

COMMUNITIES journal of cooperative living

no. 29

\$1.25



The Class of '77

Course in Democratic Organization and Management
NEW SCHOOL FOR DEMOCRATIC MANAGEMENT

Planning * Decision Making * Consensus
* Leadership * Staffing * Evaluation *
Group Consciousness



Introducing this issue

I traveled around the country this summer (*and that's in this issue*) and at one point took my turn pitching my product to a marketing class at the New School for Democratic Management [*and that's in this issue*]. I showed the Communities poster we have and people generally liked it, but took exception to *our magazine* [as in yours and mine) feeling that was a sales hype.

It's really true, though. People in community do see Communities as *our* publication. Vakhil, at the Abode, whom I met in June, was *inspired* to write the article on their three economic systems we'd talked about: Paul and Lew in the middle of their incredible Washington work schedule, did pull their notes together on Democratic Organization. Tom Stevelt, whom I encouraged in Cincinnati, sent in the article on the Peacemakers, and made an attempt to relate that group to the rest of the Peace Movement. As for Rexxxx, he's a very fine person to play with and learn from. My only regret is that there isn't some way to send him along with each copy of the magazine.

Then there was Doug Johnson from Arcata Food Coop in California, who decided it would be pushing their process to write something now, but did send about 20 pages of organizational material to pass on to the New Haven Food Coop. And Laurie Weeks of Hoedads in Oregon, who looked over the magazine very carefully before deciding Communities might indeed be the place for Hoedads to present their vision of what they're up to. An Ernesto Vigil at the Crusade for Justice in Denver... Well enough of the one's that got away. Probably most of them will appear over the next year. Part of my consciousness traveling is to keep a perspective on the relative importance of doing it vs. documenting it. Since the people who write the articles are also the folks involved in their communities or projects, there's no way I want to push them, even if I could. It just has to be the right time in their lives, and the magazine has to excite their enthusiasm.



Not exactly. More of a way of thinking about our lives. There are a number of political, economic, educational, technological, etc, *movements* which offer a direction

toward productive social change (*says me*). They will provide the *structure* for living healthier lives, and to the extent that *structure* is successful, others will be turned on.

But the *LIFE* is in our communities - not the structure or goals, which is what we argue about - but the complex of relationships which is how we live - including how we live with ourselves, grow and change over time.

This magazine tries to offer a balance of how it is to *live* in community, and the *structural supports* necessary to the development of a community way of life.

Having the magazine rotated between Chip and Mikki at Twin Oaks and me in New Haven (with some general agreements about continuity and balance, and lots of helping out) and sections of the magazine (from individual articles to whole issues - ie; #27, MNS) turned over to other groups, makes for an interesting mix of perspectives.

What strikes me as most remarkable, both in reading the magazine and in traveling, is *how sure we are about what we know*. I mean we're not guessing; we've done it. Not everybody in every community or project - tho everyone contributes to the *life* - but always at least a few people who know how our lives work, how it got that way, and what remains a genuine puzzle. (And the access is usually there for people to mature in skills and understandings within those environments...*well, I'd like to think that.*)

WHY THIS MAGAZINE

Jacques Kaswan of Doing It! when I visited, said we are an insiders' magazine, and I think that's mostly true. Not exclusive. Just, *Yes, we've learned a few things we're ready to share. Here we are in all our foolishness and complexity. Take us for what we're worth. And then there's the back of the book. Reach as a point of access.*

WHY THIS ISSUE

It mostly flows out of the travel I've been doing, and a feeling that it's important to get deep enough into material so readers have a chance to walk away more curious than when they picked up the magazine.

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN NEW HAVEN

Chris Collins joined the staff as a typesetter and production person. Waiting for some CETA funding so we can pay workers. Have a reasonable working space set up finally.

WHAT'S HAPPENING AT TWIN OAKS

Chip and Mikki working on #30, the Directory Issue, to be co-published with Green Revolution.

WHAT'S HAPPENING REGIONALLY

Martin Bradley and Larry Davis creating networking possibilities in Sonoma County toward a northern California-edited-issue of Communities, Sept-Oct '78. If interested, contact: Pacific Communities Network, box 514, Penngrove, CA 94951 (707-664-2382 or 7656).

If you're interested in regional or local development, related to this magazine, either articles or distribution, contact us: CPC, box 426, Louisa, VA 23093.

Peace,
Paul

Journal of Cooperative Living

NOVEMBER / DECEMBER, 1977

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OPINIONS EXPRESSED BY AUTHORS AND CORRESPONDENTS ARE
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PUBLISHERS. MOVEMENT GROUPS MAY REPRINT WITH
PERMISSION. *Communities* IS PUBLISHED 6 TIMES A YEAR
FROM OFFICES AT TWIN OAKS COMMUNITY, Rt 4, LOUISA,
VA 23093. SECOND CLASS POSTAGE PAID AT LOUISA, VA
WITH ADDITIONAL ENTRY AT NEW HAVEN, CT 06511. SEND
CONTRIBUTIONS OF EDITORIAL MATERIAL TO: CPC, Box 426,
Louisa VA 23093. *Communities* is \$6 for one year
\$10 INSTITUTIONAL RATE, SINGLE \$1.25.
FOREIGN ADD \$1.50. PUBLICATION NUMBER 006570

\$5 Gift Subscription

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(\$6.50 for foreign). COMMUNITIES, box 426,
Louisa, VA 23093



THE ABODE OF THE MESSAGE:

three economic systems



The Abode of the Message is a spiritual community founded in 1975 by Pir Vilayat Inayat Khan, head of the Sufi Order. As a spiritual community, we have no particular economic principles, only a wish to try to realize Heaven on Earth. While this article concentrates on our experiences with several economic systems, we have found that our attempts to treat persons as economic units have failed miserably, due to a lack of correspondence with social, psychological, and spiritual forces.

We live semi-communally in the buildings of one of the oldest American communes, the part of the New Lebanon Shaker settlement known as South Family. The community lies in the Berkshire Mountains near Pittsfield, Massachusetts, about 30 miles from Albany, New York.

2

Our buildings cluster on a slope of Mount Lebanon in one corner of about 450 acres of land, mostly forested mountain. Presently there are over seventy adults, eighteen children, from ten to thirty visitors, and assorted cats, dogs, chickens, cows and sheep.

We have a farm, a school, several craft studios, and operate a number of businesses; a wholesale bakery, energy systems (wood stoves and splitters, foam insulation) auto repair garage, and computer systems consulting. In addition we have a year round program of meditation retreats, seminars and camps.

The Abode of the Message was an inspiration that came through a vision of Pir Vilayat. He saw a place where the bounty of Divine Perfection would freely manifest on Earth. A teacher of meditation most of his life, Pir Vilayat also saw the Abode as a place where theories of higher

consciousness, techniques of meditation, and ideals of the model spiritual life could be put into practice, subject to the tests of everyday life. Sufism as an esoteric tradition uses the stuff of ordinary life - family life, work, worship - as material of spiritual development and spiritual service. In keeping with this tradition, our ideals are used as guidance rather than as rules in establishing the operations of our government and economy.

PIONEERS

After a search group had spent over a year looking for land, we settled on South Family as our home. The buildings had been occupied by the Shakers until the 1930's, then operated as a summer camp, and finally had been vacant for several years. We inherited beautiful, well-built, and thoroughly neglected structures that needed an incredible amount of work to just get through the first winter.

As the first months passed with everyone working seven day weeks, some people saw others working less hard. I particularly remember my own feelings of outrage at one person who left for a weekend vacation. How could they leave in the midst of all that needed to be done? At the time it seemed a betrayal of the obvious needs of the community, while now it seems evidence of my lack of balance.

Gradually there developed feelings of paranoia and guilt to accompany the prevalent physical exhaustion. Some people indeed did not work as hard as others and became acutely aware of it. Others, fanatic idealists, set such high standards for themselves that regardless of the amount they worked, it was never enough. Each person became concerned that everyone else felt they were not working enough, whatever 'enough' might possibly be.

A basic teaching of Sufism concerns evolution. The classical Sufi poets talk of consciousness evolving through the mineral, then the plant, animal, and finally the human kingdom. Within each realm, one's consciousness and one's capacity are different. Every individual part of the totality is in proper place, but that place is always changing as evolution continues. Naturally each person's capacity is different - for work as well as for higher consciousness. However this simple observation of common sense was ignored in our collective intoxication with the activity of pioneering a new community.

During the land search period, Pir Vilayat had talked a bit about economic principles. He felt we should have some form of a credit system where people did not work directly for money. Undesirable or difficult work would earn more credits, highly skilled work would earn more credits, and highly productive work would earn more credits. Somehow the money and work would be shared. In addition he felt strongly that we have karma yoga, selfless service in the form of work that becomes consecrated by giving it to God. In this sense, all of the first five months of work was karma yoga. With these very general principles and no practical experience, amidst the psychological setting of exhaustion and negative emotions, we plunged into the credit system.

From May through September, 1975, we dedicated ourselves to getting this community off the ground. We planted a garden, cleaned the buildings, restored the plumbing, installed two major heating systems (one of which took until mid-December to be operational) fixed hundreds of panes of cracked glass, and set up the first of our businesses. These cottage industries were the bakery and auto garage which both arrived with equipment and managers, but with no trained workers and no cash. These were our initiation into under-capitalized businesses.

As pioneers, each person was asked to donate five hundred dollars plus all their work for the first five months. The initial rent and food costs were set at \$100 per month, which meant that each individual had to bring a thousand dollars plus any money they might need for personal expenses during this period. These requirements had been announced during the land search period so most people had spent part or all of a year saving this money. While a considerable sum of money, we found that admissions fees (which are now just \$500) served as a good test of one's intention and commitment to becoming part of the community.

The initial work began with tremendous enthusiasm - a unique emotional tone of initiating a great venture where all dreams could be fulfilled. We had come from all over the country and in general did not know each other except in our ideals. Our attraction was to the vision that came through Pir Vilayat and this proved to be the glue that held together our diverse group of strong individuals. Family meetings were held every night to talk out our ideas, our ideals, the practical work, and the principles which we believed the community should use as guidelines. Pir Vilayat had talked extensively during the previous year about a government that combined hierarchy and democracy; about cooperating yet promoting and respecting individual freedom; about economic and work sharing, yet also having incentives for the individual; about working in the world yet having an atmosphere of spirituality. Unlike other communes in our time, we were to tread a very narrow line of balance between individuality and community.

OPERATION SURVIVAL

At the beginning the credit system was simple. All work was given a value of one credit per hour. The credit value was established by dividing the total income earned in a month by the total number of credits. The credits earned by each person would be tallied, their rent deducted, and the balance retained in a credit bank where it could be withdrawn as money.

The credit bank was envisioned as an institution where people could deposit money - a service to the community since it earned no interest - accumulate credits for future use such as taking a vacation, and as a mechanism of exchange where a handwoven rug could be traded at some future time for a custom-made loom.

In addition to earning their rent and food via accumulating enough credits, people were required to donate twelve hours per week in karma yoga; grounds work, farm work, cooking and cleaning. Making karma yoga required violates the ideal sense of selfless service,

however we discovered quickly that if certain work was entirely voluntary it did not get done.

Initially there was a very favorable response to the credit system. Everyone felt relief now that the boundaries of expected behavior were objectively established. The paranoia over working hard 'enough' disappeared, and people felt free to take time off as they could afford it.

The economic plan of the Abode, an extremely rough sketch, expected that after the initial five months or so we would become economically self-supporting. It was anticipated that most people would find jobs in the surrounding community, and that our businesses would slowly grow to eventually employ more or all family members. The hundred-odd thousand dollars from the initial fees was used to meet our down payment, and provide some start-up operating capital. Meeting these objectives of becoming self-supporting took us about a year and a half instead of five months. This provided us with the opportunity to live intimately with the constant pressure to survive - a pressure that became one of the strongest tests of our ideals and beings.

From one viewpoint this lack of economic planning is frightening. On the other hand, had we planned it in detail we might well have concluded that what we were attempting was impossible. No one had any experience in running a community, or any institution of this size. However, there was such a pervasive feeling of acting in attunement with the Divine Guidance that no one had serious doubts regarding the successful outcome.

After a few months with the credit system, problems began cropping up. First, it was difficult to earn a living. The credit value initially was \$1.15, and it dropped unsteadily. With a credit value of, for example, a dollar and someone working fifty-two hours per week (forty hours plus twelve hours karma yoga) the gross would be \$160 per month and the net \$60 after paying rent. This was acceptable for young single people, but was untenable for families, especially those with young children where one parent was unable to work full time.

A second problem was the lack of control over the number of credits being generated, and the amount of money being earned. The community needed people to get outside jobs since community industries were not earning enough money to support everyone. Despite exhortations by the administrators of the community, people simply did not do this. Some felt that the very reason they joined the community was to get away from the 'rat race' of contemporary society. In addition, the available jobs were either low paying, menial, or both and this did not appeal to our largely middle-class communards. Consequently people tended to find jobs within the community which had an endless amount that seemingly needed to be done.

As everyone found it difficult to earn enough money, more and more work and 'make work' tended to be done. This resulted in the total credits increasing faster than our total income - which was increasing, albeit slowly. Attempts to limit or budget non-income producing work were failures due to lack of agreement among the administrators, and the prevailing attitude of freedom as an essential ingredient of our life.

each person's capacity is different - for work as well as for higher consciousness.

A third major problem was karma yoga. Some people, primarily the farm crew, bakers, mechanics and administrators felt that their work was vital, and their time precious. Rather than spend twelve hours doing karma yoga, they felt they should spend this time at their regular work. Various deals were made excusing certain people from part of their karma yoga as an attempt to deal with this problem. These proved unsatisfactory, however, because such methods were liable to abuse.

So we embarked again through the shoals of social engineering. A credit commission was created to determine which work would receive credits. Karma yoga was translated from twelve hours of work into twelve credits of work. Everyone could simply deduct twelve credits from their total earnings as their contribution of 'karma yoga.' In the long run, this translation of an ideal into a tax proved a mistake, as the heart of selfless service was cut out, leaving a hole filled with drudgery.

To encourage people to make money which the community members needed to pay their rent which the community itself needed, we introduced 'profit sharing.' This was a percentage of individual gross earnings that could be kept off the top by individuals working in money making occupations. As an example, with the 'off the top' percentage at 15 percent, someone who earned \$200 would keep \$30 and turn the balance of \$170 into the credit pool to be counted into the total income going to credits. This lowered the value of the credit affecting those who worked solely for credits, but gave a practical solution to people who needed to earn more money to stay at the community.

Thus the credit value was determined by taking the total community income, deducting the percentage going directly to money earners, then dividing the balance by the total earned credits.

Many people including Pir Vilayat viewed this percentage as a capitalistic compromise with the sharing ideals of the credit system, but it seemed necessary. We were in Operation Survival!

SLICING THE PIE

Administration of this system was given to a credit commission. Quickly they arrived at a system of credit sheets, where each person recorded the number of hours worked each day by category - karma yoga, non-income producing work, income producing work - and the amount of income they earned. Each week these were turned into the credit commission, which examined them for obvious mistakes and non-creditable claimed work, and then tallied the results.

Soon the credit commission began giving increments for work that was unpopular (weekend cleanups) difficult (chainsaw work) or both. The criteria of efficiency and skills were deemed too difficult to assess and deal with, and so were never implemented. Thus the credit sheets were modified to also record the increment that the person earned for a particular job.

Many family meetings centered on our income pie; who got what size slice and how to make it bigger. As the system got more complex, more and more anomalies and inequities crept in. Adjustments were made for families, for single parents, for those with young children and for those with children old enough to go to school. Fines were implemented for turning credit sheets in late, and then rewards for turning them in early (which worked much better). Rent adjustments for people who went away, hardship adjustments for people who were sick. A floor was implemented for off the top percentage - one had to earn at least a dollar an hour, then a dollar fifty before this percentage took effect.

People found it more and more difficult to earn enough money and this became an increasing problem as savings became exhausted. Credit meetings then became emotionally charged as the credit commission dealt with petitioners for more credits or exceptions to various rules.

After a year or so we found ourselves in an atmosphere of being ground down, worn out, and used up. Some people had left, and the possibility of being forced to leave due to economic pressure was in the minds of many, especially families. There was no one rationally to blame, since 'we' were 'them.' No matter how much one worked, it seemed at best a marginal living. The percentage of income taken off the top by wage earners rose from 10 percent to 40 percent and still failed to induce enough people to get outside jobs. People who worked 'inside' felt they were making a sacrifice by working only for credits to keep the community running, and felt let down because the credit was so low. People who worked 'outside' felt they were making a sacrifice by working in menial jobs away from the community, and felt let down because so many people still worked inside at apparently easier jobs. Changing the percentage only altered the various slices of our income pie, but failed to make the pie itself larger, so no one was very happy for long.

Making karma yoga required violates the ideal sense of selfless service

Administratively the credit system became more and more difficult. Each month the percentage taken off the top changed, as did the credit value. In addition loans from the credit bank, past debts for rent, old phone bills, and admissions fees all had to be kept tallied by the credit

banker. Since no one had bookkeeping experience these accounts often failed to tally, which meant that the Abode funds had to be tapped to make up any differences. One result of this complexity that proved to be a long run problem was that the monthly totals usually appeared two to four weeks after the end of the month.

These problems had a psychological effect in that any change undertaken by administrators to improve the situation took a long time to have an effect. Gradually we realized that any change would take at least two months for people to understand how it would affect them personally, and even then it was often unclear. Of course by that time everything had changed again, so the entire system lurched along rather than running smoothly. This in itself contributed to the general air of instability.

CHANGES, CHANGES

In January of 1977 it was felt that something drastic had to be done. The psychological climate was not good and our finances were deteriorating. We were about eight thousand dollars in debt and seemed to have exhausted our credit. It was clear we had to raise the rent, but it seemed that the family members might not be able to afford it.

A task group was set up to analyze the situation and make recommendations. These were formulated as two alternative economic systems. One was to clean up the credit system by eliminating the wrinkles that made it so difficult to administer, imposing strict controls on the total number of credits, and restricting the rate of credit value change so feedback could be improved.

The second proposal was to throw out the credit system. All work would be either true karma yoga (donated labor) or would be paid labor. This meant that the Abode would have to hire people to work on the farm, maintain our vehicles and buildings, and do other jobs best performed by full time workers rather than the piecemeal labor that could be donated. Personally, it meant that many people who had been able to get by solely on credits would be forced to find paying work.

The finances of this system were to be the following. Out of the money each person earned, rent and job expense reimbursements would be taken off the top. The balance would be shared with the Abode fifty-fifty. The great appeal of this was simplicity and the clarity it seemed to offer. Everyone could know in advance how much money they could net at the end of the month. It was projected that the additional income to the Abode from the fifty percent donations would offset the additional costs of salaries.

After a meeting with Pir Vilayat and several family meetings the second proposal was adopted for a six month trial period. Pir Vilayats' guidance was not in the form of analyzing the alternatives in detail, but rather his intuition that a change was badly needed, and that the new system offered more promise than a revamping of the credit system.

In addition to the new economic system the rent was raised to \$130 for individuals and \$225 for families (including food) and we adopted a new policy of encouraging private businesses.

From the onset of the Abode it was felt that all businesses should be communally owned. A profit making company, Winged Heart Corporation, had been created as the umbrella for our mini-conglomerate of cottage industries. The vision had been that industries should mutually cooperate as we hoped individuals would do. However for many reasons, our experience had been that individual incentive had been stifled. Since we were severely undercapitalized, a person wishing to start a business or craft had to finance themselves. Then they had to work especially hard to pull the enterprise up by the bootstraps, yet have neither ownership nor complete operational control. Winged Heart, on the other hand, did not wish to employ people at the marginal wages common to a start up situation since taxes (unemployment, workmen's compensation, social security, etc.) were a very high proportion of the income.

To change this situation we realized that private businesses had to be both permitted and encouraged. However the community had to be protected from possible exploitation via low wages, or by the owner putting all profits into the business rather than sharing them as wage earners did. The task group proposed that the community make individual agreements with owners of private businesses regarding rent, rate of capitalization, and level of wages. These levels would be set initially to assist the new business, then over time adjusted by mutual agreement to be consistent with wage earners and communally owned businesses.

ALL-CASH SYSTEM

As with the credit system, initial acceptance of the 'all-cash' system was favorable. People were overjoyed to throw away the credit sheets and the hourly recording of their activities. In addition the ideal of karma yoga was restored. Initially we required one clean-up per week (now raised to two) and made all other chores strictly voluntary. This included ground work, dishwashing, most cooking, cleaning buildings, and other work that previously had earned credits. In practice people have not done equal amounts of karma yoga, however the work does get done and, as voluntary labor, the spirit is tremendously better.

It is important to note that in the credit system people were closely linked economically. All money earned was shared among the members of the community, while the Abode as an economic entity received money only through rent. This is completely different under the present system. People are now independent economically, and share only through the Abode as an entity. The Abode benefits as people benefit via the fifty percent sharing.

After more than half a year of this system some of its effects seem clear. It is a success with regard to karma yoga, the restoration of freedom, the promoting of individual incentive, and establishing a progressive psychological climate. Several private businesses, primarily crafts, are flourishing. Our finances are also greatly improved, but not in the way we had expected.

The all-cash system was designed to encourage people to earn money to increase the total income of the community. A dramatic increase in total income was projected to pay for the additional expense of Abode staff salaries and even provide a surplus.

What happened was quite different. Total income rose slowly, at about the same rate as before. Only now does it exceed the salary expense. Our economic salvation basically came from unexpected increases in income from visitors, seminars, and to a lesser extent from admissions fees. In general people did not change their work habits. Those who just got along before have taken advantage of the freedom of the new system to just get along now, rather than working more. People who worked hard under the old system continue to work hard under the new one. Once again human nature triumphed over our socio-economic engineering.

One emerging difficulty is that fifty percent donation is perceived somewhat as a tax rather than a sharing. There seems to be a tendency to maximize one's claimed job expenses and to thus minimize the amount that is shared with the community. People short of money tend to blame the Abode, where under the credit system there was no one to blame.

The objective of clarity and good feedback was achieved. However we have introduced various complications in the banking and accounting systems that go counter to the original simplicity. Another important objective is that the Abode administrators have been successfully able to deal with hiring a staff for wages and controlling labor expenses, where this was unmanageable when people were 'paid' in credits. The most pervasive problem - that of making a living - still remains for a substantial number of people.

The community businesses are all profitable and are beginning to make use of bank financing to expand. Our numbers are also slowly expanding which seems to assure our financial stability. It may very well be that the most important contribution of the new system is the psychological positivity it brought about, which in turn attracted success in various dimensions.

As we look to the future we see tremendous capital needs. Most of our buildings function as shelter, but need major renovations. Our space is very tight, and the financing of a large building program seems both necessary and difficult. 'Operation Survival' is over, yet it seems clear that a great wave of expansion lies ahead if we can only manage it.

The six month trial period has expired with no agitation for changes. No one wishes a return to the credit system, although some strongly feel that some form of sharing, among people rather than the Abode as a whole, should be done. It seems that the new system may be with us for a while -- but we are not going to count on it!

Abode of the Message, Box 396, New Lebanon, NY 12125, Tel: 518 794-7659

Vakil Kuner was an administrator of the Abode, and a member of the task group recommending changes to the credit system. He is presently occupied in attempting to earn a living.

NOTES IN PASSING

traveling by doggerel, summer, 1977

Having left my car with my faithful co-worker, Chip, and my affairs more or less in order, I did purchase on the 4th day of July, 1977, in the city of Richmond, Virginia, a ticket allowing unlimited travel, for a period of two months, on the north American continent, anywhere the grey hound would bear me.

Since my actual travels soon superceded my relatively imprecise plans, let it suffice that I sought to span the continent, connecting a host of communities, thus reinforcing a network supportive of social change in general, and this magazine in particular. Sic rapid transit.

by PAUL FREUNDLICH

1. SAFETY HARBOR, FLORIDA, July 5 - 8

To you whom I love
and from whom love (has been, is, will be) returned
a salutation on the occasion of my 40th birthday:

Traveling on the warmth of Timothy's
nine-year-old amusement at yet another story
from the father-friend he utterly trusts
for have I not come to share and tumble with him in the
fastness of his grandmother's Florida castle -
appearing against all prediction, yet as expected as if
my father's lost saphire ring appeared on my finger -
and no more surprising
than if we, for whatever moment,
were companions

Here's the story:

Once upon a time, there were three Kuala bears. One
was very rich (Coca Kuala) one was very royal (Royal
Crown Kuala) and one was very cute (Pepsi Kuala)...

Well, my dear and desired,
the story meanders on
thru their adventures with human beings
Pepsi charming, Royal Crown ordering, Coca buying
each with varying success in varying situations

Dutiful son, I have once again courted friendship
and side-stepped patriarchy

I have sung to you my songs
and danced with you our dance
And if there were but one life to live
I would not regret sharing it with you
As there is only one life to live
I do not regret sharing it with you

I will see you on my travels...
or at the end of them...
or at the beginnig
We will meet and feel the texture of our acceptance
search the spirit of our engagement
count the probability of our future

In mid-stride, a flare of light and the horse freezes -
recognizing birthday candles, goes on

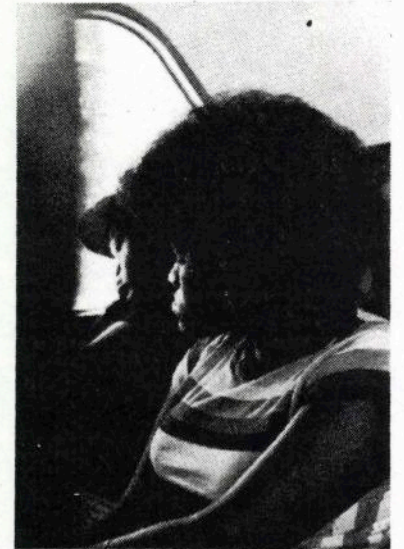
At the end, the integrity of form and content
stand for purpose. The struggle, put aside,
can be admired

At the beginning, recognition precedes intuition



2. TAMPA TO AUSTIN, July 8-9

An old man, 74
plopped his carcass next to mine
Seemed like he was doin' fine
What travelin' he did was by Greyhound
Had lived all his life in the same small town
I said,
'You must have a lot of friends in your community.
'Everybody either went away or died off,' said he.

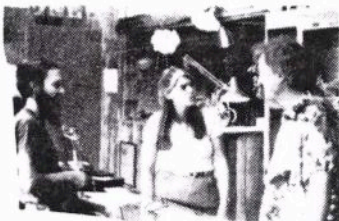


3. AUSTIN, TEXAS, July 9-11

Gary Newton entertains
a coop crowd with slides and names
much like mine and yours
Wayne and Gary over lunch
Sue's come out
I'd had a hunch
Bill Meacham's glad to see me
tho I misspelled his name
4 times in #26
pretty lame
Austin's just like coming home
Oakland house and Wendy E.
Kelly, Kathy and John D.
My karma's waiting on the phone:
Hello, you presumed too much to think I'd wait
Two nights and split is not my fate
Life goes on - find yourself another mate

4. TUCSON, ARIZONA, July 12-13

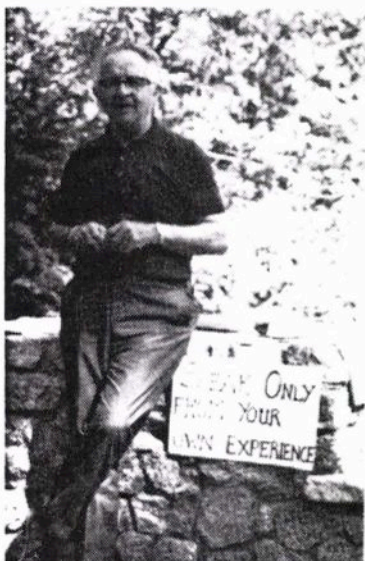
Daniel Fox whom I'd met at the Consumer Cooperative Alliance meeting in June picked me up in his snazzy 1962 Falcon convertible and I spent the next 24 hours talking organizational theory, economics, community social patterns and personal history with Daniel, Julie, Joyce, George, Mike, Frank, Margaret and Bob. Phew.



5. 47th ANNUAL COOP CAMP, SIERRAS, July 15 - 16

Ann Evans,
a thoroughly sensible lass
using her good offices to move the mass
of coop folks who've gathered here
toward federation beyond the fear
of territory transgressed;
Berkley Coop and AC Warehouse out of scale
with home-grown, health-food store fronts
afraid they'll fail

Old Wave cooperators and the new
Families grown to complascent contemplation
of what we happy few have come to wonder,
Is this what it's all about?



6. SAN FRANCISCO, July 17

Maybe I'd been out of the big city too long, but I got metaphorically raped right off the bus. There I am on Market Street, lookin' around for a bus to the opening ceremonies of the New School for Democratic Management, and this nice, clean-cut, young couple come up and ask if they can help.

'Well, shucks, you sure can. How do I get to Market and Laguna?'

And they want to know **why** I'm looking for it.

'Actually, I'm sort of in a hurry.' Not very gracious, but shit, nobody's perfect. Well, almost no one, as I'm about to find out.

A little more prodding, and I see I'm going to have to be sociable or find a new information source. So: Communities Magazine and NSDM.

'Isn't that interesting. We live in a community, too.'

'Isn't that nice.'

There's 250 of us and we own 7 houses on a block.' Whips out his business card:

Creative Community Project

My goodness, here I am, brand new in town and pay dirt already. A whole new, undiscovered, urban commune. An article at least, distribution possibilities dancing in air. With babbled enthusiasm to come for lunch and get to know them, I finally get my directions.

Okay now, here's a riddle: **What has 250 clean-cut heads, lots of money to buy 7 San Francisco houses and the stars, stripes, rising sun and moon all over?** (For more about community, patriarchy, god and multi-national spiritual organizations, try your neighborhood flower vendor).

7. NEW SCHOOL FOR DEMOCRATIC MANAGEMENT,
July 17 - 29

8. 9

Come then, children of the marches
veterans of tear gas and fallen arches
coop struggles across the land
Come to San Francisco
with a notebook in your hand

100 people gathered for two weeks
We broke into classes, but skipped the cliques
Too busy learning what we have to know:
Financial management and accounting for the new age
Democratic organization for a living wage
Community development, with social benefit the gage
fueled by energy alternatives and third-world rage

Community experience visio indisciplined design participa
tion control productivity = land worker technology money
= power people neighborhood city state nation taxation
equity loans payable accounts payable cash flow inventory
subs accounts received collection purchase production

Kristan's eyes
open wide
surprised that life
which could be so hard
is for the moment
so good

Jim from Albuquerque
took the leather from his hair
John came out
in gold lame
Paul and Lew and Paul
taught together and held hands

Maya carries contact improv
thru her confrontations
Strong and responsive
always touching

Judy passes from work
thru class
to San Francisco politics
like a swallow at the end of the day
dipping one wing
then on her way

Don Nagle
sold a bagle
packaged it in foil
If he had to
sell a beagle
would that take less toil?

Lee Webb listens to Derek Shearer
smiling to himself
like a little boy
sharing fortune cookies

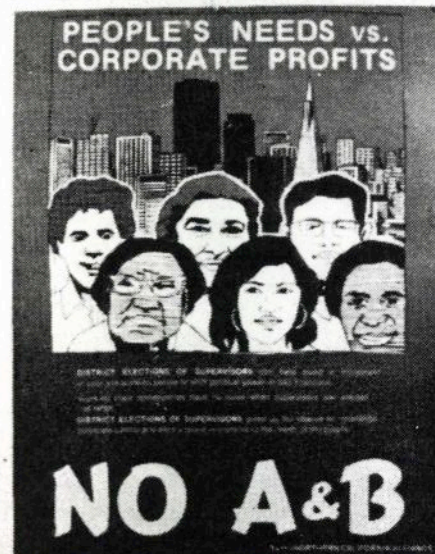
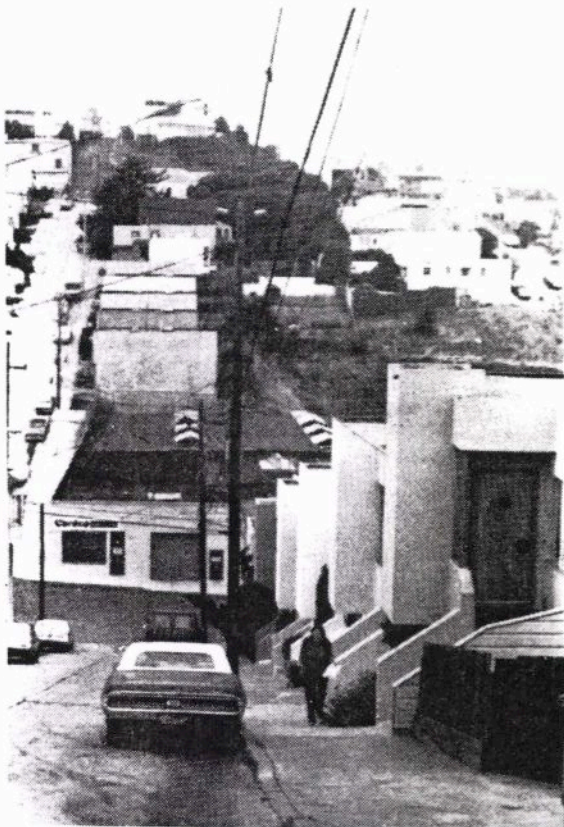


8. SAN FRANCISCO BAY, July 17 - August 4

I got sick the first week in San Francisco. After all that bus stop slop, I indulged in rich food; the bus rides reduced my reserves, and I was keyed up with no where to go with all that energy - it went round and round in my gut - and for the first time in over a year I was down with an attack of colitis - bleeding internally and knocked out.

So I gave up trying to chase down Michael Phillips and various other interesting lines of speculation and concentrated on what I could teach and learn at the NSDM (explaining clearly to my Burnout workshops that overload was first a response to a condition of social failure).

Then I stayed around the Bay area a little longer, resting up, visiting with Martin Bradley and Larry Davis in Sonoma County (who will be working on Sept-Oct '78 of Communities and helping with northern California distribution)- seeing old New Haven friends - running up to Sacramento to meet with Ann Evans on her article for #28 - doing a look-in on San Francisco reform politics:



Ernest workers climb the hills
like democratic spiders on window sills
Voting **no** on A&B
District elections will make us free
Pretty city still believes
so displays its politics
up its sleeve

Filling in California circles
Going round San Francisco Bay
Lunches are a Sacramento,
indulgences a lost memento

The lines of power pass thru SF lives
describe the body politic like well thrown knives
Above and below, and to each side
Vertical and horizontal integration
Connection is preferable to penetration

Before, the lines were solid class
Embellished with money, one could pass
Now the lines snake twisting from our hands
stretching us like rubber bands

The numbers game
turns out the same
as guess which shell conceals the pain
of who gets what

There's only so much room in City Hall
Corporate liberals against the wall
of tenent's union at the I-Hotel
Downtown interests call a tune of

*Now you see it
Now you don't
If you come to San Francisco
I won't*



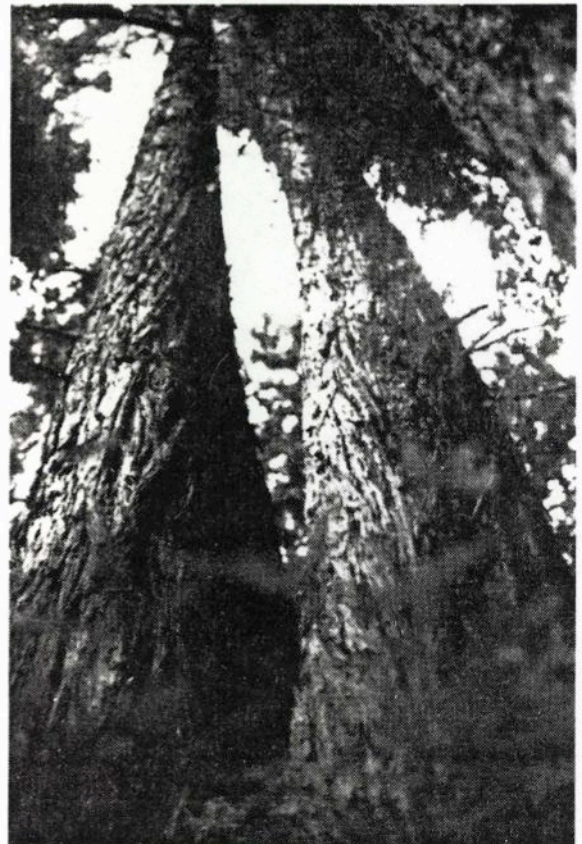
9. NORTHWEST, August 4 - 13



Nancy Poo
*housemate, comerade and lover
gone to live with another
Franny Foo
barked at guests so many times
we used her bark instead of chimes
and Richard, too
too much stress to quite be friends
the passing years have made amends*
Round and round in spiral searching
greeting, meeting and repeating
*The changes are the game
The essence is the same*

Passed on the bus
discretely covered giants
ghostly after-images of stumps
so huge
I could not stretch my arms
so wide

Redwoods,
staggering in their
stately collectivity
have no way
to frame the question
of why we cut them down



Gretchen Steinbach of Cascade Regional Library and I, appreciating the sunset on a butte overlooking Eugene, Oregon. It had taken us 45 minutes to follow a fairly well-defined path circling up the mountain.

Coming down at dusk and we immediately realized we were in trouble. The bare, high slope was steep - and in the flat evening light, the path barely discernable. At which point we took stock.

Falling seemed a minimal danger: There were no cliffs to go over. Animals, maybe snakes - small chance of cougar or bear. 80 degrees, so cold wasn't a factor. Getting lost seemed the worst to fear (and poison oak).

So we resolved to take our time, opting for discovery over paranoia, and begin a careful descent. (At this point, in the cartoon version, my trusty flashlight with its Eveready batteries clarifies the scene. Lacking it we procede).

Haltingly. Listening for the path, feeling for the path. Losing it and recovering. I'm leading because Gretchen's mostly night-blind, but once we hit the tree line, sight doesn't much matter. I'm lost and turn it over. Following blindly now. Trust walk exercises come to mind, but this is real and better. Pleased at how careful we both are. But still fears creep in...so slow down that panic edge...until we know where to go....

About the time we think we're home free, we lose the path on a steep incline. Several forays up and down...backtrack to where the path seems clearly there...I've slipped a couple times...scratched up... maybe-we should quit and spend the night out.



Let me try just once more, says Gretchen, and I take her hand.

Do you see the lights? says she, following them.

Uh, no, say I, following her... clear the hard place... down at the base, 3 hours after we began.

10. CALIFORNIA TO COLORADO, August 13 - 16

Old ladies on the bus
talk of travel like a truss
holding the world up by the balls
of departed husbands

They who served the men
who made this country
what it is
survive on incomes which allow
Greyhound travel



The dog that barked at husband's heels
trails them now on rubber wheels
The dog which dragged their husbands down
carries them from town to town

Still traveling in twos and threes
old women who now are free
to remember without guile
their master's dreams - of retirement in style

The dog that barked at husband's heels
trails them now on rubber wheels
The dog which dragged their husbands down
carries them from town to town

Sports fans in the seat behind
repeat the AP party line -
Portland's Trailblazers are a team
Philadelphia had the cream - but could not work
together and so were puffed away.
When Bill Walton hung with Scotts
and talked of
socialism and how we're not
meant for slavery
The AP line caught its fish -
caught us then, and will again
with whatever hook
neatly sums up how we're took
Fish so eager to escape from jaws of monotonous defeat
we'll jump into the net
on the way to the packing crate



Ten minutes in Laramie to find some Pita bread,
Knudsen Natural Strawberry Fiz in a health food store
and talk Communities' distribution

Homing in on Colorado
after Mormon musings on Community thru patriarchy
and long night's journey thru slot machine
Nevada tunnel of lobotomy
Near hell of get-rich,
hyped-on-coffee,
chicken-fried-stake
will get you one more plunge for how many raspberries
in a row

I always wondered what was between California and
Colorado and now I know
I'd like to visit Laramie again



Sitting with Corky Gonzales at the Crusade for Justice in Denver, thinking back nine years to when I'd last been here.

'Emilio?'

'He's out on the northside running a youth program. We see each other.'

'There was a guy...Frank, I think his name was...?'

'Wasn't any Frank...Richard maybe?'

'I don't know. I remember we were over to his house for dinner and we all had knocked off a few beers and he said to me he thought I was okay and he respected how hard I worked and what I was doing (making a documentary film for NET) but still he had a hard time not punching me out...just because I was a gringo.'

'That could have been almost anybody,' says Corky, and we all have a laugh.

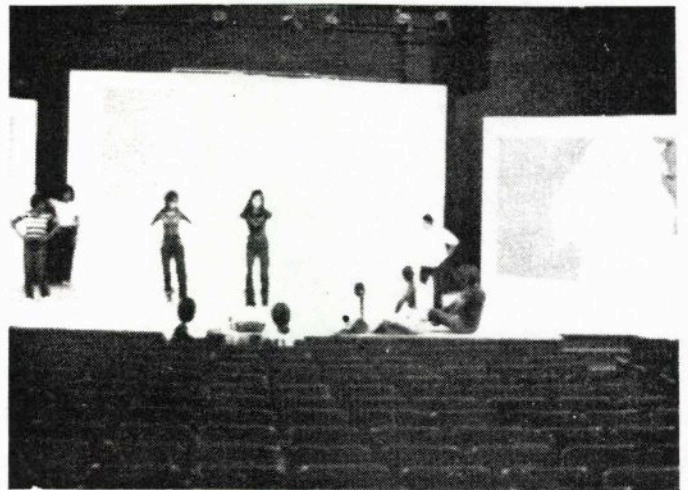
The Crusade has a few buildings, a few thousand Chicano members and a much wider circle of influence. It gets a bad press in Denver, and none much anyplace else. Nine years ago I thought Corky was doing the best urban organizing in the USA, and this visit didn't change that opinion.

That evening we watch a video tape of a Chicano boxing program. During the sparring, Corky is being interviewed and the TV reporter is pushing a little about the chances of a particularly promising young boxer to follow in Corky's footsteps. (Corky was a golden gloves champion, and later when he turned pro, the 3rd ranked featherweight in the world).

'Look, turning pro is an important decision. It's a tough life and a lot of hard work. Maybe it's a good way to get out of the barrio, but I think his parents would be happier if he stayed in school and became a different kind of professional.'

Ernesto Vigil, who took me around, and who was 19 when I was there last, had been busted for draft resisting, shot at, beaten up. Corky laid on a few stories about dealing with the Mafia, when the cops decided that a contract would be the easiest way to knock off the Crusade leadership. There are still bullet holes in the building from a small war fought with the police in '72 which left Louis Martinez dead. Corky's strong support of the AIM leadership has not endeared him to national law enforcement officials, either.

But the Crusade's school, day care and Ballet de Aztlan are as important as boxing; the social and cultural seen as inseparable from the politics. The sense is similar to what I've felt with self-defense in the women's movement or visiting Israeli border kibbutzim. Competence and preparation to deal with an exterior reality which has defined itself as capricious and violent - but determination to do it in a way which isn't self-brutalizing.



In Denver, I also visited with Larry Hotz, who is the manager (within a coop structure) of the Common Market, Denver's large, new-wave food coop. Larry was seeing the coop ideal in trouble, and the base of support eroding. People ready to get on about the business of their lives and just finding it more attractive to settle down in the suburbs, use the credential...one long-time worker in particular.

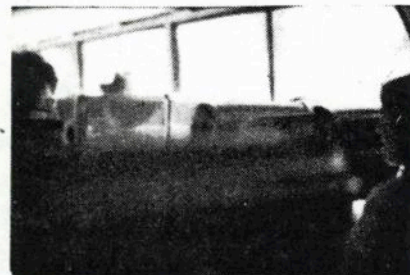
'Since the Vietnam war there really hasn't been an issue.'

For myself, the issue is America (as I live here, I am an American). How it's structured, who works for whom and what they've done to earn that privilege. I've traveled enough and read enough history to harbor few illusions about utopias elsewhere or elsewhere. I just think on its own merits and given our resources, a lot of what we're doing is just plain dumb and outdated. And I truly believe (thank you, Eric Hoffer) that a broad series of social experiments going on in this country - most of which we try to cram into this magazine - are asking the right questions and even beginning to define some useful answers. (Unused as I am to public speaking...thank you for your attention.)

12. DENVER TO SANTA FE, August 17 - 18

Maybe it was the burrito
or the 30 hours from San Francisco
or the excitement of seeing Corky again,
or all 3
AM on the bus between Denver and Santa Fe

shortly before a young male Jesus Freak
laid a monumental rap on a young mother about who
bled and died for whom.
Most of which sounded
like sublimated seduction
(Forgive me of little faith)
I go to the head again and...
Ah shit, I'm bleeding again



Dragging my ass around Santa Fe, thinking about
the last time I was here with my wife and baby seven
years ago visiting my retired general-in-law. I sat in the
same plaza. I wept at my own limits. The loss of
true-love-innocence because letting go is a proper way
to die

Feeling like
I wonder if this is going to be printed posthumously?

13. ALBUQUERQUE, August 18 - 21

We left me half-dead in Santa Fe.
How then to explain such a curious
reversal of fate that three days later
I'm feeling absolutely fine, flying first
class from Dallas to Austin?

Firstly, let's hear it for community:
**Sis, boom bah. Three big ones for
Osha.**

Friend from NSDM, Jim Frazen,
picks up my belongings and broken
body at the Albuquerque bus station
and we visit the Alternative Commu-
nity Center, where I find Hilda (also
from NSDM) and Wild R Turkey (last
seen in Chicago) the two principals of
the National Food Coop Directory.
And there it is in all of its 1977
splendor.



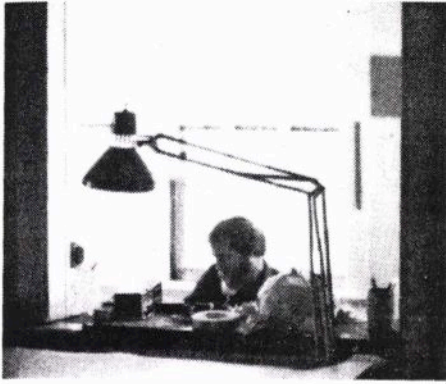
But by the time I've toured the complex of coops and
alternative services housed at the center, I'm fading fast.
We make it back to Osha, which is both a food coop and
small attached community. Jim and Hilda live there, also
it turns out, Eric, an old acquaintance from New
England, and shortly on her way, Heather, formerly of
the Advocate Press collective. All these conjunctions
make it mighty homey, and after consultation with Austin
folks, I decide to rest (lots of herb tea, sleep and hot
baths) and fly out on Sunday morning.

And it all works. I actually stop bleeding in near record
time, and tho I'm feeling weak, so wonderfully supported
- enough to drive with Osha people Eric, Minna and Cathy
to get spring water in the neighboring mountains.
Where we had a picnic and then the storm came and
lightening played about us as we filled the jugs (except I
was waiting to be incinerated, standing by an open source
of water, next to a big tree, on top of a mountain, in an
electrical storm). But coming down the mountain, Cathy
and I in the back of the van with lightening smashing and
thunder crashing was about the best hay ride I've ever had.

How I managed to be flying first class is that I missed
the connecting flight to Austin in Dallas, mostly thru TI's
fault, I thought. And when they wouldn't take
responsibility for paying the difference between tourist on
the next open flight (only open first class) I got uppity,
and started throwing around my 300,000 air miles and 5
continents. Worse, I was prepared to use being an editor
of a national magazine. 'You can't do this to me.' Which is
different than, 'You can't do this to anybody.' Which in
the community-social justice-spiritual scene is definitely
where I'd rather be. And the riff that makes the most
sense to me out of that is - that to commit much of my life
to community service is both a personal choice and a
spiritual necessity, and to whatever extent I lack the
context of collective peers, the commitment is arrogant (I
arrogate to myself the right to choose). Take me out of
peer contexts (and let me lose my respect for those
around me/feel oppressed by them) and I can be more
arrogant than most.

So thank you, co-workers, one and all.

14. AUSTIN AND KANSAS CITY, August 21 - 25



Matt Taylor
intensity
blue panther

15. EAST WIND, MISSOURI, August 25 - 28

Malon & Jennifer
& Kat Kincade
The East Wind gang
a frontier made
of cows and hammocks,
shared power and toil
pioneer spirit
and Missouri soil
Folks workin' harder
to make a fresh start
Our guide is good structure
judgement our art

16. T'WAS THE WEEK BEFORE LABOR DAY,
August 29 - September 5



Cincinatti, Columbus,
with food coop friends
Doing It! Kaswans,
I'm getting the bends

Then on to Toronto amid customary clatter
Eat well, Spice of Life, and still not grow fatter
Wash a few dishes and argue 'bout Reich
If sex will bring freedom, they've the answer to life
Another Place Farm, near the end of my trail
Dear Marc & Sydney, Katie and Bill
Son Timothy arrives, we sure are a pair
So to all a good day, and a happy, Healing Arts Fair

Back to New Haven and organizational building
Ken's running for Alderman, CETA slots and new funding
Food Coop meetngs to share information
Down To Earth restaurant...I need a vacation



17. CIRCUIT RIDING

Then opening my peddler's pack,
spreading out my awareness
of the projects and communities which challenge universal
preconceptions about our helplessness to affect
urban neighborhoods, workplace alienation, family
breakdown, classroom rigidity,
living, loving, etc, etc.

Coming to each world
like a curious space traveler
noting the customs,
paying the dues
with my community history
till folks
have sniffed out my strangeness
and pronounced me human

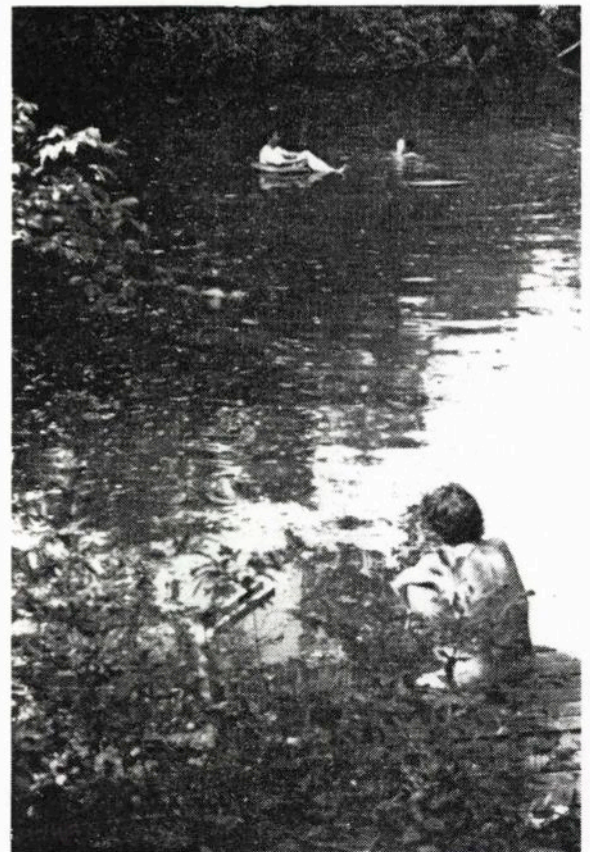
*Would you like a yard or two
of my pretty networking?
Try our best,
snake-oil-appropriate-technology?
Take this magazine I have here,
and by your participation, make it ours?
And for the child in each of you,
a penny candy of playful games?*

Leading to conversations
toward integration
tentative exchange

Something strikes a spark
and we're lit with new synergy
Concepts revised and expanded
taken back to practice
Could we really do this?
What are the steps and who knows what, where?
The funding, the people, the skills, the structure
Could we co-create the future?

My pack is lighter now
yet more full
Moving on is a meditation
on letting go
Engagement and non-attachment
are one

That star out there
I visited once,
and with good fortune
will again
Or its inhabitants,
my blood kin,
will visit me in turn
And time and space
will warp, woof,
poof





18. CODA

Being human is uncomfortable
 a confused, confusing state
 We do better as gods or animals
 escaping from our fate

to ride the bright fantastic
 romance and love beguiled
 to heartstrong drive and swept away
 overwhelmed by passion wild

to dream in wisdom and clarity
 is a fine and precious way
 to godlike seek the universe
 but it leaves some dues to pay

For most of life we're traveling
 between these perfect states
 Poor travelers can't take the time
 to understand our fates

Bemused, we think we're supposed to be
 anything but what we are
 Travelers, aware of what is past
 seeking what's afar

Reach into the present then
 and preconception put aside
 When they told us life could be known
 in most respects they lied

Yet as between each dance there's time
 to talk and look around
 And do the waves which ebb and flow
 care where they are bound?
 Do they end when they touch the ground?

There are no contradictions
 if we are traveling in state
 Animals and gods, we pause,
 in reverence for our fate. □

Seattle Workers'

Brigade:

This is a formal notification that C.C. Grains no longer wishes to be a part of the Seattle Workers' Brigade. We feel that our priorities and needs are no longer the same as those of the other businesses. We want to become a more efficiently run business—one that is capable of offering our customers and community better service, and that is less frustrating to us as workers. We want to work in a more stable collective, and to have more control over the decisions made that affect our workspace. We want to become a much more positive example of worker self-management. We feel, because of its complexity and lack of a solid base of unity, that trying to attain these goals as part of the Seattle Workers' Brigade is, at least for the present, counter-productive. To learn how to effectively manage ourselves (a new experience for most of us) is a difficult thing to do even in a place where we work together every day, and we feel that trying to learn to manage other workspaces at the same time is well beyond our present capabilities.

from a statement written by
C.C. Grains, February, 1977



“We feel that our priorities and needs are no longer the same as those of the other businesses.”

The Seattle Workers' Brigade was a large collective, a business owned and managed by those who worked in it. In its last year of operation, it was made up of four “teams” or member businesses: Little Bread Co., a whole grain bakery; Corner Green Grocery, a retail natural foods store in the Pike Place Market; Cooperating Community Grains, a warehousing operation which supplies Washington, Alaska,

and parts of Idaho, Montana, and British Columbia with organic grains, nuts, beans, cheese, and other products; and a central bookkeeping team. In May 1977, after two and a half years together, these businesses dissolved their legal and financial ties and began to operate independently of one another. This is a history of the Seattle Workers' Brigade, explaining why it was formed and why it split up.

The roots of the Seattle Workers' Brigade lie in the Cooperating Community, an informal association of about fifteen Seattle area workers collectives and consumer coops that met regularly through 1972, '73, and '74 to discuss actions related to the politics of food, the search for alternative sources of food, and the goal of unifying city and country within an interdependent self sufficient organization.” The Cooperating Community was quite active in its early years. City people were organized to help nearby collective farms with planting and harvesting, three service collectives—Child Care, Alternative Finance, and Black Duck Motors were set up for the use of the community, and a General Fund was started (largely with mon-

from Puget Consumers Coop) to capitalize member businesses. Several new collectives, including C.C. Grains and Community Produce, were formed and grew rapidly.

In 1974, the energy of the earlier Cooperating Community was beginning to wane. The organization had grown and become more complex. It became harder to decide what priorities would determine the use of community resources (what few were left unspoken for). For that matter, since decisions had to be approved by consensus, it was more difficult to make every decision. Many groups, combating inexperience and inefficiency in an uphill climb to develop their own businesses, became frustrated with the often unproductive CC meetings and activities. Several groups left the CC and others went out of business.

In the summer of 1974, a group of people concerned by the growing autonomy of the Cooperating Community businesses, met together and wrote an analysis of what they felt were the problems that held the CC back from meeting its potential as a viable force for revolutionary social change. They decided that "the bulk of our problems in CC stem from our lack of unity on the goals and purposes of CC," specifically that "Cooperating Community has, as yet made no definite commitment to socialism, to radical social change, and to mass political action." This lack of commitment to socialism was reflected in several ways:

alternative businesses join together into one legal and financial entity, sharing capital, tools, machinery, planning, bookkeeping, and personal skills. This structure would remove some of the conditions existing in CC which were in contradiction to socialist ideals. It was felt that combining alternative businesses into a "collective community" would provide the left with a valuable political experiment. Additionally, the combined structure was seen as being a more efficient use of resources. It was hoped that the businesses would be financially stronger together than they were apart, enabling the community to expand and grow.

In October, 1974, the Seattle Workers' Brigade was formed in response to the needs and criticisms of parts of the Cooperating Community. However, only four businesses, Alternative Finance, Black Duck Motors, Little Bread Co., and C.C. Grains agreed to be a part of the Brigade. The other CC businesses for personal, practical, or political reasons decided to maintain their autonomy. This created hard feelings between some CC groups and the Brigade businesses, which lasted for months. The smallness of the Brigade was disappointing when compared to the vision its founders had of a large, unified, socialist organization with a potential mass political function.

The first months of the Seattle Workers' Brigade were filled with projects and problems. The businesses

their money in the business as they could and not to withdraw it until business was booming. However, though most people took very little money for awhile, many soon developed such financial problems that it was decided that people could withdraw their back wages on request. The money left in the business—the "Boom Fund"—eventually amounted to about twenty thousand dollars before wages were finally lowered to \$232 a month, a level which reflected the actual productivity of the business, in July, 1975. This debt was a drain on the Brigade's finances throughout its existence, and is still not totally paid off.

Meanwhile, as the Brigade struggled to organize itself, the Cooperating Community was becoming increasingly shaky. In part because of inter-group resentments stemming from the formation of the Brigade, and in part because the Brigade was so involved in its consuming internal problems that it had little energy for anything else, the CC decided in the winter of 1975 to stop meeting for awhile. "Awhile" has turned out to be a long time indeed—to this day the impetus has not existed to resume formal communications between Seattle area alternative businesses.

The next series of crises in the Brigade centered around the issue of decision making. Proposals were initiated by individuals, refined in a representative liaison group, then returned to the teams, who attempted to reach a consensus agreement. If consensus

History of a Collective

1. Wages varied from business to business. 2 In a socialist society use of socially created resources should be determined socially, but in the Cooperating Community use of socially created resources was determined predominately by the individual businesses. 3. Collective and coop members usually put **their** groups' needs first and were sometimes suspicious of the other businesses. 4. The CC activities, for various reasons, appealed, for the most part, only to people of middle-class background, which was in contradiction to the goal of using the CC as a base for mass political action.

The failure of Cooperating Community to actively pursue radical social change led various CC members to propose a new community structure. They recommended that the local

joining the Brigade were restructured into teams based on the types of work that needed to be done; baking, warehousing, processing (milling and making cereals), transportation and maintenance, bookkeeping, and central planning. Wages were set at \$350 a month for full time work, plus additional money for workers with children. It was hoped that by paying \$350 a month (people had made less before) that the Brigade would attract members who were not young, white, and downwardly mobile. This dream soon proved to be unrealistic however—the wages people paid themselves did not reflect the earning capabilities of the Brigade and it lost money rapidly. Still, hopes of attracting working class members were strong, so instead of dropping wages to a workable level, people were asked to leave as much of

was not reached, the proposal went back to the liaison committee, and so forth for three weeks. If consensus was not reached in three weeks, the proposal could be passed if two-thirds of the Brigade members agreed to it. In addition there was a Planning Coordinating Team which handled such matters as meeting labor needs, dealing with insurance and lawyers, public relations, budgeting, and other financial planning.

These processes turned out to be very time-consuming and frustrating, and almost everyone agreed that a new approach to decision making was in order. But some people felt more centralized planning was needed and wanted to greatly extend the powers of the Planning Coordinating Team, while others felt that decentralization was what was needed, and wanted

everybody to get together and make major decisions as a large group in one place. The decentralists were in the majority, so the liaison committee and the Planning Coordinating Team were disbanded. Responsibility for most financial planning and budgeting was given to the bookkeeping team and a representative budget committee. The main decision-making body became the Brigade meeting, held monthly. At this meeting inter-Brigade matters such as budgets and financial affairs, new trucking schedules, and major capital expenditures were reviewed and approved. Each separate team had weekly meetings to conduct their own affairs, and additionally each team assigned some management responsibilities to individuals. Decision-making by consensus was dropped, and everything was agreed upon by simple majority.

In the summer of 1975, the Brigade found that being part of the same big business did not necessarily mean that all the teams were going to work well with each other. Some members of the trucking and maintenance team were becoming increasingly alienated from the other teams. They saw their work in the Brigade as being just a job and did not want to put a whole lot of time into developing efficient work practices, improving communication, or "criticism self-criticism." Members of the other teams felt that these T & M workers were using the loose work structure to do as they pleased. Tension grew, and after months of struggle it was decided to disband the team. Trucking and maintenance functions were taken over by the warehouse and bakery teams, and several of the truckers were eventually asked to leave the Brigade. There were also problems of supply and coordination between the warehouse and the processing teams, who shared the same building. Again, tension was high, and communication was low. This issue was resolved by integrating the teams into one "warehouse" team.

In the fall of 1975, the Brigade was given the opportunity to open a store in the Pike Place Market. Most people were excited about the idea of expanding into retailing, and felt that the relocation was excellent. The store would expose many shoppers to collective self-management, and would hopefully generate some much needed profit without requiring too large of a capital investment. So in January, 1976, the Corner Green Grocery and Natural Food Store opened for business.

This completed the first year of the Seattle Workers' Brigade. The net worth of the Brigade was a negative

"The smallness of the Brigade was disappointing when compared to the vision its founders had of a large, unified, socialist organization with a potential mass political function."

\$19,500, a loss of \$27,212 over one year of operation (Oct. 1974 to Oct. 1975). The outlook was not bright; the Brigade was committed to making massive Boom Fund payments, to supporting a fledgling business (Corner Green Grocery) which would eventually cost \$20,000. Brigade meetings were tedious and unproductive, the business was rife with structural inefficiencies, and high turnover of workers was the norm. Though people were becoming more aware of a need for greater work efficiency and better financial planning, decisions such as to start the Corner Green Grocery showed that the Brigade was still acting more on what "sounded good" than on realistic financial planning.

In 1976, the financial consequences of the current commitments and past errors of the Brigade were partially borne by the community in the form of higher prices, but were mostly carried by the workers. Wages remained at \$232 a month for most of the year, rising to \$265 in December. Work hours were still long. Still, the situation definitely improved as the year went on. The bakery, though losing large amounts of money in the first part of the year (\$5000 in May alone) was able to tighten up its operation and by the end of the year had added \$3000 to the net worth of the Brigade. The Corner Green Grocery learned a great deal amidst the complicated and competitive produce market at Pike Place, and was beginning to show a profit in the last months of the year. The warehouse expanded its product line and in April moved to a larger warehouse in Ballard. It bought a forklift which increased its warehousing efficiency greatly. It made \$3000 to \$6000 monthly, which was applied toward reducing past debts. The bookkeeping team and Budget committee gained new skills and guided the Brigade into a stronger financial position.

In 1976, the political direction of the Brigade also underwent some changes. Though the Brigade had never really developed a unified political

stand—in spite of all the rhetoric that marked its early history—there was a definite change in emphasis from socialism and joining mass movements to feminism, becoming a positive example of worker self-management, and just plain staying in business. Sexist attitudes were confronted more openly in the past and an effort was made in most teams to hire more women than men in order to maintain a balance in power. People were still very committed to the concept of worker self-management, but realized that if wages remained so low, work habits remained so spaced-out and inefficient, and the group processes necessary to keep the business going remained so draining, no one would take the concept seriously. Economic expediency was accompanied by a certain amount of political righteousness as the Brigade strove to become a more efficient and professional business.

In May, the milling operation, again a separate team, became an all-womens' workspace and changed its name to Rubyfruit Mills. Though there was some fear that the millers would become isolated and not want to interact with the Brigade members who were men, and talk of how men and women should struggle together to conquer sexism, the idea of a women's space was generally accepted. Most Brigade members were supportive of the needs of women to work with each other, gaining skills, strength, and confidence in a space where dealing with sexism was not an immediate necessity. In the summer, unfortunately, it was found that the mills needed extensive ventilation improvements, and since the Brigade simply did not have the financial resources to apply to them, they were sold to Fairhaven Mills, a collective in Bellingham. Since many Brigade members still felt that having an all-womens' space was very important, it was voted to have C.C. Grains become woman-run in August. Though some people felt uncomfortable having such a large portion of Brigade jobs closed

to men, again the idea of having the warehouse run by women was generally supported.

In January, 1977, C.C. Grains decided that it no longer wished to be a part of the Seattle Workers' Brigade. The warehouse members were tired of high worker turnover, frustrated by the amount of energy it took to keep the Brigade running at just a minimally acceptable level, and worried about what they felt was an increasingly complacent attitude toward financial management. They felt that the other teams were not seriously confronting major problems facing the Brigade. It seemed like you could struggle and struggle to make the Brigade a better, more productive place to work, but the results of most of your actions were lost in the complexity of day to day business. The warehouse workers felt a strong need to see the results of their efforts more concretely, and felt that this would be more likely to happen if they were concentrating on running one business with ten people than if they were trying to keep track of three businesses and forty people.

The idea of C.C. Grains leaving the Brigade greatly concerned the other teams. There was an atmosphere of apprehension and anxiety; rumors were abundant. The main fear was that the bakery and the corner grocery would not be able to survive on their own—the warehouse generated most of the Brigade's net return and at times had been relied on to offset losses in other parts of the business. Many people were also upset about the political implications of splitting up the Brigade. They felt that collectives are most effective politically if they work together, using principled "criticism self-criticism" to work out mutual problems. It was felt that isolation could lead easily to becoming

just a few more hip capitalist businesses.

The first Brigade meeting at which this issue was discussed was very tense. The bakery, grocery, and bookkeeping teams were frustrated by the inflexibility of the warehouse workers, who had decided that they definitely wanted out of the Brigade and were not willing to compromise themselves by considering any structure short of total split. The warehouse workers were frustrated by what they felt was an inability of the other Brigade members to see the obvious—that the Brigade's structure was too complex and its workers too inexperienced to expect collective, efficient and cooperative management.

After this first meeting things got easier. Some informal discussions were held between teams and these helped to clear the air. The bakery, grocery, and bookkeeping teams felt better about the idea as they found that the warehouse's motives for leaving the Brigade were for the most part principled. C.C. Grains workers relaxed and became less defensive as they realized that the other teams were not going to force them to remain in a situation they found frustrating and futile. As the idea became familiar, and as the arguments pro and con became more pragmatic, most members of the bakery and the grocery teams found the concept of autonomy to their liking. The Brigade had been a fairly constant source of frustration to all, and its deficiencies outweighed its positive aspects. The teams felt that by doing their own bookkeeping and financial planning, a greater level of business integrity could be maintained, and costly mistakes like those of the bakery in the spring of 1976 could be avoided. People also realized that the businesses could continue to

interact socially and politically whether they were a Brigade or not. Little Bread Co. and Corner Green Grocery decided not to remain together in the event of a Brigade split.

In March, 1977, a vote was taken and it was agreed to dissolve the Seattle Workers' Brigade, pending development of a suitable settlement. A representative task force was appointed to work out the details of the dissolution.

Now that the Brigade had decided to divide into three businesses, it remained to be decided how to divide up the assets and liabilities of the corporation. It was no problem to decide where the assets were to go. Each business kept the machinery, tools, and supplies that it used, and shared assets such as office supplies, desks and such, were divided according to need. Deciding who would assume the debts was more difficult. Most people wanted to take into account that C.C. Grains has a higher earning potential than the other businesses. It was generally accepted that the warehouse would assume the bulk of the Brigade debts, but some felt that this was not enough, that the warehouse should also pay a cash sum to the bakery and grocery. There was a lot of confusion as how much net worth each business needed in order to remain reasonably financially solid, and it was this rather than a desire to penalize one team or another that made it so difficult to decide what a fair financial settlement would be. Eventually it was decided that it would cripple the warehouse's cash flow to pay the other teams a cash sum, but that it would assume responsibility for all loans, all of its own accounts payable, and most 1976 taxes. In addition, C.C. Grains agreed to sell to the Little Bread Co. and the Corner Green Grocery at a discount. Every team was fairly satisfied with these arrangements, so the legal papers were signed, and the businesses ended their formal relationship.

The Seattle Workers' Brigade was an experimental collective community. It plainly failed to meet the expectation of its founding members (which is not surprising when one considers their expectations). When the problems and disappointments encountered by co-ops and collectives in the years of Cooperating Community are compared to those encountered by the collectives that made up the Seattle Workers' Brigade now, one finds that not a lot has changed. The workers are still predominately young, white, middle class, unskilled, and upsettingly transient. Mistrust and inadequate communication between groups and indiv-

“Though the Brigade had never really developed a unified political stand... there was a definite change in emphasis from socialism and joining mass movements to feminism, becoming a positive example of worker self-management, and just plain staying in business.”

“Most of us no longer expect our work in the collectives to directly shake the foundations of capitalism. . . but we do expect our collective experiences to shake our personal foundation of greed, competition and insecurity, we expect to learn cooperation.”

iduals is still common, though many people do seem to be learning more about how to deal constructively with negative feelings once they arise. And we never **did** develop any but the most flimsy political unities, let alone a mass movement. We can predict that these conditions will continue to exist in the future as well. The Seattle Workers' Brigade has taught us that a change in legal structure is not enough to overcome decades of social conditioning.

Perhaps we have not, are not trying hard enough. But then we must consider the form of political expression we have chosen to use. Small businesses are by their very nature absorbing and exhausting. Worker self-managed businesses are especially so—the way the work is organized is unfamiliar and for the most part untried. Collective members are left with little spare time and creativity to devote to outside social and political activities.

Still, much of value comes of working in a collective such as the Seattle Workers' Brigade. The hard work and responsibility wears people out, but those who do stay learn some valuable, if sobering lessons as they struggle to apply the spirit of collectivism to real work conditions. We are constantly reminded of the contradiction of running a collective in a capitalist society—constantly asking ourselves whether we are compromising our politics too much for the economic good of the business, or vice versa. This juggling act we do between visionary politics and the realities of economic survival in this society makes us more aware of how the capitalist system works, how it affects our lives. This awareness is not earthshattering, but it is an important step in developing our personal and collective ideologies.

Different people have derived different morals from their experiences in the Brigade, but in general the

idealism of the earlier collective took on a more pragmatic hue as the years passed. Most of us no longer expect our work in the collectives to directly shake the foundations of capitalism—we are too much a part of the “real” system no matter how much we call ourselves “alternative.” But we do expect our collective experiences to shake our personal foundation of greed, competition and insecurity; we expect to learn cooperation. Working in a collective gives us the chance to experiment with non-coercive working relationships. We can learn to recognize and confront oppressive forms of power and authority in our workspace, such as sexism, class chauvinism (based on economic or educational advantages), and power maintained through unwillingness to share skills or information. We develop the ability to organize our work democratically. We learn to initiate ideas and actions, to accept responsibility, to give and receive constructive criticism, and to compromise.

There is a last, but very significant reason why working in a collective can be a beneficial experience. We are proud of the products we make and/or sell, proud that they are healthy and of good quality, and proud that we do our best to avoid buying our food from greedy capitalists. We are able to support small farmers and encourage them to grow organically by providing them with a market. We are doing work which we feel is truly valuable and learning a lot about our society and ourselves as we do it. This, if nothing else, is worth a great deal. □

by Peg Pearson
and Jake Baker

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and...



JUNE 1977
NUMBER 54

Puget

Consumers' Co-op

Newsletter

WHAT DO YOU DO WHEN...?

THE REALITY THAT YOU ARE RUNNING A BUSINESS CAN NO LONGER BE GIVEN LOW PRIORITY?

A NUMBER OF CO-WORKERS JUST ARE NOT DOING WHAT YOU UNDERSTAND THEIR JOBS TO BE?

THE COLLECTIVE NEEDS TO MAKE A DECISION, RIGHT NOW?

SOMEONE IS NOT CARRYING THEIR SHARE OF THE WORK?

SIX PEOPLE EAGERLY CUT CHEESE BUT NO ONE TAKES THE RECEIPTS TO THE BANK?

THE COLLECTIVE DECIDES TO PAY THE ELECTRIC BILL, AND A WEEK LATER YOUR JUICE IS CUT OFF BECAUSE NO ONE DID IT?

THE SAME HEAVIES END UP MAKING THE DECISIONS IN YOUR 'OSTENSIBLE' COLLECTIVE?

1. Cry, yell or jump up and down.
2. Quit.
3. Turn page.

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Paul Bernstein teaches sociology at the University of California, Irvine, and presently is on a leave of absence as a consultant to IGP, a worker-controlled insurance company in Washington, DC. Lew Bowers studied organizational theory at Yale, practiced it as a member of the collective of the New Haven Food Coop (13 paid staff, 5,000 members, \$1.5 million annual sales) and presently is staff for Center for the Quality of Work Life in Washington. They met SF to co-teach and did fine.



DEMOCRATIC ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

Extracts and elaborations from the course as co-taught at the New School for Democratic Management, July 17 - 29, 1977

by PAUL BERNSTEIN
LEW BOWERS

There is not enough space, here, to present each day's lessons, in detail. Instead, we have decided to give the basic perspective that grounded each topic, and to include examples of how these points apply in the daily practice of alternative businesses, drawing on the experience of the students who co-created this course.

Our objective is not to transform cooperative workers into bureaucrats, but rather to: help people realize the importance of management activities in their organization, TRANSLATE traditional management concepts into relevant terms, show that organizational structure can be chosen to fit the job, at hand, create within members of alternative businesses a much greater sense of organizational options. We cannot solve your organization's problems, only you can do that. What we can do is give you a perspective from which to define the problems and generate a choice of solutions. We want to help you all become problem definers and solvers for your communities and businesses.

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BASIC PURPOSES OF ALTERNATIVE BUSINESSES

The success of any business (or human effort for that matter) will depend largely on how clear its members are on their purpose: *What are we in business for? Why are we trying to do business in this particular way - instead of a more traditional way?*

Alternative businesses have set themselves a **dual** task: not just the economic task of production but the humanistic or political task of positive growth for their employees, real service to the community, and political change.

Thus, a food coop may simultaneously be a grocery store and a political organizing project; a feminist credit union may also be a center for women organizing economically; and a collective print shop may also be a movement media support center.

The tensions between product and process, personal and political change, between what's good in the short-run for the business versus the long term benefit for workers or consumers, form much of the difficulty and challenge of alternative business. It is much more difficult to manage an alternative business than a conventional one because the task is more ambitious.

These same tensions, however, also exist in profit-oriented hierarchical businesses. But they usually can be shoved aside because the quality of the working environment, and the impact of the product on the larger community are of a low priority to the managers.

In the long-run, ignoring the humanistic/political goal can actually prevent achievement of the technical or economic aim. Standard corporations are now learning this: So long as employees are not given an opportunity for personal growth or participation in decision making, productivity, quality and efficiency remain limited. So in truth, economics and a human/political understanding goal are not **totally** opposed. But there must be a consensus in day-to-day decision making on when the human or political purpose is to supercede all other principles; and when, in order to actually achieve those human or political purposes, the technical and economic facts of life must be respected.

Experience shows that to be successful, the collective has to get clear on its priorities. The question is simple: what are we doing this for?

PLANNING

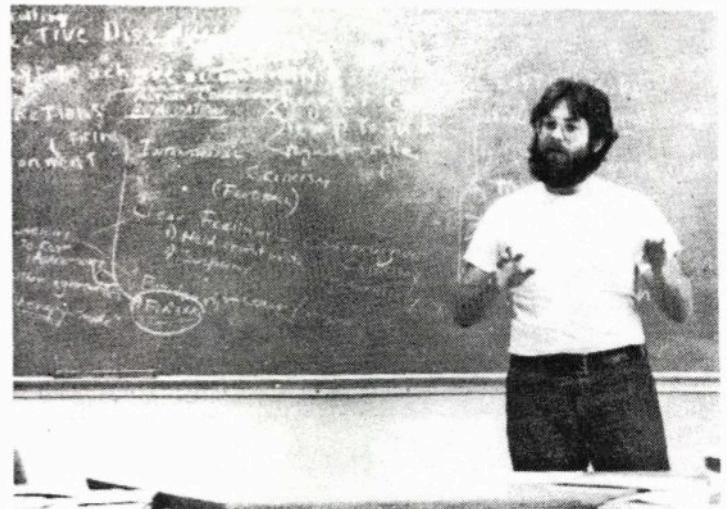
Once the collective has a clear consensus on its purposes, the whole organizational structure and management system can flow from that. There is a logical progression, as we see it, from the group's realization of its common purpose to the creation of an organization designed to achieve that purpose. The organization will be a **tool or instrument**, so to speak, by which the group seeks to accomplish its purpose. As such, the organization will be given certain **goals** and **objectives** which people can use as benchmarks for measuring whether their purposes are being achieved.

To give an example, a group may reach consensus around the purpose of *to serve the community, in particular the needs of women*. It could then set up an organization, but would have to specify a more concrete set of goals for the organization: a) to deliver health care to women, or b) to provide day care for children of working women, or c) some other goal, or d) perhaps several goals at once. Next it would need to specify an even more concrete set of **objectives**; for example to provide medical attention to sixty women a day by the end of the first year plus weekly classes on nutrition, first aid, and natural childbirth. Objectives need to be tied to time-points, or the group will lack a realistic way of knowing whether or not they are actually accomplishing their goals.

In mapping out a way to reach the objectives, the collective inevitably gets involved in a process of **planning**. In many cases, when planning is introduced, it encounters strong resistance from some collective members. There is a mystique around planning. It seems very abstract and involves a lot of jargon. It is perceived as a foreign or imposing concept. Planning is often not a legitimated role (planning will **always** be subordinated to daily operations if it is not protected). Planning can also be a class and gender

issue. Planners are traditionally middle-class white males (like your authors). Planning as we know it relies heavily on the logical problem-solving skills little boys are encouraged to excel in.

The only answer for some of these problems is to be aware of them. When introducing the concept of planning into the organization it is important to remember that this raises issues that may have some very strong negative images. If they are not aired in the beginning, they will eventually undermine the planning process. But there are some specific steps that can be taken to speak to some of the resistance: Don't start with a grandiose plan. Start with some small plan which has a clear money-making or -saving effect and which everyone buys into. This allows people to experience the concrete results of a planning effort.



At other times, the reluctance to plan stems more from a prior failure to achieve consensus on purpose and goals. In our view, without planning, an organization leaves itself open to monetary pressures from outside as well as within, and then is likely to confuse and frustrate its members. The organization will no longer be a tool but becomes a problem against which members will batter their heads (and emotions) daily.

Even organizations which haven't yet accepted the basic value of planning have occasionally found it necessary to resort to when, for existence, the need for a large expenditure has suddenly arisen. A food coop may find its six ancient refrigerators just aren't keeping things from spoiling anymore and a major purchase has to be contemplated. Or a newspaper collective must seek new space because the present small building it rents has been sold.

Without planning, decision making is usually a response to crisis, requiring a speed which often makes consultation,

much less consensus, seem utopian. Planning is really a process which prepares for careful decision making and with care, the appropriate degree of democracy and participation by those affected can be selected.

Two major occasions for planning exist: when first setting up the organization and when moving from one time period (a year, six months, five years) to another. The first occasion for planning includes steps 1 - 6 of the chart; this is when the organization itself is being designed. The second occasion for planning is a steps 5 and 6; this is when a new time period is being contemplated and the decisions that must be made are about what tasks are to be done, by whom, with what resources, and how long each should take. Planning at this point can be pretty futile if the organization's structure gets in the way. It may prevent several options from being considered in the planning process because everyone sees they couldn't be carried out in the present structure. In such cases it may be advisable for the collective to step back, take a look at its structure and consider changing it.

CHART # 1 : PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT

1. Purpose of the group
2. Goals of the organization
3. Objectives for a specified time
4. Functions (of the organization) to reach those goals and objectives.
5. Tasks (of the organization and the people) = the actual daily labor within those functions.
6. Tasks

<i>Decision to allocate tasks = Division of Labor</i>	+	<i>People Decisions to allocate people = Staffing</i>	+	<i>Resources Decisions to allocate resources = Budgeting</i>	+	<i>Time = Daily life of Decisions to allocate time = the organization Planning</i>
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7. Agreements to implement = Cooperation
8. Monitoring, checking, verifying to make sure it all gets done (agreements are kept) = Evaluation

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Many collectives feel they have very simple structures: an elected board of managers, perhaps, or a workers' council, plus a few work-team captains or coordinators. But this is only the formal or official structure. There always is also some hidden or implicit structure (not purposely hidden to fool anyone, but hidden in the sense that we are unaware of it). These implicit structures grew up gradually, naturally, out of people's actions accumulating day by day, never by a formal decision to establish that structure. An example would be a consumer-owned coop, whose formal Board is elected by the owning members. But real knowledge from day-to-day operations is in the hired staff. The Board relies on the staff who really may therefore have more influence than most consumer-owners on many issues. The formal structure has the Board making the decisions; in reality the staff makes many of the decisions.

Instead of relying on implicit or unconscious structure, our alternative businesses can choose their structures consciously, to fit their needs. Following along the chart, again, step 4 is listed as *Functions of the Organization*. This may seem a bit abstract at first but, after working in a collective for a while, people know pretty well what the basic functions are that have to be done. In a food coop, for instance, the functions are the obvious steps of a) acquiring the food, b) storing it, c) dividing, packaging, pricing and shelving it, and d) receiving the customer's money for it. In addition, there are the functions of e) monitoring the money flow (bookkeeping and accounting) and f) coordinating all these activities. If the coop is consumer-owned or relies on customers for part-time labor or is otherwise community-owned, it usually has the additional function of *membership coordination or community education*.

These seven or eight functions in the food coop could each be reason enough for a separate department or team, creating thereby the basic structure of the organization. Or, as an alternative, the group might find that it is more sensible and smoother-flowing to create some teams or departments around a particular class of foods that needs special care - as the meat department (actually, the meat room team) was created in the New Haven Food Coop. Arcata Coop in California has created a structure to respond to both these needs: they have departments (called *collectives*) organized around specific types of foods, such as produce, dairy, etc. They also have teams organized around certain functions such as all the buyers, all the people who determine the prices, etc.

The point is that one particular structure is not right for all businesses - or even for the same business throughout all its years. The collective should feel free to change the structure to respond to the needs and real functions of the product or service they are creating.

In order to choose our structures wisely and revise them when needed, we need to be good at collective decision making. This is another area where the dual aim of alternative enterprises receives a big challenge from conventional businesses. They tell us that decisions can't be made efficiently or fast enough by groups of workers or customers.



DECISION MAKING

Many alternative organizations suffer from an almost dogmatic commitment to make every decision by consensus. Group decisions on how to arrange the canned vegetables shelf and chaotic spur-of-the-moment meetings to decide what to tell the landlord, who is on the phone, are not made-up examples.

Rather than depending on any one form, such as consensus, the decision making structure can be chosen in relation to the type of decision. (see chart 2) Three major perspectives from which to evaluate a decision are: 1) the quality or rationality of the decision, 2) the acceptance of the decision by others and their commitment to executing it, 3) the amount of time required to make the decision.

The key to effective decision making is information. The quality of a decision is in direct proportion to the amount of pertinent information available. It is absolutely ass-backwards to give a group authority to make a decision if they don't have adequate information. Alternative organizations often get torn between the right to make a decision versus the ability to make that decision.

Different decision making modes excel in each of these aspects. Autocratic is the fastest. Consensus elicits the greatest commitment. If they have sufficient information, a minority probably makes the highest quality decisions.

CHART 2: RELATIVE MERITS OF VARIOUS DECISION-MAKING FORMS

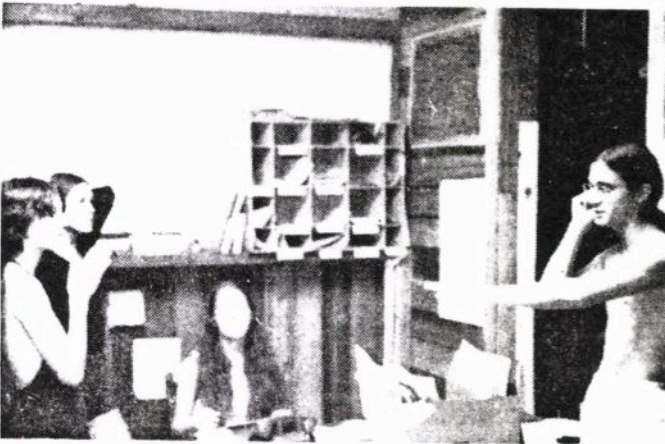
INDIVIDUAL			GROUP		
A	B	C	D	E	F
Autocratic (one person makes final decision)	Consultative (Autocratic with advice from others)	Minority (those with special interest)	Majority (voting)	Consensus	Unanimity (everyone totally agrees)
Positive Fastest, good in crisis	Positive fast, more input	Positive decision by <i>experts</i>	Positive most people are familiar with the process can be used with any size group	Positive better decision, promotes synthesis of ideas, elicits more commitment, all opinions aired, consistent with <i>alternative</i> ideology	
Negative Less likely to be best decision, less likely to be accepted	Negative takes more time, low chance of acceptance and commitment by others	Negative all points of view not necessarily heard, not necessarily representative	Negative issues become personalized win/lose mentality, lack of commitment by losers	Negative takes a long time, group must have basic agreement, progress can be blocked by one person, works best in smaller group, can end up operating on lowest common denominator	Negative almost impossible to achieve with more than 2 people

The basic question is: who should make what decisions? There are no definitive answers, but here are a few rules of thumb:

- A decision should be made by the smallest group that can reasonably make that decision. Large groups take forever, waste time, frustrate people, lead to people spacing out. Minimize large group decision making.
- Decisions require preparation. A committee (the smallest group consistent with different perspectives being represented) can be delegated to gather information and make the decision and then bring their decision to the larger group for ratification. This is a great time-saver.
- Some tasks have inherent limits on the number of people that can be effectively involved. Writing, for example, because of the need for careful wording and consistency.

An alternative organization should decide on the basis of what information is needed; how much commitment is needed from others to implement; how much time is available, which decisions should be delegated to committees, which require the whole staff and which require some larger group like customers or members.

Because of our values and principles, most alternative organizations favor decision making by consensus whenever possible.



It is important to define what we mean by consensus. It is not a license to filibuster. It is not permission for one person to tie up an entire group selfishly or needlessly. It is simply the process of continuously clarifying the efficacy of a particular alternative until everyone agrees that the group should proceed to planning for the implementation of the chosen alternative. Again, it is not everyone agreeing 100% with the favored alternative. It is foolish to predicate decisions only on that kind of unanimity. Consensus really only works in groups where there is substantial agreement. It will not work in a situation where life-long enemies are brought together to make a decision. It is a process based on trust.

Problem definition is the crucial step in any decision making process. The process of consensus is that as a problem gets defined, group members lay out their opinions about alternatives. These alternatives get tested as other group members respond to ideas, laying out their support as well as their reservations. It may be advisable to go around

the room and allow everyone 2-3 minutes to air their view. It is important to give everyone space and let less assertive participants be heard.

This is the stage, hopefully, of a growing consensus. This can be manifested by the statement of a proposal. A straw vote is another very good way of checking where differences lie within the group. After such a straw vote the usual procedure is to ask each of those persons in the *minority* to state their objections. At this point a crucial verbal dialectic takes place between proponents and opponents of the particular alternative. Possibly the objections are integrated into the original proposal through some kind of compromise. Or possibly the opponents gain converts from the statement of their objections. Then they move from being negatively-oriented to framing their own proposal.

It is important not to let positions and stances be epitomized by people. We are trying to decide on issues, not on personalities. Keep everyone loose. Have people try and argue the other side if possible. The most difficult problem at this point is people not listening to each other. So it is important for people to constantly restate what they heard the other person saying.

The basic dynamic is for the group to constantly push for clarification around differences. This clarification of differences and subsequent persuasion, compromise, or synthesis goes on until every member of the group either feels comfortable with the alternative, or perceives that further discussion on this issue would be fruitless.

Voting is a means of choosing one alternative from several. Consensus building on the other hand is the process of synthesizing elements together. It is ideally the synthesizing of the ideas of every member of the group into one decision. We see it as a higher level decision making process than voting. By higher level we mean not only that it will achieve better solutions, it will also promote the psycho-social growth of group members and of the group as a whole.

Voting implies a certain model of human nature. People are seen as antagonistic. It is a win/lose model. Some people inevitably lose and sulk away until their next chance to get back at the winners and become winners themselves. Voting is based on the will of the majority, or whatever fraction is chosen. It is in essence a quantitative mode.

Consensus is based on a different theory of human nature. People can work together. People can bridge distances and synthesize contradictory ideas. People are able to peacefully talk out their differences and reach mutually satisfactory positions. It is the opposite of voting because it is qualitative. One person's strongly held beliefs can sway the entire group. No ideas are lost. Each member's input is valued as possible solutions.

Consensus has one other valuable aspect. The goal of every decision making process is not just to decide on a solution, but to carry out that plan of action. Without subsequent action decisions are totally hollow. This is often overlooked. You see this phenomena in parliamentary democracies where one party gains control, wins the vote, but is paralyzed from taking any effective action because their majority is too small. It has been shown that a person's commitment to any decision is in proportion to their sense of ownership or investment in that decision. Consensus

attempts to develop investment from all members of a group, not just a majority. If you are involved in a decision where it is necessary for all members to conscientiously carry out whatever is decided, consensus is the best way to promote it.

There are a number of real and potential problems with a consensus model of decision making. Achieving consensus should never be covert or assumed. Consensus must always be checked in a direct manner. Otherwise it can become a much more repressive situation than voting.

There seems to be an upper limit on the size of group that can successfully utilize consensus. What is the largest group in which people can really listen to each other, share ideas and develop trust? It clearly depends on the nature of the group. We have operated in groups of thirty where consensus was effective, and with good group discipline it should be possible with larger groups.

One of the variables in the size of the group is the time it takes to reach consensus. Consensus clearly takes more time than a simple vote. But the added time can be viewed in relation to the increased understanding each member of the group will have about the issue and the increased probability of the decision being carried out; longer decision time but shorter implementation time.

But the greatest problem with consensus is the possibility that in an extreme one person can block the whole group. The group will be paralyzed, stymied on that issue. This is clearly tyranny of the minority.

This is a potential problem. This consensus model holds that the group cannot move on until everyone agrees to move on. At this point it is necessary to back off from the ideal model into the nitty gritty of reality. It is not necessary for every member to agree with the decision, but it is essential for every member to decide for themselves when to move on. The group cannot override any specific person, only each person can override him/herself. A possible scenario would be where you strongly disagree with everyone else in the group. After many attempts at rational persuasion neither the bulk of the group nor yourself have changed position. At that point you have to weigh the value of continued opposition. You may be correct and the group wrong, but they cannot see that and you cannot seem to show them that. In such a case your decision would be to state your objections clearly, ask everyone to keep them in mind as more data comes in, and agree to move on. You might also want the option of re-opening the issue at a later time. Or the group might put you and a person who understands the other side of the issue together on a temporary committee to work out a new proposal for the group to consider. Or you might decide that the issue is not important enough to take up any more of the group's time.

In any of those cases you would allow the group's needs to supercede your own personal needs. In order for consensus to work group members need to be invested in the group, really want it to work. They must see the continued work of the group as valuable, and in a deadlock situation they must weigh this value against further attempts to change people's minds.

In some situations a deadlock may occur within a group because of different analysis of the issue. There may not be enough evidence to change anyone's mind. It then might be

possible to proceed with the *majority* analysis and agree upon what further evidence for the *minority* analysis would be necessary to re-open the discussion, if it should become available. That makes it not so much a win/lose situation as given our current evidence we have made this decision, but X, Y, and Z, if they occur, will cause us to question our analysis and re-examine our decision.

Most deadlock situations are however, mixed up with a set of emotions. If the root of someone's objection is their personal dislike for the proponent of a particular position, then hopes for resolution are virtually nil until those personal issues can be addressed. For consensus to work, the group must be able to identify and work out emotions and feelings. The group must learn to deal with all levels of conflict, personal as well as ideological. If this does not happen, then those unaddressed feelings will continually block progress.

So as a last resort, safety mechanism, the collective should establish a back-up decision making method if consensus can not be reached in some pre-determined length of time. This could be agreement to switch to a 75/25% vote, for example.

What Works

- define the group that is to make the decision
- defining when the decision is in fact made
- separation of operational and policy decisions (operational decisions will take all the available time, if allowed)
- consensus in groups where there is basic trust and commitment
- delegate the decision to the smallest group that can feasibly make decisions
- use small task forces to make decisions and have large groups ratify
- everyone who is involved in making decisions must have adequate information
- deal openly with interpersonal issues or they will sabotage your process
- agreeing on what evidence will let us know if we need to reconsider decision
- tabling the decision when necessary
- setting a time-frame for consensus
- agreeing on a back-up mechanism in advance

What Does Not Work

- everyone taking part in every decision
- consensus in large groups that do not basically agree or know each other
- decisions without information
- rubber-stamping (ceremonial ratification of all decisions)
- avoidance, do not put off tough ideas (unless it is to let people cool off if emotions are running high)
- no problem definition, leads to everyone solving their own concept of the problem
- decisions without clarity on implementation
- making important decisions when tired

LEADERSHIP

What is a leader? What does she do?

To diagnose leadership in your organization, ask the following questions:

- who puts in longer hours (these signify greater commitment)?
- who understands all the jobs?
- who has been around the longest?
- who works with the books?
- who chairs the meetings?
- who does the landlord ask for?
- who deals with supplies?, the bank?
- who brings emotional issues out into the open?
- who keeps in contact with everyone on the staff?
- who learns new jobs first?
- who are perceived by the outside as key people?
- who goes outside the organization for training?

These behaviors create an image of leadership. In many alternative businesses, there is an unconscious conspiracy against leadership. This is because leadership is viewed in the conventional stereotype of control and power; the ability to compel, dominate or gain obedience. Leadership is denounced and criticized because there is a norm of equality and equal power.

Many aspects of leadership cause us trouble. Often the founders of an organization are in unique leadership roles. They are often locked in patriarchal and matriarchal roles with the group, even when they actively reject such roles. Another problem is having unequal sums of money invested in the enterprise causing a basic leadership inequality.

Effective leadership requires effective followership, and vice versa. The role of effective followership entails such behaviors as respecting the rights of others, realizing when not to talk, and sensing when continued argument is counter-productive (not bad disciplines for leaders, either). In many cases, the leader/follower relationship degenerates into one of dependency - power is taken from the followers by the leader (and given by the followers to the leader) rather than having the group's energy focused and multiplied by the leader and returned to the group.

At the extreme, the more charismatic the leadership, the more potential for either achievement of the group's purpose or subversion of the group's energy. Accountability is always the question, and clear agreements can help both the leaders and followers simply exercise different aspects of participation.

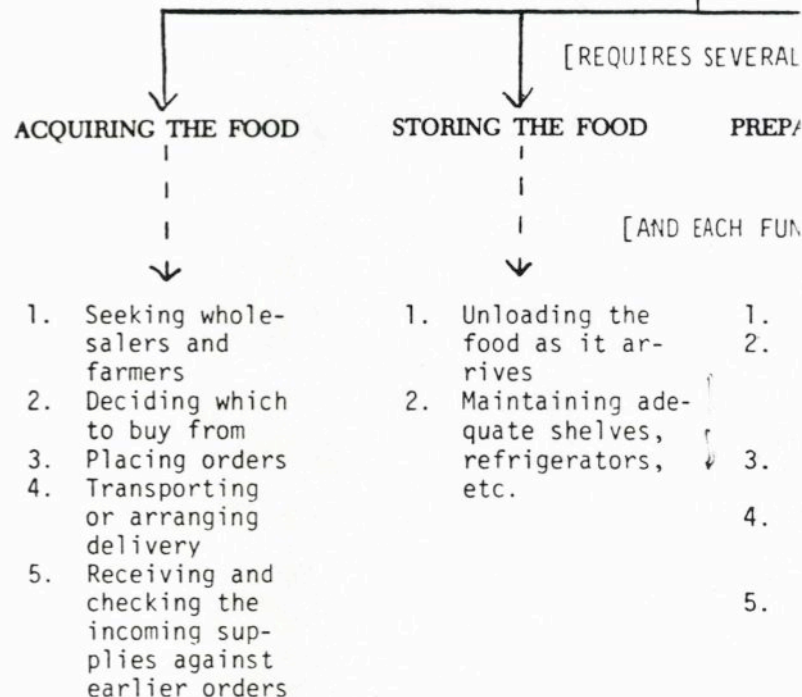
Rather than having no leaders, our vision is to have everyone be a leader. To do that we need to take advantage of our *natural* leaders as teachers. Leadership is power, and that means the ability, whether physical, mental or moral, to act. We need to move from the idea of a leader to leadership as a resource of the group, just like money, bookkeeping or a truck.

Leadership involves providing necessary information, influence/inspiration, future-orientation, teaching (especially about power) and coordinating. The goal is to understand leadership as a role which any number of people can play. The collective needs to define it, share it, and reinforce it whenever it appears.

Together, we are in the throes of hammering out a new style of leadership. Our new style is an amalgam of traditionally masculine traits like aggressiveness, initiative, attention to task with more traditional feminine proclivities like responsiveness, service and more attention to affect and process. In our collectives we are building a new model of what might be called *androgynous* leadership.



CHART 3: HOW TASKS
[THE GOAL OF THE



DIVISION OF LABOR

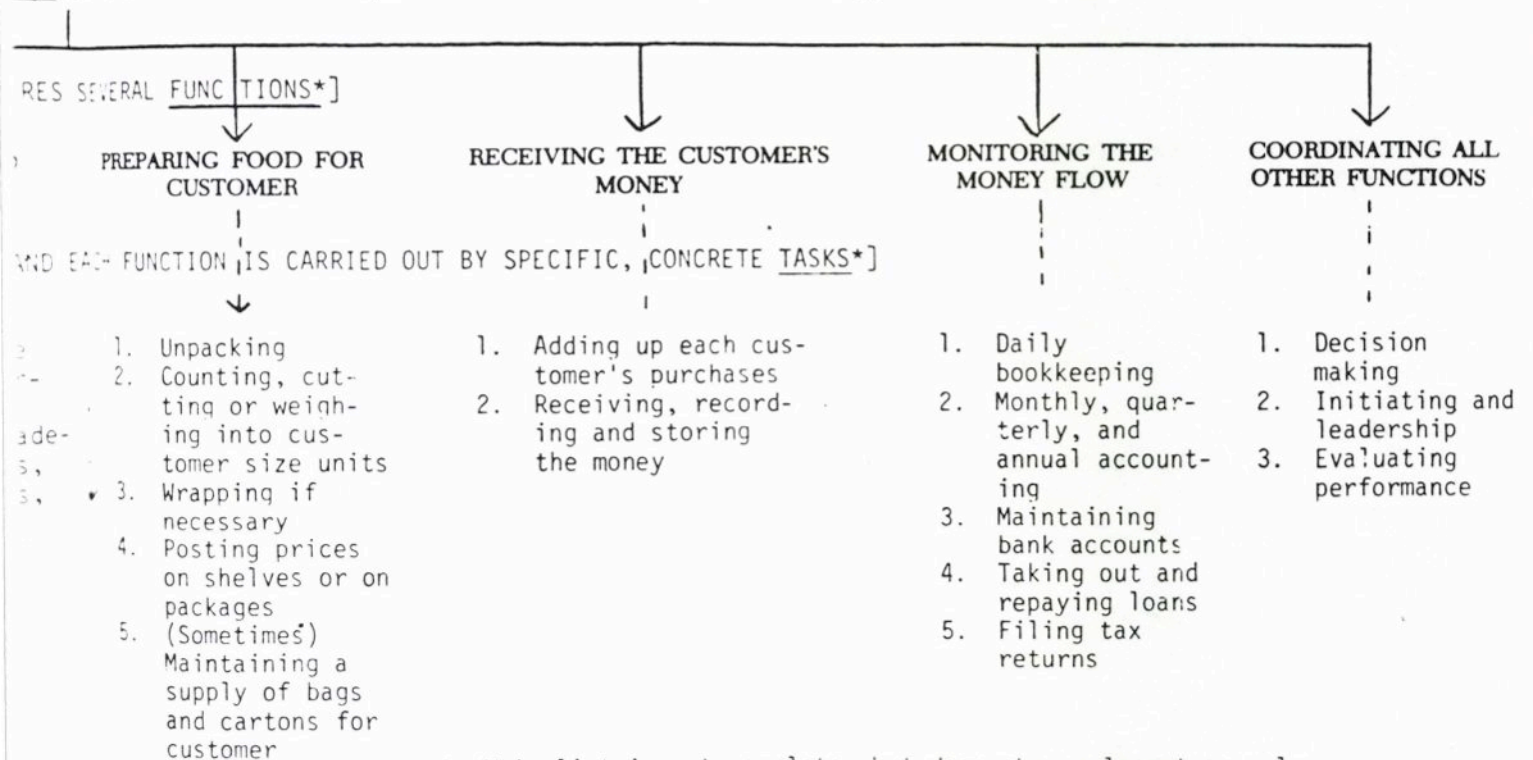
A major class of decisions occurs around the division of labor: Who shall do what, at which times, and according to which standards. It is helpful to break free of traditional assumptions; for instance, that one person must do the same job day after day. As many collectives have learned, rotating people through jobs can work just as well. People learn what the needs are in different parts of the business and so can make better decisions when coming together in general meetings. Rotation can be more interesting and more fair, allowing the drudgery work to be shared by all (and raising consciousness at the same time).

But problems come up. Not everyone will do each job as well as the next person. And being flexible about work assignments can lead to some things just not getting done. A perspective we've found helpful is to recall the **functions** of the organization that need to get accomplished and then to list out all the tasks required to get those functions done. To see it in picture form we go back to lines 4 and 5 of the first chart. In the chart, functions of the organization (line 4) generate daily tasks (line 5). The way this works in practice can be shown by continuing our food coop example (chart 4).



Jobs that people do each day are simply a string of those tasks, taken from one or several functions. The different combinations of tasks possible for each person are therefore enormous, yet they boil down to two types. In the first type of job, the tasks are put together all from within one function. These jobs will tend to be less complex for the individual (all the steps involved in packing and pricing food, for example) and they may be quite efficient for the organization. But this kind of job may offer less variety to the individual, and be less interesting. The second type of job puts together tasks from several different functions of the organization. This type of job can be more interesting for people, may help coordinate the organization better and

FIG 3: HOW TASKS FLOW NATURALLY FROM THE ORGANIZATION'S FUNCTIONS
[EXAMPLE OF THE ORGANIZATION - (RETAILING FOOD IN COOPERATIVE WAY)]



* This list is not complete, but does show relevant examples.

may make more sense for a particular product (by following it through from start to finish):

No matter how well the division of labor is designed in one year, problems will occur as the community or collective grows and changes. People take on additional tasks to help out here or there or because at a certain

moment, they are the only one with the needed skill. Before they know it their jobs have changed. They may find that people are getting upset, that coordination isn't occurring as well as before; that certain things aren't getting done as other people seem to be expecting them to. At times like these a helpful procedure can be:

1. To get together with others and list the tasks again, **clearly**, for all the operations that feed into your job and all the operations that your job feeds into. (Clear your minds of the fact that particular people are now doing those tasks, and just list all the tasks that must get done if the organizational function is to be accomplished.)

2. Look for the points of **potentially** greatest foul up in this flow of tasks, **because of the nature of the tasks themselves**, again disregarding who might currently be doing them. In other words, ask which tasks are **most crucial** in this whole string of tasks;

2. Look for the points of **potentially** greatest foul up in this flow of tasks, **because of the nature of the tasks themselves**, again disregarding who currently is doing them. In other words, ask which tasks are **most crucial** in this whole string of tasks; the ones where an error will knock out all the subsequent tasks.

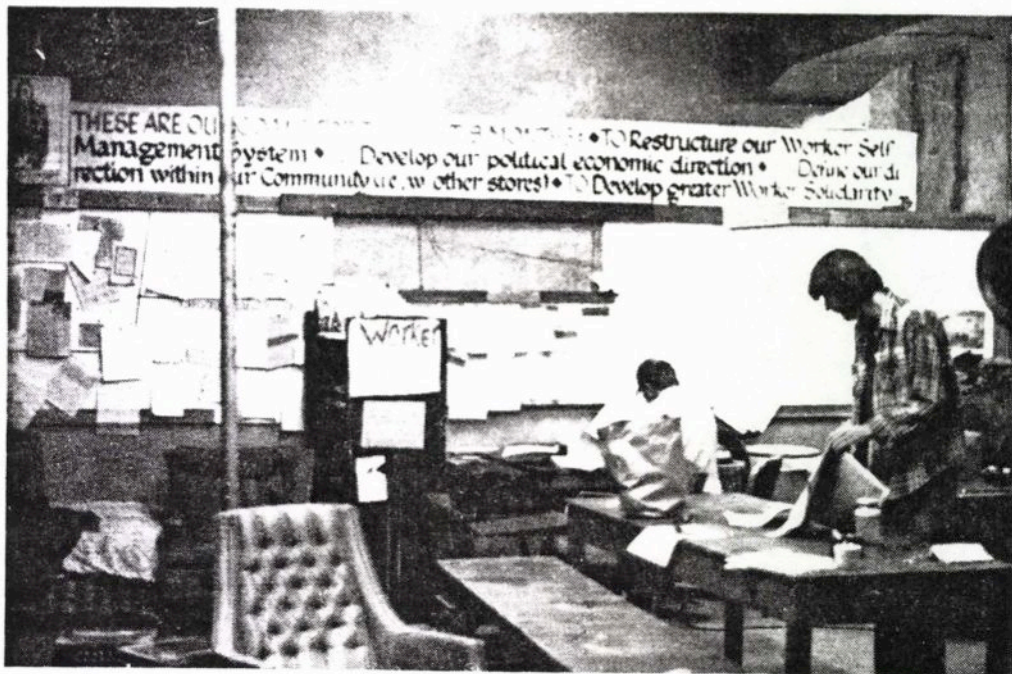
3. Identify the **information** that is needed at those crucial points in the flow of tasks. (Often the problem in division of labor is that the person performing a task isn't receiving adequate information to perform it.)

4. Design a means for building that needed

information into the task, so it's always available, no matter **who** is at that task.

5. If the problem isn't one of information, but one of conflicting expectations, then a new *job description* needs to be agreed upon, between the group and the individual (or between the team and the organization) so each knows what is expected of the other. This description should include not only what tasks are to be done, but also the **standards** they are to measure up to.

6. If the problem is not one of information, nor of conflicting expectations, then it may be that the person is not suited to the task. Often when work is not getting done well we automatically assume the problem is with the person. The value of the 5 step procedure we've just presented is that it lets us see the other possible causes and offers a way to correct them. If it turns out that the necessary information is already built into the task, and the agreements on job descriptions are already clear, but the person just is not keeping to the agreements, then we can turn to other solutions. The person may need more training on the job. Or they may need to receive some supportive criticism to help them look at both training and criticism further on. Now we need to back up and talk about staffing.



STAFFING

HIRING: Whatever the process of hiring used by the organization, it will critically affect the organization's character. Selecting from among friends would tend to have the advantage of shared vision and style, but probably will lack the diversity in race and class which may contradict our politics: Opening up selection will represent a wider community, but assumptions about values and process will have to be taught or renegotiated, all of which takes time.

There are a few mechanisms of hiring that may be helpful. When you have a potential staff member, it is necessary to evaluate both their ability to work in a collective, as well as their ability to do the job. The former is very hard to do in an interview. A trial period prior to a final employment decision, during which the applicant could actually work with you in the organization, gives you a lot more information. It also allows the applicant to experience the chaos of collectivity first-hand and decide if this is the place for them. The New Haven Food Coop uses a two-week paid trial period as a final step in the hiring process.

Hiring, when done correctly, is a mutual assessment - the organization assesses the individual, and vice-versa. If the organization does not meet the needs of the individual, the match will never survive.

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT: Coops and collectives, in general, are much stronger in meeting individual needs than traditional organizations. People work in coops for mainly two reasons: either motivated by ideals or ideology, or they are motivated economically (it is the best job available). Some classic methods of addressing personal development are to give employees a variety of jobs, allow them to acquire new skills, etc. The job description can also be used to build-in personal development goals as a part of the job.

PART-TIME WORKERS are a very controversial issue with some alternative businesses. There are some obvious pluses and minuses:

Pluses:

- meets needs of many people
- involves more people for same amount of salary money
- can allow organization to get special skills
- gives flexibility in scheduling

Minuses:

- makes internal communications very tough
- part-timers will be a disadvantage to full-timers in terms of information
- can signify lower personal commitment

PAY: There are a number of alternative ways to pay people. Each of these methods reinforce certain attitudes, behaviors or actions and the organization needs to realize that the method of pay can be a tool to accomplish certain organizational goals.

DIFFERENT MODELS OF PAY

A Everyone gets the same

- very easy to implement
- promotes concept of equality

B Pay in relation to need

- socialist ideal
- very tricky to define NEED

C Pay in relation to the number of jobs a person can perform

- puts premium on experience and flexibility
- allows differential for skill changing
- may encourage too much job changing

D Pay in relation to seniority

- encourage longer-term stable workforce
- rewards loyalty

E Pay in relation to responsibility assumed (for example, some specific leadership task could be defined and those who choose to perform those tasks get a higher rate)

- risky but in many cases honest
- reward leadership

F Pay in relation to productivity, either individual or group

- time honored capitalist tradition

G Pay in relation to craft differentials

- might become a reality as organization requires skills of PROFESSIONALS - doctors, lawyers, architects

STAFF TURNOVER: Why do alternative organizations have such high staff turnover? Low salaries are clearly one factor. The frustration inherent in the process of struggle causes some to leave. Also, there is the transiency of young educated people who comprise the basic labor pool. It is very difficult for many people to imagine making a career out of working in a coop. It seems to provide a very uncertain future.

To deal with the turnover it is essential for potential staff to know what they are getting into. That calls for careful orientation. And the organization should require a one year minimum time commitment. Making jobs more rational and developing a coherent organization leads to a somewhat more together workplace. If the organization can find local community people who want to work there they are generally more stable. People who have worked or lived cooperatively before are more likely to know what they're getting into.

EVALUATION (& MAINTAINING AGREEMENTS)

Perhaps the most important process for keeping an organization and its members evolving, for uncovering mistakes and for responding to new challenges, is the process of evaluation. We don't always use it consciously, but we engage in it often. We struggle with it in meetings whenever we try to show the problems caused by a current policy and argue for a different one. We need it periodically to see how well jobs are getting done, and a person engages in it whenever s/he finds herself/himself dissatisfied with her/his work and begins to talk with friends about what's wrong and how to change it.

Whether the question is enforcing job agreements or taking an annual look at policies, the necessity for evaluation comes right out of the other activities of the collective (steps 1 - 7 in Chart 1). Agreements on purpose, goals, tasks, timing and money are either kept or not, and the organization must know whether the agreements are being kept if it is to manage itself at all. Another way to talk about the process is as a reviewing, checking or monitoring process, necessary to see how well we as a collective are achieving our original purposes.

On the daily-life level it involves us in the sticky problems of collective discipline, individual responsibility and accountability. Few people want to be the ones to tell someone they're not doing their job well; fewer still want to handle these matters in a confrontive way. Therefore, it may be helpful to see the options available for responding to broken agreements. These options can be arranged from mildest to the most drastic and, in fact, can be used in that order, so that the toughest option - firing - becomes a last resort only, not an immediate threat which would poison the whole working atmosphere.

OPTIONS FOR RESPONDING TO UNKEPT AGREEMENTS

A Actual Consequences of Unkept Agreement - point these out; appeal to the person's rationality and their concern for the collective, its goals and purposes.

B Peer Pressure

C Intentional Criticism - The person needs information on what s/he did well, on where s/he fell short, and on SPECIFIC behaviors s/he could take to resolve the shortcomings.

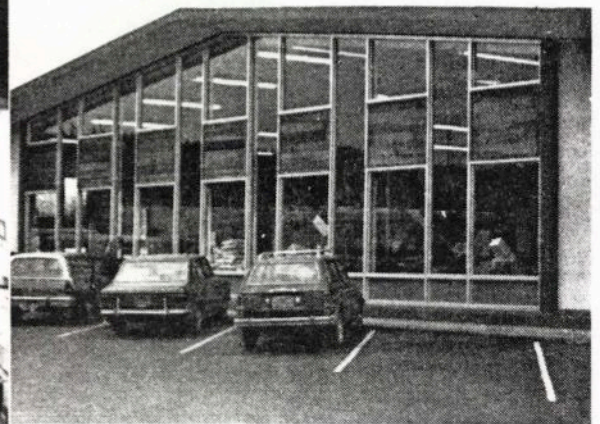
D Clearing Feelings - If the person can't take in the work-related information, s/he may need a safe opportunity to express resentments, fears, etc., that go deeper. (A helpful method for collectives is presented under GUIDELINES FOR FEEDBACK p. 38 in NO BOSSES HERE by Vocations for Social Change, Cambridge, Mass.)

E Responding to Deeper Blocks - When the person can't clear their important feelings, the collective has a choice: 1) To avoid giving that person certain responsibilities in the future, but engaging their cooperation in their strong areas; or 2) To help the person seek some experienced assistance for deep change (therapy, etc.).

F Punishments - Must be agreed upon beforehand.

G Leave of Absence - Gives the person time and a second chance, and calms the collective's atmosphere.

H Firing - the last resort.



FIRING

Firing is the toughest issue alternative organizations face. In general because of their commitment to the rights of the individual, alternative organizations bend way over backwards to attempt to work problems out. In our ideal society where everyone is guaranteed a job, it is just a matter of shuffling people to find the most appropriate job. But given our current reality, alternative organizations must learn how to fire people. A business running close to breaking even can't afford to support someone who is not carrying her share. Either learn how to fire or your whole organization will be brought down by low productivity.

All we have said about job descriptions and evaluations are the key to humanistic firing. Individuals should be given sufficient latitude to take risks and quite possibly fail. But the organization must be clear about its concrete needs for competence. At the New Haven Food Coop it was necessary to *part ways* with several people whose political organizing work (which we were very much in sympathy with) prevented them from carrying a full share, and we could not afford to *subsidize* them at that time.

Ideally, by way of periodic evaluations, it becomes clear to both parties that it isn't working and whoever it is agrees to leave. It is rarely so smooth. More likely, what happens is everyone conspiratorially decides someone should go and then orchestrates their exit.

It is crucial to set up some kind of formal process **before** it is needed. For instance, a specific group to handle complaints could be established.

MEETINGS

The world is run by those who stay to the end of the meetings.

Meetings are such a basic format for alternative organizations, and they cause so much frustration, that we have a few suggestions on how to more effectively utilize meetings.

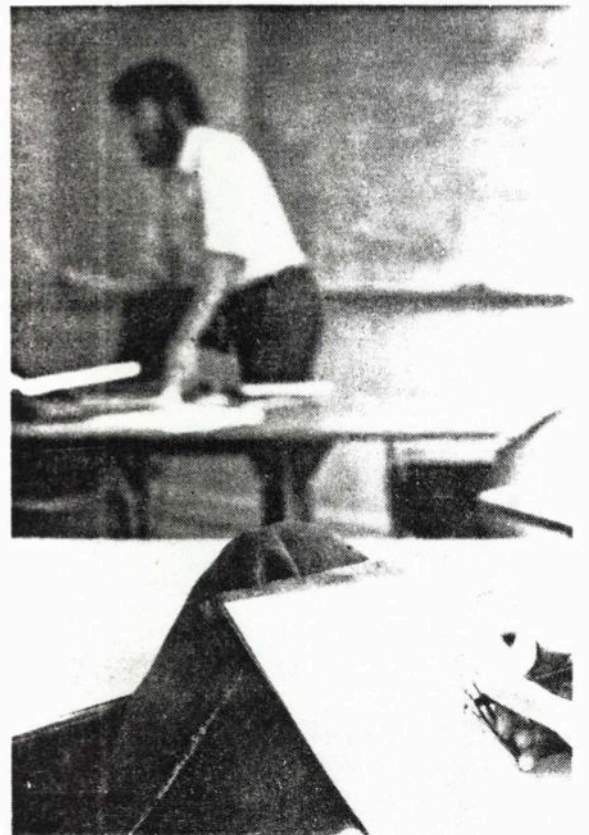
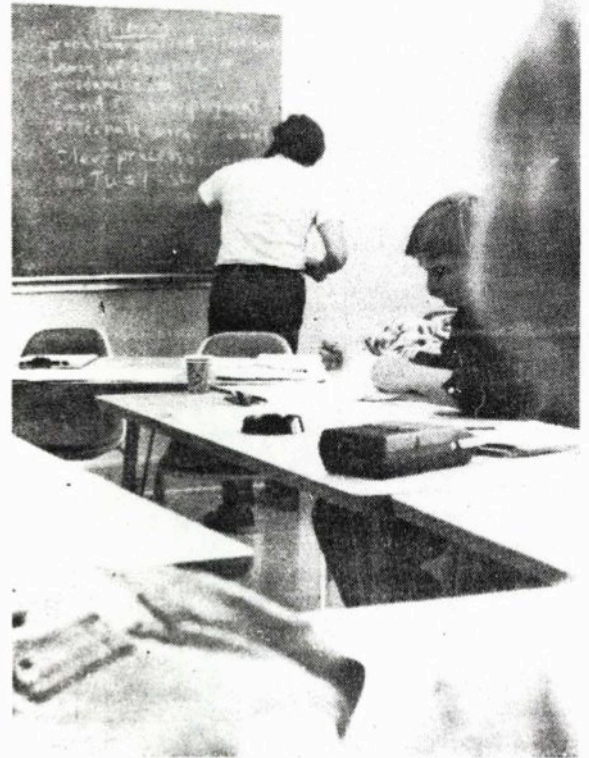
First of all, why have a meeting? Meetings are grossly overused. Make sure there is a clear reason. Avoid regular weekly meetings - they are deadly in terms of the frustration they create. It is incredible how many organizations are absolutely no more than weekly meetings.

There are three roles for meetings: information sharing, decision making and group building. There are other ways to disseminate information. If you are really having a social event, call it that. Don't go through the ceremony of a meeting. Utilize more individual or pair work. Use a meeting only when there is a real need and everyone is ready.

How do you have an effective meeting? There are three keys: 1) clarity on what the meeting is about, what the task is, etc.; 2) individual pre-work or preparation; and 3) group discipline embodied in the role of chairperson.

Here is a list of more specific suggestions:

1. Chair-person
 - have a strong chair, whose goal is to help the group achieve what it wants to achieve
 - it helps if the chair is not overly interested in the issue at hand
 - chair should frame the issues, restate ideas, clarify, ask the



question *where are we now?*

- chair should keep the conversation on the topic, follow the agenda, if someone wanders, ask them to sit on it
- chair should ask for proposals, keep up the pace
- chair should keep time for the group
- chair should check for consensus
- chair should assure there is space for everyone to be heard
- chair can check the process of consensus with a straw vote

2. Agenda

- have the agenda ahead of time, ideally put the agenda sheet somewhere public for a week beforehand so people can list their issues as they come to mind.
- prioritize the agenda and set time allotments for each item
- parallel agenda: if new issues come up put it on a parallel agenda for discussion later, the issue is preserved but the group is not diverted from the current issue
- make sure the group accepts the agenda

3. Individual work

- if agenda is known in advance, participants should have concrete work to do in preparation
- can't afford to have everybody think on their feet in meetings
- give people 2-3 minutes to think individually before opening discussion on a new issue

4. Group Discipline

- meeting participants need to learn to respond to what was just said rather than take off on a new tangent
- you don't need to talk if you have nothing to add

5. Easel Pad

- very good way to display agenda
- helps keep the group focused

6. Time

- set a fixed length for meeting - no longer than 2½ hours, and stick to it
- start on time, otherwise you end up penalizing those who do come on time
- end on time (good *reward* for hard work)

7. Breaks

- take frequent breaks, you actually end up accomplishing more
- light and lively (short games which get people moving and change the mood)

8. Size

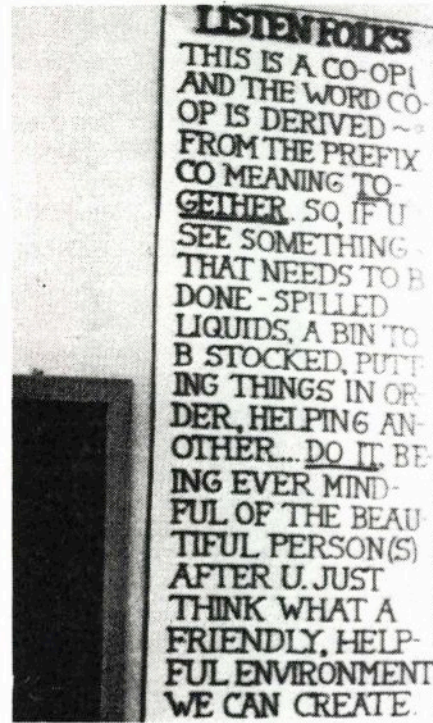
- break the group into sub-groups if appropriate, it allows each person more air time

9. Interpersonal Issues

- bring them up and clear them at the beginning of meetings, or make agreements to deal with them at another place
- set aside 15 minutes at the end for criticism/self-criticism of the process of the meeting

10. Minutes

- keeping minutes shows you take yourselves seriously
- necessary to ensure accountability



GROUP CONSCIOUSNESS

Working effectively in meetings may depend ultimately on an elusive quality some people call *group consciousness*. Becoming aware of the good of the whole helps people to reach consensus. It helps the individual to choose his or her participation more carefully. And the experience of group consciousness - when all are working *in tune* together yet is still an autonomous person - can be one of the highest thrills of cooperative work.

There is no quick way to acquire this awareness. It comes from being focussed in the present moment opening up to where others are at that moment, recalling the purpose of your being together, and having the confidence that a group vibration **can** take place. Certain communities are exploring this space and evolving a procedure for utilizing it deliberately. Work groups at Findhorn, Scotland, for example, take a few moments of silence together to focus on their common purpose before beginning their tasks.

CONCLUSION

Obviously, the management of alternative businesses is still a place for further discoveries. By adding human and political aims to our businesses we have chosen a more difficult path than conventional businesses. Their narrower goals of profit and mechanical efficiency allow them to rely on methods of specialization and obedience we prefer to avoid. The cooperative methods we add are still being refined and perfected. In a sense, all people in alternative organizations are engaged in social invention, creating ways for society to order itself and be productive at a new level. Therefore each of your experiences is important to add to the collective wisdom. Just as this course evolved out of the hard-won experience of many alternative organizations, it would be valuable to hear from you now on what in this article squares with your experience and what needs to be corrected, refined, or added to. Please feel free to write us about your experiences, c/o of this magazine. □

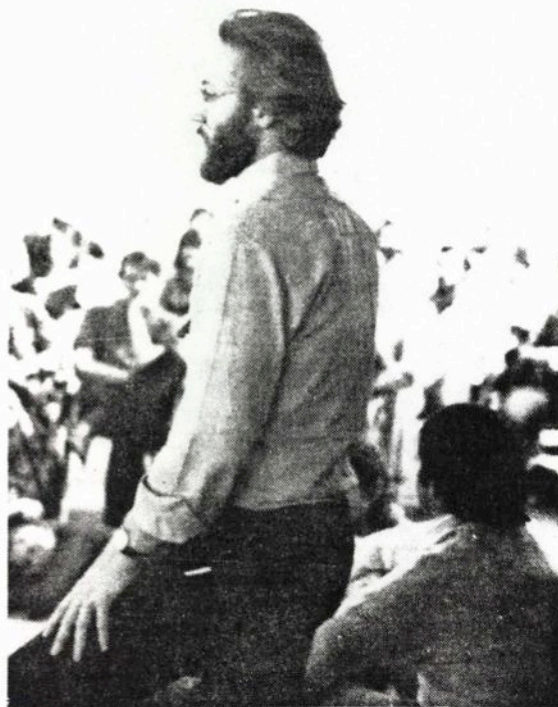
SUGGESTED READING LIST

1. **No Bosses Here: A Manual on Working Collectively**, 1976 (Vocations for Social Change, 353 Broadway, Cambridge, Mass. 02139)
2. **Alternatives in Community Mental Health**, 1975 by Gordon D. Holleb & Walter H. Abrams (Beacon Press, Boston, Mass.). Chapters 6 & 7 present a very enlightening *life-cycle of alternative organizations*.
3. **Dilemmas of Democracy** by Joyce Rothschild-Whitt, **Working Papers for a New Society**, Fall 1976. Hard choices faced by contemporary collectives.
Conditions Facilitating Participatory-Democratic Organizations by Joyce Rothschild-Whitt, **Sociological Inquiry**, Vol. 46, No. 2, 1976 (pp. 75-86) A more detailed look at the same experience.
4. **Synergic Power: beyond Domination and Permissiveness**, 1974, by James H. and Marge Craig (Proactive Press, P.O. Box 296, Berkeley, Calif. 94701). Inter-personal power for co-operative uses, to co-create rather than dominate.
5. **Constructive Criticism: A Handbook**, 1976, by Gracie Lyons (Issues in Radical Therapy Press, O.O. Box 23544, Oakland, Calif. 94623). A manual on evaluation processes.
6. **How to Conduct a Meeting**, 1977 (cassette tape by Bay Area Radical Therapy Collectives Distributed by New School for Democratic Management, 256 Sutter St., SF 94108, \$3.50). Gives procedures for clearing out feelings such as interpersonal resentments and fears that might interfere with an effective, honest meeting.
7. **Workplace Democratization: Its Internal Dynamics**, 1976 by Paul Bernstein (Kent State University Press, Kent, Ohio 44242). The experience of larger democratic companies.
8. **Management**, 1974 by Peter Drucker. (Harper and Rowe, NY). Comprehensive and perceptive analysis of traditional management techniques.
9. **Industrial Democracy: the Sociology of Participation**, 1968 by Paul Blumberg (Schocken Press, New York). Studies of conventional businesses experimenting with democratic processes.

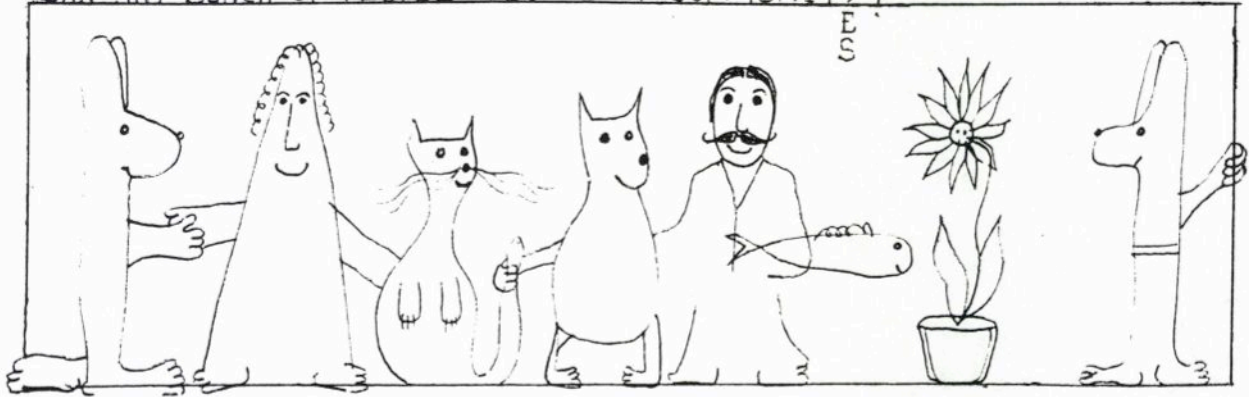


EXPLANATION OF PHOTOGRAPHS

- 26: Paul Bernstein and Maya Shone (*typical NSDM student-faculty fraternization*)
 27: Lew Bowers
 29: Kathy O'Leary, NSDM, and Arcata Coop Coordinator, working with her cheese team
 30: meeting, Energy Exchange, Eugene, Oregon
 32: Mary Dickinson, NSDM, coop warehouse, Seattle
 33: Coop warehouse, Tucson
 34: worker's area, Arcata
 36: floor area, Arcata exterior, Arcata Food Coop
 37: Lew writing and (below) student diligently taking notes
 38: sign, La Montanita Food Coop, Albuquerque
 40: top: Jim Gibbon, President of IGP, giving opening address, NSDM; bottom, Dave Oleson, founder and co-director of NSDM



CAN ANY BUNCH OF PEOPLE BECOME A COMMUNITY?



Rex Barger is a games wizard who travels the east coast, like a bird seeking feathered friends.

①

②

③

Key ASKS: Can any bunch of people become a **COMMUNITY?**

ES!

- if they believe in themselves and each other.
- if they care and dare and share.

Start with these statements, digest them thoroly in the juice of your own experience, take out any garbage you find in them, and put to good use the essence of what is left that is your own. GOOD BYE (GOOD Be with YE)!

- ① WE ALL ARE CAPABLE (and loveable — and love-ABLE) — with a great capacity to enjoy singing & dancing & playing active games — to enjoy making things in various crafts — to enjoy participating in dramatic activities. 😊 Our bodies are not only capable of amazing feats, they actually need to be used to their fullest — often — to prevent deterioration, and frequent full use contributes to a delightful sense of wellbeing. 😊 Our five senses are able to tell us much more about both our inner and outer environments than we are usually aware of. 🙌 By increasing our sensitivity to our own senses & feelings, we will also become more sensitive to others. ❤️ By going even deeper we can achieve a great inner peace & quiet joy. By becoming more fully aware of our own inner nature we can discover a powerful feeling of ONENESS with ALL LIFE. ✨ We each have the capacity to lead — to follow — to initiate, participate & reciprocate — and to create. 🔄 Everyone have something of value to give, and we can all learn from each other. ↔ Sometimes when we see someone who is very skilled in a particular area or activity, we react with despair ("I could never do that!") rather than with hope ("wow! I wonder if I could do better than I'm doin'."). Because of our tendency to want instant success, the wideness of the gap between our present skill and that of the performer discourages us. We forget that any skill is the result of much effort. We forget that we too can develop and grow in any area we put effort into.
- ② WE LEARN BEST BY DOING — by participating fully and, of course, voluntarily. Taking our cue from very young children, to be totally involved in life is the first & most important way to learn. So — when discovery of our own potential becomes more important to us than "looking good" or "being one of the crowd" — then learning can become exhilarating again. We can relish stretching our capacities and taking risks.
- ③ WE ALL ARE UNAVOIDABLY INTERRELATED and EVERYTHING WE DO (OR DON'T DO) HAS AN EFFECT — therefore WE NEED TO BE SENSITIVE & ALERT to the effects of all our actions — on ourselves, on each other and on our environment. Some of these effects are obvious, some are hidden, some are delayed. →

Here are a few **games** I've found useful in turning fears and shyness into good healthy positive energy. But if you've never learned games from written instructions before, please don't be alarmed if they don't sound like much: few people can tell how good a gourmet dinner will taste by reading the recipes. And don't forget that it takes more than a good recipe to make a dish taste scrumptious. The same is true with games. So read 'em & try 'em with love - even if they sound too simple or too weird to be fun.



FACE TO FACE (Since this game works only with an odd number of players, the leader needs to be ready to play or not as needed.) Have everyone find a buddy and stand face-to-face. Explain that the extra person chooses from 3 possible commands: **Face-to-face**, **Back-to-back** and **Change Partners**. The caller [or commander] is free to arrange them in any order and to repeat any command as often as desired - except that **Change Partners** can only be said once and is always the last command, because when it is called, the caller [along with everyone else] also tries to find a new partner. If the last 2 calls were **Face-to-face**, **Change partners**, the new partners must form face-to-face. If **Back-to-back**, **change partners** were the last two, everyone looks for & tries to claim an empty back. Be sure to let your new partner know of your claim, because once claimed you can no longer change. Whoever finds none becomes the next caller. [If your group is already congenial and trusting and sensitive to each other's space needs, let the caller create new relationships between identical parts - but remember when we each have two - such as knees - both must be used or else they need to be differentiated - **Right knee-to-right knee.**]

42

RHYME MIME is more relaxing. Sit in a circle anywhere - with or without a chair. Whoever starts says, **I'm thinking of a word that rhymes with...** [one syllable words are generally best]. Anyone guessing must then create a short pantomime to communicate the word. Only the starter may guess out loud, and after guessing correctly, says either **Yes** or **No, it is not...** [loud enough for all to hear]. If the starter can't guess it, others may whisper their guesses directly into the ear of the mimer - and those guessing correctly may join the original mimer in creating a full-scale theatrical production, if they wish, to better communicate their word to the starter. When everyone runs out of guesses & the group as a whole gives up, the starter must mime the word that was being thought of. Otherwise whoever guesses correctly gets the option to be the next starter.

HANDS DOWN 54 also involves someone picking a category and can be done with all sitting or standing in a circle so that their left hands can support their neighbors right hand. Each line of the opening chant is said with hands touching. Between lines, all clap twice in unison. **Hand down 54 // On the list // Names of // [category] // One of each // No repeats // No hesitation // Let's go.** Then whoever picked the category names another item in that category. And so on until someone repeats an item or hesitates too long [breaking rhythm]. When this happens, the chant is repeated with the next in turn picking the new category. [Please do not eliminate the one who misses.]

→ a single act may have widely different effects on different people or under different circumstances. Some effects will be positive, some negative, and some mixed. Negative effects can often be neutralized or even made positive with a combination of being sorry and forgiveness, $[(-)(+) = +]$ For maximum learning we need to know all the effects, but since this is certainly rarely if ever possible, this is one reason why

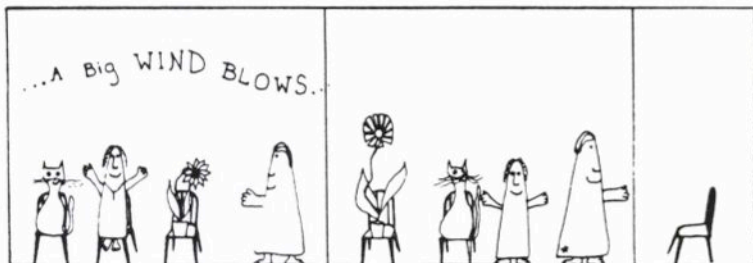
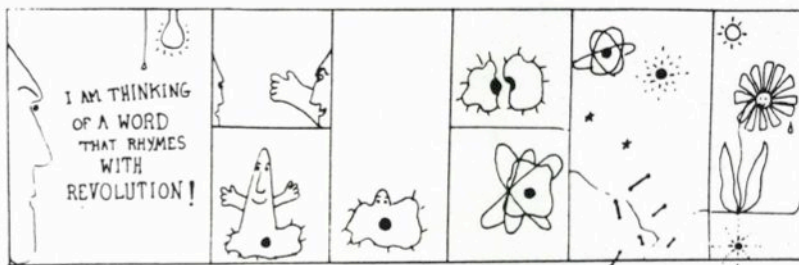
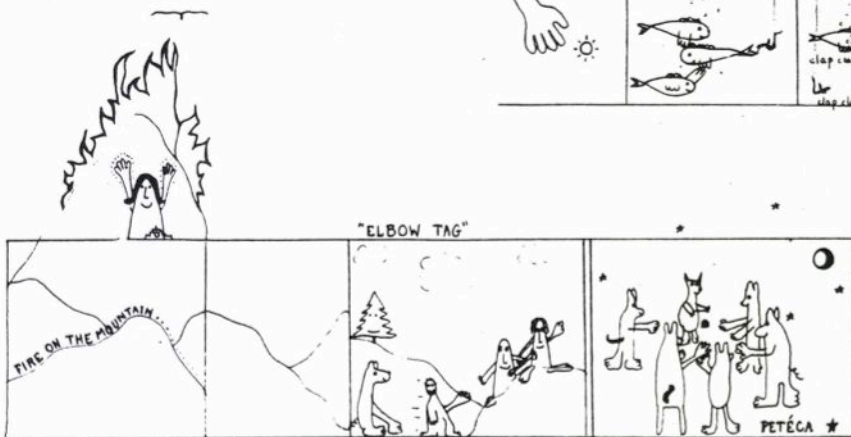
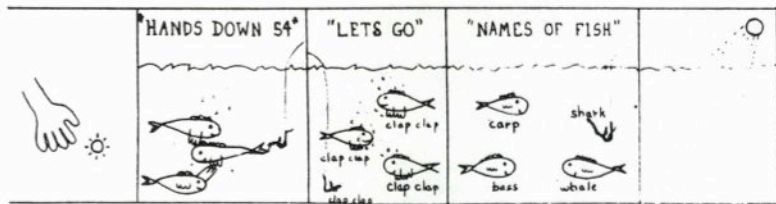
④ → → → → → → → → → → → NOBODY'S PERFECT! We not only often miss noticing important effects, we also misinterpret effects we do notice. Since we all make mistakes, nothing made or done or created by people can be guaranteed to be free from imperfections; we must therefore

⑤ → → → → → → → → → → → QUESTION EVERYTHING that people make or say or do (including all these statements and everything you make or say or do) testing each — whenever possible — with our own experience, our own deepest feelings, our own conscience (con = completely, together; science = knowing) — for these are our only criteria for what is good & true — our own deepest sense of reality. Superficial feelings are unreliable: feeling good or feeling elated can come from successful accomplishment of any goal — even murder. But by digging deep and ascertaining as best we can the short & long term effects on self, on others & on environment and by carefully examining any inconsistencies, we get closer to the truth of each matter. Simplicity is another key.

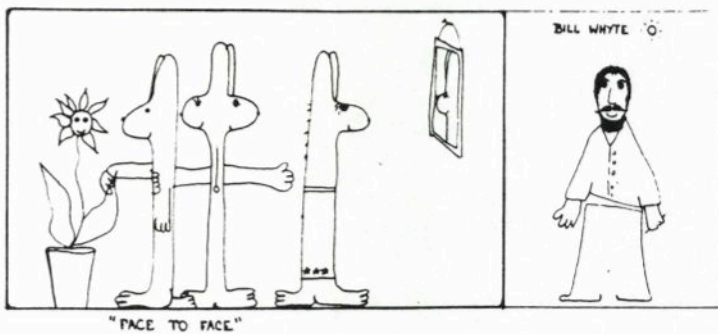
⑥ CONDITIONS WHICH FOSTER LIFE AT ITS BEST provide enough SPACE & TIME to permit growth at our own rate, to allow and encourage us to make over into our own everything we get from others (including all these points) and to grant the freedom to decide for ourselves what is of value to us, which way we will go, what we will do, what we won't do, and when. But we also need limits — because too much time & space can be as troublesome as too little — LIMITS which constantly ask: DOES THIS FOSTER LIFE? — limits which focus our efforts on ACHIEVABLE GOALS, limits which provide enough CLOSENESS & enough SOLITUDE (time to ourselves) — and limits which provide for the giving and receiving of NON-POSSESSIVE LOVE. We also need the consistency & security of enough REPETITION and the stimulation & vitality of enough VARIETY, DISCOVERY, NEWNESS. And obviously we need to be sensitive to the difference between "enough" & "too much" and to know how to be appropriate under varying circumstances & situations. we need to have our WHOLENESS recognized by others. we need to TOUCH & BE TOUCHED. we need to LISTENED TO, to be UNDERSTOOD & ACCEPTED. So we also need to LISTEN & to make an honest effort to UNDERSTAND & to ACCEPT OTHERS. we need to know that we are SIMILAR to & DIFFERENT from others at all levels of our being, our wholeness. \neq We need to know the internal & external EXPERIENCES, REACTIONS, & VIEWPOINTS of OTHERS. And since the ENCOURAGEMENT & STIMULATION of OTHERS is helpful to us, we would all do well to offer it to each other.

⑦ GROUPS BECOME IMPORTANT @ when we recognize that it takes time & effort to build the kind of TRUST relationship that makes possible the kind of deep sharing we all need, (a) when we recognize that by acting in concert we can greatly magnify our individual puny efforts, (b) when we discover that it is easier to believe in our own potential when we belong to (or be long with) a group that demonstrates by its actions that it believes in our potential too, (c) when we realize that our world will be so much much better off — for all of us — when everyone is living nearer their full potential — and that the effort it takes for us to grow and to help others to grow is well worth it.

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THE GAME WITHIN THE GAME



⑧ STARTING A NEW GROUP TAKES SPECIAL CARE — whether a temporary group of short duration or a group with long life expectancy.

① PAY ATTENTION TO DISPELLING ANY TENSION which may be present. Games can be useful here — especially if games used can be started as people arrive and can be joined easily by later comers and involve people quickly and fully. (If an object or objects must be handled in some way involvement is often quickly gained.) Mixing games that encourage short bursts of high energy output are also good.

② BEGIN GETTING ACQUAINTED SOON but try to wait till total group is present. If group totals more than 15, consider subgroups of 8 to 12. Start by sharing "safe" information: names, activities, likes & dislikes, etc. Something besides names alone is always needed to allow time to absorb each name and to provide additional "hooks" to hang it on.

③ ESTABLISH GROUND RULES — among which should be these:

- SIT IN CIRCLES in sharing sessions so all can see each other easily & listen fully.
- SPEAK ONE AT A TIME — briefly, honestly, personally & appropriately.
- MAKE SURE EACH SPEAKER IS FINISHED BEFORE ANOTHER BEGINS. Don't interrupt.
- LET THOSE WHO HAVE NOT SPOKEN SPEAK BEFORE YOU SPEAK AGAIN.
- LISTEN & TRY TO UNDERSTAND each speaker. Whispering with a neighbor or daydreaming while anyone is speaking to the group is like turning your back on the whole group.
- STAY AWARE & WATCH FOR ANY SIGNS OF DISCOMFORT OR BOREDOM in the group. Checking out our suspicions may avert an explosion later on. If any of us are hurt or angry or bored or scared or troubled, we need to be able to say so — out loud. Just saying, "I'm uneasy about what is happening" or "I'm confused about where we're going (or what we are doing)" (or whatever) can often clear the air.
- NEVER TELL ANYONE WHAT THEY ARE THINKING or FEELING or WHAT THEIR MOTIVES ARE. If you suspect negatives, request clarification. If you must act before clarification, it pays to act only on the most positive assumptions you can imagine.
- CLEAR UP ANY TENSION or DISCOMFORT as soon as possible. Try never to go to bed with a grudge — so all can start each day with a clean slate.
- ELIMINATE NEGATIVE ENERGY — it destroys much needed TRUST. Put-downs, mockery, accusations, sarcasm, rejection and even teasing can destroy in a few seconds many hours of patient trust-building. Bridges between people are built by carefully cementing each stone in place — but if you throw stones at people, they tend to build walls — not bridges.
- ENCOURAGE FREQUENT EXPRESSIONS of WORTH & ENCOURAGEMENT. Positive energy builds.
- RESPECT EACH INDIVIDUAL'S PSYCHIC SPACE. Never tell anyone what to do & never do anything to anyone without their permission. And especially NEVER gang up! If something needs doing that you can't do yourself, say that. Perhaps suggest possible ways of doing it, but always leave final decisions on methods to the doer.
- NEVER HELP ANYONE UNLESS THEY NEED and WANT HELP.
- CIRCULATE. Make frequent significant contacts with each other group member. Avoid cliques. Avoid glaring contrasts in the amount of one-to-one time you spend with different group members. EVERYONE is IMPORTANT, VALUABLE & deserves your attentive energy.
- ESTABLISH SOME SORT of SIGN so anyone with something IMPORTANT enough to warrant INTERRUPTING whatever is happening can quickly get the GROUP'S ATTENTION. Consider a raised "i" sign (a fist with pinky pointing up) which quickly says "I have something IMPORTANT enough to INTERRUPT" — with others responding by immediately ceasing all activity and raising an "o" sign (curved fingers on thumb) & directing their attention toward the "i" sign so all know quickly who wants to speak. (An "o" is symbolic of emptiness & receptivity.)

BIG WIND is best played with one chair each for all but one. The chairless one picks any category and says **A big wind blows for everyone [wearing blue]** then those in that category must leave the chair they've been warming and get a new one. The extra person also tries to get a chair in the scramble. Whoever is left chairless determines the next category and repeats **a big wind blows for...** Continue as long as your creativity, energy & interest last. [And don't limit yourselves to colors or even to things worn.]

PETECA (pe-tay-ka) comes to us from Brazil and can be played by any number. When a group gets too big, you'll know it - so split up when it does. You can use a small, softish ball or a wadded-up piece of paper, but my favorite is one of those inflated origami boxes made from my junk mail. Every time any one hits it up twice in succession or everytime it hits the floor, the whole group [chanting the alphabet together] must start again from **A**. Chant one letter for each hit. Shoot for **Z** [or the moon].

FIRE ON THE MOUNTAIN is a delightful morsel from Africa. It's another game that is best with an odd number [but it **can** be played with 2 extra people in the center]. Form a double ring of people facing the center. Each pair must be attached; the outer ring put hands on shoulders of the one in front. The extra person[s] in the center becomes the leader or conductor or who determines the rhythm & tempo for the outer ring of dancers [who will move counter-clockwise - or at least, all in the same direction]. The inner ring is the orchestra and follows the clapping lead of the conductor. Whenever the conductor is ready, hands are raised high over head and hollers, **Fire on the mountain**, then runs immediately to stand in front of any orchestra member with hands still in the air. All orchestra members must keep their hands high till the conductor or a dancer from the outer ring comes in & stands in front so they can attach to their shoulders. The person [or two] remaining unattached becomes the new conductor for a new inner ring of clappers for a new outer ring of dancers. And on and on into the night [You might also encourage imaginative **African** dancing - or at least wild abandon.]



If anyone can find anywhere in my text an indefinite **he** or **she** or **her**, **his** or **hers** that should include both sexes, please let me know. I generally try to avoid them altogether by using **they**, **them** or **theirs**.

THE NEW GAMES BOOK is full of other goodies. Be sure to try **KNOTS**, **PRUI** & the **LAP GAME**. It is also the best book I know of on games leadership. Have fun and love each other!
REX

ELBOW TAG is best in a gym or outdoors, but try it wherever you like. If your numbers are even, everyone pairs up with one elbow hooked into partners elbow. If the **chasee** hooks on your free elbow, release your partner, because that person just became the **chasee**. When the **chaser** tags the **chasee**, their roles reverse. [The **chaser** is not supposed to hook on - except in cases of exhaustion.] If your numbers are odd, have one three-some with a free elbow at each end & a double hook in the middle. This is my all-time favorite tag game. It's full of surprises.



- (D) BUILDING TRUST IS ESSENTIAL. We surround ourselves with walls, fences and defenses. We set a variety of limits for various situations: "STRANGERS - KEEP OUT", "BEWARE OF DOG", "NO SOLICITORS". The greater our fears, the more our defenses. Sometimes we trust a franchised chain food service more than we trust a policeman. Functioning becomes extremely difficult when trust is absent, when people hide behind their defenses, it is hard to tell if we can trust them or not. We need to know WHERE OTHERS ARE AT. If we sense that others have the same feelings & weaknesses we have, we tend to trust them a little. If we sense others trust us, we tend to trust them more. If we sense others not only care about us but also care about all people, we can trust them even more. The more doors & gates we open for each other the greater the trust - open, honest sharing of our own private reality. If such sharing becomes scary for anyone, consider doing it anonymously. Start from the farthest, safest gate - perhaps sharing joyful childhood experiences & early family relationships first - since the past is usually safer than the present. Talk about good times & hard times, childhood dreams & aspirations, significant people in your past, spiritual roots & growth, important periods of transition in your life. In the present, focus on what bugs you, what you do for kicks, things that make you happy, important concerns, your family, church, community & world relationships, your immediate goals, anticipated upcoming events, your present hopes for yourself & for the future of the world.
- (E) HONEST UNDERSTANDING IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN AGREEMENT - when our goals are learning & trust - so listen deeply and actively.
- (F) THE GREATER THE DIVERSITY of backgrounds in a group, the MORE CARE is NEEDED in COMMUNICATION. Always expect others to do and say things much differently from what you are used to, and accept those differences without ridicule or belittling. When the slightest suspicion of ambiguity exists, encourage each other to offer SPECIFIC EXAMPLES of ACTUAL EVENTS that may clarify that ambiguity or confusion. It is also good to spend time - early on - talking about the different meanings that various abstract words or symbols have for diverse group members.
- (G) VARIETY & BALANCE in the ACTIVITIES & GROUPINGS are as important as is EACH MEMBER'S COMMITMENT to PERSONAL GROWTH, to the INDIVIDUAL GROWTH of EACH OTHER MEMBER, to the FUNCTIONING of the GROUP as a WHOLE, & to a HEALTHY GROUP RELATIONSHIP to the WORLD.
- (A) WORK in the community - whether for internal maintenance or for external production - must be accomplished smoothly - using a minimum of authoritarian methods. It is very healthy for group members to do it all themselves - hiring others to do it as little as possible. Doing it with joy & playfulness certainly helps.
- (B) PLAY with abandon and intensity (but with no compulsion to win - if games involve any competition) & while caring fully for each other can do much to stimulate growth & learning, to contribute to each person's wholeness, and to build solid relationships within group.
- (C) SILENCE is a good starter for any activity (meals, work, play or any gathering). It gives time to CENTER OURSELVES individually and as a group - this is a process of bringing into awareness that inner core of humanness we all possess, our feelings of strength & weakness and of our ONENESS with ALL LIFE - as well as giving time to shift gears from what we were doing to what we are now about to do together. Consider starting like this the first time: "we don't really need to know a person well to be able to show we care, we pick up hitch hikers; we hold doors open for strangers. Let's show each other we care by joining hands in silence and concentrating on why we are gathered here, on what our relationships within this group are & what we would like those relationships to be, and on what each of us can do personally to make those relationships valuable for us all."



⑨ D SHARE TOGETHER OFTEN is in a variety of ways.

- OUR DEEPEST HOPES & CONCERNS about our relationships within the group and as a group to the world and to the future.
- OUR UNCOMMON EXPERIENCES if related to a topic of common interest — in order to extend our own necessarily limited experiences.
- SPECIFIC OCCURANCES that led to understandings or insights & also the CONCLUSIONS or GENERALIZATIONS we draw from them — but only if they have a SOLID EXPERIENTIAL BASE. (avoid vague generalities, speculation, & second-hand information.)
- OUR REACTIONS to a COMMON EXPERIENCE — because our varied backgrounds tend to affect both our PERCEPTIONS & our REACTIONS to the same event in many different ways. This is especially helpful to the persons who did leadership functions.

⑤ SHARE OFTEN as a group WITH OTHERS OUTSIDE — it can greatly strengthen inner bonds. Sharing our abundance directly with those in need can lift you to heights.

⑥ CELEBRATE COMMONLY-HELD VALUES joyously.

⑦ VARY GROUP SIZES & MIX as appropriate, aiming for a balance between intimate and larger group experiences with a variety of combinations.

⑩ INNER-DIRECTED DOING is so valuable for growth, OPPORTUNITIES MUST ALWAYS EXIST for any group member to initiate and lead a group activity — within these limits:

- PERMISSION of the group is needed if the activity will take more than a brief portion of the groups time.
 - POSSIBLE RISKS MUST BE KNOWN — particularly in terms of broken bones, exertion, embarrassment, or boredom.
 - QUALIFICATIONS or PREPAREDNESS of the LEADER should be known.
 - DEGREE or TYPE of PARTICIPATION EXPECTED or ALLOWED should be known, i.e., spectator or active participant, creativity or obedience, allowed or required.
- MAKE ALL MEMBERS ALWAYS AWARE of such opportunities.

♥♥♥ I-Y-Q ♥♥♥ U-R-O-K ♥♥♥ YEARN/EAT ♥♥♥ ISLE of VIEW ♥♥♥

♥ I LOVE YOU. That love is the bond between us all. It exists. It is natural. It is real! Once ^{we} you've experienced it, we can no longer contain it; we feel a compulsion to spread it. What is really crazy about our present predicament is that we actually do have what it takes to resolve it — to live together harmoniously & joyously — but we have trouble seeing it or believing it. We have forgotten what it is like to feel really good. We bang our heads against the wall because it feels "good" when we stop. Because we feel relatively better, we think we feel good. When the aspirin or the alcohol or the constant cup of coffee hides our pain, we think we feel good. We have lived so long in our barricaded basements, we have forgotten the joy of sitting fearlessly in a sunlit room feeling the delight of a gentle summer breeze coming thru the open door.

If we believe, we can BELIEVE. We can CALL FORTH the BEST in OURSELVES and the BEST in the OTHERS we come in contact with. Every contact is an opportunity. But waste no energy in worry — we will make many mistakes. But that should never stop us from DOING OUR VERY BEST every hour of every day — or from treating every decision we make (even the little ones) as tho it were a MATTER OF LIFE OR DEATH. It is — so let's always decide for LIFE and let it show in all we do wherever we go. HELP ALL LIFE to GROW! □

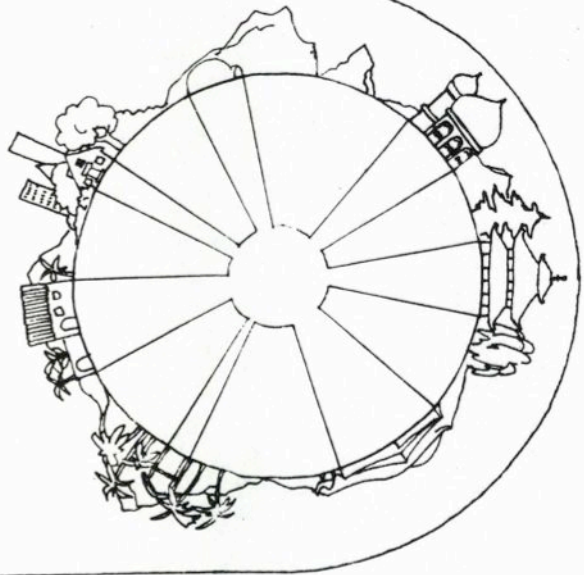
May we all somehow find enough delight in serving life that that can be our sole (soul) endeavor.

Rex ♥

[the + in my heart is for + truth and it is a plus sign for positive energy]

international

THE ARK: An Experience of a Non-violent Society



Edited by Vince Zager

Self-sufficiency and simple living - nonviolent social action - spiritual unity. Many communities aspire to one or another of these ethics. There is a community in southern France which has been putting them into practice for some thirty years now. The Ark is the inspiration of Lanzo del Vasto, a leader of the nonviolent political movement in France, poet, writer and spiritual teacher. Del Vasto was inspired by Mahatma Gandhi during the forties while traveling in India. He chose to form a community as a statement of commitment to personal and political change through total adherence to the philosophy of nonviolence.

From this radical assumption comes a clear set of agreements about the community's purpose and style of life. The nonviolent practice is all-encompassing, defining their total relationships with each other, the community's structure and subsistence economy, and the Ark's ties with the outside world - which includes political intervention.

From recent issues of the community newsletter, *Nouvelles del L'Arche*, and from some brochures that were sent to us, we have attempted to give you an understanding of the community, focusing on the ways in which it is unique.

The Companions of the Ark want to show that it is possible to attain full human and spiritual fulfillment, and even to give a light to the world, through simplicity of means and way of life, *technically under-developed*, accessible to the poor. Already many among them are working in the poor countries of the Third World and are studying the possibility of realizing communities of this kind in these countries.

Their economic independence is not an isolationist will; in fact, the Ark could be much more independent if it were not coordinated with another demand, less apparent but equally fundamental: service to others. An important part of the strength of the Community is dedication to relations with the outside under the most varied of forms: receiving visitors and friends, correspondence, lecture tours in France

and abroad, formation and support of groups of friends living in the city, training persons in non-violence, support or formation of non-violent demonstrations.

For the Companions of the Ark this way of life is a permanent direct non-violent action. Through the testimony of a life that is simple, natural, industrious, fraternal and within the reach of all, they demonstrate the possibility of a society without violence. In a society based on competition, the artificial multiplication of needs and the search for profit or *the good life*, violence and constraint will always be necessary in some form to defend the *just interests* of some. But if a few people renounce wealth and agree to procure by themselves the essential needs of their family, they form a society which can live and maintain itself without violence or the exploitation of the weak. The happiness of these persons gives birth to no covetousness. It is accessible to anyone, but even more so to the poor and to the workers.

What is more, this economic independence assures complete liberty in relation to established powers. Asking of it neither salary, advantage or protection, they may all the more freely organize the eventual disobedience to an unjust or dishonorable law.

PRACTICAL ASPECTS

The Community groups together married and single men and women living directly from the labor of their hands. The men work mostly in the fields and workshops, the women in the gardens, at housework, and in the spinning and weaving workshops. In a country like France, where a poor harvest is a worse menace than poverty, the *Companions of the Ark* have chosen to live in a poor and abandoned region on the Escandorgue plateau. They work to assure themselves of food, their children's education and initiation into various occupations.

Whole wheat bread is baked in the oven following traditional methods. The fields and gardens give grains, fruits and vegetables; the farm provides milk, eggs and cheese; the workshops provide furniture and cloth. Basic necessities are thereby satisfied on the spot without the aid

of large technical organizations. This independent economic will is certainly the most apparent character of daily life at the Ark. It is not realized in an absolute fashion but remains a subject of research, a constant direction.

Definitive entry into the Community is sealed by vows of which the first words are *We vow to give ourselves up to the service of our brothers, which begins with the work of our hands in order to at least burden no one, in order to find for ourselves and for others a way out from the miseries, the abuses, the problems of the century...*

This life is, of itself, a school of non-violence. All important decisions are reached through unanimity of the avowed Companions. This supposes an effort upon oneself to free oneself from personal opinion and accede to a sufficiently evident truth for the sake of the agreement of all. When unanimity cannot be obtained, we rather remain silent together, letting the heat and fever calm itself; we pray, we meditate, and if necessary all fast until the light capable of uniting us surges forth.

LEADERSHIP

To get an idea of the style of leadership that Lanza del Vasto presents, we excerpt from an interview;

At our community near the Larzac, we are more than 130, counting the children - and not counting all the guests. Too many. Even 50 is too many - because of the need to keep in friendly communication with everyone. In that particular community, we are mostly Roman Catholic, but quite open to people of every religion. We do not forget what we owe to the Hindus. And in our community in Morocco, the majority are Moslems. There, for seven years, Christians and Moslems have lived together, though such a thing was considered impossible. In all our communities, each one is faithful to his or her tradition and tries to keep it in purity and beauty, while remaining open to the tradition of others, trying to understand. There is no discussion, but there are shared readings of books considered sacred by the various traditions. We look for the great beauty that is always there.

Of course, we often see young people trying to start communities that fade after a few months or years. Community is impossible without certain prerequisites. There must be a religious or philosophic background. There must be leadership and agreed rules. There must be a profound sense of sacrifice. Nonviolence must be the practice in daily relationships. Of course, there are quarrels, but if we cannot settle them in our own home and our own community, how can we bring peace in the world? Every day we have the chance to work out our frictions and make peace among ourselves.

One necessity for a successful community is a sense of dignity and beauty. In our communities, great care is given to work with stone and wood, to making a door or table a joy to the eye.

In any nonviolent community, one must practice voluntary poverty. If you become attached to goods, you will have to defend them or have others defend them. So poverty is a crucial ornament of the spirit. Have few things, only necessary things, but make them beautifully, taking the necessary time. Get rid of the rubbish produced by machines.

At the end of each year - for us that means the Feast of St. John the Baptist - our rule requires us to give away everything that hasn't been spent. We give it to projects where there is need in different parts of the world. But we would prefer to have no money at all.

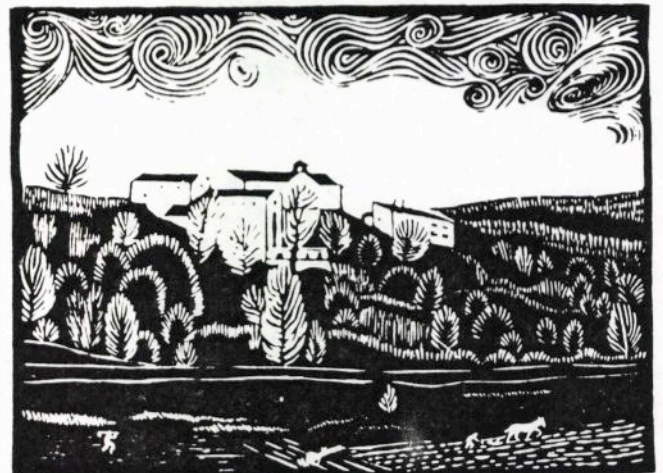
And learn how to celebrate. Keep religious ceremonies and feasts. For every day of work, have an hour preparing for the next feast. Make drawings and decorations, poetry and songs for the next feast. In all the workshops and in the fields, prepare for the feast. Let it be magnificent, joyous and serious, as well.

Keep moments for meditation. Record the reasons for our living together. Work for unity. And enjoy.

NONVIOLENT JUSTICE

Obedience is due first to the rules and disciplines, and second to the leaders who command and counsel. But it never diminishes the personal responsibility of the one who obeys.

No sanction exists, but each person has sworn to repair and compensate all faults, publicly if the fault is known, in secret if known only to the person. If a Companion commits a grave injustice, the witness to it must point it out to that person. The witness seeks punishment only if the person refuses to recognize the error and make up for it. Such is the vow of responsibility and co-responsibility.



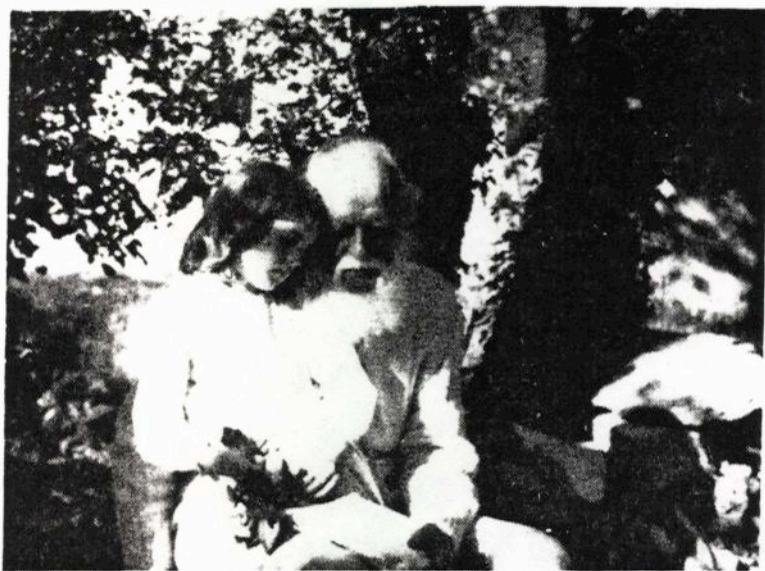
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BEHAVIOR CODE

Some of the following seems to indicate that there are a fair number of stringent norms being practiced daily at the Ark.

Nobody wears any jewels or rings except the golden *alliance* which is given to the following generations with fidelity and the betrothal silver ring which goes to the future fiancée.

The children must be clad like their parents above all during the feast days. They must be led at the communal meal, at the prayer, at the service, only if they have been taught to not cry, jump, run and molest everyone with their caprices.

Shoes must be taken off on entering the common room which is also a meditation and prayer, silence or music room. One must not enter with brutality. One must bring neither noise nor disorder.

Everybody must arrange what was disturbed and clean

what was dirtied. We must look at the cleanness of the close surroundings. Neither dirty plates nor food remains must be taken to the kitchen or in the plates.

The parents must prevent the children from letting their toys or bicycles remain in the courtyard, no the porch or on the staircases.

NONVIOLENT POLITICAL ACTION

The Ark presents itself as the experience of a society where all aspects of personal and social life are organized following the principles and methods of nonviolence. Through this permanent action it constitutes a center of formation and teaching which radiates throughout the entire world through its already mentioned points of liason. In these relations with the outside, the struggle against injustice takes on a special importance. Every companion is vowed to be *ready on call at all times for the defense of justice with the arms of justice*.

The first action of this kind (a twenty day fast against the

NONVIOLENT ECONOMY

The people of the Ark have translated their values to defining the way they see the elements of a nonviolent economy. Having a list of elements in this fashion then clearly indicates the ways in which agreements can lead to essential commitment mechanisms that are so important in sustaining community and its structures. These are a summary of the elements;

In the light of our intention to rid our lives of the Spirit of Profit and Play, major cause of injustice and violence, it will come as no surprise:

That we endeavor to draw our living directly from the earth by the work of our hands, avoiding, as far as we can, the use of machines and money;

That we endeavor not to violate and break the link God and nature have put between what the mouth asks for and what the two hands can produce;

That we reduce our desires to our needs, and our needs to the extreme so as to free ourselves from excessive toil;

That we sell the surplus of what we produce for ourselves, but never buy in order to sell or profit from mere exchange;

That we pool what resources we have that can serve the community, and give up the rest; but our communities remain poor and do not accumulate more than is needed for the year's supplies;

That as far as we can, we observe the golden rule never to pay anybody and never to let anyone pay us;

That we exploit no human, even if one asks us to, and refuse to become the accomplices of any profiteer, even if it might be convenient. For in the

same measure as we are dedicated to service, we refuse servitude;

That we try to exploit nothing at all, neither animals nor plants nor the earth. We work the land, we let live, we accept natural losses, we help to live - because one always ends up treating humans in the same manner as one treats nature;

That in the practice of any craft, we are less concerned with the quantity of the product than with its quality, and less concerned with the product than with the craftsman;

That we do not consider work and craftsmanship as something external to personal and spiritual life, but consider the work of the hands as a sacred act. It is also an act of life. So we want it to be interesting, varied, harmonious, strengthening, instructive, and edifying;

That the lowest and most menial tasks are shared by all, and foremost by our leaders, so that no one is demeaned or burdened by them;

That every craftsman among us knows and carries out one's craft from beginning to end and makes the whole object, from the raw material to the final decoration. Nobody is harnessed to a fragmentary task or makes less than the whole object for fear of becoming less than human.

In part, the community then is engaged in finding responses to such difficult concerns as:

- Can there be an economy that lends itself neither to oppression nor abuse?
- Can authority be nonviolent, neither dependent on force nor carrying privileges?
- Can there be nonviolent medicine? A nonviolent diet?

tortures in Algeria in 1957) made evident one fact: persons who cannot or choose not to orient towards the experiences of nonviolent life in the Ark may, however, engage in nonviolent combat on a precise problem or for a predetermined period. Thus was born Non-Violent Civic Action in which the Companions, Friends and Allies of the Ark join with all those, believers and non-believers, who wish to try nonviolence in the framework of present society to solve the most urgent problems.

Non-Violent Civic Action was consecrated by the 1958 invasion of the first atomic energy plant in France, prelude to a campaign directed against nuclear armaments. There was the campaign against internment camps of Algerians considered *suspicious* during the Algerian war. Later, there was the solidarity action with the non-cooperators during the Algerian war who were volunteers for civil service on the battlefield. This became the action for the statute for Conscientious Objectors.

There has been continuous action against nuclear arms in

France and also against the atomic energy plants and dangerous chemical plants. Another form of action has been the fasts held to draw attention to and raise money for the Bangladesh refugees and the starving people of the Sahel in Africa. At the present time, the Companions of the Ark are engaged with the 103 peasants in their attempt to stop the extension of the military camp on the Larzac plateau in France which threatens to make a desert of their productive farms.

How can all this harmonize itself with family life, childhood crises, the frequent holidays, the daily practice of singing and dancing? Only a stay or at least a visit to the Community can give an exact idea.

If interested, please write: **La Communaute de l'Arche, 34-260 le Bousquet d'Orb, FRANCE**

There is also a group of people attempting to create a community based on the style of the Ark in North America. Write: **Vinoba Farm, Weare, N.H. 03281**

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CONFERENCES

☆ **Holistic Health INTERFACE** (non-profit) Now in its third year, Interface continues to create educational programs to assist people in making the necessary transition from a mechanistic, reductionist world to a more holistic, organic, dynamic one. For info and reservations: INTERFACE 63 Chapel St., Newton, Mass. 02158

Nov. 9 - Dec. 4 Conscious Living, Conscious Dying New rituals for the rites of passage. A 6 week course \$45

Nov. 13, 14, 18 Death, Rebirth, LSD, and the Cosmic Game 2 lectures and a workshop by Stanislaw Grof \$40

Nov. 19 - 20 Guided Imagery and Music. Technique and philosophy \$35

Dec. 2 - 4 Buckminster Fuller *Visions of Now* evening program \$5

Education Tomorrow: Dare to be a child, and realize your own genius 9 - 5 \$25

World game now: How to make our world work 9 - 5 \$25

Dec. 10 An introduction to Bioenergetics An approach to personal growth which deals with the emotional and energetic processes.

☆ **Dharma Self-Help and Analytical CTR** Dharma Center is a year-old non-profit education corporation instructing and training people on life-style, on health, on development of the whole person. Fees include organic, vegetarian meals. For information contact: DS-HAC, RFD 113AA Shipman, VA 22971

Nov. 4 - 6 Massage Therapy \$80

Nov. 12 Ways of managing stress \$15

Nov. 18 - 20 Cycles of Life, Mid life issues. Deals with the confusion that often overcomes persons 35 - 55 \$80

Nov. 26 Stress Reduction for Couples \$25/couple

Dec. 2 - 4 Yourself and Health \$80

☆ **Another Place**, Rt. 123, Greenville, N.H. 03048 (603) 878-1510 or 9883.

Another Place is a conference and networking center. It is non-profit, with costs to participants on a sliding scale, based on ability to pay. Gatherings are communal, involving sharing of skills and work.

Fall Conferences

Nov. 18 - 20 Right Livelihood Business Conference - An exploration of how business can be a vehicle for personal growth and social responsibility.

Dec. 2 - 4 Opening the Heart for Couples - Through the use of Bioenergetics, psychodrama, mystic tradition, chanting, music, meditation, and laying on of hands guides couples to freedom of expectation and leads to new respect. Conference held at A.P., organized by Spring Hill Farm, Spring Hill Rd., Ashby, MA 01431 (617) 386-5622

Dec. 15 - 18 Social Healing Conference/ Winter Solstice Festival. Celebration and workshops, including networking, building new institutions, humane institutions, group process, and more.

☆ **School of Living**, P.O. Box 3233, York, PA 17402 (717) 755-1561. School of Living is a non-profit educational organization which publishes **Green Revolution**, as well as operating living-learning centers, and sponsoring conferences. Costs \$10 - 15/day. Partial scholarships available.

Nov. 10 - 12 Communal Living. Experiential Introduction to living on a rural commune. Workshops on government, legal organization, small scale industry, intimate relationships, education, and more. Held at Downhill Farm.

Nov. 17 - 20 Poetry Workshop with Judson Jerome. Submit sample of work and \$5.00. Write for information on low-cost tutorials. Held at Downhill Farm.

Dec. 1 - 3 Publish Your Own Book. Nuts 'n bolts from composing to marketing with experienced publishers in alternative and establishment publications. Held at Deep Run Farm.

Dec. 8 - 10 Anarchism. Sources of authority, natural and social law, diversity vs. melting pot, affinity groups, intentional families, community autonomy, communal government, consensus. Held at Downhill Farm.

☆ **Rowe Conference Center** is hosting the following conferences this fall. This is their 4th year dedicated to the faith that *life is one fabric, that developing wholeness of self is a road to healing society, that the political is not separate from the religious, and that the affirmation of life is central to all we do.*

Conference costs are on a sliding scale based on income and include 6 well-balanced and vegetarian meals. Conferees help with clean up. Morning yoga class available. Weekends are from 6:30 Fri. to 2:30 Sunday. For more information and reservations contact: RCC, Kings Highway Rd. Rowe, Mass. 01367 (413) 339-4216

Fall Conferences

Birth and Rebirth in the Lives of Women - Pat Schwartz and Cathy Ferry

Nov. 18 - 20 As women together we will share our experiences and/or fantasies of giving birth and connect them with re-birth in our lives. We will explore ways of extending our visions of midwifery into our lives as a whole. Physical birth can be seen as a metaphor for spiritual birth. All women are welcome. Patricia Schwartz, poet and feminist, directed the women's center of the Hartford Y for five years. Cathy Ferry, mother and teacher, has extensive group experience and has taught journal writing for four years.

Thanksgiving for Single People - Douglas Fir Wilson

Nov. 23 - 27 A gathering together of people for this holiday to create a family for five days. Relaxed and low key. Single parents are welcome with or without their offspring. A chance to pass the holiday with kindred souls. The cost is twice a normal weekend, reductions for more than one child are possible. Doug is director of Rowe Conference Center, Rowe Junior High Camp and is a Unitarian-Universalist minister. He has traveled round the world, hitchhiked 50,000 miles, backpacked the Appalachian Trail and been arrested five times for civil disobedience against the war.

Second Time Around - Marianne Simon and Tom Leamon

Dec. 2 - 4 For couples who have left a marriage and are entering a new relationship. Amidst warmth and support, we will explore ways to unload and learn from the past and celebrate and enhance the present. Dr. Simon has extensive experience leading workshops in values clarification, human relations, body movement and creative expression. She has danced with Merce Cunningham, taught drama, directed plays and is a folk singer. Tom Leamon, a book illustrator and portrait artist, has led workshops in Zen meditation, Sumi-e painting, values clarification and men's and women's issues.

Gestalt and Body Awareness - Peter Baldwin and Lynn Stanhope

Dec. 9 - 11 A workshop in opening to the love, fear, pain, anger and joy within ourselves and with others. Peter uses story, song and dreams to bring clarity to our awareness. Lynn shows us how to use our hands to release tension, ease pain, renew energy and bring us more in touch with our feelings. Peter Baldwin is a psychologist in private practice and teaches at Antioch. Lynn Stanhope is a potter, dancer and message therapist. They are the facilitators of the New Hampshire Gestalt Institute.

Burne, Hartford, Seth and You - Blaine Hartford

Dec. 16 - 18 Sorting through and sifting out thoughts from TA, personal power, reincarnation and what you bring to add. A personal growth and expansion weekend. Blaine Hartford, founder and director of the Niagara Institute, is in clinical membership with INTA. He is an accredited trainer with the Association of Creative Change in three tracks: personal growth, organizational development and group process.

☆ **Integral Urban House, Farallones Institute**, 1516 5th St., Berkeley, CA

94710 (415) 525-1150 G.Y.S.T. - Comprehensive Ecology - Appropriate Technology Class, taught by Stuart Leiderman. 4 week intensive introduction. Morning classes, afternoon tours and workshops, evening panel discussions. \$20/day or \$250 for entire course. Nov. 7 - Dec. 2. Write for details.

☆ **University Students Cooperative Association** will host a fall conference on the formation and development of Student Coops. The main focus is housing coops. The goals of the conference are to start new coops, help existing ones grow, and establish a regional coop organization for California. Write or call for details: Fred Guy; Education Coordinator, U.S.C., 2424 Ridge Rd., Berkeley, CA 94709 (415) 848-1936

GROUPS LOOKING

☆ **Earth Cyclers** is a non-profit corporation whose purpose is to research, develop, and demonstrate ways and means of producing and distributing food using methane, solar, wind, wood, and animal power rather than fossil fuels, chemical fertilizers, poisons, or other practices which damage the environment.

Earth Cyclers is buying 140 acres of farmland (80 tillable) and renting 320 acres of wooded pasture nearby. Income from the cattle operation and the woodlot is being used to pay land payments and rent.

The staff of 6 - 11 volunteers live on the farm and hold property in common. Members may own livestock, machinery, vehicles, etc. but all crops and other farm income are used to support the group or shared with others. Members are also expected to contribute at least half of their outside-work income to the living fund; the other half may be invested in livestock or tools, etc.

This year we are selling organic beef, firewood and Sioux Indian saddles, as well as doing outside farmwork for income. We are sharing wheat, potatoes, and *Wheat to Eat* booklets, and have the beginning of a food sharing club.

Persons wishing to join Earth Cyclers are required to be apprentices for 3 months and then fledgling members for the next 3 months before becoming permanent members. Members are expected to take managerial responsibility for part of the farm's operations as well as assisting other managers with their projects. Decisions are reached by discussion and consensus although we can resort to a vote in otherwise irresolvable problems concerning membership or property. Membership is limited to 12 persons.

We envision a decentralized world

society utilizing extended family farms, airships, electronic communication, local energy sources such as wind, water, solar, etc., and a sharing ecosytem. We would like to establish contact with people who share this sort of vision. **Earth Cyclers** Rt. 1 Box 9A Edwall, Washington 99008 (509) 236-2353

PEOPLE LOOKING FOR GROUPS

☆ I've been living in a suburban collective for some time and doing social work on a local public school (working with predelinquents). Now I'm looking for a change

My ideal would be to find a wilderness or rural school where I could live and work with committed people, grow and eat our own healthy food and utilize the outdoors as our learning environment while providing a supportive learning community for difficult students. (I still want to work with hard-ass kids - they have so much more energy than normal kids.)

I am not certified to teach but will soon finish a Masters in Experiential and Alternative Education and have 7 years Social Work experience. I have been doing challenging outdoors activities (Outward Bound type) with the kids I see now and I believe in the outdoors as a vehicle for personal, social, affective and cognitive growth.

My skills include sewing, crafts, gardening, foraging, cooking, home coning, a strong sense of organization and the ability to get things done. I have lots of energy and have been considering starting my own school, but I don't feel I have the experience or expertise to do so presently. I would like to connect with other people - if you know of a school like I've described, or are also interested in starting one, please let me know. Linda S. Cooper 1014 Montgomery Ave., Rosemont, PA 19010

☆ I need help to decide whether to join a community; if so, where? I am a retired university professor of Counseling, Education, and Psychology. I taught from 1935 to 1974. My lovely wife died in 1974 and I am very alone.

I am dedicated to world peace, reduction of starvation and poverty, and a much more participative system of education and culture. I am 77 years old, am in good health and have a good retirement income of \$1,000/month. I don't know what to do now - since rejection here at Kent State where I've been since 1946.

I think I'd like community living, but how about old age? I've looked through Reach and find little mention of elders. I'll be very glad for your suggestions. Dwight Arnold 1322 Chelton Dr. Kent, Ohio 44240

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☆Dear Friends, We are looking for an alternative community/school in which to teach. Currently we are doing graduate work in philosophy through Oxford University and the University of Michigan-Ann Arbor, but we are growing increasingly dissatisfied with teaching and living in these sorts of environments; we would like to join a serious, small school where we could teach philosophy in a broad sense of *philosophy*, where both students and other staff would be as eager to share it as we are, and where life could be lived in a broad sense of *lived* (incorporating both greater community and greater opportunity for solitude, arts, physical work, etc.). We've been referred to you by Jane Lichtman of NEXUS (Am. Asso. for Higher Education) who has seen the magazine **Communities: A Journal of Cooperative Living**. She suggested writing to you to find out both if the magazine is still in existence, and if in any case you knew of some school which would be the sort of thing we want. Any help you could give us would be very much appreciated. Sincerely, Anthony Weston, Jennifer Church, 1302S. Forest #3, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48104

☆We are looking for our spot on this planet; (mother 26, son 3, daughter 4) where we can grow in love, freely sharing with others as one large family.

We want to live in the country (mild climate) either on the west coast or Arizona or New Mexico where the children can live with animals; where we can grow our food organically and pray and sing together with spiritually high people. I love hard work and healthy living and seek an environment where we can build on past experiences for a brighter future - rich in love and good times.

I have taught Hatha Yoga and have assisted in childbirth classes and have been a professional dancer for five years and wish to continue dancing. Dancing is an integral part of my worship in attaining God-consciousness. I have many costumes (grass skirts, etc.) and would like to be free to use my talent for everyone's enjoyment.

I seek alternative education for my children and especially desire to be removed from the complexities of city life and away from cars and pollution.

If you are open to new people, please reply with information about your life-style, beliefs and directions in finding you, and about any other communities you may know where we would possibly fit in.

Write to: **Nicholas**, 608 165th Ave. NE, Bellevue, Wa. 98008

GROUPS FORMING

☆Are you concerned about developing alternative forms of energy? Let's build a solar house. (A small local company is interested.) Would you like to engage in organic farming? Learn or practice a skill or craft? Are you interested in some form of meditation? Would you like to become involved in consciousness-raising regarding social concerns, e.g. conditions in the local jail, housing for minorities...? Do you visualize the possibility of helping to train others eventually in non-violent strategies for social change? Are you interested in focusing on some of your personal patterns that inhibit your full potential in relationships with others? Could you awake to the value of spending time in studying together a larger *macro* analysis of the world situation?

The opportunity awaits your involvement. Santa Rosa (65,000) is approximately 50 miles north of San Francisco on Highway 101. Seven miles west toward Bodega Bay, where Alfred Hitchcock filmed *The Birds*, is the apple and berry growing town of Sebastopol (4600). Five miles out of town towards Bodega is 25 acres with clear title placed under the Northern California Land Trust.

The need is to find a core of compatible people of any age who are willing to build a Simple Living Community from *scratch*. They should be concerned with the oppressions of racism, classism, ageism, sexism, elitism, authoritarianism,... and be willing to work on them constructively with others - locally, nationally, internationally, and in their own house. It is hoped that someday soon this core will become a true Rural Live Center encompassing most of the ideas in the first paragraph, thereby enlarging the network of the Movement for a New Society (MNS), now evolving from the Philadelphia Life Center.

How do we begin? We could pool available resources and do our own building as soon as we get approval,... as Partners, as a Corporation, or some such. We could form a cooperative, and borrow the money. Do you have any ideas on this? We need them.

If you are interested in participating, send your names, address, present occupation, skills, financial resources available for help, willingness or ability to work, age, interests, ideas... to me or NCLT. Betsy Ederhardt, 615 Jefferson, Santa Rosa CA 95401 (707) 527-0372 or NCLT, 330 Ellis St. Rm. 504 San Francisco, CA 94102 (415) 771-5969

☆**Who We Are** We're presently a group of two building a community along the following lines:

1) We're not into religion but we're spiritual in our dealings with our human, physical and psychic environments, there is magic in our mountains, our neighbors, and ourselves. We're discovering many psychic forces at work around/inside us. We believe plants and animals and rocks all share living consciousness and we're not into establishing an artificial hierarchy. We're not holy (!) and we're suspicious of people who have all the answers.

2) Formerly campus radicals, we're no longer interested in *leading the masses*: elitist at best - nor are we escaping. We're more involved than ever: rather than sever our ties with the surrounding community, we wish to work with (not for, we're not missionaries) our Guatemalan neighbors in the local village. (Work/food cooperatives, friendships, etc.)

3) We want a community of caring, respecting, loving people. This requires ridding ourselves of many vestiges of our socialization; e.g. we encounter blatant sexism in this (central American) culture, and equally oppressive but more subtle and veiled sexism among north Americans; we're working on both. We're not into monogamy or possessiveness; we believe jealousy to be a painful waste of energy and monogamy a form of power and a source of dependency and insecurity. We find coerced relationships - whether in two-somes or groups stifling. We are learning the beauty of spontaneity and find calculated interactions and sophisticated *guises* difficult to deal with. We want things out in the open.

Dreams People to work, play, and eat communally, (though not necessary if community bond can be established otherwise) and sleep individually in small huts and/or communally in larger huts.

Searching means of combining community support - through agriculture, cottage industry: crafts, toolmaking, food processing, etc. with a village support system (cooperating with our neighbors to help us all) sharing skill, materials, markets, ideas.

Structured learning experiences for children and adults of our community and the village to integrate living/learning (to include learning to communicate in the Spanish language). Children to be reared communally.

Learning to tune into the magic in ourselves and in our rugged physical environment thru natural food, herbs, etc. Maybe set up a clinic for community and village to make us less dependent on a medical elite?

Where We Are* From highway and nearby village in central Guatemala, we walk uphill about a mile along a forest path strewn with orchids, philodendrons, and bromeliads to 110 acres of cleared and forested mountains, with several small clean streams. Climate is sub-tropical, cloud-forest, quite rainy - though sunny days happen plenty and are worth a wait; temperatures range from 50 to 85 degrees F, cool evenings and mornings. Since our arrival May 1976, our neighbors and visitors have helped us garden, as well as build one large house, a sleeping hut, and thatched chicken house, goat house, and workshop, (no electricity though we hope someday to generate electricity from the stream by the house; we do have indoor running water now!). We're gardening and orcharding organically (and composting) in hopes of soon becoming food self-sufficient (we're practicing vegetarians though we do eat meat occasionally wjth friends).

Organization We prefer to be loosely organized with people voluntarily doing what needs doing; decision making, resources and land ownership to be communal.

Since the land is paid for, we're beginning to grow our own food, and we build with indigenous materials, the cost of living is low; the most needed resource is people. If interested, write telling about yourself to : Tierra Del Ensueno Apartado Postal # 11 Salama B.V. Guatemala Centro America.

☆ **Proposal for a Communal Village** We would like to seriously propose a village community. These are the rough outlines of a concept that seems viable to us. As people respond from all over the country we can serve as a clearinghouse and information center. When the time seems right a general organizational conference will be held at a place centrally located. By that time, hopefully, the skeletal outline of structure and organization of the village will be forming in our minds, the conference will serve the main purpose of getting to know each other and the project to such a degree that location and other variables will be of secondary importance.

To begin the discussion, these are some of our thoughts.

1) A village would provide a large enough group to offer many skills, talents, and needs so that differently oriented persons would be welcomed. Our idea is a village of 50 - 100 adults and children.

2) We want a philosophy that is anti-war and anti-violence, strong commitment to faith and the need to live it in all facets of life, consensus decision making, willingness to resist taxes and unplug from death oriented enterprises, being spirit-guided

as opposed to rule-guided, and hospitality oriented.

3) One of the goals of this village is a special form of hospitality. Giving space and time to people in transition from various life situations.

4) Our desire is for a rural setting but perhaps near enough to a large town to offer a variety of opportunities such as employment or a market for services rendered by the village members.

5) As far as lifestyle, the voluntary poverty of the Catholic Worker is the ideal; but again, the idea of varieties of expression seems important. We would lean towards sharing major appliances, cars, etc., and granting money allotments to each family to spend as they see fit.

6) Money is, of course, along with work, one of the tender spots. We lean towards wages being put into a common pot and given out to families on a scale. Enough freedom to have personal money or holdings outside the village life would seem to be acceptable, especially at the beginning of this venture.

7) We would like to see low consumption and alternative energy as the goals to be worked toward. In fact, this would be underlying everything.

8) The *biggie* of course will be work. The practical would probably demand that the needs of the group are met first and then individual pursuits could follow.

9) Another huge question is that of what people bring into this village. We lean towards everyone coming into the project with an equal contribution. Some ways of achieving the equality idea but not excluding those without money are a general trust fund or community fund-raising activity.

These are some of our desires and thoughts. They are purposely incomplete and simple. We are attempting to be *starters* only. We would like others who are turned on to this concept to respond and state as specifically as they can what they would like to see. We anxiously await your input. Al Crowell and Cathy Cunningham 2130 Peterson Lane, Ukiah, CA 95482

☆ Are you interested in helping to establish a maximum cooperative community? A career, a lifetime of living with committed co-ops, is at the heart of this 100 family adventure. It resembles an Israeli Moshav. Not a commune.

At first, the co-op community can engage in co-op production of homes, foods, recreation, health, education and much else. It becomes a consumers co-op too.

Above all, the co-op community is of supreme worth, because the members

cultivate their common cause instead of competition. A co-op environment develops the best that is in us instead of the worst. Not greed but need.

Obviously, those who **seek** for co-op community are of high character and upright conduct, but not *straights*. The co-op principle of **open membership** is a structure with no doors that can close. But, *birds of a feather do flock together*. We want solar heat, compost waste, pedestrian travel, etc.

If you are a **seeker**, would you be happy with others who have these qualities? Some skill in building and/or farming. Simple, not luxury living. Pragmatic and experimental attitude. Able to achieve consensus without temper. Energetic, not a drone. Monogamous in sex. Learn the ideology of a co-op society. In general, a *peace church* type of person. Committed to creative purpose.

Do you seek a co-op career? 10 co-ops are needed to start this project. Write James Wyker 111 Bobolink, Berea, KY, 40403 (606) 986-8000

☆ Man, 56, healthy, wants to form a community in the Michigan Upper Peninsula. All members to live alone or share domiciles or land within ten miles of each other. Land there is affordable, and I have bought land and a mobile home.

Since the content of earlier issues of **Communities** indicates that some American psyches are not comfortable with some communes' philosophies of living, philosophies of child raising, lack of mental and physical privacy, and the gentle coercion of commune leaders, I propose a community in which each member will control his or her mix of privacy and communion, cooperation and self-reliance.

Outside the community's concern will be political, economic, and religious opinions of the members. Of concern to the community will be friendliness, acceptance, sharing, conserving land resources, and music and other creative expressions. There will be no permanent leaders -- only temporary leaders for specific activities or projects. We will each be responsible for providing our own necessities, but I expect that in addition to much other cooperation, we will help members develop money-making activities as necessary. This work and administration scheme has worked well for primitive groups. Hopefully, we will be one with the world. Please write: John Simmons, 5809 Lee, Downers Grove IL 60515

HELP WANTED

☆Dear Friends, We've gone for about three years without a vehicle, but now most of us feel we need a motorized vehicle of some type. So you know of any alternative vehicles - steam, electric, high mileage internal combustion vehicles, or people powered vehicles? If you do, please write to us. We may get some type of regular car for the time being (and would be interested in bargains) but are committed to a more enlightened choice. Tom Harman-Sun Rt. 3 Box 171 A, Spencer, W.Va. 25276 (Peacemaker 8/77)

☆I want to be a naturopathic doctor but lack the funds to go to school. I've met with no success in getting loans and am disqualified from other types of assistance.

So I'd like to set up a fund for naturopathic students. It would work as a brother-sister fund. After I graduate, I pay off my loan by sponsoring another student to naturopathy school. I feel the nature of the profession lends itself to sharing like this. Anyone interested should contact me at The Naturopathic Fund Assn. c/o Mary Jane Evans 130 Patrick Henry Drive, Williamsburg, Va. 23185 (N.W. Passage 8/77)

Amnesty International Launches Media Rights Campaign

Amnesty International has produced a set of 30 and 60 second public service announcements aimed at heightening public awareness of prisoners of conscience as well as AI's own efforts to free them. Every radio and television station in the country has been sent information on these announcements together with an order form. Whether these messages will ever be heard depends on the local support. Stations will only order and use them if they believe there is strong community interest in human rights and prisoners of conscience.

AI is asking all friends and supporters to contact local radio and TV stations and request that the public service announcements on Amnesty International and Prisoners of Conscience be ordered and played. For more information write: Amnesty International, 2112 Broadway, New York, NY 10023 (Fellowship 9/77)

WANTED: A TOWN

We are a group of people who want to move into a *run-down* town and create a co-operative community. The town should have older homes, available store fronts or work spaces, rural setting, and no prospects for *modern development*. Do

you know of any small non-prosperous town with houses for rent or sale? Write: Log Hollow, Rt. 1, Spring Green, WI. 53588 (Ooch Mt. News 8/77)

LAND

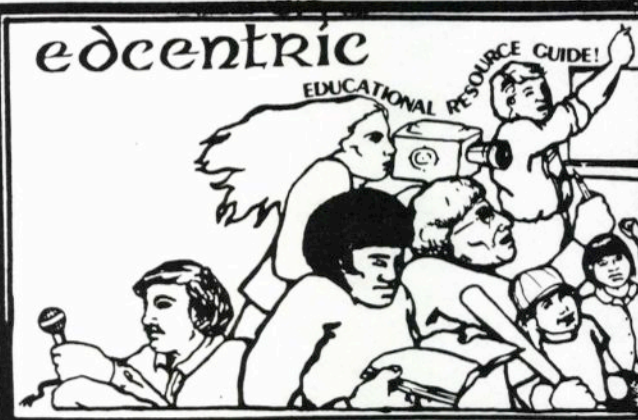
☆A neighbor? We've got a problem -- a \$27,000 problem. Also some very nice farmland, more than we can see being really needed by the community. We'd like to sell some of the excess farmland to some good neighbors -- people who would like to be close enough to share liturgical life, perhaps some work and produce (on a barter basis), perhaps co-operate in the development of water powered facilities (sawmill, grist mill, woodshop, etc.). What's available: a good house needing remodeling, (the present chapel house) with electricity, phone, gravity-fed spring water, easy access to road, school bus and mail; a 2½ acre level bottom, currently being reshaped to eliminate rain-water problems, excellent for large garden and/or pasture. Some or all of about 60 acres of hill land, which includes one quite large good field and a large tract planted last year in pine trees (ready to begin harvesting in about 15 years) and some

nice wood lands. Possibly a partial interest in the large cave, spring, attendant land and buildings needed for water powered facilities.

We're open to any number of possible combinations, provided the following conditions are met:

1. A large portion or all of the community's debt is thereby eliminated.
2. The spring remains available for Community use (we have a notion that a small baptistry/shrine might someday be built there) and protected from forms of development which would detract from its natural beauty. So... if any of this sounds interesting, we'd be delighted to hear from you. Or, if you know of someone who might be interested, and who seems suitable, please pass this on. Agape Community (Orthodox Catholic) Rt. 1 Box 171 Liberty Tn. 37095 (615) 536-5239

☆For Sale: land for community, 40 acres in West Virginia mountains. 4 houses. One modernized, all have electricity. Two barns, 4 wells, good farmland, pasture, woods, \$40,000. Write: Verda Reiter, RR #1, Box 525, Dunlow, W. Va.

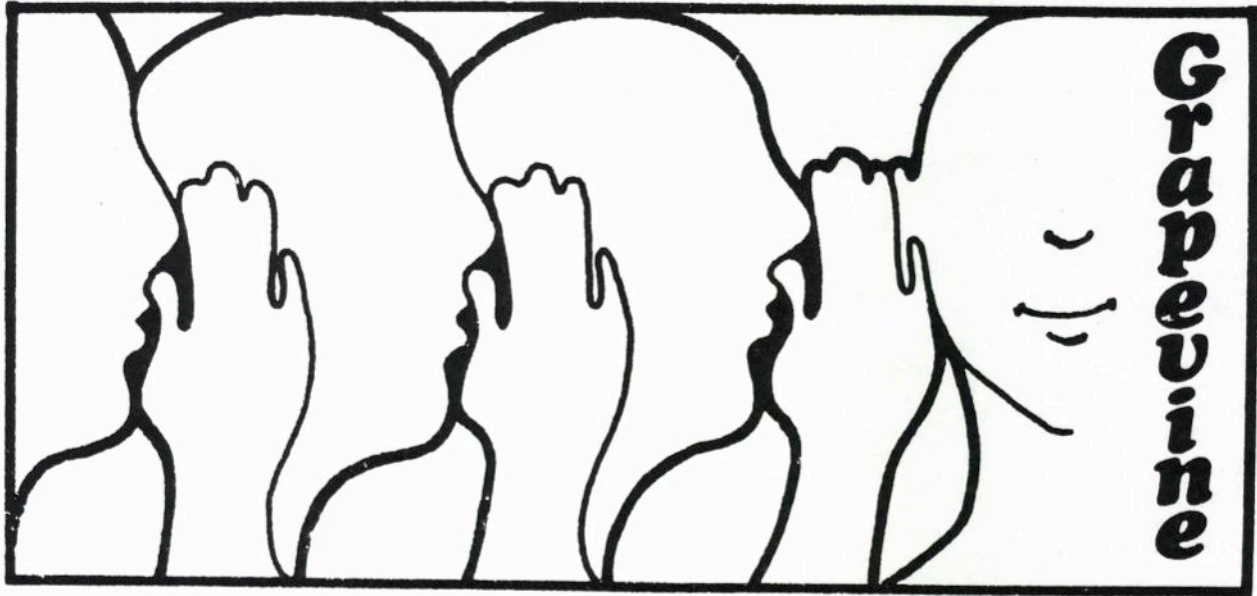


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☆The following is a letter written to the **Peacemaker**, (vol. 30, no. 7). Peacemaker, P.O. Box 4793, Arcata, CA 95521

Spurred on by the consciousness in **Food First** by Francis Lappe and Joseph Collins, our federation of food coops has been thinking of ways we could develop an economics and a politics to go with our diet for a small planet.

Our first small, but exciting step was to put a ten percent tax on sesame seeds (grown in Guatemala) and Brazil nuts (no surprise, from Brazil). Our immediate goal is to spend the money from the tax on gathering a very clear and specific story on how people who grow food are being exploited, how the land could be used for crops that would meet local people's food needs, and how the money we pay for those crops helps buy the gun powder for the very repressive governments of Guatemala and Brazil.

It is exciting that people in a broad based movement like food coops are ready to respond to the issue of high protein foods being imported from countries where people die of protein starvation. We have found that coop members are ready to take moral and political stands if we are free of abstractions and rhetoric in presenting them.

I would like to invite other coops and their federations to join in this work. Any contacts or information that would help us paint the picture as clearly as possible would be greatly appreciated. We would also welcome ideas on the next stage, which would be to find ways the money and energy could be used to change the exploitive patterns.

There are hard choices; like, should we buy sesame seeds grown in Texas that would cost more because of labor being less exploited there? Should we try to start a fund to buy land in Guatemala or Brazil where a worker-owned coop farm could be established? Or does it make more sense to give the money to groups which are working for an end to U.S. corporate and government intervention and local groups struggling against repressive governments?

We really would welcome help and suggestions on this project.

In hopes of peace and plenty for all,

Robin Sun

Growing Tree Coop 128½ Court St. Spencer, W. Va. 25276 (304) 927-4324 or 927-3227

☆ **Springtree Community**, a commune and alternative school, now in its 7th year, reflected on the changes another year has brought, in their newsletter. Their story is excerpted here.

There have been many changes here at Springtree in the past year. A number of members have left, and at present writing we have seven adult members, one student/intern and eleven children. (For the first time in our history, children outnumber adults.) We are a much smaller community than we were at this time last year when we had 28 people living here. We miss those who left, but in many ways life is simpler, quieter. There is less strife, better communication, more time and space to deal with each other's idiosyncracies and problems. The biggest difficulty we face as a smaller group is getting all the work done. We have not cut

back much on any of our ongoing projects -- we still have the dairy, chickens, garden, cars to fix, school and daily food preparation and household maintenance. The children have been tremendous help this past winter, especially with the kitchen work. Imagine two 13-year old girls (Lisa and Judi) serving up a dinner of quiche, salad and dessert for 20 people! The younger children are being phased in as kitchen assistants. On the weekly schedule about half the slots are filled by children.

With fewer members our labor *system*, if such a simple thing can be called a system at all, has been modified. There is still a weekly kitchen schedule but no labor sign-up. At our Saturday night meeting people mention any projects they have in mind for the week and solicit assistance. Every project needs a manager to make sure it gets going. After that it's pretty anarchic. Lately we have been using a new system for food processing. When Andy brings in the snow peas from the garden he calls everyone to come. We gather around the dining room table, and in 15 minutes the peas are topped and ready to blanch. It gives us a good feeling to tackle it all together, like that.

Another change is that we need less meetings. Saturday night we all get together, and that seems to take care of encounter, business, farm and garden meetings -- the works. Often the *meeting* continues as a social event late into the night, ending with a kitchen raid. There is no agenda any more, and there seems to be time for everything.

After the series of departures, we were at first reluctant to think about new

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members. We were too much hurt by the rejection of those who had left and not ready to open ourselves up to new people. We wanted to try the smaller community, and several thought we might have found the ideal size. Now we are cautiously looking for a few new members, perhaps two single people or a couple with (at most) one child. Kids we got! We don't want to increase much over our present size, but it would be good to have a few more adults to share the work and help with long-term projects.

Springtree Community, Rt. 2, Box 50-A-1, Scottsville, VA 24590 (804) 286-3446

☆ One of the effects of the Communities Conference held by Dandelion community last June (see **Communities #28**; last issue) was to raise consciousness about the needs of potential members with children. The following excerpts describe the shift in membership policy that has occurred in Dandelion and Aloe communities, both small, egalitarian (or Walden II-styled) communes.

Pappus, Dandelion's newsletter (vol. 3, no. 3) reports:

Last winter we had decided that we wanted to be ready to accept members with children by this fall, so this meeting was basically an attempt to decide, in the face of all our other commitments, whether or not we could do it. We all knew that it was an important decision, one that can't be changed after the children are living here, and we eventually took two meetings to air our hopes and fears and to talk about the changes that children would bring to the community.

The decision that came out of those meetings was a positive one, and included a strong affirmation of our commitment to communal childrearing. Now we are actively encouraging parents with a similar commitment to visit, first alone and then with their children, and to consider joining us.

We're also continuing to meet once a week to talk about our communal child-rearing program and how we would like to see it develop. We've asked for advice from other communities that are already raising children.

Dandelion Community, RR1, KOK 1 Zo, Canada

It would seem, tis the season to change child care policies. We've gotten drift of changes at Twin Oaks and Dandelion, plus changes at East Wind, too. In the new cooperative spirit, Aloe has shifted our child care policy too.

Our recent policy said that we were looking for children about the ages of our own, 5 to 10 years and that we strongly

preferred guardian[s] to visit first without the child and later with the child. At present we're interested in expanding our child care program to include younger children, infants also. We are more loose about having the child visit with the adult the first time round now too. We do have some concerns which we'll be closely looking at with folks applying for membership.

Our present physical plant is not geared towards infants and we'd need to change it if we added new members with young children. Our labor is only minimally available to facilitate those changes at present. But folks with energy and resources to help those things to happen are encouraged to get in contact with us.

Aloe Community, Rt. 1 Box 100, Cedar Grove, N.C. 27231

Aloe and Dandelion, along with the other communities mentioned above, are members of the Federation of Egalitarian Communities (see article in **Communities #25**).

☆ New England Foundation for Cooperative Living July-August Newsletter printed this brief background of the Coop Bank Bill. NEFCO c/o 8 Ashford St., Allston, MA 02134 asks supporters to contact their senators.

We're undercapitalized -- it's a constant complaint and overriding problem for almost every coop in New England. Let's face it, more capital would mean better inventory, more error leeway, smoother service and less worry at bookkeeping time. When a coop faces a crisis stemming from undercapitalization, the rest of us face a difficult moral decision -- do we bail out our fellow coop or do we

protect our own undercapitalized assets? It's a lousy situation, and choosing either alternative does not promote a healthy coop system.

The National Consumer Cooperative Bank Bill, S1010 was designed to provide coops with adequate capital through loans and with adequate technical assistance in such areas as financial management. The Coop Bank Bill, written by Ralph Nader and the Cooperative League, makes provision for eventual coop take over of the Bank by means of elected representatives. Special funds are set aside for high risk coops serving inner cities and/or low income members. These funds, called the Self Help Development Fund, will be administered by A.C.T.I.O.N.

At the moment, Shanti Fry -- the New England CCA Task Force Coordinator -- is looking for a contact person in each coop. A contact person would inform his/her coop about the Coop Bank Bill and ask members for help -- for example finding someone to write a support letter to the Senate Banking Committee.

As supporters of this bill, S1010, we can help change the capitalization picture for current and future coops. Politicians are sensitive to consumer issues. **Writing and visiting Senators really does affect votes.** During the House of Representatives vote last month (the Coop Bank Bill passed by one vote) New England's representatives voted overwhelmingly favorably. If we can repeat this success in the Senate by organizing support, we can make a huge contribution to the future of coops.

All interested people, including those who may only want additional information are requested to contact Shanti Fry at the Cambridge Food Coop, 661-1580/1581 or 661-2087

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COMMUNITY TECHNICAL SERVICES : 1ST ANNUAL REPORT

Community Technical Services [CTS] is a voluntary association of engineers and technical people devoted to helping alternative intentional communities with land use planning and with the design, construction, and maintenance of habitations. According to our Agreement and Procedures, we report annually on our activities of the past year. This is the first such report.

The member Associates of CTS are:

- Russel M. Adams (CTS Coordinator)
Professional Civil Engineer
1275 Union St.
San Francisco, CA 94109
Specialty: Sanitary and water engineering
- Edward B. Beattie
Professional Civil Engineer
P.O. Box 452
Sausalito, CA 94965
Specialty: General Civil Engineering
- James S. Caid
Professional Civil Engineer
1275 Union St.
San Francisco, CA 94109
Specialty: Structural engineering
- Mike Corbin
Rt. 3 Box A87
Amherst, VA 24521
Specialty: Sanitary engineering,
environmental chemistry
- Lewis A. Elwood
P.O. Box 1151
Albion, WA 99102
Specialty: Solar and wind power
- Edward Haeck
1401 Marine St. Apt. 3
Boulder, CO 80302
Specialty: Land use planning
- Steven M. Ridenour, P.E.
Approtech, Inc.
1700 Meadow Rd.
Southampton, PA 18966
Specialty: Solar and other alternative
energy
- S. Glen Taylor
P.O. Box 242
Norwood, CO 81423
Specialty: General civil engineering
- Barry Welliver
Professional Civil Engineer
6 Spruce Ave.
San Anselmo, CA 94960
Specialty: Structural engineering

The only job completed according to the procedure we had set up was a land survey for the Cerro Gordo Community near Cottage Grove, Oregon. Last November (1976) Ed Beattie traveled to Cerro Gordo and assisted the community

members in setting up the survey. Most of the actual survey data was taken by the community members, and the final plans were drawn up by Mr. Beattie.

CTS activity this past year has been mostly responding to inquiries. A description of the organization was placed in the NSF Directory of Appropriate Technology issued this past spring, and in the spring issue of the appropriate technology newsletter TRANET. An advertisement appeared in the May/June COMMUNITIES.

Although CTS has succeeded in coordinating but one job so far, I believe we have accomplished something useful in presenting our skills not as something necessarily to be restricted to those able to pay the going commercial rate, but available to all those interested in, and working towards, a saner life style.

Russel M. Adams
September 1977

COMMUNITY TECHNICAL SERVICES - Agreements and Procedures, July '76

Purpose. The agreed purpose of Community Technical Services (CTS) is to function as an informational clearinghouse to connect intentional communities with qualified technical people. The term *work collective* is seen in this restricted sense.

Associates. New Associates are selected by consensus of the existing Associates based on review of a resume or statement of qualifications, interests, and intent. The Associate agrees to consider carefully all alternative intentional community work referred by the coordinator with the objective of meeting the community's needs insofar as possible within the community's ability to pay. Arrangements for services are strictly between the Associate and the community, and CTS does not guarantee either to the community that an Associate will take the job or to the Associate that the community will pay for it. Communities requesting services will be so informed.

Coordinator. At the beginning of each fiscal year, the Associates shall select by consensus one of their number as coordinator. The coordinator agrees to maintain correspondence regarding work referrals and regarding present and prospective Associates, to publish an advertisement for CTS in **Communities** magazine semiannually, to maintain financial records, and to prepare and distribute the annual report to the Associates. The time spent in coordination activities is not reimbursable.

Administration and reports. The following administrative procedure will be followed:

1. Coordinator distributes request for services to cognizant Associates within two days of receipt.
2. Associates reply to coordinator within 5 days of receipt by them, suggesting which Associate should take the job. Coordinator negotiates if more than one Associate wants the job.
3. Coordinator replies to community advising of status.
4. Associate contacts the community directly, negotiates an agreement, and forwards \$5 to the coordinator.

After completing a job coordinated through CTS, the Associate agrees to forward a short design summary to the coordinator. The annual report, prepared by the coordinator and distributed to each Associate, will consist of that year's design summaries, a financial statement, a list of the current Associates, any proposed changes to this agreement, and any other pertinent information. The coordinator shall publish the design summaries and the list of current Associates in **Communities** magazine.

Financial. The fiscal year runs from 1 July to 30 June. Associates are not restricted as to the amount or type of payment negotiated for their services. The \$5 processing fee is intended to defray cash expenditures such as postage, telephone, advertising, stationary, and distribution of the annual report. If there is a surplus at the end of the fiscal year, it shall be distributed proportionally among the Associates who paid during the year, and the next year's fee adjusted to the expected break-even point. If there is a deficit, the fee for the next year shall be adjusted to the expected break-even point with enough left over to make up the deficit.

PEACEMAKERS

CONVENE

*In trying to be a presence to one another
we may alleviate some of the suffering
around us...* **Bernadette Scholl**

Be a presence to one another... That could well be the Peacemaker credo. Need I mention that the context of Bernadette's statement made it clear that she was speaking of a loving, caring presence? That context was a discussion group and the context of the group was the Peacemaker Orientation Program held the 14th through the 27th of August in Lum, Michigan. I attended all of that program and I want to share some of what went on, also a little about what Peacemakers is.

Perhaps the best way to introduce Peacemakers is to present the statement we issue; it expresses a thought similar to Bernadette's: *For years, Peacemakers has challenged the legitimacy and authority of violent ways. We have experimented with and committed ourselves to nonviolence as a way and spirit of living. Peacemakers is a movement dedicated to the transformation of society through the transformation of the individuals living within it. By changing your life in accordance with what you believe, you begin to change the world in an often small, but truly definite and positive way.* To this I will add the frequently expressed realization that only nonviolent revolution can bring about a permanent nonviolent society.

These things stand at the heart of the Peacemaker movement, and call us to high personal responsibility. When taken to heart and lived out they lead us along some common roads such as income and phone tax refusal, simple living, consensus, civil rights, feminism, ecological respect and a wholistic



world view. All grounded in nonviolence. I was finding so many shared convictions and attitudes with others at the program that I finally felt I had found my home.

The Peacemaker movement as such came together in April of 1948, when about 250 people gathered in Chicago because of their interest in and need for a more radical pacifism than they had experienced or than was being practiced by existing organizations. This was in the face of growing taxation and the enactment of peacetime conscription. The conference in Chicago worked out a program of personal and group discipline and action that lifted most of those present to a commitment considerably more radical than any large group of North American peaceworkers had ever accepted. With its fundamental and grassroots approach, this movement began immediately to have profound influence on peaceminded individuals and their organizations. More important, however, many people found in the Peacemaker Movement a way of life, a positive way of living for peace. Because of the unique structure of the organization - informal, loose, serious, committed to consensus as the decision making process, directly responsive - it has continued healthy for nearly three decades. The program in Lum drew a wide variety of people totaling at least 75, the furthest from Portland, Oregon, to my knowledge.

Except for a few things the first days, the program was unscheduled ahead of time. This was intentional so that we might learn from doing that process

ourselves and also would be better able to suit our needs. One of the first meetings was a presentation on the consensus process which we had subscribed to as the way in which we would make decisions during the program. Other early meetings included a history of Peacemakers; expectations, wants and then scheduling discussions responsively; a presentation on nonviolence, followed by groups of four or so sharing their thoughts and experiences with nonviolence.

We soon established for ourselves a daily pattern. This consisted of meals at 8, 11:30 and 6, discussions and workshops at 9:30, 3 and 7, and work period at 1. This varied somewhat from day to day. There was much music and singing - Judy and others having put together songbooks in true Peacemaker fashion.

Besides the daily pattern to work out there was the scheduling of the discussions and workshops. Topics included: tax resistance, living in harmony with ideals, revolution and social change, feminism and nonviolence, a women's group, sexuality, natural birth control, birth without violence, healing, alternative energy, tribal cultures, coops, and prisons. We also had people from other peace organizations attending so we learned about Catholic Worker, Movement for a New Society, Great Lakes Life, and Community for Creative NonViolence. There were also three slide shows fitted in; one on Trident and Seafarer, another on global resources and the multinational corporations, and Larry Gara's on the history of nonviolence. Despite the length of the above

listing, I'm sure I've forgotten a few.

There was another purpose to our gathering, perhaps more important than discussing all of those very interesting and important matters: to gather nonviolently, to experience coming together, forming personal ties and a group whose business was the discussions and the sharing of past experience; to experience nonviolent living together, to become aware of the possibilities and ways of accomplishing this.

And behind this was the process of consensus. What was the Process accomplishing? Was it working? Was it appropriate in this case? If people did not agree, how could they be encouraged to speak?

On a Monday we scrapped the entire day's plan. To much of importance had built up which had to be discussed. *The schedule was too tight, feminists were misunderstood. Was it okay to spend common money for food items of questionable quality with regards to violence and/or produced under economic and labor exploitation...*

Using the Clamshell Alliance process as a model, we spent the morning bringing up and clarifying issues. During the afternoon we were in small groups deciding what to do with these things. Then after supper we came together again in the big group. The spokespeople from the small groups reported and then, with a little more discussion, we make our decisions. It worked! We came together that day as a community. Everyone was aware of the consensus process and the questions surrounding it. We cared about each other and were willing to change our own behavior in many ways so as not to bring about violations within or toward the group.

The remainder of the week went smoothly enough. No crises or issues arose to threaten the community. Tuesday morning several of us went to Upland Hills Farm School to see their solar energy installations. Wednesday was left open as a breathing space. Friendships continued to develop, new ones began; even then people were still showing up for a few days stay and already some had departed. With the inevitable partings drawing near, sharings among us moved to a higher level - a sense of immediacy, an unwillingness to engage in the usual social rituals of getting-to-know-each-other. We touched directly. Isn't that what it means to be a radical?

On the last evening we gathered over a period of a few hours under an apple tree, drawn there by two who had been

sitting and singing together. When all were present, we began a process of evaluating the program. Although everyone, I believe, felt that the time had been worthwhile, we grumbled a lot. This was primarily around the ways our community had formed and the rambling nature of the meetings. The community had formed slower than most people had expected, and not as clearly as some had envisioned. There was a discussion about ways in which that process could be better facilitated in future meetings. (There are two orientation programs every summer. The other one this year happened earlier in Arcata, California, where the Peacemaker paper had recently moved.)

Jim said what for me proved the catalytic statement in understanding our difficulties. He pointed out that an orientation program in nonviolence necessarily implies that people will be responsible for themselves and making their own decisions. So I slowly formed

the opinion that our difficulties lay in not keeping certain essentials in mind. Referring back to the Peacemaker statement quoted at the beginning, the crucial thought is the transformation of the individual. With this thought the revolution begins, and on it we need to focus. All discussion groups, work experiences and daily activities needed to refer back to this, to ground in this. As people living together and committed to doing so nonviolently, we need to gently confront each other a thousand times and ways daily in order to bring that way and spirit to life in our lives.

As for myself, I continue to follow my muse where she leads and am climbing previously unscaled peaks, though not without difficulty and tiring. I am breaking through with other people in freer ways, speaking and being with them in ways only thought about previously. To this day the magic continues. □

Tom M. Stevelt

U.S. POSTAL SERVICE STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT AND CIRCULATION (Required by 39 U.S.C. 3685)		
1. TITLE OF PUBLICATION Communities, Journal of cooperative living	A. PUBLICATION NO. 006870	B. DATE OF FILING 10/17/77
2. FREQUENCY OF ISSUE bimonthly	C. NO. OF ISSUES PUBLISHED ANNUALLY 6	D. ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION PRICE \$6.00
4. LOCATION OF KNOWN OFFICE OF PUBLICATION (Street, City, County, State and ZIP Code) (Not printer) Rt. 4, box 169, Louisa Va. 23093 (PO Box 426)		
5. LOCATION OF THE HEADQUARTERS OR GENERAL BUSINESS OFFICES OF THE PUBLISHERS (Not printer) Box 426, Louisa, Va. 23093		
6. NAMES AND COMPLETE ADDRESSES OF PUBLISHER, EDITOR, AND MANAGING EDITOR		
PUBLISHER (Name and Address) S.E. Coffman Rt. 4, Box 169 Twin Oaks Community, Louisa, Va. 23093		
EDITOR (Name and Address) Paul Freundlich, 2 Chapel St., Milford, Conn. 06460		
MANAGING EDITOR (Name and Address) Mikki Henig, Twin Oaks Community, Louisa, Va. 23093		
7. OWNER (If owned by a corporation, its name and address must be stated and also immediately thereunder the names and addresses of stockholders owning or holding 1 percent or more of total amount of stock. If not owned by a corporation, the names and addresses of the individual owners must be given. If owned by a partnership or other unincorporated firm, its name and address, as well as that of each individual must be given.)		
NAME ADDRESS Unachool Educational Services Corp. PO Box 753, New Haven, Conn. 06503		
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DIRECTORIES & RESOURCE CENTERS

☆ **Resource Manual for a Living Revolution** People engaged in social change work need training in specific skills than can facilitate the transition to a new society. The *Resource Manual for a Living Revolution* is a collection of tools that have been developed by hundreds of people and used by the authors and their friends in numerous social change activities. The manual describes skills that can help groups to develop an analysis, vision and strategy; to build a support community; to raise their own consciousness and that of others about important social issues; and to train and educate people for action.

Social change movements need efficient organizational structures so that they can challenge present unjust power structures and model elements to be found in the society of the future. The manual includes information for the construction of alternative institutions and direct action campaigns. It is a useful resource for activists; teachers, social workers, community people, and others interested in preparing themselves for action to achieve basic change in the U.S. and abroad.

Contents: The theoretical basis of change, working in groups, developing communities of support, personal growth, consciousness raising, training and education, organizing for change, exercises and other tools, practical skills, groups to contact.

Price: \$5 for 1 - 4 copies. Write *Resource Manual Movement for a New Society*, 4722 Baltimore Ave., Phila., PA 19143

☆ **Community Resource Centers** are springing up everywhere across the country. A national network is now being

established through the assistance of the **National Self-Help Resource Center**, 2000 S St., NW, Washington, DC 20009, (202) 338-5704. The purpose of the network is to facilitate exchanges of resources, skills, and experiences; provide a national forum for dialogue on mutual concerns, and possibly assist in the formation of coalitions to deal with problems common to many communities. Intra-network communications is the purpose of two publications, the monthly *Network Notes* and the quarterly newsletter, *Exchange*. The Spring, 1977 *Exchange* includes a listing of national non-profit resource organizations.

☆ **Free University Directory** to over 200 free U's in the U.S. A free university is an organization offering ungraded, unaccredited classes to the general public. Anybody can teach, anybody can learn. The free U's uniqueness is this utilization of citizen participation in learning and sharing. Directory not free, send \$1.00 to **The Free University Network**, 615 Fairchild Terrace, Manhattan, Kansas, 66502 (913) 532-5866

The Worldwatch Institute is a non-profit organization based in Washington DC. The *Worldwatch Papers*, a series of studies on environment-related issues on a global scale, are now available through **Alternatives**. They are a highly useful source of information for any serious student of environmental issues.

Price for a single copy of any paper is \$2.00. Special bulk prices: for 2-10 copies of any one paper, \$1.50 a copy; for 11-50 copies, \$1.25; and for more than 50 copies, \$1.00 a copy. The papers are also available

on a subscription basis for \$25.00 a year.

Please make cheques or money orders payable to **Alternatives, Inc.** and send to us c/o Trent University, Peterborough, Ontario K9J 7B8. (Please allow 6-8 weeks for delivery.)

☆ **SORRY WE GOOFED.** The **Food Coop Directory** of 2300 coops in the U.S. and Canada, which we listed in our *Resources* column last issue (**Communities** #28) costs \$1.50 per sample copy to individuals and coops. (We failed to list the price) Special bulk rates for coops and not-for-profit groups that become Directory supporters for \$3.50. Mailing labels are also on sale.

The finest Coop Directory to date, this year's also includes the addresses of warehouses and federations, resource groups, and regional newsletters. Order from: **Food Coop Directory**, 106 Girard SE, Albuquerque, NM 87106



W.F.S.

☆ **The Future: A Guide to Information Sources** is a directory with info on 450 individuals and 230 organizations engaged in research into what may happen in society and technology during the years ahead. 603 pages. Newly released. \$17.50 from **The World Future Society**, 4916 St. Elmo Ave., Washington, DC 20014

APPROPRIATE TECHNOLOGY

☆ **The National Center for Appropriate Technology** has available approximately \$1 million for grants of up to \$10,000 for projects involving appropriate technology in the areas of energy systems, small scale food production, waste and water management and recycling, economic development, and community and shelter design and development. NCAT is particularly interested in working with low-income groups, community organizations, and low-income coops. Examples of projects might include energy conservation, solar and wind energy, community gardens, low-flush toilets, grey-water treatment systems, neighborhood job development, development of low-cost community centers, and new decision-making systems. For a copy of the program announcement, write NCAT, Box 3838, Butte, Montana, 59701

☆ **Solar Energy Sourcebook** Over 700 Manufacturers and Distributors of solar related products listed both alphabetically and by city and state.

- Over 150 specific categories of products and services that you will need.

- Over 400 Architects, Engineers and Consultants listed both alphabetically and by state.

This easy to use volume will help you locate exactly what you need, where you need it. Produced as a loose leaf binder so that it can be continually updated, it is irreplaceable for builders, manufacturers and home owners wishing to use this new and upcoming technology.

Comes free with membership (\$15 per year) or can be purchased for \$12. Send check to SEINAM, P.O. Box 9352, Washington, DC 20005.

WIND AND WINDSPINNERS a nuts 'n bolts approach to wind-electric systems by Michael Hackleman, an **Earthmind/Peace Press Publication**. Copyright 1974. \$8 large paperbound. Available from **The First Ozark Press** P.O. Box 1137 Harrison Ark. 72601. \$.60 additional for postage and handling.

☆ Training programs for solar technicians are now graduating trainees much in demand by construction firms.

A program started by California's Office of Appropriate Technology in Sacramento has graduated 17 technicians in September 1977. Jobs have already been offered to five students.

The curriculum covers aspects of solar use, carpentry and plumbing. The first eight weeks of the 20 week course are

devoted to theory and design. During the following 12 weeks, students work on installing hot water solar systems in state buildings.

Other programs include: 1) a two year program at San Jose City College resulting in an Associate Science Degree in Solar Technology; 2) the inclusion of solar system installation by the New England Fuel Institute in its oil furnace installers program.

Other groups are starting programs: the New York State Solar Application Center, 212-689-5070; San Diego County Construction Laborers Training and Retraining Trust, 714-766-4602; Sheet Metal Workers International Association, 1750 New York Avenue NW, Washington DC; Farallones Institute and Mission Rebels, 415-495-4041.

☆ **Jobs and Energy Environmentalists for Full Employment** is an organization that was formed to argue against the conventional economic wisdom that economic growth, job creation and energy growth are inextricably linked to one another. **Jobs and Energy** represents the outcome of their research, and it is almost certainly the best single source on that subject available in the English language.

Included: sections on Productivity and Jobs; Energy Growth and Prosperity; Energy Efficiency and Jobs; and the Politics of Energy. Everything is painstakingly documented, making **Jobs and Energy** simply essential reading for anyone trying to combat the energy growth lobby.

Copies of this monograph are available for \$2.00 each for individuals, or \$5.00 for institutions, from **Environmentalists for Full Employment**, 1785 Massachusetts Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20036

☆ An easy-to-read cartoon-illustrated booklet - **How You Can Save Energy Every Day** - has been issued by Channing L. Bete Company, Inc.; 45 Federal Street, Greenfield, MA 01301 (413) 774-2301. It has 15 pages, sells for \$.50, and is one of 22 *Scriptographic* booklets issued by Channing Bete. A catalog is available on request.

☆ **Appropriate Technology Sourcebook** by Ken Darrow and Rick Pam is a helpful guide to practical books and plans for village and small community technology. Topics range from: *Tools to make tools* to *Energy: Pedal Power*, to *Health Care*, to *Soapmaking*. Price: \$4. Write: **Appropriate Technology Project**, Volunteers in Asia, Box 4543, Stanford, Cal. 9430

☆ **Agribusiness or regional diet?** Large corporations or food clubs? Exports, imports or family ecofarms? The choice is up to you!

The way we spend our food money during the next few years may well be the main factor in determining the future of human society.

If you think ordinary people should have control over their own lives rather than having the world run by a power elite, then there are two effective things you can do:

1. Avoid buying anything unless you know who made it or grew it.

2. Make sure the producer gets a fair return for the efforts.

For information on how to form a food club and buy from area eco-farmers contact: **Earth Cyclers** Rt. 1 Box 9A Edwall, Washington 99008

☆ **Shamianah Inc.**, coop yurt builders. Easily transported, solid in look and construction, yurts are a remarkable form of shelter...

...the basic element is the expanding wall lattice: strips of wood are fastened together at intervals such that they can be expanded to form a larger wall section. Several of these sections are expanded and tied together with a door frame to form a circular wall. A compressive band/rope is then drawn around the top of the wall to help support the roof. Poles are then run from the top of the wall to a higher central compression ring. Sometimes there are two pillars helping hold up the central ring; and sometimes there are no pillars, the roof being self-supporting like a truncated cone. The wood structure is then covered with various amounts of felt and canvas depending on the climate and weather.

Shamianah yurts come in a variety of sizes and materials. Write for details.

Shamianah is a worker-owned and controlled cooperative staffed by people who are committed to cooperation as a way of life, to developing appropriate technologies, to providing quality products and services that are environmentally sound and socially conscious... and at the same time provide economic sustenance for our membership.

Initially, we are putting all income from yurt building into making the cooperative more capable of producing higher quality products and providing more work for our members.

Shamianah, Inc., 4500 Aster ST., Springfield, OR 97477

BOOKSHELF

Here are brief descriptions of five books related to the intentional community movement. Our free brochure contains a complete listing of some 35 books on living and working cooperatively. Write: Community BOOKSHELF, Box 426, Louisa, VA 23093.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

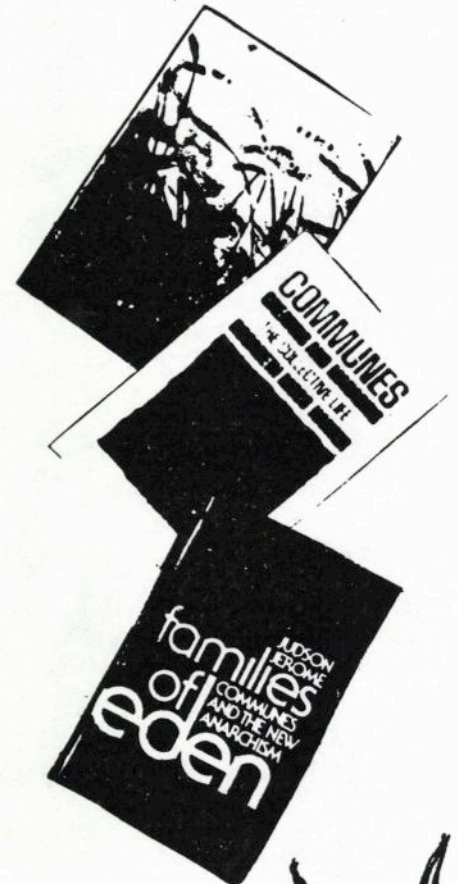
Families of Eden: Communes and the New Anarchism. by Judson Jerome. Hdbk., 171 pp. \$7.95.

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

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

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

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



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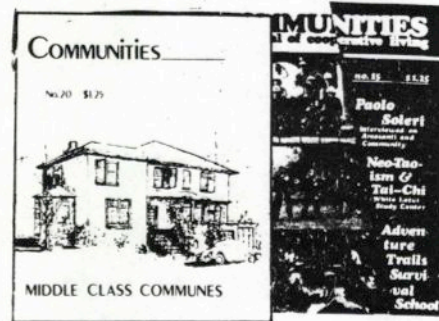
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