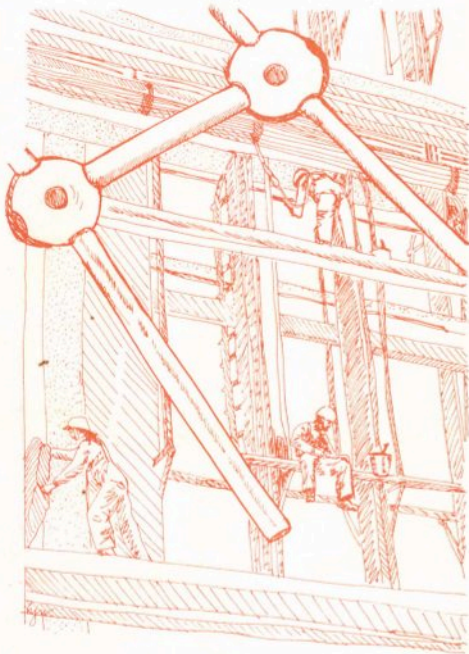


# COMMUNITIES journal of cooperative living

# 26

\$1.25



**Social energy shares  
with money and  
pleasure a peculiar  
property:**

**it is increased  
by transmission.**

*Phillip Slater*



**We chose to stand our ground. Because we know we've got to fight from here - we just can't permit (ourselves) to be shoved around from one community and one borough into another, one state into another...People in America move from one state to another as fast as you can deposit dimes inside a phone booth. But it's time to make a decision if we're going to let communities fall apart. That people are going to remain and care enough to continue to save their roots..their culture.. and the places where they live.**

*Robert Nazario*

## Introducing this issue

The best part of doing this issue, aside from working with Susan and Chip around the clock at the Press, typesetting and doing layout, was traveling to Austin, Texas (and working around the clock with Wayne and Gary, John, Bill & Sue pulling articles together). Oh, I had a chance to see the sights, attend a conference, dance some, play some. *Yes.*

Sitting around the loading dock at Woody Hills Food Coop with Sue White, a member of the collective, and Gary Newton, recently of Wheatsville Food Coop. Other workers and friends drop by from the juice bar next door. A sunny, Wednesday morning in Austin, Texas, taking some time off for collective introspection.

SUE - We came in with the attitude that we could just be a collective. Everybody would be equal. We would all do everything. About twelve people, and everybody was working fifteen hours a day. Finally it went down to six, then to four and then down to three.

GARY - Hours or people?

SUE - Huh?

GARY - People?

SUE - People? Oh yes, people. But we've had some really bad chemistry.

GARY - We've gone thru some of the same things. You look at some of the personnel...certain people didn't fit working together, and certain people didn't fit into the working situation. And just the evolution of working that out. At that, it was the most together collective I've ever been in.

SUE - The real important thing is trusting each other's competence. Some people aren't really competent to do certain things. I can think of people I've worked with, and the reason it didn't work out is certain people weren't competent to do that kind of work, and that was why they had so many personal conflicts.

GARY - That bothers me less, because the skills issue is very clear - versus the chemistry. That's so nebulous...it's not scientific...it's not up front. It's how you feel about a person. It's subconscious.



PAUL - You know, it's funny. When we get down to *serious* business... Like, ah, who we get it on with... In relationships we don't question that - *of course* we're going to want to spend time with people we like, or are drawn to. But somehow, because it's a working situation or a living situation, and somehow involves our politics...then we don't feel right about factoring in our intuitive responses.

GARY - *Everyone is intrinsically good, and everyone intrinsically can work together.* But that ignores that people are different. I think our fellow workers need to be friends.

PAUL - There's another whole area with fellow workers beyond skill or whether people are trying hard. And that's trusting good will and vision. That's the one I find myself coming back to most in my own community, in relation to people I don't really get along with. I sort of pull back and say, *Wait a minute, look at the time they put in. Look at the causes they struggle for beyond their own personal needs. Okay, so to this extent I think they're on an ego trip, to this extent I think they're a pisser to get along with.* Nevertheless, there's some level of respect.

GARY - That's one thing I think we're starting to learn about in the criticism/self-criticism in the collectives. It's hard to struggle out the negative stuff, but sometimes it's even harder to struggle and get out the positive criticisms and the reinforcements. I think we're only beginning to learn how to balance it.

SUE - Were you doing that much at Wheatsville? Formally?

GARY - The Thursday planning sessions were meant for that. First thing on our agenda was to go thru and work on that...

SUE - What sort of things did you talk about?

GARY - How people were relating to each other. How we were feeling about each other. Just learning how to do that is real hard. Like I was criticized by a lot of people for giving negative criticism in a poor method. And I was critical of other people for not getting out feelings they

(Continued on page 41)

# Journal of Cooperative Living

MAY JUNE, 1977

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### How This Publication Works

CPC, Communities Publication Cooperative, is the editorial & publishing board for **Communities Magazine**. It represents those individuals and communities who have expressed and demonstrated a continuing commitment to the magazine. Access is through participation.

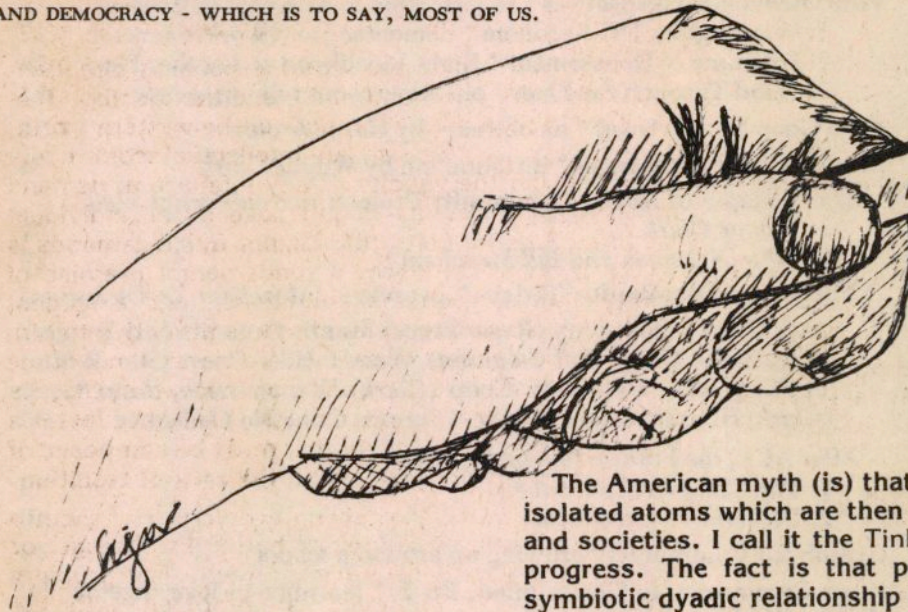
Editorial direction of each issue is decentralized, with coordination through CPC. Certain functions are centralized - circulation at **Twin Oaks**; production, layout and printing in **New Haven** (moving here from Oregon). In order to formalize **Communities'** relation to a new location in which it is being produced, CPC has become a division of the **Unschool Educational Services Corporation**, a non-profit, tax-exempt corporation which has been the developer of an alternative high school and a regional newsletter, and the formal sponsor of Training for Urban Alternatives, an NIMH-funded grant, supportive of cooperative projects in the New Haven area. This involvement with a local community institution will be mutually useful. (*Among other things, it now means gifts or grants to the magazine are tax deductible*).

In the slightly longer range, CPC expects to develop an affiliation with the **Institute for Cooperative Communities**. ICC, in the breadth of its board and goals, seems best suited to support the magazine in its service of the development of the ideas and reality of community.

All these arrangements retain for CPC the right of management and policy, but recognize our relation to communities in which we are based, and a movement of which we are a part.

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KRESGE COLLEGE WAS SET UP IN THE EARLY 70'S AS AN EXPERIMENTAL EDUCATIONAL COMMUNITY TO JOIN THE FIVE MORE TRADITIONAL COLLEGES WHICH COMPOSED THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA AT SANTA CRUZ. SOME ASPECTS OF THE KRESGE PROGRAM WERE FUNDED BY THE FORD FOUNDATION, AND PHILLIP SLATER WAS COMMISSIONED BY THE COLLEGE TO EVALUATE ITS EFFECTIVENESS. EXERPTS ARE PRESENTED (WITH APPRECIATION TO THE KRESGE COMMUNITY FOR GRANTING PERMISSION) IN THE SPIRIT THAT SLATER'S PERCEPTIONS ARE PROVOCATIVE AND EASILY GENERALIZABLE TO ANY COMMUNITY WHERE INTENTIONALITY IS THE IDEAL AND TRANSCIENCE THE STRUGGLE; WHERE THERE ARE PROBLEMS OF SCALE; WHERE THERE IS TENSION BETWEEN EFFICIENCY AND DEMOCRACY - WHICH IS TO SAY, MOST OF US.



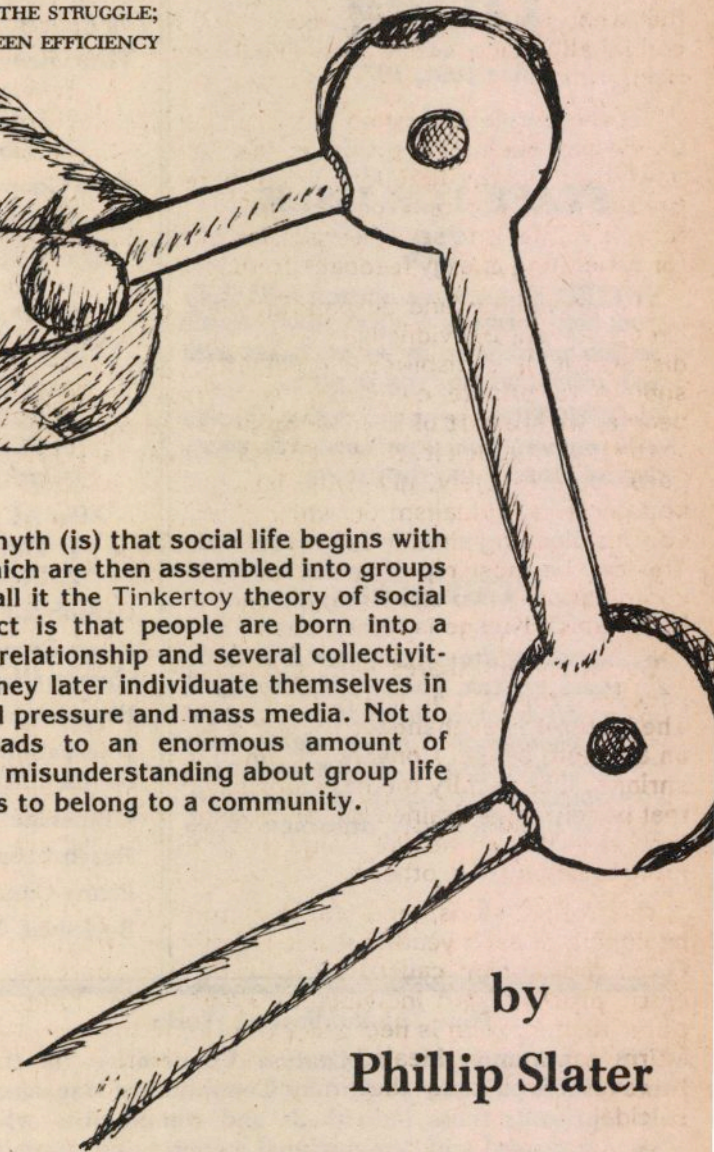
The American myth (is) that social life begins with isolated atoms which are then assembled into groups and societies. I call it the Tinkertoy theory of social progress. The fact is that people are born into a symbiotic dyadic relationship and several collectivities, from which they later individuate themselves in response to social pressure and mass media. Not to recognize this leads to an enormous amount of mystification and misunderstanding about group life and what it means to belong to a community.

## BEYOND TINKERTOYS

exerpts from an evaluation

Evaluation of the success or failure of any Kresge program is always befogged by the high expectations of its founders. I regularly go through three reaction phases when I approach some new facet of Kresge: **first**, I feel excited and admiring of the creativity, the sense of community, the emotional caring, the intellectual ferment, the social wisdom, the commitment, the mutual respect; **second**, I feel despondent upon hearing of the disappointments, the hurts, the failed dreams, the disasters, the defections, the loss of energy; and **finally**, I feel astonished when I discover that this sense of failure and alienation masks an assumed success that is largely taken for granted and ignored.

The fact that so many people, both faculty and students, care so much about a college community, is in itself rather startling. In my experience, most



by  
**Phillip Slater**

college communities are treated with about the same concern as is a public conveyance: criticized if it functions poorly, ignored if it functions well, and in any case, viewed as someone else's responsibility.

### energy

Core people talking about Kresge often evoke the image of veteran donors at a blood bank. So much has been given, and yet the need seems unlimited. There is a human energy crisis at Kresge -- a feeling that people will burn themselves out if they don't pull back, yet a strong conviction that still heavier energy inputs are needed if Kresge is to achieve its goals.

These perceptions are pessimistic but rest on a solid core of reality. To start anything new requires heavy

energy inputs. To do it in a **new way** demands twice as much. To do this while embedded in a larger institution with traditional mores requires not only superhuman energy but also an unerring sense of balance.

But the worst energy drain of all is the constant expansion and turnover of faculty and students, so that whatever is built up in the way of community is continually being swept away, like sand castles in a rising tide.

Yet the problem is by no means hopeless. Much of the despair seems to rest on an inadequate theory of how social energy functions in an innovative setting. Energy must not only be invested, it must also be recycled. That is to say, mechanisms must be invented for generating energy feedback to those who invest it.

The prevailing (and despairing) view of energy at Kresge is an individualistic one: I have energy, I disburse it, it is disbursed, gone. But **energy is not subject to private ownership -- it flows between people, we are part of it. If we do not blind ourselves to the flow or block it, then it comes back as fast as it goes.** Unfortunately, given the basic assumptions of bourgeois individualism on which Kresge was founded, this blocking already exists and must be released. This can be most rapidly achieved by delegation and coordination -- two elementary organizational principles in which Kresge is rather weak.

**Social energy shares with money and pleasure a peculiar property: it is increased by transmission. The faster it is exchanged, the more there is of it, in an absolute sense. Conversely, when it is hoarded it shrinks.** One faculty member, for example, reported that he felt more drained of energy this year than last year even though he was doing less, because he felt more isolated from other Kresge faculty.

The orientations and faculty retreats at the beginning of each year have been vitally important... **Given the erosion caused by daily friction, bureaucratic process, and individuated goals, some emotional revitalization is necessary from time to time to affirm community ideals.** Omission of these inputs, however demanding they may seem, is ultimately suicidal.

The time when such inputs are most needed is when people feel most drained, most alienated from each other, and hence most unwilling to engage in any such process. Energy for integration and revival is demanded precisely when everyone feels they have none. This is a typical instance of the self-defeating character of individualistic thinking: one imagines oneself expending energy that doesn't exist. But people go on a retreat to **get** energy -- because the experience is energizing. People in warm uncluttered proximity usually experience a net energy **increase**. It is only when the flow is blocked -- either going out or coming in -- that an individual experiences a net loss of energy.

#### some root problems

Kresge is plagued by three root conflicts -- conflicts that are familiar to all and yet often unrecognized as

**internal ambivalence.** Core people naturally tend to behave inconsistently around these root conflicts -- a source of anger, suspicion, and hurt feelings. The conflicts are often personalized, but many of them spring from flaws built into the Kresge structure at the outset. This is not to say that the conflicts could have been avoided; in some form or another they are inevitable. But they have been aggravated by the form in which they were created.

#### individualism vs. community

Kresge came into the world espousing simultaneously the virtue of community and the ideology that has eroded community throughout the western world. It isn't easy to establish an intellectual community while denying the validity of any intellectual demand which that community might make on an individual member. **A community that cannot make demands is inert, lifeless.** Yet it was a fundamental premise of Kresge that a teacher should teach, and a student should be exposed to, only what was attractive to him or her at the moment of contact -- a classic tenet of the academic elite. **It is a paradox of innovation that its depth is an inverse function of its speed: the faster a new form is created, the more it must be composed of old patterns hastily grabbed off the rack of tradition.**

It is not so much that giving everyone a chance to do their own thing was in itself harmful to Kresge, or that choices should have been forced. The problem arises when this approach is combined with the principle of irrelevance. This principle asserts that what I do has no relation to what you do and therefore does not need to be negotiated. (It is a cultural error based on the experience of emigrants who were always able to drift somewhere else when they couldn't relate to their immediate social environment.) **Letting people do what they want evokes high energy output to the extent that their wishes can be correlated, but when everyone goes in different directions it is just dissipating away energy.**

Individualism is nonconfronting as well as entropic, and hence incompatible with the idea of straight talk. It evades conflict, difficult choices.

Individualism teaches only one mechanism for coping with conflict: leaving the field. When things go wrong and people get hurt, we tend to pull energy back from the collective setting and seek security in isolation. Sucking on ourselves, we wonder why we feel drained.

**The myth that people are not interdependent permeates our culture, and the university is afflicted with it in a particularly virulent form. The conflict over it will not vanish, but it would certainly help matters if it could be recognized that individualistic values are antithetical to, not a subcategory of the Kresge dream.**

#### equalitarianism vs. personalism

Personalism is an awkward term I have chosen to express the idea that relationships should be personal and informal rather than bureaucratic, that people should act out of some meaningful connection with the personalities of those with whom they interact, rather

than treating them merely as members of a category.

In a small face-to-face group there is no conflict between equalitarianism and personalism. But with every increase in size the contradiction grows deeper. More and more impersonal mechanisms are required to safeguard equalitarianism -- mechanisms that increasingly violate the spirit of personalism. This is why the newer radical movements attach so much importance to working in small collectivities. The fact that Kresge is not and cannot be small is a social reality with implications that have not been faced and dealt with.

If you take the view that Kresge is just one big family, that its issues are simply ones of personalities and personal relationships, that structural factors are unimportant and that it violates the norm of **straight talk** to mention them, that behavior is not affected by the positions people hold, and so on, then every structural conflict becomes a matter of personal betrayal. The hurts and wounded egos that result are thus magnified, confirming the psychologistic theory that created them.

Kresge is not a small group of peers or a family. It is a large institution with a complex structure and must be recognized as such. I have, at times, been startled by the political naivete of core people, who get hurt, angry and scornful when their one-big-family approach is seen as authoritarian or paternalistic. Kresge is authoritarian and paternalistic in many ways. Its commitment to informality and personalism has sometimes caused the omission of those impersonal mechanisms that protect the less powerful under conditions of explicit structural antagonism.

Whatever the level (of power) desired it should be firm and constitutional, rather than something that rests on the whim and goodwill of core people. To a great extent this is the case at Kresge: many powers and responsibilities are firmly in the hands of the students, and this degree of equality is utterly taken for granted by core people.

It is clear from student comments that they are never entirely clear when the equality model is operative and when it is not, and this is not too surprising. Faculty members in kingroups, for example (small, mixed support groups which carry on through the year) are told that they (a) should behave as equals in relation to students and (b) are necessary for the kingroup to survive. But if they are vital in a way that students are not, then they are not equal, no matter how they behave. Their equality is limited by the special responsibilities they bear and this should be made explicit. There is nothing wrong with behaving

Kresge students are able to...transcend the frames that strangle most academic thinking. As one faculty member observed, **Kresge students have a perspective that usually only teachers have, an overview.** I would go further: very few teachers have it either.

as peers, but there needs to be greater clarity about the structural limitations on the **meaning** of this behavior -- limitations created by the role of responsible leader.

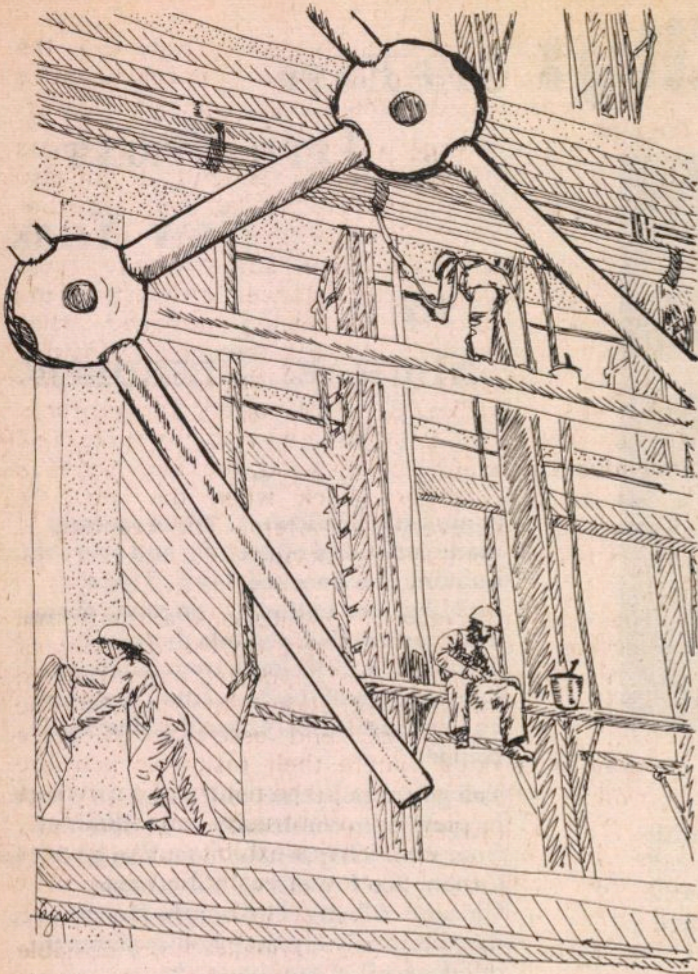
Suffering at Kresge around the equality dilemma comes not only from failing to recognize it but also from reactive defensiveness to the flak that nonrecognition caused. As core people have been attacked for their inconsistencies they have sometimes retreated further into an oligarchic stance. Mistrusting the community and tired of being attacked, they sometimes work quietly behind the scenes, making use of the ambiguity provided by the equalitarianism-personalism conflict to get important things done. Usually this backfires in the long run, for even if an individual can hide his or her hand, the core people as a whole come under attack when the move is discovered; and everyone suffers. The reaction is understandable but self-defeating.

The difference between constitutional and **informal** power has a very visible effect on the behavior of students. Wherever they feel supported and protected by explicit community sanctions, they tend to be active, vocal, articulate, and assertive. In more ambiguous settings, where their task role is more informally assigned -- more in the nature of a **privilege** -- they tend to play an unobtrusive and distinctly subordinate role. Their behavior exhibits an awareness that what was merely given can easily be taken away again.

Complete consistency about equality is not possible at Kresge, but it is possible to clarify power relationships much more than they are now. **Straight talk** has never been extended to issues of ideology, for the simple reason that ideological talk is not and cannot be straight. Yet **straight talk** has itself been made into an ideology, which naturally causes suspicion. For the ideology of personalism and straight talk provides no protection whatever against oligarchic behavior -- on the contrary, it facilitates it. **If we are all close and understand one another, what need is there for mechanical contrivances and rules that protect you against me? And if I want to get something done in a hurry why shouldn't I consult those closest to me?** Behavior perfectly appropriate to a small, close and loving community evokes words like **nepotism** and **junta** when carried on in a larger system.

It is important, then, to recognize that a loving personal community of more than 600 transients, set down in the middle of a not particularly friendly bureaucratic institution can never be very far from dissolving into a powerful clique of intimates and a mass of powerless and alienated students.

The fact that students are transient, that the university exerts bureaucratic pressures, that there is a real power hierarchy -- these are bound to outweigh egalitarian sentiments from time to time. When there is a responsibility crunch, when a decision of profound importance to the future of the college arises, there is a tendency for equality to go out the window -- to be treated as a peacetime luxury.



The real power differential between faculty and students should be faced up to and expressed openly, rather than masked in the shell game of now-it's-democracy-now-it's-personalism. True equalitarianism and straight talk require being willing to admit when and where power has been retained and hoarded.

Some of the ambiguity about equality springs from the fact that students are in part co-members of the Kresge community and in part a client population. Now those who serve any client population even when they are social peers usually need time to distance themselves from that population from time to time to renew their spirits, protect their identity, and drain off accumulated irritations and destructive impulses blocked by the service orientation.

In the long run it would be better, I think, even for the core people themselves, to relinquish this ambiguity and the dubious power it confers. Procedures need to be more, rather than less explicit if Kresge's goals are to be achieved under present conditions of size, etc.

Power and responsibility need to be even further democratized, and where they are held close, or equality limited, this needs to be clearly stated. Otherwise the present policy of punishing energy output will continue, and the Kresge vehicle will certainly grind to a permanent halt. For the more

power is concentrated, in a dynamic system like Kresge, the more both the few who have it and the many who don't will get trashed for investing energy. This happens simply because each group defines an energy investment by the other as a power grab. Each then guilts the other and energy begins to drain away.

Note the destructive power of guilt over energy: what is felt as a **giving** by one side is experienced as a **taking** by the other -- a perfect no-win situation. Both are right, of course, for where energy is concerned, giving is taking. It is **circulating**. Suspicion and guilt stop circulation and drain energy. Straight talk and democratization increase it. They are good principles, even when in conflict, and simply need to be applied somewhat more fully than they have.

### purity vs. diversity

The Kresge community has had great difficulty since the college opened in deciding where and how to draw its boundaries. The issue of inclusion and exclusion, of what membership means, of how monolithic or diverse the community should be, have plagued the college from the beginning. This is characteristic of new collectives, especially when they seek to be innovative and cohesive and fear absorption or annihilation from the surrounding society.

The central issue in the purity-diversity conflict is where one draws the line, inside one's head, around the Kresge community. If it is drawn too narrowly it will become too vulnerable and will suffocate. If it is drawn too largely, it will dilute and evaporate.

Every social organism requires both a singleminded thrust and a degree of diversification. Those needs are always in tension and produce a certain amount of strife. In fact, the more vital the system the more troublesome the conflict will be. There is energy that comes from a monolithic thrust and there is energy that comes from complexity and diversity. Each alone tends to dissipate, however -- it is the combination that is particularly powerful. Each energy source keeps the other alive and in motion.

### ritual and celebration

Many people at Kresge have mentioned the inspirational and energizing effect of seeing the whole community together in one place, and complain that this now happens so rarely. Someone said to me that Kresge needs more celebrations and fewer agonizing reappraisals. I certainly feel that no agonizing reappraisal should ever take place without a celebration to go with it.

This is not a light matter. Kresge often seems lost amid aspirations and disappointments. Every community needs rituals of self-appreciation at regular intervals, and this seems to happen rarely if ever at Kresge. Some energy needs to be invested regularly in **designing a ritual that celebrates all that Kresge is and has created: recognizes its trials, amuses itself over its blunders, enjoys its existence.** Such a ritual celebration is also a way of passing on history. It increases circulation in the community bloodstream. □

# Rebuilding the City: 519 EAST

11TH STREET,  
NEW YORK

BY  
MICHAEL FREEDBERG



## BACKGROUND

New York City is barely emerging from a fiscal and urban crisis which has provoked profound questions about its future. The old questions - *Is it manageable?* *Can it be governed?* - have been replaced by, *Can it survive?* And if so, what role will the people themselves play?

The city has come through a time when it was believed that the solution lay in the hands of the government: decentralized bureaucracies, improved welfare systems, better services. Now there is a growing belief that it is the neighborhood groups - the people who have been the backbone of the city's development - who probably hold the key to the future.

No where has the failure of government been clearer than in its efforts to preserve the city's housing stock. The massive abandonment (to the extent of 30,000 apartment units a year) in the inner cities - in neighborhoods like the South Bronx, East Harlem and Ocean-Hill Brownsville, has left huge areas of the city devastated: urban wastelands of smouldering buildings, empty lots and deserted streets. Along with the loss of housing has come a decline in the city's economy - a loss of almost 600,000 jobs in the last five years, a deteriorating tax base and huge increases in welfare recipients.

All of these realities caught up with city government during 1975's fiscal crisis, when it was forced to cut back on vital services in housing, day care, fire and police services, care for the elderly, hospitals, education, etc., in order to steer the city clear of bankruptcy. Proposals were made to *write off* the poorer neighborhoods and instead deliver services only to those communities which were still *viable* - program called *planned shrinkage* by its most ardent proponent, the city's housing administrator. Other proposals were for the development of huge industrial parks in razed areas of the inner cities, with tax incentives for new businesses and industries. None of these suggestions took into account that living in these neighborhoods were people...people who, while living in substandard conditions, had no where else to go; people who were committed to the preservation of their neighborhoods; and people who were practiced in the art of survival.

Some schmuck down at urban renewal made some kind of decision and every third building was knocked down. Those buildings had nothing wrong with them. They just needed a couple thousand dollars. The city's lost a tremendous tax base because of the demolition program, and because this city would rather move people.

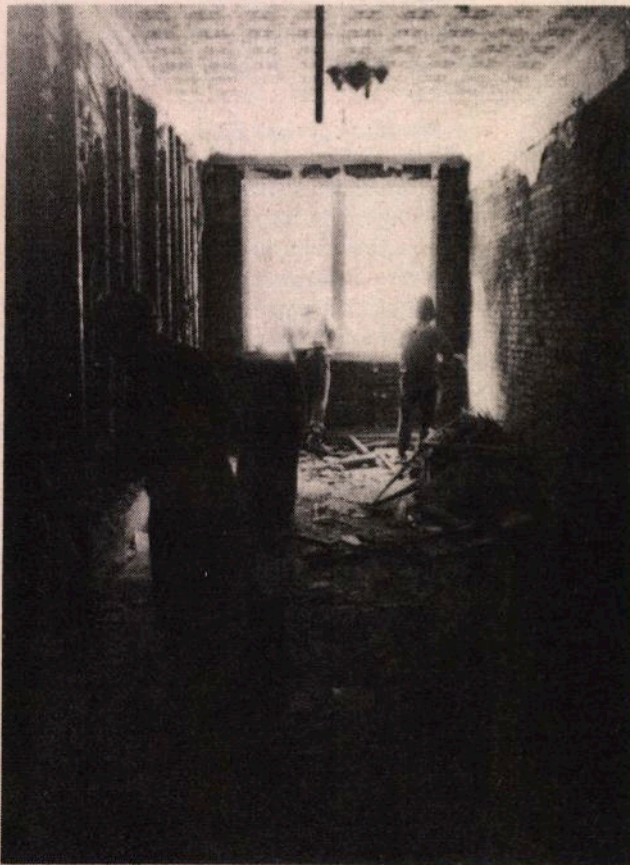
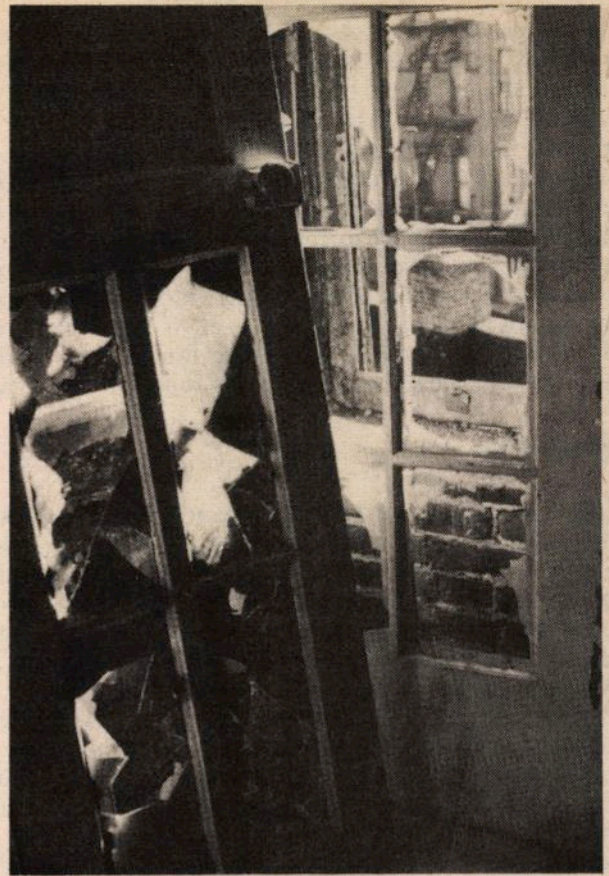
You go around this country and see what's happening to community -- no different from what's happening here. You go out to Boston, San Francisco, Milwaukee, Chicago, Albany, Pittsburgh, Harrisburg, they literally lay their bodies across the bulldozers that are coming in...

WITH ASIDES BY  
*Michael Freedberg*  
[italics]  
AND Robert Nazario  
(bold)

*If the land is owned by someone else...you've been ripped off for most of your life, paying high rents for almost no facilities, if you've gone through winters with no hot water, no heat, with rats and plaster falling, then obviously you're not going to have a very positive attitude towards your environment.*

4½ years ago I came in and I just couldn't believe the conditions people were living in. The hallway walls had leprosy - just chunks were missing, busted waterpipes everywhere, lead paint still on old walls, broken windows, and the hallways and balconies just filled with all kinds of coke bottles, and little caps, and cookies and busted up hypodermic needles and bags of junk. It's incredible, you know.





One of these neighborhoods was the Lower East Side of Manhattan - a community which has had a rich history of successive waves of immigrants since the turn of the century, and now mostly Puerto Rican and Black. One block - 11th Street between Avenues A and B - in the heart of the *slum* organized itself on a grassroots level to turn around the seemingly endless process of abandonment, fires, demolition and decay. With courage, commitment, motivation and plain hard work, a neighborhood once filled with despair is showing signs of hope. A wide range of diverse resources, both government and private, were mobilized by this community to achieve its goals: just one example of similar groups working in most of the city's low-income neighborhoods which have loosely joined together to form a powerful voice for the solutions to their neighborhoods', and therefore the city's, problems.

## FOREGROUND

East 11th Street was a typically abandoned city block until a group of block residents initiated negotiations with the city's Housing and Development Administration for a loan to begin rebuilding one of the burnt-out buildings, 519 East 11th Street. The negotiations lasted over one year, based as they were on the need to convince a skeptical bureaucracy that the idea of untrained, unemployed, local residents renovating a building of this size was not ridiculous. 519 was owned by one of the large slumlords on the Lower East Side and was the first of his buildings to be burnt: 13 fires had broken out in a matter of three weeks when the tenants had begun organizing against him. The building had been taken over by the city due to tax arrears, and was scheduled for demolition, as were 10 more buildings on the block. Faced with the virtual destruction of their neighborhood, the residents eventually received a loan of \$177,000 from the city of New York to purchase and renovate the building. Instead of putting up the normal cash equity required to borrow money on this scale, the tenants suggested that instead they put in *Sweat Equity*, which would allow them to achieve ownership of the property without capital of their own. In October 1974 construction began, and after 18 months of work, the building was ready for occupancy. All the work, including the *mechanical* trades - the electrical, plumbing and heating systems - was done by the tenants themselves with professional supervision. Over 300 burnt beams were replaced, and a building given up for lost was transformed into a non-profit, cooperatively owned building housing 11 low-income tenants in two- and three-bedroom apartments which had replaced the old, overcrowded railroad flats. The tenants paid themselves \$3.00 an hour out of the loan for 32 hours of work a week, and the remaining eight hours became their *Sweat* equity in the cooperative.

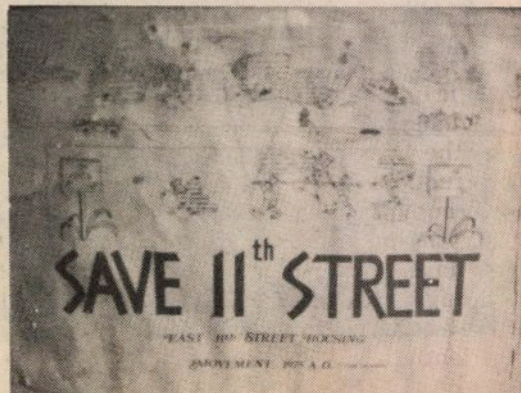
With the addition of CETA job training funds, 519 remains much the prototype for other *Sweat Equity* projects in the city. Twenty buildings with 500 apartments (total value over \$8 million) are currently under renovation in nine neighborhoods including three projects on 11th Street. The first solar and wind energy installations in the city were installed on 519, and have sparked similar projects in the other tenant-owned cooperatives. The combination of *Sweat Equity* and energy conservation have produced, for the first time, a viable solution for producing low-income housing. Rents in *Sweat Equity* projects are approximately \$35 - \$40/room, about half of what they would be under any conventional rehabilitation. By eliminating the profit motive, and by doing the work themselves, the tenants are able to create living spaces which they can afford; and even more remarkably, living spaces which they own. On 11th Street a block organization, El Movimiento de la Calle Once (the 11th Street Movement) grew out of the project at 519 to coordinate the resources which were available to the block, and to undertake a comprehensive community development effort. A wide range of programs in the areas

## ...it's been a tremendous war here on the Lower East Side.

*I remember when we were trying to finalize the loan on 519 way back in '74, after a year and a half of these unbelievable negotiations, we finally started work in anticipation of the city making its final agreement a week or two later. And when the city's loan committee met to make that approval, they turned us down. They suggested they had to re-review the entire matter because there was now a new city administration.*

*We had an amazing meeting one fall day to discuss that, and I went to the tenants and I said, LISTEN, I IN GOOD FAITH CAN'T EXPECT ANYONE HERE TO CONTINUE WORK, BECAUSE OBVIOUSLY THE CITY IS NOT SINCERE IN ITS COMMITMENTS, AND I DO NOT WANT TO BE IN THE POSITION OF ANSWERING FOR THE CITY. And the response of the people was, even though they'd only been working here for a couple of weeks, LISTEN, WE DECIDED TO TAKE OVER THIS BUILDING. WE'VE ALREADY STARTED. WE, AS PUERTO RICANS, HAVE BEEN MOVED FROM ONE NEIGHBORHOOD TO THE NEXT, AND WERE NOT GOING TO BE MOVED OUT OF THIS ONE. WERE GOING TO STAY AND FIGHT.*

*On the basis of that kind of attitude we pulled a political and media and community pressure campaign against the city. Within 24 hours the city had reconvened its committee and made the approval. Interestingly enough, even though we've spent a lot of time learning the ropes within the bureaucracy [I spend half my time organizing the bureaucracy, and the other half in the neighborhood itself] even though we've learned to negotiate pretty well - every time we have to close a loan, we have to get 30 people busted.*



of housing, open space, education, job training, energy conservation, and economic development is now underway.

**BLOCK LEVEL** At least 750,000 families in NYC live in substandard housing. 64,000 apartments have been taken over by the city because of tax arrears, while 71,000 stand in totally abandoned condition. Traditional government programs have focussed on *slum clearance*, urban renewal or other large-scale development efforts. Involving billions of dollars, particularly during the 'sixties, very little has been achieved in alleviating the conditions in the low-income neighborhoods, and many of these programs are being cutback due to lack of funds. The alternative is now being developed on 11th Street and elsewhere in the city: with a neighborhood-by-neighborhood approach involving community groups who have learned the skills and developed expertise to function more effectively than has the giant city bureaucracy. A typical city block contains about 1,500 - 2,000 residents--people who identify with that block, feel a sense of community towards it, have grown up there, belong to social clubs--who define it as their *neighborhood*. It is here that a city environment becomes managable and that city residents can begin to feel that they can have some impact on their environment.

### OWNERSHIP

Residents of the low-income neighborhoods are traditionally seen as *victims* of larger urban forces beyond their control. And it is true that there has been little incentive for landlords to maintain their buildings once they have deteriorated to the point where there is no real return on investment. The process is a familiar one: as rents remain relatively constant, maintenance and fuel costs escalate; the owner continues to collect rents, but cuts back on basic repairs, stops paying property taxes, and ultimately walks away from the building. In some instances he will fire-gut the building to collect fire insurance - thus *milking* the last of his profits from the building. Increased fuel costs have played a particularly large part in this process. The low-income housing movement in New York is based on a belief that tenant ownership and self-management is the key to long-term preservation of the neighborhoods, and in particular non-profit cooperative ownership.

**URBAN HOMESTEADING** Until now there has been little incentive for the people in these neighborhoods to maintain their buildings or take any real responsibility for their long-term survival. And the conditions in the crumbling tenements--lack of heat and hot water, fires, inadequate wiring, poorly-lit, overcrowded apartments--didn't give the tenants much sense of pride in their physical environment. So neighborhood people were forced to stand by while landlords slowly abandoned their homes, as one-by-one apartments were vacated and finally burned. Sweat Equity begins the reversal of this process, returning to the way large parts of the country were settled: homesteading. A group of neighborhood people interested in taking over an abandoned building approaches a community housing group for technical assistance. It forms a non-profit housing corporation which then constitutes itself as a cooperative, with the specific intent of borrowing money to purchase, renovate and own the abandoned structure. They then begin the long process of negotiations with the City -- in the case of 519 for over a year -- and the actual construction, usually 12 - 18 months. By the time the building is ready for occupancy the tenants have invested a huge amount of time and energy in the project; they have learned to work with each other; and they have developed a sense of collective responsibility towards their building. The next step--towards long-term maintenance through energy conservation--is a logical one in changing from a dependent relationship with the environment to an independent, self-sufficient one.

I would like to see the community to be a community where I don't have to see (children) running at in the middle of the night, having to run nowhere because of a fire.



They just dumpel stuff down here - old abandoned truck...used to be stripped down in there. Lot of junkies out in the block and...murder was the law...it seemed like they went around and picked up in a helicoptr all the criminals, you know, and dumped them on Eleventh Street.

*Many of the people left the block, RELUCTANTLY, because there's this tremendous sense of identification with each other and each other's families. They left because they had to leave...forced out by the fires. Many of those people are now coming back and they're participating in the projects because they see 11th Street as their home, their base.*

You could walk down the block and ask people, DID YOU EVER THINK THAT BUILDING WAS GOING TO BE REBUILT? The answer is no. No one. People thought we were foolish, we were crazy to try to rebuild this building month after month. They started seeing garbage coming out of the windows...they said, FORGET ABOUT IT, IT'S GOING TO COST US TOO MUCH MONEY - WE WON'T BE ABLE TO AFFORD TO LIVE IN THERE AFTER IT'S FIXED. WELL HAVE TO GO ON WELFARE TO PAY THE RENT.

The land reform that takes place when property which was traditionally seen as little more than a part of the real estate speculative market is turned into people's non-profit ownership is the base for an entire community development effort. And when this new ownership is acquired without cash, but rather with people's own sweat, a uniquely different relationship is developed with the land.

Adjacent to 519, for example, was a vacant lot, the centre of the block's car-stripping trade. Through a summer youth program, the lot has been transformed into a park/garden with a half-basketball court for teenagers.

### ENERGY

The most radical step after land ownership has been the energy conservation and energy production projects that were undertaken along with urban homeseading. The huge investment that the tenants had made in 519 needed to be protected. They had taken on a \$177,000 loan commitment payable to the City of New York over 30 years. Unless steps were taken to conserve on-going maintenance costs, the long-term survival of their building was threatened. After all, increased fuel costs had led to building abandonment in the first place, and they were continuing to escalate. By the end of this past winter, fuel oil was costing the city's low-income neighborhoods 50 cents a gallon, a 25% increase over the previous year.

The Housing Administration had originally allocated \$300 for insulating the building - before the *energy crisis* - and barely enough to insulate the roof. With a grant from the Community Services Administration, the building was *super-insulated* and a solar energy system installed, the first of its kind in New York City. Later, after Con Edison had shut down the building's electrical supply (as a result of a rate dispute) a wind generator was installed on the roof. The combination of these energy saving systems cut back on fuel bills by almost 70%. More importantly, the project demonstrated that decentralized power production as a partial solution to the fuel crisis was possible; and that low-cost, appropriate technologies could be used, even in a low-income area.

Slowly the critics were silenced. The idea of a group of unemployed, untrained, neighborhood tenants taking an abandoned building and rebuilding it had been called laughable. The suggestion that solar and wind energy was possible in New York City, and on this scale, was treated with skepticism. But now all of this had happened. A shift had taken place in the neighborhood; the first steps toward community control.

### COSTS

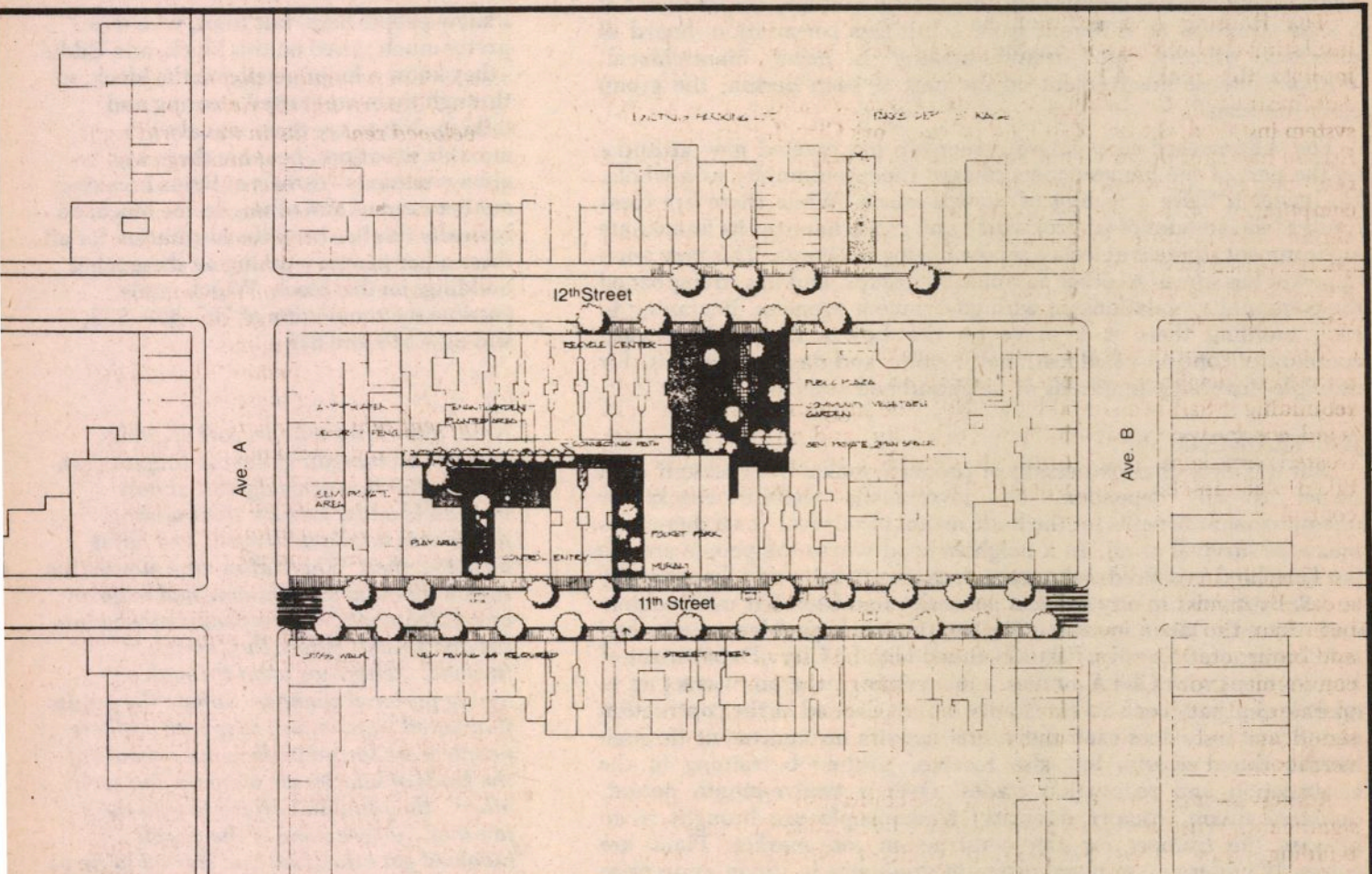
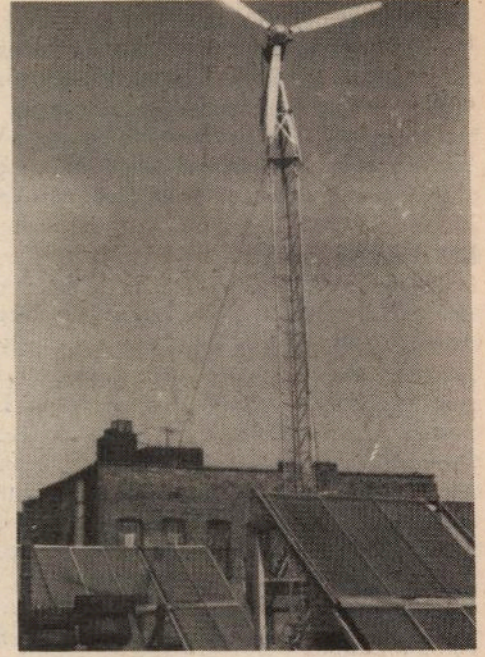
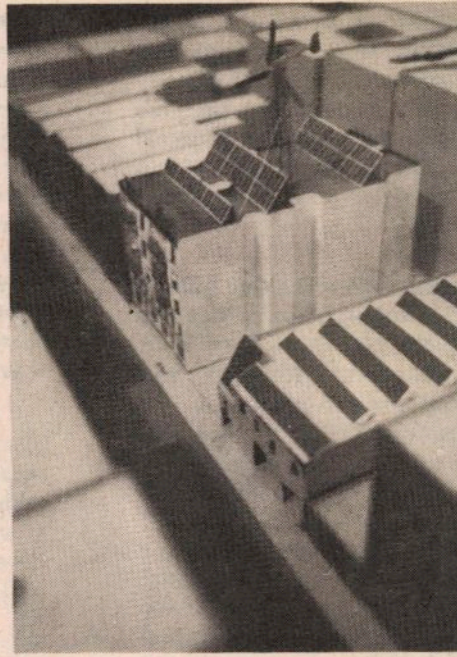
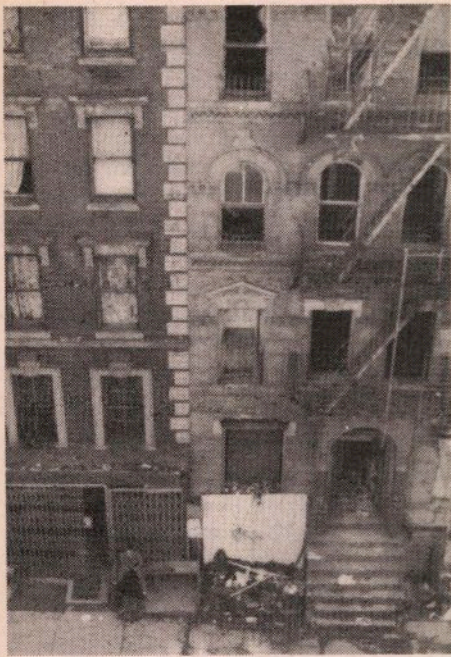
This shift in the economic base has ramifications in a wide variety of areas. By involving people in the housing/renewal process, a way has been found to deliver basic services without the huge administrative and bureaucratic costs usually associated with city services. While the community groups certainly need more support, the high percentage of finances that goes into salaries and basic program support produces significant cost benefit in terms of jobs and money circulating in the neighborhood economy.

Actual savings in basic housing rehabilitation are equally as significant. When the 519 group borrowed \$177,000 to renovate the building, they saved \$180,000 in what it would have cost a conventional contractor to have undertaken the same work. Demolition costs of over \$10,000/building are saved. The buildings are put back on the city's tax rolls; the monies expended in maintaining the building are spent in the neighborhood at local suppliers, or in hiring local repair services. But perhaps most significantly, neighborhood people are no longer on unemployment or on welfare, and contribute city, state and federal taxes. So the advantages to the local government are clear; and for the neighborhood residents themselves, housing -

When this building got burned down, I met Michael and (Phil St. George) and they came in and around the Lower East Side looking for a building they could rebuild. O.K.? How they were going to do it they were not too sure, too clear. But they were very bold, very courageous and they wanted to do it. So I started showing them buildings around the Lower East Side and introducing them to youth gangs. I finally brought them here and I said to them, HOW WOULD YOU LIKE TO REBUILD 519? IT'S THE DECISION OF SOME PEOPLE ON THIS BLOCK THAT THIS BUILDING'S GOT TO BE REBUILT...AS AN EXAMPLE TO THE LANDLORDS AND TO THE GOVERNMENT AND EVERYBODY THAT THIS HULK OF BUILDING, OF BURNT-OUT SHELL, COULD BE PUT BACK INTO LIVABLE SHAPE. So, when we started having all these ideas, me, Michael, Hal and then we got Juan Rios. Then Juan brought in Eddie and Tony Bruno and Joey B., and we all banded together.

*You've got to remember that the Lower East Side is probably the richest piece of undeveloped real estate in the world right now. And the thinking of housing planners and professionals has been, WELL, LET'S GUT IT, RIGHT, and then the developers can come in with their large-scale schemes WHERE DA BUCKS ARE. While we've been spending so much time on developing people as well as buildings, the big developers are coming in now, the \$31 million investment schemes, the high cost housing. It's based on these endless government subsidies where in order to sustain the cost of that kind of development each tenant has to receive a check from the government to balance out the difference between what he can afford to pay and what the rents are. And where the planning involves combining four or five buildings, putting an elevator in one of them and creating one hundred-unit projects, which I think are unmanageable.*

*We could turn around tomorrow and sink ten million dollars into fifty buildings on the lower East Side. But without that ownership factor, without the sweat equity, and without the coop spirit, I don't think you've got a housing program. But unless we can come up with a development alternative which incorporates those principles, yet deals with scale of city problems, unless we can do that, I think 11th Street, which is a nice little operation, is going to go down in history as precisely that.*



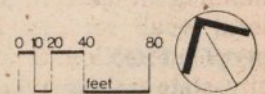
# E. 11<sup>th</sup> ST. OPEN SPACE DEVELOPMENT PLAN

11<sup>th</sup> ST. MOVEMENT  
519 E. 11 ST.  
ADOPT A BUILDING  
177 E. 3<sup>rd</sup> ST.

Abramowitz & Chieng  
Landscape Designers  
Community Development Fund

Michael Freedberg  
Project Director  
Edgardo Caraballo  
Project Coordinator

Juan Rios  
Project Supervisor  
Luis Rodriguez  
Project Supervisor



decent housing - is created at costs they can afford: average carrying charges are coming out at \$35/room, as against \$150/room that new construction involves. The entire approach of recycling what already exists, saving the existing resources is one based on people's involvement, but it is also a cheaper way of preserving the physical environment. The *throw-away* philosophy advocated by the urban planners and designers is bad economics, as well as poor philosophy.

### COOPERATIVES

Whereas only a few years ago most properties were privately owned on the 11th Street block, today the largest number of buildings are tenant-owned or managed cooperatively. In the context of New York City, where there are strong pressures toward individualism and isolation, the demands that a Sweat Equity project makes on the tenant-owner are towards necessary cooperation. While the scale of the built environment may be intimidating to some, the enormity of the task of rebuilding and managing a five story necessitates cooperative organization and relationships. Both during the construction period and after each building is occupied the group is intimately involved in decision-making regarding design, apartment lay-outs, construction scheduling, financing, loan processing, etc. In order for these decisions to be made effectively, effective working and personal relationships must be established. While each building corporation has a legal structure no different from a business corporation--board of directors, officers, etc.--decision-making is never hierarchiacal. Without intense involvement on the part of each person, the group can't function.

The shift toward cooperative ownership has created new attitudes on the part of the homesteaders toward their community as a whole. No longer is there a feeling of powerlessness. While there are clear limits to the amount of control which any group has over its immediate environment, there is at least a sense of being in charge. This new sense of power has spread to other community groups, and has strengthened the community's relationship with government agencies. Beginning in each building there is a move on the Lower East Side toward community control--of educational, health, and daycare services, for example--involving hundreds of neighborhood residents.

### JOB TRAINING

But it is clear that ownership of property makes little sense if each owner is still dependent on government welfare checks or unemployment benefits for the basic means of survival - or if there is no means of survival at all. In a neighborhood where the people are the last hired and first fired, where the declining number of jobs generally and the cutbacks in city services generally had been felt most acutely and where the mean income is \$5,000, the whole problem of jobs had to be confronted directly. Partially funded by the City's Department of Employment with CETA monies, a job training program was set up to operate alongside each Sweat Equity job. At the end of the construction period, not only does each individual acquire an apartment through his/her Sweat equity, but also receives on-the-job training in the construction and renovation trades. Over a twelve-month period, qualified union (usually minority) tradespeople are brought in to prepare the trainees for the construction job market. Plans are currently underway to place program graduates in union apprentice slots, or in a locally-run construction and maintenance company. While it would be foolhardy to suggest larger economic forces can be turned around on this kind of local level, a beginning has been made.

### EDUCATION

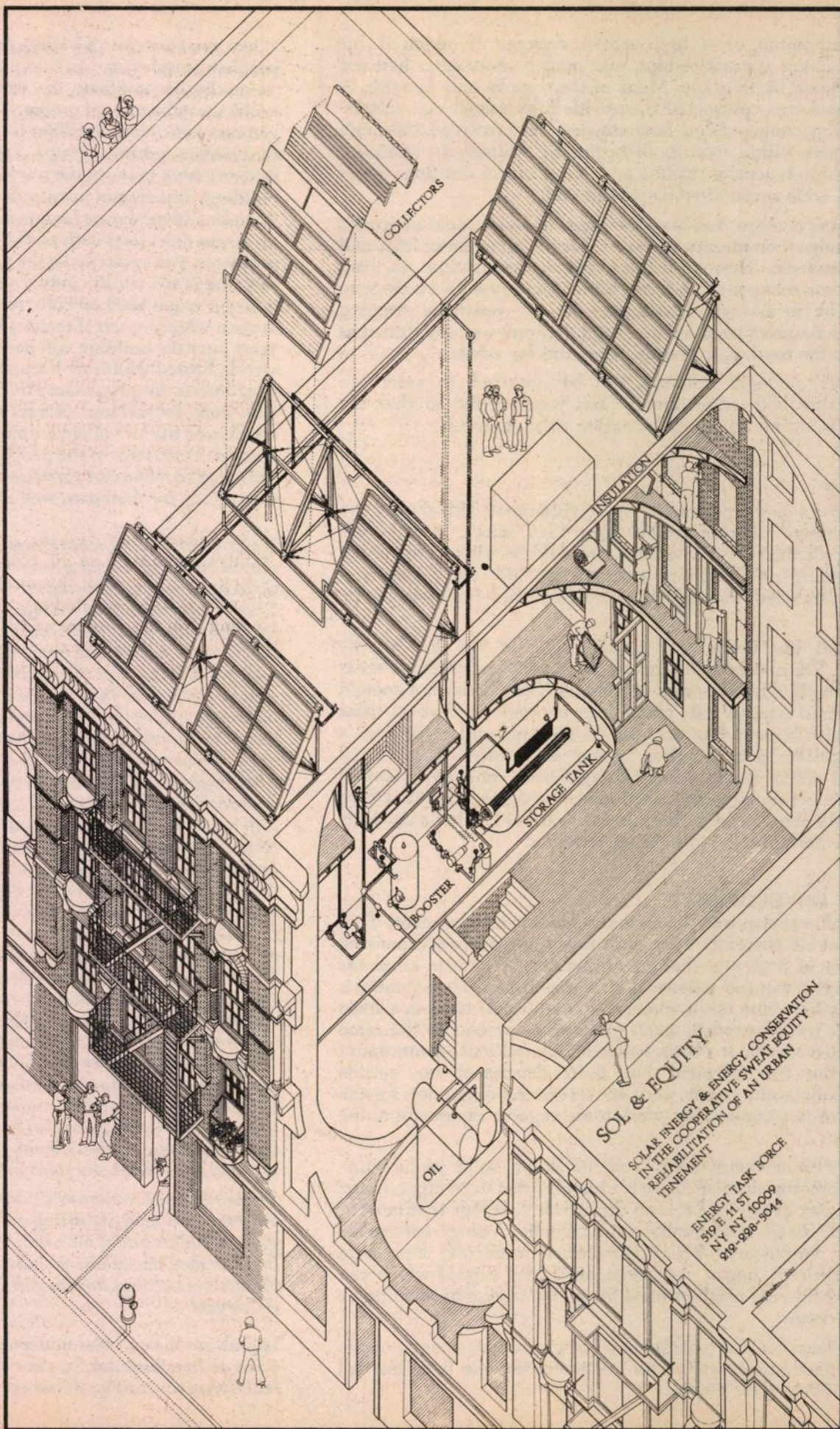
As homesteaders were being trained in the construction trades it became clear that they didn't have the educational backgrounds

I would never ever once again work doing demolition in the kind of conditions we did demolition in this building. We used to work on this in 10, 15, 20 degrees and the majority we did on this building was always at below zero. We would always have to start fires in the back yards to keep warm. We just came bundled up in clothes. You would hit yourself with a hammer or crowbar on your finger. It would just be agony and tears - a cold thing hitting a frozen finger - it's a terrible experience...it was the winter of '74.

Then after they saw the building was totally cleaned out, they suddenly started seeing beams and plywood arriving on trucks. They started seeing whites, Puerto Ricans, blacks, young kids beating on a nail...working. Seeing these things happen.

I knew people here, but Juan, who was pretty much raised on this block, and Eddie - they knew a lot of people on the block, so through them we started meeting and talking. Not to say there was always amiable situations, because there was always tensions - threats of fights breaking out between us and others on the block. So basically this has been the inspiration for all these other people working on these other buildings on this block. Which made possible the renovation of 507, 509, 533, and now 518 and 535.

*Now, after three whole years of going through an incredibly demanding process, where after two years against almost incredible odds, we took this building, which was totally destroyed, and put it back together. Where after nine months we ran out of money...everyone had to go on unemployment...where people moved into the apartments before they were finished...where we went through on-going personal changes...where the group fluctuated from month to month...where people were forced to drop out because of the kinds of salaries we were paying each other...they couldn't afford to feed their families...where some of the people involved got into drugs and started to rip us off, and we had to deal with that...where we had to go through bitterly cold winters without any heat. And where we had to sit down as a group and figure out how to manage these sorts of problems. Now we can do it - we can sit down with the group that all lives here, and make decisions in a relatively short time.*



needed. A minimum of a high school diploma is required for placement in union apprenticeships, and most homesteaders had not progressed beyond ninth grade. Many of them spoke only Spanish. A local day school was contracted to provide high school equivalency English-speaking courses. Some homesteaders have received their high school diploma's within months of beginning courses. In addition, classes are held in blueprint reading and architectural drafting, boiler repair, and a wide range of trade-related skills.

As important, perhaps, has been the range of educational programs begun for younger community residents - elementary, junior high and high school students. Through a block youth organization, an after school center was set up on 11th Street for elementary school kids, who are tutored by local high school students. A vocational training program for delinquent youths in the neighborhood was established as an adjunct to the on-the-job training program for adults.

In this way, younger residents will be prepared to enter the construction sites both educationally and vocationally, so that the homesteader is not handicapped by earlier disadvantages.

### OPEN SPACE

As a follow-up to the park built by neighborhood kids during the past two summers adjacent to 519 East 11th Street, a children's playground is planned for this summer; the children will be involved in not only designing but also building the playground. The playground itself will use recycled materials from a demolished building on the planned site.

Vacant land has become a major blight in the low-income communities. The massive building abandonment has left huge areas of these neighborhoods devastated and empty. Clearly it's not enough simply to rebuild what is left; plans must be made to develop these spaces. The 11th Street focus has been on planting and gardening: a community garden and recycling center are underway involving neighborhood adults and children. Using French Intensive planting methods, and developing solar-heated greenhouses, the garden will be a focal point for community activity and a means of involving residents not otherwise participating in housing activities.

### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The critical next step is in the area of economic development. To a real extent there is currently a dependence on government financing for the variety of programs that are underway. A shift in emphasis must now begin if true self-reliance is to be established. The potential is there. For the first time in low-income communities, there is a huge buying power (represented by each building loan) and at the same time the skills to service it - both controlled by the local community. Until now the neighborhood has been dependent on outside contractors to maintain, repair, and renovate its buildings; now for the first time there is a community work force capable of providing the same services.

Particularly in the energy areas--weatherization, solar manufacturing, solar systems installation--there is a huge market to be tapped, and in New York City at any rate it is on the Lower East Side that most of the skills exist. Small, community-run alternative energy enterprises will provide employment for neighborhood residents, but more importantly perhaps, begin, over time, generating capital which can be turned back into the neighborhood for such purposes as small home improvement loans.

Similarly a local cabinet-making shop and construction company are currently planned, once again with homesteaders who have learned their skills building their homes.

When you come into a building you find people unemployed, you find people with serious health problems, day care problems, educational problems - with the younger folks, with the older folks - you find junkies, pushers, pimps. You could find anything that's in the world inside one building. You cannot just say that you want to make a better house for a person to live in. If you don't deal with all the other problems, you could make the nicest building in the world - in two years time and you've got \$200,000 into renovation - move a whole bunch of tenants in it - two years later the building will be a total wreck: busted windows, burned out apartments, simply because the landlords, city, state, federal bureaucrats have never considered the fact of government, that you must give initiative to the people of these buildings to make certain decisions for their own selves, for their own welfare.

*We are really doing what the government should be doing. Local governments are set up to be providing housing services. They're supposed to be saving neighborhoods, and we're doing it for them. And I hope we're doing it in a way which illustrates that the established process has failed. In a sense we are tackling a traditional problem in a new way, that is, with local people in a very open, democratic kind of organization. That means the whole notion of accountability has to be addressed in a different way. We can set up all these formal decision-making structures, but unless we are accountable to the people in the neighborhood and on the block, as organizers, we wouldn't be able to survive. It's not like we're sitting in an air-conditioned office somewhere. Most of the work goes down on the sidewalks, on the streets, and we're living there. These are our neighbors. These are the people whom we have to deal with on a day-to-day basis. If we weren't doing what they wanted us to do, we'd have to leave. We can't lay our number on them because they'd just tell us to get out of here, we don't need you, we don't want you--so our survival depends on our accountability.*

*The traditional community corporations in our neighborhood are sitting on a good few million dollars and it ain't doin' nothin', because they haven't been willing to make themselves accountable by getting out onto the streets.*

There's got to be a clear understanding that if you are professional, you are only here to fulfill your role as a professional, but we're

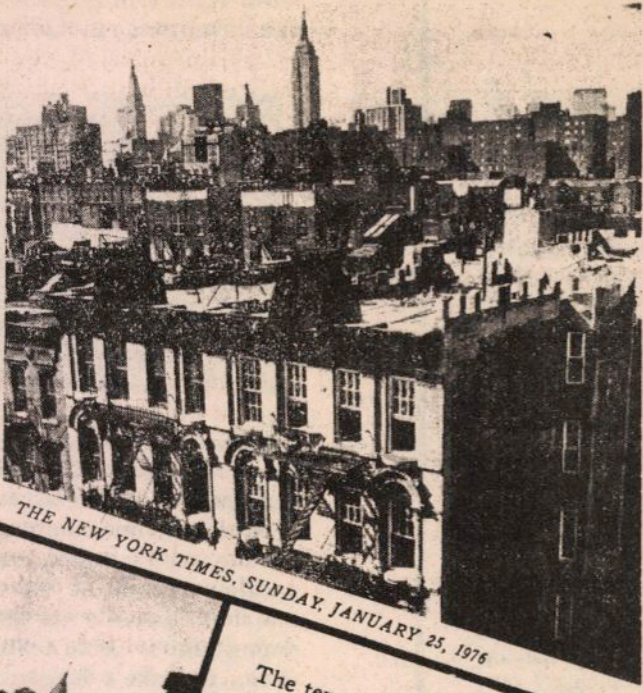


# Tenement Co-op to Use Sun to Heat Water

The New York Times

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THE NEW YORK TIMES, SUNDAY, JANUARY 25, 1976

The tenant-workers  
at 519 E. 11th St.  
reconstruct their  
building as part of  
"sweat equity" plan.

in government-subsidized cooperatives,  
there are many housing experts, in-  
cluding Frances Levenson, who  
such cooperative Levenson, who  
and lower-income housin-  
sity.

## GOVERNMENT

The 11th Street Movement is fairly unique. It was set up primarily to coordinate the range of resources that are coming into the block and to improve city services to it. But also really to be a voice of people influencing how those services and those resources are used. Every tenant-owned, managed or cooperatively owned building on the block (and there are now nine) as well as other active people on the block are invited to be on the 11th Street Movement Steering Committee, which is the policy-making group.

The Steering Committee is a workable group, about 15 people. Every three to six months we have a block meeting, where we report to the block as a whole. Usually 50 - 60 people attend.

The number of people who are affected by or are participating in one or more of the activities that are going on on the block, and express their needs and aspirations through those particular activities, is in the hundreds. Whether it's the people who are doing the community garden, the people who are receiving job training, the people in the buildings fighting landlords, whether it's the kids who are doing after-school tutoring. That's the other area of involvement besides the kind of overall policy-making representation. The way you involve people is through real activities and programs. As important as trying to develop an open, democratic decision-making structure is a good, efficient staff which can go out there and set up programs which bring in as many of the people on the block as possible. Summers in N.Y. are times when most people take off, and times when everyone is in the street. Everyone is out there, and that's the best time for our community organizing. And it happens a lot on an informal basis, a lot of talking and a lot of beer drinking and coming up with some kind of consensus among all those people about what are the major needs, and then to develop programs which can involve them.

the ones to decide... We're the ones that are going to decide the policies we're going to set and mandate for the entire community and block buildings. We're the ones that are going to start controlling the economy of the community.

*I think there's a feeling of accomplishment and of pride which wasn't there a couple of years ago, and that really goes through a lot of kinds of interactions that happen. I've had a couple of parties in the last few weeks at my place which were really great - just a lot of different people there - the music would change from soul to salsa to rock. I don't think two years ago it would have happened because those kinds of people wouldn't have been there in the first place, and second of all, over the years people have learned how to go beyond their own cultural roots even though in some ways still maintaining them. So I enjoy those kinds of occasions and I enjoy hanging out in the social club across the street which stays open all night, particularly during the summers, and getting pretty drunk with people. And the kinds of outings and trips that go on during the summer as well as the kind of just general socializing that happens on a day-to-day basis.*

*I think what I really wanted to do when I came here, feeling that YES this was the kind of political work I wanted to do, and given my own background in architecture and urban planning, was demonstrate that a people-oriented housing program was a more viable way of approaching the problem than any other program that had been developed in the past.*

*I think on 11th Street we've demonstrated that. We've demonstrated that people do have the willingness and the commitment and the motivation to get out there and do the kind of hard work that's necessary. I think we've also demonstrated that government cooperation is needed, and I think this is PRIMARY, demonstrated that resources have to be coordinated on a local level; this is not something that can be done on a national scale.*

*I expect to continue living here, maybe for the rest of my life. But I don't plan to continue work on the block for very much longer. I've spent a lot of time training people and working with other folks, and I'm interested in making the work I've been doing over the last three years a really viable model for other neighborhoods...taking all we've demonstrated, and making this model available to the people and communities that can use it.*

## NETWORK

The neighborhood housing movement has spread to most of the low-income communities of New York City, joined together in a number of loosely-formed networks. A part of this movement has been the growth of urban homesteading from a single project in East Harlem to efforts in three of the city's five boroughs, involving the conversion of over 500 apartments to tenant cooperative ownership.

But the conditions vary from neighborhood to neighborhood, and so do the group's activities. Most of them are members or affiliates of the Association of Neighborhood Housing Developers which acts as an advocacy group for the different neighborhoods, as well as providing legal and other technical assistance. It is in the neighborhoods themselves that policies are set, decisions made and programs developed. The Association simply reflects the needs and activities of its member groups, and assists in bringing them together in a unified force. Clearly there are city-wide issues to be faced - in the use of federal community development dollars, for example, or the administration of job training funds, or in the operation of the city's rent control program. But each neighborhood is an autonomous unit, providing a strong base for the activities of a community housing group.

On a **national** level, the Association and its member groups maintain close ties with a number of organizations with similar neighborhood preservation goals. They include: National People's Action, a Chicago-based organization which has been leading, on a national level, the struggle against banking disinvestment and redlining of inner city neighborhoods; the Alliance for Neighborhood Government, which is concerned with governmental de-centralization and the return of political power to neighborhood based units of government; the Institute for Self-Reliance in Washington, which focusses on the development of alternate technologies in urban areas; and the National Center for Urban Ethnic Affairs which provides training and technical assistance to neighborhoods throughout the country. Through the Center a loose working relationship is developing between community groups in a number of cities on the East Coast; such is SECO in Baltimore, and Adopt-a-Building on the Lower East Side.

On the **state** level: Community groups have joined together to address a variety of state-wide issues, and to influence the legislation relating to community development. The New York State Tenant and Neighborhood Coalition, while consisting mainly of tenants in middle-income neighborhoods or from large housing developments, many upstate groups (from such cities as Poughkeepsie, Albany, Troy) represent residents whose housing concerns parallel those of the City groups. A People's Housing Network was established in 1976 to encourage and assist community residents throughout New York State to form organizations to work for neighborhood preservation, and to exchange information of statewide interest.

On a **city** level, in addition to the Association of Neighborhood Housing Developers, a powerful coalition has developed around the use of community development monies in the city: the New York City Community Development Coalition has over 250 neighborhood groups under its umbrella, and has become a powerful voice in exposing the abuses of city programs. Conferences are held regularly, newsletters distributed, and issues publicized through the coalition.

In addition, there are a number of city-wide **technical assistance** groups such as UHAB (the Urban Homesteading Assistance Board) which works with urban homesteading projects, and acts as the center of a network of these projects formed to locate new funding sources, resolve bureaucratic obstacles, etc. The Energy Task Force provides technical assistance in the energy area.

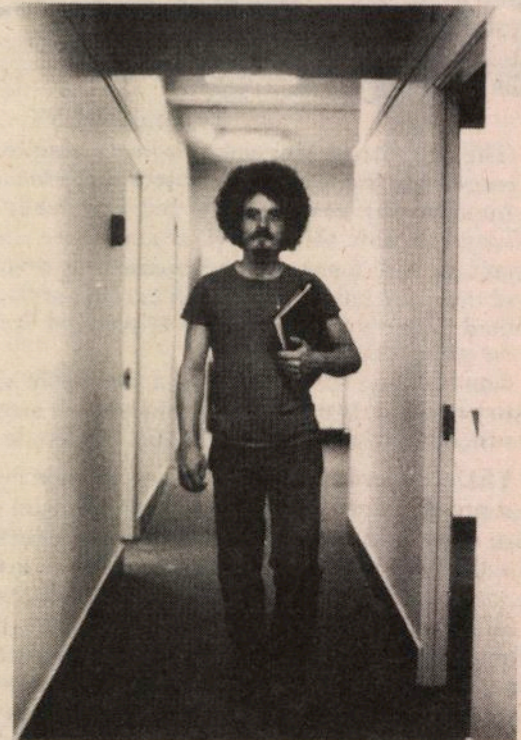
On a **neighborhood** level are the community groups, the backbone and the strength of the entire movement. While they concentrate on block, tenant, and community organizing, their roles go far beyond that of the traditional organizer. They provide specific services to local residents - in job training, in tenant education, ownership conversion, as well as being a direct voice of community people in dealing with government agencies and other technical or housing groups.

On a **building** level, each Sweat Equity group is cooperative, meeting on a regular basis; both during the construction period or when managing or maintaining their building. Through their neighborhood group they are in touch with a wide range of city-wide and community groups, and participate in setting policy on issues of neighborhood concern.

*Without the efforts of the last three years, 11th Street today would be a vacant lot.*



We chose to stand our ground. Because we know we've got to fight from here. We just can't permit (ourselves) to be shoved around from one community and one borough into another, one state into another... People in America move from one state to another as fast as you can deposit dimes inside a phone booth. But it's time... to make a decision if we're going to let communities fall apart. That people are going to remain and care enough to continue to save their roots, and their culture and their music and their art and the places where they live. □



WORDS OF ROBERT NAZARIO EXERPTED FROM THE FINAL REPORT OF THE NSF STUDENT-ORIGINATED STUDY PROJECT ON SELF-SUSTAINING COMMUNITIES, MIT, 1976, COORDINATED BY MARK ISAACS. CHAPTER BY LARRY WAINBLAT.

IF EAST 11TH STREET SETTLES SOME QUESTIONS ABOUT THE CAPACITY OF PEOPLE TO REBUILD OUR CITIES IN NEW WAYS, ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR COMMUNITY-BASED, ECONOMIC CHANGE RAISE MORE. THE THREE DISCUSSIONS WHICH FOLLOW FOCUS ON: 1) ECONOMIC DEMOCRACY AND WORKER CONTROL 2) KEEPING OURSELVES TOGETHER AS WE TAKE ON MORE DIFFICULT AND COMPLEX ISSUES OF PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT 3) THE SIGNIFICANCE OF AN OLDER WAVE OF COOPS, BUILT IN THE '30's, TO PRESENT COOPS.

# Three Economic Perspectives

edited by Paul Freundlich

## 1. Washington, DC

Well, it was billed as a Friday exploration of strategies between groups involved in worker-self-management-economic-democracy-community-control. Dave Oleson of the New School for Democratic Management out of San Francisco, and Randy Barber of the People's Business Commission were the principal conveners, and it was tied in with a board meeting of FED over the weekend in DC and the site shifted from IPS to IGP. *Right.*

There were, to put it mildly, several agendas on the table, besides sorting out acronyms and relating faces to previously-only--heard-over-the-telephone-voices. By Saturday noon when I left, quite a bit had been at least *talked* about. I'll try to summarize some of that, after presenting a brief cast of characters:

**PBC** - People's Business Commission is a spin-off of the People's Bicentennial Commission. Concerned with democratic, non-capitalist economic change, and seeking to be a switchboard (switchblade?) and media/education support in the process.

**FED** - Federation for Economic Democracy - the largest representation - somewhat of an academic cast, moving to seeing how the rhetoric and theory of radical economics can be important to practical social change.

**NSDM** - New School for Democratic Management - Dave Oleson skipping around the country looking for interest in a self-management perspective to practical management problems...and finding significant response from all those struggling projects, coops etc. that need proper accounting and business procedures, without mortgaging their souls in business school or hiring functionaries to do their work.

**Strongforce** - Washington DC worker-control project concentrating on funding and support of businesses in Adams Morgan, and funded by NIMH (the National Institute of Mental Health) - came mostly to supply resource material on other self-management approaches which might be a useful background for our discussions.



**Community Futures** - consultant network supporting community initiative in economic and other development.

**IPS**-Institute for Policy Studies-Wash DC left think-tank provided meeting place. Several IPS Fellows attended.

**IGP** - International Group Plans - a worker managed insurance company based in DC. On Saturday we met in their *building*. A big building, quite modern, in downtown Washington.

Some union representatives from the Garment Workers. Assorted friends and strangers, buzzed through. I counted 21 at one point.

The most curious sense of the meetings were the shifts in scale - from theory of how things should work, to small examples of worker self-management, to speculations about what the corporate managers of the economy had in mind. Or to put it another way, we'd get down tight on how we could make one thing work (like helping workers take control of a factory and what kinds of skills and process they'd need) to stepping back and wondering if we and the workers were simply being manipulated to take over the no-longer-worth-exploiting dregs of the economy.

How important is worker self-management? Is it ever going to be more than a fractional sub-set of the American dream? Are community control and neighborhood scale realistic in an age of monopoly capitalism, complex technology and high mobility? Are workers who've been trained to confront management or be servile to it, interested in sharing authority and responsibility, even if the power could be shifted? What are the unions, which have developed their own structures, power relationships and investment in a good opinion of their organizing over a long and largely honorable history (I had a *great-grandfather* who helped found the AFL) to make of a projected *peacable kingdom* in which their own role is unclear?

On a more positive note, here are some lines of development I thought were interesting: † There are some communities which have already begun organizing themselves, but not necessarily along economic lines. Some of them know they want economic development, but need a better idea of how it can be part of an overall strategy.

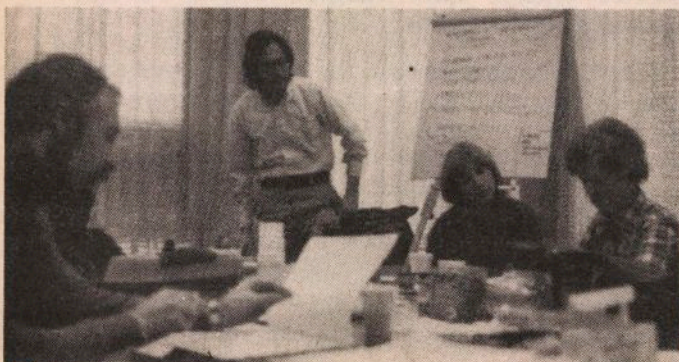
East 11th St. in New York City (see elsewhere in magazine) was cited: that right now, priorities of whether to stress jobs per se, worker-control or community control are being decided. An effective planning/training team could be important. Community Futures had already explored that function with them.

† What are the funding possibilities for community support training? We talked about government programs on all levels. George Benello of FED suggested the NSDM could be a resource.

† A distinction was raised between worker control of a management team (and policy) vs. worker self-management. It was pointed out that CCED (Center for Community Economic Development) in Cambridge, with the most experience in CDCs (Community Development Corporations) has essentially given up on worker control as an issue, and is concentrating on community economic development, period. George Benello said that was a lot of the feedback FED was getting: *It may be more economically feasible once we figure out how all these parts relate.*

† We talked at length about the overload of having to deal with political, social and economic questions at the same time - particularly when the *competition* was just trying to make a buck.

Heather Tunis from New Haven spoke of the recent closing of the Connecticut Feminist Federal Credit Union: *People are now putting together an analysis*



*beyond the financial demise, trying to see what kinds of policy changes they were able to effect, in terms of credit for women; what kinds of public education was undertaken; how many women were able to get loans who would never have gotten them anywhere else; how many women were reached who would never have had any other contact with the women's movement and what kind of effect it had on them. They [those centrally involved with CFFCU] were trying to knock their heads against the system in a very idealistic way, and to us who were looking at it, it was very successful. But then, with one fell swoop, it was all gone.*

† We speculated about the relationship of powerful themes (energy crunch, cost of capital, possible Federal policy directions) on the direction of economic democracy over the next decade.

† We discussed the contradiction of being committed to grassroots development, but doing regional or national networking, coordination and hustling. Even if we had solid rationales for why that programmatic support was necessary, where was our organizing energy really going?

† Regional concentrations, particularly in Appalachia were explored.

† We warned ourselves about extrapolating too quickly from a few solid projects or communities to a whole theory or program. There may already be a number of useful regional and national coordinating groups (Association for Neighborhood Government for instance) but until we know how many of their component groups are solid, and for how long, can we really build a serious strategy?

† Could we (*we?*) concentrate on a few themes (like solar energy, conservation, food)?

† I suggested that neighborhood development in itself could be an important growth industry sympathetic to community and worker control and economies of small scale. That when it takes 1½ million to build a new building, but only \$300,000 to rehab a burned-out shell, and it can almost all be done within the neighborhood (as in E 11th St. and about 50 other NYC projects...*speaking of extrapolation*) then perhaps housing rehab and neighborhood development is a major organizing strategy. PAC and the Home Maintenance Corp. in New Haven were cited as already using that strategy.

† Len Krimmerman of FED and I got into a rif about cooptation. He was identifying the functional compromise of ideals which follows from (for instance) having to deal within a capitalist marketing structure, no matter how pure you arrange the workplace.

I was clarifying the possibility of clear agreements with collaborators like the government - that if we could reach a common understanding on a central issue, even if we had different perspectives, then we could avoid a head trip every time we sat down together. The example I used was the NIMH grant I wrote and negotiated in 1974 which funded coops and social change groups in New Haven: our common agreement was an urban condition of alienation, with cooperative environments as a

possible anodyne; our procedural agreement was an experimental training grant, which being to our mutual advantage, then simply required the responsible documentation of the training/educational aspect of our social change work.

I questioned, however, whether worker control, in itself, was an argument that government is going to see in its interests. So if it's strictly on the basis of worker-control, and we're making deals with government, then the question of cooptation's real. But there are other arguments within which worker control is an element. One of them is quality of life, and the government has got to be interested in quality of life. Another is economic development - if we can redefine productive work within a community framework as the measure of economic health, then we'll have some leverage. A third is education, a better educated, more competent population, more self-reliant. Given the state of the schools, employment and the social environment, we could define some leverage to operate from the center of our own power, not just asking for handouts.

† Randy Barber brought up pending legislation before Congress, particularly one bill on community labor management cooperation that probably won't pass.

† We discussed how much could be learned from past worker cooperative experiments; how much that could be generalized and applied? How much needed to be learned by each group, each time for their process to be really understood and consistent with their history?

† Dave Oleson reported he'd been initiating a series of conversations with labor leaders in the Bay area. I've found a surprising degree of openness to talk about worker-control, although usually the term we end up using is industrial democracy. But industrial democracy and worker-control are very closely related, so I think there's grounds for moving ahead. ... There are a number of very specific kinds of courses, specific kinds of skill needs that aren't being adequately met. So the suggestion that I've gotten from several of these union leaders is that a school like what we're trying to put together offer those courses and involve union people in a special kind of program. ... All the specific skill courses would have as an agenda--democratizing union operations. I've been assured that the union leadership will pay for the shop stewards to attend these courses.

We can offer several services. One is offering specific skill courses, and two, along with these we could offer courses in labor's role in community economic development. Several unions that I talked to are actively thinking about it. As a matter of fact they're doing more than thinking about it, they're planning. For example, in San Francisco the building trades council has been kicking around a plan to develop a union housing construction corporation that would employ 300 unemployed construction workers to build low-income housing for the elderly in San Francisco. This is where we could use a community bank in S.F. It looks like the rank-and-file is going to insist that the prevailing wage rate be paid, which will kill the project. But at any rate that's just one example among many that I've got of a union taking an active role in developing a community economic development project. If we could offer services--financing available from city, state or federal

agencies for unions, help coordinate union involvement with community agencies in making a thing like this housing corporation go, if we can do more and more of those kinds of things--well, we begin to bridge the gap anyway. And more specifically, I think there's a way to talk about conversion to worker-ownership, worker-control. The way I would do it, instead of titling the course Worker-ownership, I'd title it, What to do when the boss goes broke.



You've got a lot of interested folks. We hope to get on top of what that kind of course would include. With all these kinds of courses, you more than get union people inside the door. If we make industrial democracy one of our goals, and economic democracy one of our goals, and economic democracy and industrial democracy get coordinated agendas, then we're in a good position to at least make sure that dialogue happens -- and for the next couple years, I think that's about all we can hope to do.

I think a lot of what we were up to was seeing what we were up to...if you see what I mean. We were all people used to being taken seriously in our own worlds, trying to impact on what we had identified, for a variety of reasons, as important business. We were torn between taking seriously what we knew, or what we didn't know. The former is more reassuring, but the latter seemed more real, and once accepted, a better beginning.

- \*\*\*\*\*
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- ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

## 2. The Dilemma of Debasement: *it's below de attic*

Discussion held at the 2nd Right-Livelihood Business Conference, February 1977, Another Place Farm, Greenville, New Hampshire. Participating: ROGER NEECE (*economic consultant, Boston*) PAUL FREUNDLICH [*Communities Magazine, New Haven*] MARC SARKADY [*Another Place*] CLAY [*Community Coop, New Haven*] LARRY LENSKY [*Twin Oaks, Louisa, Virginia*].

ROGER - I want the kind of social unit that rewards me. Like Dennis and the people at the Advocate Press could just do a straight business or just be movement printers. Doing both means a lot of extra work on their backs. We're at a point, now, before we have the integrated institutions...

PAUL - So part of what we are is business people and part is political & social organizers, and that means some of our work is an act of faith, reaching into the future. And when there's no one to pay us at this particular point, that's just the way it goes. What else are you going to do?

ROGER - But we're the craftspeople about business. It's going to turn out in 5 years that if there's anything going, that you're the craftspeople.

MARC - Even now this situation exists. Another Place or the Advocate Press or Twin Oaks are organized as businesses in a way to bring in more money...to pay people as craftspeople in relation to skill.

I think that as well as being social change people and business people, we're also evolving beings, which is an individual thing within the context of the group. I see a value in encouraging and refining people's individual skills. I see collective situations very often not only *not* doing that, but actually discouraging it. I'm not willing to be in that situation.

PAUL - Mostly it's that the frame is too small for those kind of specialized skills to be useful. How in the hell are you going to have somebody credentialized to be a planner, affirmed and supported by others, when they're coming from a house with six or seven people in it? When you've got a community with 60 or 80 people and a few hundred thousand dollars per year budget, then you've got to have planners. It's a hard thing to be a planner at Twin Oaks; people take a lot of shit for it. But there's no question they're doing an important job. It's service...

LARRY - It's the worst job. It's the thing that burns people out faster than anything...the ultimate service job or the ultimate organizer. And I think the main thing that keeps anybody doing it is it's being at the *cutting edge*...being at the forefront of what's going on.

PAUL - And the fact that somebody's supporting you to do that is just tremendous...

CLAY - To pick up on what Marc was saying about the dilemma of the debasement of individual excellence that takes place in collectives. I think when you're part of the collective energy flow, either the flame burns you out over time or it refines you. And that's determined by whether you can define your individuality without blocking the collective flow.

LARRY - Everybody burns out after a number of years, and in the long-term, it just won't work. At Twin Oaks we have to be able to create a system where people will last more than a year or two or four.

CLAY - When people burn out, do they just revert back into the membership, or do they drop out of the organization?

LARRY - Some people leave, some people get recycled. That's one of the best things about Twin Oaks. I spent a year in one thing and I burnt out from that. Three months later I'm charging forward in something else. We can recycle people, though some people they just burn out like leaves and there's no place else to go...

MARC - The recycling thing is positive, but it doesn't really resolve some of the tensions that we go through year after year...the financial crises, the budget crises, the process crises. And some of those are going to keep going because we're experimenting. That's positive, but I sure would like to find a more harmonious way to go through them for myself and the people I'm involved with. And I've seen that process go on in every collective organization I've ever been in, and it's better here and in a lot of the groups I know about than it was for us five years ago. I give us all some support and credit for that one.

PAUL - There was a lot we had to learn and still do. If you're doing a planning gig, and there's three other people you're planning for who've been planners themselves, then it works better. If you've got somebody who wants to be in that kind of role; who wants to be at that kind of cutting edge, fantastic! All you want is *accountability* so you know that person is working for you; it really is service and not some kind of ego trip.

It's the same around business and economics: we're beginning to get some people who have some experience, been through a few failures; people who have some more professional experience. So I think we have a new mix at this point; a reeducated class of people functioning within alternative environments (collectivity, flow, political ideology, business practice). It's not flower power anymore or total rejection, so *now let's get down to business having some serious effect*.

ROGER - What you said that really spoke to me is that when people have experience, they can appreciate what you're doing. When somebody's tried to organize something, they can appreciate how hard it is to organize. That says to me that more people have to be involved in organizing. It can't be this *professional* kind of skill.

LARRY - I'd like to give a brief example of one way we tried at Twin Oaks of drawing people into the planning process. We do an economic plan every six months, which means we have to allocate so much money and so much labor to 50 or 60 areas. And, of course, there's always way less available than what we need.

What we've started doing the last few times, and are still refining, is we've turned it into a game. We give the

form to everybody in terms of: *Here's so much money and here's so much labor. Divide it up. Here's what the folks got last time, here's what they're requesting this time. Here's what they need to keep going, what they'd like and what the minimum is.* And everybody plays the game.

CLAY - Do people participate in that?

LARRY - People have. We've done it a few different ways. I think this time it will be a lot better. It's partially been successful, but it's been too rushed. This time we did it on a form. People were there with calculators. You kept going back because the first time you found that you'd spent \$20,000 too much and were over 5,000 hours in labor. What are you going to cut?

CLAY - This next time I think you just ought to do it with the I-Ching.

LARRY - One of the serious proposals was to do it by a lottery system. The planners would come up with one plan. The economic planners would come up with one plan. Anyone else who comes up with a plan that balances - we'll consider it. And somehow we'll choose a decision-making process to look at four plans and choose one.

ROGER - It gets heavy real quick.

LARRY - The bigger and more complex we get, the harder it gets to involve people, and the bigger risks we're taking.

3.



## WIND THROUGH THE PINES

*The wave of coops, which developed in the seventies, have been peripherally aware of older structures, which, symbolized by the twin pines, also called themselves coops. But member involvement seemed low, management was often uncollective and the operations were often big, business-like, older folks, straight, strongly entrenched in the market economy.*

*If you turn that around, from the perspective of that older generation, the new wave coops were small, undisciplined, dirty, young, hippy and prone to failure.*

*Well, in the last few years, some of the new coops have developed impressive dollar volumes, cleaned up their accounting procedures, and the folks are getting older. All of these changes have begun a careful dialog across the generational discontinuity of 1940's & 1950's affluence [when no one was messing with coops because the streets were paved with imperial gold].*

*On April 1-3, 1977, the Austin housing coops sponsored a conference bringing together representatives of the two generations, Wind Through the Pines. Meeting in the modern luxury of 21st College House or sitting around the pool at the Ark, we learned something of each other's language, the tentative pre-condition for a re-vitalized/more vital coop movement.*

*The remarks presented are excerpts from the older cooperators:*

**JERRY VOORHEES** (former President of the Cooperative League of America; five time congressman, defeated by Richard Nixon's first smear campaign) We're in the tradition of the first group gathered around a fire, that had been accidentally started, who decided in their wisdom that it was a lot better for them to unite in a peace group and keep that fire going (since they didn't know how to start it) than it was for each person to have the individual liberty to club all their fellow human beings over the head whenever they felt like it.



**EMIL SEKERAK** (education director, Berkeley Food Coop) I've been invited here as an *older cooperator* to explain why people in my era joined coops and what has motivated them to stay. Let me first explain that my coop experience has been in a campus coop, much like yours, in a small Ohio college; a consumer coop in a World War II concentration camp for Japanese-Americans; in a state-wide wholesale consumer coop, as a field organizer; and as a counselor and helper to coops like food conspiracies and buying clubs. Most recently, and for the longest time, I've been a staff member and Education Director of perhaps the largest and most successful, urban food retailing consumer cooperative in U.S. history. My remarks will be from the perspective of one who has passed through the bag of that particular experience, between the 1930's and the present.

What made us form or join or go to work for coops in the 1930's? I can answer that in three words, *The Great Depression*.

*First*, people wanted a means of *survival*. They wanted goods and services they desperately needed.

*Second*, people were angry with an economic system that left them *helpless*. They wanted something they felt they could control.

*Third*, people felt the need for *company* in their misery and their fear and wanted to work together to solve their problems.

*Fourth*, consumer cooperation was self-help largely, and they like the *independence* that gave them from possibly coercive governments they were seeing (in Italy, Germany and the USSR).

*Fifth*, they liked *participatory democracy* - open membership - one member, one vote. They felt it was an idea which would produce results, economic benefits, more real income. *Not for profit, but for service*, refunds on excess profits, *doing what's best for the consumer*.

*Sixth*, and last, it accorded with their *philosophy/or religious beliefs* about how people should relate to each other - cooperating together without giving up privacy and individuality, without being submerged in a totalitarian social order. It could be a revolution, but a quiet and peaceful one.

It was, therefore, an economic, social and spiritual movement. Its base, however, was economic. It had to show product as well as process.

*Why did we leave and why did we stay?* We left when we failed, or when the need was gone or when we were tired. We stayed when our coops were successes, when they achieved their purposes.

There are enough success experiences here, and around the world to prove that coops can work. Some of these coops have grown, and grown large. Perhaps sometimes too large, too impersonal, too much like the establishment. But these large coops have strength, they have career opportunities, they have financial resources, they have know-how, they have growth. And *growth* for a coop doesn't mean just getting larger. It means bringing more people, more economic muscle into the cooperative sector, and this has got to be good.

So for us, consumer cooperation was a vision yoked to a practical method.



OLLIE TURNBULL - (Executive Director of the Cooperative College of Canada, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan) The credit union system in Canada has always been thought of as part of the cooperative system. And money is rolling in there like you wouldn't believe...you get what's called an exponential curve. For instance, in my own province of Saskatchewan, credit unions were first started in 1937 with \$200 by a group of people in a Savings & Loan community. And one guy put in most of the money, and then took a loan out right away to see if it would work. That's true! Well, the assets of that total system this year was up to \$1.2 billion and it's accumulating at the rate of about a million per month. So there's large amounts of capital coming in, and all that capital is owned and controlled by the members in that province.

Last year the cooperatives in our province turned out about 400 million bushels of wheat. The farmland is controlled by cooperatives. We don't worry about a monopoly of cooperatives: *that's exactly what we're about*. You've just simply got to get that muscle. Last year, the cooperative dispersed \$25 million in capital refunds. Now if that had been a privately owned company, it would have made 25 more millionaires, and you wouldn't even have to live there to get it. That money all went back to the farmlands....

Well the issues now, I see as this: developing ways to look at the quality of life within a cooperative, particularly the work space. If a cooperative is different, if we *say* it's different, then by God, it ought to look different, and the people who work in it should feel this difference. Now there's no body of theory to study how you manage a coop. All the research and the literature on management has come out of non-cooperative enterprises. So that's what you get when you go to a college of commerce. So when a cooperative hires a manager, they get a person who's really trained on the literature. And if there is a difference in managing a coop and a non-coop enterprise, you wouldn't find it from that manager. It's what's called a self-fulfilling prophecy.

MORRIE LIPPMAN - (Briarpatch Coop) I'd like to confuse the issue so I'm going to give you three different examples which will tend to distort words such as *commitment* and *participation* as follows: There's a coop outfit in Eau-Claire, Wisconsin which runs a business dealing with practically everything the family could want. They have a food store, restaurant, clothing, gasoline and everything imaginable. It's all under one roof, and I guess sales volume is about \$20 million a year. Why do the citizens of Eau-Claire stream to the coop? They'd be damn fools for staying away. They pay only 3 to 4% markup. There is *only* a Board of Directors and no other committees. And if you call their shopping there *commitment* or *participation*, well tell me, and I'll develop a different understanding of what the words are.

There's a coop in British Columbia, a town of maybe 20,000 in an area with a total of 50,000 people. This tiny, little area flocks to the coop. There are 7,000 families, more than half the population. The average purchase each time you come to the coop is \$45. The reason why



there aren't more than 7,000 families who join is that the coop simply can't accomodate anymore in the two shops, so they closed membership. And do you know what the motivation of all those families who are in there and want to get in? They can save at least 15% on the price of the things they need. So much for *philosophy, subtlety, idealism, participation and commitment*. There is only a Board. There are no committees other than the Board. It's true that the Board doesn't get paid: it's a contribution they like to make. So that's the limit of *altruism* in that situation.

As against those two examples, I'd like to bring in dramatic and (I believe) proper distinction, the fact that Wheatville and Briarpatch in California have *compulsory* contributions by the membership, asking something like 3 hours a month. It's part of the contract. Involvement is *in* the contract. Now is that *commitment*, is that *participation*? I promised I would confuse you, and offer those as my confusions. □

### FOOD CO-OP NOOZ IS DEAD

After three quarters of a year of publishing inactivity FOOD CO-OP NOOZ has finally died. FOOD CO-OP NOOZ was first published in January 1974. It was the third attempt (Synergy, Rochester and Intergalactic Food Bird, Boston Food Co-op) at a national publication attempting to serve the quickly growing food co-op movement. All three attempts failed and for very similar reasons. All three were premature--ideas whose time had not come. There was and is a lack of energy to publish a national newsletter/paper/periodical. This lack of energy derives from several sources. There has never been enough money to produce a national publication. Although FOOD CO-OP NOOZ was the best funded of the three, it never had the money to pay the staff necessary for its publication. The American Friends Service Committee gave the NOOZ invaluable support to get it started, and Chicago's Loop College helped fund the NOOZ until last June. However, the NOOZ was never self-supporting. Although the NOOZ sent out to all the food co-ops in the nation there were fewer than 500 individual subscriptions and 30 bulk subscriptions.

People's commitment to the NOOZ also began to dry up as staff workers began to question priorities in organizing. Should energy go into a national publication when local co-ops and federations don't even have viable business organizations necessary for survival? Many NOOZ staffers working with the Chicago collective decided to begin working with the Chicago Warehouse (GIP-C) and area co-ops. Austin staffers decided to work with a study group on why co-ops are failing and on a new storefront co-op. There was a definite trend back to grassroots local organizing.

This question of priorities has always been a problem among the readership. The NOOZ has never been accountable to the constituency it was supposed to serve--food co-ops. The NOOZ was not accountable to local needs, because local people didn't have the energy after working on local activities to give feedback or write for the NOOZ. Without this accountability to local co-ops, the local co-ops never felt responsible for the

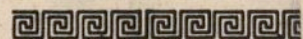


survival of the NOOZ (through subscribing to it and writing for it.).

So if a national periodical isn't viable, do we communicate nationally, and if so, how? National communication is important, but primary energy needs to be focused locally and regionally. The easiest way to accomplish this is through newsletter exchanges and the support of regional newsletters. Austin Community Project was exchanging newsletters with over fifty co-ops all over the nation. Energy can go into producing a local or regional newsletter to serve the area's needs. Then through the exchange of these newsletters a national network of communications is created. As the needs for more formal means of communication are created, the energy will be there to fulfill those needs. However, at this point in time energy needs to be focused on regional and local needs. □

We recommend readers and subscribers of the NOOZ to support these regional periodicals: COMMON GROUND, Main P.O. Box 24112, Oakland, Ca. 94623; NEFCO Newsletter, 8 Ashford St., Allon, Ma. 02134; MFFC Newsletter, 211 Charles, Ann Arbor, Mich. 48103; DIGESTER'S READER, 1335 Gilson Madison, Wis. 53715; TURNOVER, 3030 20th St., San Francisco, Ca. 94110; CATALIST, 304 E. First Ave., Vancouver, Canada; and SCOOP, P.O. Box 721 Powderhorn Station, Minneapolis, Minn. 55407.

Cooperatively in Struggle Gary Newton



Communities Magazine WOULD BE INTERESTED IN PUBLISHING AN ANNUAL ISSUE FOCUSING ON national food coop nooz, IF THERE WERE A STRONG AND KNOWLEDGEABLE GROUP LIKE MINNEAPOLIS' SCOOP INTERESTED IN COORDINATION. ANY TAKERS?



OLD FASHIONED

COMMUNITY



*austin*

AUSTIN COMMUNITY PROJECT

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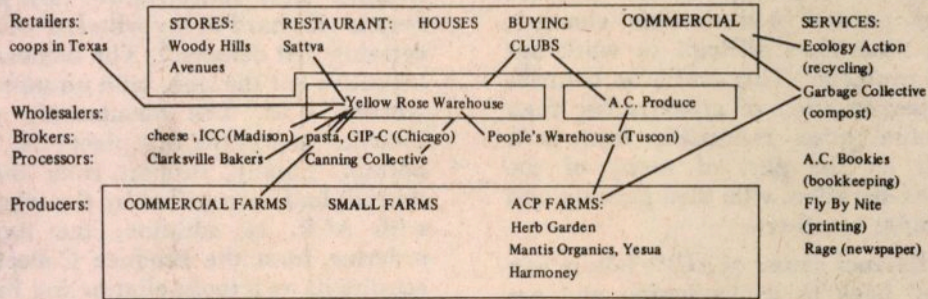
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A YEAR AND A HALF AGO, **Communities** ATTEMPTED AN OVERVIEW OF URBAN, COOPERATIVE COMMUNITY IN AMERICA. AS A PIECE OF ONGOING HISTORY - **The Movement for a New Society** IS STRONGER THAN EVER (SEE THE NEXT ISSUE, # 27 FOR CONFIRMATION); BOTH THE INSTITUTE FOR LOCAL SELF-RELIANCE AND STRONGFORCE ARE FLOURISHING; IN MINNEAPOLIS, THE **People's Warehouse**, WHICH WAS SEIZED, HAS GONE UNDER, BUT THE ALTERNATIVE WAREHOUSE, **Dance**, AND THE COOPS ARE DOING FINE; THE **National Food Coop Nooz** IS OUT OF BUSINESS, BUT THE **Directory** CONTINUES... AND AUSTIN COMMUNITY PROJECT?

# AUSTIN, a Time of Changes

Two years ago, Austin Community Project (ACP) was in its heyday. Affiliated with it were two coop food stores, two neighborhood food buying clubs, four organic farms, a produce distributing collective, a tools maintenance and rental collective, a bakery collective, a canning collective, several housing coops, a vegetarian restaurant, a recycling collective, and more. 1000 to 1500 people were members of the organization, and 25-30 people were on the payroll. ACP was a federation that tied all these various groups together, and attempted to provide some economic services, some coordination of functions and some collective leadership to the community. ACP had grand dreams (*goals*) of changing society. There were and always have been people who were not associated with ACP, but for many people, it was *where it was happenin'*.

AUSTIN COMMUNITY PROJECT (and other Austin collectives) Economic structure 10/18/75



One year ago, **Communities Magazine** wrote of ACP, *Food turns out to be nice to work with: everyone needs it; there's a reasonable cash flow; jobs get created; stores become gathering places; associated services spring up [restaurants, bakeries, canning]; coordinative functions develop [warehouses, trucking and stable relationships with producers]. One of the most coherent developments of this process has been in Austin. (Note: that issue, #19, contains a reasonable description of ACP for those interested in specifics.)*

Today, ACP lies in ashes and is only a strong memory for those once actively involved (or an ever-present hassle for those saddled with tying up the loose ends). Exactly what happened and why is not easily answered.

I suspect that what has been happening here - collapse, retreat, regrouping - is occurring on a wider scale than just Austin. I hope some of these articles...two perspectives on the collapse of ACP...a look at several current ventures...and two speculations on where we might go...strike a responsive chord with people around the country, and help others avoid some of the dead-end alleys we have run down.

Wayne Clark

# The Collapse

The causes of the failure of ACP are numerous and I don't pretend to understand all of them. That will take considerable study (which we should do) but I think I can outline a few of the causes now which were at the heart of the failure.

Before I get into my explanation, I should point out that one's view of the collapse and problems of ACP is very dependent on the purpose the person had in mind for ACP in the first place. For example, if someone thought that ACP's purpose was to provide cheap food, then the collapse can be explained as a failure to provide cheap enough food to attract price-conscious shoppers. Or one could explain the failure by highlighting ACP's and the coop's inefficiencies. One the other hand, I think ACP's primary purpose for existence, the reason why most people got involved with it, was the desire on the part of the members to do something to change the destructive capitalist society around them. This is not to say that the majority of the members were socialists, because ACP lacked the political clarity necessary to lead the members in this direction. But I certainly think that the members did not like the society they saw and wanted something quite different.

Consequently, I think ACP's biggest problem was its lack of a unified purpose to guide its actions. Many people joined the coops for such reasons as cheap food, natural food, friendly atmosphere, spiritual fulfillment, cooperative ideals, and social change. Several of these purposes conflict (e.g., natural food vs. social change); consequently, it was oftentimes difficult to work out adequate solutions to problems. This confusion contributed greatly to the perpetuation of crises rather than their solution. Perpetual crises eventually lead to a deterioration of will on the part of many of the activists/leaders in the federation, who then gave up and quit trying to keep things together.

Although many of the root causes of ACP's failure can and should be traced back to its beginning and are inherent in its structure, ACP's problems began to multiply in the last nine months. In about October, ACP started to develop serious problems. Active and functioning committees (e.g., Budget, Agriculture, Community Development Stock) dissolved. Attendance at Council and Assembly meetings dwindled. Store membership fell. Coordinators quit and were not replaced. Direct Funding was not being paid. Information/communication channels deteriorated. The farm labor system stopped functioning. Finances were a wreck and loans were defaulted. Personal energy approached zero. Surprisingly, all these problems of member involvement were developing at a time when the coop stores were improving. Their product line was slowly expanding. They were cleaner and the appearance was nicer. The equipment was improving and workers were becoming more experienced and efficient. Finances were more controlled. Apparently the members were losing interest in what the coop had to offer.

All of these problems were further complicated by major problems in one of the food coop storefronts, the Avenues, which had been inhibited from the beginning by its lack of neighborhood ties. In contrast to Woody Hills which grew out of a neighborhood-based buying club into a storefront, the Avenues was started by John Dickerson, myself and a few others as a storefront in a very top-down fashion. It had almost no neighborhood ties, not even involving the only major coop organization in the area, the Hyde Park Coop food buying club. I think the only reason the Avenues did so well at first was the strong, though controversial leadership of Mike Smith. The beginning of the end started when Mike was ousted by a group with an anti-elitist, anti-authoritarian outlook. Two of the women in that group eventually joined the store collective and carried with them an anti-ACP bias. This bias was supposedly coupled with a pro-neighborhood orientation, but the Avenues never did much to develop stronger neighborhood ties.

A Joint Committee was created as a vehicle by which the housing coops and food coops were to jointly administer the crisis period, and the anti-ACP bias was complimented by an anti-Joint Committee position. A confrontation ensued over workers' salaries which the Avenues' store collective *lost* (*lost* is not the right word because it's hard to say who *lost* what, but the collective certainly felt defeated). The demoralization of the work collective left the store with no support whatsoever. The workers quit. The membership was never strongly attached to it in the first place; i.e., no support from the bottom. Finally, support from the top (where it all started) had been stifled by the workers' refusal to work with ACP. In addition, the Avenues had stopped ordering from the Produce Collective, had started to acquire its own tools, eliminating the need for the Tools Collective, had almost stopped selling the Bakery bread, and had never supported the Bookies (the bookkeeping collective). This lack of support, combined with other problems to kill all those collectives except the Bakery. Finally, since the Avenues was part of the legal structure of ACP, the collapse of the former killed the latter.

But by no means should all the blame for ACP's collapse be put on the Avenues. That was only the straw which broke the camel's back. Given the stew of aforementioned problems that ACP had at the time, the authoritarian, panicked creation of the Joint Committee was the catalyst that caused the dissolution. The Joint Committee was created by a March 17 Council that was brow-beat by College House and ICC (two of the large and financially stable groupings of housing coops) into accepting their proposal. The meeting did not attempt to find the *best* solution to the problems at hand, but was forced to ratify the housing coops proposal (in which they held veto power over any decisions that the Joint

# of ACP

## two subjective views

Committee made) through threats of liquidation of ACP and the stores. Later it was discovered the ICC was only liable for \$200 per store (or a total of \$400) and not \$2,000 - and that College House was not liable at all. The bank officer in charge of the accounts was at least as responsible as the stores for what happened.

The housing coops were very concerned about their relations with the bank and their reputation in the business community, but I think that the crisis was not as bad as it was supposed to be. The March 17 meeting was the beginning of the end because it totally alienated almost all the people who had been active in the past. This created a situation in which a small group of people attempted to do a massive amount of work with almost no support from the members. In a very short time, these few people burned out, unable to handle the workload.

To sum up, I feel that ACP failed primarily because it lacked a clearly defined, common purpose - thus giving rise to many problems of member involvement. These

problems of member involvement were compounded by the failure of the Avenues due to isolation of the coop from both its members and ACP, coupled with the demoralization of the work collective, and by the alienation of the ACP activists, growing out of the authoritarian creation of the Joint Committee.

I started this article by pointing out that this is not an objective description of what happened. All people interpret and describe *reality* from their own perspectives. If you agree with me that social change should be the primary purpose of coops, then you will probably agree with my description of the causes of ACP's collapse. If you don't agree with me, then you will highlight other causes of the collapse. Many of these other causes probably did contribute to the collapse - it's just where you place your emphasis.

## 2 - John Dickerson and Bill Meachem

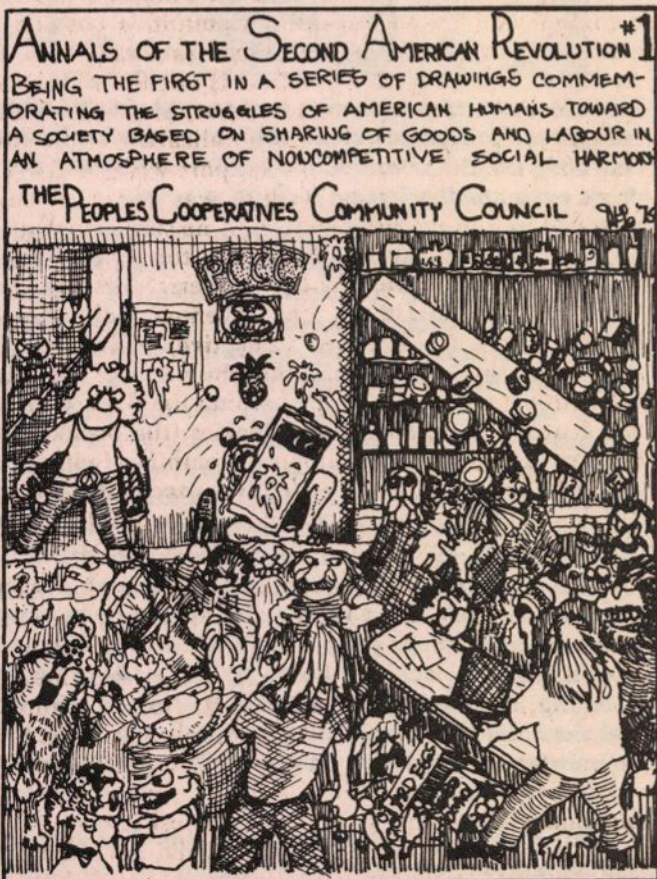
Austin Community Project began five years ago. In March of 1972 about 20 people met in a natural food store near the University of Texas to talk about developing an alternative method of distributing organic food in Austin. ACP began a heady 2 year climb in activity until the spring of 1974 there were perhaps 1000 members of the organization. ACP was a federation of consumer coops, working collectives and farms. Its purpose was to help create and maintain a *cooperative community* in central Texas. Two years later the organization dissolved amidst panic, accusations and lots of bad feelings.

The reasons for the collapse are many. As important as any is the fact that for the core of activists that kept it going, ACP was simply no longer fun. It was a struggle. It was no longer able to provide a feeling of unity with other activists, rather they were divided into various camps in dispute with each other. The burnout had hit in a big way.

The vision had by far outreached our grasp. Our organization was economically premature and impractical. We had a pathetic lack of capital and a gross lack of specific skills. We had a lot of *bozo* ideas. We started a warehouse, for instance, before we had the business to support a warehouse. The problem went beyond economics and into ideological conflict. We couldn't even agree on how our jobs were to be structured. At one point some people felt that the chief responsibility of all paid workers in the federation was to make their paid positions obsolete by organizing that function so that the *people could do it for themselves*. Others felt that the creation of paying jobs in the cooperative community was a major goal. These ideas did not mix, and this was only one of many conflicts.

### COMMUNITY: Vision vs. Reality

Along the side of ACP's letterhead stationary was the phrase, *Building a Cooperative Community*. This word,



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

this concept, this rhetoric was constant in ACP all the way up to the end, in one way or another. The search for community was a whole lot of what ACP was all about.

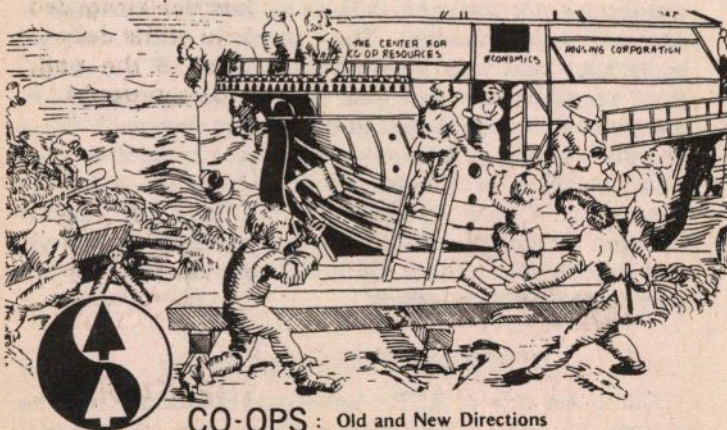
The New Wave of coops, of which ACP was part, largely emerged from the anti-war, New Left ideas of the late '60's and early '70's. One of the New Left's early and most important concepts was community. *The function of politics is to bring people into community*, was a phrase from the Port Huron statement. But most people who started coops in order to build community had never read this statement. They didn't need to. The word and the hope were everywhere.

At the same time that New Left political activists were marching, organizing and storming the campus, others were moving to the country to form rural, intentional communities. Both, in their own ways, were trying to overcome the competitive alienation that walled people off from their neighbors. But the coop community steered a middle course - less strident than the political activists, the coopers stayed in their urban settings to try to form community.

But what was this community supposed to be? For the most part, people didn't really know (although lots of ideas were blown around). One thing that most people agreed on, at least at first, was that this community had a direct correlation to the neighborhood that the coop existed in. For instance, although those initially involved were almost exclusively young, white, college-educated, leftists - eventually everyone in the neighborhood would be able to use and support the coop store, including the Blacks, the old folks, even the young liberal professionals (these labels refer to the social situation that exists in West Austin).

And then, once everyone was using the coop store, gradually people would get used to working with each other in their neighborhoods. Some bright people would find more and more things that this group could do. Before long, the neighborhood coop would not only have a food store, but also would provide itself with hardware, would own houses, would provide day care, health care, and on and on. The neighborhood could eventually contract with the city to provide some of its own municipal services. The road to greater localism and self-reliance seemed to be open.

But what happened? After a few years of supposed



CO-OPS : Old and New Directions

community organizing, the coop members were still overwhelmingly young, middle-class, well-educated, health food-organic oriented, and counter-cultural. Even though other people lived all around us, they were not in the coops. What had happened, from the perspective of neighborhood community organizing, was that another *wedge* had been driven into the neighborhood. Now the hippies didn't even buy their food in the same stores!

Among other things, we had created a *Catch-22*. We had no capital and damn little knowledge about our business. We had to depend on volunteerism - a lot from the principle people involved, a fair amount from the regular members. This need, and even seemingly a desire to institutionalize volunteerism, coupled with the revolutionary spirit of the times attracted to the coop (and brought about a dependence of the coop on)



counter-cultural people who had enough leisure time to volunteer. To a great extent, the overwhelming image of the coop as *young-white-hippy-types* kept many people from even coming in and looking around.

A specific example of this was the problem of natural foods vs. serving the neighborhood. The coops started when there was a tremendous growth of interest in natural foods. Natural foods were healthier, and we could avoid supporting big agribusiness, so for the most part, early New Wave coops (the *Old Wave* coops were those dating from the thirties) carried them almost exclusively. In our West Austin neighborhood, many people want white flour, some processed foods, ice cream, beer, and so on. Not only couldn't you find them in our coop, but you were sometimes treated rather condescendingly, as ones who had not yet realized the cosmic significance of brown rice. Although there's a whole lot of truth to the perspective of those who support natural foods, many people were excluded. This was a tough question, one that hung up hundreds of hours of meeting time and that created scores of unfriendly relationships. The coop's inventory policy determined its membership, and its membership perpetuated its inventory policy.

This was only one of the problems that stifled the development of our early vision of community. Another was that it became clear, over the period of a year or so in 1975 and '76 that we really couldn't

create a community - even among ourselves! There were too many conflicting ideas of what we were supposed to be about. Would there be worker control of the workplace, or member control of the coop? Would there be some central functions [like bookkeeping, fund-raising, education, labor coordination] funded by the various coops and collectives, or should each group go off on its own?

When Satva, the vegetarian restaurant, was about to fold because of internal bickering and poor management, the ACP Finance and Accounting coordinators, with a few others, went in to set up a decent bookkeeping system, some cash control, etc. and to try to smooth the decision-making process. Word spread throughout the federation that Satva needed help, and many came to work there, or just buy lunch. Satva was saved from failure for another year and a half, but many Satva workers muttered darkly about *ACP bureaucrats with briefcases*, and bitter feelings remained.

ACP collapsed, finally, because many groups simply didn't pay their share of the costs. But this was because ACP was viewed as *them*, as *elitists* gathering every other Wednesday to decide things without being in touch with the grass roots. The *grass roots* (or at least the activists in some of the groups who claimed to represent the *grass roots*) conveniently forgot that it was ACP workers who had raised the capital (and incurred lots of debts) that had started many of the businesses in the first place.

Many of these activists were glad for ACP's help when they needed it (for fundraising or publicity or labor) but when ACP needed help to pay its bills, many were reluctant to chip in (though not all).

One of the strong points of our federation of coops, collectives and farms was what we called *labor charge*. In many coops around the U.S., members are required or requested to put in some labor time in the coop every month, to cut costs. Austin was unique in that a person's labor could be done in some of the other groups in the federation, as well as one's own coop. For instance, one could get labor credit in the food store for working on one of the farms, or the recycling project. At its best, this was an excellent way of sharing knowledge and experience. Nearly everyone who spent a Saturday on the farm came back feeling not only pleasantly weary, but part of a greater community whole than they had before. For a while this system worked pretty well, but then some of the same problems cropped up. The person who had been coordinating the labor exchanges decided to quit - to let the job be done by a volunteer committee. The committee didn't work, but then no one to replace the original coordinator could be found. The work was just too alienating, because the attitudes of the dominant society got in the way. No matter how much we *said* that work was creative, meaningful, learning and sharing experience, most people took work to be drudgery, to be avoided if at all possible.

We could go on and on with the grisly details.



Conflicts between the stores and produce-buying collective, for instance, led the stores to buy from commercial distributors, and undercut what had once been a chief source of revenue for the federation. Conflicts between the produce-buyers and the farms led the produce-buyers sometimes to buy from commercial distributors in town and re-sell to the coops at a mark-up; when the coops found out they could get the same produce from the commercial distributors cheaper, they were (*rightly, we think*) outraged. The farms knew what was happening long before anyone else would admit it. When their *labor charge* crews quit showing up on the weekends, they determined to go ahead and make it on their own, without support from the in-town coops. So far, they've succeeded.

The straw that broke the camels back came when our bank informed the housing coops (which had guaranteed the food coops' overdrafts with a \$2,000 certificate of deposit) that their money was in danger of being confiscated, because the food coops were overdrawn some \$1,800! The housing coop workers, dismayed to find that many food coopers didn't think the problem was very significant, insisted that a *joint committee* of housing and food coop people be formed to oversee the food coop operations. The housing coops would have veto power over the committees decisions, and the committee would have the authority to make binding decisions for the food coops. This caused an uproar at what was probably the best-attended meeting in ACP history. Housing coopers were amazed to find that some people didn't think the coops' relations with the bank were particularly important, and some food coopers were outraged at the *authoritarian, macho elitism* of the housing coop workers. The Joint Committee struggled along for several months, one store paid off its debt to the bank, the other store folded, and in the end, nobody wanted to even hear the word *coop* again!



THE FADING  
FAT CATS

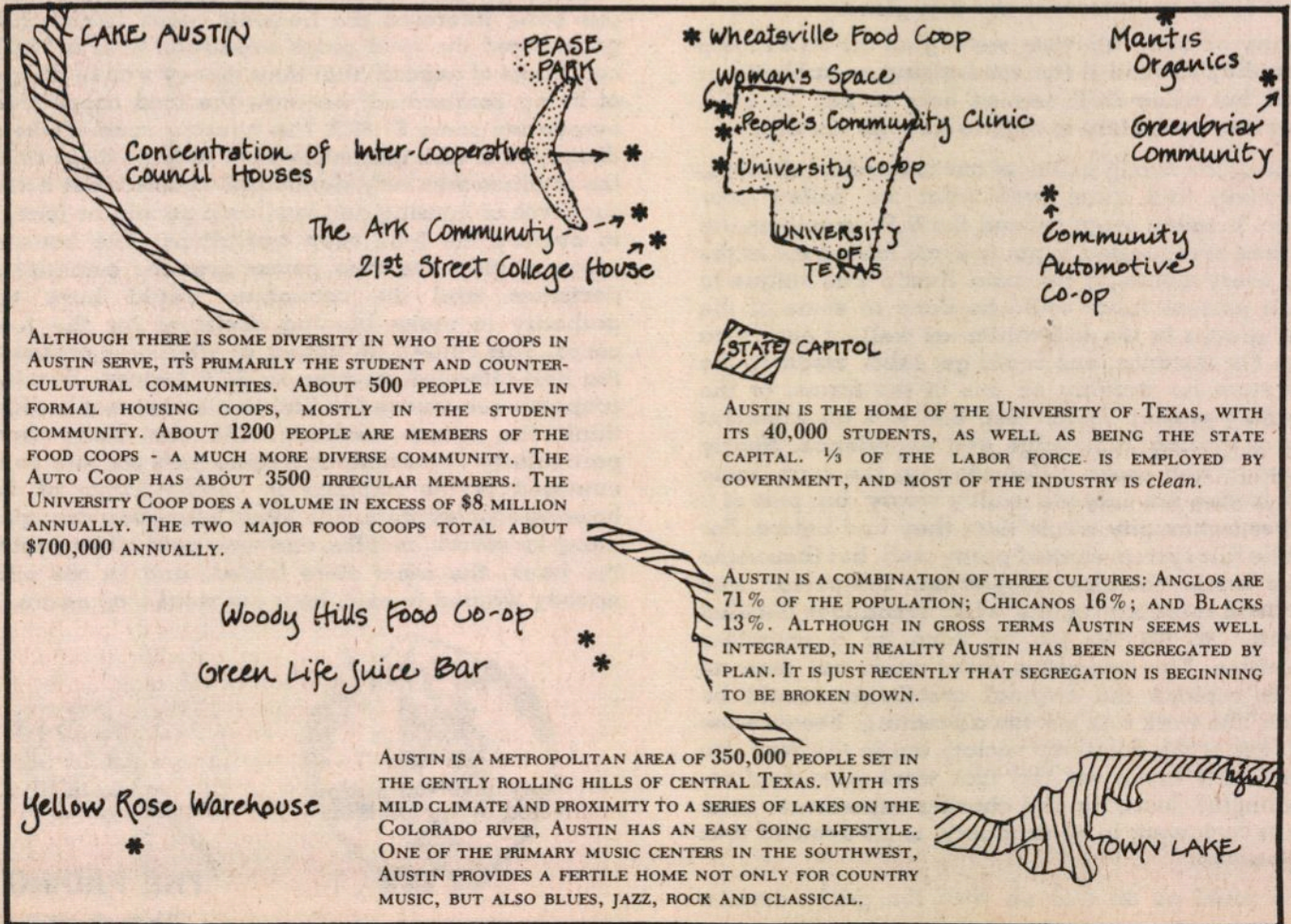
# The Coop Community Today

After the smoke, it was clear that there was no longer a functioning federation of coops and collectives. Nevertheless, some of the member coops continued on their own, and appear to have a good chance of surviving. The ones that couldn't make it on their own, folded. But Woody Hills managed to raise a couple thousand dollars through benefit concerts by friendly musicians, and moved to a bigger and better location, and the other remaining store, Wheatsville, armed with much more technical know-how, management skills, and almost enough capital, has grown and prospered in the University area.

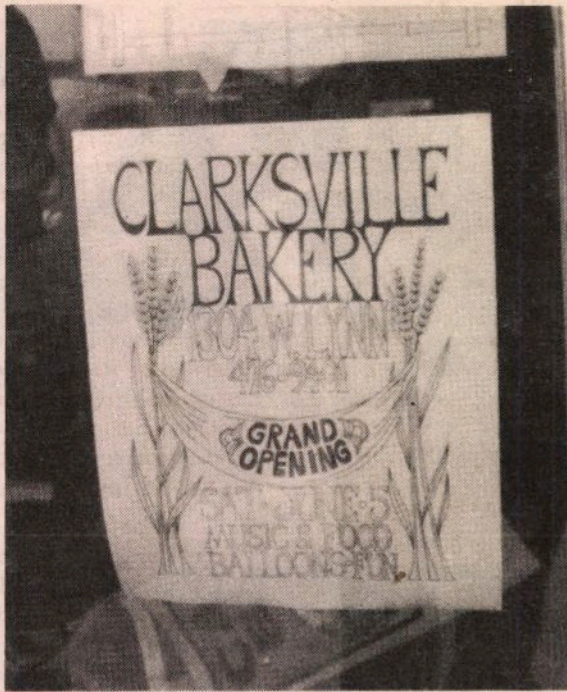
We don't really have a *coop community* today, if we ever did. What we have instead is a pluralism of separate activities, each with its own group of people, who, more or less strongly, identify with it as a major focus of their lives. The food stores are separate now, with different policies on *natural foods*; their memberships don't overlap. The farms, though friendly to the coops, sell many places in town, and have no formal ties to the coops. There are some focus-points of activity and social identity that were always fairly separate, and have continued that way: the Community Clinic, the *alternative* newspaper, the Auto Coop, Greenbriar School. Some of these are doing well, others still totter on the brink of collapse. The women's movement has certainly had its effect on

the coops, but now has its own bookstore and counseling space, for women only. There's Bread and Roses, a school for socialist education and organizing, with a feminist print shop (a separate entity) with its own group of committed activists. Recently there's been some interest among the various spiritual, meditation and yoga groups in coming together for mutual sharing, but this too is quite apart from the other *alternative* groups in town (except for individuals who are members of both communities). And the housing coops, which have always been primarily oriented to the relatively transient student market, continue to operate without formal connections with other groups (though they are organized themselves in two major groupings, ICC and College Houses).

For now, this pluralism isn't a bad thing. Each group is a focus for its own members; and although community isn't viewed as the primary intentional goal of many of the groups, in fact it is a reality for members of each group. It's not trying to be one big community, it's many separate ones - a few based on geographic neighborhoods, most on a commonality of interest among their members, (where one's identity is a function of one's social, rather than geographical, location). Everyone is certainly breathing easier, and time is gradually healing the wounds of the recent past.







Clarksville Bakery

The Clarksville Bakery has been a collectively owned and operated business serving the local area and the coop stores and houses in the Austin area. It began a few years ago with the help of Concerned Citizens for the Development of West Austin and the Woody Hills Food Coop. In the spring of 1976, with a loan from the University Coop, the Bakery moved to its present location and became an independent store. By September, the Bakery was in the financial doldrums and only one person, Mary Robinson, was willing or able to put out the effort to keep it going. At this point three of us decided to make the effort together, hoping that within a few months the Bakery would be self-supporting. Six months later (at this time) after much sacrifice from a number of good-hearted people, the Bakery was at another point of no money, low energy and not enough people to run it. So we decided to close out and sell it at the end of March.

The financial problems of the Bakery are no doubt similar to many small businesses in this society; there is a need for either financial backing or enough volunteer labor and community support to survive the initial period of development. The Collective (members of the Bakery) always considered itself a community project, yet practical experience told us it was our responsibility in the end. The community idea has been difficult to realize in the face of the generally alienated work patterns in our society, as well as the emphasis on monetary exchange in our social relations. Perhaps worst of all, because of the struggle to survive, the Bakery was never able to even approach the problem of mal-distribution of wealth in our society. A great many people, particularly the large black population in the nearby Clarksville area, simply couldn't afford our products.

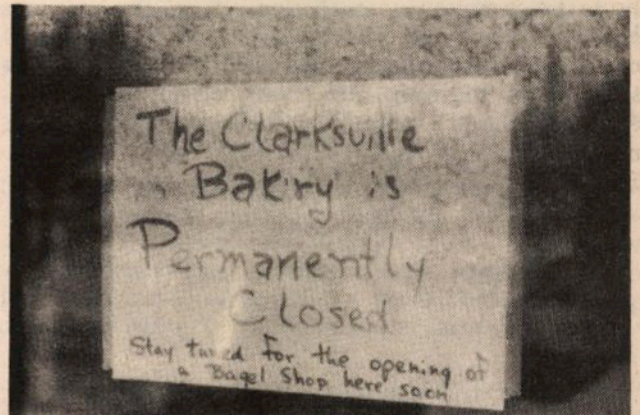
Within the Collective, however, there has developed a sense of community, a sense of responsibility toward one another, an ability to listen, respect and work with one another. But there have been problems, too. The anti-capitalist attitude that pervades coop-type activities

easily lends itself to a rejection of both efficiency and management, both of which are vital parts of any business operation. This was also true of the Bakery to some degree, and caused problems in communication and operational procedures.

In a nutshell, prior to **cooperation** comes the skills and knowledge needed to **operate** on the practical level. These skills are no more capitalist than socialist. They are simply the practical tools needed to function in the actual world. What needs to be challenged is the **purposes** to which these skills have been and are being used for - the accumulation of wealth per se, status or power.

To reorient ourselves towards values of human well-being, service and responsibility is the key to creating a consciously cooperative society. In the final analysis, the survival of the Bakery, or other cooperative enterprises, is not the criteria by which the coop movement should be judged, but rather the values which we hold and demonstrate.

*Roger Peace, Clarksville Bakery Collective*



Mantis Organics

Cooperation between such diverse groups as a farm collective with two or three members and relatively large consumer groups was hard to formulate and harder to achieve. The life experiences of these people differed considerably and misunderstandings were commonplace. After about a year of struggle, we decided that a useful form of cooperation would be for the consumer groups to provide labor, which would allow the farms to expand production and lower prices. This involved some risk for the farms. Mantis Organics borrowed thousands of dollars, planting more than it could possibly take care of in an act of faith that the promised labor would show up.

On several occasions, the labor system faltered and fields that needed attention were set back or lost, but for the most part the experiment worked while it lasted. It also turned *cooperation* into something tangible for the farmer, and over 1,500 people had the experience of learning and working in the country before ACP labor went out of existence. Two of the farms which had been minimally involved withdrew at this point, relatively unaffected by the problems. The Mantis Organics farm and garden were different: they had attempted to expand production using borrowed capital and large amounts of community labor and were not set up to continue without the labor. Fortunately, labor support

continued during this time while Mantis Organics attempted to reorganize, and the crops were not harmed.

Mantis had been essentially a two or three person collective with other people participating as live-in students of agriculture, part-time workers, working visitors of the one-day labor charge volunteers, mostly through the labor system. Mantis had run a garden and vegetable packaging center on the edge of Austin and a farm about eighty miles away. Since the labor system was ending, the collective needed to rapidly expand. It did so by encouraging people who had been previously involved in Mantis through the labor system to become full members. This took some convolutions, but there's been some success. There are now four people at the farm, four at the garden, and one who rotates between these two operations. The farm is still understaffed, but Mantis can survive.

Mantis Organics borrowed money from ACP in 1975, predicting that it would break even in '76 and start substantial repayment in '77. This is about what happened, although its economic growth took some unexpected turns as it adapted to the end of ACP. It started doing its own marketing when the produce collective went out of existence. It had to change its growing and marketing policy to include vigorous marketing to non-cooperative businesses. At present, most of its sales are outside of the coops, although its standing policy is to supply them first.

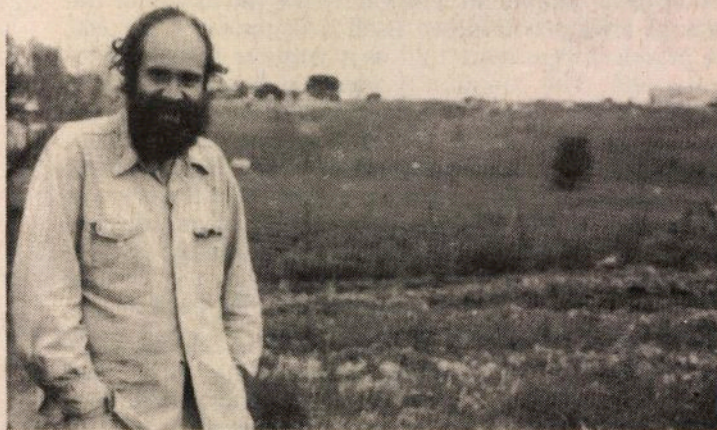
Mantis also expanded its line of products. It established an alfalfa and mung bean sprouting operation which now sells over a ton of sprouts each month. This was a major development since regular sprouts customers buy surplus vegetables when available, and the continual revenue from sprouts has stabilized Mantis' economic situation.

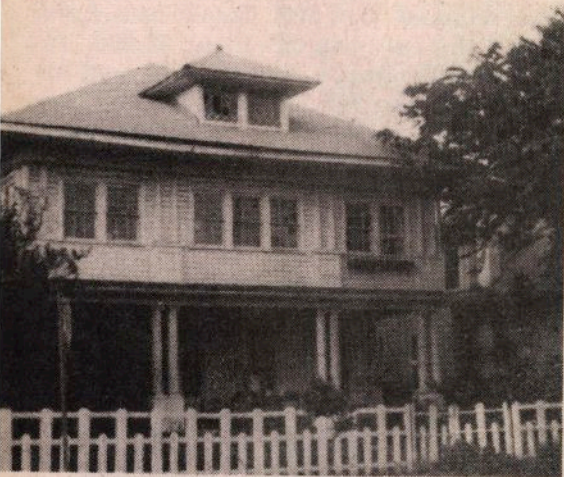
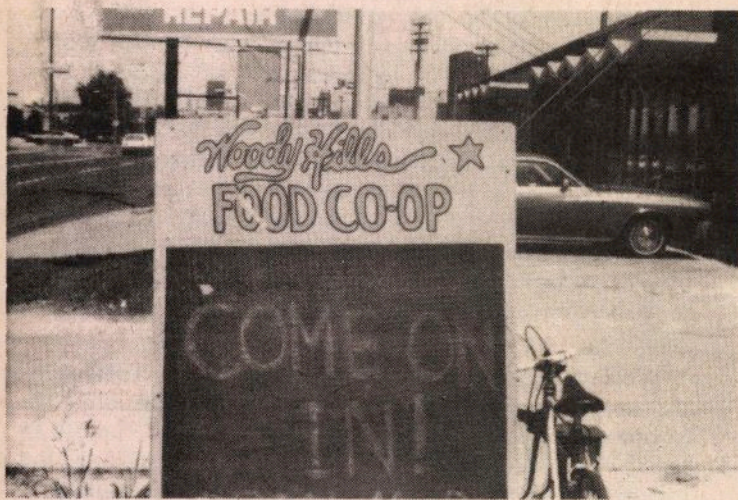
We at Mantis feel fortunate to have participated in the ACP experiment, and believe that we probably wouldn't have survived without it. We were developed and flexible enough to survive its fall and continue our agricultural program. We will continue to operate and pay back loans as quickly as possible. We will continue to grow relatively large amounts of organic produce for our friends in ways that are ecologically sound, open to public participation and inspection, oriented towards meeting the needs of the people. 1976 was a year of major changes for us, but our basic goals remain the same. We were understandably preoccupied with our internal problems during this time. Now that the basic changes are accomplished, we intend to continue to serve the community at large, and will attempt to establish viable forms of urban-rural cooperation.

*Zig Smigaj, Mantis Organics*

### **Wheatsville Food Coop**

Today is March 15, 1977. It's Wheatsville Food Coop's first birthday, and about 700 members are celebrating. Let me tell you about this one year old. Our strategy for serving us is to carry almost anything any member wants, but provide thorough information on the nutritional, ecological, and political implications of these products. However, we are doing a sloppy and inconsistent job of informing.





To pay for most of the expenses in our store each month, we divide a portion of the amount of money we pay for rent, utilities, staff salaries, etc. by the number of members. This now comes out to \$3 per person per month. We mark up the goods an additional amount to cover the balance of our overhead. Other than start up loans, members provide our capital. We pay in a refundable capital fee of \$2.50 each month till each member has paid in \$50. Besides these fees, each member works three hours per month in the store. We feel this helps us to understand our store better, as well as reduce our expenses.

Well now, you may want to ask Wheatsville how it feels to be one? Economically, Wheatsville is feeling pretty good. We're rapidly approaching a break even point. Our membership is increasing sharply and our volume is now around \$30,000 per month. But our health should be evaluated using various criteria. Balance sheets and income statements are not sufficient. Participation and democracy and worker control are also variables that must be measured, though we have not as yet developed adequate gauges. This is a serious criticism that should take a high priority during our second year. I feel if we don't provide ways to measure important goals such as democracy and participation, then the more easily measured variables, like profit, tend to take on disproportionate importance.

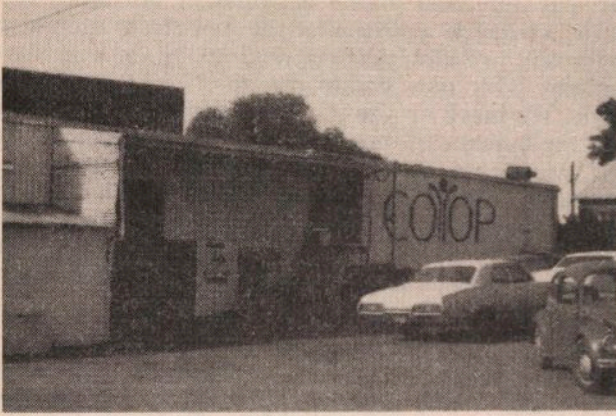
Like most infants, Wheatsville is having problems with regularity. The many stops and starts and skips are caused by our lack of experience. *We have too much backstock or we're out of stock. Sometimes we have too many people trying to work in the store and sometimes we have no one. Who knows what fees you owe? And we're changing things around trying to make things better, and some people are still doing it the old way because our communication systems are not appropriate.* But things are tightening up. A mandatory orientation that is offered once a week has helped considerably. A visit of two staff to the San Francisco Bay area coops, financed by CLUSA (the Coop League of America) also has helped us get our systems together faster.

One of the nicest characteristics that this one year old is exhibiting is the amount of participation from members. Mostly that's due to the turnips we've raised. A Wheatsville *turnip* is a member who *turns up* four hours per week to work in the store. The turnups do the more specialized jobs like helping make orders, cashiering, etc. We have one type of turnip that becomes manager for a shift. They decide what needs to be done and then suggest different tasks to the staff and other members who are working.

Although attitude and interest seem to be at a high level, we do lose members regularly (damnit). Most of the people who leave us seem to say that the share of overhead makes the store too expensive for them or that labor takes too much time. But overall, it's exciting. We have learned much from our parents, ACP and Avenues (now deceased) and our older sibling, Woody Hills (now thriving) and we're actually making it. We're surviving and thriving and there's lotsa energy and good feelings.

Now the question is, *How will Wheatsville behave during the terrible twos?* To prepare for this next year, we've formed a planning committee - but the plans have not been formulated as of today. So the following

## Woody Hills Food Coop



comments are my own and include what I think the priorities for the community should be.

In my opinion, the overriding mission of Wheatsville should be to create a structure where people have the incentive and the opportunity to meet in small geographic-based groups.

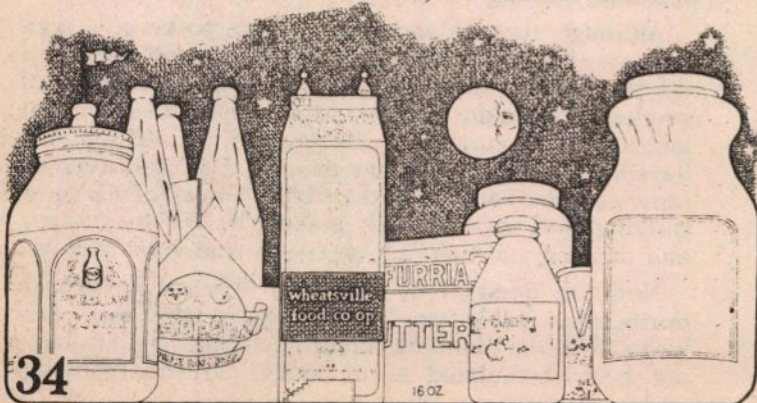
I envision the size of the groups to be 20 people or less. This allows each individual to actively participate in discussion and decision-making. The groups would elect representatives to a council. This groups-council structure allows critical information to more easily flow among coop members and encourages real member input and understanding.

The reason that a small group is important is that large structures tend to exclude people from participating, while small groups encourage it. The reason for neighborhood groups is to enhance a feeling of community and to provide a structure that could easily be used in other ways, such as for study groups and political action groups.

The trial group we have started at Wheatsville has played primarily a social role, although the group has provided suggestions that were implemented. The primary roles of a group would be communicative and participatory, although we envision groups providing services as well. Delivery of goods to the elderly in the neighborhood; recruiting, welcoming, and orienting new members; day care; and taking charge of the store for a day are examples of what could happen.

If these groups are set up in a way that encourages them to work, then Wheatsville will have many very powerful information processing units to take care of our second year and beyond.

*Bill Swanson, Wheatsville Collective*



Just four months ago, operating out of 1,000 sq. ft. storefront, maybe our two biggest day-to-day hassles were figuring out how to cram one more flavor fruit butter into the chaos on the particle-board shelves above the produce cooler and about to collapse into it, and trying to maintain sanity doing bookkeeping in an office that tripled as a storeroom and a cheese-cutting room (oh, also a kitchen). We had grown to that. We began as a church basement buying club which opened a closet-sized storefront, moved to half of a larger building a year later, then expanded to occupy the whole building.

We lost that lease in September last year, with three months to move. There was no other building available in our neighborhood. We found one suitable enough in South Austin, across the river. But neighborhood loyalties arose in protest. *A co-op is a community, a community has geographic limits.* But the will to survive won; we moved December 19.

The move was financed with risk. Small loans from members provided the only capital--about \$2,000. In January we netted \$2,000 from a benefit engineered by an old co-op member who felt, thank god, that she wanted to return the favors the co-op had always done for her. Cheap labor from co-op members minimized the cost of some fairly extensive remodeling. Credit covered the costs of electric and utility installations.



Having doubled our space in the new building we're doing our best to fill it up with inventory. Another cost that's been largely unfinanced. Our work on a \$5,000 bank loan never quite got completed: as long as the checkbook balance stays black, we allow ourselves the luxury of flakiness. And it has stayed in the black to our surprise and relief.

We expected an initial after-the-move slump. It never happened. Sales volume has risen steadily since December and continues to rise. We've gone from \$2800 to \$6500 per week. It's this boom that's allowing us the unfinanced expansion.

Why the incredible success? If we'd been advertising zealously, I'd pin it on that, but we've done no advertising. I can't see any formula jumping up and down or hitting me over the head, there are a few things people say we've *done right*.

1) Located on a main busy street, with no supermarkets nearby.

2) We're out of the closet. Compared to our old storefront, the most noticeable physical change in the new store is SPACE. We have aisles big enough to push grocery carts through. (oh how comfortable that feels!) We have room enough to create displays that are aesthetically appealing. There is enough open space around our wooden and plexi-glass grain bins that they can be seen and their handsomeness appreciated. Three big picture windows on two sides of the store let in natural light and accentuate the airy atmosphere.

3) The floor is white tile and kept clean, the shelves are kept tidy and colorful, space allows for sensible product arrangements. But there is enough funkiness (old wooden shelving, artistic wooden bulk bins dominating the entrance, a special room for herbs and one for books) to keep things from being sterile. In a coop store, for sure in ours, this balance between sterility and funkiness seems real important. A little funk, some imperfection, humanness, breaks open the barrier that divides consumer from producer, making folks a little more comfortable about going to the storeroom (a well-organized one) for rice to restock the bins themselves.

4) We have a greater variety of inventory--health food and non-health food.

Co-op politics haven't changed much here. The age-old controversy still rages: shit food vs. pure food. We have loosened a little (only a little) our interpretation of our food buying policy. We justify the shit food by displaying it right next to the pure counterpart, and plastering the shelves with little red-on-blue, *warning: bad for your health* signs. So Bama Strawberry Preserves have snuck next to the P&S Honey Apricot Butter, and canned corn and peas add a little color to the top of the produce cooler where the fresh variety is out of season (a petition asking for their removal is filling up with signatures). Even Rosarita Refries with lard have defied the no meat clause of the buying policy, and only manage to escape purging by being bought up so quickly. We've obviously not abandoned our *health food store* image. We're still the refuge of purity sought out by that *conscience-clearing, secretly-craving, Hostess-Twinkie-for-lunch-bunch*. We've stood fast on resistance to white sugar (except what's hidden among the strawberry jams and boysenberry kefir) and meat and fruit cocktail, soda pop, cigarettes, non-union lettuce, aspirin, and we had to half-price the canned apricots in heavy syrup (even though they were co-op brand) to get rid of them.

The labor requirement has changed (before the move). No longer requiring everyone to work, we reward those who do with \$1.00 per hour in food credit (to finance the additional expense, we raised the monthly fee from \$2.00 to \$3.00). The rationale was that we should not exclude those who could not work (for whatever reason) and that the positive reinforcement of rewarding labor was more in line with co-op ideals than the negative reinforcement of charging an additional fee to those who would not work. The necessity was that we needed more members because we weren't breaking even. We have quite a few people doing labor now, enough to barely get things done, about 20 cashiers each working five hours per

week, and one or two people stocking or cutting cheese every day. Last night we began talking about the possibility of returning to a mandatory labor system. We're faced with the end of one crisis and the return of another: no more financial woes, but membership non-involvement is at a peak.

How to make of a store a co-op? We left the old location with maybe 250 members, lost many in the move, and after three months count close to 600. It seems like a sudden explosion. No more labor requirement to force involvement, no more energy to do new member orientations while it's all needed in the setting up of the store and keeping up with the business expansion. Membership meetings have been poorly attended, and there is little interest in Council (board of directors) elections. We've got a lot of people still trying to figure out (or not trying) what a co-op's all about. The dilemma is that changing the situation may depend on the efforts of an energetic council, but there's a pool of apathetic members from which to form the council. Yuck.

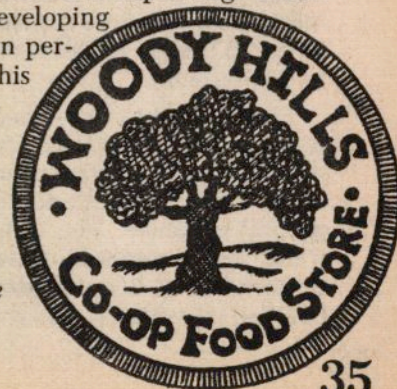
We've come to rely heavily on polls to gain member input. A little impersonal, and requiring some organized effort, but it's the closest we've come to anything that works. Currently all the hot-headed uncompromising debate over stocking policy has been set aside until we tally the results of the survey on the issue. We're asking folks if they want the store to be exclusive: politically, ecologically, nutritionally.

With the rise in sales volume, and cash-flow problems no longer plaguing us day-to-day, we're not so afraid of serious financial reporting. For the first time, weekly income-reporting has become a routine part of each Council meeting and has even managed to worm its way into the newsletter on a regular basis. salaries have been raised to poverty level, and priorities (insurance, capital improvements) have been set for spending extra money. The top-notch organizing job done on our bookkeeping system a year ago, is finally getting the follow-up it deserves. We're using it!

Inter-coop cooperation is slowly improving. Though the two Austin co-op food stores are no longer dependent on each other for joint ordering, we are now building other informal ties. A mutual lack of respect and sense of competition blocking our unity is being cast aside. As each store develops its own independent strength we feel more able to spare time and energy for sharing. The staffs have begun getting together for Sunday breakfast, and there is talk of retreats and inter-co-op soccer teams. We've cooperated on advertising. Our informal communications on supplier research are improving. Could be we're on our way to re-developing more formal ties. It's my own personal hope that we will do this only at the point when each of us is strong enough individually.

Sue White,

Woody Hills Collective

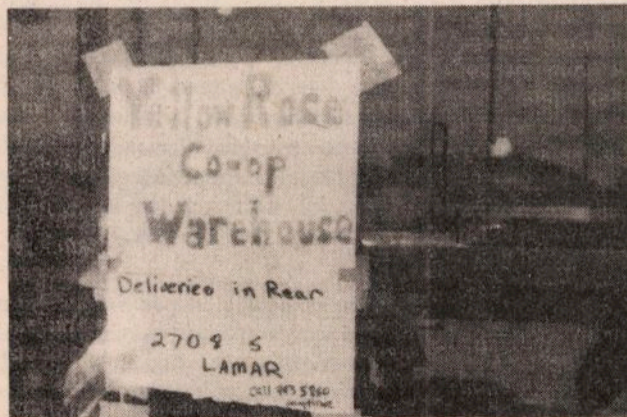


## TFCC

Although the Texas Federation of Cooperating Communities came into formal existence in January of this year with the final adoption of its by-laws and Articles of Incorporation, it has been in the wind about two years. TFCC began in the summer of 1975 with the creation of the Yellow Rose Cooperative Warehouse, a regional wholesaler and distributor of grains, dried fruits, nuts, cheese and juice. Yellow Rose operated for a year before a struggle developed over ownership, control, responsibility, accountability, etc. All along it was thought that Yellow Rose was a project of a Texas federation of cooperatives, but it was only with the struggle that ensued in the summer of '76 that a formal structure was developed.

TFCC's structure takes a lot of its concept from ACP (naturally) but it also has a few things that ACP never had - like a written and approved set of By-Laws. TFCC is divided into two areas, political and economic. The economic area includes the Yellow Rose Warehouse, and other regional operations as they are developed. Each economic operation has a steering committee of patrons and workers to oversee its operation.

The TFCC Board of Directors is its political arm. The Board includes all members of the federation on an equal basis and has as its purposes the *development of cooperation in Texas*. Like ACP, TFCC tries to tie the area together politically and economically, but unlike ACP, it has more formal structure, less grandiose goals and four years of ACP to build on.



## People's Clinic

The People's Community Clinic began in 1970 (as the People's Free Clinic). It focused on serving the street and poor people in the area immediately west of the University. Several years ago, it changed its name to reflect people being asked to pay for services if they could afford to (about \$20,000, or 10% of the budget is raised in this fashion).

The Clinic has developed into a fairly extensive and stable organization thru funding from the city, county, state and federal governments. Primarily the Clinic now serves women's health needs, with one night reserved for general medicine. The Clinic sees about 175 people per week, with a core staff of twelve, 50 volunteers and eight doctors. There is a staff director, but most decisions are handled collectively, and the pay scale (\$3.63 per hour) is equal for all.

The Clinic has joined with other agencies in forming Austin Area Human Services Association to develop and maintain an adequate network of quality, community based human services within the central Texas area.



## University Coop

The University Co-op was founded in 1896 by a faculty committee of the nascent University of Texas. It was modelled after the Harvard Coop where some of the faculty attended college. It slowly grew and expanded until today it is a large book/department store with annual sales of \$8 million. Its primary purpose is to serve the *educational needs of the University community*. Its members include all students, faculty and staff at the University.

During the years of economic boom, the Co-op's economy boomed. In the 1960's and early '70's the University's enrollment grew rapidly and the Co-op's profits were strong. The rebates hovered around 15% of total purchases.

With the economic decline of 1973-74, the Co-op fell on hard times. In 1973, the Co-op paid a 10% rebate to more than 75% of its members. In 1974, the rebate fell to 3% and in 1975 to 0. In 1976, the Co-op capitalized on a low return of register receipts and paid a rebate of 5% to about 10% of the members. This year no rebate is expected.

Member satisfaction with the Co-op has mirrored the rebates. During periods of high rebate, most members were happy although a few members, consistent with the political changes that were occurring in the country at the time, wanted changes. As the rebate fell, so did member satisfaction. Currently, dissatisfaction is reaching the point where students are starting to shop elsewhere for textbooks. Some people are attempting to capitalize on this dissatisfaction to make the Co-op more of a democratic institution.

To refer to this bookstore as a Co-op is a misnomer. Of the nine members of the Board of Directors, only the four student members are elected. The four faculty members are appointed by the President of the University. There are no annual meetings. Members have no power to change the ByLaws. There is no co-op education and information is guarded jealously. The Board has total power.

In 1975, the Texas Legislature approved a Cooperative Association Act providing for coop incorporation. One of the provisions of that act is that all organizations calling themselves co-operatives must be organized under this act or change their name. The Act is very progressive because it provides for almost total member control of the co-op. The University Co-op Board is fighting

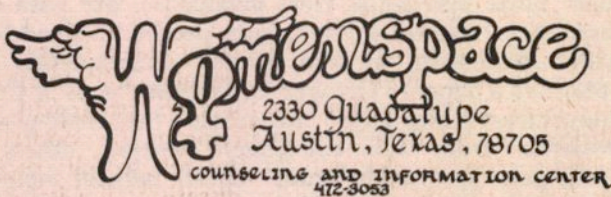
incorporation under this act because it would dilute their power.

This year, the President of the Co-op got Austin's legislature delegation to introduce a bill which would exempt the University Co-op from the name provision of the 1975 Act. Before the bill got to committee, pressure was brought by the co-op community in Austin and a compromise was worked out. If the bill passes the legislature, the University Co-op will have one year to become a co-op or change its name. It is up to the members to insure that the Co-op doesn't change its name. The struggle to turn the University Co-op over to member control is just beginning.

### Women Space

We are a variety of women from the Austin community devoted to a collective approach with a flexible structure. We are self-taught *para-professionals*... *feminist-peer counselors* with credentialized consultants available to us in an advisory capacity. We want to offer space for all women, all ages, lifestyles, races & creeds. We believe that personal/societal are tangled together in all women creating some common ground of understanding. We want to provide a supportive environment where women can share resources, discuss alternatives, gain insight, confidences and strength.

We also want to be a model for a third alternative to rigid hierarchies and total structurelessness. We are serious about this and have devoted much time and energy to group dynamics and individual problems which develop in working toward this process. We feel like pioneers and would love to share our reactions, questions, experiences & concerns with women involved in similar endeavors.



### Auto Coop

The Auto Co-op began in the spring of 1970 as an attempt to get cheaper gasoline. After 1½ years of work, the Co-op decided to forget about cheap gas, because gasoline would require too much capital without saving much money. The Co-op moved to get more involved in honest and cheap auto repair.

Presently the Co-op offers: reasonable parts prices (especially on foreign car parts) including tires and batteries, tool rental, auto mechanics classes, stereo repair, mechanics on referral, repair manuals and tools.

It is a membership coop; membership is \$2.00 per year. Members are entitled to buy in the store, use the services, and to one vote at the membership meetings. The Board of Directors is elected at the membership meetings. We have grown to include more than 4,000 members. At one time the co-op had a garage, but the



administration of it proved too difficult and costly and it was dropped. Today members are referred to mechanics who do dependable work.

A year ago the co-op seemed to be in great condition. It was doing fairly well in its new location and it had assets over \$10,000. But these assets were mismanaged. Now they have been replaced with \$12,000 in liabilities, and the store looks barren because it has so few parts.

This situation was allowed to develop because of very little member involvement for the last year or more. At a recent membership meeting not enough people showed up to constitute a quorum for the Board of Directors.

A primary reason for low member involvement can be shown by contrasting an auto co-op with a food co-op. People come to an auto co-op when their car needs repair. For most people, this is neither a very pleasant nor a very frequent occurrence (at least they hope it is not). In contrast, people come to a food co-op at least weekly to purchase food for an enjoyable experience - eating. Automobiles are also something many people would like to do away with. In other words, auto repair is not a very good mode (vehicle?) of uniting people's daily lives. Auto repair could be an important service to organize around, but a coop needs a more central theme (like food) or it will be unstable.

Things at the Co-op are not totally hopeless. The workers have managed to keep the place open. Enough income is generated to pay salaries and slowly decrease the debts. If the Co-op can hold off some of its debtors long enough, it may again be viable. In addition some people are talking about restructuring the co-op so that it can regain some member involvement.

### The Housing Coops



The present state of cooperation among housing cooperatives in Austin is one of almost total disorganization. What are the conditions within the housing cooperatives and the larger society that have led to this state?

First, I will define housing cooperatives as residences for group living in which a group pools its money and labor in order to more efficiently provide themselves with adequate food and shelter. In Austin this can mean anything from a five story dormitory housing several hundred students to a large old wooden house with seven or eight people. The complexity of scale can range from several million dollars in HUD funding for a 200 member new College House, managed by a full-time, paid staff, to a rented house where people cook dinner for each other.

Now the context for all this is that from the 1930's until the last five or ten years, housing cooperatives meant student housing. As the University of Texas grew larger and more alienating, the rift between on-campus housing grew. Following the civil rights and anti-war era of the '60's, the final break came when the University (in order to avoid integration) eliminated the rule requiring approval of off-campus housing. The '60's had also lead to an upsurge in community involvement and lessening of campus-based, social interests. Student voters stepped outside their sectarian interests and united with minorities to arrest the growth-oriented boosterism within the city.

In the past, the housing coops were united in a campus-based, social/political organization called the Inter-Cooperative Council. But in the last ten years, ICC has moved from an organization that spoke for the Austin Housing Cooperatives into an eight house, cooperatively owned management corporation. Now, in spite of isolated pockets of neighborhood cooperation like ICC and the Wednesday Nite Foodbuyers Coop, there is no working together, on a campus (much less a city-wide) scale for the interests of cooperative housing. Consequently the development and growth of cooperative housing in Austin has been stifled, sporadic and disorganized. And there remain on the books laws that could potentially be used to hassle the newly developed independent housing coops.

What are some of the major contradictions within the Austin houses which must be struggled thru before a new unity can be formed? On campus and off campus housing; student and non-student; small houses and large complexes; good food and junk food styles; owned and rented; independent coops and ICC houses; coed and non-coed.

One of the main internal contradictions is the conflicts between and among males and females. In the past 45

years of Austin coop history, the major change has been the coops becoming coed. With the advent of separatist feminism, the conflicts between males and females (straight, bi, gay or lesbian) are just beginning to be outlined. This potentially antagonistic contradiction must be struggled thru if cooperation is to take place.

I believe that the housing cooperatives in Austin should take a cue from the unions and unite to form a Political Action and Education Committee with a two-fold purpose: (1) To carry on political and cooperative education (2) To fight for social change and positive legislation.

*Michael Owens, Whitehall Coop*

#### Gung-Ho Collective

Within two weeks of ACP's last meeting in June, 1976, the GUNG HO COLLECTIVE was formed. We came together because we had invested much time and energy in ACP for the purpose of social change, and we wanted to learn from that experience. We wanted to find out why ACP had collapsed and what lessons were to be learned from the last four years. We did not think the answer was nearly as simple as *We were bad business people*. If we had been better business people, ACP might have survived as a business, but would it have survived as a community, and as an agent of social change? Our motivation to meet and discuss was increased by the fact that we knew there were others (and still are) who believed almost the opposite: They hold that the primary problem was trying to involve ourselves in social change when we should have been minding the store.

Our first months of meeting (once and twice a week) were taken up in constructing an outline for a comprehensive paper on ACP. Despite the fact that the paper has yet to be written, our discussions have reflected upon the strengths and weaknesses of almost every aspect of ACP. These discussions were invaluable. But with only three members, we wanted more people involved for a wider discussion of the issues. Consequently we published a paper in October '76 (*Austin Coops in Crisis*, excerpts from which follow this article - the whole piece is available from the collective) inviting others to participate in a study group. Seven faithful members have been meeting steadily since then to address the question, *Should we be doing coops to cause the social changes we want?*

Thus far, we are still attempting to agree. Our progress has been disappointingly slow, but it is a consolation that seven people feel strongly enough to continue to meet and talk.

The GUNG HO COLLECTIVE has continued to exist. Our eight and a half months of meeting have helped us to see our main task now as greatly increasing the discussion on the role of the coops in social change, and learning from our coop experience.

We are not without our opinions, of course. I think I can speak for the collective in saying that if coops can be used to effect social change, it will not be through economic power. That is, coops cannot hope to change things by becoming larger and larger and gradually taking over the economy or even one small section of economy such as food distribution. But they might be useful for organizing people, experimenting with democratic institutions, and resocializing ourselves and





others. But how that can be done, we don't know. We need a theory and strategy of social change, and the role the coops can play if we're to be effective. ACP's greatest weakness may have been its failure to plan: To work together, we need to agree on where we want to go and how to get there.

Whatever the verdict on the role of coops in social change, we feel that the years of work that we put into them have not been wasted. We have learned much and have much more to learn from those experiences. Furthermore, we feel a responsibility to share our learning with others in coops and social change activities. We encourage anyone who is interested to write us (GUNG HO COLLECTIVE, 602 Elmwood, Austin, Texas 78703) so that we may carry our struggle forward.

Jim Pryor, Gung Ho Collective



## After ACP, the Future: two perspectives

### 1. the Gung-Ho Collective

How shall we regard these past years of struggle? Was it foolish, youthful idealism, or was it a necessary part of a long, long struggle - a disillusionment, part of our revolutionary education? We in the Austin Coop movement are faced with a choice: we can forget the past and give up the struggle, or we can learn from our mistakes and failures and move the struggle forward.

It has been said that *it was a good idea but ACP just didnt work. We're going to have to quit playing games and join the real world. Politics is going to have to take a back seat for a while. Economics comes first. Attitudes like this place the blame for the failure of ACP totally on our own personal failures, while ignoring the fact that this past year has seen the highest rate of small business failure since the depression. But ACP is not really gone. Five years of practical experience on coming together don't just vanish, and should not be allowed to be forgotten. Let's not take one step forward and two steps back. Let's not be reactionaries. We must realize the irregularities, the starts and stops of the learning process.*

We must learn where we have been. We must formulate and reformulate our theories and we must act upon them.

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We tried to build a small human society in the midst of a monstrous inhuman one. We failed. We now realize how incredibly naive we were in our attempts. But the problems that led us to work in the coop movement and to want to change the world still exist: environmental pollution, boring and low-paying jobs, waste of human energy and natural resources, polluted and plastic food, alienation from society and each other, racial discrimination, restrictive sex roles, and lack of control over the basic decisions that affect our lives. These are the things that make our lives miserable and these are the problems that will continue to exist unless we have a fundamental change in our society.

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To truly eliminate these problems that drew us into the coop movement in the first place, we must educate ourselves, organize ourselves, and cooperate to relegate capitalism to the closet of skeletons of past oppressive systems. Capitalism has served its function of developing our productive capacities so that all might live better. But the time has come for the life we have all been waiting for. Production by millions of people can no longer be controlled by a handful of privileged. Our own coop experience and history has taught us that it is capitalism we must attack. Whatever type of work we do - be it neighborhood organizing, labor organizing, or coop organizing - the end result must be the overthrow of capitalism. Nothing less will solve our problems.

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We had high hopes and collective dreams about a community that would *consume what we produce and produce what we consume. We would be self-sufficient, democratic, organic, ecological and humane.*

But the logistics of how we would get there and what strategy we were using were never really discussed. There was no distinction between ends and means. We thought we should *live the revolution*. In other words, we were to live as if the revolution had already occurred. So, our *goals*, our dreams to be more accurate, were the only thing we talked about. That and our alienation from the current society.

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Our lack of theory is nothing to be ashamed of. As Mao clearly explains in *On Practice*, we can develop valid theories only after we have engaged in practice. In analyzing our failures, we come to understand the nature of our task.

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The value of cooperation, and of cooperatives, differs among individuals: good food at a good price, natural food, a feeling of community, the idea of cooperation, and to a few - the possibility of organizing ourselves into a real community; a community that fights with one hand and builds with the other; raising consciousness and razing capitalism; organizing neighborhoods and disorganizing *modern, efficient, industrial society*.

Through study toward action for social change through coops.

Jim Pryor, Michael Owens, Wayne Clark

## 2. Bill Meachem & John Dickerson

What can we learn, and where can we go from here? In Austin, the coop community has cut way back on what it is attempting to do, and with more limited goals, we have a chance to succeed. Rather than trying to realize grandiose visions all at once, we are attempting to build a solid economic base, while maintaining a cooperative spirit.

We've learned what some of the wrong directions are. Too narrow a base of people, too narrow a definition of community, leads to cliquishness and makes it hard to survive. Continued bad business eventually eliminates itself - you either learn proper accounting, inventory control, stocking procedures, etc., or you end up in collapse! We've learned not to be overly purist about politics. Of course, coops are different from normal businesses, in that the members can have ultimate say over policy. But the battles of all-out democracy versus a small group insisting on *correct* politics are over (now they're skirmishes). We've learned that health food facism - i.e., smugly refusing to soil one's hands with canned goods, white bread, etc., and bad-rapping those who like such foods - is obnoxious, and prevents us from approaching many of our goals. We learned that there is an appropriate size for a community grocery store, and too small is as bad, in its own way, as too big.

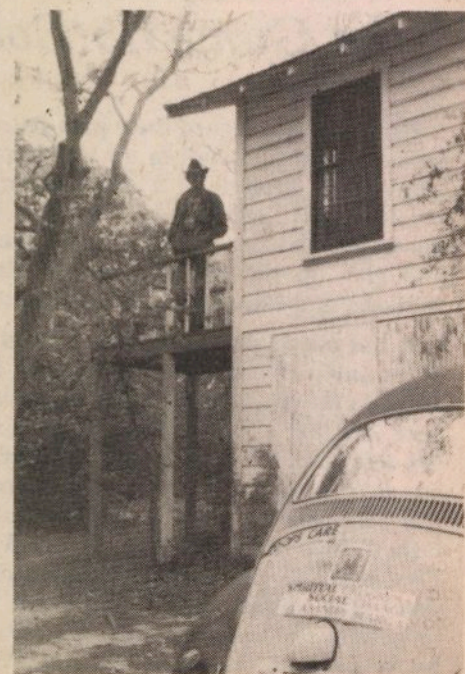
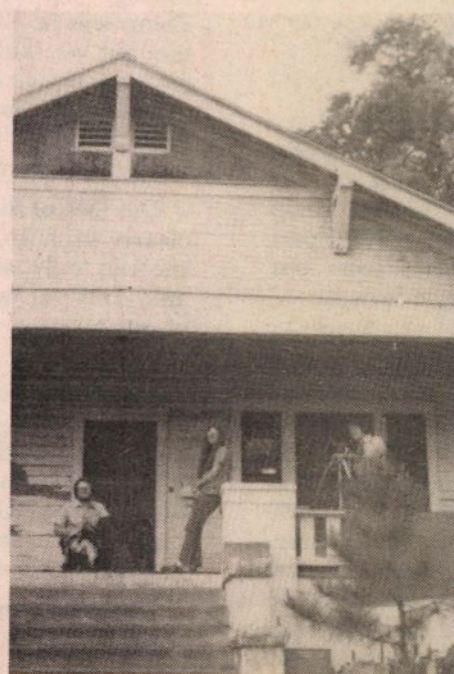
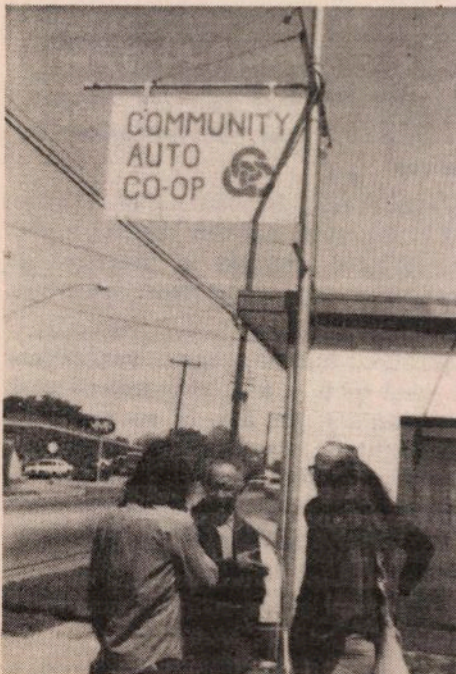
On the other hand, we've learned some positive directions. We know now that we must expand the community we want to serve, carry a wider line of foods to appeal to a variety of people, and make an effort to reach non-student, non-single, non-young, even fairly straight people. We've learned the necessity of good business and management skills...-planning, budgeting, marketing...and are putting them into practice. We've seen the bad effects of

letting a small in-group run a coop - that people they disagree with get rebuffed, and the coop turns into a business run for and by a clique. Now we build in strong member controls.

We'd like to form stronger ties with the older generation of coops, both producer and consumer. The *Wind Through the Pines* conference in early April was a step in this direction (see report elsewhere in this issue). We still believe in the usefulness of consolidated or federated operations among several consumer-oriented businesses, but we know this can't happen overnight. And we are continually involved in education - providing our members with information about products, coop philosophy, economics and politics.

It's quite clear that coops have a tremendous potential for being a better way of meeting needs than traditional, profit-oriented businesses. In the 1930s, when the previous strong wave of coops occurred, the U.S. economy was in a depression. Then the primary goal was economic - to give the small farmer and consumer a break through united economic action. Today, most people don't depend on coops for cheap goods and services, though nobody's complaining about cutting costs. Instead, coops are a focus for community, for interacting and sharing in a way that really is different from the alienation and isolation in the capitalist marketplace. Despite the failure of ACP as a tool for city-wide community based on neighborhood integrity, the coops provide a much-needed space for their members to relate to each other across the counter and down the aisles as friends.

This is the strong point of coops in Austin today. But ultimately it won't be enough, because when people



have their economic and social/interpersonal needs met, they find they still need to contribute to, and be a part of a greater whole. Beyond self is community, but beyond community is the rest of humanity, and the rest of the living beings on this planet. In practical terms, this means that the goal of coops to achieve broad social change is still viable and necessary. Eventually we'd like to see a network of cooperative channels of food distribution in this country, from the small farmer to the neighborhood food coop store. This would be a way of using an *appropriate scale* as Schumacher in *Small is Beautiful* advocates, and of undercutting corporate hegemony in the food industry. If human civilization is to survive, we'll have to implement ecologically sound ways of using the earth's resources, learn to do more with less, learn to view labor-intensive production and marketing as opportunities for self-expression, instead of drudgery...and to find our fulfillment in our own powers of learning, working and sharing with others, instead of ever more frantic accumulation of material wealth.

Can coops do all this on their own? No, but they can certainly be elements in the process of creating a better society. One important function, now and in the foreseeable future, is to provide a kind of breathing space: coops can be a place to relax a little and recharge, before going out again into the fray. They can also be environments to involve, acculturate and educate people to the benefits of an ecologically sounder way of life.

But there are dangers. Foremost is of competitive destruction. If coops get influential enough to start cutting into the capitalists' business, you can bet they will be attacked (already happening with the big agri-coops). We need to grow, to develop economic clout, without growing too far removed from the people we are to serve. A network of small-to-medium-size neighborhood coops, while not as cost-effective as a huge supermarket, might be more beneficial in the long run. People need to realize that the economics are only part of what's needed: our responsibility is to build that message into our process.

One example of the problems involved is the well-known bribery scandals of the mild-producer coops: it was still *us* (producers against *them* (consumers)). This kind of greed will have to be transcended. We need to affirm the gradual, but clear expansion of outlook from self to family and friends, to neighborhood community to economic interest group to humanity as a whole. The whole planet should be one big coop, in which we are all members.

In the end, the only certainty is change. Coops will need to be adaptable enough to cope with both the short-term continued affluence and corporate domination of everyday life, and with the longer-term probability of depletion of resources and consequent economic upheavels. No doubt there's much along the way we can't see clearly now, but if coops continue to provide space for people to exercise their flexible, innovative creativity, then the future need not look dim, at all. □

## CONVERSATION (continued from the editorial page)



were having. We need to try to do that, because otherwise it comes out in other ways. We haven't been taught to do this; we're learning new communications skills.

PAUL - There's also probably a balance of the amount of positive stuff you need in order to deal with any negatives.

GARY - I think that's what I'm particularly bad at: Establishing the relationship on a positive level before you get into what the struggle is.

SUE - That's why, when I detect that Steve's (another member of her collective) got something negative on his mind-before I ask him what it is, the first thing I do is go up to him and hug him.

PAUL - We see all the things that don't work, but I'm not sure we really have any options. I mean, we know we'd rather work with people we like. We know we'd rather work with people where we share political vision. We know we'd rather work with competent people. I mean we're not stupid! It's hard to find them.

SUE - But the limits are that we're struggling coops. We're undercapitalized. We don't pay enough salaries, and people have to have money to live on. So we can't just have our pick and choose. Plus we're talking about not only the competence of running a coop grocery store and doing all the research...

GARY - That's two different things, though.

SUE - Maybe so, but we're treating it as something to be done by the same person.

GARY - Well, that's because we've never done one successfully.

SUE - Well, they've been slowly successful.

At this point, Gary and Sue got into a complex discussion of the debt structure of Austin coops, which was still going on when I returned several minutes later after having satisfied my need to photograph an artistically muralled van.



SUE - ...I'm sure we can make an exception. Anyway...

PAUL - We're broadcasting these negotiations, folks. Representatives of two cooperatives...

SUE - Anyway, Gary, I thought you weren't working at Wheatsville anymore.

GARY - I'm not.

PAUL - I think he's speaking on behalf of the larger cooperative community...

GARY - I'm just trying to get the bookkeeping worked out...

SUE - Right, right.

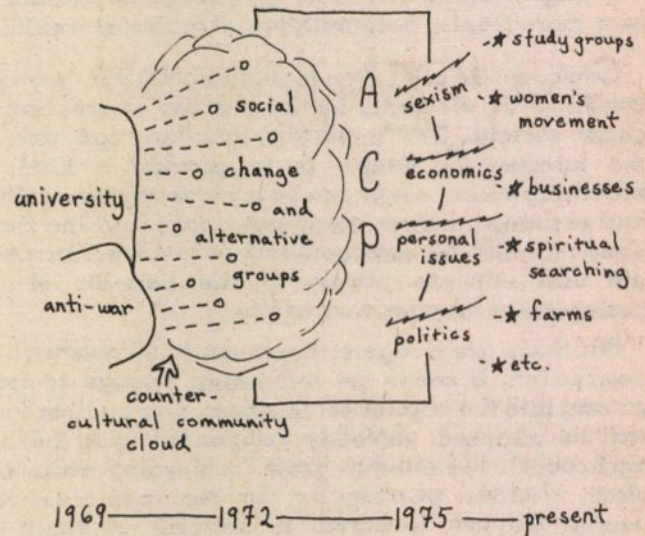
PAUL - One thing that fascinates me about your history...about ACP, is this is the closest I know that anybody's come in an urban situation to the kind of community that exists at Twin Oaks (or a Kibbutz) where you have internally consistent economics, politics, social system...it's all worked out. Everybody's got their own area of authority; there's some overall planners; the people have the final say on everything; there's some level of unification and diversity. But the problems we've run into (in New Haven) and it seems you have in Austin even in a more sophisticated way, is that in an urban community, the environments that people are working in don't deal with enough of their lives. A food coop doesn't deal with your social life, etc...

GARY - It's not wholistic enough.

SUE - I think we were trying to treat it as if it were, ignoring the fact that it wasn't.

PAUL - So if we could only make it more wholistic...maybe we have to figure in *time*. I was doing this little drawing with Gary earlier... Here are all these people coming out of a university context with their separate trips, but also some common ideas. They try out their separate things, and then they decide to put it all together in what's essentially a new learning, working, living environment - which is the coop community, counter-cultural community - eventually formally structured as Austin Community Project.

And then questions get raised by living and learning in this structure. Some out of practice and some out of politics; some out of changed personal needs and some out of a developing social awareness. I'm not sure what all the themes are here - certainly the women's movement was one. And all these questions say, *that somehow this context, this little world we've created, isn't big enough. It just won't do it.* And the structure is just too complex to take it apart, brick by brick, to find out what's not relevant anymore. *It'd be better if we just bombed the whole thing-break ourselves up, and then do our separate...* I mean here's Woody Hills over here, and here's Wheatsville, and here's the study groups, and here's this group and that group, and maybe somewhere down there in the future, another formulation gets itself together again in a better way...or in a better way for that time...to encompass all those people. The people, the community maybe remains more or less the same.



GARY - A lot of the people who were putting in the primary energy agreed that the organization was dysfunctional.

SUE - For those of us who were most involved in it, who most set the image... We had a different perception of it. It *was* wholistic to us because that was our lives. You know, 'cause that was our major political activity...

GARY - Where our energy was going...

PAUL - It was also your major social activity.

SUE - Right. We were getting paid; that's where our friends were; that's where our parties were.

PAUL - Another little thing on the structure you created: I wonder how many people it was made to work for. You set up a design that required the participation of what? 2,000 people? 4,000 people? You had quite a bit going. You needed a certain number of labor hours, working out on the farm, etc. And how many people did you really have participating?

SUE - Not enough. Not half as much.

PAUL - Maybe half as many as you needed. That's a constant, built-in strain. Your social and political vision said, *This is what we should be constructing...*

SUE - We were such idealists that we were almost willing to believe it was there.

PAUL - ...almost willing also to do the work yourselves. In other words, if you're working 80 hours a week, then you're doing enough work for the other half of the people who aren't there...

GARY - We wanted to jump from here to there without understanding the process of evolving to that. And now we're beginning to reexamine whether that's even what we want to evolve into.

PAUL - So now you're building smaller structures which can not only be set up, but maintained by the number of people you've actually got. So now you're able to do some kind of assessment based not on what you'd like to be, but on what you think is reasonable.

GARY - Also when we dissolved ACP, we started cutting

out what was not economically feasible. We started eliminating the dead wood; stuff that had really died a while back, as far as the energy goes... You know, I think we're going to evolve back into something which will serve a similar function to what ACP did. I think eventually we'll have some type of federation.

SUE - I do too.

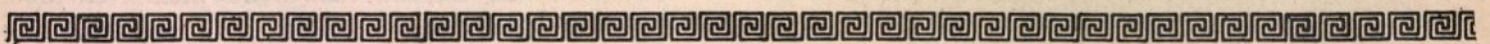
PAUL - Think it'll be the city of Austin?

SUE - No.

GARY - Texas.

DAVID [WHO HAS WALKED OVER FROM THE NEXT DOOR HEALTH FOOD RESTAURANT FOR THE LAST PART OF THE CONVERSATION] - The world.

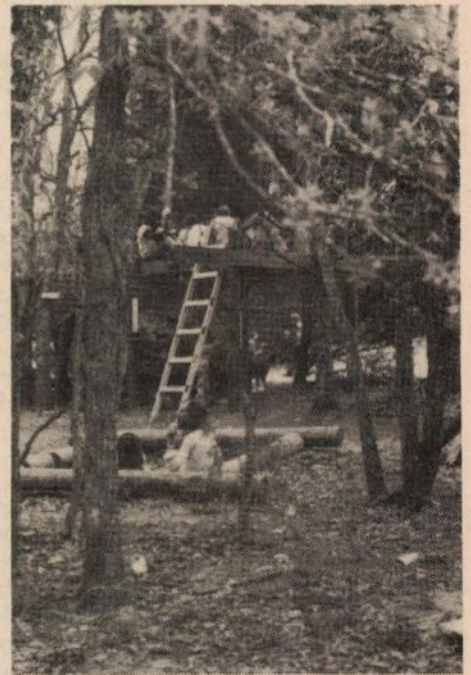
SUE - I think the cooperative community is going to get real strong here, though... □



# GREENBRIAR

The future of any community is ourselves and our kids, as we grow and learn together. For Austin, Greenbriar is one place where that happens.

Greenbriar is a cooperative school operated by the parents, students, staff and friends, on a piece of land about 40 miles east of Austin, Texas. The school opened in the fall of '69, and 6 years later an in-town (more correctly *edge of town*) facility joined it. The in-town school focuses on 5-8 year olds, while the country school takes students thru high school age, but there's plenty of mixing between. Subsistence salaries of \$150 per month (with adjustment for need) pay several staff. Greenbriar is also home to the 25 people who live on the land as a community:



## Community

### THE COUNTRY COMMUNITY

The Greenbriar community is a complex situation to describe: it is an extended *family* of about 25 people, about half of whom are children; the procedures, rules, work-priorities, etc. are only loosely defined and in a constant state of change. This condition has several causes, including changes in membership and size of the group, and sometimes a lack of mutual respect, trust or consideration.

### HISTORY

Greenbriar began as a home for the staff as well as a

school. The first year, four adults and three children lived at the school: The rest lived in Austin. But many of the staff who had planned to make their homes there, left. By the end of the third year, the staff decided it would further the purposes of the school to invite crafts and trades people who would enliven the atmosphere by living at the school, and serving as life-style models for the students. In the years that followed, the community took on an identity of its own. Presently only three of the staff live in the community, though others in the community either have or hope to teach there. Several children without their parents are also residents now.

#### AUTHORITY

There is no formal, legal, or documentary basis for the existence of the community. The charter and by-laws do not mention it, except as some of the early by-laws apparently assume that at least some of the staff will live on the school property. In such a case, it is apparent that such authority as the community exercises must derive from the assumption of power and from traditional and customary usage only.

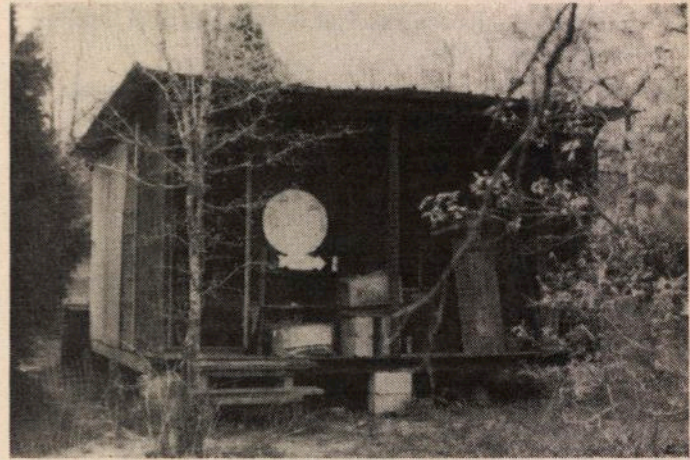
In fact, the community does make many decisions, not only about who is admitted to the group, but about use of the land, maintenance priorities and expenses. To a lesser degree, it also affects the day-to-day operations of the school. This has come about largely because the community includes the group of adults most immediately affected by these decisions, and because they do much of the labor and contribute to the expenses involved. In addition, they are generally active in the school's committees and at General Meetings.

#### SCHOOL-COMMUNITY INTERRELATIONS

Most community members join because they want to be involved with the school, either directly as staff or in some other supportive capacity. Moreover, community members generally believe that what is good for the community is good for the staff; they hope the reverse is true as well.

In any case, it is clear that community membership makes it possible to live in a quiet, sylvan environment at very little cost. The Main building provides facilities for dining, recreation, and business activities; and only two families (eight people) occupy quarters which they build and/or paid for themselves. In addition, the electricity which lights cabins and the Main after hours, and which pumps the water, is paid for out of the school budget. These substantial benefits, designed to aid and support the staff, are extended to the whole community.

In return the community supports the school in a variety of ways, not all of which are easy to measure directly. The most definite support comes in the form of a monthly contribution (\$150) to the semi-annual land payment. The community also pays for whatever butane the school consumes (e.g. cooking classes). As the need arises the community sometimes taxes itself or solicits among members for specific repair projects such as tying the bridge planking to the support members or for improvements in the plumbing in the Main. For such projects the community typically supplies much (if not



all) of the labor. With student and staff help community members usually see that there is firewood for the Main during cold months.

Other activities by community members support the school in less tangible ways, just as do other parents. The activities include participation in General Meetings and work on school committees, and in fundraising activities such as benefits and fairs. The community also plays host for a variety of visitors, school meetings, etc. More often community members help to baby-sit and supervise over-night visits by students and their friends. Occasionally members act as teachers either with individual students or as temporary substitutes for absent staff.

School-community relations are also marked by some attempts at more active cooperation. Both school and community work with fair consistency to keep the Main reasonably clean and orderly. There are occasional lapses on both sides. More ambitious is the honey house-workshop project. The school, the Crofuts, and other friends have contributed money and materials; school, community and friends have invested labor; for the building is designed to provide woodworking and auto mechanics space for community and school as well as facilities for the Crofut honey business. Despite the fact that the building would be so generally useful and despite the broad support for the project, it has progressed but slowly. Planning and site selection were begun in the summer of 1975; about half of the projected building is under construction, and presently (March '77) the framing on the half is almost completed.

Some areas of conflict between school and community are also observable. The chief of these center on the use of the Main on which both depend heavily. Proposed changes in the arrangement of working space and passageways has repeatedly provoked discord and sometimes heated conflict between the school staff and community members. Staff attempts to control use of the kitchen during school hours have been steadfastly frustrated by the community. Community efforts to prevent pilfering of fruit, bread, peanut butter, and coffee have been largely unavailing.

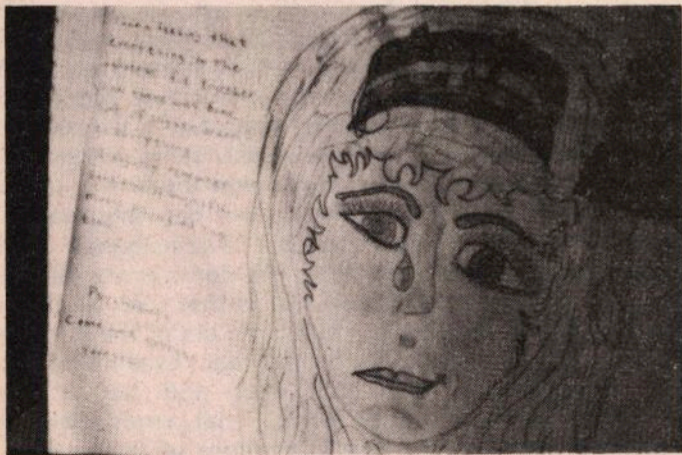
Beyond these domestic (but not, on that account, trivial) matters, there are less specific and definable interactions between community and school. Like individuals, both school and community have times of elation, depression, and conflict; these currents of emotion pass easily from one group to the other through constant contact. Though both school and community recognize limits imposed by interests other than their



own, conflict does break out even if everyone tries to be on their good behavior most of the time.

Not all problems, of course, lead to conflict, yet may remain genuine and troublesome. One such difficulty arises out of the relationship between the children in the community and the rules and discipline of the school. The school imposes very few restraints on itself in the form of rules, but even minimal rules require some possible sanctions behind them to give them force in any diverse group. The common forms of punishment, of course, are odious to staff and students alike. In practise this has meant that an enforced absence of a day or two is the most severe sanction which is generally acceptable. To be sure, this *punishment* clearly implies the possibility of a more permanently enforced absence: in short, expulsion. But in the case of children residing in the community, neither of these is really possible. Community children cannot really *stay home* from school. This means that the school has effectively no sanctions with respect to those children; and for their part, the children are neither so dull nor spiritless not to understand and take advantage of their privileged position. (Indeed, who could always resist such a temptation?) This means, in turn, that such rules as the school really need cannot be enforced fairly, and that situation largely destroys the possibility that most of the school will submit in good faith to self-imposed rules.

In general these conflicts, differences and assorted other problems spread the feeling that a widespread lack of respect and consideration pervade community, school and their relations.



#### MEMBERSHIP, CHANGE, POLICY AND HOUSEKEEPING

Each spring and fall bring major changes in community membership, and in turn, changes in general policies and habits. These policy changes may be helpful in meeting immediate needs of the group, but they make long-range planning quite difficult. Even membership policy undergoes revolutions. No longer than a year or two ago, prospective new members were carefully screened for their personal compatibility with the group, and their likely contribution to the school; few new members joined. Now almost all who are seriously interested and able are welcome; and the community grows. One factor encouraging rapid change is the fact that few written records are kept of community policies, decisions and rules. New members find out the customs in a random, word-of-mouth way.

There are, however, some generally understood policies: active support of the school, communal decision making, working toward communal self-sufficiency and ecologically sound ways of living.

Community living arrangements are a blend of the communal and the individual. There are single-family or private dwellings for sleeping. There is also the A-frame, a large house used as a *holding tank* for new members until other arrangements can be made - either someone vacates a cabin or a new one is built. Kitchen, dining, recreation and business facilities are all included in the Main.

Eating and daily household chores are done communally. Rosters are sometimes used to make sure that important jobs are covered, but generally work is done on the honor system.



Most community maintenance is done in a sporadic and disorganized manner. Through weekly discussions at community meetings, members are generally aware of what needs to be done, and when someone has the spare time, energy and materials, some things get fixed.

Communal expenses, chiefly food, are currently met by a charge of \$60 a month for adults and \$30 for children.

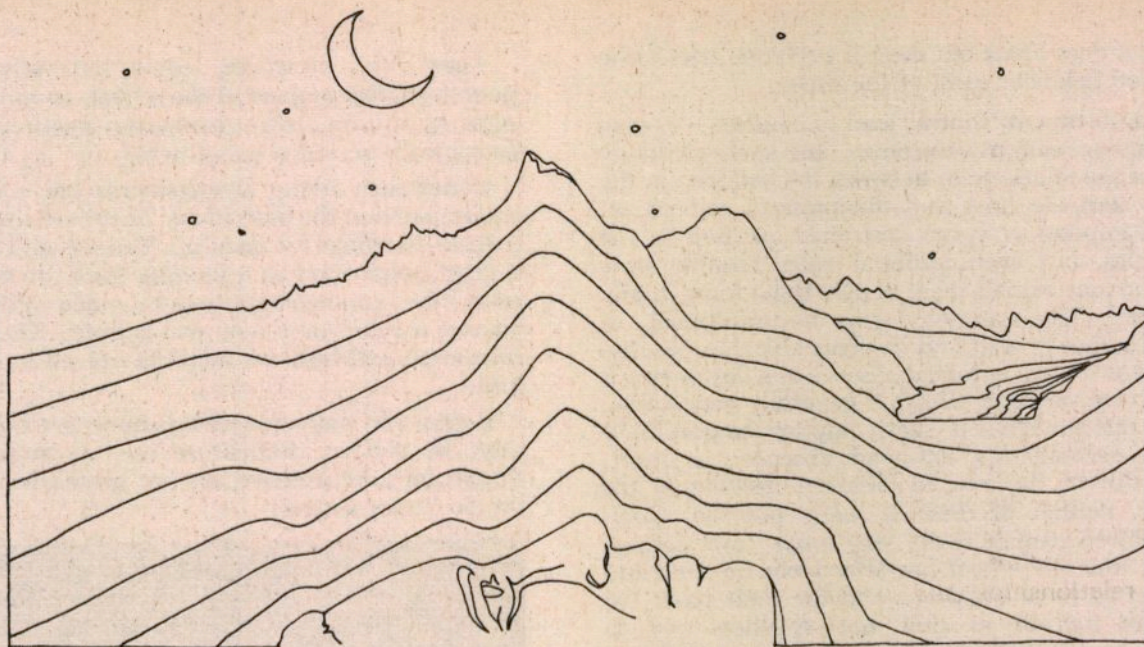
#### LIFESTYLE, IDEALS AND HOPES

Community members are all examples for the school's students. They see and observe lifestyles, and for them, what members do is what they are. Of course, what members do and what they think they ought to do are sometimes different, and students see both.

In addition, many parents, staff, and friends of Greenbriar either have or once had a dream of moving to the country with some friends, and getting along in peace and harmony with each other and the land. It is not nearly as easy to do as it sounds, of course, but the community still works for this goal...struggling to make it happen. Students see all of this; they see people caught up in the petty hassles of day-to-day living; they see dedication to an idea.

*Greenbriar stakes its life on the conviction that children really want to learn - and that the proper business of a school is to provide opportunities for learning.*

*Greenbriar exists in the Austin, Texas area as a living, breathing (& growing) alternative.* □



# FROM COMMUNITY TO COMMUNION

## Part 2: *Learning to Love Together*

In the first part of this article, I took the position that the social, political and economic problems which arise in all communities, from small communes to cities or nations, are for the most part less the products of poor institutions, laws, social structures or design than of failures in individual consciousness: varying forms of emotional immaturity together with distorted perceptions of both physical and spiritual reality. It was my further contention that these distortions of human perception and response, contrary to the conventional political wisdom, are subject to transformation: we are all capable of change and growth, given only the perceived need and the desire. Indeed it is my belief that nothing short of this kind of transformation of individual consciousness can bring about the sort of social change which has been attempted through such various means as the community movement and so-called radical politics, each of which had tried to achieve this by changing social forms, structures and relationships. It seems clear now that we have reached a point in human evolution where the availability of incredible technological and economic power to the dubious purposes of the emotionally and spiritually immature has created a perilous world condition for which the remedy can apparently lie in only one of two possible social responses. The first of these is a trend toward increasingly centralized political and economic control: a kind of bland, monolithic, corporate state in which we all collude to protect ourselves from one another--a condition sometimes referred to as 'friendly fascism'. And, at the other end of the scale, a movement toward radical decentralization; toward local and individual self-reliance and self-sufficiency.

Where the New Left and student movements of the 'sixties, following such models as Che Guevarra and Franz Fanon, tended to get as lost as their opponents in infatuation with power, self-righteousness and ideology, the community movement has perceived from the beginning that this response is in essence simply more of the same: new cast, same old plot. It has seen the futility of trying to win the power game and the necessity for beginning another, 'alternative' game based on cooperation, independence and personal responsibility. What the community people have failed to perceive however, is that such qualities can only grow out of a spiritual soil, out of the humble perception of a larger truth than that revealed by the demands of the individual ego; and out of an understanding of the need for personal, emotional and spiritual purification. It is this failure of understanding, I think, which has led to the early death of so many secular 'intentional communities,' and which has relegated the community movement itself to a marginal place in American social history. Surely it is no accident that the most vigorous and long-lived small communities in this country have, with few exceptions, been those which have been built around a spiritual teaching and discipline.

In order to distinguish between the two kinds of community, that built around experimental social structures and 'alternative' value systems, and that founded on a shared process of self-purification, I have chosen to designate the latter by the term **communion**. The word, in the sense in which I use it here, is borrowed from the German sociologist, Herman Schmalenbach. It was Schmalenbach's belief that his contemporaries, Ferdinand Toennies and Max Weber,



had incorporated too many characteristics under the catch-all name of 'community'.

According to Schmalenbach, the prime example of a human **community** is the family, particularly the peasant or small-town family, founded as it is on bonds of a 'natural and physical coherence,' a coherence 'generated by proximity and consanguinity.' Community, then, is the result of both tradition and a 'natural interdependence'. It is, in effect, the **unconscious by-product** of certain natural social processes. In this interpretation, a **sense** of community only appears after the fact of living together has existed for some period of time. Thus the small rural town I live in deserves the name of 'community' to the degree that there is a feeling of solidarity among its citizens based on family ties, economic interdependence, cultural affinities, long-term social relationships, and so forth. The important point here is that the town's citizens did not come together as the result of prior emotional commitments to one another or to a shared faith or process. Nor did they come together in order to share or create such a faith or process. Their sense of togetherness is, so to speak, accidental. According to this usage, the common contemporary terms 'planned' or 'intentional' community are misnomers. Where the grouping is planned or intentional it cannot, by this definition, be a 'community.'

Most likely, according to these sociologists, such a grouping will have its origins in some form of 'society,' a category defined as being characterized by the element of reciprocity, a coming together for the pursuit of mutual interests, as in a business venture, political party or social club. Or it may have its beginnings as a 'communion,' in which case the glue which brings or holds it together will be shared feelings of the members for one another or for some common faith, vision or process. (A close friendship religious sect would be examples of communion.) Even more likely, it will be some combination of the two. What is important to understand is that it is only after the venture, process, or 'natural interdependence' has been in existence for some time that feelings of 'community' can legitimately be expected to appear, and a true community be said to exist. Prior to that the unifying element of an 'intentional community' can only be either some form of mutual self-interest (society), or, on the other hand, shared loving feelings (communion)--or, again, some combination of these. A genuine sense of patriotism is an example of community feelings which have arisen out of what began as a society, a venture in mutual self-interest; while an American Indian tribe or religious sect, such as the Amish, might serve as instances of a social grouping which contains all three elements of **society, communion, and community.**

These may seem like dry, pedantic sociological distinctions, but they have, I think, a real, living significance for the community movement for several reasons. In the first place, as I have already mentioned, I suspect that the collapse or low vitality of so many small communities can be attributed in large

part to the disappointed expectations of so many of their members--often precisely those members, I would imagine, who might bring the greatest amount of energy to their commitment, had it been made under conditions more likely to provide the gratifications they were seeking. Mistaking the idea of 'community' for feelings of love and closeness and a sense of common purpose or devotion, they are disappointed to find an ambivalence which is more society-like than they would have wished. What I think many of these people are in fact seeking is something much closer to what we are calling **communion**. What they are likely to find, however, is a group which has had neither the aspiration to create a communion nor the time or conditions to become a true community. A better understanding of the real nature and origin of community feelings might help to avert much of this individual disappointment, as well as the waning of group energy.

While it takes time and conditions of 'natural interdependence' for a society to **evolve** into a community, by the same token a communion, given these same elements, will tend to **deteriorate** into a community. A communion, that is, 'may lead to community . . . but only to the extent to which the communion is then left behind.' (Schmalenbach) The issue is basically one of emotional intensity. While feelings of community tend to be low-keyed and pretty much taken for granted, they nonetheless contain a stronger element of fellowship and closeness than is to be found in a 'society.' Strong feelings, on the other hand, are the very basis for a communion. It is the lability of such feelings, the difficulty in sustaining positive human emotions, which creates the problem. As feelings of love and commitment begin to flag they have to be replaced by vows of loyalty or fidelity, and eventually even by contracts, if the group is to survive: the **forms** of social coherence are brought in to fill the vacuum created by the ebbing of the **feelings**--and the communion has begun its transformation to a community or society. Thus it could be said that a communion is to a community what being-in-love is to marriage: a social relationship which begins as the sharing of loving feelings is compelled to shore up its continuity with vows, contracts and other legal or

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*What is necessary  
for consensus to work  
is a shared belief in  
an already-existing truth*

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quasi-legal devices. It is this perception of the instability of human emotions, and their seemingly inevitable decline into the same old egotistical demands for the gratifications of self-interest, which has led to a universal discouragement and cynicism

about the possibilities of a genuine brotherhood or communion, and to the legal and institutional forms to which all larger societies turn for social coherence and continuity. Sadly, but inevitably, it appears that many small secular communities come in time to suffer from some form of this same disenchantment.

If a communion is to survive as such, then, ways must be found not only to keep the initial loving feelings alive, but also to provide an emotional framework or psychological perspective through which the usual ups and downs of personal feelings can be mediated, negative emotional energy transformed to positive, and heat converted to light. Failing this, the negative egotistical feelings we all share will almost inevitably lead to interpersonal schisms which may eventually prove beyond repair; or, if repressed (even worse), lead to the slow erosion or flattening of the loving feelings which were the basis for the original union.

Several kinds of communion are possible. There is, for instance, a kind of communion which sometimes develops within a community of joint artistic endeavor, such as a film production group, in which any or all members have given their talents to the group, and to constitute the emotional glue which binds them together and to one another as they work together at art.

pull quote



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*We have to engage in a two-way stretch by reaching for heaven while we take responsibility for our feet of clay*

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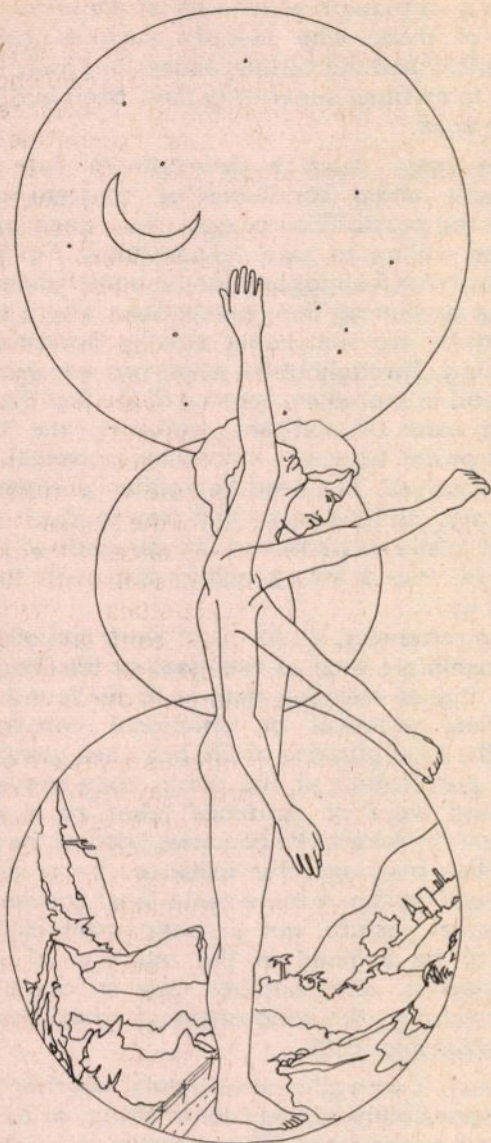
Another type of communion may evolve around participation in some social cause such as the civil rights or anti-war marches of the 'sixties. (Or the German youth movement in the days of the Third Reich. There is no law which says that such feelings must lead to socially or spiritually desirable ends.) And there are small communities today which hope to find their emotional glue, as well as their means of resolving interpersonal conflicts, in some psychotherapeutic system or process to which their members have become committed.

In all these instances, however, the emotional energies and commitments tend to be limited to the duration of the project around which they were formed; or to become dissipated or corrupted in time through ideological or theoretical disagreements, struggles for power, differences over community policies, or any of the other myriad machinations of the self-serving ego. Indeed, one element which these groups have in common is precisely the fact that during the time in which the spirit of communion prevails, the ego and its demands has been to some

degree transcended by some manner of commitment to a higher reality. This kind of transcendence of the ego, a sense of the overwhelming importance of such transcendence, and a profound commitment to its achievement throughout the course of the individual's life, is to be found, on a continuing basis, almost exclusively in communities whose members are united in following some form of spiritual path. Only among those who share a belief in a higher psychological reality than the individual ego can there exist the possibility of going **beyond** the ego so that it can be seen more or less objectively as simply another psychic phenomenon to be dealt with and transformed from a higher level of perception and truth. So long as the individual is identified with his 'personality,' his social role, or ego--as is the case with most Western psychotherapies--the way out of the trap of egoism has been cut off. Short of an acceptance of the possibility of a higher level of consciousness than we have been taught to perceive, we remain stuck in the same old round of power struggles, competitiveness and defensiveness, in all the ploys and hostilities which lead to breakdowns and failures in our lives and in the lives of our communities.

But if the spiritual paths offer us a way out of the ego trap, they also offer us another way into it. For the ego is a wily beast and does not give up so easily, but shows a great talent for simply co-opting whatever program we employ to try to keep it in its place. And so it is all too easy for the spiritual journey to become simply another, bigger ego trip: to start putting on spiritual airs, to find some special virtue in the particular path one has chosen, or to look with condescension on those who have failed to see the light. Most dangerous of all is the tendency to believe that one is further advanced along the spiritual path than is in fact the case; to confuse the unconscious repression of negative feelings, and the projection of a 'loving,' saintly, idealized self-image onto the world around one, with genuine enlightenment and non-attachment.

To deal with this strategy of the ego we must remain constantly aware of the basic nature of the human condition: that we live on two levels at once, so to speak, the level of thought and egotistical feelings to which we have been conditioned, and, at the same time, the level of our true spiritual nature toward the recognition and experience of which we are struggling. This means that we must continually confront, accept, expose and take responsibility for all those unattractive thoughts and feelings of which we are so ashamed, and which we normally try so hard to conceal: for they constitute a large part of our psychic reality at this time and place, and to deny them would be to create a lie, to fall out of truth. At the same time, we must constantly exercise the awareness that this is not our **only** reality--that it is indeed only a small part of that reality, one with which, however, we have tended to become deeply identified. In a sense it is a matter of cleaning up the house in which we live while making preparations to move into a new, brighter, cleaner home; of reaching upward and beyond to a new reality



while facing and accepting the present one. To a large degree the courage and energy to confront the present reality is made available through one's belief in the greater one. This is the advantage the spiritual paths have over the purely psychological disciplines: they provide a larger context in which to confront one's ego so that in ceasing to be identified exclusively with one's behavior or persona, one can more easily afford to face the truth of one's present emotional reality. We are able to face who we are because of the knowledge of who we **really** are. In this way the psychological and spiritual disciplines can and do compliment and reinforce each other.

But there is another possible trap: we can mistake the **identification** of the ego with a larger reality for the **transcendence** of ego. This is the kind of phenomenon which occurs around political demagogues or certain charismatic religious leaders. It is this sort of response which has given mysticism (particularly as the term was misused in connection with German National Socialism) a bad name among those of a liberal political persuasion and banished such 'mystical' philosophers as Plato and Hegel to their ideological

doghouse. The confusion comes from a misunderstanding of the spiritual experience itself. The phenomenon of mass adoration and personal subjugation to a political or religious figure, or to an ideology or political state, is a function of the individual's abdication of responsibility for one's own consciousness, one's own divinity, and the turning over of that responsibility to some other human agency which one has been led to believe represents a 'higher power.' Far from being aimed at the letting go or transcendence of ego, such a response is a way of magnifying the ego by equating it with some larger entity or force, a phenomenon which Carl Jung referred to as 'psychic inflation.' This process is in total contrast to a true mysticism in which the individual experiences oneself, in complete humility, as an extension or 'child' of God, totally responsible for one's own divinity or Buddha-nature, as well as for one's everyday life and actions. A central element in the genuine spiritual experience is the concurrent awareness of one's utter personal uniqueness and at the same time of one's total unity with everything that is. It is precisely out of such apparently paradoxical perceptions that the spiritual journey evolves. Where there is an attempt to 'resolve' or gloss over the paradox, as for instance through an appeal either to rampant individualism or to some form of mass idolatry or relinquishment of personal conscience and autonomy, one can be sure that it is the ego and not the spirit which is being attracted to this seductive and oversimplified picture of reality. Promises of power, appeals to prejudice or self-righteousness, to ideological rigidity or the relinquishment of personal conscience--all these are the sure signs of a spurious mysticism.

If, then, we are to avoid the traps we must remain constantly on the alert for the myriad sly ways in which the ego (both our own and that of others) will try to buy out the spirit. We will have to engage in a kind of two-way stretch in which we exercise new spiritual and psychological muscles by reaching for heaven, while we remain fully aware of and take responsibility for our feet of clay. In both of these tasks the love and support of our fellow seekers can greatly lighten and speed our work. But this is not so much a reason for seeking communion as it is an explanation of the way in which a communion's health and vigor takes root and grows. For once again we are confronted with a paradox. Just as we saw that a sense of community cannot be achieved through conscious effort, so it seems that a true communion will only appear as the by-product of our commitment to a shared journey. The best things in life are certainly not 'free,' but neither are they arrived at through greed or an act of will. They are always the by-products of being in harmony with reality--being 'in the Tao.' The **pursuit** of happiness makes no more sense than a **struggle** to be spontaneous. 'Take care of the means,' Gandhi told us, 'and the ends will take care of themselves.' (There is no question of 'utopia' here, for utopia is a terminus, a vision of the 'perfect ending,' while the spiritual quest has no ending, no scenario, no plot or pay-off. The journey is its own reward, its own fulfillment.)

When, and only when, we seek purity in our hearts and truth in our spirits will we find the true nature of love, and in it the antidote to the 'realities' of power. Communion, quite simply, means learning to love together.

In what ways, then, will this learning process, the addition of a spiritual dimension, affect the everyday life and values of a community? Let us look briefly at the three areas of community life (and indeed of all human relationship) which cause the greatest problems and conflict: the issues of power, sex and work. In her article in **Communities No. 18** to which I have already referred, Kat Kinkade makes the statement that, 'Consensus doesn't really work, and groups which survive in spite of that fact are really governed in some other way, probably by an informal majority rule....' However, given some ability to still the voices of our egos which speak out of prejudice or personal interest or the sheer desire to have our opinions prevail, consensus **does** work, as the Quakers and other religious sects have been demonstrating for centuries..Not only can consensus provide solutions and decisions, it does so in a way which promotes and nourishes unity rather than leading to the creation of faction, hard feelings and withdrawals of energy as is often the case with majority rule.

What is necessary for consensus to work, however, is a shared belief in an already-existing truth which represents the reality of the situation and which will in the end be best for all (inevitably, since, in the final analysis, we are all one). That, and the recognition that it is the task of each member of the group to attune oneself to that truth. When this fails to occur, then this fact itself becomes the truth of that moment. Since it is always the truth and the search for it which has priority, a failure to reach a decision will simply indicate that the group has not reached sufficient maturity or insight to make such a decision, and perhaps should not do so at this time. If, in the end, one believes that the universe is by definition perfect--and that one always gets what one needs to further one's spiritual journey, if not what one **wants** by way of immediate gratification--then there can be in a sense no 'wrong' decisions. If the given decision turns out to be counter-productive or inadequate to the physical or social needs of the moment, that fact in itself will become a 'teaching' to the mind and spirit: perhaps, for instance it is time to investigate the validity of those 'needs.' Through all this there is always the shared sense that in time the truth will become evident to all.

Given this faith in an ultimate reality and the individual's potential ability to tune in to it, the whole issue of authority also becomes transformed. Hierarchy ceases to be a dirty word, since positions of authority now derive from the community's general sense of certain individual's special worthiness or wisdom--in essence to their more advanced point of evolution on the spiritual path. The kind of spiritual communion I have in mind (and I am not speaking here of those with charismatic leaders) tend on the whole to be democracies in the process of evolution toward

theocracy--a thought which may strike terror into the hearts of those who identify such a trend with 'clericalism' and the various abuses of power to which claims to spiritual superiority have been put throughout the ages.

Once again, such a development can only be acceptable under conditions of constant vigilance toward the possibilities of ego trips. Each individual must be willing to take responsibility for 'policing' one's own true feelings and motivations, while all have the task of sharing their perceptions where they feel that others are not being equally honest or self-examining. Throughout the whole process there has to be a good-humored acceptance of the fact that, at our present state of spiritual evolution, the tendency toward power trips will indeed be 'universal,' as Kat has maintained, but need be neither 'permanent' nor 'necessary,' so long as we can stay in touch with our deepest desire to transcend the demands of our egos and enter into a loving relationship with the world around us.

In the same way, all forms of work and of personal relationship are seen as exercises or teachings which have a higher meaning than is to be found in their immediate practical or emotional consequences. When the total purpose of life becomes going to God or the purification of the spirit, then the everyday warp and woof of existence takes on a different significance. All activity becomes grist for the spiritual mill. Thus marriage, for instance, becomes a true sacrament: neither a mere socio-legal convention nor sentimental gesture. nor a confinement of the 'free spirit' to be avoided in the interests of personal independence. It is another step on one's path--a shared journey, the seriousness of which transforms the relationship itself.

And so it is with all commitments, whether to a job, to a responsibility for decision-making, or to a social or sexual relationship. The criterion is always to be found in the honesty and sense of responsibility and lack of exploitativeness one brings to them. In no case are these 'moral' issues, however, Rather, like everything else in the life of the communion, they are judged in the light of their effects on the progress of the seeker. Thus the help I give you is a gift to myself, and the harm I cause you is an added burden I will have to carry along my path. In this way the journey toward self-realization and that toward social coherence and brotherhood are united in one unifying conception: that which is good for me--you for all--becomes, by definition, what is good for me.

One effect of this conception is to cause a re-examination of one's social values. Suddenly it becomes alright again to cherish and celebrate the biological and emotional differences between men and women, for instance, or the special relationship of children to their parents, or of those with much 'authority' to those with less. We are able to begin giving up the defensive positions and policies and attitudes--the ways of protecting ourselves and others we care about from what we have come to see as the inevitability of exploitation. We can begin once more

to honor our own humanity.

What is at issue, of course, is the very nature of love itself. In time one begins to learn that the various emotions one has come to associate with that word--feelings of attraction or attachment, dependency, or even 'affection'--are only a distant reflection, the ego's facsimile, of that love which the Greeks knew by the name of **agape**, and which the early Christians called Charity: the love which is pure giving, not really what we think of as an 'emotion' at all, but rather a state of consciousness, a field of positive energy or light which illuminates the world around us, and in which we come to know each other as different aspects of the same Body, the same Spirit.

Needless to say, to most of us on the lower reaches of a path such moments of illumination come all too rarely. But it is the knowledge of this possibility, together with the recognition that in the end there is no

other way to either personal or community happiness and fulfillment, which keeps us on our journey. And it is as much the shared sense of our common fragility--of our need for the love and support of our fellow seekers--as it is our joint commitment to the process to which we are all dedicated, which brings and holds us together. In the continuing celebration of our higher nature, and the equally committed work of exposing and transforming our lower, of making all that is unconscious conscious, the ugly and the beautiful, we renew our faith in the power of truth. And in the power within each of us to transform our selves, our lives, and through us, our world.

It is out of such a shared vision that communion is created. And it is through the continuing renewal of this vision that communion can grow into community without the loss of the love and the faith from which it was born. □

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**A Response from Kat Kinkade**  
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I read George Clark's articles with acute interest and a heavy sense of recognition--recognition on several levels. First (since he has referred to my writings directly), I recognize that he has read me correctly, understood my views, and addresses himself to the issues without error; we have communicated. Second, I recognize that he is an articulate spokesperson for a point of view I've heard a lot of lately among the people I live with. I can readily imagine some member of East Wind reading the article and saying "Yes, yes, that's what I've been trying to tell her!" From that I recognize that the topic is indeed appropriate for this time in communal history. It deals with the central issue of secular community. The question Clark raises is this: After making the necessary adjustments and compromises that make secular community possible, is the job still worth doing? His answer is no, and he goes on from there to seek some form of community that would satisfy him.

He speaks, not from the position of having found such a community, but from one of believing that it can be created, based on experiences he has had and conclusions he has drawn from them. Any skeptical remarks I might make about the probable applicability of such a vision can wait until that dream has taken tangible form--in other words, until a commu-

nity of the sort he wants has been formed, has proven attractive and satisfying to some number of people comparable to Twin Oaks and its offspring, and has existed long enough to provide a basis for comparison. If and when some community comes along that offers the fundamental goods and services that ours does, and in addition does a better job of holding and satisfying members, I won't quibble; I'll join. In the meantime I live in a community which is, though imperfect, pretty good; I'm giving my energies to a project which, though limited, is not trivial. The scope of my ambitions is modest--I just want a good society, open to everybody, always making itself better.

I put away with my adolescence the notion that any emotion, however desirable, can be sustained. **Agape** may be possible, but I am pretty certain that it is not possible for large groups to learn it fast enough for it to serve as a serious social control mechanism--or rather, in place of such mechanisms. The yearnings which draw many people to community are, I freely admit, often frustrated by the realities of what we really have to offer. It does not follow from this, however, that there must necessarily be some other way to make a community which would satisfy those yearnings. One does not reason from "I wish I could live

forever" to "There must be a way to fix it so I can live forever". There may be or there may not, but the longing does not prove anything one way or the other.

Secular community proceeds from the assumption that we are ordinary mortals with egos that will probably be transcended only from time to time, and conflicting desires that must be dealt with (preferably with love, but if that isn't available at the moment, then with something else). That assumption strikes Clark as "tragic". To me it just has the solid ring of truth.

Either the entire human race is capable of learning and practicing sustained transcendence or it is not. If it is, then Clark's suggested path would seem to be the fastest and best way to get from here to a sane society. If it isn't (and I suspect it isn't), then spiritual short-cuts won't work, and we had better settle unashamedly for what we can manage.

We probably can't manage happiness, but we can arrange our environment to prevent the grossest of misery. Those of us who don't get so far as charity can at least achieve decent behavior. Tolerance is within our scope. So is fairness, courtesy, humor. And this is not just for a minority elite, but for everybody, if we succeed. These goals are transcendent enough for me. □



## INTERNATIONAL:

*For eight days  
we gathered  
in an out-  
right energy bash...  
We turned up the  
juice and no one  
got burned.*

# WORLD SYMPOSIUM ON HUMANITY

by Allen Darling

At times the cosmos alerts those who pay attention to such things. It is November in Vancouver. It isn't raining.

Otherwise things seem normal. The Hyatt Regency Hotel rises in concrete elegance among neighboring towers. Morning cars drive the air from the street and the dawn peace is shattered into an entropy of motion. In the hotel lobby, though, everything is anomalous.

Mystics, seekers, and long-haired anachromisms of another decade stir, a bit uncomfortably, in this haunt of the three-piece suit set. Businessmen take uncertain shelter in the morning news. Tangible energy here. The World Symposium on Humanity.

That it won't rain for the next eight days will be considered coincidence by some, but we've learned that enough people putting their energy together can do surprising things. And energy is what the World Symposium on Humanity is all about.

The Symposium began on November 27. By the conclusion of its active phase eight days later, it had heard from twelve *principle speakers*. They had set the tone for the one thousand paid Symposium members and the three hundred or so freebies in their attempt to (in the words of the Symposium organizers) "catalize the formation of a group consciousness" and "gather the new spirit abroad in the land".

This effort, though essentially no different from the many previous attempts to gather the 'sixties energy that diffused so desperately in the seventies, developed some unique and for the moment incalculable results. Incalculable because the energy raised, communicated, and shared during those

days touched so many of us so deeply. It fed so positively this embryo we call the "New Age". While it left a lot still to do, it did so much in identifying the directions, methods, and responsibilities we share in trying to build harmonious lives in a harmonious world.

And unique because after a week of lectures, meetings, meditations and hassles the WSOH actually attained some concrete results; actually took a few plodding steps into the "New Age".

The methods and directions explored at the Symposium were varied, but throughout the event an understanding emerged of the importance of decentralized communities and of the responsibilities communities have as the cutting edge of newly forming culture. Out of that understanding came several things of interest to those of us in community/communal pursuits. The Symposium organized an on-going communities forum, a communities cooperative and resource office, and an information questionnaire. Perhaps most importantly, it organized a foundation to seed new communities or new programs by existing communities.

Indeed, the WOSH itself was the effort of a community and an example of just such an exercise of responsibility. Symposium roots undoubtedly reach back to the sixties and beyond, but the actual gathering of impetus and energy began with the Vancouver 3HO, after their successful Healing Symposium in the fall of '75. Envisioning a more comprehensive conference, they began sending invitations to speak to "leaders" in New Age areas. When the first affirmative replies and the mortgage on their ashram (needed to finance the promotion of the Symposium) came in, a New Age happening took shape. When I spoke to Guru

Raj Singh, the overall Symposium coordinator, two weeks before the conference began, he smiled and told me that "the Symposium is out of control", that it had "expanded beyond anyone's ability to control it". Though this may have been a bit modest considering how well the 3HO operated throughout, it was nevertheless an accurate description of how they saw the event. As an energy source, the Symposium would have a "life of its own".

And no wonder. It's possible (records were compiled but aren't available yet) that as many as 300 communities were represented. Six of the twelve principal speakers (Pir Vilayat Khan, Stephen Gaskin, David Spangler, Swami Kriyananda, Rolling Thunder, and Yogi Bhayan) were spiritual leaders of their own communities, and the majority of unaffiliated people in attendance had some community or cooperative living experience.

For all this representation, the communities components of the WSOH didn't really come together until the third day. During the first two we were busy identifying ourselves and the undertaking we were part of. Beginning with a meditation in the Hyatt Ballroom (a significant event in itself), the Symposium assembled. Silence. Breath. Sat Nam.

Then in rapid succession we absorbed two hour lectures and two hour workshops by Yogi Bhanjan, David Spangler, Theodore Roszak and Bucky Fuller. Sandwiched (cheese and sprouts, naturally) between these sessions were shorter meetings including Sun Bear of the Bear Tribe. Mime artists. Concerts (too short in the opinion of many) on dulcimer and sitar. Group meditations. Guerilla theater. A sit-down veggie dinner for 1300 (the first in the Hyatt's history).

In that time we got the feel of the craft and display areas, Interlogue, a closed-circuit info feedback system, and of course, each other. Energy was high. The threat of an early burn out singed the air. Reeling, we made our way into the Sunday night streets. Tired. Happy. High. It still wasn't raining!

By Monday morning many people had made the contacts necessary to form committees in several areas. In the relative calm of having no major events scheduled the Symposium organizers set about assigning space and publicizing the variety of group meetings occurring throughout the week. Committees formed on nuclear energy use, Native People's rights, herbal medicine, polarity therapy, a variety of yoga disciplines, and a series of communities forums. Some of these were problem solving and organizationally oriented. One dealt only with how to start a community. David Spangler hosted two small sessions in his room to discuss communities issues.

Out of the energy of these forums was generated sparks that will keep the Symposium message burning beyond its formal conclusion.

A communities questionnaire came from the first form. Attempts to gather resource and demographic info on communities have happened many times. Unique in this effort was a corresponding plan to make use of that info.

The Communities Cooperative Brotherhood (a working name only) is an idea whose time has come. It is simply a coordinating group for communities to put those in need of

resources in touch with those that have them. Planning to operate initially out of Vancouver, the Brotherhood has set its goals as follows: (1) to develop a funding base for its operation (probably from the Humanities Foundation, although dues and other possibilities are being considered). (2) to provide an information, education and counseling service to any community wishing to use it.

One application of this came up immediately. Someone had developed a small energy transfer unit so that power can be generated from one community, possessing more than its requirements, to others who are energy hungry. Obviously the power companies aren't too pleased about this sharing system, but thus far haven't been able to do anything to stop him from sharing it. This info would, we hope, be available through the Communities Coop once it gets together.

The scope of this project doesn't stop with information though. Quoting from the report presented to the Symposium body, "With God all things are possible but we

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## *The traditional Indian's message of Richard Kastl, Rolling Thunder, and Sun Bear became one of the strongest and clearest rallying points of the Symposium*

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must walk the spiritual path with practical feet. We would endeavor to create a sense of community among our communities and to ensure the survival of each one. If a community should become ill and need harvest help, the Coop Brotherhood would get it done". Perhaps this really can develop into a communities resource that is available not only on paper but spiritually and physically as well. We'll see. But in the effort one clearly hears the message of the Symposium echoing. The time has come to gather our energies together. Not the alienated groping of the sixties, but new and positive steps to a creative and functional group consciousness. As Pir Vilayat told us during one of his talks, *Communities are the testing ground of the New Age*.

The other major ongoing project from the WSOH is the Humanity Foundation. Not an outgrowth of the communities forum, it was nevertheless of particular interest to us. Created to carry on the work and message of the Symposium, the Humanity Foundation will be administered by the twelve principal Symposium speakers. Its goal is to provide seed grants to new communities or to existing communities developing new programs and to promote the ideals of the Symposium and of alternative community lifestyles.

The WSOH membership gave it a moving beginning during the closing ceremonies. The scene was the Hyatt Ballroom again, but the furniture was gone and we sat, more than a thousand strong, circled around Stephen Gaskin, when someone revealed that the Symposium would

finish in the red. The energy swell was expected, but everyone was surprised when the cash started flying out of the crowd toward the center area. Before the last bills fell, over \$5000 was collected. With this the Humanities Foundation made its first grant, giving Richard Kastl, a representative of the Hopi elders, \$1000 for the Hopis' struggle - and our struggle - to keep the sacred Hopi lands from being exploited for oil and uranium reserves.

The traditional Indians' message that Richard, Rolling Thunder and Sun Bear brought to the Symposium became one of the strongest and clearest rallying points. For these Indian brothers also see the need for communities to lead

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## *The World Symposium on Humanity actually took a few plodding steps into the New Age*

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the way in developing the unity of spirit, mind and body necessary to "walk in balance" on the Earth Mother. This unity is the message expressed in the symbol the Symposium chose (three interlocking rings), and the effort to help create it is the Symposium's reason for being. The purity and earnestness of the Native People's input overwhelmed the Symposium. These men showed how the greed, corruption, spiritual ignorance and just plain thoughtlessness of industrial society not only denies Indians the ability to live a spiritual life by polluting and destroying the Earth and its creatures, but through an arbitrary judicial system, attempts to deny them even the right to try on their own sacred land. Clearly these infringements were not detrimental just to the Indian cause, but to the cause of all communities and men wanting to live spiritually, in balance with the Earth. A time of cleansing is coming, Rolling Thunder warned. In his community in Nevada, and in the Bear Tribe's in Washington, Indians and whites come together as one to learn and practice the wisdom and skills of "walking in balance". While this idea isn't new, few have heard it so meaningfully and movingly stated. Most moving of all was Richard Kastl.

Richard was not a scheduled speaker but was given the stage several times. He discussed the Hopi prophecies, which among other things predict the Earth Mother's purification in the event current mistreatment continues, and the coming of a time when the "white man's children will wear their hair long and dress like Indians". This would be a sign, the prophecies say, that the time was good for right-thinking Indians and whites to come together and build the unity of a New Age. Richard led us three times to the "earth healing site" (where Hopi spiritual leaders came and prayed during the Habitat Conference) for sunrise ceremonies. The World Symposium on Humanity became a community itself. A community with a message for other people and communities: **Get back to the land. Learn to be in balance with nature. Learn the wisdom of a natural life style and the skills to live one.**

The Hopi prophecies tell us it may soon be too late. Our own reason and lately even our own empirical science tells us it may already be too late. The message that the Hopis, Symposium and the communities movement shares is that while there is time, let's get together, learn to live together, and put that good positive energy back into the world.

The Symposium gelled to accept the responsibility to do something. Inspired by the Hopi land issue, a group formed whose members would get up local committees to aid the Hopi effort and, more importantly, to fight in their home locality to protect the land from thoughtless misuse and destruction. A communication link of these committees was to be provided through a clearing-house address in Vancouver. How far these projects get, of course, remains to be seen but certainly here, as in the case of the Communities Brotherhood and the Humanities Foundation, the buds of the Symposium were flowering.

Despite all this flowering, everything at the WSOH was not roses. Vague, and sometimes not so vague grumblings about the location and high cost of the event were persistent and recurring. Stephen Gaskin in fact wanted to withdraw when he learned that memberships cost \$100 each, but attended because promotional material advertising his appearance had already been distributed. Said Stephen at the closing ceremonies, "I'm real glad we came, but sometimes I still feel you are all so rich that it almost compromises me to be here." As Guru Raj often explained, the Hyatt was the only facility available at the time, that could handle the numbers and the extensive video technology. Surely the thousands (millions?) who see the tapes and share the Symposium energy through them will find it was worth it. Some at the Hyatt wouldn't agree. The paradox of the discussions we held and efforts we made taking place under the auspices and to the profit of the Hyatt Corp. was nevertheless inescapable. And sometimes ludicrous. Although our relations with the hotel were mostly friendly and cooperative, limitations adopted out of deference to Hyatt policy sometimes seemed petty and annoying. The Symposium members, though, arrived early at a subtle consensus. We are here. Let's make it work.

Another issue was the lack of women among the major speakers. Though they were never fully satisfied with the organizers' explanation, the women's interests were, upon protest, given some consideration by the staff that endeavored to open more channels for women's input and issues. This was, incidentally, indicative of the overall incredible openness and power sharing of the Symposium staff.

Going beyond these criticisms though, were some things the WSOH members failed to do. While we met and energized each other, took responsibility to act and sometimes acted, the World Symposium on Humanity took no action on behalf of the humanity of South Africa, Chile, Brazil, et al.. Perhaps it's too much to expect the first WSOH to tackle all of this. It may be taking ourselves too seriously at this stage to think we can. But with the exception of a statement opposing proliferation of nuclear power, and a short demonstration on behalf of Leonard Peltier, WSOH energies were internally directed. In this can be found another message of and for the Symposium. As we learn to develop and share our energies to become a world





humanity, we must also develop a broader view of how much learning, growing and sharing we have to do to make that comfortable spiritual phase a reality.

So much was said. In the succession of days we heard from Swami Kriyananda, Ken Keyes, Michio Kuchi, Bernard Jensen, and finally Stephen Gaskin. We heard from each other.

The Texas Lake Community announced the B.C. coalition of cooperatives meeting in February. A continuation of the Symposium energy; the ongoing message exemplified by the communities there.

The Moonstar Family, who live a survival lifestyle in Northern B.C. relating to, but independent of, technological society.

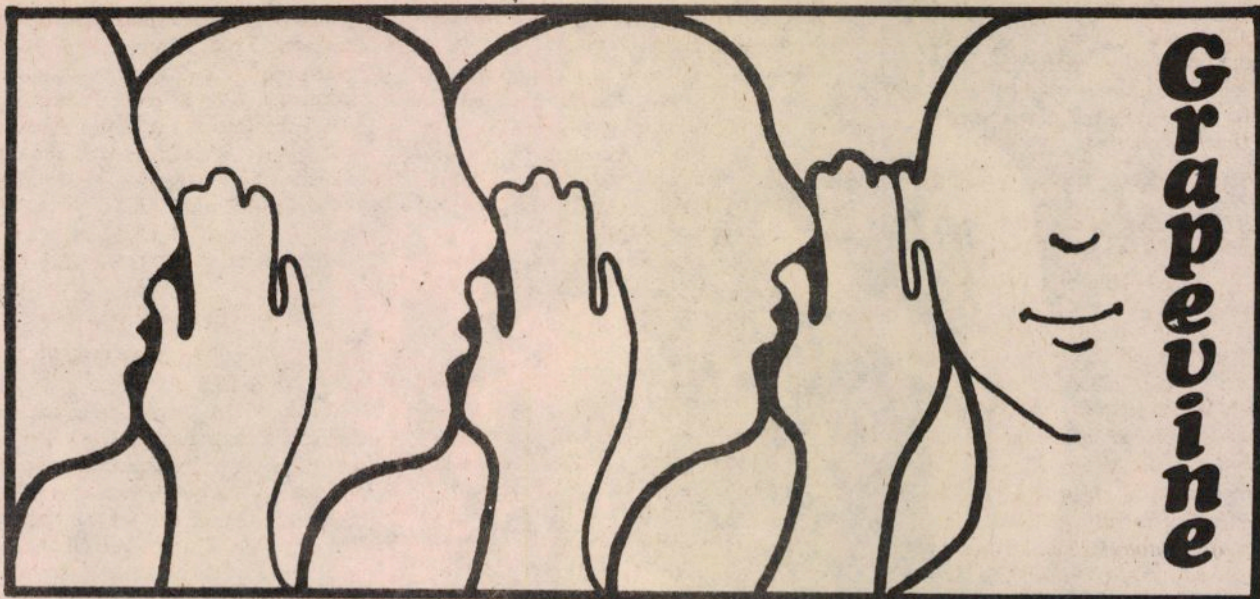
The Bear Tribe. The Farm people, who epitomize through their work at home and the work of their outreach arm, Plenty, the marriage of New Age energy and planetary consciousness.

These people are not just saying, but showing, how far we can go if we put our energies together. And energy is what the Symposium was all about.

For eight days we gathered in an outright energy bash. For eight days we turned the juice up and no one got burned. The real spirit and the real message of the WSOH, after all the speeches and wisdom, is in that energy. And in those people fortunate enough to share in it and carried a bit of it away with them. What we do with it determines how long and how well the Symposium lives.

When it ended, people lingered a long time. Finally we dispersed in our many directions. Out in the streets the skies were still clear. Downtown Vancouver still climbed around me. Only some things were still the same.

A note about this article: In sorting through all the tapes, transcripts and notes on the Symposium, I felt the real message was in the energy and emotion of the event and that is what I tried to capture and relate here. However, in the speakers' presentations are a wealth of wisdom, knowledge and information that is both interesting and useful. Tapes and transcripts of all events at the Symposium are available from World Symposium on Humanity, 1962 W. 4th Ave., Vancouver, B.C.. Also, a series of films from the Symposium should be distributed soon. Watch for them.



## ANANDA REBUILDS AFTER FIRE

### HOW FULL THE HEART THAT WORKS WITH GOD

Ananda Cooperative Village, Box 900  
Alleghany Star Route, Nevada City, Cal.  
95959.

The fire destroyed much of what we called Ananda. But we have long understood that the external form is secondary to the inner spirit. The fire gave us the opportunity to put this understanding into practice, and helped us to see--on a far deeper level--that dedication, selflessness, and divine attunement are the essence of our community. Defined this way, Ananda was undiminished by the fire. In fact, it was strengthened.

In the months since the fire we have put in well over 10,000 man- and woman-hours of work directly connected with rebuilding the homes and restoring the burned land. WE HAVE:

†Nearly completed four homes, and framed one more, and brought three others up to floor level.

†Designed and drawn up plans for 13 homes.

†Applied for and obtained building permits for eight houses.

†Cleared 150 acres of land of brush and debris.

†Seeded with rye and alfalfa grass 50 acres of cleared land.

†Sold to local sawmills over one-half million board feet of timber from burned pine, fir, and cedar trees.

†Split, stacked and sold 50 cords of firewood from burned areas.

†Constructed a new 2400 gallon water tower, and installed over 2000 feet of water lines.

†Cut and gravelled access roads to new house sites.

We have received donations totalling \$40,000, for which we are deeply grateful. An additional \$29,000 was raised through the sale of timber. This \$69,000 has seen us through the initial phases of reconstruction. We estimate \$40,000 is needed to finish replacing the homes destroyed by the fire.

Many of the new houses will be domes. Domes are economical to build and reflect in their expansive contours the spirit of our lifestyle. By repeating the same design for many structures, we have been able to streamline the construction process - buying and cutting materials in large quantities. The crews can work with increasing efficiency as they repeat the same procedures from dome to dome. One split-level, rectilinear house has also been built, and two creatively designed log cabins are under construction.

Our whole concept of housing has changed now, from being a village of hermits to cluster housing. As Jyotish expressed it, *When we first came to Ananda we were fleeing the crowded cities to become hermits in the woods. Our housing pattern was to build our homes as far away from each other as possible! Now we have a different attitude. We want to live more like an extended family, sharing our sadhana, our family life, and our child-raising. The cluster housing we are building now reflects this emerging sense of family and community. The fire has given us the opportunity to express, far more quickly than we would have been able to do otherwise, this new attitude toward life together.*

The fire took away a lot of the physical Ananda; yet we've had such happiness from giving our work to God that we'll remember 1976 as a year of great blessings.

## RETROSPECT: WOODBURN HILL FARM CONFERENCE

[Woodburn Hill Farm is a family-oriented rural intentional community in southern Maryland. Founded in 1975, it's located on 200 acres].

Woodburn Hill Farm, RT. 3, box 98,  
Mechanicsville, Md. 20659

The Woodburn Hill Conference is our gift to ourselves and our movement - the intentional community. This year's gift was exquisite! Over 100 people; all ages, gathered amid frozen pipes to experience a real contact high. The theme of our conference was **The Life and Times at Woodburn Hill Farm**. And the content of it was us - all of us!

January found our community in a hard place - cold, depressed, struggling to ...hardly a posture to spring-board a share-the-wealth conference...Yet as we marshaled ourselves and our friends to the task, we warmed. It came together.

The workshops: country jobs, lifestyles, farm futures, interpersonal dynamics, family/children, growth/spirituality, intentionality, creative financing, governance/decision making, food/gardening, men's group, women's group.

One key was a decision **not** to bring in resource people from other communities or elsewhere. We used our own skills and talents and borrowed heavily from extended family and friends. Another key was a dynamic design that followed the stages of the group (and community) development. And we allowed room for people to meet their own varying needs.

Among the evidenced results of the Farm and Community Conference are a group of enthusiastic new friends naming themselves **Friends of Woodburn Hill Farm** who are discovering ways to relate

to our community and their interests. And, of course, we have new members - the serendipity of the conference! The intangible result of the conference (and the best gift) is a keenly felt sense of pride and spirit that we earned.

### NEWS FROM KOINONIA PARTNERS

#### Koinonia, Rt. 2, Americus, Ga 31709

The following is excerpted from their winter 1977 newsletter: *The most important work we do at Koinonia is with children. We build low-cost homes, fight hunger through food cooperatives and agricultural projects, work continually for economic and social justice -- but if in the process we neglect our children, we will ultimately inherit the wind.*

*The Koinonia Child Development Center, better known locally as the KCDC, throbs with life as about 20 children and a half a dozen adult staff alternate from story time to singing and 'ballet' [of a style found nowhere else on earth] from painting to 'creative free play,' from nap times to meals consumed with voracious enthusiasm. At times the building seems certain to be damaged by the noise, but as one veteran kindergarten worker observed, it's a joyful kind of noise.*

*Georgia has no state-wide kindergarten program yet, so most children here begin school with less preparation than their counter-parts receive in many other states. Children who attend the KCDC are*

*given a big advantage, a chance to learn social as well as mental skills.*

*The staff is chosen to include men as well as women, black teachers as well as white. The Philosophy prescribes that children should have freedom to develop their attributes without the imposition of rigid sex roles. The central theme is the creation of an atmosphere of love and acceptance for the children. 'We can teach the children lots of skills, but mostly our children need lots of love when they are little.'*

*The Parent-Child Nursery is the newest addition to the children's program at Koinonia. As its name suggests, the nursery is more than just a baby sitting service. It operates as a parent-cooperative with 7 parents working with the regular staff several hours each week. Credit is given the participating parents toward their children's tuition fees. But the more important result is the lively interchange of ideas and information about nutrition, discipline, family planning, health and parenting in general. The parent's participation at the Nursery also helps to build the sense of community involvement and responsibility for the whole pre-school program.*

*Of course, there is a great amount of work with children at Koinonia that has little if anything to do with the more*

*formal programs: special tutoring at the 'Learning Tree,' Drama Club, Forest Park Youth Club, summer recreation and work programs, church school classes, a baseball team, and much more. Koinonia is no utopia for the children any more than for the adults who live here, but they are not being forgotten in all the rush. We keep finding that all of us have more love to give than we thought we did.*

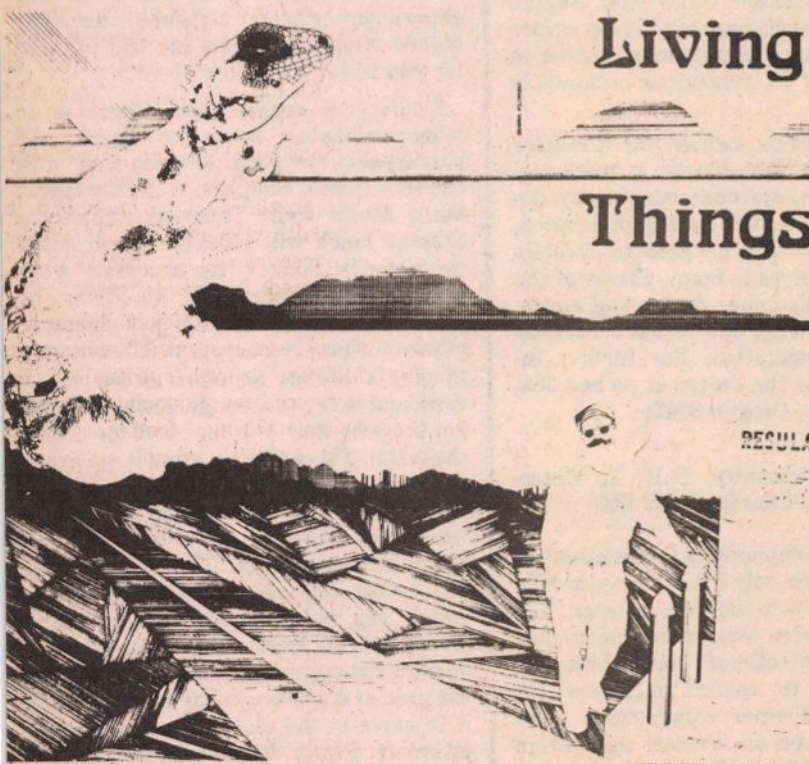
### ALIYA, MAPLEVALE GO UNDER

**Aliya Community, P.O. Box 2087, Bellingham, Wa 98225**

When Aliya wrote its listing for the **Communités directory**, they had signed an agreement to buy land, contingent on getting an adequate water supply. Since then they drilled for water and got a 200 foot dry hole. Understandably disappointed at this setback, Aliya writes that it may become part of another community, re-emerge at another time in another place or in another form.

**Maplevale Organic Farm, RR 6, Box 7, Site 11, Fredericton, N.B. Canada**

Maplevale Organic Farm is no longer operating and will be sold shortly. Hal and Judy Hinds have moved from the area and would like their friends not to write Maplevale any longer. Their publication, **Northwind**, is also defunct.



# Living Things

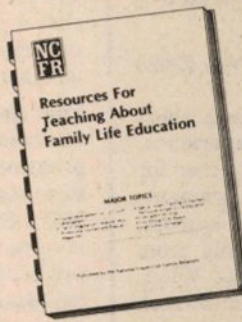
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*Edited by Rebecca M. Smith*

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## CONFERENCES AND WORKSHOPS

### Consumer Cooperative Alliance

June 23-26 The CCA is sponsoring its 48th annual conference of consumer co-ops in Montclair, N.J. Old and new age co-ops from a wide range of consumer areas—food, housing, insurance, credit union, etc.—will participate. Speakers and participants represent many regions. Workshops on sexism and feminism in co-ops, inter-regional buying, trucking, warehousing, co-ops in federations, and collective processes. Also *nuts and bolts* sessions in organizing and managing. Some internal struggle is foreseen with the structure of the alliance being questioned by members. Cost: \$85. Some scholarships available. \$20 reduction in cost possible by staying in homes of local co-ops. Write: Jeff Ferris c/o NEFCO, 129 Franklin St., Cambridge, Mass. 02139.

**Twin Oaks Community, Louisa, Va. 23093**  
[703] 894-5126

June 4 - 11 *Walden II Week* is a short term, real communal living experience. Twenty to 25 people will live together for the week, forming their own government, communal treasury, work-credit system, and social organization. With help from members of Twin Oaks and East Wind, the WIIW participants start from scratch and function as if they were going to live together on a long-term basis. If you are thinking about communal living, this is the ideal opportunity to test it out. Setting up the kitchen, arranging for sanitation facilities, planning menus, distributing work, preparing budgets, and learning to communicate are some of the first essentials. But social interaction, positive reinforcement, dancing, massage, swimming hiking, and parties are just as important. Each WIIW is different. Each forms its own government and makes its own decisions within a Walden II framework. Each time new friendships are built.

Please: no pets and no illegal drugs of any kind. No children, except at future WIIW advertised as especially for child-

ren. Yes to all others. Bring camping equipment.

The cost will depend on your WIIW group. Registration deposits (which repay T.O. for preparations) are \$20/person. Upon arrival, your communal treasury is begun with an additional \$35 from each. Sometimes, as much as half of this is refunded at the end (but don't count on it), depending on how your planners and managers manage your money.

To register, phone to ask about openings before you send the deposit and a self-addressed envelope to **Walden II Week** at the above address. We will send you a map, work preference sheets, and further suggestions.

If you cannot come in June, Twin Oaks is scheduling another WIIW from August 13 - 20. Early registration will help assure that it happens. The minimum number of participants is 20, registered a month in advance.

**The Cerro Gordo Center for Creative Community** is sponsoring a workshop program in eco-systemic community design beginning July 9 thru September 3, 1977. Students will be able to directly involve themselves in many phases of the project from planning, design and experimentation through the actual construction or implementation. For further information write the center at **po box 569, Cottage Grove, Oregon 97424**

**Dandelion Community, R.R. 1, Enterprise, Ontario, Canada, KOK 1Z0**  
[613] 358-2304

June 24 - 26 **Communities Conference** will be similar to the July 4th conference held at Twin Oaks over the past 5 years. The aim is to broaden awareness and understanding of intentional communities in general, and to recruit members for Dandelion and other communities. The emphasis will be on secular, egalitarian groups such as those that use the Walden Two model. These groups share a commitment to equality, and an interest in organization and a deliberate experiment-

ation as a means of creating the good life. But, we also thrive in our diversity, and much of the conference will deal with areas relevant to any communal living situation. We invite people who are serious about joining community, either now or in a year or so. We also invite representatives of communities who want to do some selective recruiting. This is a good time for future communitarians to visit Dandelion.

Dandelion is not a conference center. However, we have decided to gather people together on our own land because that is where we are building community. How we deal with its practical problems may be a good stimulus for discussion. You can see a community in action and evaluate whether you will like our experiment or prefer a different one. The details of our communal life will be here for you to see and think about.

Conference organization: There is no indoor sleeping space to spare. All participants are asked to bring their own shelters (tents, campers, station wagons, etc.). Meals from Thursday supper to Sunday lunch will be cooked and eaten communally. Some of the necessary work of the conference will be done by organizing participants in a way similar to our own labor-credit system. The object is to give everyone an equal share of the work and to try to arrange that people will get the jobs they like the most (or dislike the least). There will be a few large group meetings, but most of the discussion is planned to take place in small informal workshops covering a wide range of communal experience. If you have ideas about workshop topics, especially those in which you have information to share, please let us know. We hope to offer enough structure to get the conference off the ground and leave enough flexibility for it to move in the direction of our mutual interests. Please do no bring pets.

About children: Dandelion and most of the other communities involved in this conference are committed to communal

child-rearing. If your interest in community includes children, we would like to give you an opportunity to experience at least some aspects of this concept. If you bring children to the conference, you are asked to spend most of the first day working with an experienced childcare person and with other parents and children to set up children's recreation facilities and a childcare program for the balance of the conference. We'll provide shelter in case of rain, tools, other physical materials. The rest will be up to you.

The cost is \$22 per person for adults and children (except those too small to walk or eat communally). Send the advance registration fee of \$10 per person with your name, address and phone number.

Come and share in the learning and the celebration! With the support of the Federation of Egalitarian Communities, we will be working to help you find a community.

*Federation: Aloe [N.C.], Dandelion [Ontario], East Wind [Mo.], North Mountain [Va.] and Twin Oaks [Va.]*

**Another Place, Rt. 123, Greenville, N.H. 03048 [603] 878-1510 or 878-9883.**

Another Place is a conference and network center run as a non-profit organization. Conference costs are on a sliding scale based on economic situation. Scholarships are available. Conferences are communal: everybody helps with the work either by giving a workshop, doing childcare, cooking meals, etc.

**May 26 - 28 Alternative Education** Students, teachers, parents, and administrators will attend. Workshops will be on: overview, goals and visions, the nuts and bolts of building and maintaining a school, and sharing our favorite classes and teaching techniques. We'll be working toward building the growing network of alternative schools throughout New England.

**June 3 - 5 Dance and Music Celebration** of the spirit and struggle for a new way of life and our senses of movement and bodily joy. There will be time for individual presentations, group jamming, and group dancing.

**June 16 - 19 Social Healing Conference Solstice Festival** focused on people becoming free, working to unite in the struggle for political freedom and human rights with the spiritual striving to become free ourselves--to become whole. Workshops: networking, building alternative institutions, anti-nuclear organizing, psychotherapy, womancraft, group process and leadership. Saturday night solstice celebration with music and dance.

**June 24 - 26 Women: Body, Mind, Spirit** An intensive weekend workshop for

women which will focus on relationships, body and mind awareness, women affirming women, and the spiritual journey.

**Rainbow Family Tribal Council, P.O. Box 5577, Eugene, OR 97405.**

**The World Family Healing Gathering** is to be held July 1st to 7th in the Gila National Forest in New Mexico. Our previous gatherings have been held in Colorado '72, Wyoming '73, Utah '74, Arkansas '75, Montana '76. All of these gatherings have been similar in vision, taking place in remote areas of the land with all people being invited. This year the Forest Service has promised complete cooperation so we may enjoy our Constitutional right to gather in Peace. The site is confirmed and we have a clear picture of how the site can be effectively set up so as to protect its ecological natural splendor and allow for folks to center with one another and the Earth.

Nearest town is 40 miles away at Winston (Hwy. 52) pop. 50, there will be a contact center set up to direct folks onto the site in Winston. Please bring large gas containers, water containers. The weather will be dry, hot with possibly some summer rains. Bring sunburn protection, shovels, picks, axes, large canning pots, camping equipment for at least a week; bulk food is welcome but this year we are mainly going to try to serve raw foods (sprouts, fruit, nuts, vegetables) as these are easier to prepare, in hot weather, easier on physical body. We use all donations including green energy (money) to feed all the people that come, in a cooperative manner. Nearest good food market is 90 miles away so come prepared to stay. As usual there will be a one or two mile walk into site.

We are a Tribe of Volunteers. We ask anyone who comes to give of their personal energy and time to the various jobs needing to be done during the gathering. We ask for no guns to be brought, we discourage drugs, alcohol; please leave your pets at home. We encourage Healers and Healthful Herbs. We come together to share work, living, prayer, information, council: to develop harmony with each other and the earth. Child care is cooperatively set up with all parents and individuals interested in helping.

Each year we ask that strong workers come after the 15th of June to help set up, our permit will be for June 21 - July 15. If you come early be prepared to work and bring supplies. Some of us will be staying together, traveling as a Tribe in search of land upon which to build a P.E.A.C.E. Village: join us in a serious, committed way. The Gatherings are for healing of all minds, hearts, bodies, souls; healing of the Earth and all people. This is an

absolutely Free event. There will be a Gathering in Silence on the Fourth of July at Noon to *listen*. We have grown in experience and trust and we feel that this gathering will reflect our beings as we are now. We ask that if you can not come in the physical be with us in Spirit wherever you are; we ask that you join us in healing the Earth and all People. Gather food, tools, people as you come, there is room for all, the door is open, let the children come Home to the Mountain.

**P.E.A.C.E. = Positive Energy Alternative Community Environment**

**Women's Workshops. A Woman's Place, Athol, N.Y. 12810. [518] 623-9541.**

**May 13 - 15. Astrology and Tarot.** Working toward a feminist interpretation of these two ancient systems of knowledge.

**May 20 - 22. Work Weekend.** Help with preparing the garden for planting, digging a new septic system, and spring cleaning.

**May 27 - 29. (Memorial Day). Body Massage, Shiatsu, Reflexology.** Techniques for healing, body awareness, communication.

**June 3-5. Herbs.** Herb walks on AWP property. Learning to identify herbs and edible plants.

**June 10 - 12. Auto Clinic.** Some basics on how to do a tune up and oil change, also basic body work.

**June 17 - 19. Poetry.** Share your writing with other women, or just listen; scheduled reading and writing sessions.

**June 24 - 26. Music.** Bring along musical instruments to play, learn to play, or just come to stomp and sing along.

**Sonnewald Homestead, RD 1, Box 457, Spring Grove, Pa. 17362 [717] 225-3456:**

**June 4, 5, 6 Ecology and the Modern Homestead.** Learn the basics of gardening, nutrition, homestead structures, animals and bees. Sonnewald Homestead has been an organic farm for over 25 years and is a fine example of how to grow your own food, use alternative energy and move towards simplified self-sufficiency. One of the first solar heated homes in this country is on this homestead, as well as a natural food store. Adults \$20, Children \$5, under 5 years free. (includes registration fee, meals and facilities.)

**The School of Living, P.O. box 3233, York, Pa. 17402 [717] 755-1561**

**June 17 - July 1 Eco-lifestyles.** Organized with a Walden II type government. Special projects: weeds & herbs, solar food dryer, tools, wood and remodeling.

**July 2 - July 15 Eco-lifestyles.** Organized with consensus type government. Special projects: soil building, grow hole, working with stone and concrete, remodeling.

July 16 - July 29 **Eco-lifeways**. Organized with strong leader type government. Special projects: weeds and herbs, root cellar, working with stone and wood.

Individual sessions \$45, all 3 \$100. Write for details, include large, stamped envelope.

★★★★★★★★★★

### GROUPS LOOKING FOR PEOPLE

**FINDERS COMMUNITY:** Our energies are directed at offering a public service. We operate out of two unique apartment buildings in upper Georgetown, commonly known as Glover Park. We function as an airport offering our services to those people who are seriously looking for a community or considering organizing one. Here, people are exposed to communal life and the learning is high. People meet here and take off on new adventures. We have a constant flow of visiting experimenters and have a core of from one to 20 men and women and also our senior members travel a lot. We have three communal children who are free. We encourage high energy people to stay and become part of our tribe. We thrive on adventure and like to play games. We also have a farm in Sperryville, Virginia and an old hill house at the foot of Old Rag. Visitors are welcome anytime--as we live a day at a time. 3918 W. St., Washington, D.C.

**We're looking for people who are looking for us** We are a rural, family-oriented, intentional community in So. Maryland. In '75 several households pooled resources and acquired a fantastic 200 acre Amish farm. *The Good Life* includes separate housing, common kitchen, sharing dreams, mortgage making, childrening, hard work, personal growth, privacy.... **Inquire: Woodburn Hill Farm, Box 48, Charlotte Hall, MD 20622**

**BeLite Community:** Our community has undergone many changes since our beginnings in Ananda Marga in August 1972. In November 1972, we started a natural foods bakery and our focus shifted to it. In May, 1974 we moved to 225 acres of rented, mostly forested land in the country. That fall we built a pole framehouse. We also have built two small yurts and a pond and sauna. We have cultivated an organic garden for three years. In February 1976, we passed the bakery on to a wider group of friends. It continues to thrive and is still very dear to our hearts. Since letting go of the bakery, we have not really had a central focus. It has been a time of taking stock, as a community and as individuals. We share the joy of living on this beautiful land we have put so much energy into. We hope to see a continuing community living here. Beyond that our future is nebulous. We

are looking for more folks to join our community. Our members have dwindled from twelve to three at the moment. Much of the future direction our community takes will depend on the new folks who join us.

The folks here now are Mitch, 25; Steven, 23; and Mikel, 22. Mitch has lived in the community for four years. He is currently working in a collectively run natural foods restaurant. Steve joined the community this summer. He works at the bakery and paints houses. Mikel has lived in the community for two years. He is doing carpentry and furniture making.

We share a desire to live on the land in harmony with nature. We are also striving to make our living in ways that help further our personal growth. We aren't into any heavy trips; spiritual, political, or otherwise. People interested in our community can write to us **c/o Belite Community, RD 2, 44 Starks Rd., Newfield, N.Y. 14867** Visitors and new members are welcome.

**Las Mercedes, Calle Jalisco, Res. Elizabide, Apto. 8, Caracas 106, Venezuela:** We are a group of 18 friends (most of us single) who have been together for six years. Ages are between 17 and 43; equal number of males and females. We try to lead a natural, rational life in the measure we can, avoiding unnecessary and harmful attitudes and actions, such as smoking, drinking, and eating commercial trash, going to nightclubs, etc. We base our nutrition on fruits, vegetables, whole cereals, milk products, nuts, and very occasionally, fish. We own and run a lacto-vegetarian restaurant in Caracas. We also have a small carpentry and wood furniture shop. We live and work in Caracas and will continue to for a couple of years. We plan to go back to the land and retire as soon as possible to live in the two farms we have south of the Orinoco River. On the 500 and 5,000 acres we have cattle, horses, and are beginning to plant fruit trees, bananas, rice, corn, beans, etc.

We are interested in developing (especially in the smaller farm) the basis for a self-sufficient community. We have worked hard to finance this project. We need several persons with experience in biological agriculture and self-sufficiency techniques to provide us with the knowledge we lack. We are open to all possibilities in relation to the manner they would engage in our program. We can suggest a basic salary to begin with, and then it would depend on how these persons could integrate with us, without limit. No capital needed; we are ready to provide airplane tickets, land, financing, tools, equipment, and other necessities. If we are mutually satisfied and compatible, full membership is possible. Those with real

interest, write: **Carlos Ignacio Perez**, at the above address. Send detailed information and a recent photograph.

**Texas Lake Community, P.O. Box 5, Hope, BC Canada, VoX 1C0 (est. 1973)** We are a small community of 12 adults and one child. All monies are pooled collectively and we receive \$1.00 per day plus a clothing allowance. We are organized as a non-profit society with a charitable donation tax number.

We run a year-round hostel at Texas Lake, 7 miles north of Hope, BC, on the Trans Canada Highway. Overnight Accommodations available for \$2.00 per night for anyone who is travelling. At Texas Lake we supply the hostel with fresh vegetables, eggs, honey and goats' milk.

We also co-ordinate another project called *BC Communities Network*. We are compiling an information bank on BC alternative communities. This information will be available to contributors for sharing common interests and resources. Any existing networks that would like to plug in for information exchanges would be appreciated.

The group is in the process of establishing a New Age Conference Center to facilitate interchange and knowledge. As well as holding conferences this place will be a sanctuary, a place where people can gather to experience God within. All participants will be involved as they are at Texas Lake hostel in the day-to-day work. Eventually would like to build retreat cabins for those that work to go deeper within. Towards this end we have purchased 120 wooded acres beside the Kettle River 32 miles north of Rock Creek, BC. We hope to begin building the spring of '77. If you are interested, please write.

**The Last Resort Ranch**, a 160 acre family homestead has room for people wishing to build a cabin, help with farm work, and do their own thing with local resources, such as woodcraft, ceramics. We, three adults and three children, participate in public school and community activities. **Write: Sam Lightwood, Kenny Lake, Copper Center P.O. Alaska, 99573**

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### GROUPS FORMING

**100%Co-op Community Forming:** Opening for seven co-ops for construction crew. Crew becomes core of total co-op small town.

Write your view of co-op living, your experience in other co-ops, your skill in housing construction; and a resume. **Jim Wyker, 111 Bobolink, Berea, KY 40403.**

**New Age Communications Arts Center:** A proposal has been made for a rural, new age communications arts center, which would enable performing artists to replace their city life with creation of an ecologically sound, egalitarian, cooperative community. In order to be self-sustaining, the center could provide at *people's prices* such services as:

- 1) Groups of traveling entertainers, using rural community as home base.
- 2) Seminar/retreats and residential school for the arts.
- 3) Retreat for artists (non-members as well as members).
- 4) Center for production of new age video and audio tapes, films, theatre vehicles, music, dance, etc.

People using the arts to promote love-unity-sharing, consciousness expansion and spiritual realization are asked to share their ideas, fantasies, experiences, and resources. Write to **Ahn [not Ann] Schoneberg, c/o Questa Food Co-op, 255 Pismo St. San Luis Obispo, CA 93401.** Please include a self-addressed, stamped envelope. *If the proposed center already exists, please let me know.*

**Oklahoma Communal Living:** Wanted: young families that can join hands with us each morning in dedicating ourselves to each other and to the Ever Presence. Individual family units, communal vegetarian meals, no drugs. We're into meditation and developing our self-sufficient homestead. We operate a health ranch, taking care of the ill and teaching preventative health care. **New Life, Rt. 2, Box 215, Wilburton, OK 74578.**

**Wisconsin Commune:** Four people interested in forming a vegetarian cooperative wish to meet others who would like to share their lives and combine resources to beat the rising cost of farmland. We welcome all human energy and would especially appreciate any leads on suitable rural lands. Also would enjoy hearing from exiting rural vegetarian cooperatives. **J. Piazza, Rt. 2, W. Lacy Rd., Madison, Wisc. 53711.**

**School of the Arts** is a senior commune for about five to seven people over 50 who will live in one dwelling, with private rooms for individuals and couples. Activities will consist of living together as an intentional family, eating, housekeeping, maintenance. Activities for economic support and private pleasure will be open to choice. No cigarette smoking or pets will be welcome. Simultaneously the farm (187 acres) will be placed in a trust for the purpose of teaching disadvantaged youth, maybe kids from high crime areas of the cities, or later, ex-cons. Two activities will be: intensive academics for excellence in our cultural demands of all areas, like

reading, math, history, politics, science, art, etc.; and vocational in all areas of human needs, like building, energy requirements, sewage disposal, water supply, food getting, plants and animals, bees, earthworm culture, fish ponds, lakes for fun, clothes preparation, including spinning, weaving, sewing, etc. Art will figure heavily in all this; and the preparation for jobs will concentrate on beautiful work, no shit stuff.

Members of the commune may involve themselves in the school if they wish, at a modest salary. **Ann Morris, for SCHOOL OF THE ARTS Box 114, Stillwater, NJ 07875**

**Agahpay, c/o Dick Baker or Ross Anderson, Milam, WV 26838 [304] 897-5788**

We are starting a seeking fellowship to become an intentional community, the Creator willing. We plan pacifist back-to-the-land fellowship, emphasizing Jesus Christ's radical teachings. We don't want the meaningless watered-down and/or dogma-strangled religion of the Establishment-church. Open to messages of other faiths unless such conflict with Christ's message. Wanted: Artists in pictorial (including photography), writing, and music fields. Non-artists needed also. **Families with children welcome also.** Outreach to help area considered important. We were in community experimentally. Target time to start permanent fellowship: Summer of 1977

**Christian Commune.** help me start one. My odd combination of doctrinal opinions makes me want to do this instead of joining an established group. Let me send you my doctrinal essays--not as creedal articles to subscribe to, but to show you how I have things figured out so you can see if we have enough in common. The price of the essays is feedback; if you don't comment early in the stream of essays, I'll conclude that you aren't interested and stop sending them. I promise to answer your comments. I'm not a Marxist, don't want to abolish the nuclear family, and think our commune can get along fine without television. (Also without alcohol or other drugs). One commune makes hammocks, another candles; what shall we make? Help me figure out industry. Raising hogs, vegetables? To be not a boarding house, not a cooperative, but a commune, we have to have an industry. When we get going, shall we kill two birds with one stone by recruiting from halfway houses, drug rehabilitation centers and hitchhikers? When we have children, they should go to public school, then choose, as Bruderhof children do. When success threatens us with unwieldy size, we can form a daughter commune. Unattached men first, families later. **Robert Powell, Box 10267, El Paso, TX 79993.**

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## PEOPLE LOOKING

**Pat and Ray:** Having been interested in being directly involved in community for many years, we are frustrated in finding ourselves still leading rather conventional individualistic lives. We are interested in a homogeneous community of people with common goals and philosophy of life and not one that attempts to be all things to all people. We seek a group of people who organize and control their own lives, but who also lend a helping hand to others when it is within their means.

*We invite anyone who believes s/he might be able to cooperate with us in starting a small intentional community, to write us at 242 Northwood, Yellow Springs, Ohio 45387 or [513] 767-8181.*  
**Pat and Ray Olds.**

We want to leave the smog and the freeways and the fierce competition of urban life. We are searching for a country community to join. We are ...Chester (33) a carpenter, cabinetmaker, gardener, a lover of books, of nature and ricotta cheese pie, and ...Ananda, graphic artist, therapist, ex-health food store owner, (and a great kibbitzer). Wholistic health and natural foods are quite important to us, as is always telling the truth to each other.

We are looking for a group of mature people, who are trying to change the decaying culture by creating positive alternatives to the ass-backwards way our society has of teaching values and love. We want to join an established community and help work towards self-sufficiency, ecological harmony, equality for all (including children), and above all, open and honest relationships. We will be sad to leave the bay area because we have so many friends whom we love here, but we will move anywhere if the circumstances are really right. (We are very partial to California and Oregon).

So if you think we fit you, and you fit us, please let us hear from you soon. We are anxious to stop thinking, and planning, and talking; and get it on! Love and Peace, **Ananda Coner and Chester Noreikis, 575 Montclair Ave., Oakland, CA 94606 [415] 835-1314.**

Strong, gentle woman, 28, and six year old son, seek country situation living with small group of mellow, caring, long-hair type people, either near Chicago, Illinois, or Nashville, Tennessee, where I may be attending a nurse-midwifery program, or other interesting and community-minded area.

I am interested in small-scale home-steading, i.e. gardening, goats, chickens, but wish to have time for other pursuits, which include square/country dancing and calling, music (especially old-timey string

band), sewing creative clothing, possibly as a secondary source of income, and alternative childbirth/health care.

I'm accustomed to living with other people and enjoy it--am seeking a proper balance between relationships with others and time/space with self, physical labor, homesteading planning and hanging out singing and dancing, meditating, or whatever. I am also somewhat attached to my nursing (part-time only) but would like to eventually work at alternative health care.

Joshua is a very bright, lively, sensitive and loving child with diverse interests, and would like to live with another child/children if possible. If it sounds like we are people you might enjoy having around, please write Sue Hay, RD 2, Box 224, Binghamton, NY 13903.

Margie (26), Don (37) and Baby Fetus (due early August) are looking to meet folks who want to create a small, loving community. We seek friends who can share their love for the land, animals, plants and each other. We try to grow through daily living. We are beginners in Zen, yoga, farming, simple living, and making babies. We have a dog, and a cat that we love dearly. Laughing, singing, and being silly are important to us. So is working hard, or watching the grass grow, or a coyote run. Please write The Peaheimers, Star Route, Marion MT 59925.

I am a Counselor (Master Degree) with 12 years of public school experience behind me. I am single and 34 years old and now teaching Adult Ed. in Grand Rapids, Mich. I am looking for a place to get out of this rat race of a society and live on a co-operative basis with others of like mind. I'd like to be able to use my talents (teaching and/or counseling) if possible. I am looking for a community or group or co-op. Don Priehs, 247 Charles S.E., Grand Rapids, MI 49503.

My name is Larry Melton and I'm looking for a community that bases itself on principles of Billy Jack's Freedom School.

If there is anybody who would like to live and help start a freedom school, please contact me. Larry Melton, P.O. Box 4221, San Francisco, CA 94101.

Looking for a community or group to join when I retire, that:

--allows each member their own home and freedom to make personal decisions about own life;

--in ideally, a warm climate and country setting or ocean, near college town and Unitarian Church;

--has all ages of people;

--and appreciates me.

Write to: Do Studio, Skidmore, West Tisbury, Ma 02575.

Me and one year old son, David, are hoping to get off of welfare, food stamps and living alone together. We are seeking an alternative society, family, and education, either communally or cooperative community (into buying a piece of land). We have much good energy to share with our brothers and sisters. I am into freedom, childcare, crafts, communication, yoga, meditation, healing arts, dancing, singing, laughter, gardening, and vegetarianism. David is into being happy and making those around him happy. We are open to many ways and teachers.

If you would like to share our energy or know someone who would, please let us hear from you. Peace, from your sister, Ronnie Goodman, 4530 N.W. 36th St. #403, Lauderdale Lakes, FLA 33319.

I am a sincere man who is presently incarcerated at the Southern Ohio Correctional Facility in Lucasville, Ohio, for over 7 years. For the past few months I have been trying to establish some contact with the outside society. However, because of a general misunderstanding society has about men in confinement, my efforts towards outside communications have been fruitless.

It is important that I establish new contacts with people outside, because I seek to live a completely new lifestyle when I return to society, but as it now stands no one even knows I exist. I would like correspondence, contact. Willie Hopkins, 132-082, PO Box 787, Lucasville, OH 45648

*Loneliness in a place like this is almost unbearable. It is very much like that of a quiet drama which keeps building and building, seemingly without end...*

*The experience of such a feeling has to be felt to be understood. I have no wish to continue to be swallowed up by what appears to be a vacuum of emptiness, nor do I wish to remain just the faint echo of a hidden shadow...*

*In a desperate effort to emerge from the eternal prison of lost despair, I attempt to re-acquaint myself with the outside world and to become associated in a more honest and valid relationship with humanity...*

*I seek not pity, but rather a more meaningful strength in the understanding of others as well as myself...*

*My interests are many, my pleasures are few, and my hopes are that someone will respond to moral, spiritual, and intellectual communication...*

In closing, I would like to say that I believe, *I really do believe* that whenever you can share a smile, a tear, or a thought with a stranger, then *you are strangers no longer*. I wish to thank you in advance...

George M. Heard 111, #138-947, po box 69, London, Ohio 43140

#### Alternative Marriage/Family Styles.

I and my partners, Connie and Carol, are living in a group marriage of six years. We have grown to include a daughter, Devyn (22 mo) and Anita, a roommate for two years. At the end of this year we will begin a year-long journey of discovery, research, exploration, and fun in North America. We want to contact others involved in alternative lifestyles. I am a licensed marriage and family counselor and human relations trainer in private practice. I've been a consultant to alternative lifestyle groups. Connie is a psychiatric nurse skilled in child therapy and kindergarten education. Carrol is head of a department of alternative education in a local high school. Devyn is a full-time delightful child. Anita is a psychiatric technician in an emergency admitting psychiatric unit. We would like to assist alternative groups. Write: Digby Henry, 33121 Acapulco St. Dana Pt., CA 92629.

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#### HELP WANTED

We are seeking apprenticeship under an experienced healer. We are especially interested in herbal healing, but we are also open to other alternative methods. We are currently enrolled in undergraduate college programs for training people to teach the handicapped. However, we find the structure unbearable. *We are not into healing, healing is into us.* Satinka W., 1022 W. Johnson St., Madison, WI 53715 or Orenda S., 133 Durand-Apt. 10, East Lansing, MI 48823.

I am a lesbian mother being sued for custody of my five year old daughter. She has lived with me ever since we left her father four years ago, and wants to be able to continue living with me. I am one of eight lesbians and three children who formed a living/working collective one year ago. We share our children, money, possessions, fears, growing, joys. We're working to break down our socialization and to build a new feminist way of being. This custody case is both personal and political. It involves the right of lesbians to live with their children. It also involves child's rights--the state should not be allowed to so totally disrupt a child's life against her will. Because of my lesbianism and political activity, all aspects of my life are coming under scrutiny. I must defend in court my past and my present living and working situations, the sanity of myself, my child, and her friends. To fight this case, I must hire psychiatrists and lawyers--both expensive. We are appealing to feminists across the country for your support--money, skills, or useful contacts.

*Please help us in this struggle for the human rights of women and children. We need your help. Every bit helps, large or*



small, so dig deeply. The struggle is all of ours. Donations to Lesbian Defense Fund, or LDF, P.O. Box 4, Essex Junction, VT 05452 We are non-profit and tax exempt.

**Skills and Information:** converting to wood heat, alternative septic systems, becoming tax exempt, women to sponsor benefits and/or fundraisers.....**Contact: A Woman's Place, Athol, N.Y. 12810 [518] 623-9541.**

We are starting a spiritual homestead where children are the prime concern, where people can study and practice the art of education. We are into anthroposophy, ala Rudolf Steiner, et al. We are presently two adults (30 and 33) and two children (2 and 10), living on 20 acres in beautiful secluded valley a mile and a half from the Pacific, near Westport in Northern Mendocino County, Ca. There is adjacent property for sale, so we welcome potential neighbors with compatible lifestyles.

We need folks this summer to help us build a children's common house, with the possibility of staying on and living in the community. Visitors are welcome. \$1.00 per day per meal and help with the homesteading. No pets. Farm animals considered. (We have a pony). Come prepared to camp out. Write: **Children's Haven, Box 516, Albion, CA 95410**

**Build a Feminist Community this Summer:** Redbird is a feminist living and working collective in central Vermont. We are eight women and three children. We share our children, money, possessions, fears, growing, joys, work. We're working to break down our socialization and to build new feminist ways of being.

In the last few years, the best thing we've found has been connection with other women-sharing, working out, supporting, learning, playing, growing, leaving our isolation to find solid connections with other women. Out of this shared warmth and strength has grown our dream: to build a women's community.

To begin to make that dream happen, we are having the first of several summer transportation to and from planes, buses, build a feminist elementary/secondary school, residence cabins, and a collective center.

**To Make it Happen:** Redbird invites you to come and work with us this summer, to share in making the dream of a women's community become reality. We've got the land, a large piece in Hinesburg (23 miles from Burlington, 4 hours from Boston, 7 hours from NYC), with meadows, wooded hills, a creek with a swimming hole. Hinesburg is rural; the land is away enough so that we can be ourselves. It won't be a holiday leisure resort; this will

be a summer of sisters working together. We'll share childcare and maintenance (cooking, firewood, etc.) No experience is necessary. There is plenty of room for learning! There'll be time for other fun too-exploring, swimming, music-making, campfires....

**Nitty Gritties:** Redbird will provide shelter (tents), food (vegetarian), and transportation to and from planes, buses and trains in Burlington. Redbird has no money. We've put anything we did have into getting this women's community off the ground. We're asking for \$1.50 a day donation from those of you who come this summer. If your problems with money are worse than ours, let us know. If you want to come, make reservations now (for June 15th - Sept. 15th). Send the information requested below, and we'll send you more specifics on the work, climate, necessary clothes, directions, etc.

**Send us:** 1] your name, address, phone number; 2] dates you want to come; 3] ages and gender of children you'll bring; 4] any special needs or resources you have; 5] can you bring any tools?

Restrictions: no male adults; no pets.

*We hope to see you this summer!*

Please mail reservations and inquiries to: **Redbird, 280 Manhattan Drive, Burlington, Vt. 05401**

#### LAND

Looking for a couple or two who believe in mountain land and its potential, to buy 1/3 share of 130 acres of south slope ridgeland at Narrows, Va. \$3333. Man (46) and wife, Doris (52) would like to establish a Swiss-style of land use: the ridge, the point overlooking the New River, all the roads, best fields, and stone quarry would be community property. 50% common usage, the rest private ownership. Contact: **B.W. Lewis, 6914 University Dr., Alexandria, Va 22307**

#### 170 ACRE FARM FOR SALE

We are an established communal group in the Finger Lakes region of Upstate New York and have decided the time has come to sell our farm because all of us are going in separate directions. We have put it up for sale with local real estate agents, but would prefer to sell it to a group or

#### NEW SCHOOLS EXCHANGE PROBING THE DYNAMICS OF CHANGE

*New Schools Exchange Newsletter is an energetic and conscientious publication which concerns itself with educational liberation. Although their political perspective is often not stated, NSEN reflects a profound and integrated understanding of education's role in facilitating - or inhibiting - social change. The articles are often loving, occasionally bitter, but always rooted in the reality of human struggle. It's friendly as well as critical.*

-Lincoln Cushing

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**NSE, PETTIGREW, ARKANSAS 72752**

community which might carry on the work we have begun here. The property includes a 12-room, 100 year-old farmhouse which we are in the process of re-modeling. It has a new well (in addition to 5 others on the property), new submersible pump, a new septic system, and a wood-burning central forced-air furnace. There is a large chicken house which is livable; a 13 x 15 cabin; 2 small ponds; 3 large barns with utilities, grainery, silo, work space, etc.

There are 40 or so tillable acres, which we have been enriching organically. The farm has several garden sites, as well as apple trees, maple sugar trees, strawberry plants, etc. There are 50 or so acres of beautiful woods, with many trees suitable for sawing lumber.

We feel this is an excellent set-up for a community or group of people to get started on. There are numerous food coops in the area, as well as community work days, wood-cutting bees, etc..

The price we are asking for the farm is \$75,000. In addition we will consider selling our excellent working farm machinery, our tools, bee hives, wood stoves, cattle, furniture, lumber, etc. Please send all inquiries to: **Sunrise Farm, RD 1, Prattsville, NY 14873.**

\*\*\*\*\*

### How does a person meet & make new friends?

*Find the right people to live communally with? Connect with people who share the same dreams?*

One way is to leave it all to chance, & passively "await your fate"... but another way that works better is to join the Utopian Society. The Utopian Society provides a personal crossmatching service, linking up people all over with common ideas, interests, goals, visions & ideals. Dues are just \$5.00 a year. Members also receive "The Storefront Classroom" newspaper bimonthly, & "Utopian Eyes & Communal Living Directory" (magazine) quarterly.

Send dues (or \$1 for sample publications & more info.) to: **STOREFRONT CLASSROOM, BOX 1174-C, S.F., CA 94101.** (Phone (415) 566-6502)



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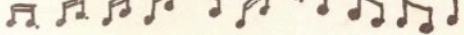
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*If you have technical skills in architecture, engineering, or environmental planning, and would like to become a member Associate, send your resume to the Coordinator.*

What did the Pink Panther say when he saw the dead ant in the path?

Give Up? 

*Deadant, deadant, deadantdeadantdeadant, deadaaaant..*

# Bookshelf



Here are brief descriptions of 5 books related to intentional community. Our free brochure contains a complete listing of some 35 books on cooperative life and work.

**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 plausibly present a case for such organizations as the basis of a decentralized society, describing 3 contemporary communities they see as partial successes in carrying out this vision.

**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.*

**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, DC., the authors explain how, through demonstration experiments, cooperative groups can persuade their neighbors to regain economic and political control of their own lives.

**Beyond Marriage and the Nuclear Family** by Robert Thamm. Pbk. 231pp \$3.95. A strong case for the commune as the environment which will facilitate transcending interpersonal difficulties.

**Communes: Creating and Managing the Collective Life** by Rosabeth Moss Kanter (ed) pbk. 544 pp. \$6.50. ...articulates many of the problems of living in community.

## COMMUNITIES

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## About Our Next Issue...

Rachel Bedard and Cynthia Arvio of the Philadelphia Life Center are guest-editing material from the Movement for a New Society, a well-established and multi-dimensional social change network. Articles from all over the country include: struggles within a lesbian-feminist house - a social change perspective comes to Savannah, GA - the Men Against Patriarchy in Phillie - the development of a senior women's collective - and much more. With a major emphasis on feminism, the issue also touches on political analysis, group dynamics, direct action training - in short, most of the important aspects of the politically oriented collective process.

**For Future Issues** - we are particularly looking for material on alternative economics: worker controlled or communally-owned business; cooperative marketing and distribution; credit unions and other collective financial structures. Geographically, we need input from groups on the West Coast, especially the Northwest.

If you want to contribute an article, based on your cooperative experience, the send us an outline and something about yourselves. Paul Freundlich, one of our editors, will be traveling this summer, and if you contacted us soon enough, might be able to visit your community and work with you directly.

### APOLOGIES

1) For two errors in the credits of our last issue. The authors of the *Women in Community* article were **Dianna McLeod** (not Cynthia Arvio) and Rachel Bedard. Cover credit goes to Steven TO, along with Cathy.

2) For two mistakes in the **Directory** listings of our Jan/Feb issue. The **MNS** phone number is (215) 724-1464. The correct address and number for the **Storefront Classroom Utopian Community** is PO Box 1174, San Francisco, CA 94101. Phone (415) 566-6502. Thanks to M. Manning of Tulsa for the time, attention and care about the magazine and community in his critique of #24. We learned a few things.

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