his children. Of ourselves we give freely as our goal is to bring about a healthy and high existence upon our Earth Mother who is now very sick because of her selfish children.

Leadership is through a Nundunaga (Central Person) and all decisions are based on unanimity of Camp Councils.

Age, Color, and sex are not barriers to Clan membership, but this is not a path for faint-hearted or self-indulgent peoples. Serious visitors are always welcome and letters will be answered if accompanied by a stamp and envelope. I have spoken for my People, *Whispering Leaf / Blue Jay, Singing Sweetwater Creek, c/o Route 2 Box 117A, Watertown, TN 37184.* [See conference section of *Reach about Gathering of Rainbow Tribe.*]

Windspirit Farm is the seed of a small homestead/family within the context of a larger Kettle community. The Kettle Community is a loosely knit community of 5 or so nuclear communities of differing types comprising about 60 people & 1200 acres all within a radius of a few miles. It is linked by the spiritual bonds of friendship, and a wonderful cooperative food store.

Windspirit lives on at least 150 acres, most of it steep hardwood forests, with several acres of hilly pastureland & several of flat cropland. After three years on the land in Kettle (2 on Windspirit) we are confident that we can continue to survive comfortably, all the while doing the joyful labor of making living things grow and thrive. We want to turn our gardens & pastures into lush gardens & parks, while retaining our woodlands as a sanctuary for all living things. As of now (2-76) we have a tractor & plan to grow several crops, though we are looking towards horse-drawn equipment in the near future. We're also interested in developing crafts and/or a cottage

industry as well, but first wish to become more competent in the arts of basic survival. As of now there are two of us here but we'd like to find some more—two for a start. We do not believe it would suit the community by trying to build it to a large number quickly, but rather to develop the depth and trust vital to a relationship on a one to one basis. We feel that we'd like to hear particularly from two but welcome letters from all gentle people seeking paradise. *Jessie & Elliott, Windspirit Farm, Kettle, KY 42752.*

We have 250 acres of virgin tropical coast land on the Great Barrier Reef in Far North Queensland. The land is half rainforest, half open eucalypt forest with some steep slopes and magnificent views. Sea frontage is mangroves, with abundant fish and oysters. A semi-permanent creek forms part of the boundary. The land is suitably isolated, with access by 4-wheel drive vehicle (24 miles from Cooktown). Average rainfall is 100-150" per year. The tropical climate is most suitable for subsistence farming and self-sufficiency. We are five individual conservation-minded families who have formed a proprietary limited company to purchase land, and are seeking five more families to join us as equal shareholders, with close co-operation and harmony on a community level. At present we have four children, collectively, and would like to increase this number to ten or more, to enable community schooling, and would like to have one shareholder with teaching qualifications.

The price of each share is \$A5250 plus one tenth share in minimal company running costs. All genuinely interested people please write for more detailed information to: *Bev. & Bob. Smith, Post Office, Redlynch, North Queensland 4872, Australia.*

Los Horcones Community: A Walden II style community in the sense that the results of the Experimental Analysis of Behavior are used in dealing with the behavior of all its members.

Located in a semi-desertic area, 2Km. from Hermosillo, Sonora, Mexico.

Work organization by Labor Credit System. Government by Planner-Manager System. Open for all persons. The community can give information about the trams that foreigners should do to live in the community. If you want more information, write to: *Comunidad Los Horcones, Apdo. #372, Hermosillo, Sonora, Mexico.*

We're 3 folks who are looking for 1 to 5 others to help us build a family (homestead) community on the 26 acres we're buying on the Oregon Coast north of Florence. Our interests are cooperative land buying, economic & food self-sufficiency, hunting & gathering, eating natural foods, labor intensive/hand tool gardening, developing alternative sources of power, raising bees, geese, chickens, ducks & goats and developing permanent, non-monogamous, non-sexist, non-ageist relationships.

What we aren't looking for are smokers, heavy drug users, religious zealots, or persons committed to large dogs.

If this interests you, please write to us at: *Crabapple Homestead, Rt 1, Box 1254, Florence, OR 97439*

Blue Skys is a community of Vegetarians into love. We hope to be moving onto the land soon and need a few more women and children to balance things out. Write *C. Hensel, 144 14 Terrace S.E., Miami, FL 33131.* Also if you know of any land in Florida to share crops we would like to hear from you.

We are a collective of 12 people who are operating a kosher restaurant in Washington D.C. We have two bases; religious and political. Our political stance is thus; we are an anti-profit business and are trying to

educate the community in the meaning of that: we own the store jointly as a collective; we rotate jobs so that no hierarchy of knowledge will develop, we all receive equal (subsistence) wages. We work in cooperation with other anti-profit/alternative businesses in the D.C. area, in trying to establish alternatives to the capitalist system. We use Criticism/Self-criticism every workday to evaluate our efficiency and cooperation and we've found it helps to improve communication and interpersonal relationships.

Our other purpose for existence is to develop a community spirit around the restaurant; using it as a center where people can get together to talk, eat, sing songs, dance, listen to speakers or to speak, have benefits; in a word be a community; Working through the restaurant, we have involved many people from the community in our projects, which include a Drop-in Center and a Meals-on-Wheels for Senior Citizens, support for political activity, oral history class and Israeli dance classes, one day a week. We have many ideas for future projects, once the restaurant becomes strong enough to support them, such as buying clubs, some sort of publication, a hangout for youth, community meetings which we hope will draw interest and generate new ideas from our neighbors. We are also into getting more involved in larger political activities, but we need some direction and new energy to make these ideas a reality.

So, we welcome visitors or volunteers for short periods of time; our request for would-be members is to come and work with us for 3 weeks to get a true idea of what we're all about. We're a year old now and are looking for people with a long-term commitment in mind. *Kosher Kitchen, 11200 Lockwood Drive, Silver Springs, MD 20901. [301] 593-3772*

We are an organic farming community (established seven years), who is seeking a very special person as full-time teacher-coordinator for our new community-built school, which is to be completed this fall.

We have several teachers among the parents and members plus others with special talents in farming, building, crafts and the arts. There is much talent to be utilized and integrated into a 'living school.' There are no heavy philosophies here, we're pretty open here; we like Neill and Steiner.

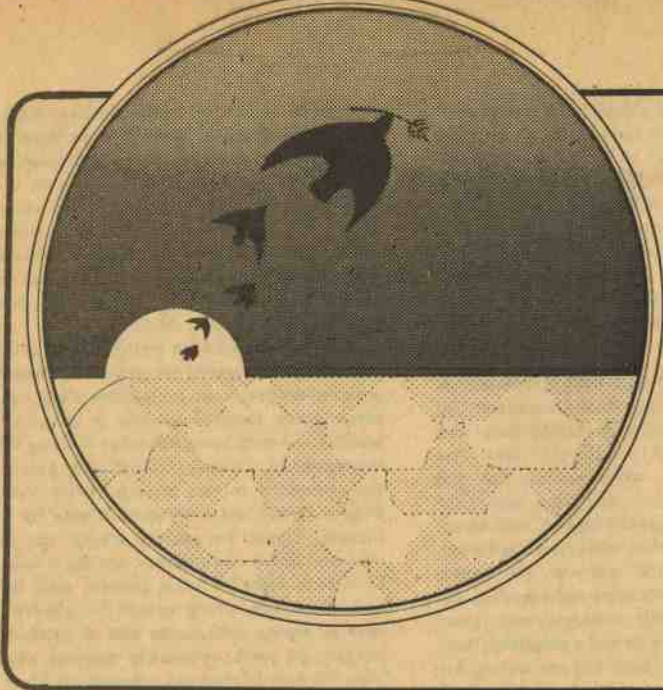
We are located in Southern Indiana, (Brown County), fifteen miles from Indiana University, on 450 acres of wooded hills, organically farmed valley, pastures, lake, orchard and individual family homesteads for about forty adults. We hope our teacher will live among us and become a part of our beautiful community-family.

We would greatly appreciate any help you might give in helping us find our teacher. We would prefer someone experienced in alternative education, country living and with children of his/her own. However, these are "preferences" as such and not nearly as important as love, understanding and respect for children. *Search Committee, Plum Creek School, Box 399, R.R. #3, Nashville, IN 47448.*

Woolman Hill is a year-round alternative educational community on a 110 acre farm held by the Quakers. We try to live and work cooperatively, making decisions by consensus and working towards self-sufficiency.

There is room for 20 people, ages 14-18, to do carpentry, organic gardening and farming, forestry, crafts and academics. Winters are spent away from the hill in a work-travel experience.

Our summer session is from June 21-August 21. Fall session begins September 13. For information write *Woolman Hill, Deerfield, MA 01342* or call 413 773-9065.



# THE Grapevine

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** The material for both this column and the Reach section is taken from what people send us. We cannot vouch for the authenticity of a given item, although we welcome input on that, as well as the news itself. We trust that the information we get is basically sound, albeit optimistically stated. However, its a good idea (as with everything in life) to check it out through direct correspondence, if you are interested in connecting with something you read about here.

**Crabapple is a community in Wales of 6 adults and 2 children. It is a Walden II group and has a Natural Food store for income. It is looking to expand its membership, so inquiries are very welcome.**

From Wales. Walden Two/Twin Oaks Community in Britain, Newsletter 6, Crabapple Community, Middle Ty Brith, Llan-santffraid, Powys SY22 6TE. "Our smallholding, called Middle Ty Brith, is 17 miles west of Shrewsbury. It consists of 8 acres of reasonably flat and fertile land (for Wales, that is)...We are 5 adults and 2 children...We hope to expand to about 14 adults on this smallholding and have been granted outline planning permission for a large extension which will accommodate this number....Jade was 3 last summer and we decided to try putting behavioural principles into practice and have a go at teaching him to read. Much reading of educational literature gradually led us to the conclusion that nobody knew much about teaching reading. One of the few things to emerge clearly was a singularly unsurprising tendency for children to learn in approximate proportion to the length of time spent teaching them...We write meaningful words — his name and our names — in big lower case letters on 3x5" cards. Starting with one card we showed this to another adult who said the appropriate word and was given a food reward. We then showed the card to Jade and as soon as he responded correctly gave him the food reward. Repeating this rapidly 'shaped up' the desired response to the written stimulus. The next stage was to shape up a different response to a different stimulus — another word, so that he could 'read' 2 words. At the moment he reads about 20 words reliably. More recently we have been teaching him to read pairs of words and he seems to be getting the idea of this. At the same time we have been decreasing the frequency of the food reinforcers (rewards) so that the

behaviours are maintained by the more conventional social reinforcers only (praise, smiles, hugs etc.) Eventually, of course, the behaviours will be maintained by their own rewards — i.e., finding out what the picture or story is about...Undoubtedly there are enormous problems concerning the morality of behaviour mod. principles — and undoubtedly they can be used in a very authoritarian manner. But Jade, brought up on these principles seemed such a happy, together and aware kid that I can't help feeling that, applied correctly, behaviour mod. can lead people to much more satisfying and responsible lives than traditional, erratic child-rearing practices can...Maybe it's axiomatic that there's good and bad in all of us — and we can arrange things to encourage the good in people. You certainly seem to be doing that with young Jade. A lovely kid! Not to forget, of course, Hannah, who's so mature and self-directing for her age. Very together for an 8 year old...It seems to me that the important thing about behaviour mod that must be put over is that it can lead to a person learning to control his own behaviour and not necessarily to him being controlled by others....."

**East Wind is a Walden II community in the southern Missouri Ozarks, which is growing rapidly towards a 750-person group. They share all labor and money, a planner/manager system of government, and an egalitarian, noncompetitive culture. Excerpts from a recent Nooz letter:**

**Long Range Planning:** Henry of TO was here for a week, and our people went into high gear with the plans for construction this year. It looks like we will be building a shop building this spring.

The shop building will be a pole barn type structure. It will be



somewhere between 2500 and 5000 square feet; it will house weaving, stretchers and hammock storage with possibly auto shop and a new industry — depending on the final size. There is even a possibility that we will install a loft, which will provide temporary housing to alleviate the bed crunches. It is to be located just off the road, about a hundred yards northeast of the present stretcher tent.

A probable site has been chosen for the next dormitory. It also will be to the north of the stretcher tent; just a few hundred feet to the northwest, on the hillside overlooking the western valley.

A planning group (Chuck, Che, (formerly Steve,) James, and Rev) is working on the design, which will be checked out for soundness by Henry. It will probably be twenty or so rooms, and there is a possibility of a bunkroom, or some variation thereof (tentatively being called a "laGuinn") space. Construction will begin at the earliest, the first of June.

Will and Henry worked up two possible designs for a sewage treatment system; one is to be a sewage treatment plant -a-la TO; the other is a system of purification lagoons. Even if the community uses a composting toilet such as the Ecolet to handle our shit, we will need (do need) some sort of plant to deal with the grey water from the sink and shower drains. According to our utilities people, we are in the stage of "checking out the dollar biz".

We're a small group with a variety of trades, skills and professions; diverse experience in the "community movement", and mutual faith that we have the capacity to develop a cooperative village that will be secure, viable and economically feasible.

Independent families will engage in extensive voluntary cooperation on community owned land thru long-term leases from a rigid Community Land Trust patterned after and probably chartered under a national land trust organization now being developed.

The New Life Foundation will handle the planning, engineering, legal negotiations, promotion and initial construction. Members will be offered basic homesteads complete with a house and utilities so they can join the community and immediately enjoy the comfort and security of their own homes while putting part of their energy into building homesteads for those who will follow. Thus eliminating the major reasons that mature responsible people have found it so difficult to get into "communities".

The present owner of the land will enjoy the advantages of dealing with a non-profit organization. Transfer will be gradual and similar to a land purchase contract. He will enjoy the security of having his land enriched with homesteads, improvements and cheerful people during the transfer period and his financial input will be short-term and far less than he would have paid in sales commissions. We hope he'll also be proud of his essential part in this venture and become an active member himself.

Our compensation, aside from the pleasure of creation, will be earning our own places in the community as active members. We're convinced that there is a greater need for the cooperation and intimacy that will be the result of this effort than we could possibly satisfy and expect to be operating within a year.

The plan is right, the cultural climate is right, the time is right. Will you please join us for a few more steps in the journey by sharing with us your reaction to this outline and the possible extent of your continued interest?

**New Life Foundation, Facilitating Development of Alterna-**

**tive Communities, P.O. Box 86, Cobham, Virginia, 22929. New Life Foundation is being started by the same folks who put out Plain Dirt, the quick-access monthly classifieds [see Resources, this issue].**

**Twin Oaks is a community in Virginia consisting of approximately 70 people ranging from newborn to 68 years. It is a diverse group and approaches to designing its culture reflect that diversity. The following is an excerpt from the most recent issue of the Leaves, T.O.s newsletter.**

#### **EDUCATING KIDS**

About a year ago, we started talking about and thinking about the more formal aspects of educating our kids. Maya was close to two years old; his verbal abilities were blossoming, his curiosity was growing and his energy was high. It sometimes seemed that he was asking for more direction for his energy; he often seemed bored by the toys we had around and the level of his aggression towards the other kids had increased some.

Because of our general child-rearing philosophy, we did not want to deal with his new skills and energy in a negative, punishing way. We were interested in re-directing some of that energy towards his becoming more independent and towards his learning about his environment and how he related to it. Several of us had been reading works by Maria Montessori and had been impressed by her philosophy and approach to education—i.e., that children are capable of joyfully learning and growing, of enthusiastically observing, recognizing and manipulating things in their environment with a minimum amount of adult intervention. Justin, a visitor at that time, was a Montessori teacher and spent a couple of evenings talking with some of us about those methods.

After that, we started the process of creating the education program. Meetings of interested people brought out differences of opinion on the subject of educational methods; lengthy discussion didn't resolve those differences, but did make clear that the program probably would not completely reflect any one method. Out of six people interested in actually doing the lessons with the kids, four of us became tutors, with the intention of having a team of two start with Maya, and having the other two get involved when Thrush was ready. The program started with Maya in the summer of '75.

Now, in January '76, Maya has left us, and Thrush (31 months) and Seren (27 months) are getting individual lessons 2-3 times a week on alternate days. "Doing a Lesson" consists of one of the tutors going into the Quiet Room with the child who's turn it is that day. We wash our hands and then straighten out the room; the child usually puts books and toys away while the tutor closes the door so the other kids don't interrupt. Then we pull the shelves with the lesson materials out of the closet.

Most of the materials are homemade and are either copies of Montessori materials or designed according to the same educational principles. The kids use a rough/smooth texture board, a button board, a latch board, little pitchers for pouring water, matching color cards or fabric cards or shape cards, and a cylinder block (fitting different size cylinders into appropriate holes) to develop their senses, their motor skills, and their language skills. We've also introduced materials that are not strictly Montessori, such as homemade puzzles, blocks and bead-stringing.

The child chooses the material he wishes to use first and carries it to a low table or to the broad windowsill. If it's new to the lessons, the tutor "takes cos turn first", modeling the appropri-

ate use of it. The child then takes cos turns. We try hard not to correct and to interfere, unless the material is being abused. Sometimes the child takes a short turn and is done with that material; sometimes co becomes engrossed in one activity for half an hour. When the child's interest is waning, either the child or the tutor suggests that they get another material out. One of our ground rules in lessons is that a new material cannot be taken off the shelves until the old one goes back on. When the child is unwilling to carry a material back, it usually indicates that co is losing interest in the lesson and is willing to end it. If there are extenuating circumstances that are occurring when the child is unwilling to put the material away, like if co has just fallen or has had a very frustrating time using it and doesn't want to touch it, we don't force co to do it, but try to help co re-direct cos interest. The lessons usually last an hour.

Our short term future plans are to start doing lessons with the kids together and to start lessons with Moriah, who will be two in March. Our longer range hopes are that we'll have a space devoted to education that we can arrange so an adult can hold "classes" for lots of kids at once.

**Synergy Newsletter.** Family Synergy, P.O. Box 30103, Terminal Annex, Los Angeles, CA 90030.

**Family synergy is a nationwide nonprofit all-volunteer group of people interested or involved in the caring alternative lifestyles of open relationships, expanded family, and communal living. Their monthly newsletter has articles on the problems and joys of these lifestyles; "how-to" information; and schedules of many workshops, conferences, and other events. Here are some excerpts from their recent newsletter:**

#### **PAGING THROUGH THE CHAPTERS**

Almost every chapter does speaking engagements to an aggregate of one to possibly three appearances weekly, nationwide. We don't list them in the Newsletter because we learn about many of them too late (or not at all), and because they'd take up a lot of room! But they are vital and appreciated both by Synergy and by many of those who hear them.

This brings us to one Los Angeles area item, at least. Hy Levy was on Channel 2 late in February on a panel show devoted to the American Family—Past, Present and Future.

#### **MEMBERSHIP QUESTIONNAIRE**

Some months ago, a questionnaire was included with a Membership Directory mailing. This questionnaire asked for information as to why people joined FAMILY SYNERGY, how well their desires were being met, how active people were being in our activities; and what kind of lifestyles they were into. . . .

The highest percentage reported was for open relationships, with 63% of the respondents saying they were living in them. This included 83% of the responses from people in family relationships (which includes married and unmarried couples, and people in expanded families living together). Of the remaining total, almost a third said that they were not in open relationships but wanted to be, and the balance either were not sure, did not want to be, or gave no response. Only one respondent, a single female, said that she had been in an open relationship in the past but did not want to be now or in the future.

#### **CLCC**

For those who don't know, CLCC stands for the Communal Living Clearing Center, a service of FAMILY SYNERGY. The CLCC helps people interested in communal living to find others

also interested, and provides some help in getting these people together and started. It also helps existing houses find people, and can provide expertise and support in time of problems.

**Dandelion is a Walden Two community of 5 people in Ontario. The following article is from their newsletter, Pappus. They are open to new members and visitors. A 10 page brochure has been prepared about them, so if you're interested in finding out more, contact: Dandelion Community, RR1, Enterprise, Ontario, Canada K0K 1Z0.**

Hooray, I'm home again!!!

Last week was my last week on outside work and I'm feeling free again. I got up when I naturally woke up, had a peaceful breakfast and spent a blissful day working on a window greenhouse and tinnery inventory. I got to sing to all the records I like and when I got thirsty I went outside (a clear, mild, sunny day) and stole a few mouthfuls of sweet maple sap, fresh from the tree.

This is supposed to be an article on the garden planning, but when I started writing that's what came out. It all goes together I guess because now I have a chance to work on some things I've been planning for so long. I remember back in October or November we decided to make some plant shelves for growing fresh greens over winter. It turns out that's what I finished today. Its new purpose is to house the seedlings for our upcoming garden. This year we are adding to our 30x60 foot patch a 50x150 foot patch in a new, more fertile (so says the university soil test lab) more convenient site. Our crop selection is growing also. We're planning to stock up for winter with a root cellar, freezing and canning, along with growing some summer goodies (cantaloupe for one) and experimental crops—soy, kidney and lima beans.

The garden is already planned. I disappeared for awhile with seed catalogs, calendar, **Organic Farming and Gardening**, and books on companion planting and the like, as well as mounds of scrap paper. The material was digested and thought over and written down and scratched out and cursed upon until I emerged from my hole with a big fancy new garden plan and posted it on the kitchen wall.

We then sent away for the seeds and began talking about a water storage system and irrigation, preparing for another possible dry summer. There are a lot of questions to think over before we feel completely satisfied with the plan, watering is only one. Shall we compost or just mulch? How many of each vegetable do we want to end up with and when? Which shall we eat—which shall we eat? How can we best utilize the space we have? When do we start planting so the plants mature on time? I have a feeling that the most successful gardeners have plenty of experience upon which to base their decisions. Maybe we can make up partially for our lack with careful planning. I should include, though, that we learned plenty from last year's garden.

Next on the agenda are fruit trees and berries. We will probably have strawberries although the exact location and amount have not been decided yet. Our raspberry thicket will get a pruning and I would like to get a few rosa rugosa, rose bushes from which to get fresh rose hips.

We have a few apple trees and are thinking of places to plant new ones, as well as different kinds of fruit trees.

Our current attempt at feeding ourselves from the great outdoors is tapping some sugar maples (the very ones I'm always swiping sap from). We have just a few trees, but enjoy the work and feeling of accomplishment. Now all we can do is wait for the days to get warm and the snow to melt.

—Liz



# RESOURCES

**Gesar** is a quality publication with articles, news and reviews related to Tibetan Buddhism. Subscriptions are \$5.00 a year (tax-deductible). Single copies for \$1.50. From Dharma Publishing, 5856 Doyle St., Emeryville, CA 94608.

The Oregon Dept. of Energy has produced a special calendar for 1976 with a wide range of energy saving conservation ideas and suggestions. An outstanding value for \$.75 from the Oregon Department of Energy, 528 Cottage St., NE, Salem, OR 97310.

Several publications from the Taizé community in France are now available in English. **The Rule of Taizé** and **Festival** are both published for \$2.95 as Crossroad Books from Seabury Press. Those exploring and learning the keeping of a spiritual journal will find **Festival** an excellent example. Both are recommended to communities exploring future models for tomorrow.

ECO-NET is a non-profit environmental education network with emphasis on information exchange relating to environment, economics, food, energy, communications, shelter, and agriculture. Their 16-page **Rain** publication is top-notch, although it does have an emphasis on the Northwest. It is only \$5 a year from **Rain**, 2770 NW Irving, Portland, OR 97210.

**Plain Dirt** is a quick service monthly minizine of alternatives. PD says, "Let's hear from the city people! We're pleased with the increasing number of communities that are finding their way to PD's pages & hope the action will continue growing. We'd also like to have a lot more participation from people living in the cities. Surely there's lots of things in the urban areas that we could help with. If you've got friends in the city, send us

their names & we will try to send them a copy of PD." Subscriptions are \$10/yr & include a free ad if placed with subscription (otherwise \$2/100 words). "Any ad that reaches us by the 10th of the month will be printed in the issue that will be circulated nationally on or about the 20th of the **same month**, using 1st class postage to speed delivery. We keep our focus on fast contacts cheap." **Plain Dirt**, Box 86, Cobham, VA 22929.

**LION Newsletter**. "The Living In the Ozarks Newsletter is an **active** publication. LION folks don't just read the newsletter—they **do** the newsletter. Open editorship is our policy & we ask you to participate in the info exchange by writing letters, articles, etc." Examples: the Dec. issue included a 2-page detailed description of a Clivus Compromise—A Homemade Composting Toilet; a page about production of apples, blackberries & table grapes in Northwest Arkansas with a graph showing fixed costs & cash returns per acre & the break-even acreage; a page of news from the U&I Ranch, Eldridge, MO; a page of news from East Wind Community, Tecumseh, MO; several pages of "notes, notices & stuff". Subscriptions: \$8/yr. Volunteers welcome. Joel & Sheri Davidson, Pettigrew, AR 72752.

**Interaction** is a coalition of 5 organizations cooperating in education for social change. Printed resources include: Third World Reader Service (Interaction); Latin American Country Primers & Mobilizing Packets (EPICA), Bibliographic Catalogues for Country I Issue Analysis (CoDoC); Corporate Action Guide (Corporate Action Project); Conversations, Concerns & Challenges (LAOS) ASF Newsletter (Aktion Suehnezeichen). "Besides sharing this common commitment, **Interaction**, located in 2 houses in northwest Washington, DC, also shares physical facilities which serve as offices,

staff headquarters, resource & workshop center for the coalition & linked groups & individuals. Interaction, 1500 Farragut St., NW, Washington, DC 20011.

**COMNET—Northwest Information Network**, Box 5599, Seattle, WA 98105. A NW Intentional Communities Directory, listing 58 community groups in Washington, Oregon, Idaho and British Columbia (18 of which are actively looking for members). The Directory also lists over 20 resource groups, names and addresses of people forming communities, etc. The directories are \$.75 apiece from NW Community Memory, Box 5599, Seattle, WA 98105. Be sure to include a large, stamped, self-addressed envelope and one dollar to help cover Network expenses with your request for information.

**Earth Books Lending Library**. They have over 300 books on Homesteading, get back to the land and communal living. You pay a \$5.00 membership fee which is refundable when you cancel and \$.65 for each book you borrow. They pay postage to you, you pay postage back to them. Earthbooks Lending Library, Sweet, Idaho, 83670.

**A European Alternative Directory** is in the final state of completion. It will be printed and mailed by Connexion (Obermuhle Family, D-8161 Hundham 1-132, W Germany). A great amount of completed forms have been collected. The A.D. should give us a significant panorama of the movement as a whole and perhaps the most up to date information about groups and communities around the world. On the other hand very few financial contributions have been received for printing and other expenses, so that it will be necessary to charge for it.

The book that was announced last year is going to be issued in Italy in the

spring of 1976 under the title: **Antistoria**, per una ideologia della decentralizzazione (Anti-history, the development of an ideology of decentralization). Contacts have been made to find publishers in both France and Germany. From Gabram, IMMK, via A. Cantele, 37,I-35100 Padova, Italy

**Co-op Books & Records**, P.O. Box 2436, Tallahassee, FL 32304. June '74 issue (#1) of their "People's Bookseller" newsletter contains a 5 page superlist of bookstores distributing "left political" materials, and tips on record distributors, importers, etc. Send \$30.

**Organizer's Book Center**, P.O. Box 21066, Washington, D.C. 20009. Run by the **Source Catalog** people who specialize in how-to books on community organizing (group legal services, storefronts, etc.). Catalog of 30 unusual titles. Also request their "Books for Women Organizers" 20 title catalog.

**Earthrise Incorporated** is a non-profit organization engaged in future research, education and design. Their newsletter is a bi-monthly report on futures studies around the country and world. They have workshops which present slides, films and games in futurism. Futures Lab is an ongoing undergraduate program stressing global/local, social/environmental planning toward the year 2000 (leading to a BA or BS). Write to them at: Box 120, Annex Station, Providence RI 02901, (401)274-0011.

The folks at the Boston branch of Vocations for Social Change have come out with another fine issue of their **Peoples Yellow Pages**. It's available for \$2.50 from Vocations for Social Change, 353 Broadway, Cambridge, MA 02139.

**Gay Sunshine**, Box 40397, San Francisco CA 94144, (415)824-3184, is a journal of gay liberation published bimonthly and circulated nationally. The publication concentrates on gay politics, personal accounts, poetry, graphics, interviews, gay prisoners news. Subscription: \$6/12 issues, \$10 1st class, sample copy for \$1.

**197 Bulletin for Film and Video Information**, 80 Wooster Street, New York NY 10012, is a newsletter that serves the needs of independent film and video makers and their users. The bulletin is organized around five aspects of film and video: 1) film and video making, 2) distribution, 3) exhibition and

programming, 4) study, 5) preservation. Subscriptions are \$2/4 issues, \$4 foreign.

**198 The Center for the Study of the Future**, 4110 NE Alameda, Portland OR 97212, (503)282-5838, is a non-profit organization for Christians of all denominations who are interested in the future. A sample copy of their newsletter, **Patterns**, is available for \$.25 or a subscription for \$10/year, from the above address.

**199 Technocratic Trends Research Bulletin**, is a Technocratic analysis of trends and events in the news, compiled by the research staff of the **Technocrat Magazine**, 433 E Market Street, Long Beach CA 90805. One year subscription of 12 issues is \$1.50.

**200 Radio Free People**, 133 Mercer Street, New York NY 10012, (212) 966-6729, is a collective of volunteers formed in 1968 to make tapes of talks, songs, poems, documentaries, collages and drama having to do with revolutionary social change. They provide recording facilities to radical groups around New York. Send for a copy of their catalog.

**249 Synthesis** is an anti-authoritarian newsletter for citizen-worker self-management ideas and activities. Write to League for Economic Democracy, Box 1858, San Pedro CA 90733, for a sample copy.

**208 People for Self-Management Newsletter**, Box 802, Ithaca NY 14850, is about worker-controlled management and production efforts from around the world. \$2 for 6 issues.

"Alternative Canberra" is a contact joint in Australia for anyone interested in new societies, alternative technology, etc., in Australia. Anyone interested outside of Australia in what's happening down-under or needs to someone to talk to, crash with when they get out there could contact us, and we'll do all we can. Alternative Canberra, c/o 32/4 Condamine Court, Turner, A.C.T., Australia 2601.

**Resolution**, 630 Natoma St. San Francisco, CA 94101, is a non-profit organization which distributes films on everything from China, to day-care, to feminism, to the revolution. They print a brochure which describes the films they distribute and it can be had by writing them.

**Insight Exchange** distributes films on mental health, prison struggles and the womens movement. They have two film flyers, one contains the films mentioned above, the other, is a listing of over 30 films and videotapes about women. Both flyers are available from: Insight Exchange, P.O. Box 42584, San Francisco, CA 94101 (415)621-2713.

**The World Future Society** publishes a newsletter called **Lifestyle Tomorrow** which describes changing trends in todays lifestyles with an eye on their effects for the future. The newsletter cost \$6.00 to World Future Society Members and \$9.00 to non-members and librarians. World Future Society, 4916 St. Elmo Ave., (Bethesda) Washington, D.C. 20014 U.S.A.

**Wind Power System, Inc.** of San Diego publish a small bi-monthly newsletter which describes their experiments and new products in the wind energy field. The newsletter is \$3.60/year and is available from Wind Power Systems, Inc. Post Office Box 17323, San Diego, California 92117.

Steve Baer, nuts and bolts solar energy pioneer, has recently published a new book on solar energy. It's called **Sunspots** and can be bought for \$3.00 from Zomeworks Corp. PO Box 712, Albuquerque, NM 87103.

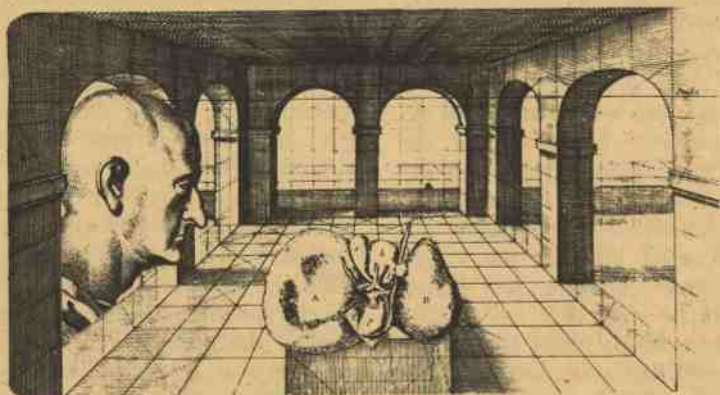
**Energy for Survival** by Wilson Clark (Anchor Press, Doubleday \$4.95 + postage). A lengthy book covering the history and the basis of the American high-energy system, the limits to growth, energy and industry, society and transportation, and agriculture. The work then goes on to conclusions about resources for the future and decentralized power systems.

**Sharing Smaller Pies** is a wonderful insightful 35-page treatise on "living lightly," is available for \$1.50 from Tom Bender c/o Rain, 2270 N.W. Irving, Portland, OR 97210.

Some of the items in this column were taken from **Resources Newsletter**, a small newsletter which conveys new ideas, changing needs, services, products and events related to the movement. Subscriptions are \$5.00 for 12 issues, plus an index, to subscribe or to get a sample copy (SASE) write **Resources Newsletter**, Box 134, Harvard Square, Cambridge, MASS.

# Social Science

## research & theory



More and more researchers are beginning to use this column as a way of telling others about their activities. This issue's column, particularly, reflects that trend. Thanks to all of you who have been keeping me (and our readers) informed. I'm always grateful for information about social science publications, research and conferences related to living in community. If you have information you'd like to share, write David, Social Science Editor, Box 426, Louisa, VA 23093.

**CONFERENCE ON COMMUNITY:** There will be a conference entitled "Community and Individualism: 350 Years of Experiment in America" to be held at Hancock Shaker Village from September 30 - October 3, 1976. The theme of the conference, according to Pat Hunt, the publicity director, is "...the ideological sources of communal societies and individualism in America, the tension between community and individualism in American experience, relationships between communal societies and the dominant culture, institutional arrangements in communal societies, and the future of community and individualism in a changing world." Speaking at the conference, among others, will be John Hostetler, Kenneth Rexroth, Laurence veysey, Rosabeth Kanter, Jessie Bernard, E.C. Eric Lincoln, Herbert Gans, Karl Arndt, Kenneth Keniston, Robert Houriet and Kat Kinkade. Contact Pat

Hunt (Hancock Shaker Village, Box 898, Pittsfield, MA 01201) for more information.

**CHILDREN IN COMMUNITY:** Larry Constantine (co-author with Joan Constantine of *Group Marriage*, a study of multilateral relationships) has found his attention increasingly turning to how children get integrated into open marriages, multiple relationships and communal living arrangements. His "Treasure of the Island", a careful review of research on communal child-rearing, will be published as a Sage Monograph in the fall of '76. (Sage, 275 South Beverly Drive, Beverly Hills, CA 90212) He's written a chapter on "kids and alternatives, including alternative sexual lifestyles for kids" to be included in the next revision of Libby and Whitehurst's *Renovating Marriage* (1973), Consensus Publishers, 255 Rose St., Danville, CA 94526. See my review in the Social Science Column of *COMMUNITIES* #17.) And, at the National Council on Family Relations' annual meeting last year, he presented a paper advocating the "Open Family: A Lifestyle for Kids and Other People."

In that last paper, and in a paper about his family's experiment with an egalitarian internal economy, Larry draws a distinction between the 'open family' and the 'liberal-permissive' family. The latter "...disrespects the rights of family

members who happen to be parents and denies real differences in ability and personality." It imposes a democratic structure on the family which does not allow for child-like behavior from any of its members. In the open family, on the other hand, roles are fluid (adults can be children) and the structures of the family (rules of behavior, processes of decision-making) are subject to continual scrutiny to see if they are feeling good to all of the family members.

Of particular interest is the 'internal economy' which the Constantines are using to distribute economic resources among the family members (3 adults and 3 children, two of whom are 4 years old.) As Larry describes it:

"...everyone here gets paid by the family at the same hourly rate for everything that contributes to the common good, whether or not this would normally be a paid activity. Income from outside sources, which reflects, among other things, the unjust vagaries of the market-place, belongs to the family not the wage earner. Personal income is paid from the pool after all individual and collective necessities are met. We grant equal pay for equal time regardless of sex or age, because we feel that an hour of my time cannot be said to be worth any more or less to me than an hour of Heather's time is worth to her."

Larry admits that he has had to become more frugal in his spending and that the children, though they are learning responsibility in money management, are free to be frivolous "...or, as few kids are allowed to be, truly generous." Of course, this is the freedom that adults with discretionary incomes have always had.

A book which profoundly influenced Joan and Larry to radically experiment in familial egalitarianism was R. Farson's *Birthrights: A Bill of Rights for Children* (NY: Macmillan, 1974), and they cite Thomas Gordon's *Parent Effectiveness Training* (MY: Wyden, 1970) as the "...most practical guide to non-power parenting" they know of.

**SOCIOMETRY AND COMMUNITY:** Clare Danielsson recently sent us a report entitled "A Sociometric Response to Problems of Human Distortion and Solitude in Intimate Community Living." The report is a product of a month-long experience in creating an 'intimate community' last July. Clare and the core staff introduced sociometric and psychodramatic techniques within a Christian perspective to help people experience their own 'brokenness' and to help them

learn how to integrate others, despite the others' brokenness, into an intimate relationship. Sociometry was used to make explicit the emerging friendship networks, including the identification of 'isolates' and non-reciprocated relationships. Psychodramatic techniques were used to work with the deep-seated feelings brought out both by the sociometric sessions and by the normal course of community living. Finally, the Christian emphasis provided the meaning framework within which the participants could make sense of the movement toward community.

By itself, the report failed to make the intimate-community experience live for me, perhaps because the sociometric and psychodramatic techniques must be experienced rather than read about, but it seemed an excellent introduction for those who would consider trying to use such techniques in their own attempts to find community. It is available for \$2.50 from Clare Danielsson (259 Wolcott Ave., Beacon, NY 12508. She hopes to be having another month-long workshop this July. Write her for more information.

**GEMEINSHAFT/GESELLSHAFT:** Joseph Blasi, a researcher at the Harvard School of Education (Longfellow Hall-Appian Way, Cambridge, MA 02138), has written an excellent analysis of the individualism/communalism polarity as it relates to the building of small communities. Starting from the gemeinschaft/geellschaft framework of Tonnies [*Community and Society*, 1940, NY: American Book Co.], Blasi develops a six dimensional model within which to access the quality of life in community. The six dimensions are: 1) Traditional vs. Mechanical-Modern approaches to social change, 2) Utilitarian vs. Communitarian economic structures, 3) Individualism vs. Fellowship-Oriented social structures, 4) The Intellectual vs. Intuitive orientation in education, 5) Bureaucratic vs. Consensual decision-making, and 6) Identity-Oriented vs. Integrity-Oriented personality structures.

Blasi's method in the paper is to discuss what it would mean for a community to be located at either end of each of the six dimensions. Being at the intellectual end of the education dimension, for example, allows a society to "extend the range of human satisfactions by putting forth innovations in scholarship and activity through the use of reason." On the other hand, Blasi argues, "The intellectual orientation is not responsible for wholeness or for a conception of the unified process of

experience." Cognitive learning triumphs over affective and social learning, producing intellectual giants and emotional cripples.

A community residing at the intuitive end of the educational dimension "... encourages an attitude towards learning and educational structures where knowledge and reason are intimately related to deep community values which members perceive as integral to the quality of their lives." Such an orientation, however, increases the danger of dogmatism and a lack of innovation that must suppress human diversity.

Blasi suggests that on this dimension, as on the other five, there may be a 'middle way', one which combines the attractive aspects of each end of the polarity. The educational system of the Kibbutz, Blasi maintains, comes close to being this middle way. In this paper, and in a forthcoming book on the Israeli Kibbutz, Blasi examines the Israeli experiments for what they can tell us about resolving the polarities. His writing is an outgrowth both of a research project on the Kibbutz Movement and of his own experience of living in several urban communes, a rural commune, a monastic Catholic community, an Italian ghetto and a Kibbutz.

**COMMUNAL DATA - GATHERING:** James Richardson (Dept. of Sociology, University of Nevada, Reno, NV 89507) has written two papers which could prove to be very important for future researchers. The first, "Commune Typologies: A Critique and Extension", is a careful analysis of the most widely quoted classification schemes, those of Ron Roberts, Andrew Rigby, Rosabeth Kanter, Ben Zablocki, and Bennett Berger. Richardson faults the above systems 1) for being primarily applicable "to the appealing but limited case of the so-called counter-culture-oriented communes," 2) for failing to "take seriously communes that are overtly fundamentalist Christian in orientation, 3) for failing to "take into account groupings or federations of communes," 4) for displaying "a general lack of appreciation for the complexity of communal life," and 5) for failing to emphasize change rather than attend to static considerations.

In the second paper ("A Data Frame for Use in Research on Communal Phenomena", 1975, Unpublished) Richardson attempts to correct the above failings by constructing his own rather exhaustive typology. He would like to make his paper available to any researchers who are going to be gathering data about communal organizations, hoping

that the common use by many researchers of one data frame would make future comparative analysis more fruitful. His dream is that eventually some institution would offer to serve as a repository for all such material. (The Paley Library at Temple University, Philadelphia, PA 19111, has already offered to be such a repository. Contact Elliott Shore for information.)

**COMMUNAL NON-VIOLENCE:** George Hillery has completed a study of "Nonviolence and Freedom in Communal and Formal Organizations." Four communes and a Trappist monastery were contrasted with a number of formal organizations having the character of total institutions (prisons and boarding schools.) The major hypothesis, that structural and perceived freedom would be highly correlated with nonviolent behavior, was partially supported. Hillery concludes that "... the nonviolent are the most free. On the one hand, they escape the influence of violence by refusing to act toward violence on its own terms. On the other hand, the freedom of the nonviolent groups is also associated with discipline and commitment." Given the self-selectivity of the sample populations studied, and the indirect relationship of some of the measures of freedom with nonviolence, I would suggest caution in generalizing from this study. It will be published in a forthcoming book on nonviolence. For further information contact George Hillery, Sociology Dept., V.P.I., Blacksburg, VA 24061.

Hillery, by the way, also has an article (with Paula Morrow) coming out in the *International Review of Modern Sociology* (Winter, 1976) entitled "The Monastery as a Commune" which I've yet to see.

**NEW JOURNAL:** Barry Singer (Psychology Department, California State University, Long Beach, CA 90840) is putting together a new journal entitled *Alternatives in Marriage and the Family*. In a "Statement of Editorial Policy and Content" he says, "We are generally interested in self-conscious attempts to create alternative family forms or alternative relational processes. Relevant content areas include but are not limited to: long-range cohabitation, singles institutions, serial monogamy, swinging, open marriage, group marriage, extended family structures, growth communities, alternate family aspects of communal living, and alternate family aspects of groups with variant sexual preferences." Write to Barry for more information. The first issue has yet to appear.

# READ- BACK



The article "Community and the Small Group Problem" by David of Twin Oaks, in #17, set me to thinking about some things that I feel are important to the community movement at this time. Most communities seem to have evolved around the concept of some sort of group homogeneity as a part of their function as extended families. As the community movement continues to grow I question whether this concept can remain viable.

An obvious parallel with the extended-family community is the small primitive society. The Tasaday are a fine example of this: they are democratic, communal, almost totally non-specialized. They have managed to survive this way for quite some time, but it was a bare survival. They began to prosper only with the introduction of steel knives (about 15 years ago). They also appreciated the introduction of modern medicine. Yet those few things that made the difference for them between bare survival and a life that allowed them considerable leisure meant that someone, somewhere, was engaged in fairly specialized manufacture.

As we watch the world's wealth beginning to be re-distributed and the industrial nations slowly being forced into (at best) a steady-state economy, it is obvious that the capitalist system of production will no longer work. With the final collapse of the modern industrial complex many communities may choose to live a pre-industrial agrarian life. Indeed, they may have no choice as machines wear out or are unusable for lack of fuel, as tools break and are irreplaceable. But Skinner's four-hour workday will never be achieved on that level of non-technology. If humanity is to really realize the age-old dream of being set free of soul-crushing, back-breaking drudgery—a dream that is possible right now with the proper use of the tools of modern technology—then that technology must not be allowed to die. And I believe that the only part of our society sufficiently well-organized to keep technology alive is the collectivist community.

If the community movement does

indeed shoulder this burden, there are several factors that must be taken into consideration: (1) Specialization is inevitable, but need not be overwhelming; China has an expanding technology with only 20% of its population involved in non-agrarian production. An efficient steady-state economy might be able to do better, but efficiency will be directly related to the degree of specialization. (2) Manufacturing can be humane and need not summon up visions of Gary, Indiana, or Detroit. (3) The community must not sacrifice its hard-won gains in the areas of personal freedom, liberated interpersonal relations, non-sexist attitudes, etc. (4) A great number of people have reached the point of being willing to sacrifice some apparent freedoms—the kind that lead to "conspicuous consumption individuality"—for security of survival, freedom from financial obligations and greater leisure, and that to achieve these things will be willing to accept a certain degree of social planning.

I think that in the process of considering such matters it is important to distinguish between labor specialization and social sub-grouping. Specialization can be most profitably approached as a manifestation of the uniqueness of individuals and their talents, and this allows us to enlarge our vision of the possibilities for community. I would agree that we should try to inhibit the social (interpersonal) status acquired from specialization prevalent in contemporary society, while learning to appreciate its social (collective) utility. Some such balance might be achieved by giving lower labor credits for specialized work, so that someone desiring such work receives mild negative reinforcement for it, just enough to offset any prestige while not discouraging that number of specialists that the community can use. A similar system could be used for non-specialists who do not rotate labor assignments.

I would argue also that a certain degree of social sub-grouping reflects the uniqueness of individuals. When that sub-grouping seems to be negative I would look first to the values adopted by the larger community. It seems to me that very frequently a community, or a large number of its members, place value upon some quality or activity that is demonstrably possible for only a few members. I perceive this as a behavioral pattern we have learned in a society obsessed with hero-worship. It is bound to produce hostility in a theoretically egalitarian society. Alter those values and the significance of the sub-group will disappear.

I suspect also that part of the reaction to the formation of sub-groups may be from an unwillingness to accept that our communities are themselves nothing but highly articulate sub-groups formed in protest to the de-humanizing society around us, but still very dependent on that society. I think we must decide if we are willing to remain alienated sub-groups and can be satisfied with the hope that a few communities may survive as the world crumbles around us. The alternative is to decide that we are not only willing, for example, to invest the enormous energy required to publish a magazine but to build the presses that print it.

I think that communities have some hard thinking to do, some difficult decisions to make. The answers aren't in, because we have just begun to ask questions. It is my hope, though, that through the exchange of theories and philosophies, as well as practical experiences, that some important steps can be made in considering the problems and structures of a communitarian society.

In Peace  
El-Uriel  
31535 NE 151  
Duvall, Wash. 98019

# bookshelf

**Working Communally: Patterns and Possibilities.** by David French and Elena French. Hdbk., 269 pp. \$10.50.

Communal workplaces, in the Frenches' vision, are industrial and agrarian enterprises run on a human scale by people who live and work together cooperatively. The Frenches make plausible the argument that such organizations can be the basis of a decentralized society. They describe three contemporary communities which they see as partial successes in carrying out this vision.

This is an important book, the first to pull together in a coherent way the rational arguments for a communal society.

**Communes: Creating and Managing the Collective Life.** by Rosabeth Moss Kanter (ed.). Pbk., 544 pp. \$6.50.

The Social Science Editor of **Communities** magazine wrote, "This is the best single introduction to the issues involved in living communally that I've seen. Rosabeth's book is valuable because it articulates many of the problems of living in community, provides a framework for understanding those problems, and gives examples of how other communities have dealt with them."

**Beyond Marriage and the Nuclear Family.** by Robert Thamm. Pbk., 231 pp. \$3.95.

Thamm takes a social-psychological perspective in looking at problems in contemporary society and sees at their root an inability in most of us to deal with dependency, jealousies and self-involvement. He builds a strong case for the commune as the environment which will facilitate our transcending those interpersonal difficulties. Within such an environment, he argues, we can learn to develop strong ties of intimacy with a number of others, allowing us to be free of excessive dependency on any one person.

**Families of Eden: Communes and the New Anarchism.** by Judson Jerome. Hdbk., 171 pp. \$7.95.

Pat Conover, a sociologist and member of Shalom Community, says in his communal bibliography, this is the most valuable book on the contemporary commune movement. It is wide ranging both in scope of direct research and in issues addressed."

The Social Science Editor of **Communities** magazine praises Jud's "...exceptional ability to capture the texture and meaning of communal life in well-chosen observations of actual communal events."

**Neighborhood Power: The New Localism.** by David Morris and Karl Hess Pbk. \$3.45.

Morris and Hess have provided the beginnings of a handbook, one detailing the methods which intentional communities and other cooperative groups can use to expand the boundaries of their sharing to include more than their own memberships. Drawing upon their experiences in the Adams-Morgan neighborhood of Washington, D.C., the authors explain how, through demonstration experiments cooperative groups can persuade their neighbors to regain economic and political control of their own lives.

## COMMUNITIES

## BOOKSHELF ORDER FORM

Your name and address:

---

---

Titles of the books you want:

---

---

---

Please add a 10% postage and handling fee for orders less than \$10.00.

Total: \$

Order from:

Bookshelf,

Rt 4, Box 17

Louisa,

VA 23093



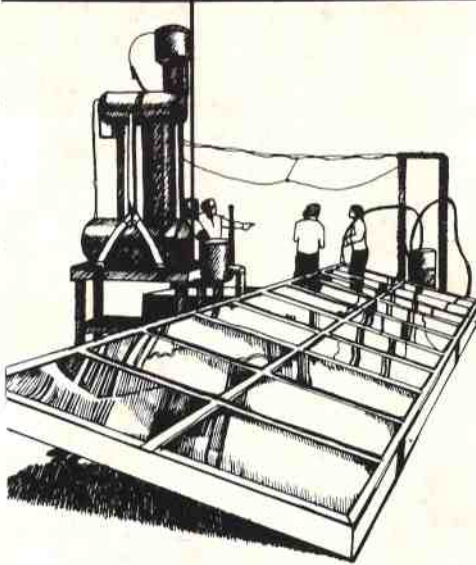
# ABOUT OURSELVES:

Our vision of the job of editing this magazine is to function as a clearinghouse: to collect material, select what's most relevant for the folks who read **Communities**, and take charge of the production and distribution tasks. This means we don't want to be writing all the articles, taking all the photos, and preparing all the graphics for each issue. We hope this material will come from the people who see this publication as a tool or resource which is available to them, especially those living cooperatively. The following are suggestions for readers who have material to contribute:

**NEWS FROM READERS:** Three sections of each issue are set aside for short letters from our readers: Readback, Reach, and Grapevine. **READBACK** is "letters to the editors"—write and tell us your reactions to the magazine any time! **REACH** is our contact section—you can let others know you are organizing a new community, looking for a place to live, planning a conference, or offering a service. **GRAPEVINE** consists of letters or newsletter excerpts from existing communities—we like getting your up-to-date news, musings, analyses, and chatty letters.

**GRAPHICS:** We like to publish a magazine which is attractive as well as informative. We always need photographs (black & white prints), drawings, and cartoons.

**RATES & DATES:** The magazine's finances continue to hover near the break-even point, so the only pay we offer contributors is a free subscription. Occasional paid ads are accepted, but announcements in Reach are printed without charge. Due to editing, printing, and mailing schedules, there is usually a five-to-eight-week lag between our submission deadline and the distribution date, so send us your material as early as possible. Thanks for your help—we're counting on you to make this a better journal.



# FUTURE FEATURES IN COOPERATIVE LIVING

**OUR NEXT ISSUE** will be an experimental departure from the theme format. We will be initiating a **Feature** community section, which will be a detailed look at the people and institutions within an established group. A series (possibly evolving into a permanent column) on **Cooperative Alternatives** will start with issue 21. It will focus on intentional groups other than communes; food cooperatives, worker collectives, community organizing efforts, and other forms of community. Other articles in 21

—First of a series by Kat Kincaid on the Kibbutzim

—Social planning in community, by David ruth

—One or two articles on Local Relations; how communities interact with the surrounding city or county.

**ARTICLES** run usually between 1000 and 5000 words. We are particularly interested in material on: **Children:** **Local Relations:** **Membership** (the process of gaining and losing members): **Cooperative Alternatives.** Please send articles to **Communities/East, Box 426, Louisa, VA 23093.** Deadlines for Issues 22 and 23 are July 1, and September 1.

**DEPARTMENTS:** We have regular columns dealing with health, farm & garden, social science, helpful hints, book reviews, resources, and international news. These columns will continue only so long as we get good material for them. If you are knowledgeable in any of these areas let us know your specific interests and we'll help you plan an article.

## COMMUNITIES a journal of cooperative living

- I am sending  \$ for a sample copy  
 \$6 for one-year sub. (6 issues)  
 \$11 for a two-year subscription

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Communities/East  
 c/o Twin Oaks  
 Box 426  
 Louisa, Virginia 23093

### subscriptions

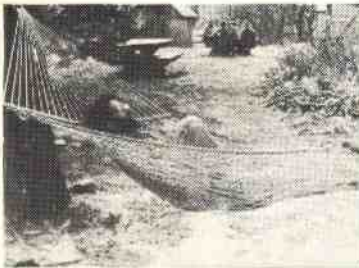


# back issues

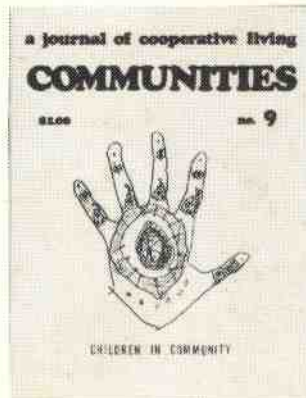
TEN ISSUES — \$12

\$1.00 no. 8  
a journal of cooperative living  
**COMMUNITIES**

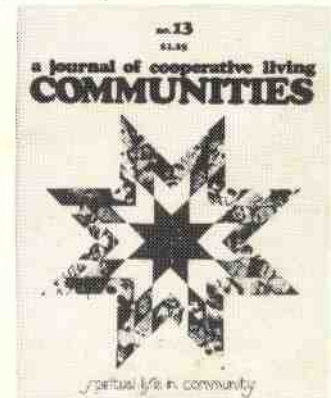
individuality & intimacy  
privacy  
open relationships  
couples  
single  
community market



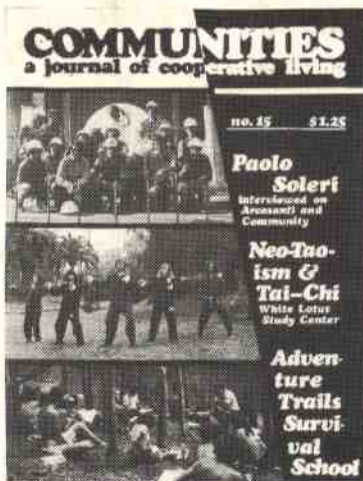
#8 Individuality & Intimacy



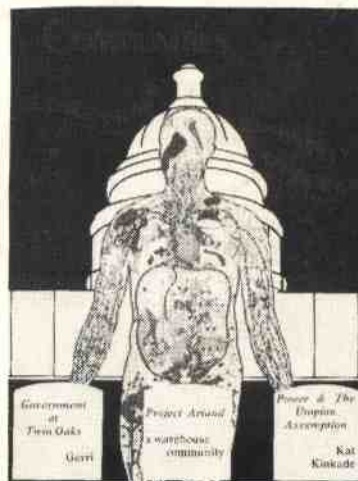
#9 Children in Community



#13 Spirituality in Community



#15 Education



#18 Government



#19 Urban Communities

To subscribe and/or order back issues, send check or money order to:

**COMMUNITIE**

BOX 426  
LOUISA, VIRGINIA 23093

Jan Moore  
2118 E. Linwood  
Milwaukee, WI

53211