

COMMUNITIES journal of cooperative living

no. 36

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a very *interesting* issue, including
Secrets of the Circle of Gold

This Issue

Mikki Wenig has been working with Jim Bowman for a year to develop the material on community in British Columbia. We held it over from the last issue, with that big consumer Coop Alliance section.

I looked up Ken Perlow (*You Can't Go Home Again*, 719) former coop heavy in Madison, when I was out for the CCA meeting in June. He'd done this bizarre trip, sailing round the Caribbean - showed me the draft of an article on the People's Yacht Collective. It was going in the September issue, but come August and still no final draft. So I called up Ken: a *people* had been missing with the boat for a month. The worst was feared,

which would make it not so amusing an article, indeed. Well, it worked out okay, but not in time for the issue, so here we are.

Speaking of bizarre trips, I've had my doubts about Kerista Village/Utopian Eyes/Storefront Classroom. But I liked Bluejay Way's collective self-examination, and visiting with them this summer, found them confronting urban communal living with imagination and humor. They still may not be quite my style, but I like them.

Dick McLeester called me up from Amherst one evening in October about the Circle of Gold. I gave him the earful I'd been dumping on everyone who asked (and many unasked). I also offered him \$10 out of his blown \$100

as my personal contribution to stop his letter. And if he was into it, how about writing an article?

There's Joe Blasi's initial Social Science column, passing on some of the learning from a busy and interesting life. There's more kibbutz material on the family. My shaggy community stories evolved out of a number of potboilers which have been left around the house.

Mostly we're preparing for the May publication of *A Guide to Community and Cooperative Alternatives*, the double issue for which we'll be skipping our March number. A big project. We think you'll like it. (See back cover for more.)

Finally, or firstly, there's the mess in Guyana:

HEAVEN CAN'T WAIT an editorial

Fortunately they didn't have TV and newspapers in the 13th century when the Albigensian Heresy was being rooted out. The pictures and headlines of whole towns put to the sword, or mass suicide by the Cathars as they willingly relieved themselves of their bodies (presumably on their way to heaven) would quickly have become as much of a media event as the People's Temple.

It was quite a Thanksgiving week here on the American continent. Beginning with the murder of Congressman Ryan, through the enlarging scale of the *suicide*, to the puzzled response of the media. *Beware the heavy trippers, and the one-truth, ya gotta believe, abandon hopelessness all ye who enter here.*

What do you make of mass suicide? Unlike overdosing or rape or the usual run of violence (the repetitious or subtle rejections, withdrawals and atrocities) the media had to deal with the scale of this. Like a plane crash it ripped through our constellations. *Could I have known someone...? It must mean something.* I think what upset the media most was the possibility of judgement on society; that even 500 adult Americans could be critically unimpressed with the American dream.

Roslyn Carter was interviewed at one point. She was unable to understand any relation between her fundamentalist creed which teaches life-is-sin and salvation-lies-in-the-next-world, and a revivalist cult crazy enough to take it seriously.

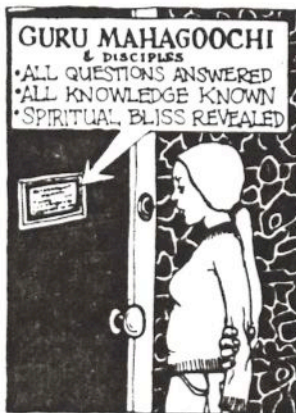
Another TV interviewee was a past member of the cult. She and her husband sitting around their living room: "Several years ago we went through a ceremony. Jim kept hinting about death and the next world. After we drank the wine, we were all waiting...but Jim laughed and said it was just a test." And she looks into the camera. "But I was ready to go. I just thought, *thank God, it's over.*"

You understand, Roslyn? Even looking back a few years later, she didn't see an aberration. Perfectly calm, Jones-less and still ready to say, "*Thank God, it's over.*"

Jim Jones was their hope, their channel. Tune in his trip and screen out the rest. And if Jones was increasingly paranoid; if he thought that *they* (the U.S. Government) were going to take it all away before he worked out their next set of travel plans...for that noted land of religious freedom, Russia [*now there's a measure of his divorce from reality*]; if he was prepared to head for heaven directly, then it may be irrational, but it sure isn't illogical.

Those who joined the People's Temple in its migration from Ohio to California to Guyana didn't begin life as cultists. For those who had come off addiction or out of

continued on page 64



Journal of cooperative living

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Staff for Issue no. 36

EDITED by PAUL FREUNDLICH; British Columbia by MIKKI WENIG, CHIP COFFMAN AND JIM BOWMAN; Social Science, JOSEPH BLASI; International, VINCE ZAGER; Reach, Grapevine & Resources, MARGARET OAKS

PRODUCTION: CHRIS COLLINS, PAUL, MIKKI

ART: PONY SHEA

Credits

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WITH SPECIAL APPRECIATION TO DENNIS, MARLENE, STEPHIE AND BILL OF THE ADVOCATE PRESS; JUDY GREENE OF SAN FRANCISCO FEMINIST DEMOCRATS

Continuity

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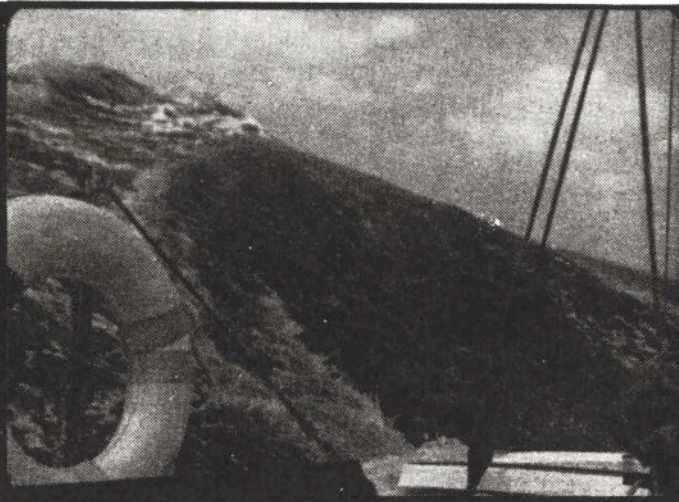
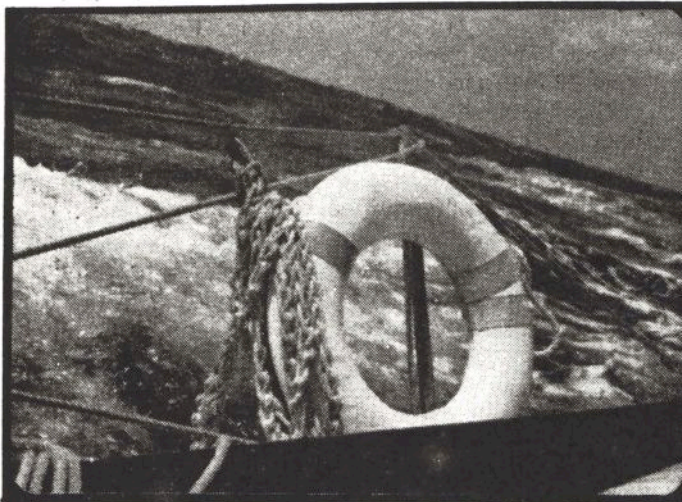
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The People's Yacht Collective

by Ken Perlow



Well, why not? We've all been involved in co-operative ventures in order to transform other dreams into reality. So, once upon a time, five Madison co-ops set about going to sea the best way they knew, and the only way they could afford - co-operatively.

Three P.Y.C. members returned last summer from a 1200 mile cruise through the Florida Keys and Bahama out-islands. Three others were even more ambitious, returning last June by way of Haiti, Jamaica, and Mexico. One is en route to Panama. Plans for 1979 remain plastic; it's a mean ocean.

The People's Yacht Collective idea was a figment of two of us Madison co-op "heavies" who had co-founded five or six housing co-operatives (after a while you lose count). We decided that old co-ops need neither die nor fade away - they should sail off. We toyed with the idea of crossing the Atlantic, just seriously enough to begin studying what we were up against. Ed took a course in hydrodynamic engineering; I studied navigation and meteorology. After which, we decided that our first practice attempts might be more prudently directed down the islands.

Then we ran into two friends who had composed their own variation on the dream (sailing around in Europe), and a plan began to coalesce. After all the imaginary dust had cleared, five of us put our money together for a boat - it came to \$9000. More might materialize later (it always did for our houses), but any left over after improvements and repairs would have to go toward equalizing member investments.

A boat, the saying goes, is naught but a hole in the ocean into which you pour money. Mercifully, \$9000 doesn't buy a very big hole. In fact, it was \$6000 short of the most miserly and optimistic estimates anyone ever gave us for the cost of a sound, blue-water vessel, but what did they know. We'd have to find something small and take turns.

In December, 1976, we set it down in writing: Ed and I,

who alleged to know about boats and their uses, would head south and find one. Mark would join and revive us a month later. We three would have use of the craft through June; the other two drew July through December (hurricane season). Every December, a schedule for the next year would be established. (On the Winter Solstice - we sailors are a superstitious lot.)

Inured to many a hallway redolent with that special co-op admixture of stale plaster and fresh catshit, we knew how to shop for collective merchandise. Especially since none of us had ever cruised before, but had only sported on Madison's swampy lakes.

First, we needed something enough like a lake boat that we, or any new member, could get in some useful practice beforehand. It also had to be a vessel even one person could handle, thus allowing for maximum latitude in cruise planning, inevitable membership attrition, and perhaps the most insidious scourge, seasickness. (You don't just think you're going to die, you know it. I speak from experience.) The boat had to be easy and fun to use: a familiar sloop rig - simple, efficient.

More than anything else, we had to avoid the specter of intricate long-term maintenance. Wood, though the most common and least expensive building material, was out. A wood boat cannot sit unmaintained. It can't sit, period (worms). Neither can steel (corrosion). We had to go with the most exotic and expensive stuff, fiberglass. Glass gets dirty, slimy, and encrusted with barnacles, but not full of holes.

Since co-ops have always had trouble planning for any exigencies farther in the future than immediate commitments, this was our most crucial concern. Unlike big houses, small cruising boats get bounced around rather violently, especially by inept hippies who fancy themselves either Sir Francis Chichester or Captain Bly. And even if your house does fall apart, you'll only end up in the street, not 300 fathoms.

For cruising, we needed a full-keeled hull with plenty of ballast. Nothing light or dainty. And nothing home-built, since popular models (again the most expensive) are the only used boats which retain a high resale value. Should the P.Y.C. ever become dysfunctional, we want to have our cake and eat it too. And we could not settle for less. We would either find such a boat for our price, or return to the cold north woods dejected and defeated, albeit suntanned.

To make this initial six-month story just a little shorter, we bought ("resurrected" is more accurate) a well-travelled VW van, drove it through one ice storm and two engine rebuilds to New Orleans, thence east along the Gulf Coast, coaxed it through West Florida and over to Fort Lauderdale, and literally pushed it (the starter died) down to Miami and the Keys, hitting every pier, Marina, and brokerage. The task was not so difficult as it was completely insane. Have you ever tried to house three people in a van for three months?

I can tout the praises of our perpetually renamed, twelve-year-old, 25½-foot Pearson "Ariel" without being commercial, since they don't make them any more. Two months to find, one month to fix, but that boat has handled full gales under storm jib like a canoe on smooth water. Well, almost. Still, our expectations are realistically myopic. For all our initial study and careful planning, we managed in the first four months alone to hit two reefs, narrowly dodge one nasty waterspout, and become totally lost for a day and a half in the famed Bermuda Triangle.

Salty tales of the briny deep ("Blowin' force nine, she was...") are best reserved for periodicals which deal with the subject. Having completely catalogued the boat for future members and users in a forty page illustrated manual (copies available for a modest fee), I do not relish the task of preparing yet another glossary for you lubbers with the good sense not to know a trysail from a topping lift. With luck, some of our madcap anarchist adventures will sneak their way into miscellaneous boating magazines as soon as I can afford my own electric typewriter. And we've been damn lucky so far. Knock on fiberglass.

But what's the point? We've all been using the structure of co-operation as a tool - for learning and for leverage - to make a better world, to realize some of our more modest fantasies. It was time to tackle some heavier ones. Everyone dreams of "going to sea." For me, it used to occupy the same dusty cerebral nook as effecting social and political change.

The reality certainly took some gettin used to. Beneath its effulgent socialist rhetoric, collectivism has invariably stagnated into endless meetings of petty bickering which are run "by consensus" to hide the total lack of interpersonal trust. Indeed, the unwritten social contract is, "Since I don't trust you, I won't let you make any decisions without me."

We rewrote the contract. Simply. "Take turns. Stand your watch. Nod off." One of us might totally fuck it up and sink the boat, but that has to be OK (as you help inflate the life raft) since we don't believe in captains. Without that totally finctional trust, however, you never get any sleep. Two hours on, four hours off among the three of us. If that boat had been built for it, we could

have sailed around the world. And we will.

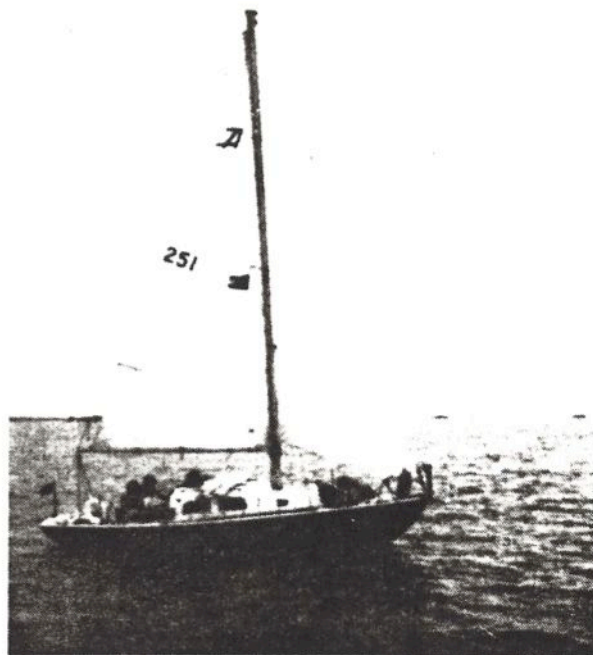
The analogy is all too close. On the ocean or in a revolution, competent collective decisions must be made quickly, and people must trust each other with their lives. Both pasttimes have their moments of jubilation, yet are basically humbling experiences: No one beats history (especially not those who rewrite it. "Socialist realism," as one Soviet gadfly put it, "is praise of the current leadership in a form that is comprehensible to them.") No one beats the sea either. We learned; we survived. Let us hope, come the revolution, that we can all say the same.

POSTSCRIPT: The People's Yacht Collective is still in its inchoate stages. We now have six members, and the boat has been turned over (exchanged, that is, not capsized) three times. The ensigns of the Dominican Republic, the Cayman Islands, and Honduras have all flown from her starboard spreader.

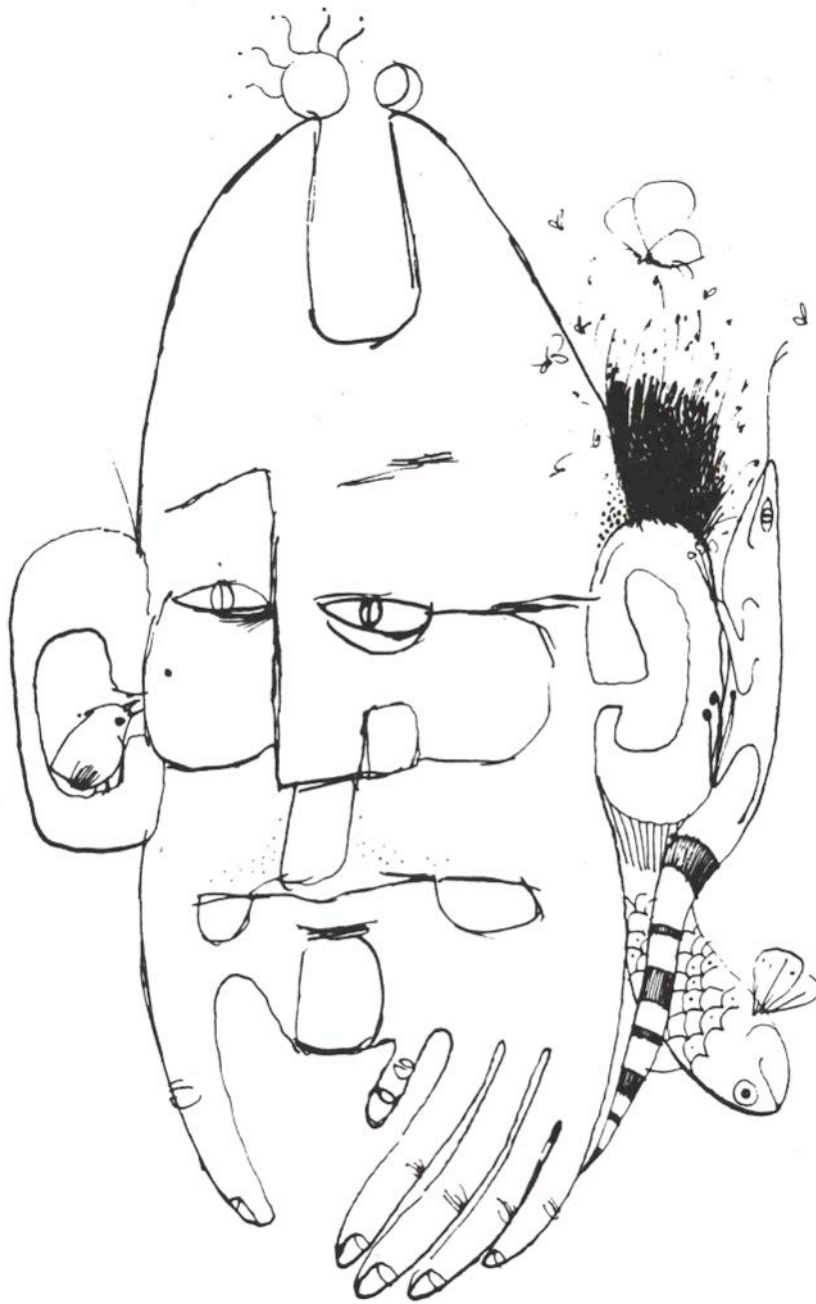
At the moment, we are simply a garden variety partnership, and not incorporated as a co-operative or otherwise. Nor is the P.Y.C. currently soliciting membership from the general public, pending discussion, review, and untangling of finances by all surviving members this December.

This "surviving" business is no joke. The member currently singlehanded the boat south was not heard from for over a month. The best excuses with which we could reassure ourselves were (a) he got busted for some petty offense and couldn't communicate, or (b) he totalled it out on a reef and was too embarrassed to communicate, since (c) and (d) were both unmentionable. We rejoiced to find out that (e) a local mail and phone strike had necessitated several weeks extra travel.

Some of us, though, are already talking about "a crossing," "a fifty-foot schooner," and "lots of people." We heartily invite correspondence, c/o Madison Community Co-operative, 1001 University Avenue, Madison, WI 53715. Si, se puede! □



Have You Heard The One About . . . ?



**a collection of shaggy
community stories by Paul
Freundlich**

THE COMMUNITY FAIRY TALE

Twenty-one upon a time there were twelve bears who lived in an old farm house. There were eight androgynous grown bears and four baby bears.

One day, after the breakfast porridge the bears on clean-up were no where to be found.

"I'm not doing it," muttered a bear. "I've done three shifts already this week."

"I'm not doing it," complained another bear. "It will just reinforce their irresponsibility."

"I'm not doing it," began another bear. "I..."

Just then the seven dwarves from the neighboring community arrived, accompanied by a prince or princess (somebody royal, anyway) who was looking for a community.

"My name is Snow White," said the personage.

"It's just not right for us," said Whizzo, the dwarf.

"Too tall by far," said Blotto.

"Too royal and therefore dangerous," said the sophisticated Whippo.

"Too used to being waited on," said the ever-practical Buzzo.

"Too rejecting of my advances," complained Sleazo.

"But we thought you might have an opening or two," suggested Mongo.

"Whatever gave you that idea?" asked a bear.

"Well," said Mongo, "as we were coming through the woods, there was a dragon finishing off the last of two bears who looked very familiar..."

Later that day, the ten bears asked Snow White how it got its strange name.

"Actually my name used to be Goldilocks." Removing a small, silver box from a pocket, it sprinkled some fine white powder on the table. "Until one day a magician gave me this magic dust..."

"But," interrupted one of the bears, "what kind of name is Goldilocks?"

"What's the deal," asked Snow White, "are you anti-Semitic?"

"No," answered another bear, "we just don't like sorcerers or physicians. We're anti-semedic."

"Or construction workers," added another. "We're anti-cementic."

"Or people who use words too cleverly," offered a third. "We're anti-semantic."

"Well," said Snow White, "I'll give you a simple word. I'm getting O-U-T." And left.

The bears looked at each other around the simple table.

"I liked it," one of the little bears said finally. "I think you were cruel."

"Shut up and eat your porridge," said a large bear. "There are *some* things small bears just can't understand."

In the uncomfortable silence which followed, a large bear

wearily raised a paw. "Process," it said. "I'm afraid we need a house meeting."

Everyone groaned, agreed and lived ever after.



THE GOTHIC COMMUNITY NOVEL

Eliantha had been eager to have the old house on the hill be the commune's new home. She'd been part of the group for two years, when the executor of her Great Aunt's estate had called.

"What a break," she'd said that evening, as they all sat around the dinner table. "I only visited a few times when I was a kid. It seemed sort of scary then, but it's a big house and I'm sure we're not going to be frightened by it."

The smile on Eliantha's face was replaced by a frown and then a flash of fear.

"The...the...picture..."

"What?" asked Roddy.

"The picture of the commune over the fireplace. Freddie isn't in it anymore..."

They all turned slowly.

"Just like Marion and Zeke before they disappeared," gasped Marc.

A scream cut through the night from the upper reaches of the house. And the scream held a name... "Freddieee!"

"But Aunt Agatha," Eliantha complained, "why couldn't you have told me my true nature without sacrificing the whole commune?"

"My dear, would you have believed me? And you were so attached to them. Besides," the blackcloaked figure in the corner of the room muttered slyly, "they tasted so good!"



THE COOPERATIVE SPY STORY

Van Alps, a squat, dour Dutchman, stabbed the Rothman into the high-pile carpet, then turned bitterly on Linguisto.

"Your information is cold. I may have to go in myself, and I don't like that."

"But...but...I infiltrated the most successful new wave coop, and I was in place. I..."

"But, but," Van Alps interrupted angrily. "But you picked Common Market which is out of business, *Linguini*, and thus you are discredited."

Linguisto cowered away from the desk, and scuttled from the room.

"So much for *Langostino*," sibilated Hiroshi.

"So much for this whole operation unless we get someone into the Coop Bank," muttered Van Alps darkly.

Hiroshi eyed him carefully. "Chief, we have one option..." He hesitated.

"Out with it," demanded Van Alps.

"Well, if we collectivized our operation...uh, became a cooperative...You know, one member, one vote..."

Van Alps regarded him balefully. "The KGB operation in America a cooperative?"

Hiroshi began to squirm. "Uh we could change the name. You could be the general manager..."

The grey phone in the third drawer disguised as a stapler clicked three times. Van Alps quickly picked it up, pressed it and stapled his ear to his beret.

"Ouch," said Van Alps.

"I think that was really the stapler, chief."

Van Alps recovered quickly and took the correct phone while Hiroshi carefully removed the staple.

When Van Alps finished listening, he put down the phone with a bemused expression. He lit up another Rothman, leaned back and bestowing upon Hiroshi a look of almost respect, "Hiroshi, draw up those plans. The Mafia has just joined CLUSA."



THE COMMUNITY KIDDIE STORY

"Run, Spot, run," said Jane.

"Oh, look at Spot and Fluff run together," said Dick.

"Oh, look at Dick and Jane play together," said a Meta.

"Look at Spot and Fluff play with Dick and Jane," said another meta.

"I wonder how long before we can teach Dick and Jane to weave hammocks?" asked a planner who was passing through.

"What's a hammock?" asked Fluff.

"What's weaving?" asked Spot.

"Say," said a meta, "we might get more work out of spot and fluff."

"And no trouble with child labor laws, either," said the planner.

"Run, Spot," said Fluff.

"Run, Fluff," said Spot.

"Look at Spot and Fluff run," said Dick and Jane.

"Irresponsible animals," grumbled the planner.

THE COMMUNAL HISTORICAL ROMANCE

Henry strode angrily into the room. Enough, I say. These hesitations do not become you, madam."

Anne cast a last, longing look at the verdent English countryside rolling off to the river Perth. Then she turned to her king. "And what guarantees, sir? What guarantees that I in my turn will not be discarded and put upon the block?"

"Block? Discarded?" wondered Henry. "Could you mean Kathryn and Rosalind, Beatrix and Mathilda, Margaret and Gwendelyn?"

"The very same," insisted Anne, her breasts heaving. "Demeaned and destroyed by you after taking the flower of their youth."

Henry exploded in laughter.

Anne regarded him icily. "I see no cause for frivolity."

"But woman," Henry objected. "I have destroyed no one. Kat and Roz, Bea and Matty, Marg and Wendy - we all live together with Northumberland, Lancashire, Westmoreland and that popinjay, MacDuff. Pon my soul, there was some preference for a sixth man, but your qualities have won the day."

Sweeping her into his arms, he carried her to his horse. "To London, madam, and as fair a menage a douze as you'll ever see."



THE COMMUNITY SCIENCE FICTION STORY

M'Elitinko, the Andromedan Serphite waved a tentacle as it dissolved into the mass of seething jelly.

Filusia turned away, tears in her eyes. "Ram," she said. "He gave his life that the Federation might live."

"Dash it, Filusia, it was what any of us would have done - and we're not out of it yet," said Ram.

"But the jelly is quiet."

Ram, the Andalusian gnome, looked about them warily: "There are stranger things on this planet than jelly."

The shadow which they suddenly perceived had them quickly backed against a wall. As the huge form pressed down, it forced them closer and closer to the jelly.

"We aren't going to make it," whispered Filusia.

"Goodbye, Filusia," sobbed the gnome.

"The Federation forever!" they screamed together as they felt the jelly slithering over their legs.

Filusia?

Ram?

M'Elitinko?

What does it mean?

They could feel M'Elitinko's melifluous voice rather than hear it, for they no longer had ears, or, indeed, bodies.

We are together now. Us and many others. All part of one organism - aware, but merged.

Oh, Ram, Filusia projected, if we could only get word to the Federation that the jelly is not our enemy.

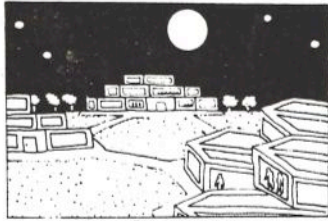
At that, there was a vast sucking sound, and from the muck of the jelly, two psuedopods stretched till they increasingly resembled M'Elitinko and Filusia. With a pop, they separated.

"And now to Federation headquarters," exclaimed Ram.

"But Ram," Filusia complained, "you're in M'Elitinko's body."

There was a quick shiver in the protoplasm and Ram's features struggled to surface, then slipped back to M'Elitinko's shape.

"Well," said Ram philosophically, "gnomes aren't built in a day."



COMMUNITY JOKES

A visitor to Twin Oaks was admiring the volleyball team.

"Oh yes," said a member. "Our volleyball team is known by everyone all over the world."

The visitor smiled. "Surely that is an exaggeration."

"No," said the member, "I'm quite serious."

"Hardly by everyone."

"Everyone," returned the member with conviction.

"If your team is so famous," remarked the visitor, "why do they not appear at important events like Wide-World of Sports or the Olympics?"

"Modesty," said the member, "and nothing more."

Increasingly enraged by the presumption of this out of the way community and their rumdum volleyball team, the visitor sauntered to his Silver Wraith II, parked adjacent to the courtyard, and reaching into the glove compartment, extracted fifty big ones.

"Put up or shut up, Ponzo. Fifty thou against your volleyball team at half-time at the Super Bowl in an exhibition with the NFL all stars."

A quick consultation with the volleyball team, the hammock manager and the economic planners produced a positive answer and the bet was on.

Two months later, the mark was sitting on the 50 yard line of Superbowl XVII. At half-time, out come the groundskeepers and string up a volleyball net; out comes an NFL all star team, none less than 200 lbs. or 6 feet, five inches; out comes the Twin Oaks volleyball team.

And the stands go crazy.

The exhibition begins and the play is furious.

Finally the bettor can't stand it anymore. Turning to a cheering fan, he demands, "Do you know those people?"

The fan is still waving his banner, and with slightly glazed eyes responds, "Never saw them before in my life. But you know, they're sure giving Twin Oaks a hell of a game!"

No. 1 - "How many coop members does it take to screw in a light bulb?"

No. 2 - "I didn't even know you could get coop members into a light bulb."

One day, long after the coop had closed, a faithful collective worker was still restocking the inventory and cleaning up. Coming across a venerable, glass honey container, she began methodically polishing.

Suddenly, there was a huge puff of smoke and a Genie appeared.

"What is your wish, mistress?" demanded the Genie.

"What can you do?"

"Anything."

After serious thought, she suddenly brightened. "For a test, make me a yogurt-banana-boysenberry-pistachio-date-Guava smoothie." And waited expectantly.

"Ah," beamed the Genie, "my pleasure." And gesturing swiftly, "Pouf, you're a yogurt-banana-boysenberry-pistachio-date-Guava smoothie." □

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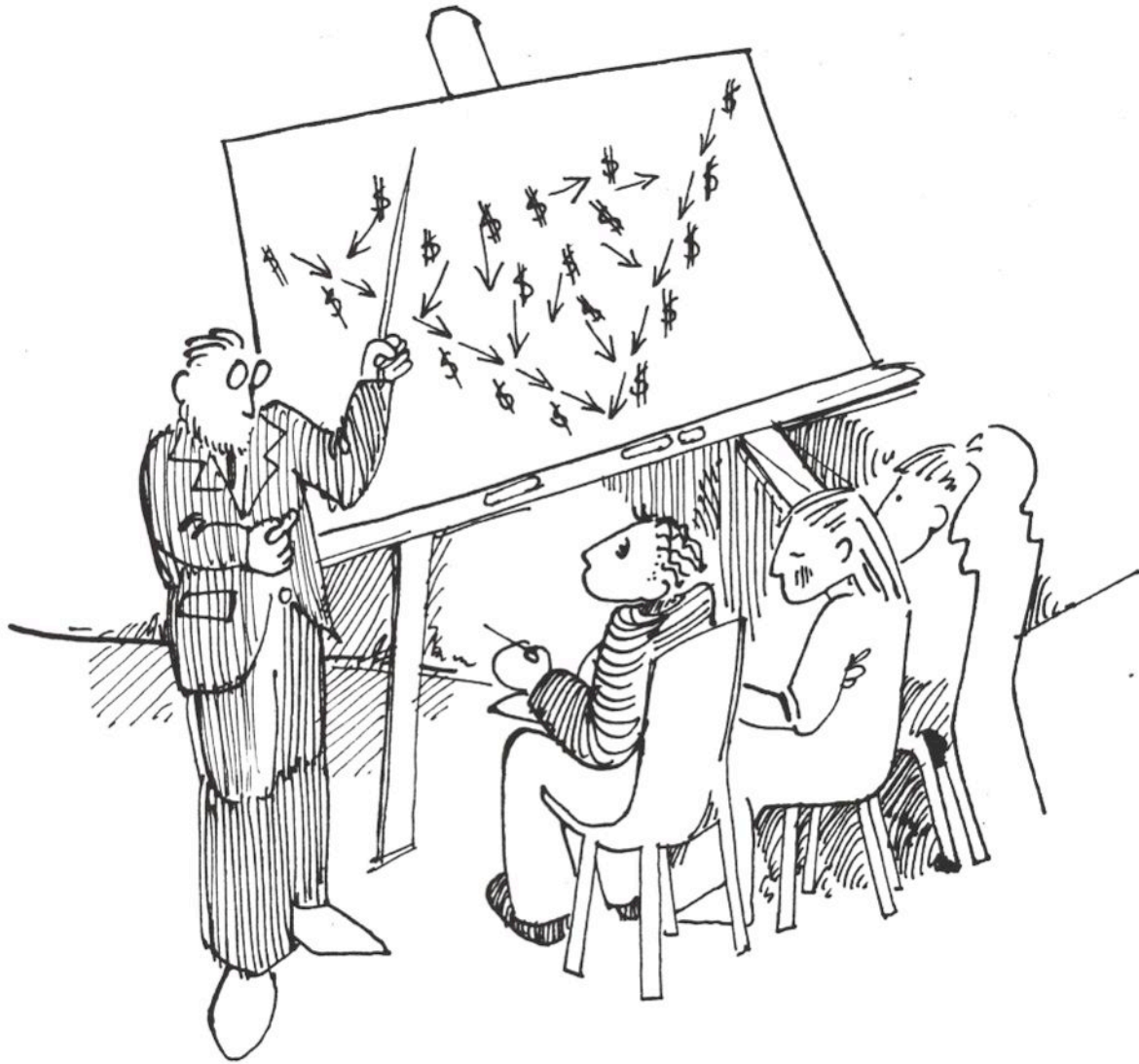
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is operated by and for alternative communities. Our vision is to unite the buying power of communities into a positive economic force. We carry items you suggest and need; we share what we know; we offer better and cheaper alternatives.

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SECRETS OF THE CIRCLE OF GOLD



Economist - "Now class, where would you like to be in this circle?"

Student - "At the bottom."

Economist - "But circles don't have bottoms."

Student - "Well, that's no circle."

by Dick McKeester

"I don't need to steal from people. All I do is show them their greed and they hand over their money."

-from the movie *The Flim Flam Man*

Just what is the Circle of Gold? The answer can vary greatly depending on who you talk to. For some it is a new way of thinking about money and wealth; a daring philosophy which works now! Others denounce it as an old con job, a scheme in which only a fool would get involved. For sure, the Circle is an event which has involved many thousands of people. From roots in various spiritual communities, it has spread through rural communities, food coops, the gay and feminist communities, anti-nuclear organizers, new age entrepreneurs, hitchhikers and college students.

The Circle seems to have started on the sunny shores of California (where a certain gold-rush sensibility is still alive and well). In only a few months it has spread at an incredibly rapid rate on the eastern coast. When I first heard of the Circle of Gold, I was suspicious and sceptical. But as more and more people I respected joined (and in a few cases received large sums of money) I began to wonder. What would I do with a lot of money? The possibilities definitely intrigued me. But to be involved at all required putting out \$100, which for me is no small amount.

How does the Circle work? The basic mechanics are very simple. You buy the letter for \$50 from a friend and send \$50 cash to the first person on the list of twenty names and add yours to the bottom of the list. Copy the letter and sell them both to two friends in the same way. You've got your \$100 back and have only to make sure that the new participants send \$50 each to those now on the top of the list. As the letter continues to sell, your name moves up the list until eventually \$100,000 cash pours into your mailbox.

The letters are passed from hand to hand among friends, thereby adding a personal touch and supposedly avoiding the laws prohibiting the use of the mails. As more close friends told me about it, I became fascinated: all the ins and outs of the pyramid system that seemed to defy the logic of mathematics; all the people I knew who were involved and the possibility that it would really work. When my fascination with it carried over into a dream and dominated my mind the next morning, I impulsively decided I had to buy in. Not totally convinced, but now I would find out directly.

N.Y. Times, Sunday November 26, 1978

COAST CHAIN LETTER IS BIG ON BROADWAY

A \$100-a-person chain-letter scheme has swept from the West to the East Coast in a matter of weeks, luring hundreds with promises of \$100,000 payoffs.

But law-enforcement officials said that the entire chain was illegal and a fraud, and that they were determined to find the chain's originators.

The chain, called the "Circle of Gold," started about three months ago in Marin and Santa Cruz Counties out side of San Francisco, according to Bay Area authorities who are investigating the chain.

A week and a half ago, it was detected in Chicago, and New York authorities now say that the scheme has spread there, and that it seems to be taking the city's theatrical community by storm. One source said that the entire cast of one Broadway show was involved, as well as the staff in the office of a local hospital.

Though promoters of the chain said it was legal because the letters were exchanged in person, Judith Ford, director of consumer fraud for the San Francisco County prosecutor's office, said participants can be prosecuted for mail fraud, and the chain's originators are guilty of a misdemeanor under California law.

Miss Ford said the scheme originally was promoted as if it had been developed by a "humanitarian organization, and that was not the case."

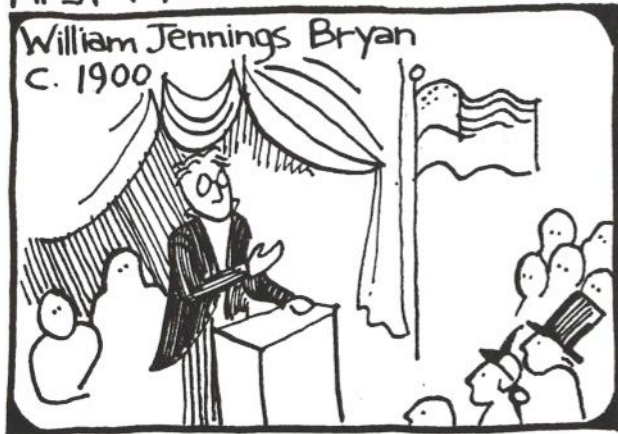
In addition, she said her office was investigating charges that the first 12 names on the list were not 12 separate people, but were instead a few people using several aliases. She said there have been no arrests, and the investigation is continuing.

Will the Circle Be Unbroken?

It didn't take me long to find the weak link, that final flaw. It had never occurred to me that I might have any trouble selling two letters. Only a week ago it had seemed that there were scores of people who would beg to buy it. Now it seemed that anyone interested had already bought one and was searching for buyers themselves. I was a little surprised and disturbed, but still optimistic - after all, I had lots of friends.

What really stopped me was the friends who were critical, asking questions I couldn't answer. They referred to an age-old con job known as a *chain letter*. Those who started it would make lots of money, and others high on the list might benefit, but only at the expense of many others at

First Mention of the Circle



"This nation shall not be crucified on a Cross of Gold. A circle, however, is another matter entirely. If you'll just see my assistant after the show..."

the bottom who would lose out. To illustrate their point, they asked, "Where does the money come from?" As far as they were concerned, the answer was clear and simple - it came directly from other people at the wide end of the pyramid.

This all seemed pretty plausible, but I really didn't want to hear it. After all, I was out \$100 and only needed to find someone who believed it might work. Obviously I had called the wrong friend. But the next one was worse...

This friend spelled out where it would break down. As an area gets saturated with letters, people will be unable to sell theirs. The more that get sold now, the more who will lose out eventually. In fact, it could be mathematically shown that any money a person made over their initial investment, some other people down the line would lose out exactly that amount. So if I was lucky, I might not lose out, but others would.

Here I stopped short. I was bummed and angry - at myself, at my friends and at this stupid Circle. Why was it that I and so many friends had fallen for such an exploitative game? What was it that kept me from thinking more clearly about it; that got me to turn off my crap detector and join up? I figured this had to be one of the stupidest things I had done in quite a while.

I was not in a good mood when I met some friends who were part of the Circle. "Your problem is that you've let yourself have negative thoughts and get caught up in old patterns of logical reasoning. If you could just think positively, just believe it will work. There are plenty of people around who would be glad to buy it. If you can follow through and keep it going, you will see how wrong your negative friends are. Just wait until the money starts rolling in." But they didn't really respond to the tough questions that had been raised, except to imply that they should not have been asked.

I still felt stupid. I talked again with my critical friends.

One pointed out that some real needs were coming out. That, in fact, the Circle played upon the needs of which many people were unaware (to belong, to find a spiritual way to make money, to escape, to play, to win).

Another friend talked of how chain letters had a long and dishonorable history. In fact, a whole psychology had developed for what were known as *flim flams*; a kind of science playing on people's weak points to separate them from their money via fraudulent schemes. Now my feeling of being so stupid was changing. I felt some anger and a strong desire to learn from this whole crazy thing. I wanted to go beyond a simple positive or negative view of the matter, to really dig down into all the contradictions and history to see what could be found.

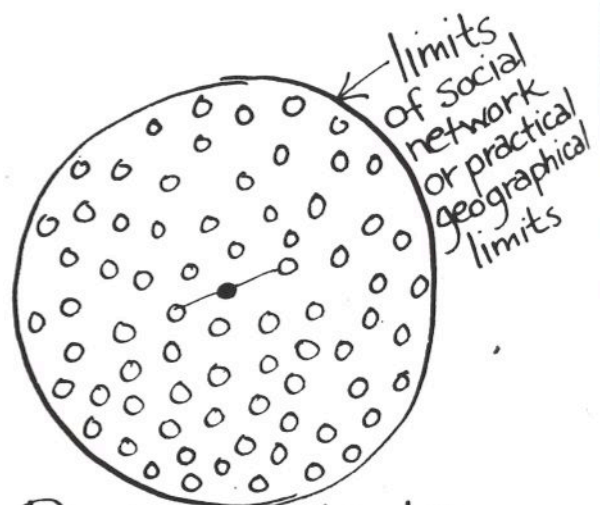
When is a Chain Letter Not a Chain Letter?

The Circle letter emphatically states "this is not a chain letter, chain letters are against the law. Altho it is based on a similar concept (that of the pyramid), rather it is a new age treatment of an ancient principle based upon integrity, and has full approval of legal council." I must admit, it did seem to differ markedly from the chain letters I had seen before. But a little research assured me that the heart and soul of the Circle is a chain letter. And I was quite surprised to discover that there is **nothing** new about it except the new age terminology. All my assumptions about how it might differ in popularity, amount of money involved, safeguards to insure its success, etc. were proved wrong.

The exact origin of chain letters is unknown, with the earliest record of its popularity coming from the early part of the century in the form of a *good luck* letter. You received one from a friend which instructed you to make seven copies and send them to seven friends within seven days. The reward was good luck if you complied and bad luck if not.

Then, in 1935, someone in Denver, Colorado started a new type of chain. This one, known as the *Prosperity Club*

Saturation in physical environments or social networks...



(subtitled *Faith, Hope and Charity*) asked participants to send only a ten cent "charity donation" to the first person, add your name to the list and pass on five copies to friends who will do likewise. It promised returns of \$1,562 when the chain continued unbroken. The craze swept the country like wild-fire and sent mail volume zooming. The Denver post office was hit with an additional 240,000 pieces of mail a day, or about three times its normal volume. At least one postal carrier was arrested for plundering his sack. Soon chains were sweeping other cities and President Roosevelt received hundreds of send-a-dime letters at the White House.

Eventually it became one of the major events of the depression. One citizen calculated that "we do not have to go (very far in the geometric progression) to salve all the ills of this country and of the entire world..." Envisioning a world without need of further taxes, the writer suggested that it be made illegal to break the chain. In Springfield, Missouri "chain-letter factories" sprung up where the ante was raised to \$.25, a dollar or even ten dollars; a "professional" sales service and a notary public signature that insured money had been sent - all in return for a 50 percent cut. One such clearing-house was called The Pot of Gold (sound familiar?). Many chain letters were passed hand-to-hand or sent via telegram to avoid postal regulations.

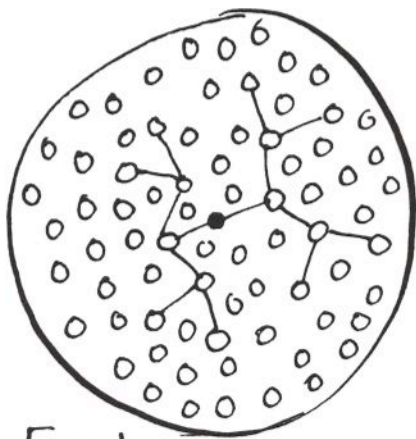
Suddenly, less than two months after it began, the chain letter craze was over. The newspaper columns read, "The craze which swept over this city yesterday subsided because almost everybody had a letter to sell, thus draining the buyer market dry. The saturation-point on any one chain is reached in a comparatively short time. As a game it was fun. As a get-rich-quick scheme, it was generally a flop."

In the wake of the great dime chain letter, other peculiar requests appeared using the chain letter form. The Liquid Assets Club, originated in Lincoln, Nebraska, held out the prospect of 15,625 pints of whiskey in return for one sent. Birmingham, Alabama chain letters directed recipients to pass on a kiss to the first person on the list. Others requested postage stamps, postcards, a bale of hay, quilt patches, golf balls, earrings, recipies, dates with college girls... Having run their course here, chain letters were popular in Britain for a short time - known as *snowball schemes*.

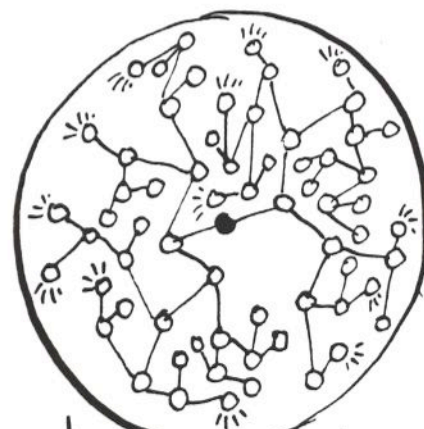


Since that time, most fraudulent schemes have set their sights on larger stakes, applying the *pyramid principle* to selling non-existent commodities or fictitious life insurance; setting up a vacation-fund club, building fund or park maintenance program - until fraud orders stopped most of these schemes. But the chain-letter prize will have to go to Glenn W. Turner, mink-oil salesman extraordinaire, who, through his glorified chain letter promotion *Dare To Be Great* signed up tens of thousands of chain participants (actually, they signed each other up), many of them at \$5,000 a crack.

Of course, chain letters have, on occasion, been put to other uses. In the Fifties, when coffee prices rose to an astonishing dollar a pound, American housewives circulated a chain letter that urged a boycott. In 1956 an industrialist raised \$45,000 via chain letter for the re-election of his friend Dwight Eisenhower. Shortly thereafter, Vice-President Richard Nixon was accused of violating the Hatch Act by mailing chain postcards to federal employees. A Senate inquiry into the matter blew over.



Early Stage:
still room.



Later: running
out of buyers.
Reports of diffi-
culty selling further
depresses market.

Chain Letters



"One if by land, two if by sea... send a dollar back to me."

A chain letter to aid the family of slain civil-rights worker Medgar Evers, in 1964, flooded former Mississippi segregationist governor Ross Barnett with five thousand one-dollar checks made out to Evers, with Barnett to serve as trustee. Barnett termed the episode "harassment."

Chain letters have been used to protest Soviet domination of Czechoslovakia, to aid flood victims, even to locate missing persons. An environmental chain letter called for recipients to wrap and mail a pound of garbage to the corporate polluter of their choice.

The popularity of chain letters continues to be mysteriously cyclical, reappearing every 3-4 years. In August 1969 there were only 97 chain letter frauds under investigation, but by 1970 (a good year) the number under investigation had shot to 559. And yes, they do bust people for chain letters, as they are illegal in most states on several different counts of fraud. Unfortunately, this only seems to add to their popularity. Recently New England Postal Inspectors were especially outraged to discover that the man behind a chain-letter fraud was a rural mail carrier who used only one real name in the letter - his own. All the other names were those of people on his route who had died and to whom there was no danger of his having to hand over any money.

For me a bit of research and reflection on this kind of history puts the Circle of Gold in a new light, rather than the new age: an old well-worn game that you'd think people would be wise to by now; that anyone trying to sell their letter would be laughed out of the room. And yet, we not only fall for it, we embrace it and turn on our friends. Perhaps the whole thing was started by a Zen Master casting around for a new stick with which to whack us over the head, screaming non-verbally, "Wake Up!"

From Fools' Gold to Medicine Circle

Many people have been fooled by the Circle. That includes me and it even includes many of those who received money from it. We have all voluntarily chosen to get involved, yet for most of us the Circle is not what we thought. One cannot help but wonder whether everyone

was as sincerely ignorant. There is anger here, but also a sense that the Circle may have some value as a mirror. By using it to learn about ourselves, the people, attitudes and world around us - perhaps it can be transformed from a negative object into an opportunity for healing.

Perhaps the first thing I see coming out from the Circle is people's greed. Chain letters are a notorious get-rich-quick, something-for-nothing scheme that plays on people's greed. Many of the Circle participants believe that small is beautiful and personally try to live simply. Some would say that they have let go of material greed entirely. But what happens when a friend offers us \$100,000?

Perhaps it's time to realize that many of us are tired of always serving others and barely scraping by (if that) ourselves. It may be that we really need and deserve a bit more.

Further, we should realize that we are still in a society that continually baits us, spending millions to convince us that we need all kinds of junk. This makes it much more difficult to distinguish need from greed. In fact, subjected to this bombardment, it may be impossible. At any rate, we should see simplifying our lives as a gradual process, one in which we need to support each other. And as long as there are such strong materialistic attitudes around us, we should not be surprised when our own greed pops up from time to time - even when we thought we had left it behind.

The Circle represents a new way of thinking about money, changing it from concepts of greed, grasping and misuse of power, and raising it to a collective redistribution of wealth with the potential of changing the economy.

- Circle of Gold

The Circle letter makes quite a point of suggesting we move on from a "poverty consciousness to a prosperity consciousness". Apparently a poverty consciousness is an attitude that things are scarce, that there won't be enough to go around and we need to always fight it out with others for what we need. The statement implies that this attitude is out of date.

But in fact, scarcity is still a real issue for the majority of Americans and will continue to be until these problems are changed. On some level most people are aware of this (for those who are unsure, let me offer a few facts - in 1962, the wealthiest 5 percent of Americans owned 50 percent of the total wealth and the richest 20 percent owned 96 percent of the corporate stock.)

The Circle of Gold replaces one economic myth (that money is made by hard work) with another (that money is made by magic). The truth is, as the name implies, that those in our system with capital to invest at the right place at the right time at the right rate of return are the real money makers. The Circle is in perfect harmony with capitalism by providing the advantage to the smart investor who gets in at the beginning. In practice it is so exploitive as to be forbidden even by capitalist laws.

...money is a form of energy and energy is infinite; constant reinvestment gives the Circle the shape of an infinitely expanding pyramidal spiral.

- Circle of Gold

Money as energy? Pyramidal spiral? Infinite expansion? Does anybody know what these words mean? Constant reinvestment simply does not happen - it is another mystification of the reality that once again somebody down the line is getting screwed. I have even heard it argued that new babies would keep being born who would invest. There may be "a sucker born every minute", but where are all those babies going to get \$100? And even if all that could be figured out, we'd have to outlaw birth control just to keep up with the geometrical progression.

There are many things in the Circle letter that prevent people from thinking clearly or critically about it. The possible thought that some Circle members might lose out is discounted because it represents the old, logical, finite manner of thinking. Now, granted there are plenty of cases where we have learned to rely too heavily on logic. But when someone is asking you to put out \$100, you'd be kind of foolish not to use some logic.

Thousands of people have done it. The facts prove the case.

- Circle of Gold

The Circle asks us to trust in it, to have faith that it will work, and at the same time tries to assure us that we cannot go wrong. By having the seller accompany the buyer to the mail box, we are taken beyond faith to see that it cannot fail. But this is all a show designed to distract us from the fact that we are taking a big risk and many will lose out. If the letter were honest about this, it would be closer to gambling in a lottery, but the Circle is aimed at people who would not gamble.

People are not allowed to think critically about the Circle. If someone even asks the wrong questions, they are being negative. Those already involved (the positive ones) would rather not continue the conversation lest they be contaminated and drawn into the negative thought pattern. In some ways this reveals how fragile and easily disrupted a belief in the Circle is. This dualistic division between positive and negative thoughts/emotions pervades many New Age communities and prevents clear thinking in many areas.

It is not possible to really define and separate thoughts and emotions into positive and negative, as anyone who understands dialectical process or the eastern yin/yang philosophy should know. These apparent opposites are part of the same whole, and change in varied circumstances.

Criticism can be very positive and constructive, although it is often not seen as such in our culture. Insecurity, mistrust, fear and anger can be valuable emotions when we pay attention to them and find appropriate ways of expressing them. In fact they become most negative when we try to deny or repress them. Finally, I have come to feel that the most negative thing I could do with the Circle of Gold is to sell it to another person, friend or not.

Some people think that members on the bottom of the list will somehow lose out, that the continuous link has to break down somewhere. This is not necessarily so, and represents thinking of the circle in a finite manner.

- Circle of Gold

The Circle does give us a glimpse of its fatal flaw, but now we are told it is all our fault. Our Karma is not right, we don't believe in ourselves or the Circle enough, we are thinking wrong, we feel insecure or lazy. Never is it suggested that the area might be saturated with letters, that now matter what one does, no-one else is going to put out \$100. The victim is to blame completely and the pyramid structure of a chain letter assures that there will be many victims.

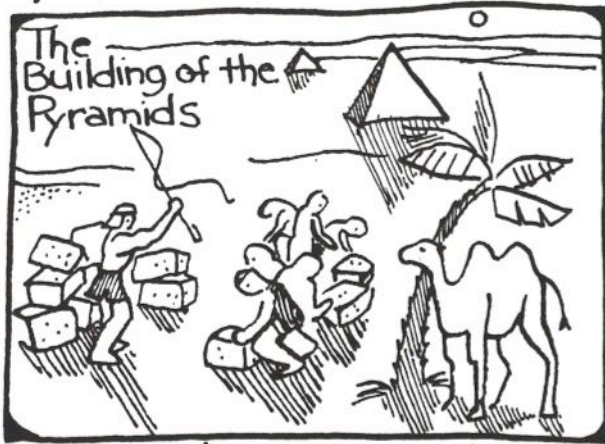
It makes me particularly sad to see people again blaming the victim. I know others who, either because they couldn't sell their letters or because they didn't want to cheat others were put down and trashed by their friends for not following through on their commitments, for not *taking responsibility for themselves*. These people are blamed not only for losing their own money, but also for cheating those who sold it to them of the money they hoped to get. Here we begin to see some really ugly results of the Circle: greed turning people on one another.

What does happen as more and more people are unable to sell their letters? Lost money, self-hate, broken friendships, major splits in larger communities are all possibilities. Further, many people will not only decide that the Circle was a rip-off, but that all New Age and alternative community thinking is a sham. Distrust, insecurity and the sense of scarcity may actually be heightened by the eventual

By the time you get to the 12th transaction - and it takes 12 to get your name to the top of the list - you have 4096 people trying to sell the letter to 8192 people. By the 32nd time, more than 2 billion people will be trying to sell the letter.

- Boston Globe, 10/17/78

Pyramid Clubs



"Now, each person takes two slabs. The first slab you carry to the site at the top of your list..."

collapse of the pyramid. The Circle will tend to leave people more mystified and confused about their economic situation in the end. I hope all that won't happen; that this is an idle exercise in paranoid fantasy, but it has *at least* the potential of the original promises.

Most people I know who are involved in the Circle are sincere people. They're not in it to rip others off, often not even themselves. There is talk of donating money to the Clamshell Alliance (anti-nuclear power organizing) or using it to buy land and start a community or provide seed-funding for community service projects. It's a shame that people cannot have land to live on or be able to work serving the community unless they have capital to work with. But magic won't replace organizing.

People's intentions are very good in most cases, and *Intention* is indeed a buzz-word in the letter along with *Integrity*, *Faith*, *Mutual Support*, etc. All the good intentions in the world, however, do not make it right to con others out of their money. Perhaps for some this has been an opportunity to think of something they really should like to do it only they had the seed money. Perhaps people can envisage how, if everyone pooled a few dollars of their personal wealth, it might go farther as collective social wealth. But we've got to find better models than a chain letter for doing so. Magic won't replace organization.

Some people are excited by the kind of networking that happens among people with chain letters. There seem to be vast possibilities here for communication, community building and mutual support on some level. Actually phone trees use a similar concept. And the idea of spreading the word about a boycott or other information seems to have possibilities.

The most recent developments for the Circle include getting big headlines in mainstream papers - none of which has been very favorable. The Circle has proved a smash in New York, as the entire cast of a Broadway play bought in.

A Circle of Platinum has gotten off to a good start, requiring \$1,000 to buy in. But all is not rosy. Both California and Massachusetts seem to be pretty well saturated and classified ads have appeared in both states in last ditch efforts to unload letters that no longer have a market. Some even speculate that California may at last sink into the ocean under the weight of this one.

The End of the Rainbow

Perhaps the most positive action we could take would be to try and eliminate chain-letters once and for all. This is not the simplest task, but let's look at some possibilities.

First you might clean up your own house by returning any money you received through the Circle of Gold to the person who sent it with a letter explaining why. You could also write the person you sent \$50 to and let them know you have re-evaluated your actions and would like to ask for the money back as one person to another. See what reaction you get to these, if any. In my case, I got my \$50 back with a long letter thanking me for acting so powerfully to change the situation rather than just having negative feelings.

If you bought the Circle but have not yet sold it, you could decide (as I did) that you refuse to resell it on principal, thus admitting your mistake and not furthering the scam even if this means losing some money. Notify everyone you know of this decision.

Decide to start a chain letter collection. Every time you receive one add it to your collection without passing it on. Send a postcard to the *friend*, as well as all the names on the list explaining why you have done so and demanding that they *think!*

Of course, you don't have to just sit around waiting for a chain letter. You could start your own **Anti-Chain-Letter**. Rise Up O' Sisters & Brothers! You have nothing to lose but your chains... Explain that your purpose is to let them know what you think of chain letters; why they are a fraud, exploitive and illegal. Mention their long history of failure. Talk of various ways you would suggest dealing with them. Throw in a few jokes, a favorite quote or graphic; after all - this is a gift, remember!

Perhaps one day everyone will be wise to it and chain letters will truly become extinct. Who knows, the time may come when my chain letter collection could be sold to a museum. What do you think - any chance I could get \$100,000 for it? □



Dick McLeester is a member of the *Food For Thought* collective book and periodicals traveling store. He recently helped organize *Dance Spree*, formerly was Coordinator of Education for the Western Mass Food Co-ops, explores dreams and is a long-time member of the *House on the curve*, in North Hadley, Mass.

readers' survey



Please tell us about yourself... and about what you would like to see more of in COMMUNITIES

Part 1 - ABOUT YOU

1. Your age _____ Occupation _____ Years of schooling _____
2. Do you live in the city? _____ Suburbs? _____ Apartment? _____ Rural area? _____
3. Do you live in a cooperative household (share rent & food)? _____
a communal situation (share income, food, rent, etc.)? _____
If so, how many people live with you? _____
4. How many people read your copy of **Communities**? _____ What is your favorite magazine (aside from **Communities**, of course)? _____
5. What goals do you have in the next 5 years?
6. What are the most important concerns you have at this time (worldwide, personal - view of current political and economic situation)?

Do you have any solutions? What are they?
7. Do you belong to any kind of cooperative... be specific (food, housing, work, babysitting)?

Part 2 - ABOUT US

8. Please indicate what you would like to see more or less of in future issues of **Communities**...

More Less

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | a. Political analysis |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | b. Urban focus |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | c. Rural focus |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | d. Economics in community |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | e. Family and interpersonal relationships in community |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | f. Articles on the kibbutz |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | g. Women's issues |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | h. Aging & childrearing |

More Less

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | i. Description of communities |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | j. Spiritual communities |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | k. "How to do it" articles |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | l. Humor |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | m. International coverage |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | n. Reach |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | o. Resources |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | p. Grapevine |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | q. Social science |

9. Rate on a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 low and 5 high the following features or articles.

- The coverage of the Consumer Cooperative Alliance issue 35
- The coverage of the Bank Bill issue 35
- A focus on regional issues i.e. British Columbia
- Kerista Village issue 36
- Secrets of the Circle of Gold issue 36

10. Which article in the past year did you enjoy the most? the least?

11. Which issue in the past year did you enjoy the most? the least?

12. Graphic input. Rate on a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 low and 5 high. Please comment.

- Photographs
- Layout
- Covers
- General attractiveness of issue

13. The GUIDE. We are expanding our annual directory into a 150 page **Guide to Cooperative Alternatives** (see back cover). Do you know of any resource groups or communities who would like to be mentioned in this guide? Please give names and addresses and person whom we can contact.

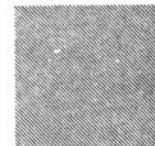
14. Do you know of any groups who would like to help distribute the Guide?

HERE'S WHAT I CAN DO FOR COMMUNITIES

- I will renew my subscription
- I will get friends to subscribe or send a friend a gift subscription or Guide
- I will contribute articles, or artwork, to the editors
- I will enclose a tax deductible contribution to **Communities** in the amount of \$
- We will advertize our conferences and events (write for rates) or send in donations with reach and resources
- Other, please specify

Thanks for taking time to fill out this questionnaire and sending it back as soon as possible. Be sure to include your own name and address when you mail it back to us.

Return address



Communities
Box 426
Louisa, Va. 23093

I am no newcomer to the subject of intentional community. Since July 1971 I have lived in one. Joining only five months after its inception, I have watched it grow and succeed; helped develop the ideas, and the practice. The community of which I am a member is Kerista Village in San Francisco, spiritual community of 26 adults.

The Odyssey Of Kerista Village



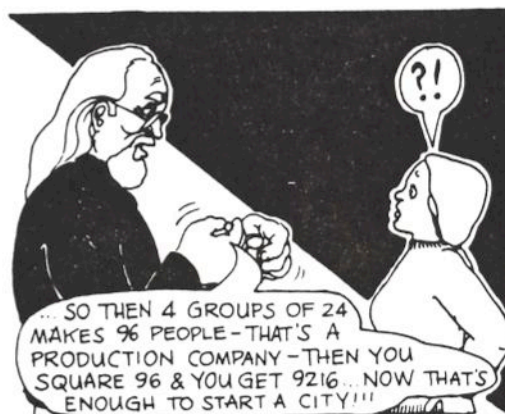
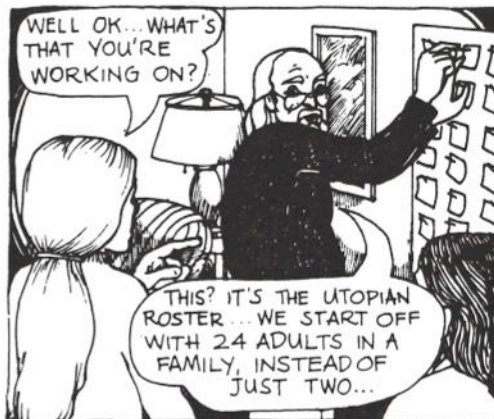
by
Bluejay Way

I - SPIRITUALITY AND GROWTH

Anyone familiar with utopian experiments of the past and communities of today will tell you that generally the most successful are those with a leader and a spiritual identification. My own experience backs this up. Spiritual communities and leader communities push from 2 to 3 digits with apparent ease. In the history of Kerista Village, we have been struggling indefatigably to attract new members and have been growing at a small rate.

Our community has not only billed itself as egalitarian, but demanded a level of responsible participation from members beyond the grasp of most people who check us out. In all fairness, our slow growth has been due not only to our steadfast adherence to complete equality, but also to our position on interpersonal relationships. We've created an alternative form of relating that goes beyond coupling, with its concomitant jealousy and possessiveness. *Polyfidelity* is a lifestyle in which an individual lives with a number of her/his best friends, and maintains multiple relationships within the group, while maintaining a fidelity bond to the group.

We are a spiritual community. Yet we have always seen ourselves as being detached from the superstitions and seemingly irrational dogmas to which most supposedly spiritual people are attached. Therefore in the early days we emphasized that we were a community of rationalists. We were aware of the pressures brought to bear on an individual who is serious about breaking away from the coupling mold. We knew that only someone firmly attached to reason and intellect could surmount the pull of conventionality and her/his conditioned emotions toward a romantic one-to-one couple relationship. Although we knew this attachment to rationality in no way lessened our spirituality, we were seen by others as a non-spiritual community.



These three factors, then, contributed to our slow, sometimes imperceptible growth: 1) our attachment to rationality; 2) our demand for people who could assume equal responsibility in the community; and 3) our desire to maintain polyfidelitous (uncoupled-committed) relationships.

In the last year and a half we have emphasized the spiritual foundation and orientation of the community. While still not growing at the same rate as this year's most popular guru trip, we have noticed a definite increase in our rate of growth. Fourteen of the twenty-six members of the community have joined in the last twelve months.

The spiritual emphasis did not evolve as a ploy to attract more members. The founders of the community, a man named Brother Jud and a woman named Even Eve, have always conceived of Kerista Village as a co-ed monastery; a new religion for the new age. When Jud started building community in 1956, it was as the result of a conversion experience in which a chorus of hallucinated voices gave him the calling to found the next great religion of the world. Eve's conversion was no less metaphysical, although somewhat less grandiose. While riding with a bunch of hippies in the back of a pick-up truck in Vermont in the last stages of a pre-college summer spree she was struck with the calling to become a communitarian building the new society. They met, two people with a profound spiritual vision, and Kerista Village the community, and Kerista, the new religion, was born. Unlike other spiritual communes, however, they resolved that neither of them was to be spiritually exalted or esteemed as the master or founder. They would only play as equals.

In the early days it was not uncommon for the I Ching to be thrown two and three times a day. The alphabet board - a homemade ouija board - was used by members of the commune in obtaining new names to mark one's new life as a communitarian. It was also used to plug into wisdom from the *intelligence field*, the source in the cosmos of all thoughts and ideas, or so we believed.

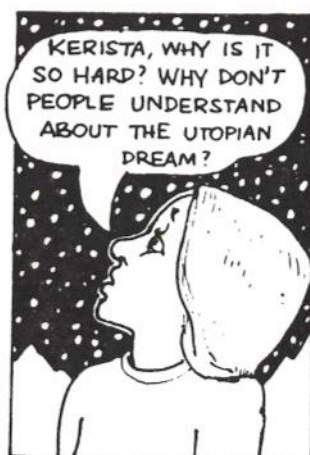
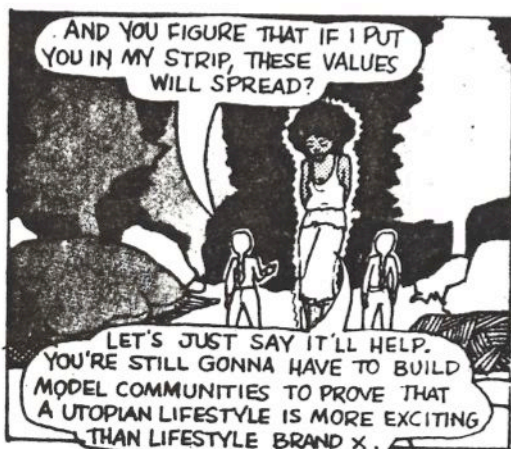
Cosmology, religiousness, spirituality, demystification of spiritual energy and receiving directions via *transcendental coincidences* and serendipitous occurrences were everyday topics of conversations. Voodoo and religions of *primitive* cultures were subjects of fascination as our own pantheon of names and concepts emerged with positions

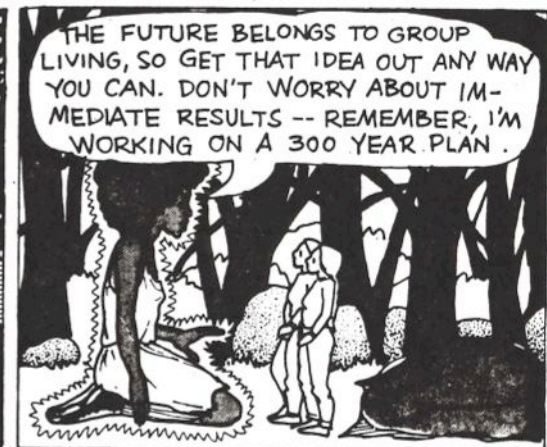
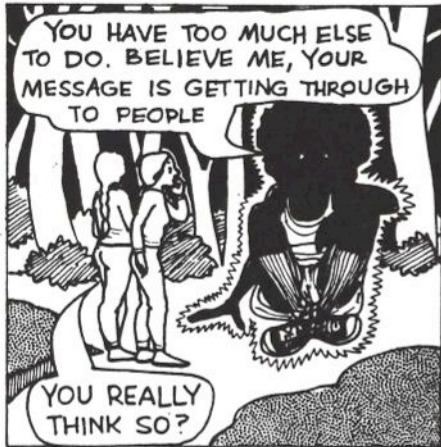
on everything from reincarnation to free will, to answering the age old question of religions: How could the ultimate spirit of beneficence (divinity) allow such intense suffering and injustice to have been perpetrated since time immemorial? Our answer, by the way: So humanity could slowly rise above oppression and create the *technology* and *know how* which creates a material base for the end of oppression. At the same time we could be evolving a *moral* code in humans which abhors the oppression of the past with a determination to see it wiped out once and for all.

In our efforts to transcend coupling we dealt largely with psychology and in our justification of community we concerned ourselves largely with ecology. These more secular interests de-emphasized our spiritual concerns. As we spent more time delving into such subjects we were necessarily spending less time on metaphysics and spirituality.

Perhaps as a way of getting back on our more spiritual path, or perhaps as a result of having worked out the psychological base for the transcendence of coupling, we've been going deeper into our religious inclinations. When this last wave of spirituality began, about a year and a half ago, we found ourselves with a deep need for the kind of tranquility which true believers always seem to have. In the wake of the impending ecological crisis, it seemed necessary for sanity to believe that the divine had a plan worked out for the survival and utopianization of planet earth. While we were certainly going to work to bring this about, we wanted to have tranquility even if it looked to us like our work was progressing rather slowly.

The next major step in our path was the inception of the goddess. We noticed two things: that all cultures have deities that they venerate and that people who believe in a deity have a certain tranquility and sense of security not found otherwise. So we invented a goddess to serve our microculture. We still revere divinity and do not confuse the deity with divinity. The deity is our invention. She is a source of inspiration (a perfect model to look up to). She is a source of sub-conscious wish-substantiation (by praying to the deity we are really telling our subconscious minds how we want to grow and change). Worship of the deity opens up receptors in the mind leading to the experience of mystical consciousness.





II - GROWTH AND PROBLEMS

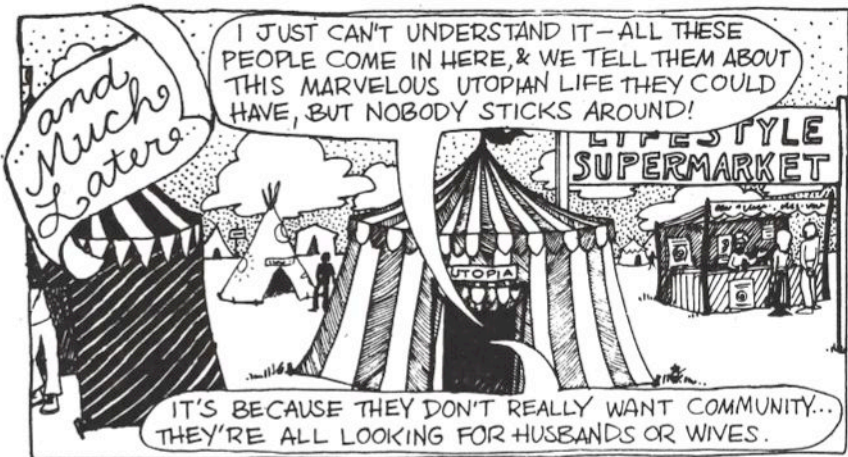
With our increased emphasis on spirituality, including the founding of our own church - Kerista Consciousness Church - we have grown. When there were fewer than 10 of us we had established an equality of responsibility and integrity that made us feel we literally had attained total equality. With the influx of new people, we found ourselves increasingly in a de facto leader/follower type of division. Invariably the new people knew less than the old-timers. Since each member was and is totally self-directing, this inequality of knowledge of systems and

procedures created a condition where the newcomers were doing less to make the trip happen.

Older members had already wrestled with the pulls of coupling vs. the desire to live and practice polyfidelity. Newer members invariably had to spend a certain amount of their time in the internal struggle of conditioned desires conflicting with utopian desires. Each new member has, at some point, come face to face with the ball and chain syndrome. Picture a person who is running. Suddenly

she/he is flat on the ground, having come to the end of a chain attaching a leg to a lead ball. The person running represents desires to transcend coupling. The ball and chain conditioned feelings which always creep up and slow one down. It is only through strong determination that members can transcend these desires and slowly unlock and dissociate themselves from the ball and chain and move ahead into the psychological frontier of polyfidelity.

In addition new members are always dealing with resolving unfinished situations with old friends and lovers and obtaining appropriate relationships with parents and relatives. These psychological issues occupy a great deal of time and energy and necessarily limit the amount of creative energy they can put into understanding and working for the trip.



One more issue contributed to a somewhat unequal relationship between members of the community. This is ageism. Jud, one of the founders, is 55 years old, has long white hair, a long white beard, a booming voice and stands a full six foot three. When he's laughing he looks like Santa Claus. When he's seriously arguing in favor of one position or another his forceful manner makes him reminiscent of Charlton Heston playing Moses. His forceful personality, combined with most people's unconscious desires to be led, had caused some people in the community to expect him to take more of an active role in the affairs of the community than they themselves were interested in taking.

Then there was also the question of conditioned self-image roles. Those of us who joined the community close to its inception knew that it was up to us to create a structure where none had previously existed. We saw it as culture-structure: creating a microculture out of a raw idea. If it was going to get built it was going to be because people like us were working diligently. Newer members had a different image: they were joining an established community and didn't see themselves with the image of being conceptualizers. They were *joiners*. They expected us to have worked everything out.

All of these factors were quite understandable. As an old-timer I had great compassion with the struggles the newer members were going through. I also had years to change my self-image from that of a joiner into that of a creator. The newer members had to accomplish a

transformation in a matter of weeks or months to catch up to what had taken us years to evolve. They were striving to attain the same kind of seasoning and knowledge of community systems. Only then could there be an equality of responsible concern within the community. Since each person's talents and interests naturally differed, we knew that each person would manifest responsibility in different areas. We wanted each person to have equal dedication and commitment to the success of the community. To do this, we had to bring newcomers to the same level of understanding as old-timers.

At all times we have maintained non-sexism and political equality. Every decision we've ever made has been by vote and people have always had one vote from the moment they joined the community. (Joining is

conditional upon 70 percent acceptance.) The inequality which emerged in the community was not at the decision-making level. It was more at the overview level.

We took great pleasure at having people tell us that our community was such that no matter who they talked to, everyone understood the psychological issues involved in polyfidelity. Everyone understood the philosophy, backwards and forwards, around which the community was patterned.

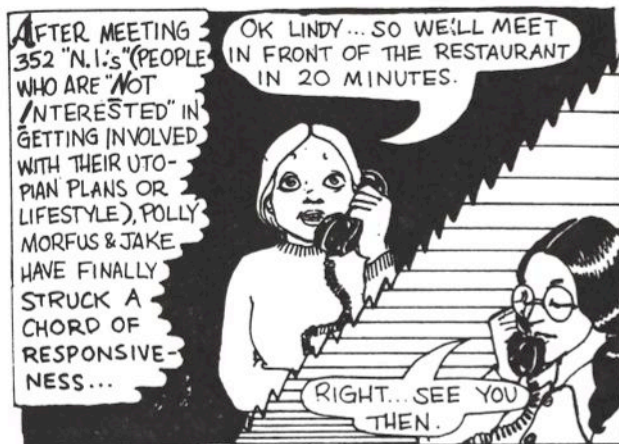
The same could not be said for our money management. If someone asked certain members to explain the financial reports of the corporation (which is the change agent for the community) those people would have to say that they didn't know or understand bookkeeping.

The community has about 30 different projects and programs. Keeping track of them all demands great awareness. We advertise in many places, which means calls coming in and everyone is expected to respond. So lack of understanding shows up because of the complexity of the community, around money issues, and demands on all members to be fully aware of all procedures.

The prospect of having turned into an *inequalitarian* community as a result of growth was very frightening. Right around the first of the year all of us were sitting around *gestalting* (having a flow of consciousness, no-holds-barred conversation) about the state of affairs in the group, when all of a sudden, Jud burst into a heavy round of bawling and sobbing.

"Some people in this room want me to be the guru! But I'm not going to be the guru. I can't!" he cried. Others cried that night as well. I looked deep within myself and cried that somehow we had to find a way to get beyond periodic lapses into mediocrity. We either were going to live up to our title, *Kerista Village Utopian Community*, or change our name to read, *Kerista Village Home of Mediocrity*."

We all looked into our hearts that night and have been looking ever since. Most recently we've come up with a system to attain true equality at the overview level. We've undertaken a series of workshops for community members, all community members, in all phases of the organizational management and procedures of the community. Everything is covered. Workshops in how to answer the phone deal with all the different types of



phone calls we receive and explanations of the programs going on. Most importantly we have made mastery of the formal bookkeeping system a spiritual exercise for members. Each member is getting personal instructions in the system and is keeping a personal set of books. (We do not pool everything we have into a central pot: We have a voluntary wealth limitation.)

Beyond maintaining a funky, comfortable yet moderate standard of living, members put their economic overage into projects of their choosing which benefit the community. Through mastery of money management and bookkeeping, people are able to get into surplus income sharing.

Mastery of bookkeeping enable us to do a consolidated report as a community. We can issue reports showing the total income and expenses for all community members and community programs. These reports can be understood by everyone in the community rather than the elite administrative class. In most communities only a very few people understand the flow of money and this contributes to an inequality; an hierarchy of administrative control. Through the democratization of administrative knowledge and ability we can truly make decisions regarding expenditures and conservation of economic resources at the democratic level.

Once people become aware of the economic status of the community they have an interest in the operation from which they would otherwise be detached. The

community becomes each person's *baby* to be taken care of and guarded the same way a person would guard her/his private estate.

Peer self-help group therapy and utopian psychology techniques are enabling people to overcome the pulls of their past conditioning. As internal conflicts of a psychological nature subside, administrative overview and knowledge are creating a condition of equality of capability and responsibility for the affairs of the community. Members are entering a period where total equality appears to be emerging. As a result of the increased focus on spiritual issues, as well, people are getting the necessary cosmic inspiration to assume responsibility and perform as functioning self-directing leaders.

We used to think of ourselves as a *leaderless*



community. Now we think of ourselves as a community of leaders with a system of government which is democratic and into *shared* leadership. Rather than seeing ourselves as guruless, we see each member of the community as a guru or respected teacher. As people get the knowledge about overview and systems procedures, they practice being transmission centers and pass it on to newer people, who don't have it as yet.

All this is significant because we don't know of any other community that has ever attained pure and total equality, not just in decision making but in day-to-day responsibility, power and interest in community affairs. It is thrilling to imagine that as we grow, we will pass on the knowledge so that at all times each member will be able to answer any question about any part of the community's operation. In our case, we have found that as we become more centered and in control of events regarding the material plane, our consciousness opens up to knowledge and awareness of the mystical plane.

Some argue that spiritual awareness is slowed down when you're trying to raise someone up to your level. We have found this to be untrue. As our community becomes more egalitarian, the essential or mundane parts of life take a smaller role as the load is shared. Having companions who are fellow adventurers enable us to experience new realms of spirit.

□



The basic unit of Kerista Village is the B-FIC, or *Best Friend Identity Cluster*. Ideally, each B-FIC has 12 men and 12 women engaged in a life-time commitment, with the mechanism of heterosexual and rotational sleeping schedules. Each B-FIC is an organic model, which only grows as new members are acceptable to all. In practice, the longest lasting B-FIC, *The Purple submarine* (more than five years) has seven members, while other, smaller B-FICS and a pool of unincorporated individuals account for the rest of the villagers.



It was 3:30 in the morning. I came out of my dream-confused world with surprising clarity of mind, almost as if I had expected to be awakened by the sound of Eve's voice. "Lil, Jud. There's news." Rolling over, I saw Eve, Pep, and Geo silhouetted against the doorway of the bedroom. "The Purple Submarine is now six."

There it was, so simply stated. I was not caught totally by surprise. For most of the night, until about forty-five minutes earlier, I had been participating in the gestalt which had centered on Way, our partner of five years. Way was expressing pulls toward being in a group with Sym and Fir, members of our community who, at different points in the past, had been part of the Purple Submarine. She was also bringing out feelings of inequality inside the group which none of the rest of us were experiencing. She was baffled and gloomy and losing the religious perspective that whatever happened would be for the best.

"Azo is across the street with Way now, getting her settled in," said Pep, as the three of them filed in and took places at the foot of the bed and on the sofa. "There's room for all of us to fit on the bed now," I smiled, curling up my legs,

"You may as well all climb up for a conference." As the others filled me in on what had happened after I left and as we all fleshed out the picture for Jud who had slept through most of it, I found myself moved by a profound sense of appreciation and tranquility.

When Azo returned, I got the full visual. There we were — all six of us piled on the bed. The new look of the Purple Submarine. I felt cozy and warm — and yes, happy! Now how could it be that my overall mood would be one of buoyancy when a partner with whom I had anticipated a lifetime run had decided she could be happier elsewhere? Had I never really loved Way in the first place? Was I frigidly incapable of loving anyone? Were the emotions I had dubbed love something less than love which would prevent me from ever experiencing the real thing?

It is impossible to know what the future holds. In relationships, it seems to me that the wisest approach is that of humility — to admit that you cannot know with certainty whether your relationships will do a lifetime run. Standing in the present, feeling the emotions of appreciation which we call love, you don't know whether love will last or not,

whether it is actually true love or delusion.

What I am talking about is the very nature of our non-possessive relationships, summed up both in the phrase "holding on tightly, letting go lightly" and in our commitment to a current intention of lifetime involvement with one another. Gathering all conscious thoughts and feelings, each of us is saying out front that we cannot imagine wanting to be anywhere else than on the path we currently find ourselves on, and with no other people than those we have chosen to be with. And yet, we are leaving ourselves open to new input and to the idea that things change.

My self-image includes being free of dogma in any form. I renew my lifetime intention to my partners and community constantly. The commitment to them is always fresh, free of any guilt or dependency. In the phrase "a current intention of lifetime involvement", we tend to emphasize "lifetime" rather than "current intention" because emotionally we experience that kind of security. Nevertheless, our experience shows that lifetime expectations are not always realized.

There is some part of me that wants to recognize and come to terms with the fragility of my relationships. That is the part which is satisfied and even stimulated by the realistic appraisal of our love as an illusion. We have often said about both our B-FIC and our community that while we are just this side of being strangers, we are still closer and more unified than any other group or family we know of outside our microculture.

We have always seen our current intention of lifetime involvement as the basis for trust and a means to avoid the "hold back factor" built into more transient relationships. It may be that some degree of "hold back," albeit a very tiny percentage, is actually healthy. Healthy because acknowledgment — without fear — of the possibility that love may not hold could be a psychological protection against grief reaction.

Similarly, for all I know, my partners and I may form a large circle and walk away in six different directions. My illusion, however, is that we are indivisible and that death alone will part us. The happiest, most liberating thought, is that I am not attached to that belief as a certainty. I can be flexible enough and religious enough to accept any eventuality with joyousness.

Yesterday morning I was lying in bed with Jud. He asked me if I thought our high affection level would burn out. Since Jud often asks that question in a light and rhetorical vein, I answered cheerfully that the thought hadn't occurred to me. A moment or two of silence told me he was serious. I gulped a bit and asked, "Yours and mine, or all of ours in general?" Emotionally, I was completely unprepared for the reply — "Yours and mine." I felt as though someone had just thrown a ten pound shotput down my throat. My stomach was already in knots. I asked him to explain.

As it turned out, Jud's thoughts were springing from an incident which had happened in the baths over the past weekend at Harbin Hot Springs. One night, Jud remembered being physically affectionate with me and noticed that I was only passively receiving the touches. Right after that Azo, the other man in our B-FIC, came into the pool. Apparently I went over to him and immediately became physically affectionate. The flag going up in Jud's mind

was whether my feelings for him were burning out and whether I was developing a preferential relationship with Azo.

I clearly felt nothing of the kind and was completely unaware of the incident he described. I gave him reassurance that my affection had not waned in the slightest and then, much to my own surprise, began to cry. When Jud asked why I was crying, I explained that I was just feeling badly for having hurt him, for having made my partner, and best friend, feel insecure. His answer struck me and is apropos to the subject at hand. "How could you hurt me? I only want to have what is mine. If our affection isn't meant to hold, why would I want us to stay together and how could I be hurt by reality?"

Surrendering to a positive view of reality makes it an easy path for non-possessive relationships. The purity of Jud's integrity got through to me and was all the confirmation I needed that he was truly reassured. In our family, we give one another the right to ask for reassurance on any aspect of our relationships. Once it is given, we have the kind of respect for one another's sincerity that makes further reassurance rarely needed.

The spiritual advantage of seeing love as an illusion is its consistency with the emotions of devotion and surrender. One of the practical advantages of that perspective is that it helps people free

themselves from the psychological bonds of possessiveness. Part of its merit may also be a concession to each individual's instinct for survival.

In making multiple adult relationships work, the emotion of equality is a particularly important one to feel. If inequalities exist and are perceived, subtle rivalries necessarily develop. Feelings of inferiority have their natural outlet in expressions of superiority. Feelings of inferiority lead to paranoid that one is not desired and could, at some point, be left alone. Survival instincts make us feel threatened and draw us into trying to find an edge, an advantage. In extreme forms (neurotic couple relationships, for instance), jealousy, dependency, put-down-humor, (all of which quickly erode a relationship) become rampant.

Even, very subtle traces of rivalry destroy idyllic happiness when the combination of people is sensitive to evaluating behavior and guarding against mediocrity. Equality, felt as an emotion, is an exhilaration springing from appreciating your own worth and the worth of others. It is felt as the absence of stress. Buoyancy and absence of negative intrigue are essential to keeping the illusion of love innocent and fresh.

Each one of us in our group noticed that the distancing with Way was considerably less traumatic than similar situations in the past. I attribute that phenomenon to a growing religiousness. Our spiritual orientation and positive view toward reality have been part of our philosophy for quite some time but I think they have become internalized at increasingly deeper levels of faith. Hope is a natural and immediate by-product of the belief that you cannot fall.

Hope keeps our illusion fresh, tied to the present reality, and keeps us going through positive growth and change together. We feel internal security stemming from the sensation of being tapped into a Cosmic design and from the shared opinion that, as a B-FIC, we're the best illusion around. Anyway, faith in our love as a great illusion is melting levels of frigidity and opening us up to new degrees of trust — with humor and humility. As we see it, there is nothing that New Age religion or New Age relationships need more than humility and humor. The Purple Submarine is just trying to do its part.



creating an efficient money management system

The first thing a person has to establish is that money doesn't manage itself. It has to be managed by people. When you bring together twenty adults or twenty million adults into a collective sharing relationship the principles are the same. The money comes from different income sources and the money goes out to different categories of expense.

Money comes into what? Money goes out from what? We call it a change agent. The change agent is the entity which holds our money, just like a reservoir holds the drinking water for a city. Money flows like water. Our commune is a vessel with outer boundaries. Inside the boundaries is our lifespaces. This consists of the space that we've control over... our housing facilities, our motor vehicles, our assets including our cash, and any other things that we own or control. Our change agent is made up of three corporate entities.

Three? Why three? one is political... that is our church. It's tax-exempt and chartered by the State of California. It's our constitutional democracy and the entity that guarantees to each member full and equal voting rights on all policies which govern the community. The church makes the laws that we live by, including the sumptuary laws which control our spending. We wish, as a matter of policy, to curtail all superfluous economic activity. Therefore, conspicuous consumption or wasteful spending is against our laws. Committing an infraction may result in expulsion from the commune.

The next corporate entity which we've established is an educational nonprofit corporation, also chartered by the State of California. This organization operates our educational facilities including all schools and colleges which make up the space we live in. We dwell in a learning environment... a university run by its students. The

educational nonprofit corporation is also designed to operate public service projects for the benefit of the general public. For example, in San Francisco we distribute free newspapers and magazines that raise the consciousness of the members of the larger community. We also provide free educational and recreational activities for children and adults including sponsoring a Utopian Art Theater.

The third part of our change agent is organized as a self-employed workers' coop; **Abacus Self-Employed Workers Co-op, Inc.** It's organized as a corporation under the cooperative laws of the State of California. Its express purpose is to handle all administrative matters for self-employed workers and to create opportunities for more people to become self-employed if they wish to do so. An individual applying for membership in our commune, is given a complete orientation about the commune's economic and political systems. S/he agrees to master the elementary bookkeeping system which each member is obliged to become a part of. Thus, each member keeps a scratch pad on which to enter all transactions as they occur. Going out to lunch, spending money for carfare, buying a book, etc. Many of these items are reimbursable to the individual by the change agent.

The three parts of the change agent all function in complete harmony with each other, just as the parts of an automotive vehicle work together. The incoming member goes through a trial period of two months. At the end of this period, the requirement is to clean up personal finances in such a manner as to start out on an equal footing with all other members, whose personal voluntary wealth limitation is \$600. A person who has \$20,600 upon entering the commune, would place \$20,000 in a trust fund or escrow account, which is frozen for seven years. If, before seven years, this particular person leaves the commune, s/he will leave with exactly the same amount, \$20,600. After seven years, the \$20,000 is contributed to the change agent, if the person has truly decided to a lifetime commitment.

by Brother Jud

HOW MONEY WORKS FOR KERISTA VILLAGERS:

A person begins each month with \$600 in a personal account. It is their responsibility during the course of the month to:

[A] contribute to the upkeep of the community [through the church and educational corporation].

[B] take care of personal needs at a simple level [food, sundries, telephone].

[C] contribute to the collective savings of the community, the use of which is decided democratically. The savings are held through Project Sister, and cover the full range

of what the community might choose as necessary or enjoyable for its life [cars and their maintenance, education, travel, white water rafting equipment...].

This system works for 21 urban adults, with incomes ranging from \$18,000 to \$3,600 per year. The community is *not* responsible to provide work for members, though many members have organized small, income producing projects (the largest being the shopper/newspaper, *Storefront Classroom*).

FOR EXAMPLE

account at beginning of month
church dues
educational corporation tuition (includes rent)
estimated contribution toward collective savings [Sister]
non-reimbursable personal expenses (includes food)
personal income
preliminary end of month balance
adjusted contribution toward collective savings
account at end of the month

	PERSON A	PERSON B
account at beginning of month	600	600
church dues	-5	-5
educational corporation tuition (includes rent)	-100	-100
estimated contribution toward collective savings [Sister]	-100	-100
non-reimbursable personal expenses (includes food)	-195	-225
personal income	400	705
preliminary end of month balance	600	875
adjusted contribution toward collective savings	0	-275
account at end of the month	\$600	\$600



Why does Polly Morfus, star of "Far Out West" comics, live in the Kerista Village commune?

MANY OF OUR READERS HAVE ASKED ABOUT THIS, AND WE WERE CURIOUS TOO... SO WE ARRANGED A SPECIAL INTERVIEW TO ASK THE QUESTION TO POLLY HERSELF. HERE SHE IS NOW, TALKING TO VETERAN REPORTER LOIS LANE...



WELL POLLY, I'VE FOLLOWED YOUR STORY FROM THE START. IT'S REALLY A PLEASURE TO MEET YOU IN PERSON.

I FEEL THE SAME WAY ABOUT YOU, LOIS. I MUST SAY, IT'S REMARKABLE YOU STILL HAVEN'T AGED A DAY IN WHAT, THIRTY YEARS?



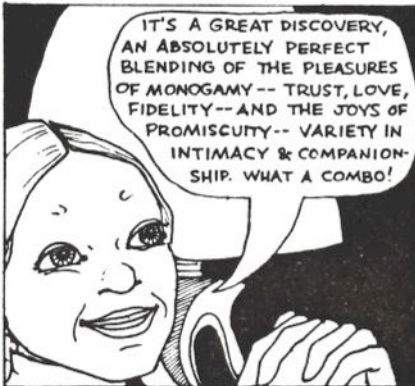
HA, HA! WELL YOU KNOW, TRADE SECRETS. BUT BACK TO YOU, POLLY, WE HAVEN'T MUCH SPACE... WHY DO YOU LIVE IN KERISTA VILLAGE?

HM, THAT'S NOT AN EASY THING TO SUMMARIZE IN JUST A FEW BOXES... KERISTA VILLAGE IS SO DIFFERENT FROM ANYTHING ELSE GOING...



ARE YOU REFERRING TO THE COMMUNE'S PRACTICE OF GROUP MARRIAGE -- POLY--UH-- HOW DO YOU SAY IT?

POLYFIDELITY. YEAH, WELL SURE, THAT'S DEFINITELY A BIG PART OF WHAT'S SO UNIQUE ABOUT IT.



IT'S A GREAT DISCOVERY, AN ABSOLUTELY PERFECT BLENDING OF THE PLEASURES OF MONOGAMY -- TRUST, LOVE, FIDELITY -- AND THE JOYS OF PROMISCUITY -- VARIETY IN INTIMACY & COMPANIONSHIP. WHAT A COMBO!



AND THIS IS UNIQUE TO YOUR COMMUNE?

AS FAR AS WE KNOW, IT IS. I GUESS ANOTHER THING THAT'S SPECIAL ABOUT IT IS THE GESTALT PROCESS WE USE. DO WE EVER TALK?



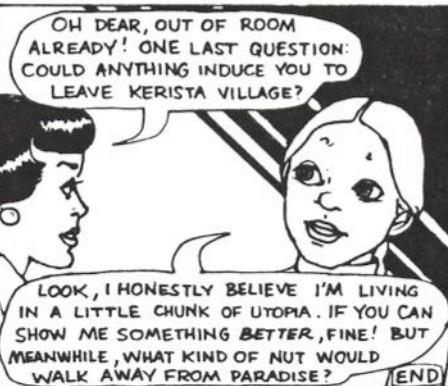
THE IDEA IS TO EXPRESS ALL YOUR FEELINGS, ISN'T IT?

FEELINGS, PARANOIAS, FANTASIES, THOUGHTS, AMBITIONS, ANYTHING & EVERYTHING. WE LEAVE NO PSYCHOLOGICAL STONES UNTURNED. I GUESS THE LEVEL OF COMMUNICATING MOST PEOPLE DO IS REALLY DULL TO ME BY CONTRAST.



SO I TAKE IT THAT YOU FIND THIS ENVIRONMENT STIMULATING.

YEAH, IT'S CULTURE SCULPTURE, IT REALLY KEEPS ME AMUSED. I WAS A FISH OUT OF WATER EVERYPLACE ELSE... NOW I JUST GET ON... SWIMMINGLY!



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a night in the children's house



by **Hanna Nehab**

Dinnertime, eight o'clock in the evening. I enter the dining room, which is humming with people and I feel a little bit embarrassed. All the people around are in their better or evening clothes, clean, orderly and most of them seem to have plenty of time on their hands. I myself come in with working clothes on me and an acute feeling that my time is short and everybody is aware of that. So I take only a little bit of bread and look around to see, if there is something tasty to add to the nightwatch's menu. Having finished my bread and my tea I get up, say goodbye to my slightly annoyed daughters and man and start for the kitchen. There I shall find a basket with food to sustain two or three persons during the night. Looking around, I add those tasty or interesting extra-bits I had been looking for and, putting all the stuff on my bike, I am off.

I enter a very small room: a table, three chairs, a small refrigerator, a small cupboard and a broad board with four different radio-telephone sets: one, the most elaborate, is a radio-telephone. I turn it on and hear all the humming, speaking, singing of all the 160 or so children in their houses. I listen sharply to find out, if somebody is crying or if there is some unusual noise. If so, I am spotting the place easily by trying the different knobs, one to each room...

Nothing unusual and I lift the receiver of another telephone, to contact the guardians, who are in charge of the gate and the civilian and/or military security. They answer and promise to visit during the night. There is also a kind of "Walky-talky" and on it some 5 or 6 names. Those are the women who have small babies and are still feeding them in the evening or at night. Each of them has a small transistor which they carry with them to the dining room, to the movie if there is one, or to their friends and neighbors. The moment the baby is awake I shall turn the transistor on and inform them that they are wanted and should come quickly. Finally there is a regular telephone which is disconnected, in order not to waste too much money on private talks.

Having made sure that nothing special is to be heard, and having arranged the food in the refrigerator, I take my flashlight and begin a round of the babies and the toddlers: all those children who are already an hour or so in bed. (With the bigger children the metas (metapelot) stay till 9 o'clock.) We now have 3 babyhouses, each one with 12 or 18 children. It is summertime and I need not worry whether or not they are firmly tucked under their blankets. Sometimes I even free them from too much covering. I enjoy this round: sleeping children are the sweetest thing I can think of. Entering a children's house I look for the notebook, which is open on a table, and there I check to see if some child is sick, has to get some medicine, had had some injections or is apt to cry at a certain hour.

Returning to the watchroom I may find some of the nurses of the bigger children, who give me all the information I need or may be needing. I write everything down - there are so many children and I like to be sure of everything.

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Tonight I am told that in one of the houses a boy has high fever and is not yet asleep. The nurse asks me: "Please go now, that he may see you and speak with you. That may give him a better feeling for the night." The boy is half asleep but very glad to see me and to hear that I shall come every half hour to look at him. (And so I shall do - never lie to children, especially not if they are really worried.)

Now it is half past nine o'clock and I feel like having a cup of coffee. I sit down, settling in for the night, taking out a book or something to write or perhaps some handicraft; the best way to overcome sleepiness. And then I begin to think of this letter...today everything is so big and well organized... There was a time when only the military guard looked after the children - 20 or 30 we had, only nobody thought of being so very considerate. And we had only very little supervising: we were "heroic" people and surmised that our children were also very brave. We expected them, even the smaller ones, to manage in the dark to help each other. We had a different theory about babies then: that was the time before Dr. Spock's book became the Bible of childraising. When a child cried you had to see if there was perhaps some special reason, like malaria or some other fever, but if not... "crying is healthy and develops the respiratory tract" - so the doctors told us. And we accepted this attitude. We ourselves did not cry and if we did - we would never have admitted it.

Some years later, when we had already 4 or 5 houses with children, nightwatch was considered "services only" i.e. unproductive work and the less time you spent on it the better. So the nightwatch had to sort out laundry, feed the work animals, prepare breakfast and light the kitchen stove etc. etc. And to go around and awaken 10 or 15 people at the same moment, not too late and not too early. It was 8 hours of hard work, you could not think of reading or knitting...



But nightwatch then had a very special "highpoint" which today is lost together with poverty and hunger: at

midnight one watchman after the other came to eat in the room of the children's house nightwatch. At a time, when we had two women for the children and two or three men against thieves and/or infiltrants, this midnight dinner was a very lively and likeable affair - and drawn-out. The main dish was chips. They've had to be enough for the guards, for those nightworkers who happened to work in the fields and for each of our own children, who expected to find in the morning a bag with crisp, golden chips at their bedside, big enough for 2 or 3 roommates. There were also all kinds of loners: those who could find no sleep, or perhaps the husband of a pregnant woman, who had to be brought to the hospital, or the different artists, who only at night felt the full impact of their creativity and the special hunger which goes with sudden inspiration. We were then not very considerate but easy-going and lighthearted: the noise we made could awaken all the children at once - but only seldom did that happen. We were happily feasting and talking and enjoying our good company and the children were used to the noise.

Back now to today's routine: it is 10 o'clock and my colleague comes to join me. She is in charge of the kindergarten - and schoolchildren. After having settled down and having refreshed herself with some coffee or tea, she looks over all the notes and messages which pertain to the 80 or 90 children in her care.

Every hour I make my rounds, changing diapers here and there, comforting a crying child, opening and closing windows and so on...and in between I enjoy the fact that I am awake when all the world is asleep. Only late at night can I enjoy the stars, recognize satellites or shooting stars, listen to the voices from the children's animal-farm (it belongs to the schoolchildren and is, with the work and management done there, a preparation for kibbutz-life; kibbutz management and democracy in general). The peacock, full of burning love, is screaming abominably, the pigeons are moving slowly and cooing in their sleep. But them, in those times we still had the jackals. You nearly can't distinguish between their voice and the voice of a child in terror and sometimes I frantically ran from house to house in search of the child, till I arrived at the last house and heard the jackals far away, beyond the fence. (That was before the transistors and other electronic appliances.)

At 2 o'clock in the morning my replacement arrives and I can go home to sleep. My work is only six hours, because of my age, and the friend who comes to relieve me will stay till 6 o'clock in the morning. My other colleague, the one who arrived at 10 o'clock, is younger than us both and works 8 hours. So age may be even a privilege! But before leaving I enter the rooms of my grandchildren leaving a picture postcard on each one's bed, to greet them in the morning.

Generally one has one of two weeks of nightwatch in a year. But I myself, being older and working in a job where there is no need to replace me, may be called on to fill in whenever the need arises. I gladly agree to do so, since this is my second favorite profession. I am looking forward to my next "call".

Looking back, looking back...you come to compare and to ask yourself a lot of questions. In those 44 years attitudes

changed radically. Some older people like to say: "When we were young, we were so idealistic and so strong and so much more worthy etc., etc. That is not my cup of tea. I look at things in a kind of dialectic way. When we were young and the kibbutz was new and we could not be sure that it will succeed - we were extremely harsh and in all our decisions extremists and collectivists. This attitude we also transferred to the children: they had identical clothes, no privacy, had to be quite sure of themselves and were extremely sure of our worthiness. We succeeded: common property, children house and communal education - all these are facts. There is no need any more to be harsh and demanding. Those of our children who chose to become educators, metas or teachers don't need to stress the communal character of education. They can be lenient, can develop and even sometimes spoil the single child, because kibbutz education is firmly established. After a generation's time of stark collectivistic education we can indulge in the development of the individuality of each member and each child, as long as we remain aware of the fact that a balanced state in vulnerable and frail and we must always reestablish the balance.

But those are the dialectics of life: you attempt something, you achieve it essentially, even if not completely, and in this new situation you must again attempt a new harmony. Today the kibbutz is indulgent to kids and youngsters, liberal in a lot of aspects to grownups and elderly people and still is a commune, based on all the principles of a commune. May be that this liberal trend will

become too prevalent and then again attitudes must be changed. But these changes are our life. It has been good, heroic and adventurous in the past. It is good today: interesting and full of problems. But all the time it remains Kibbutz, a living Kibbutz. □



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COMMUNITY, B.C.

Beautiful and sparsely settled, British Columbia has long attracted experiments in intentional and cooperative community. In a country where cooperatively organized business is a large fraction of the overall economy, there nevertheless remains a great deal to be done in achieving social and political transformations, given the ideals of the cooperative movement as defined by the Rochdale Principles. The following 7 articles give a mere sampling of some current and historical attempts to use the cooperative form to promote radical change.

Keith Jardine (also involved in the U.S. cooperative movement; see "A Gathering of Friends", issue 35), gives an overview of the consumer and worker cooperative movement in B.C., and the prominent role that the Fed-Up food network has in it. The Campus Residence Association article by Jim Bowman traces the development of a housing coop through some evolutionary stages that are familiar to many cooperators and communitarians.



The rest of this section reports on intentional community, starting with some historical notes on 19th and early 20th century groups, then moving into present-day communities. One is struck by the diverse philosophies here; from the spiritual focus of 100 Mile Lodge, to the unique Marxist perspective of a rural activist commune, Ochiltree. Argenta community is notable for its rapport with the larger community of Kootenay Lake within which it exists. Finally, the Coalition of Intentional Cooperative Communities (CICC) article by Jim Bowman gives us a glimpse of an excitingly large and diverse network of British Columbia communities.

As a "correspondent editor", Jim Bowman patiently brought together this material for Communities over a period of 17 months. A recent graduate in sociology, Jim pursues his hobbies of history and gourmet cooking as a long-time resident of the New West Coop in Westminster, B.C. He is also active in Fed-Up, and the CICC.

The Emerging Cooperatives

by keith jardine

Keith Jardine has been involved in the co-op movement since the age of 14. He is a former member at Fed-Up Co-operative and a past member of the Credit Committee at CCEC Credit Union. He is presently engaged as a B.C. co-ordinator for the People's Food Commission, working in his spare time on the committee designing the Co-op Resource Project. He is also on the board of directors of the Consumer Co-operative Alliance.

The 1970's represent a very unique period for the co-operative movement. In the past six years, North America has seen the emergence of a "new wave" of co-operatives, whose numbers doubled and tripled in the early part of the decade, and whose growth rate now averages about 30 percent annually.

In 1974, the Co-operative Union of Canada identified the need to gather information on these co-operatives, and to examine the potential for developing relationships between these newer groups and the longer established co-operatives. In response, Ontario's four largest co-operative organizations; (The Ontario Credit Union League, Co-operators Insurance Associations of Guelph, United Co-operatives of Ontario, and Gay Lea Food Co-operative) commissioned a co-operative resource center - "Proaction" - to gather information on these newer co-ops. The resulting report provided a wealth of information and specific suggestions for ways the established co-ops might co-operate with them.

While the report, prepared by Bonnie Rose, was written over three years ago, it is very pertinent to the present moment in the co-op movement, and it remains descriptive of these newer co-ops. The following excerpts from this report are particularly useful in defining the co-ops which I shall refer to as the "emerging co-operatives".

"One must carefully avoid using stereotypes or easy generalizations in dealing with these co-operatives. They are highly diverse, varying greatly in function, mode of operation, and philosophical viewpoints on co-operation. In services they encompass food, housing, day care, crafts, rural settlements, schools, and others less common. In operations, they range from paid staff to staff/member shared labor, to total voluntarism. Philosophically, they are of many minds, from socialism to anarchism.

But even while respecting their diversity, one can identify certain values and aims which most emerging co-operatives hold in common:

- Specialized roles are avoided. Personal development is often seen as requiring continual freedom to change, to find oneself. To this end, stereotyped work, sex or social roles are avoided whenever possible. Much attention is also paid to organizing shared or backup responsibilities so that an individual may withdraw from a role or task when necessary without letting the group down.
- Nonhierarchical, noncompetitive and decentralized organization is seen as desirable. Not all the emerging groups are egalitarian and very few are anarchistic, but most do deplore the ineffectiveness and inhumanity of large bureaucracies.
- A high degree of individual member responsibility and participation is an objective of most groups. Such responsibility and participation are seen as essential to personal development as well as effective group functioning.
- The work/home dichotomy is discouraged. Many people involved in emerging co-operatives find traditional work settings alienating. They feel strongly that one should be able to relate to the people and activities at one's place of work as honestly and freely as those at home.
- Experience is respected. Many people involved have cause to respect the value of experience, for they learned difficult lessons in their first naive attempts at developing co-operatives. They caught themselves reinventing the wheel, and wish to avoid doing so in the future. Many have an additional reason to respect the value of experience: they have spent years of effort and thousands of dollars to obtain educations which turned out to have little practical value on the job market compared to experientially learned practical trades.
- Social objectives are seen as equal in importance to financial survival. The older groups recognize that economic survival is necessary, but in no way do they see it as sufficient. A co-operative which is a financial success at the cost of close member relationships would be as much a failure to them as one which went bankrupt while good relationships were maintained.
- Community/co-operative values prevail. A way of life in which people can work together in mutual trust to achieve common objectives is seen as essential. In the past, groups have carried this ideal to Utopian extreme, suffering rude

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awakenings as a consequence. They have been learning that trust is earned rather than given.

- Limited growth is accepted. These co-operatives usually prefer to divide into two groups or move into a new service or product area rather than grow larger in a given area. Diversification is seen as more desirable than monolithic expansion. Vertical integration of decentralized co-operative organizations is the basic economic strategy of emerging co-operatives.

- The ecological imperative is primary. The fact that our resources are limited is becoming only too obvious to all of us. The people who build emerging co-operatives often do so because they believe it will enable them to create self-regulating systems which tax our nonrenewable resources little if at all.

- Social change is embraced. While established co-operatives operate by this society's rules even while trying to effect change in it, the groups studied here are squarely aligned with basic change. Most of the people involved are not content with the quality of life offered through existing social and economic institutions, nor are they satisfied that these institutions can continue to grow indefinitely. Co-operatives are seen as one way of effecting necessary change.

The food co-ops are often organized as much to provide community contact as to provide food, although savings on food are appreciated. Nutritional considerations are of key importance, and many of the new food co-ops deal in

"health" foods. These groups represent a different market group than that served by established... (co-ops). Many of the people involved in them would not be happier shopping in a supermarket that happened to be co-operatively owned than in any supermarket.

Common Problems

The groups also have some common problems:

- Hyperidealism often leads to impossible expectations and consequent disappointments.

- Transiency among members results in a lack of consistent leadership. This has been a problem particularly with urban projects, and particularly food co-operatives, which require a relatively low level of commitment from their members. Rural communities have also had these problems.

- Varied member backgrounds and philosophies have led to difficulties in developing common objectives and goals.

- The largest problem is lack of information and access to the experience of others. Emerging groups are attempting to apply the principles of co-operation innovatively in a highly complex social system. All too often, they lack basic information on what is and has been done and spend much time and energy on rediscovery. This is not strictly due to ignorance. For example, much of the Canadian co-operative experience to date is either undocumented, written in



public relations prose, or buried in files. It is not readily available for people to use in developing co-operatives suited to contemporary needs."

The Emerging Co-ops in B.C. - Some History

In her preliminary report to the Co-operative Union of Canada, Ms. Rose identified the Fed-Up Co-op network in B.C. as being "...indisputably the leaders of the emerging co-op movement (in Canada)." This remains true of B.C.'s emerging co-op movement of which Fed-Up is now only a part.

The first of these co-ops sprang up in 1971; a small pre-order group in Victoria. Only a year later, their number had grown to twelve, with new co-ops forming all over the province. These twelve co-ops banded together in the fall of 1972 to form their own wholesale association. The new "co-ops of co-ops" was dubbed "Fed Up" - a name perhaps suggesting dissatisfaction with the present food system, or being well fed, or *federation*. For whatever reason, the name caught on and stuck, despite some objections to its negative tone.

A group of the more committed co-op members took on the task of setting up the warehouse. The Fed-Up warehouse soon became an extension of the way the individual co-ops worked, only on a provincial scale.

Within each co-op, individuals would place prepaid, advance orders. A community hall or some such would be used as a place to distribute the food upon its arrival. Members would share in all the labour and decision making required in running their co-ops.

The operating structure of Fed-Up that was established remains the same today. Each of the member co-ops sends 1 or 2 members to work in the warehouse for a week each quarter. The half-dozen or so workweek people plus the Paid Collective (the 4 paid Fed-Up employees) form the Warehouse Collective, which makes week-to-week administrative decisions as well as providing the warehouse labor. While this system requires that the Paid Collective spend some time

training the workweek people, it ensures that all of the member co-ops take an active part in Fed-Up's administration and that the structure remains decentralized. Long-term policy decisions are made at quarterly Council Meetings hosted by a different co-op each time.

The Fed-Up warehouse began to carry a wider and wider selection of goods, mainly by ordering regularly through other wholesalers. Most ordering groups did not need to place orders anywhere else. This, combined with the simplicity of organizing co-ops of this model, made it very easy for new groups to form and join Fed-Up. Between 1972 and 1973, the number of ordering co-ops mushroomed from twelve to over 50, with each group membership ranging from 15 to 300.

Fed-Up established a structure unique to pre-order consumer co-ops in North America, designed to accommodate the needs of small rural-based co-ops in a sparsely-populated province. A policy of splitting cases to supply small orders was adopted, work-weeks in the Vancouver warehouse were assigned on the basis of geography; the closer member co-ops were required to contribute more labor.

The overall growth of these pre-order co-ops achieved a peak in 1975, with nearly three quarters of a million dollars in goods ordered through Fed-Up in that year.

The Movement Diversifies

It was also in that year that Fed-Up first established paid staff at their warehouse. This, and other innovations, had been hindered by many of the problems enumerated in Bonnie Rose's report.

Numerous changes took place, which kindled a re-examination of the Fed-Up system, and its future overall role:

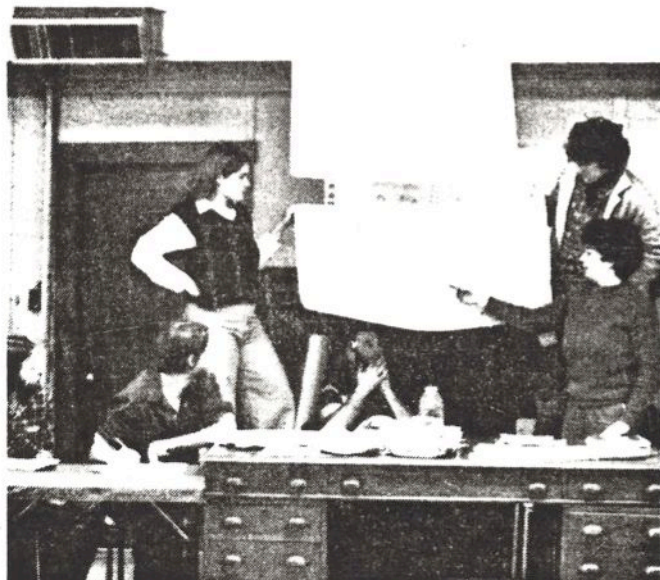
1. Following the 1975 peak, Fed-Up's volume took a long slump. Some of the co-ops had folded, other were experiencing a decline in membership. A few co-ops had withdrawn from Fed-Up, as it had ceased to meet their needs.

2. The first of the new "storefront" co-ops did not see themselves fitting into the Fed-Up system. There was a growing trend towards converting preorder co-ops to larger storefronts, and a new set of needs was arising.

3. A new wholesale group had become established, named (perhaps inappropriately) the Brokerage Collective. They started by handling a few items for Fed-Up and the co-ops not served by Fed-Up. They expanded to carry more of the staple items required by the latter, and later increased their volume by opening sales to the general "natural foods" market.

4. Another wholesale group later started up, also closely tied to the co-ops called "Wild West Organic Harvest". The group provided fresh produce to the same market as the Brokerage.

5. A credit union (CCEC Credit Union) had been incorporated by emerging co-ops and other "self-help" groups. But the co-ops needed to tighten up their business practices if they were to take advantage of the new credit union.





6. Regional groupings of co-ops began to develop; one has already established a warehouse. The regional groups serve to consolidate volume locally, preliminary to ordering through Vancouver wholesalers. They also aim to encourage increased food production in their respective regions.

Food production groups were starting to produce canned goods (in reusable jars), bakery items, and granola. Canary Cannery and Uprising Breads had grown, with the Brokerage Collective, to form CRS Workers' Co-op.

In another B.C. city, People's Share Collective (producing granola and breads), Astral Moves (a trucking collective), and Harmony Distributors (a distributor for Wild West) have grown to form a workers' co-op, following CRS's example.

What Next?

It's difficult to say just where this loosely-knit cooperative community will go from here. In the case of the food wholesaling groups, overall volume is increasing steadily, but Fed-Up's volume is not keeping pace with that of the others, which do not require the labor of the co-ops buying from them.

The increasing complexity of the individual operations; lack of clarity about each of their respective roles (division of markets, etc.); fuzziness about where consumer control should stop and where worker control should begin; the tendency to submerge explicit political ideals for ones of economic success...all of these factors threaten to fragment the co-op community and undermine its survival.

At the retail level many individual co-ops are experiencing economic and ideological problems. However, there are now efforts afoot which may draw these groups closer together and serve to solve some of the pressing problems.

First, a group called the Co-op Resource Project has begun laying the groundwork for various co-op educational and technical assistance programs.

Secondly, attempts at dialogue and shared planning among these groups are occurring with increasing frequency. It is only through this kind of communication that the co-ops can move forward in a mutually beneficial way.

(Author's Note: To give the above issues the analysis they deserve would require a much longer and much different article. This article was edited down from the May 1978 issue of Enterprise, a B.C. magazine for credit union officers. It was intended to introduce the emerging co-ops to the established credit unions, but hopefully will meet the needs of Communities readers as well.)

Keith Jardine invites ideas from Communities readers.

*His address is
2204 West 13th Avenue
Vancouver, B.C.
V6K 2S3*

An excellent newspaper, the Catalyst, is published by a collective of Fed-Up about 9 times a year. Besides "housekeeping matters", it usually contains interesting articles on communities, nutrition, the environment, and political ideas. Subscription rates [for 1 year] are:

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The Catalyst's address is:

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Campus Residence Cooperative Association

by jim bowman

The Campus Residence Cooperative Association (known to its members and friends as the New West Co-op) consists of two three-story Edwardian houses side-by-side in the inner-city neighborhood of New Westminster, a city in southwestern British Columbia. It lies on the fringe of an affluent residential district, dominated by nuclear families, with boarders or roomers in the larger houses. Another adjacent district consists mostly of recently-built apartment buildings inhabited by young working-class individuals and families. Within a one-block radius of the Co-op are a corner grocery store, a small park, two coffee shops, and a beer parlour.

The Co-op had its beginnings in the fall of 1966 with a group of Simon Fraser University (SFU) students living cooperatively in a rented house. These people were aware of an upsurge in cooperative student residential life. The Campus Residence Cooperative, Incorporated, which had operated co-ops at the University of Toronto since 1938, was in the process of establishing Rochdale College, an ill-fated educational-residential institution. Co-ops in residential neighborhoods near most Canadian universities were centers of radical political activity and experimentation with unconventional lifestyles - aspects of the world-wide "youth revolt" of the late 1960's.

In January, 1967 the Campus Residence Cooperative Association was incorporated. The constitution allowed for a wide range of potential activities, and a low initiation fee of \$1.00. Using a mortgage from Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation and a second mortgage from the B.C. Central Credit Union, the founders purchased the Co-op's present property in 1967 and began to renovate it. The founders, who constituted the first Board of Directors of the Co-op, established a structure of rents on the basis of the size of rooms. A house manager received free rent in exchange for undertaking general repairs and supervising house cleaning.

By December of 1967 most of the founders had moved out for various reasons, and the manager's position was eliminated as a cost-cutting gesture. The responsibility for week-to-week affairs fell to general house meetings of the residents.

The Co-op at this time was composed almost entirely of young SFU students and dropouts. Most were involved in a search for personal fulfillment - some through inward-di-



rected means (psychotropic drugs and mysticism), while other sought external solutions through radical political activism. The polarization between these two tendencies became more pronounced as student activism at SFU became more militant. By the fall of 1968, three of the "dopers" were evicted by the Board for trafficking in LSD, an action which resulted in the departure of most of the "mystics" and "dopers". This purge was conducted by the Board to discourage irresponsible attitudes and protect the Co-op from outside persecution. It resulted in a situation whereby the "political" faction came to dominate the house.

The "political" era marked the beginning of a communitarian concept of the Co-op. The rent structure was replaced by one in which everyone paid an equal amount, regardless of room size. For the first time children were included in the house, in an attempt to make the co-op experience more meaningful. New members were required to be sponsored by incumbent members, and were scrutinized carefully. The Co-op became the center of activity of the Students for a Democratic University, the major activist group at SFU. Its role was seen as a base for political work - a "cell" in a network of revolutionaries. It was also seen as a model or testing ground for social organization in a communist society.

In the fall of 1969 the student movement suffered its most crushing blow - the defeat of a major strike at the university. A pessimistic mood prevailed in the Co-op, and by the

spring of 1970 most of its members had moved on to other universities, to political activism in the city of Vancouver, or to rural communes. This departure resulted in the most serious crisis of the Co-op's history. The "politicals" had misused the Co-op's finances, resulting in a serious deficit, as well as a shortage of residents at the same time. Out of necessity, a system of admitting new members without question was adopted.

From what appeared to be the death of the Co-op, a phoenix-like regeneration of optimism and enthusiasm occurred. The diverse newcomers eagerly took on tasks to bolster the sagging financial state of the Co-op and shape a cohesive new community. One of the members, Theadora, a middle-aged divorcee, took on the role of "charismatic leader". Using a knowledge of group dynamics and psychology, she formed relationships with the various members which were catalytic in the socialization process of new members. Also instrumental as a cohesive force was a series of group LSD sessions, which led to a feeling of group identity. This period in the Co-op's history has been described as "T-groupish". Without deliberately setting out to do so, the Co-op was using communal living as a form of therapy. House meetings were held without the use of Robert's Rules of Order, which were considered "bourgeois", and an attempt was made to reach major decisions with a consensus of all members. It was at this time that the Co-op made a few unsuccessful attempts at establishing cottage industries, made short-lived liaisons with rural communities, and undertook serious discussions on the history and philosophy of communalism.

Within a year, Theadora's role as leader was challenged, and a move toward a more egalitarian distribution of power was underway. Theadora moved out, and the dominant role in house affairs tended to fall to whoever volunteered the most time to various house duties. Eventually Will, a community worker with a penchant for politics, assumed a dominant position. During this period the Co-op established liaisons with various community social agencies, and several emotionally-disturbed teenagers became members. liaisons with various community social agencies, and several emotionally-disturbed teenagers became members.

Since 1974 a system of organization without leadership has evolved. A legal-rational distribution of power at house meetings has developed, involving rotating chairpersons, relegation of detailed matters to committees, and the use of a modified form of Robert's Rules. Although the written constitution of the Co-op is still in effect in theory, actual decision-making is done at house meetings, the Constitution of the house meetings is an unwritten, evolving one, much like the British parliamentary tradition. Debates on contentious issues and admission of new members involve the use of the "Swing-around", a procedure by which the floor is passed from member to member in a clockwise or counter-clockwise manner, allowing each member to speak to the question without immediate rebuttal. New members are required to reside in the Co-op for a month's trial period, and must be acceptable to 75 percent of the Co-op.

The present membership of the Co-op consists of 24 adults and 3 children. Its adult members range in age from 18 to 66, with a median age of 24.5. The educational level of its members is higher than average, but the employment rate and median income is lower than the national average for this age-group. The Co-op has a disproportionately high



rate of unattached males.

A survey revealed that most members moved in primarily for economic or other practical reasons, although the psychological or social advantages of cooperative living was often a secondary factor. After staying in the Co-op for some time, however, most members found the increased social interaction reason enough to remain. Many of the present members are former members who have left the Co-op and then returned. Often members leave for several months on vacation or for temporary jobs, holding their room in the Co-op by paying partial rent during their absence. The transience of Co-op members is probably less than that of their age-group in the society-at-large.

A majority of Co-op members felt that cooperative living was not only more economical than living individually or in nuclear family households, but that it also meant a considerable saving of time spent on household tasks. Most members spend more time in various recreational pursuits than they would in an individual or nuclear family household.

Most of the members surveyed said they spend up to half of their time is social contact with other Co-op members, although most were also involved with people outside the Co-op. As a compact network of relationships, the Co-op acts as the hub of a larger, looser network of neighbors, former Co-op members, and other friends and acquaintances in New Westminster and throughout metropolitan Vancouver.

While some of those interviewed saw their membership in the Co-op as a long-term commitment, the majority saw their stay as a transitory stage in their lives, a means to save economic resources, or develop social or vocational skills. A relatively small proportion could foresee living in a nuclear family household or a small or cooperative situation. Many simply had the intention of spending considerable time in travel, education, or other pursuits of self-development. Most had no certain future plans.

Such transience is characteristic of urban groups that lack an economic base or strong commitment mechanisms. Yet, the membership felt that there was social and economic significance to such cooperative efforts. The emphasis on understanding people, on social dynamics and the moral concept of sharing provides an important interpersonal support network to counter the impersonality of city life. Economically, cooperative living was seen as a way of reducing wasteful and unnecessary consumption by sharing resources. □

Historical Notes

Intentional Communities in B.C.

by jim bowman

To many, the province of British Columbia is a sylvan utopia of majestic mountains, fertile valleys, and shimmering fjords. With a population of only two million (2/3 of which is concentrated in the urbanized southeastern corner of the province) and an area equal to that of California, Oregon, and Washington combined, its geography has always attracted communitarians who wish to seek harmony with nature and isolation from urban society. With a relatively small area suited to agriculture (4 percent of the province), its economy has historically been dominated by extraction industries, such as logging and mining. Intentional communities have had to develop in the midst of a province of "company towns".

A brief historical overview is worthwhile, because these previous intentional communities of British Columbia have been largely ignored by American students of communitarianism. Yet, they established a tradition that is carried on in many ways by the present-day communities and networks described elsewhere in this issue.

The communal society that has had the greatest impact on British Columbia was the Christian Community of Universal Brotherhood, or the Doukhobors Community. Another short-lived but significant community was Sointula, also described below.

A few other communities are worth a passing mention: The Canadian Cooperative Society (1896-99) at Ruskin was an attempt to establish a community with an industrial base in accordance with the principles of the English utopian tradition of Owen and Ruskin. The Star Construction Company (1925-31?) was a community of young fundamentalist Christians who operated a cheese factory at Sooke. The Aquarian Foundation (1924-33) whose ideology was based upon several pseudo-sciences and Eastern cults, came to an end when its founder, a Rasputin-like character known as Brother Twelve, was sued by some of his disillusioned followers. Undoubtedly other unpublicized communities have existed in the past.

THE DOUKHOBORS

The exact origin of the Doukhobors is uncertain, but they are believed to have formed in the late seventeenth century in southern Russia as a reaction against the dogmatism of the Russian Orthodox Church. An illiterate peasant society,

the Doukhobors kept no written records but relied upon the Living Earth, an oral tradition of hymns, catechisms, and stories. They were bitterly persecuted by the Czars, although they were able to establish an era of stability and communal prosperity under the liberal Czar Alexander I between 1801 and 1839. Imprisonments, exiles, conscription, knoutings, and enforced mass migrations were renewed under succeeding Czars. In the face of this



Doukhobors awaiting the funeral procession of Peter

repression, the great spiritual leader Peter (the Lordly) Verigin defiantly united the Doukhobors. In 1895 a Declaration of Doukhobor principles was made which included the following:

- The members of the Community regard all that is, lovingly and with delight. They try to inspire their growing ones with this line of thought.
- By the word "God", the members of the Community understand: the power of love, the power of life, which is the source of all being.
- The world is based upon going forward; all things strive for perfection, and through this process seek to rejoin their source, as seeds yeild ripe fruit.
- The members of the Community in their beliefs allow utter freedom to all that is, including the life of man. Every organization founded upon violence is counted unlawful.
- The chief base of the life of man - thought, reason serves. For material food this serves: air, water, fruits, and vegetables.
- It is held that the life of mankind is communal, upheld through the strength of moral law, for which (this) rule serves: "whatever I do not want for myself, I should not wish for others."

The publication of this subversively pacifist statement,

accompanied by a ceremonial burning of weapons, resulted in still further persecution. But in 1899 the intervention of the anarcho-pacifist Count Leo Tolstoy as well as several American, British, and Canadian Quakers permitted the arrival of 7,400 Doukhobors - about half their total population - in Saskatchewan in 1899.

The Canadian government was at first eager for the industrious Doukhobors to settle on the under-populated Prairies, and offered them three large blocs of land for colonization. Soon, though, it became apparent that the government required an oath of allegiance to the Crown, availability for military service, and abandonment of the communal system of land tenure as conditions of settlement. About half of the community, known as the Independent Doukhobors, accepted the government's terms and assimilated into the Canadian cultural mosaic.

Under the benevolent dictatorship of Peter the Lordly, the "Community Doukhobors" left the Saskatchewan lands and purchased farmlands in the valleys of the West Kootenay region of British Columbia in 1908. It was here that the Doukhobors prospered through hard work and deficit financing, building brick factories, a sawmill, a grain elevator, a jam factory, and numerous roads and bridges. The typical Doukhobor form of settlement in "villages" was established. A village consisted of 50 to 75 persons residing in two large brick houses connected by a



Verigin, Brilliant, B.C., 1924. Note the Doukhobor "villages" in the background.

U-shaped wooden annex of apartments. A kitchen and a school were sometimes housed in separate buildings. The village was usually the basic unit of Doukhobor economic, political, social, religious, and educational life.

After Peter the Lordly's death in a mysterious explosion in 1924, the leadership passed to his somewhat erratic son, Peter Petrovich (the Purger) Verigin. Under increased economic and social pressures from the surrounding Anglo-Saxon society, the tensions which had always been dormant within the Community erupted, and continue to be a tragic cause of divisiveness to this day.

Government policies were established, obvious attempts to systematically destroy the Community organization. In 1940 the mortgage on the Doukhobors' lands and industries were foreclosed, despite the fact that it had nearly been paid off. Title was purchased by the B.C. government, placing the Doukhobors in the compromising position of tenancy. The industries deteriorated, apparently from government neglect. In enforcing compulsory schooling laws, Doukhobor children were sometimes separated from their parents and sent to a makeshift boarding school.

As a reaction to this the radical minority Sons of Freedom sub-sect became active. Zealous in their interpretation of Doukhobor principles, they paraded in the nude and destroyed their property in an Adamite gesture of innocence before God. Their actions were also a form of protest against government policies and the perceived materialism of the Community Doukhobors. These actions, publicised by a sensationalistic press, brought further repression to the entire Doukhobor community. After a series of upheavals, the majority of Doukhobors finally abandoned the communitarian lifestyle and were assimilated into the mainstream of Canadian society by the mid-1960's. A handful of impoverished Sons of Freedom continue to assert their anti-authoritarian principles (and some are still imprisoned for it). A few of the younger Doukhobors have made attempts to revive their grandparents' communitarian lifestyles, and preserve their history.

The ideology and ethical code established by the Doukhobors and successfully practiced for some seventy years continues as a source of inspiration for the "back-to-the-land" movement of today. The simple Doukhobor motto "Toil and Peaceful Life" sums up the goal of many of today's communitarians.

SOINTULA COMMUNITY

The Kalevan Kansan Colonization Co. Ltd., as Sointula was legally known, was founded by a group of Finnish immigrants who were employed in the notoriously dangerous coal mines of Vancouver Island. In 1900 they invited Matti Kurikka, an exiled Tolstoyan socialist publisher and journalist to lead them in the formation of a communitarian alternative to capitalist exploitation. A friend of Kurikka's, A.B. Makela, a Marxist writer and labor leader, was invited to be his assistant. It was thought that his practical, efficient nature would complement Kurikka's visionary idealism.

The utopians decided to settle on tiny cedar-clad Malcolm Island, located in a strait rich with salmon 200 miles north of Vancouver. The B.C. government generously offered the colonists title to the island and in December 1901 the first settlers arrived to found the community of Sointula ("Place of Harmony").

The colony experienced many difficulties at first. The settlers' lack of experience at logging and fishing, their initial lack of private accommodations for families, and a tragic fire in the community hall resulted in a high turnover of members. Kurikka's advocacy of free love (in a community with a high proportion of single men) and increasing conflicts between his idealism and Makela's pragmatism led to tensions in the colony. In spite of its problems, Sointula was able to borrow sufficient capital to establish an industrial base by the end of 1903. A pier, a foundry, a blacksmith shop, a brickyard, cobbler's and tailor's shops, barns, and warehouses were built. A sawmill was under construction, and fishing and farming operations were developing. The population grew to 100 men, 50 women, and 88 children, mostly housed in permanent dwellings.

Kurikka's mismanagement in handling the colony's \$60,000 debt led to its disbanding as a legal entity in 1905. Kurikka and his followers left to form another community in the Fraser Valley near Vancouver, which lasted until 1912. Essentially, Sointula failed as an organized intentional community because it was under-capitalized, and because it failed to define its political structure as being based upon either charismatic leadership or upon a legal-rational process.

The majority of the colonists remained on the island, and their communitarian principles are still manifest in the cooperative store and credit union, and in the prevalence of radical political ideology. Sointula remains today truly a "place of harmony", an oasis of tranquil independence in a region of company towns dominated by logging companies. □

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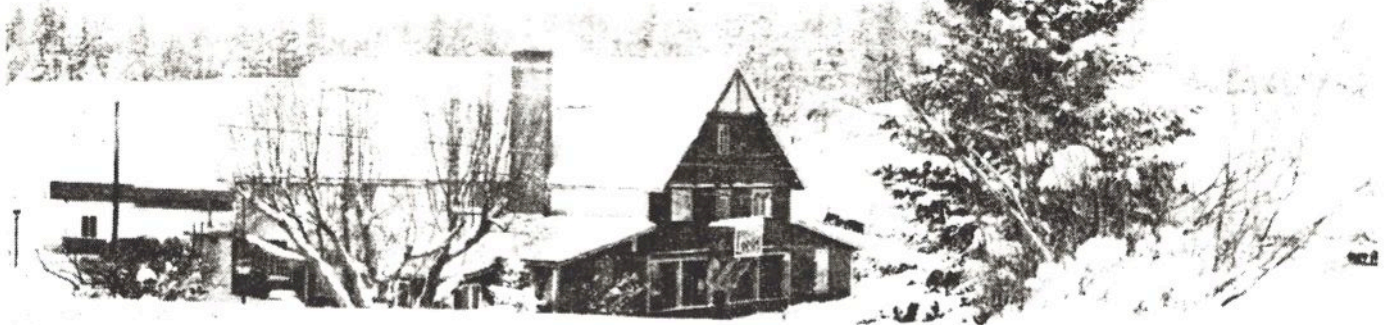
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100 Mile Lodge Emmissaries of Divine Light

by dave thatcher

The Emissary communities have an intriguing mix of values and material successes - particularly the 100 Mile Lodge of British Columbia, the focus of this article. Founded in 1948 on the property of a traditional English noble family, the group retains some of the material trappings of British aristocracy, while having embraced a broad spiritual philosophy and certain "alternative" values such as collective ownership, appropriate technology and wholistic living. On the other hand, serious questions about their patterns of charismatic leadership and the maintenance of traditional sex roles have been raised by those of us for whom feminism and democratic or consensus decision-making process are key values. In any case, 100 Mile Lodge and the other Emissary groups represent an interesting aspect of the movement towards community, and a very significant focus for the many people in their network. Dave Thatcher, a key writer and spokesperson for the Emissaries, tells us all about it.

We here at 100 Mile Lodge in south central British Columbia are a point of orientation for a worldwide community of some 200 ranches, farms, orchards and communal homes. All this began simply enough back in the 1930's with one man, Lloyd Meeker, who saw something of his potential and the potential of mankind as a whole, as

one, as we perhaps sense we are meant to be. By word of mouth and through lectures a few became close to this man, finding his vision not only akin to their own but carried their sense of purpose much further. This organism became known as the Emissaries of Divine Light.

100 Mile Lodge has been in operation since 1930 when Lord Martin Cecil, fresh from the British Royal Navy, came to the thinly settled wilderness of central British Columbia, recognizing there was more to life than the traditional comfort of British aristocracy. He met Lloyd Meeker in 1940 and found with him a significance to their relationship. In 1948 100 Mile Lodge was established as the Canadian headquarters for the Emissaries of Divine Light, when half a dozen people moved here to provide the base for our community. Now thirty years later we are roughly 110 in number; our population varies slightly as a few change location throughout our larger community. Our ranks swell to as many as 200 during our classes and various conferences. We provide two month courses in the Art of Living here and sessions of varying lengths at several other locations.

We operate fifteen businesses in town - a bakery, hotel, service station, building supply outlet, stereo and TV shop, the local newspaper, a cattle ranch, and an accounting and management consulting firm, to mention a few. Many of us

work here in our communal home while others are employed in our various businesses. This balance in activities assures that our home is taken care of and that we have toothpaste, good tennis balls, and various other essentials to wholesome balanced living.

We also operate Educo, a rigorous wilderness training program for boys and men. (Men only thus far. Sorry, ladies. A few fine women come to provide the home setting preparing food and generally creating the base from which the entire operation moves.) Having taken the one-week adult course I can say without hesitation, the experience is remarkable! Faced with a raging torrent of white water while hurtling downstream in a frail canoe, or clinging eighty feet up sheer rock face with apparently nowhere to turn, one discovers a depth, a solidity, a resource within never known before.

The men are coordinated by a fine fellow I feel privileged to know, Carl Richmond. We meet daily and one of us will offer a consideration of new awareness being discovered in his, and invariably in our, practical experience of living. We also look at jobs needing to be done for the day: farm and ranch chores, construction, maintenance, making sure all the women's needs are taken care of in any of their areas of activity.

The women are similarly coordinated by Marcia Marks, wife of Ross Marks, mayor of the Village of 100 Mile Lodge. Ross has been on a federally appointed Task Force considering views on Canadian unity. Quite an interesting and responsible position to hold, particularly with his background of nearly thirty years of communal living.

Our children attend local schools where perhaps a half dozen of our family teach. We feel the primary influence upon our children is at home and as our children need to function in the world as it is, school is a good situation to learn the art of "being in the world but not of it." If what we are doing is right it will ring true with them, as children are quite sensitive and alert. We are planning our own accredited high school and university soon, and operate Twin Valleys, an alternative educational community near London, Ontario.

In our home the children are looked after by many, but by a particular man and woman on an on-going basis. They meet after school for snacks and perhaps to hike or ride horseback, or attend to various things which need to be done around our home. Often others of us will provide something special, be it crafts instruction, music, gymnastics, teaching those interested about construction or mechanics, or the finer points of horsemanship, or the girls helping in the kitchen. The boys have just finished a fine cabin and are about to shake the roof with their own hand-split shakes!

Occasionally we are asked about adherence to "traditional" male and female roles. We don't impose such role delineation, with men often helping in the kitchen and elsewhere and the women pitching in with ranch and farm activities, and occasionally on construction sites, too. We find roles are not as important as the spirit in which we do whatever we happen to be doing. There is invariably much to do in keeping one's expression specific, clear and light, so what does it matter if you happen to be pounding nails or

Our orchestra in action



peeling potatoes? There is so much more of a finer nature to be generated in one's atmosphere of living, a special creative space where new things can be sensed, seen and born.

For recreation we are well equipped: a tennis court, pool, sauna, ice rink, ping-pong and snooker tables. We have an equestrian club and a crafts studio - the old village water tower which we recently redesigned for pottery, weaving, stained glass, leather work and whatever. The men rent the local ice arena twice weekly throughout the winter to play hockey, coached by an older ex-pro who played back in the 1930's and 40's, and play the local police force, teachers and teams from other Emissary centres. Of course there are countless rivers to canoe, alpine meadows to hike in, and in winter cross-country and down hill skiing are excellent.

We occasionally stage a theatrical presentation, usually written here. Many participate in our choir and orchestra. For a short period of time a few of us formed a rock/blues band and by playing locally were able to contribute substantially to our fledgling orchestra, providing instruments and other requirements.

We have a large organic garden here and an orchard and garden in the B.C. fruit belt to provide high quality food for our family. We keep our own bees and so much more.

Word of our growing experience here reaches far places. People now come from all over the globe for visits and classes. Sunrise Ranch, our international headquarters near Loveland, Colorado, publishes **News Light**, a newsletter which keeps us current with what is transpiring throughout our extended family - letters, pictures, articles from Bangalore, Sydney, London, New York, and lesser knowns like Aurora, Ontario and Selma, Indiana are featured regularly. We publish annually **Northern Light**, written by many of us here at the 100, recounting events and experiences throughout the year past. Sunrise Ranch prints a similar magazine called the **Eden Valley News**.

Integrity newsletter is published at the Hundred. It began five years ago when the editor of our local paper, Chris Foster, wrote letters to several newspaper editors around the world, indicating it appeared to him that the world was in a complex mess, and that maybe what was required was something simple: people like you and me revealing homespun qualities like honesty and integrity, qualities based on a concern for rightness in living. The response was so great that "Integrity" was developed as a means of handling it. It serves increasingly as an outreach vehicle and we trust a point of inspiration and assurance for many the world over.

I should mention something of our larger family. We have centres all over the North American continent, particularly large ones near Toronto, New York, Vancouver, Portland, Los Angeles and Baton Rouge. We have centres overseas in England, Scotland, Holland, West Germany, Italy, Israel, Ghana, Nigeria, Rhodesia, South Africa, New Zealand, Australia, and have friends in most other countries. From all these places people come to visit, attend classes, and to share with us the deepening experience of life.



Eduro wilderness training base camp

And how does it operate? Though we appear, in a sense, to be doing a lot, running several businesses, having scores of centres around the globe, it is no more than a training ground for us to grow up to reveal the real character of manhood and womanhood, not being at all impressed with our roles or with what we are doing. Rather, we learn to fulfill a responsibility as stewards of the Earth. We are interested in learning to be "In the world but not of it." We find that our identity may be beyond the world of effects, in spirit, and then effects sort themselves out quite easily and naturally. Differences of opinion are simply resolved by acknowledging that there is a larger perspective to be seen, and a person simply must do what needs to be done from the standpoint of that larger view. Sounds ridiculously It is! But one needs to be willing to let go of old roles, prejudices and concepts. That initially may be a full time occupation. An ancient Chinese proverb puts it neatly: "Before enlightenment, chopping wood and carrying water; after enlightenment, chopping wood and carrying water." The activities may appear the same but the perspective and purpose has ascended. This experience we find is occurring beautifully and powerfully, in cooperation and mutual respect among increasing numbers.

We meet four times weekly to give special thought to our experience together from a spiritual perspective. On Sunday, Martin Cecil, who coordinates our overall ministry, addresses the group. It is always a pleasure, sometimes comfortable, sometimes uncomfortable, to come into a larger vision of spiritual living and so to further refine one's artistry and sensitivity in this. It's a particular privilege to be able to openly share one's experience with one whose vision and ability has been well practiced and proven over a long period of time. □

If this description of our experience is one you would like to know more about, I would welcome hearing from you.

100 Mile House,
B.C. Canada V0K 2E0.

Ochiltree Commune is one of the few rural intentional communities in North America to base its organization upon the principles of Marxism-Leninism. Uncompromising in its insistence on organic farming methods and rural self-sufficiency and vociferous in its rejection of vegetarianism and "New Age" religions, Ochiltree has never shied away from

controversy. With its prolific propagandizing in local and regional publications and its confrontationalist style of political activism, Ochiltree has incurred the wrath of many, yet it continues to develop as a remarkably cohesive, active community with strong ties to the local town of Williams Lake and to the intentional community movement of British Columbia.

Ochiltree Commune

Ochiltree Commune began seven years ago when a group of people, discontented with city life, moved to a remote lake in the interior of B.C. Like many other hippy communes, past and present, it was a reaction to the alienation from nature that living in the city creates. Taking the initial step of leaving city life was the first of many struggles that shaped the history of Ochiltree Commune.

After the first summer of living communally, we realized that in building an alternative lifestyle and becoming more independent of the system, we had to start supplying our own basic needs, particularly food. Quesnel Lake was unsuitable for agriculture so when fall arrived the few remaining commune members - principally from one family - bought fifteen acres of farmland nearby.

A fairly self-sufficient farm was established, including dairy and beef cattle, pigs, chickens, and a large organic garden. Our political awareness was increasing; brought about by the change in our relation to production - we were now milking cows and feeding chickens rather than working for a boss, selling our labour. Through working with and observing our animals and allowing them as much freedom as possible, we learned much about nature and human society. We saw how animals take only what they need from their environment in stark contrast to man in Capitalist society who rips off and exploits the earth. It sickened us to realize where our animals came from - the feedlots and cages of this sick society. However, we had not yet thrown off the shackles of private property manifested in



the fact that we still "owned" a "family farm" and we were still far, despite our self-sufficiency, from the alternative.

The next advance in our awareness occurred through a struggle over the question of private property. The circumstances, the need for money, were forcing us to make a political decision: to bow to the system by continuing to own land and returning to the labour market, or to defy the system by giving up the private ownership of land and moving to a neighbour's unused natural hay meadow which we wouldn't own. We realized that the "security" of legally owning land is a Capitalist lie as the North American Indian would testify to. There was strong opposition and sharp struggle resulting in two family members leaving, but we followed our higher senses and moved our whole farm to the Borland Meadow.

Since moving to the Borland, much practical work has been done - our breeding stock has increased and improved, fences and log buildings have been built, haying goes on yearly with work horses (the meadow is normally accessible only by team and wagon/sleigh) a garden was put in etc. and along with this practice our political theory has further developed. From our experience of living together, we learned that monogamy, the nuclear family, is the grossest form of private property. It stood in the way, with its jealousies, of the further political development of the commune. Monogamy, which serves well the interests of Capitalism, among other things, alienates people from each other and from their true human nature. Therefore monogamy had no place in a revolutionary commune which we were striving to develop. Instead we started struggling to develop relationships among all of us and the positive results show we are on the right path.

Our association and participation with counter-culture organizations, such as the B.C. Communities Coalition, and our search through many of the counter-culture publications, has revealed that the current movement with its "spiritual" rather than political emphasis, contributes little to the creation of a truly new society. In order to spread political consciousness, we started our own publication entitled "In Defense of Nature." The title reflects our realization that nature must be **actively** defended against its actual enemy - the Capitalist system. At the time, this was more a feeling than the result of a political/economic analysis which we are beginning to undertake now.

Our plans, which called for spreading out to other isolated natural hay meadows would not, because of their remoteness, put us into a position where we could challenge the Capitalist system. Instead we directed our interests to the Sugar Cane Indian Reserve, close to the town of Williams Lake, where several commune members were staying to help start a large garden for the "Troopers" (Indian street people) upon their invitation. Our original intent laying in sharing the crop (mostly potatoes) and "helping" the troopers, as we still shared, to some extent, society's condescending attitude towards oppressed and impoverished people. Initially, only a few troopers were attracted to leave town and work in the garden. We realized that this was due to our discouraging attitude about liquor which plays a major role in the trooper's lifestyle. Thus, we alienated ourselves from them. We displayed this discouraging attitude, not because we were opposed to

alcohol, but because the racist thought of a carload of drunks arriving, not just drunks but **Indian** drunks, was frightening. This once again made us conscious of our bourgeois upbringing, which instills in us the hypocritical virtue of sobriety, particularly where Indians are concerned. Having become conscious of this fact, we accepted the troopers' lifestyle. Subsequently more troopers started joining us which climaxed with an enthusiastic collective effort at harvest time.



Troopers & hippies debating with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

By this time, the garden had developed into a fairly self-sufficient farm, with pigs, goats, beef cattle, a workhorse, and bees. The public reacted very favourably when the troopers participated in the Williams Lake Fall Fair where they won several prizes for their produce.

Through working and living with the troopers, we learned that the image society has concocted about Indian people bears absolutely no relation to reality. Indian people have more to teach us than vice versa, as is the usual notion with white society. The troopers' rejection of straight society which other Indian people have been lured into, reflects their resistance against getting alienated which is the method Capitalism uses to insure its survival. The troopers represent an advance awareness, a revolutionary spirit.

With a need for further income and wanting to continue our association with the troopers, we applied for a government grant, aware that the government is anxious to remodel and integrate Indians into society. Of course we had no intention to "rehabilitate" the troopers. Although the grant was officially approved, we had to struggle with reactionary elements such as the R.C.M.P. and government officials who attempted to delay and eventually stifle the grant. By using provincial wide television, radio, and

newspaper coverage as a tool in the struggle, the grant finally got underway. This initial struggle with the state, which we knew would continue and intensify, made us aware that we lacked sufficient political understanding to win the fight for the troopers and make us fit for future encounters with the system. We therefore decided to systematically study revolutionary literature and set up a school for this purpose at the Borland. This was facilitated by the rotation of commune members between Sugar Cane and the Borland all winter. Besides helping to develop our political theory, the school had a great unifying effect for the commune and provided a relief from the strenuous work at Sugar Cane (the front line).

The government grant survived several more attempts to stifle it; until it terminated this spring right at planting time. The issue was that we illegally utilized wasted produce (perfectly fresh - we ate lots ourselves) from behind the local supermarkets to help feed our pigs at the troopers' garden. The very same produce that customers carry out the front door may, according to health officials, be infested with deadly diseases when carried out the back door. We are presently exposing this fact to the public. The necessary permit required to utilize the supermarket waste is geared for the agribusiness type pig operations, but we are considering fighting the government officials to get one.

Another issue revolved around the grant's employees involvement with the co-operative store at Sugar Cane which we helped to establish during the winter. The store, part of the Fed-up food co-op system, sells food at a very low cost to meet the basic needs of the troopers and Sugar Cane people and also provides a ready and appreciative market for much of the garden's produce. The store sells vanilla extract, which the troopers use as an inexpensive alcoholic beverage, so this was used as further pretext to terminate the grant. At a public meeting held to protest the termination, we exposed that vanilla extract is as safe to drink as scotch whiskey and that the troopers didn't need government officials to tell them what they should or shouldn't sell in their store.

The government's attempts to stifle the troopers' work has

Feeding out hay



not only backfired but has served to heighten the awareness of the troopers, ourselves, and much of the general public.

This spring the garden has doubled in size (five acres), construction projects are underway and many more troopers are living there. An alliance of progressive elements of the Indian and white cultures has been forged which we know is getting positive attention from other reserves and will likely play a decisive role in the revolution. The alliance, however, may be a temporary one as the two progressive elements will concentrate more within their own cultures towards the common goal.

The school at the Borland Meadow has produced "The Revolutionary Hippy Manifesto" which, through the process of intense criticism/self criticism, is being presently revised. The revised manifesto will be directed more on an international scale.

In conclusion, Ochiltree Commune is in the service of the people, mother earth and the revolution. Our philosophy is based on communist principles and is guided by the science of Marxism/Leninism. The success of our commune is based on criticism and struggle without which, as we've learned through our practice, it is impossible to advance. □

For a subscription to "In Defense of Nature" and a copy of "The Revolutionary Hippy Manifesto" and a copy of the revised edition to follow when we complete it, write:

Ochiltree Commune
P.O. Box 6
Horsefly Road
via Williams Lake, B.C.

or

P.O. Box 33
RR #3
Sugar Cane
via Williams Lake, B.C.

A donation to help cover printing costs is appreciated. Your comments and criticisms are also welcomed.

The small settlement of Argenta on the shore of Kootenay Lake in south-eastern British Columbia was never an intentional community in the strict sense. It actually evolved into an outstanding model of communitarian interdependence and non-authoritarian social organization. The movement toward communitarianism and self-sufficiency which has developed in British Columbia in the past ten years has been somewhat inspired by the

example of Argenta. Most recently, a large proportion of the Argenta community has taken a leading role in organizing against the establishment of the Trident nuclear missile base at Bangor, Washington.

This excerpt from a letter from Ryan Dunnett, secretary of the Kootenay Cooperative Land Settlement Society, gives an idea of how the community of Argenta developed.

Argenta

by ryan dunnett

At the end of the last century Argenta was a mining town - for a few years it flourished from the deposits of silver and lead in the mountains that rise steeply from the shores of Kootenay Lake. A grandiose street plan was even laid out (on paper) by real estate promoters.

Then, after the boom subsided, there were only a few isolated homesteaders serviced by the paddle wheelers of Kootenay Lake.

In 1952 the first Quaker families arrived - a caravan of Model A's - and gradually more families with the same philosophy (if not religious affiliation) arrived. In the late 50's the Argenta Friends School was started - basically a finishing school for grades 11 and 12 - and an excellent one, too.

Most people came to live a homesteader way of life, with individually owned plots but with a great amount of mutual cooperation and support. That's as true today as it was then.



Ryan, Tracy and Loren's house

Others gravitated here, attracted by the locale and the established sense of community. The artists, craftspeople, and in the late 60's, the counter-culture "back-to-the-landers".

We have 230 acres of land situated at the north-east corner of Kootenay Lake. The land is not suitable for large scale farming but is ideal for supporting small homesteads. We envision between 12 and 17 of these homesites, served by common gardens and pasture. There are certain basic requirements that a resident is required to fulfill - financial, minimum work commitment, belief in the cooperative ideal, and willingness to solve conflicts in a group. Other forms of participation are purely voluntary but there is a great deal of labor exchange.

We are an officially incorporated co-op and thus our democracy has official guidelines, and offers legal protections for our members. We work on the basis of consensus mainly but will vote if necessary to make urgent decisions.

Right now we have 8 resident adults, 3 children, 3 people on a three-month try-out period, and 40 or so supporting members scattered over the continent. We have share units of \$5. One share is required to be a supporting member, 700 shares for a single resident, 1000 shares for two people, 1300 shares for three, and so on, children under 16 are admitted free.

There are other land co-ops in Argenta, but they usually consist of extended families or groups of friends, and are not chartered under the Co-ops Act. I would guess that there are around 90 adults resident in Argenta, plus a lot of indigenous kids plus 20 or so Friends School students. In addition, 8 miles to the south is Johnson's Landing, which has a smaller population but similar composition.

Our community, Kootenay Cooperative Land Settlement Society, K.C.L.S.S., was conceived of around this time and first settled in 1971 "where there is adequate space and sufficient privacy for people to be honest and trustful so that it is possible to assert the natural tendency to **cooperate** for the integrity of every individual instead of competing for special privileges for a few..." - a quote from our original Statement of Intent.

Methods of making a living are of course varied. The school employs some at a subsistence wage - a real vocation. One or two work on the highways; there's a man who builds airplanes; there are some inheritances, but the large majority of young adults are tree planters and fruit pickers in season. There are excellent artists, potters, woodworkers. The occasional government Local Improvement Project grant gives a boost to the economy. As I said before, K.C.L.S.S.'s land is not suited to large scale agriculture and this is true of the whole community. But most everyone grows as much as possible of their own food and preserves it; consequently one can earn enough money to purchase products one is unable to grow or craft, with 2-3 months of work outside the community.

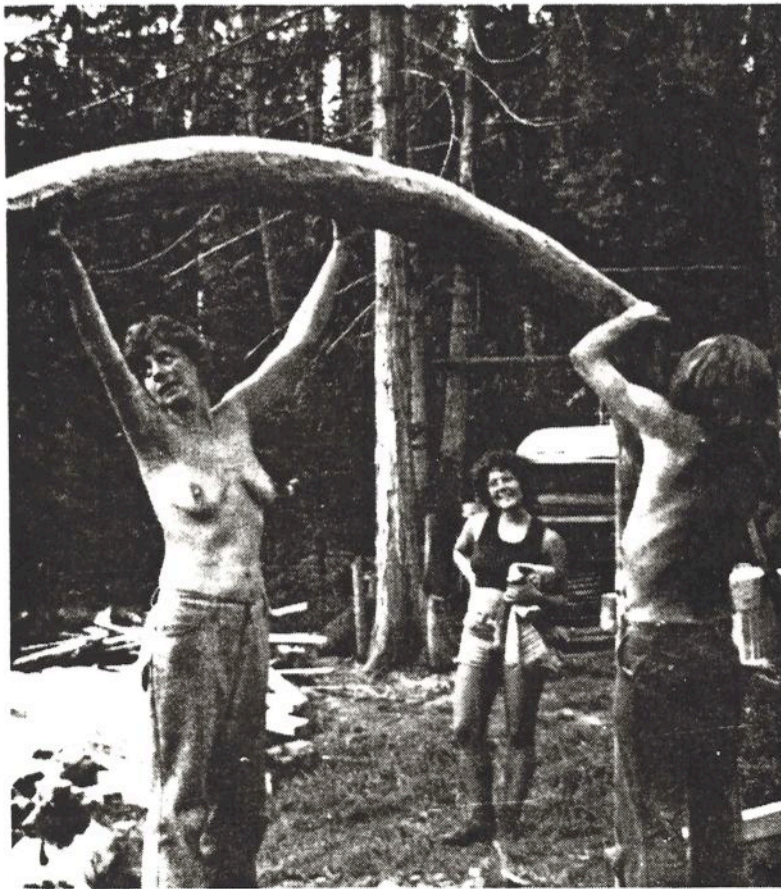
Argenta, to me and I'm sure to many here, is a unique place. It has organically grown over the last 25 years - evolving into a community incredibly supportive, united in its reverence for the land and for the people. Because of its geographical position, pushed by the lake against the buttresses of the mountains, space is limited. Probably 99 percent of the people here are here because of Kootenay's relative isolation, unlike other areas of B.C. such as the Slokan Valley where the alternate lifestyle lives in an uneasy truce with the farming and forestry interests.

with the farming and forestry interests.

Life is not all rosy of course, but it's usually the "Outside" that threatens - such as the duel with Kootenay Forest Products, in which the united community won important concessions. As a result, the community has representation on the Folio Committee - the committee consisting of the Wildlife, Fisheries, Forestry, Highways, and other government agencies in the area. We feel that it is an important step to get grassroots representation. It is important, from the point of view of anarchism, to not allow oneself to be absolved of responsibility. Argenta probably shares this perspective with other people in alternate lifestyles.

When a home burned a few years back at the onset of winter the whole community contributed work, materials, and energy to have a new one built in a couple of weeks. When someone needs a lot of people power to work on a project for a day or so, as many as 30 people will show up. The Argenta Women's Group initiated 1/2 work day per week to help anybody with anything but particularly the older people.

What we have is a responsible community, highly educated both academically and practically, friendly, loving, and nurturing. It's nice to live here. □



Workday at Argenta



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Coalition of Intentional Cooperative Communities

by jim bowman

Some 80 British Columbia communities and communitarian organizations are associated with the Coalition of Intentional Cooperative Communities (C.I.C.C.).

The Coalition is sometimes described as "an amorphous network of groups and individuals who are somewhere on the same road in creating cooperative settlements, urban and rural." It is an unincorporated association with no dues, no leadership, and no formal structure.

The Coalition holds a weekend conference every three months, hosted each time by a different community. The host community arranges for food and lodging and organizes the agenda, including workshops for the development of skills and exchange of information on communal living, and perhaps a Saturday night boogie. The host community is also usually responsible for publication of the following issue of the **Open Circle Newsletter**, the Coalition's quarterly networking organ.

As its name suggests, the Coalition includes a wide variety of groups, with different forms of organization and different *raison d'être*. An arbitrary classification of 43 communities associated with the C.I.C.C. (33 rural and 10 urban) suggests that 20 are essentially cooperative living arrangements whose purpose is mainly economic or social. Communities organized for more idealistic purposes (10 New Age spiritual communities and 3 political activist communities) are in the minority. Other communities associated with the Coalition are social-service-oriented, art-oriented, too much in a state of flux to be classified, or share the characteristics of several types.

With a diversity of membership and such a loose structure, the C.I.C.C. is vulnerable to ideological conflict. Disagreements have arisen between egalitarians and followers of religious leaders, and between political activists and non-activist utopians. Still, the communitarians of the Coalition have minimized their differences in order to promote their common goals.

The C.I.C.C. originated in 1975 when the humanist New Democratic government of British Columbia sought a group of communitarians to give advice on human settlements. From this, a group was formed to lobby for trusteeship of government land by communities. The New Democratic government was unfortunately voted out of office before legislation for communitarian land trusteeship could be passed, but the Coalition continued as an organization to promote communities. It was agreed that the Coalition would promote, among other things, non-exploitive social and work relationships, non-hierarchical decision-making,

and minimized dependence on the capitalist economy. A major goal of the Coalition in British Columbia - where real estate speculation has resulted in urbanization of some of the best agricultural land, thus making it too costly for the average farmer or farming community - is to promote the concept of land as a non-speculative community resource rather than as private property.

Discussion at Coalition conferences can cover a wide range of topics, including rural skills and micro-technology tactics for local political organizing and public relations, and the social dynamics of communities. Perhaps the most useful function of the conferences is simply to allow members of communities to meet one another, to form social and economic relations between communities, and to renew the energy level of communitarianism.

Between conferences, a mailing address of the Coalition is maintained at Box 5, Hope, B.C., where a library of communitarian publications and a file of community contacts is kept. The **Open Circle Newsletter** publishes letters from individuals wanting to join communities, from communities looking for members, from individuals or groups wanting specific information or services, as well as information and ideas about communities. Subscriptions to the Newsletter are available (from the Hope address) for \$2.00 per year or by barter. A directory of communities in B.C. will be published by the C.I.C.C. (at Box 5, Hope, B.C.) in the near future.

Affiliated with the Coalition is the legally-incorporated Holding in Common Land Society (Box 5, Hope, B.C.). Its purpose is to acquire land through grants, donations, or purchases, to hold it in perpetuity (thus discouraging speculation), and to arrange for its non-exploitive stewardship by responsible intentional communities or families.

The number of people living in community in B.C., as for most of North America, seems to be declining. This is due to various demographic, economic, and ideological factors. Yet the movement that remains, though less visible to the public, is more mature, more skilled, more realistic, and more committed than a decade ago. Organizations like the C.I.C.C. are increasingly important as meeting grounds for sharing the common experiences and solving the common problems of intentional communities. The potential for an egalitarian, non-exploitive economic system is greater than ever. Communitarians with a wide variety of organizational forms and ideological perspectives are coming together to form a distinctive communitarian culture, with the ultimate goal of liberating the Earth and her inhabitants. □

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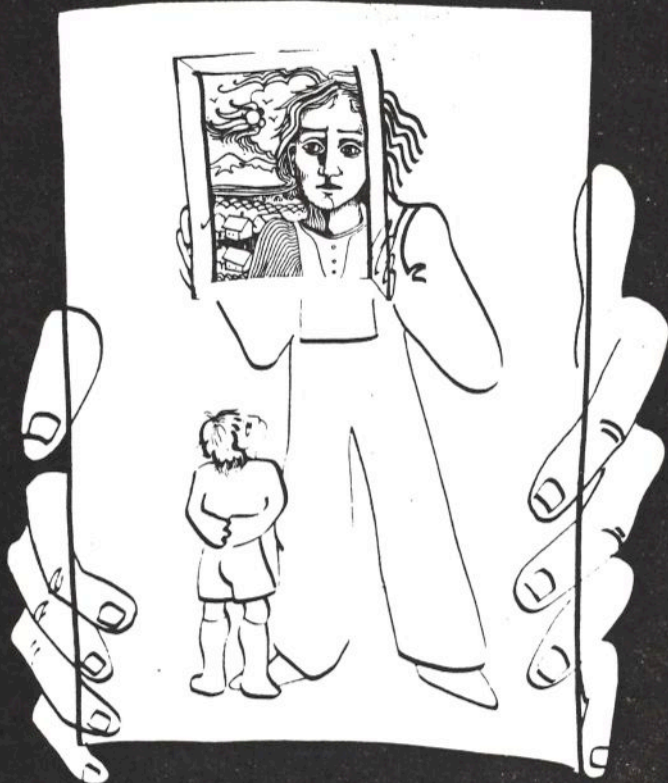
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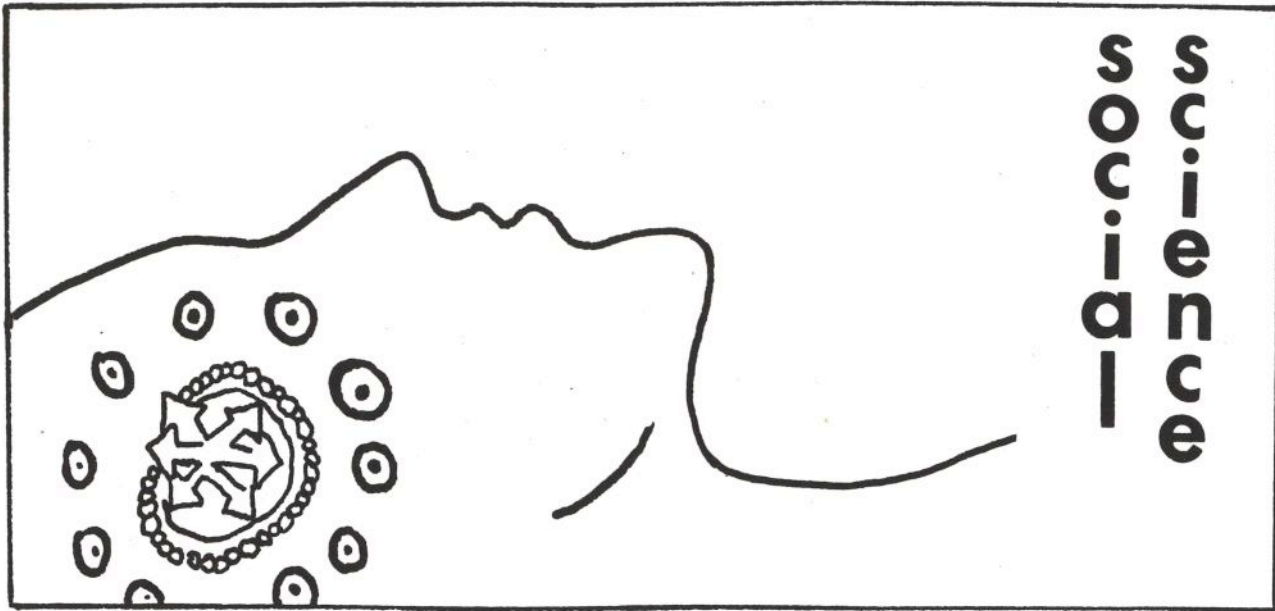
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Community Studies and Social Policy

by Joseph Blasi

The records of history informed me that human nature had been governed by force and fraud, and that a general conviction prevailed that it would not be otherwise controlled with safety or benefit to itself. Yet, from the most impartial consideration I could give to the past transactions of human kind, I am obliged to conclude that those principles of government proceeded from error regarding the real constitution of human nature. For believing as I do most conscientiously, that the principles which I am about to explain are founded in fact, are in unison with all nature, and are abundantly competent to relieve society from its errors and evils, I must, while this conviction so remains, adopt every measure that my faculties and experience can suggest, to enable all people to receive the same impressions, and to act upon them.

Robert Owen, Address Before the U.S. House of Representatives, 1825

When Robert Owen the communitarian who devoted many years of his life to developing New Lanark in Scotland, addressed the House and the Senate, he said something that today many of us think impossible! The notion that all the members of Congress, the secretaries of all the cabinet departments, members of the public and President James Monroe and President-elect John Quincy Adams, would have the time and the interest to listen to a long lecture on the promises of

communitarian possibilities for the country, is a bit difficult to believe. That such an event ever happened in the United States may be a complete surprise to many.

Owen's remarks are the touchstone for my first column. The Community Studies and Social Policy section continues the Social Science column which David Ruth worked at for many years. I hope in the future I can begin to share ideas about community, dilemmas of communitarian life, tips and reviews on who is doing interesting writing and thinking on community, and the open and reflective attitude which always marked David's contributions.

PURPOSE AND GOALS

Examples and stories of communal, mutualistic, and self-reliant community alternatives around the world and meditations on what it all means has been the fare of **Communities** magazine. The examples and stories are important because few people will believe that new societies are possible just on the basis of talk or debate or persuasion. Owen is right that the system of force and fraud, the society of alienation and inequality is built on the belief that nothing much works as an alternative.

But isolated examples and trial and error experiments would never be enough to transform the patchwork quilt of communitarian alternatives into more

stable, sure, and more mature associations. These successful communities or alternatives can begin to present whole countries with different options that can be freely chosen.

The meditative articles in **Communities** magazine encourage us to learn from each other's experience, to examine ourselves closely and become serious about what we are doing, to be critical in suggesting our problems, and playful and spontaneous in brainstorming options. If we are to grow and mature we must let ourselves be nurtured. As Owen says, adopt every measure to share our impressions, and explore how the many facets of community and the personal development it may foster, is competent to relieve society of its errors and evils. The worst thing that can happen to the communitarian trend is for it to represent the values of cooperation and equality within each community while communities look suspiciously and competitively on each other. The evidence of what happened in North America with the failure of so many nineteenth century communitarian attempts can refresh our memory. True, their failure did not only have to do with lack of inter-community cooperation. It stemmed from the belief that certain strains in the movement were **right** often without the willingness to examine the problems of all evolving groups critically. We can let individual alternatives evolve right out of existence. We

can feel secure in supporting, building, or living in our own little commune, neighborhood, network, or community and not worry what the environment for alternatives as a whole is like. We can casually see the roots of serious problems and mistakes in many areas and groups and not take the time to try to understand what we can do about it.

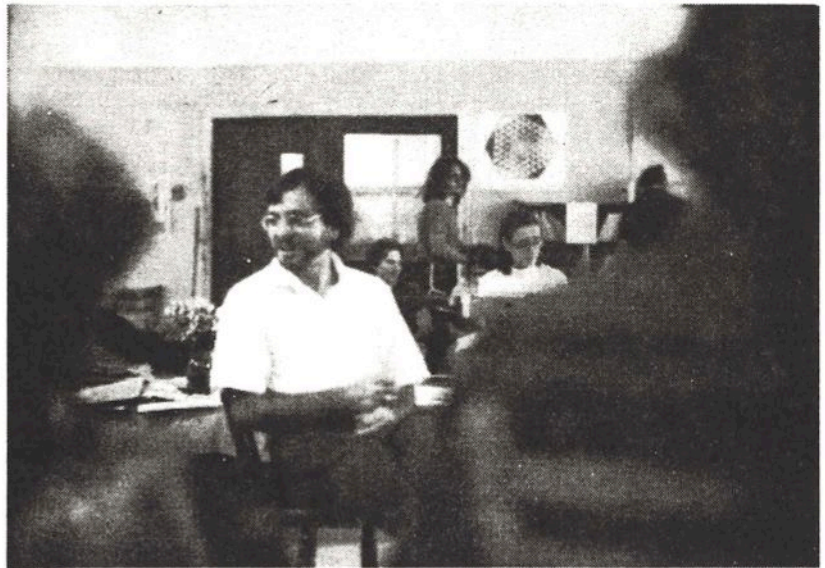
If the community movement is to be more than a selfish cocoon for individuals, we need to understand the quality of life we are constructing clearly. We have to **demonstrate** that we have developed alternative structures which reduce or eliminate social alienation and crime, monotonous work, powerlessness, political and prestige hierarchies that control most of the economic resources, economic competition and classes, a lack of neighborliness, an overwhelming dependence on the Federal government, an emptiness of spirit and human celebration, apathy about global issues and problems. Otherwise, we will be just another society, not an alternative.

A reasonable goal seems to develop procedures, commitments, and personal skills that prevent or reduce the structural exploitation of societies set up to do people wrong and gross human problems. We should pursue an analysis which identifies the most consistent and socially useful learning of the communities movement. We need to derive from our experiments an understanding of what we can change and what we must accept. Are poverty, race discrimination, inequality, hunger avoidable? Will feelings of sadness, existential anxiety, spiritual challenge and hankering, disagreements over personal styles or goals, conflicts between parents and children emerge as a part of human life no matter how we organize societies?

The purpose of this column will be to focus on much of the reflection going on inside and outside the community movement. I hope readers will send along their thoughts, poems, manuscripts, references, flyers, and questions, news of events, names of books, xeroxes of articles, tips on news and developments in communities and the world that seem to represent critical issues of community. I will continue David Ruth's custom of reporting on materials brought to my attention, and I will start to suggest new themes that might merit our reflection.

SOME BIOGRAPHY

I have been in a lot of worlds that take different stands on the theme of community. I was born into a very traditional Italian working-class family which to this day has those patriarchal Sunday



spaghetti dinners at the house of the grandparents; practices a degree of mutual aid unknown to my Protestant and Irish Catholic friends; and emphasizes acceptance, support, and commitment, to care between people. I have seen the fellowship of lower class life in my family, and its increasing disintegration and emphasis on competition for success in the outside economy. I have seen people move out of geographical proximity with each other. The passing of the ghetto on Ninth Street. The end of the dream that ethnic neighborliness represented a more humane way to strive for the American goals of equality, democracy, and the good life. All this in Scranton, Pa.

For two years as a monk in the Jesuits (Society of Jesus) there was the experience of religious communalism. Poverty, chastity and obedience in one of the great cults of the Catholic Church. This contributed a certain understanding of religious communes, since the Novitiate (first two years of training in the Jesuits) is very structured, spiritual, hierarchical, uniform, and in many ways, very enjoyable.

In spite of the many fine Jesuits, the structure of the Society was too contradictory of the values I espouse. The rules against sex, the impossibility of democracy, the riches accumulated by the Order which started and runs many of the great universities in the Catholic World, and the use of such riches generally to train people to accept a society organized for social, economic, and political exploitation - all these dissuaded me from continuing on that path.

After a series of stints exploring the human potential movement at the beginning of the decade, working as a

counselor and planner of drug abuse drop-in centers, and a teacher and proponent of alternative high schools as a way to redirect the values of the young, I decided these were all partial solutions. In such a fragmented society it seemed that attempts to change only one or two of the settings frequented by people held little promise of positive social change.

COMMUNITY STUDIES

Six years ago I began to be interested in the Israeli kibbutz. 100,000 people live on 250 kibbutzim in Israel. The movement began in 1910 and is 95 percent comprised of secular kibbutzim where Judaism functions as a cultural identity without religious institutions. The kibbutzim (plural of kibbutz which means large group) has attempted to transform all the areas of peoples' lives in one community. I decided to spend two years researching the kibbutz. Since I am not Jewish this involved a lot of Hebrew study. I also chose to live in and work in the communities I studied, doing the research after work hours. Over two years what emerged was the largest research ever conducted on any one kibbutz. My study dealt with social, economic, political, psychological, and educational issues in the community.

For several years as a graduate student at Harvard University, I taught a course on Kibbutz Society and Community. Almost three years ago, after finishing doctoral studies I was appointed to the Harvard faculty and coordinator of the University's Project On The Kibbutz and Collective Education. This research project serves as a focus for courses, research, information and a bi-weekly lecture series on kibbutz and communal issues.

Because it is secular, because of its advanced stage of historical development, because it is so large, the kibbutz movement can serve as a model and source of reflection. In looking at it issues emerge that we should be thinking about, but for a variety of reasons are not now aware of. It also provides a modern community movement which we can touch, feel, criticize, and examine. It is also an excellent place to look when we are not so sure our interpretations of 18th century utopian experiments in North America tells us all we want to know. As I try to keep up with developments in the kibbutz movement and compare it with other movements, I will draw on this research.

COLLECTIVE INVOLVEMENT

My most important involvement is membership in the Cooperative College Community. Two years ago a group formed which hoped to develop a cooperative community and a liberal arts college. We see the members supporting themselves by working in a variety of crafts, agricultural, arts, and industrial branches in a rural setting. What is different is that the CCC's mission is more specialized than building a community. Members will teach one course a semester over and above their community work in a small liberal arts college on the community's premises. The college will be fully accredited but differ from traditional colleges in four ways: First, it will not charge students for faculty salaries; i.e. there will be no tuition. Students will pay simply for their food, housing, and other physical expenses. In short, education will not be sold or used as a business enterprise but will be a cultural and social event in the community. Secondly, the college will offer courses on equal footing in arts, crafts, skills (carpentry, plumbing...), and traditional subjects in humanities and sciences. Third, every member of the community will be on the faculty and there will be no hierarchy in the faculty (no senior this or assistant that), and a strong emphasis on student participation in determining their own education. And fourth, education will be in the context of a community where young people have contact with teachers who live what they preach. The environment exemplifies an attempt to strive for values of equality, democracy, fellowship, and economic cooperation. The CCC now has 16 members and a house in central Massachusetts where some members live. We engage in monthly meetings and work projects (like our recent solar greenhouse project) to learn skills necessary to build the community. We hope to buy land in the next year and begin constructing the community.

Right now, members try to spend as much time as possible working together, socializing with each other, making specific plans, and looking for additional members.

SOCIAL POLICY

My major social policy involvement has been the Voluntary Job Preservation and Community Stabilization Act. This legislation, which I helped to develop as a Consultant to the US Congress along with William Foote Whyte, the sociologist from Cornell, was introduced on March 1, 1978 on the floor of the House of Representatives by Congressman Peter Kostmayer together with Stanley Lundine and Matthew McHugh. Though not enacted into law it would address some major social dislocations from a community perspective.



United States
of America

EMPLOYEE-COMMUNITY OWNER-
SHIP TO SAVE JOBS WHEN FIRMS
SHUT DOWN

HON. PETER H. KOSTMAYER

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, June 19, 1978

● Mr. KOSTMAYER. Mr. Speaker, on March 1, 1978, I introduced the Voluntary Job Preservation and Community Stabilization Act, H.R. 12094 together with my colleagues Mr. LUNDINE and Mr. McHUGH, of New York.

This legislation provides loans to employee and employee-community groups to purchase firms due to shut down, but where the continued operation of those firms is feasible. I am pleased at the response this bill has received. So far 49 of our colleagues have become cosponsors.

All around the country factories are shutting down, throwing people out of work. Often the economics of local towns and neighborhoods usually dependent on a few industries are seriously injured. These decisions to shutdown are made by large conglomerates which do not take into account the stability of the local group. The government (us) pays unemployment compensation and ultimately welfare payments. Now, however, there is an alternative: we have many exam-

ples of employees and area citizens who have bought firms and run them as employee or employee-community owned cooperatives. Interestingly, these firms have been very successful.

Our legislation would provide \$100 million a year in loans to help workers and local citizens buy such firms. It would also include technical assistance to help them develop a more participatory organization. This is not a cooperative community but it is an example of the increased attention mutualistic networks are getting as solutions to national social and economic problems. Ultimately, out of employee-owned businesses might develop a greater sense of mutual aid in certain neighborhoods and communities. Cooperation with the firm might be expanded to cooperative day-care, education of the children, and possibly even cultural activities.

To the extent cooperative institutions are successful, the possibility of their extension to other areas of life increases. Cooperative communities represent an attempt to apply cooperation to the whole of a person's life, not just consumption or work. Like the growing emphasis on consumer coops and worker-owned cooperatives and employee-community owned factories, cooperative communities can be seen not as another *lifestyle* (the *lifestyle* concept reminds me too much of stamp collecting) but as social policy alternatives. Community becomes a responsible act of citizenship in an age where both large bureaucracies and individuals are bankrupt to deal with the crucial human problems of the day.

Unless there is a rebirth of a more decentralized, small, community-oriented, mutual aid-based network of solving problems in this country, too many people may conclude that the very values of equality, democracy, and fellowship themselves are worn out. The community movement strangely, as small and weak as it is, is at the very center of the creative themes of our future.

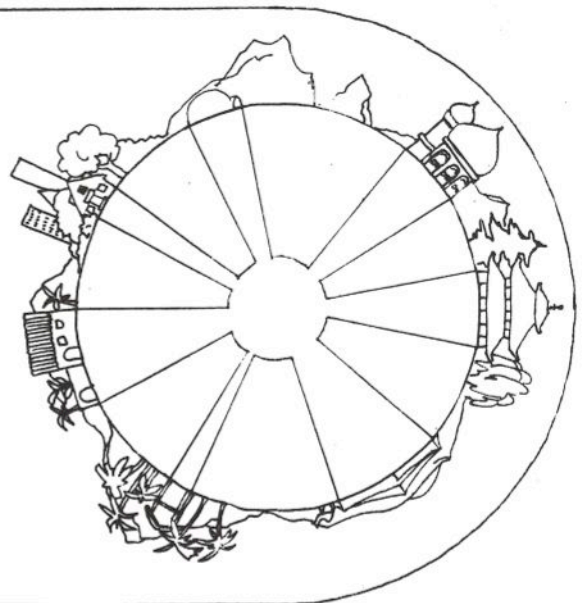
Joseph R. Blasi is a member of the Cooperative College Community working as a sociologist and professor at Harvard University and Coordinator of Harvard's Project on The Kibbutz and Collective Education, also serving as a Consultant For Social Policy at the US Congress. Letters, manuscripts, books to review, comments and questions are welcome at:

Harvard University
Longfellow Hall
Cambridge, Mass. 02138
(617) 495-3436 [office]

international

THE STORY OF GLANEIRW HOUSE COMMUNITY

by Roger Helyar



edited by Vince

The following is from Resurgence magazine, a good resource for the alternative lifestyle movement in England-Scotland-Wales. The bimonthly is available at \$10/year (air mail \$15). It contains articles and book reviews written by a host of known activists from Great Britain. Available from: Pentre Ifan, Felindre Farchog, Crymych, Dyfed, Wales.

Glaneirw House was once the seat of a country landowner. For the past two and a half years it has been the home of a remarkable co-operative community. The house looks out from its slightly dilapidated but still imposing front, between towering pink and red rhododendrons, away across miles of green farmland to the Preseli Hills in West Wales.

When I arrived, I did not sweep round to the front, as did visitors in the heyday of the house's Victorian grandeur, but drove down a straight track, past a notice warning me of the presence of free range children. I parked by the shop where the community sells their freshly picked strawberries, their macrame, their pottery, their herbs, their needle work and wood craft. Looking up at the tall old house, across a cluster of roofs of farm and stable yard, I could imagine it in its 19th century affluence. It had one style. Today it has another.

I am not sure what my reception would have been in those far off days, if I

had arrived expecting to find out how the people of the house lived and managed their affairs. Chilly I expect. My experience of the Glaneirw Community, in two day long visits, was very different. I had expected to feel an intruder but everyone was so friendly, welcoming and ready to talk that I soon began to feel almost an honorary member. Not only did they tolerate me hindering them with talk while they were busy with their work, but they showed me round, entertained me to no less than four appetising and nourishing meals. As if that was not enough, they allowed me to attend their weekly meeting.

Gradually I pieced together something of the story of the community so far. Among the eight founder members were several who had had the experience of living in other communities and had clear ideas about how to begin.

A Democratic Community

They wanted to establish a largely self-sufficient community, in which members lived and worked collectively, which would be permanent. They pooled their entire financial resources, and with the further help of a bank loan, succeeded in buying the seventeen bedroom house and surrounding forty-four acres of land. This was two and a half years ago. They formed themselves into something called an unincorporated association and drew up a document setting out their general aims and laying

down guidelines for the democratic conduct of community affairs. Of the original eight members, four have left, with the guaranteed return of their contributions, the value of which is geared to any change in the value of the property. But more have joined.

There are now some thirteen adult members; and five children. There are also five people who have been staying with the community for some time, making up their minds whether to apply to join. New members must be prepared to contribute whatever they have, to the community. They must be in general agreement with its aims and to have lived and worked at Glaneirw long enough for the existing members to be able to decide on their suitability. A meeting of all the members makes the final decision. All decisions of any importance are made by the community meeting together, around the table in the dining room. Every member's voice counts equally. Decisions are reached in common. Nobody is the leader. Elections for offices, such as chairpersons and secretary, are held annually. No one may hold the same office two years running.

The average age of the adult members of the community is probably in the early thirties. The children, a lively and obviously intelligent little group, consisting of three girls and two boys, range in age from under one to nearly ten. The three eldest attend the local primary school. Among the adults there are more

men than women, although on the days I was there the presence of two women visitors made this imbalance unnoticeable.

Solicitor, Traveller, Computer Programmer...

Several of the community members had begun the move from their former life style by working on farms as WOOFers. One, who had also been in the Merchant Navy, had worked more extensively on farms, particularly in Devon. Another had actually owned a farm in Wales. But this gifted group of people has mostly come to self-sufficient community life from occupations with little contact with the land. One was involved in social research, another in local government. One member, now successful growing strawberries, came from the world of computers via drama therapy with mental patients. Some had acquired professional qualifications and practiced for a time, for example: one as a nurse in a London hospital, another as a solicitor - he still practices part-time. Some of the women with children have opted for community life, determined not to be trapped as housewives in 'suburban boxes'. Several people had dropped out of university, some before some after first degrees. Several had travelled widely, one at least in Africa and India. All, in their different ways were searching for an alternative to the conventional plan which seemed marked out for them. One founder member explained how, when the time came to join the community, she still hankered after a little more travel, but decided that she had found what she was looking for, and that the chance of helping to start Glaneirw was too good to be missed.

I went around and talked to people: as they served in the shop, (which they had together converted during the winter), as they ground car valves, picked strawberries, made pots, cooked, partitioned rooms, ate meals, watered tomatoes in a magnificent plastic greenhouse, washed up dishes; and planted borccoli. I was made aware, over and over again, of a desire to extend one's range; and of pleasure in discovering talent in directions which had been formerly closed to one by a different pattern of life, by one's sex, one's background, education and training.

In the opinion of those who had experienced it, the first year at Glaneirw was quite a struggle, especially the winter. With no money income and no crops growing, had it not been for the food several members brought with them as part of their contribution, life would have been impossible. In the beginning it was a matter of survival.

Soon the emphasis was on establishing the beginnings of self-sufficiency. Now, two and a half years later, things are not easy, they never will be that, but there is a consciousness that the community is moving into a new phase.

All Work the Land

There is a cautious pride in the achievement of a very substantial degree of self-sufficiency in food. The emphasis in the work of the community has shifted somewhat. Food production remains the overriding practical concern but there is a move towards some specialization, which is helping to bring in some money and to extend the group's contact with society beyond Glaneirw. The pottery, and other crafts, the shop, the market stall in Cardigan and the legal service, are examples of this. But the farm, the house, and the garden come first with everyone, however specialized they may be for part of the time.

Individual members have taken responsibility for different areas of work. One is in overall charge of the small herd of Jersey and Guernsey cows, another the market garden; another the strawberries, and so on. But everyone helps. Four people share the milking. Very many people work in the gardens and the fields. They take turns in the shop and in the market stall and at cooking and washing up. Housework is attacked in a combined operation on Monday mornings. People co-operate to mend equipment. Sharing of tasks, and interchangeability is a vital feature of life.

"Together, we can do almost anything," said one member.

At Glaneirw there is no evidence of an obsession with self sufficiency for its own sake. They accept that they need to earn some money. They buy food they cannot produce: sugar, tea, coffee, nuts and rice. They are planting fruit trees but it will be some time before they yield, so dried fruit has to be bought. They buy rolled oats. They are not able to roll the oats they grow so it is fed mostly to the stock. They buy beans of various sorts and other foods to ensure a balanced diet. Not much meat is eaten.

After only two and a half years, home food production is impressive. Last year they harvested seven tons of wheat. This provided bread for the year. They feed wheat to the chickens and ducks, and still, until recently, had a surplus to sell. They grow a variety of vegetables and have been able to sell a considerable quantity. In the case of potatoes they miscalculated somewhat. They sold too many and have had to buy them. The major part of the food for the livestock - chickens, ducks and cows - is grown on

the farm. This includes beans for the cows. So much hay was made last summer that there has been a surplus to sell at good prices. The chickens and ducks provide eggs. Three hives of bees will be producing honey this year. The cows provide all the community's needs of butter, milk, yoghurt and cheese. I inspected an impressive array of maturing cheddar type cheese and can testify to its excellent taste. I also sampled some delicious buttermilk cheese. Most of the fields are of four acres. Vegetables are growing in the walled garden, the market garden and in the fields. When I was there, several fields were up for what promised to be a good crop of hay. I saw a magnificent field of winter wheat and strong tall rye. I saw field beans, beetroot and spring wheat and many other things. Garlic is a profitable crop. The field the cows were in had its share of thistles but my general impression was that the farm was well managed and the land in good heart. The obvious fertility of the soil owes a good deal to the hundred tons of farm yard manure which the members of the community loaded and carted from the cowsheds of friendly neighboring farmers, a back-breaking undertaking. Local farmers seem genuinely impressed by the achievement of the community in successfully growing such a wide variety of crops in an area now largely given over to dairy farming.

Private Space is Ensures

The house was used as a hotel in its most recent past. It had been neglected for some time before the community bought it. Redecoration will take time. There are so many more important things to do. It seems structurally sound though, and lends itself to adaptation. I saw a large bedroom being converted into two. Another bedroom had been recently refurbished with an impressively sanded floor as the children's dormitory. The eldest girl, aged nearly ten, is soon to have her own room. All the adults have their own rooms. It is the established practice to ensure that every member has this private space.

Downstairs, a new store room for bottled fruit and jam is under construction. The most impressive room is the dining room which looks out to the south. The walls of the room are decorated with colorful hangings and there is a piano and a Rayburn. Sitting at the great oval table, made partly of old floorboards by one of the community's experts, one can see a cloud of wild bees swirling round the roof of the porch. They have been there for several years and have successfully resisted domestication.

In two of the other ground floor rooms, one named the Albert Hall, there are wood burning stoves: ingeniously adapted old milk churns. There is a television set. But it is the large friendly farmhouse kitchen which is the heart of the house. There are always people there cooking and washing up. Members are constantly passing through or dropping in for a chat, a cup of something and bread and jam, in between jobs outside.

There are interesting store cupboards. In the dungeon-like cellars are

stored root vegetables in boxes filled with sand. The drink is kept in what was once the hotel bar. I saw jars of home-made wines labelled to deter premature consumption ('Notverynice' or 'Horrid'.) I tasted some carrot wine which was as good as vintage port. There is a store room full of sacks of beans, grains and other food, with a section set aside for 'Kids Food'. In the lobby is a notice board. I was impressed to see pinned to it thoughtful instructions in case of fire, which paid particular attention to children and heavy sleepers.

The stable yard houses the workshops where carpentry and metalwork go on. Next to it is the farm yard and cow sheds where the cows spend the winter nights. At the moment they are out in the fields all the time and are milked there. Not far away is the pottery where high class work is done. It is equipped with a modern kiln. Clay work by children from the local primary school is fired there.

The members of the Glaneirw House Community might say that my picture was concerned with externals and conveyed nothing of what it is like to live and work in the group.

What Makes it Tick?

Of course my picture is superficial. How can someone who visits for two days know what it is like to live there? Also, I believe that just as a conventional family has a right to privacy, so has a community of twenty people, however tempted I might have been to do a study of the group to discover what makes it tick.

For tick it does. It does work. It has coherence. A coherence which is evident, through all the different individuals' awareness of the uncertainties and of the provisional nature of many achievements and of the half finished nature of many projects. It is a coherence, which is more apparent to some than to others; more apparent some days than on others. Hope is bound to ebb and flow. Morale, the feeling of unity. Together we can do almost anything is sensed more readily on a fine summer day when everyone is being exceptionally nice to each other and not so readily when one is shivering with cold in the big old house in the winter or when one is lying in bed, sleepless, after a contentious meeting. □

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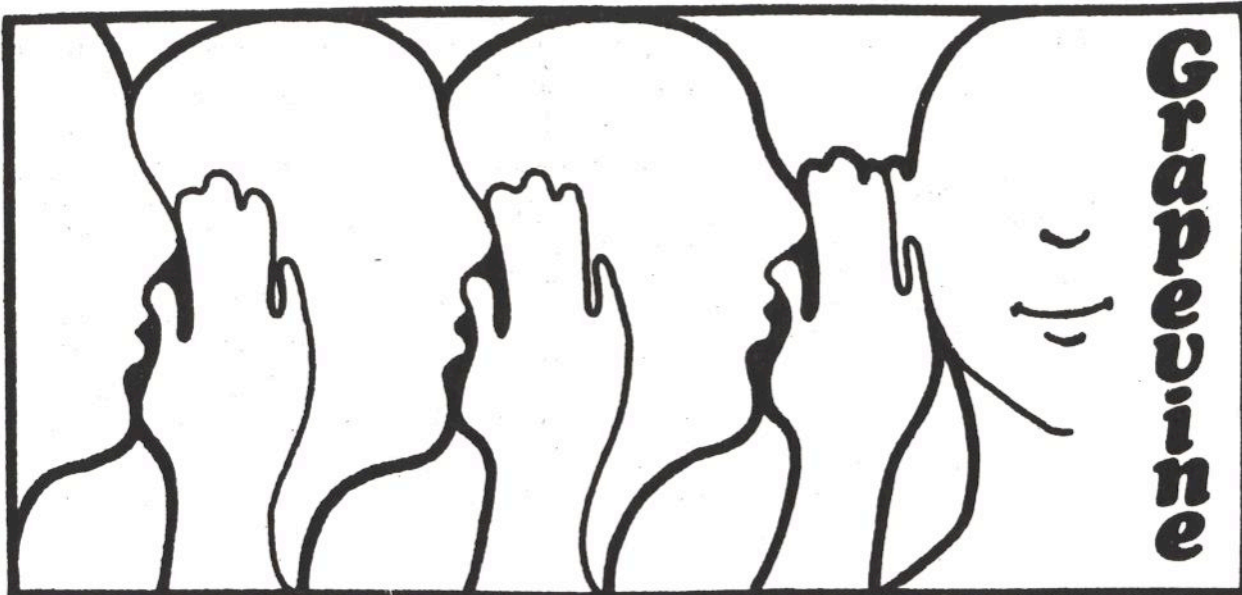
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WEST COAST COMMUNITIES CONFERENCE

During the six day period of August 22-27 this summer, about 100 people gathered to participate in the West Coast Communities Conference. The conference was sponsored by Kerista Village, a San Francisco-based Utopian community. The first three days of the event were held in San Francisco at one of the Kerista houses. The last three days took place at Harbin Hot Springs in Lake County, CA.

The focus of the conference was "software of communal life": relationships, sexuality, communications, economic systems, education, and family. About a dozen communities were represented, as well as a number of small communal households with no formal name or established structure. Naturally, with this diversity, a variety of views and perspectives were offered. Unattached participants (not living in any community) were exposed to a spectrum of ideas, as were the in-community participants.

By the second day at Harbin things started feeling pretty loose - a combination of hot baths, the country, and the wearing-off of the initial strangeness - and a lot of informal discussion and socializing occurred in addition to the formal workshops.

One topic that got attention was the

"polyfidelity/polyintimacy" debate. "Polyfidelity", represented by the Keristans, is a group family structure where non-preferential non-monogamy with intra-group fidelity practices. "Polyintimacy", as represented by Utopian Laboratory II (another San Francisco group) and Solal and Walkabout from Seattle, is also a group family structure. "Polyintimacy" doesn't necessarily include non-preferentiality or fidelity to the group. The questions raised by this difference had to do with love and intimacy...whether love can be shared with family and non-family members alike (sexually speaking) and still be strong, or whether such a range of involvement weakens and dilutes all bonds.

Another topic of conference was contributed by Lonnie, from East Wind Community in Missouri, who gave a talk on the Federation of Egalitarian Communities.

A highlight of the conference was the Saturday night entertainment. The Utopian Art Theater troupe of Kerista Village performed two original comedy plays about communal living. Many individuals performed music and songs that the audience listened and/or joined in with. Other individuals performed schticks of one sort or another, such as a great Mae West impersonation. This was topped off by a high-spirited dance.

It's always hard to know exactly who got what out of an event of this kind, but the general vibes and comments picked

up by Kerista Villagers were very positive. A lot of people met each other and made plans for future meetings and friendships. People learned about alternatives they hadn't considered. A few people found communities to join.

There may be a second West Coast Communities Conference next year... Kerista Village isn't certain about it yet. Keristans like to wait a few months to savor the aftertaste, before deciding on such things.

Blue Jay Way

DANDELION CONFERENCE

The July 1st weekend became an experience of sharing for me and about 100 others, as we came together at Dandelion for the Communities Conference.

We camped together on fields, sharing warm sunny days, and chilly nights that were beautiful and clear. The air was fresh and exhilarating, especially for those urbanites among us. We enjoyed mosquito-free slides and films in a newly-enclosed building, Aduki, built by Dandelion members and friends. The physical facilities were enhanced by "Drosophila" members, participants in a week-long Walden II community experience that preceded conference. They built a number of beautifully-constructed picnic tables and a 20' wood and

plastic-covered dome. (Amazing what ten erstwhile fruitflies can accomplish!)

Following early morning meditation and breakfast, each day began with a sharing circle, for announcements, for planning, and for singing, and for the feeling of being all together. Workshops followed, then lunch, then more workshops and dinner. Workshops were many; topics included: work and labor distribution, government, values and agreements, Walden II and behaviorism, alternatives to punishment, group process, conflict resolution, re-evaluation counselling, interpersonal relationships, aging in community, men and women in community, starting a community, economics, physical environment, solar energy, spirituality, and networking.

Films on community experiences were shown Saturday night. On Sunday, information, discussion, and recruitment sessions were presented by members of existing communities.

Folkdancing and a group campfire followed. The campfire was for me the high point of the weekend, built of course on the experiences of the two days before. We began by singing songs we knew and could share, and then moved toward more ballad-style songs improvised to express our thoughts and experiences. I sensed a coming together of those of us from rural and urban settings as we shared concerns about environmental destruction and nuclear proliferation. Thinking about these things can be real negative, but I sensed in our group a feeling of strength, a positive energy for coping and for overcoming these things in a positive and creative way, through pooling skills and energy. It was a wonderful feeling to be 'surrounded by concerned, aware, loving, and energetic people. One change we made in a song that night was especially significant to me: it was the change from "Ain't gonna study war no more" to "Gonna learn for peace right now". This symbolized a shift from resisting a negative force to creating a positive force for a better, more beautiful world.

Thanks go to the Federation of Egalitarian Communities Dandelion members, and all of us who were there. The spirit of gathering is retained. I feel that we are not alone, nor even a small group anymore. There are more and more people who are discovering that positive life force and are building a loving, humane and creative world.

"Cause we're building a circle of lovers,
of all the people who walk on the earth,

And we know that the circle of life will keep us together."

-from the words of a song sung at the campfire

Lyn Adamson

CONFERENCE OF INTENTIONAL COMMUNITIES IN MAINE

The first Conference of Intentional Communities in Maine, the beginning of a communication and mutual assistance network, was held November 17-19, 1978. Attended by over sixty adults and children, most members of communities, the conference was held at Atkins Bay Farm in Phippsburg.

The weekend gathering was sponsored by four intentional communities, the members of which were feeling isolated, generally not even knowing of the existence of other similar groups in the state. Although intentional communities are organized in a variety of ways, the communities at the Conference are generally governed by democratic, consensus decision-making processes.

The Conference was run similarly, with most decisions made by consensus. Meal preparation, clean-up, and child-care were shared. Various individuals volunteered to facilitate the many events, resulting in active involvement by many people in addition to the original sponsors.

The opening meeting Friday night produced numerous proposals for events. After breakfast, Saturday morning, we met in a large group to get better acquainted and to schedule activities. The decision-making process worked remarkably well for such a large number of virtual strangers.

Next, a large group met to explore **Problems of Living and Working Together**. In the afternoon workshops titled **Truth Process, Natural Healing, Closeness to Our Natural Environment, Land and Building, and Keeping in Touch with Our Spiritual Cores** were held. After dinner a group met to develop proposals for future activities and continuing communication. Socializing, a massage workshop, and music-making rounded out the night.

A Sunday morning celebration with improvised music and dance took place in the first sunshine of the weekend. A final meeting approved plans for a newsletter and drew volunteers to plan and host a spring conference. The newsletter will be published at least twice before the conference and will serve to keep people in touch and circulate ideas for the gathering.

The Conference of Intentional Communities in Maine brought together many Maine community members for the first time. The weekend was one of both enjoyment and satisfaction. The formation of this network should be of benefit both to the individual communities which belong, and the larger Maine community as well.

For information about the conference to be held April 27-29, 1979, write to: **Conference of Intentional Communities in Maine, c/o Fulford, Box 78, Vinalhaven, Maine 04863**. Subscriptions to the newsletter (\$2 for an individual, \$10 for a community) are available by writing to: Bill Holland, 31 Walter St., Roslindale, Mass. 02131. Other inquiries will be handled by Patricia Pedigo, Battlebrook Farm, RFD 1, Box 84A, Danforth, Maine 04424



HOT MULCH

...is a gardening bunch who are part of Shannon Farm. We grow organic vegetables and herbs.

Last year, two of us began selling fresh-cut herbs to restaurants in Washington D.C. Next year we want to expand to four members. Also, we are beginning to raise herbs for the bulk market and can add two more people to start that undertaking.

"Shannon Farm is an anarchistic community at the base of the Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia. We have 120 acres of farmland and 350 acres of hills and forests. We are a mixed group of people with a variety of approaches and we welcome diversity.

I would like to invite bisexual and gay people to come join us in the gardens, or just join us.



Write: **Chuck Hall, Crazy Owl, at Rt. 2, Box 183, Afton, Va. 22920** for more information.

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Conferences

☆ **Movement for a New Society Two Week Training Programs in Nonviolent Action** - Includes group process skills, democratic decision-making, direct action, conflict resolution skills, nonviolence theory, community organizing and more! Philadelphia: Jan. 13-28, March 15-30, May 16-June 1. \$90-120 (negotiable). Write: MTTCC - MNS 4722 Baltimore Ave., Phila., PA 19143

☆ **The World Symposium on Humanity, April 7-14, 1979.**

This even is to be held simultaneously in Toronto, London, and Los Angeles. The three centers will be linked by interactive video satellite, and the proceedings will then be beamed around the planet for viewing by those unable to attend directly. Some of the greatest voices of the New Age will be providing the focus for the blending of all the human arts into this week-long dialogue of heart and mind. The gathering is an attempt to understand the eternal "now" that lies behind the paradoxes of our world today. The Symposium is being planned and coordinated by The Humanity Foundation which is centered in Vancouver. The Foundation's words about the World Symposium are: "...Our first great challenge is to create a consensus that fundamental change is possible - to create a climate, a framework, which can integrally organize and coordinate the forces which are today striving for growth along seemingly separate paths. Until we have created that master context, all talk of strategy is meaningless. Action up to

that point will only endlessly recreate the problems."

"This is the purpose of the World Symposium on Humanity - to sketch out that context, and create an irresistibly vibrant vision, a new paradigm, for constructive humanist action. We aim to engage a wide public in practical debates and affirmations of hope; 3000 participants will attend each of the three events, and up to 10,000,000 people will view parts of the proceedings on their home televisions, or at specially-organized public centers."

"This is an opportunity for all those who regard themselves as world citizens to come together, to organize, and to drink deep from the well of collective intuition."

Registration costs for the Symposium before January 1, 1979 are: single - \$175, couple - \$315, child - \$45, and after January 1st are, single - \$200, couple - \$360, child - \$55. Installments are possible. For the Toronto event send Canadian currency; for Los Angeles and London events send U.S. currency. Registrations and more information are available by writing to: **The Humanity Foundation, 2173 West 4th Avenue, Vancouver, B.C., Canada V6K 1N7.**

☆ **Rowe Conference Center** is hosting the following conferences this winter. This is their 5th 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 6:00 Friday to 2:30 Sunday. For more information and reservations contact: **RCC, Kings Highway Rd. Rowe, Mass. 01367 [413] 339-4216**

Shelter Institute - Design for Living - Pat and Patsy Hennin

Jan 12-14 Patsy and Pat are co-founders of Shelter Institute in Bath, Maine, a school for energy efficient design and building. Their knowledge is immense and ranges from construction to law to family self-sufficiency. A weekend of sharing their knowledge and wisdom. They'll be covering, with the help of their children, how to begin building or repairing your own home; design as a whole concept of living; politics, morality and economics of energy; parameters of environmental responsibility; how to think personally about energy efficiency; and how to overcome the resistance to change.

Living above the Arctic Circle - Sam and Billie Wright

Jan 19-21 Since 1969 Sam and Billie Wright have been homesteading above the Arctic Circle in the Brooks Range in Alaska. Besides surviving, they have been active in ecological concerns and the meaning to be found in life. Both are Unitarian Universalist ministers and Billie is author of *Four Seasons North*. We have been trying to get them here for years. Finally they are taking a winter off to try building, with their hands, a dwelling in the Arizona Desert.

Groups Looking

☆ Hooker House started as three middle class families in August 1977. Only one of the original three remains, but we are still a middle class cooperative, with four men and two women as full time residents. Our immediate purpose in cooperative living is mutual social support as well as economic and work economy. Our long-range purpose is finding what makes cooperative work, particularly for middle class people with no former cooperative experience. We are not vegetarian, religious centered, nor particularly ecological. We eat some junk food, watch TV, drive cars, enjoy skiing, and fit in pretty well with contemporary urban society. Decisions are all by consensus. We support Frontrange Alternative Communities Networking Group and feel better communication and information sharing could improve cooperative living. We are open to considering people for membership, rather cautiously selective of who we accept.

Hooker House, 3151 West 24th Avenue, Denver, Colorado 80211, Tel. [303] 477-5176.

☆ Free Spirits Ranch, near La Paz, Bolivia, in temperate jungle. Open to any and all who can pay \$1.00 a day and contribute a little work, for a month or a year or a lifetime. No hard-core religion or politics. Write: **John Roush, c/o Consulado de los Estados Unidos, La Paz, Bolivia.**

☆ An Appropriate Technology-minded community, Sunflower Farm, in southeast Ohio near Ohio University, has openings for several new members. Presently we are six families on 100 scenic acres with private 5 acre home-sites and a 50 acre commons for cooperative activities and income projects. Members also often have full or part time outside jobs.

Plans are being made for a unique Appropriate TEchnology Skills School where people from outside the community can learn food, shelter, and alternate energy production skills for more self-sufficient and, hopefully, more cooperative living.

We invite persons able to teach in such areas as aquaculture, hydroponics, wind or solar power who seek a community where learning, teaching, research, creativity, and cooperation are some of the basic values for both personal and community growth, to contact us.

We would appreciate if you could tell us about yourself and your goals. We will be glad to answer questions and send additional information.

Contact: **Sunflower Farm, c/o Bruce**

Sabel, Rt. 1, Box 90, Amesville, Ohio 45711

☆ **Jordan River Farm.** We (Miriam, Seph and Lynn) are three adults living on 470 acres of land, soon to be put in trust, in the northwestern part of Virginia. We hope to establish a community in order to run an organic farming operation on this acreage. The farm is predominantly rolling pastureland, therefore we foresee beef and dairy cattle raising along with some specialty crops as our most promising options. We desire to eventually derive the majority of our income from the farm with farm generated income and equity to be shared by members of the community. We are currently seeking additional members to join us in our effort. If you are interested or have any questions, please write to: **Jordan River Farm, Huntly, VA 22640**

☆ We came together realizing that common ideals and shared interests are what it takes to build fulfilling lifelong relationships. And although we find the idea of "advertising" for partners to be somewhat impersonal, we don't know how else to reach like-minded people... so here we are, hoping that some compatible soul will stumble across this notice, see the vision behind it, and be inspired enough to respond.

We're trying to build a sane environment (an Eco-house in San Francisco, also spending time in the country and traveling) for living, working, playing and loving... emphasizing equality, non-preferential multiple relationships (not coupling), ecology, and a commitment to actively pursue ideals and long-range goals. Our method of defining our standards - and our key to implementing them - is total, uninhibited, open sharing of our perceptions, feelings, and ideals (while remaining open to outside interests and relationships, provided group harmony, commitment, and effectiveness remain high).

Special pursuits include a construction collective, co-op networking, publishing, artistic development, health, nutrition... and just having fun. We are **PYRAMIS, c/o *RSVP, 681 Ellis, Box 885, S.F. 94109.**

☆ We are a community of Utopians living out our ideals through open honest communication. With a positive view of reality, we are working towards social change. Some of our ideals are equality, social tolerance, long-lasting interpersonal relationships, humor, art, verbal-ity, healthy ecological living, self-sufficiency, democratic decision-making, and polyfidelity (an alternative family struc-

ture).

We are operating a 160 acre organic dairy farm in Wisconsin which is in the process of being transferred into a land trust. In combining old and new methods of agriculture with a labor intensive approach, we hope to achieve a unique farming experience. Preservation of wildlife, conservation, and organic living are essential foci in our approach to life in the country. **Soy and Fal, Scrub Oak Farm, RR#4, Strugeon Bay, WI 54235 Tel. [414] 824-5646**

☆ If we have help and God is willing we'll pay off the entire mortgage (\$300,000) in the next year. Your participation will help realize this goal. If you're willing to learn painting, we're willing to teach you.

Sanatana Seva means Service to the Eternal. As a member of the Sanatana Seva crew, you will:

Live in the presence of Yogeshwar Muni

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Help establish Kayavarohana as a center of spiritual growth

Participate in all programs free of charge

Receive a monthly stipend of \$12.50

Learn a trade

Other staff positions available at Kayavarohana include: maintenance, general office, bookkeeping, handyman, construction, kitchen, reception, gardening, and editing.

If you have friends you think might be interested, let them know about this opportunity.

For details, write or call: **Tapasvini, Sanatana Seva, 3100 White Sulphur Springs Rd., St. Helena, CA 94574 [707] 963-9634**

Groups Forming

☆ **A New Age Community in the Making in Israel**

In the midst of this pressure cooker of constant struggle and religious confrontations, it is a unique challenge and privilege to take part in the making of a centre of light and unity, to be instru-

mental not only in the individuals' spiritual growth but in the rebirth of a most ancient and profound culture, which in turn will play a vital part in the spiritual rebirth of humanity. We invite you who feel drawn to help and/or join in this challenge.

My husband Asher and myself, having been through different spiritual paths in the East and West, want to be free of confinement to a particular movement. The centre, be open to all seekers.

My involvement has been teaching Yoga, meditation, plastic arts for self expression, and guiding on wholesome nutrition.

Asher is a scholar in comparative religions, and works as a guide of the country specializing in its history and the background of the different cultures that emerged here.

We feel that the combination of our respective experiences and energies could be of benefit to seekers of different backgrounds, and that there is room for others to share their potentialities.

The centre, Mishkan Noam, is located in the woods of the Western Galilee hills, facing the Mediterranean. We received the place in an extraordinary way, in which we felt Divine providence.

We have been running weekend workshops which have been quite successful in their aims of expansion of consciousness. We anticipated having groups and/or individuals from abroad that would come for a period of reflection, combined with studies and visits to places of interest and significance under Asher's guidance. Studies would include subjects such as Jewish mysticism, Kabbalah, universal aspects of the Bible, and would go along with our workshops aiming at the releasing of the potentialities of the person. Programs could be worked out jointly.

We are in need of more help. Persons who feel moved and fit to take part in this adventure, may write us, adding some details about themselves.

Naomi Eder, Gan Panorama, Segev 25272, Israel

☆ I am looking for people - men, women and children, who are attuned in assisting in creating a spiritual cooperative commune in Marin County, a fifteen minute drive from San Francisco, Ca.

I am looking for people who share similar values and interests. I am into daily meditation and daily spiritual study. My interests include the Science

of Kriya and the Art of Tantra, natural foods, spiritual music, art, sports, loving relationships, children, camping, healing, mystical and sufi dancing and massage.

I am in the process of creating an environment that serves, supports, and assists one and all in attaining Self-Realization, a right livelihood and the development of loving relationships.

Personal attributes I value in myself and in others include openness, humor, honesty, fairness, compassion, positive attitude, gentleness, tolerance, accountability, evenmindedness, sensitivity, and dedication to self-realization.

My past experience with communities includes direct experience of Ananda, Living Love Center, Henry Ohloff House, Paras Rajneesh Ashram, Kerista Village, Cofu and many others.

It was from these various experiences I was able to synergize a more workable and flexible environmental living arrangement that would serve the spiritual needs as well as the spiritual needs.

Please let us open a communications and learn more about each other.

Richard Parenti, 506 Pine St., Sausalito, Ca. 93965 [415] 332-3807

☆ The Actions Analysis Experiment in Santa Cruz is a group of people starting positive group living in America.

We believe in emotional self-expression, positive communication within the group, and open sexuality.

We have a collective business to support us and are saving towards purchasing land possibly about June 1979.

We operate by direct democracy, equality, common economy, and collective living arrangements.

We are modeling our emotional development after the Action Analysis Organization of Europe.

Our government is simple direct democracy and we establish positions of responsibility as needed.

Our labor and material distribution is modeled after communities within the federation of Egalitarian Communities and Alpha Farm of Oregon.

We are seeking others who wish to join us. For more information or to arrange a visit write **AAE, 235 Auburn Avenue, Santa Cruz, CA 95060 [408] 423-2616**

☆ Walking Wood is to be an intentional community for families with young

children. We have located a beautiful 22 acre farm, bordered by a river in the North Carolina mountains which we would like to share with 3 or 4 other families in an extended family environment. Children are to be educated at home through the natural growth of play, interaction, discovery, and curiosity.

The farm has a barn, and a 3 room cabin that can be used as a communal kitchen and play/work/study area, and together we can build individual family structures in the woods.

We are seeking vegetarians, non-smokers; kind gentle people who want to raise their children outside of the confusion and segmented consciousness of society and the systems that perpetuate it.

There is a nearby medical clinic, (including a midwife) as well as a natural foods co-op and crafts outlet. One or two other possible sources of income nearby.

Please write or call if interested:
Rickie c/o Walking Woods, Box 557342, Miami, Fla 33155 [305] 271-6719

☆ Interested in collectives? A collectively-run natural foods restaurant is now forming in Binghamton, N.Y. We are looking for responsible, considerate individuals willing to take on a long-term commitment.

Please write: **Peapoles power plant, 43 South Washington Street, Binghamton, N.Y. 13903**

• The Cooperative College Community is looking for carpenters and other artisans, craftspeople, organic farmers, and academics to create a community in which art, ecological balance, self-reliance, health, and education are valued more highly than personal wealth or professional advancement. We envision students and 75 adult members and their children in a rural northeast setting. The community will be an economically cooperative village, with maximum self-sufficiency. It will operate a small liberal arts college, not charging students for faculty salaries. All decisions are made by consensus. For more information, write: **Cooperative College Community, 90 H Summer St., Williamstown, MA 01267**

☆ We are interested in forming a loosely-structured rural community on our farm in Colombia, South America. We grow coffee and cocoa as cash crops (and corn, beans, fruits, and vegetables as subsistence crops) on our 100 & acres. The farm is mountainous, remote (three hour walk to nearest road), and very beauti-

ful. If interested, please write: **Finca Los Guadales; A.A. 118; Cartago, Colombia, South America. Jackie, Jim, and Meredith**

People Looking

☆ My son and I, 4 and 32 are moving into a time for building the vision that has grown over the years. We desire to be a part of a family-community relationship, a life of simplicity yet of depth of experience. Work, play, laughter and tears in devotion and humility unforced by any dogma. Acceptance, open feeling and expression.

Are there people who we can Live-work-play-love-learn-grow with? Is there a lady with a child of two: a free-flowing, deep-knowing, warm-loving Nature spirit with whom we can share ourselves? I'm a gentle man, with a passionate yet subdued and tranquil nature. Joel is full of life and wonder. We flow well together yet there is an awareness of necessity. Of mother, of lover, of sister, of daughter. I would like to hear from any who also have a desire to realize a full life in community with others. We are also ready to put our energies into an existing community if we can find you?

Terry and Joel Sayre, 3480 17th St., Boulder, CO, 80302

☆ I'd like to start/join a Keristan type group in the Southeast Sunbelt (S. Cal, Az., N.M., Tex.). This includes, but is not limited to, the following concepts: a group marriage (size open at this point) wherein all members strive for relationships of equal intensity with each other; an intention of lifetime involvement; eco-consciousness; omnivorous diet; a high level of communication; total rationality, openness and honesty on all thoughts, feelings, etc.; no prejudice towards age, race, sex, or any other physical qualities of an individual; lifelong learning; no pets; no tobacco; no intoxicants in a manner offensive to other members or in a way that interferes with group harmony; Rational Pantheism; democratic decision making except consensus on additional members and changes in this social contract; joyous vocational involvement; larger community involvement; communal child rearing.

These are most but not all the concepts I'd like to live by. For more info write to: **Frank Zygumt, 1125 E. Campbell, Phoenix, AZ 85014**

☆ We welcome applications from those who want to work with and live closely with others on the land at farm-related and other activities. No anarchistic grasshoppers please. Our people will be open, hardworking, intelligent people who can communicate their goals in writing. There will be times when they will have to abide by others' rules. If they're not willing to do that at home, they'll most likely not do it among large groups of communitarians. We do not want prudish, religious hypocrites, or the screwy criminally inclined. Write: **Marvin Manning, c/o General Delivery, Pocahontas, Ark 72455**

☆ (Wholesomeness) Holism Universal, Inc. is a non-profit private corporation with the primary goal of planning, organizing, co-ordinating, motivating, and controlling applied and pure research in the areas of holistic health, education, social welfare, social rehabilitation, and human services. Services will be marketed through teaching, publishing, consulting, and trying different clinical settings. A family style out-patient clinic and research-oriented family-style residential center will be established. It will help clients learn optimal responsibility, awareness, involvement, and conscious pre-planned practice and enter into a contract of goals and expectations about wholesomeness. Funds will be sought from a variety of sources including manufacturing in appropriate technology. All people will be offered hourly work credit (work or money) which can be converted into programs of personal growth or money. Clear contracts will be drawn up.

Do you wish to join such a venture? We will train you. No special degree requirement, but a willingness to learn all you must. Please provide resume, expectations, and projected participation as volunteer, provider, organizer, consumer, or investor. Write: **Shirish Pandya, 11461 Fox Lake Rd., Orrville, OH 44667**

☆ At the Labor Day Weekend Communities Conference this year at Twin Oaks we were excited to meet lots of neat people and to part with \$160 worth of literature. Unfortunately we only received \$100 in payment. If you took or borrowed literature from our table and forgot to leave money (or if you just want to contribute) please send \$ to: **MNS, 4722 Baltimore Ave., Philadelphia, PA 19143**

☆ My fiancee and I are looking for a true HOME. We love people and we love life.

We are willing to work and sacrifice and learn. We are not materially-oriented in the least and do not wish to belong to a community into the drug scene. We believe in the nuclear family - but also want to be part of a larger family simultaneously.

I am a poet of absolute integrity and commitment. I will more than carry my weight - but home for me is a place my work belongs also. I make a subsistence living as a part time church janitor and have also written stories and plays.

Karen is a secretary and is working toward a 2-year degree as a teaching assistant. She is solid and loyal and loves with her whole being - especially children.

We are mature and responsible - and since for us communal living is not a passing whim but literally a matter of survival - we'll fight with everything we've got to help make the community work.

Please respond quickly as possible.

Timothy McPeck, 465 Norwood Ave. Upper, Buffalo, New York 14222

Land

☆ "The Reluctant Land Sale", Maryland. Woodburn Hill Farm is a rural family-oriented intentional community in southern Maryland. We are "land poor" and will sell 30-60 acres to compatible folks. Dirt road, Amish area, private, timber/open, water, beautiful! Write: **WHF, Rt. 3, Box 98, Mechanicsville, MD 20659**

Help Wanted

☆ Seeking people with a competent business sense or calling to organize/run a trusteeship oriented business, (offering a low cost, cross country transportation alternative by using van rentals at New York City, Boston, San Francisco and/or Los Angeles.)

Interested individuals with skills in any of the following: Management, law, finances, public relations or diesel maintenance, and living in one of the above locales, contact: **Nusom at 76 Fulton Street, Weehawken, N.J. 07087**



Alternative Schools

New Schools Exchange 1978 Directory and Resource Guide is "full of tools and information. It is also full of hopes and dreams. The many varied resources which it contains are intended to aide rather than guide - be your own guide." So reads the introduction to the fourth and last directory. **New Schools Exchange** will no longer publish a newsletter or annual directory because the organization is not financially viable. We lose a useful and valuable resource.

This last issue is a combinatio of directories; chapters on alternative and community schools, free universities and learning exchanges, and adult education programs list names and addresses, state-by-state. A few articles on the history of public alternatives, the story of free u's, tips on selecting and starting learning programs, photos, and a pageful of poems are interspersed. An ample bibliography and list of resources complete the guide. **New Schools Exchange 1978 Directory and Resource Guide** represents a monumental effort, well worth the \$5 cost. Additional donations welcome. **NSE, Pettigrew, ARK 72752**

The Alternative Free-Neighborhood-Universities Catalogue [AFC] is becoming a transnational network of mutual aid by learning from each other. AFC is "a convivial tool of people, who take heart to do in important things what is in the strict sense self-evident" (Ivan Illich in the first edition).

AFC started in 1976 as a self-help initiative of farmers and female peasants in an undeveloped rural district of

Germany by reviving the tradition of the autonomous cooperation of the **universitas** of villages, later copied by students and professors and called university. The aim was to stop the social and cultural erosion of their villages by offering and requesting mutual and integral teaching and learning everyday-life knowledge like the baking of bread, sheep-shearing, mill-building, deer-stalking etc. Soon urban individuals and groups cooperated, offering and requesting their own themes.

The **Free Neighborhood Universities** do not require membership nor matriculation. The offers and requests will be announced like a number in the telephone book and persons who are interested make contact with the announcer. There will be no cost for the publication in the AFC to non-commercial announcement. Announcement of party-politics or those that are violating human rights will not be published.

The AFC 1978 (Verlag Freie Nachbarschaft GmbH. : D-6145 Lindenfels, 148 pages, DM 7.50 postage included) includes 220 offers and requests of 150 collaborators in Germany and Western-European countries. Announcement of offering or requesting expertise, knowledge, skills and contacts across the national borders send to the editor **Dr. Bernhard A. Suin de Boutemard, D-6145 Lindenfels [BR Germany]**.

Pendle Hill, founded in 1930, is a non-degree granting adult center for work, study and contemplation. Suburban location, near Philadelphia, coeducational, autumn, winter and spring terms of ten weeks each and summer sessions of one week each. Silent meeting for worship open daily for all; meeting for business of the community twice monthly after the manner of the Friends. The purpose of **Pendle Hill** is to provide a time in which life can be lived for its own sake. The college is not a traditional

school, nor an intentional community, nor a commune. It is rather a place in which an unique community of personal search and group concern may emerge each year anew, dependent upon what each person brings to the common sharing of life and thought. Scholarship help is available. Families and singles accommodated. Classes, interest groups, individual research projects combine with volunteer work in nearby agencies.

Pendle Hill, Wallingford, Penn. 19086
[215] 566-4507

Gay

The Lesbian Tide is a national feminist newsmagazine written by and for lesbian feminists in the United States. We specialize in; a full and comprehensive coverage of national lesbian and gay rights issues, mothers and custody cases, personality interviews with leading lesbians, reviews of the latest feminist books, records, etc. and in depth political analysis editorials. Subscriptions are \$6 per year to **Tide Publications, 8706 Cadillac Ave., no. C, Los Angeles, CA 90034**

The Gaylight Collective publishes a monthly magazine, **Gaylight**, geared to the lesbian and gay community in Central New York. Our purpose is to establish a sense of community among gay men and lesbian women in this area as well as providing a constant and highly visible reminder to elected officials, government agencies and the non-gay media of the existence of our largely silent community.

We are fully supportive of the gay rights and feminist movements in this area and operate on a non-profit basis

with the support of advertisers and volunteer labor. At the present time we distribute 2000 copies every month in Syracuse, Ithaca, Utica, Rochester, Albany, Oneonta and wherever we can find outlets.

Gaylight has been a primary information and communications resource for the gay/lesbian community of Central New York since June 1976. A recent issue included articles about Briggs initiative/Proposition 13, Gay Rights Legislation across the nation, Anita Bryant, local rallies and resources.

Mailing address: c/o The Printers Devil, 385 W. Onondaga St., Syracuse, NY 13202 [315] 475-6857

Information

The Pacific Studies Center is a community research and information center. PSC helps tenants organizations, ecology action groups, unions, journalists, students, teachers, and individuals learn more about American society in general and their own areas of concern in particular. PSC realizes that timely information is crucial to the protection of people's rights. Information files are maintained on a wide variety of topics, ranging from counterinsurgency in Thailand to the health hazards in the Santa Clara Valley electronics industry. A written or phone request for information is answered promptly; a library is open 10-6 on weekdays.

PSC published the bi-monthly **Pacific Research**, a journal focusing on US foreign policy, multi-national corporations, and the political economy of Asia and the Pacific. Subscriptions: \$6/2 years/12 issues/individuals in the U.S. Institutional, foreign, and airmail subscription rates are higher. PSC is partially funded by institutions, but relies largely on donations and subscriptions for support. For more information, contact: Pacific Studies Center, 867 West Dana St., no. 204, M Mountain View, CA 94041 Tel. [415] 969-1545

A list of Toll-Free Consumer Hot Lines is available from Ralph Nader's Public Citizen group. Information areas vary from housing to insurance, from runaways to veterans, from solar to health information. The hotlines are operated by government agencies, which established the information services under urging from the Public Citizen group. Hotlines make it easier to use the agencies you pay for. For the list, write: Hotlines, Public Citizen, P.O. Box 19404,

Washington, D.C. 20036. Public citizen needs contributions to continue its work, but the list is free. Send a large, self-addressed envelope.

STASH, Inc. is a non-profit organization (est. 1967) which provides an alternative to government and other traditional sources of information on psychoactive drugs. STASH avoids the misinformation and scare tactics that permeate the field of drug information, and provides a wide range of publications that are authoritative, informative, concise, current, and readable. STASH does not advocate the use or non-use of any chemical agent.

The quarterly, multidisciplinary **Journal of Psychedelic Drugs** is the cooperative publication of STASH and Haight-Ashbury Free Medical Clinic. (Subs. \$20/year/individuals, \$30/institutions, \$40/foreign) The 29 pamphlets STASH publishes includes reprints of the most important journal articles as well as articles researched and written by STASH. Pamphlets are 60 cents each for 5 copies or less. For more information, for subscriptions, for book and pamphlet lists, write: STASH, 118 South Bedford St., Madison, WI 53703 Tel. [608] 251-4200

Self Management

Strongforce is a 6 year old non-profit resource center for worker-community managed business in Washington, D.C. In addition to the Youth Program, which provides on-the-job training for over 100 low-income youths each year, Strongforce operates an Economic Development Program. The technical assistance provided covers such areas as starting a business, fundraising, business management, publicity, community liaison, legal requirements, taxes, bookkeeping, marketing, and advertising.

As part of its educational work, Strongforce publishes a quarterly newsletter on worker/community control, D.C. **Democratic Economics**, and a series of technical manuals. The following three resources are part of the series.

Democracy in the Workplace is a technical resource manual which deals with these issues: 1) history and overview of the self-management movement; 2) organizational functions, structure, and development; 3) education in the business and the community; 4) The Basic Folder - a simple educational guide about worker control; 5) legal and tax

requirements; 6) marketing; and 7) finance. This book is designed to help train people who are working in or want to establish a worker-controlled enterprise. **Democracy in the Workplace** was written, printed, and produced by worker-controlled businesses. \$5.

Nonprofit Food Stores: a Resource Manual studies the development of four food co-ops. The history, location, facilities, pricing policies, staff structure, salary levels, and the problems and progress of each store are analyzed. The final chapter offers some nuts and bolts suggestions. \$3.

Women Taking Charge: New Ways to Economic Power is a collection of articles describing women's self-managed workplaces. Domestic, factory, and office workers, and workers in feminist enterprises tell how they made their workplace more responsive to their needs. This book challenges the traditional concept of how women view their work. An appendix and resource guide for women in business are included, along with an overview of general and feminist credit unions. The book describes the first steps in developing an economy based on meeting human needs, rather than on profit. \$4.50, 90 pages.

For more information on worker-community controlled businesses, or to obtain these publications, contact: Strongforce, 2121 Decatur Pl., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20008 When ordering books, include 50 cents for postage and handling.

Metro Co-op Community is a group of individuals in the Toronto area interested in promoting wider use and understanding of their democratic organizations: co-operatives, credit unions, worker collectives, and community-based organizations. MCC acts in the areas of public education, promotion of member organization's services, shared member and leader training, lobbying on legislation affecting member organizations, and social events. Their tools are a journal of topical events and opinions, speakers bureau and presentations to groups, annual Open House for the general public, discussion/research groups, directory of local co-op services, and exchange visits and tours. For more information, write: Metro Co-op Community, P.O. Box 365, Adelaide St. Station, Toronto, Canada M5C 2J5

Publications

1978 Publications from Movement for a New Society (postpaid)

MNS No-Nukes Packet - 11 of the best articles on nuclear power issues. \$3.50

Leadership for Change - political implications of feminist leadership styles. 60 cents.

Beyond Simple Living - looks at need for moving from personal lifestyle to political issues. \$1.65

"A MacroAnalysis Seminar on Food and Hunger. \$3.50

Feminist - An MNS Feminist Bibliography. \$1.15

Alternative Health Care in a Rural Community, 55 cents
also still available

Resource Manual for a Living Revolution - The "Monster" movement "how-to-do-it" book. \$5.70

Moving Toward a New Society - Analysis, Vision, Strategy for a decentralizing, democratic, and ecologically sound new society. \$4.00

Write: MNS, 4722 Baltimore Ave., Box CC, Phila. PA 19143

Miscellaneous

The Children of Prosperity, by Hugh Gardner, presents an overview of 13 modern rural communes in the western U.S. The author visited each of the communes in 1970 and again in 1973. Gardner analyzed the groups using the measures of commitment developed by Rosabeth Moss Kanter in her study of 18th century American utopias (Commitment and Community: Communes and Utopias in Sociological Perspective). Success of the modern group was predicted if commitment was present in the forms of : sacrifice, investment (physical and/or financial participation), renunciation (geographic and/or media isolation), frequent communion (experience of whole group, oneness), mortification (mutual criticism, institutionalized awe). In this study the strongest tie to success (i.e. continued existence) was renunciation. Isolation helps. Amongst modern middle-class communards, communal sharing did not make for long-lived groups; allowance for individualism did. Also, where either anarchy or strict obedience ruled, groups fared better than those struggling in the middle ground.

Children of Prosperity made for interesting reading because 12 of the 15 chapters were glimpses of human places presented by a storyteller-author. Humor and struggle were kept in focus

while the researcher-author examined each commitment criteria, commune by commune. The first and last two chapters were dedicated to defining terms, analyzing results, and interpreting the sociological milieu of the decade. The research was not without its statistics and social psychological garble. A fair balance was struck.

Children of Prosperity. 13 Modern American Communes. Hugh Gardner, St. Martin's Press, Inc. 175 5th Ave., N.Y., N.Y. 10010 281 pages, including index. \$14.95. Ask your library to order it.

Working Papers for a New Society is a new bi-monthly magazine. The well-researched articles on such topics as reverse discrimination, community organizations, unemployment, job safety, energy action groups, reform efforts, campaigns, and more, are easily read. Articles mention different analyses of a situation, informing readers, of and acknowledging a variety of perspectives. The slant of the magazine challenges the status quo, but avoids negativity by focusing on alternatives that work or might work. Articles are 3-9 pages in length.

Working Papers is impressive because it is thorough, while the style is lively and palatable. Advertising is sparse. The layout, the physical appearance of the pages, is attractive and visually pleasing. Each issue contains a few resource listings - lengthy compared to **Communities** standards, but similar in content. Book reviews are another feature.

All in all, **Working Papers** is an exceptionally fine magazine. Subscriptions are: \$15/year/individuals; \$12/students and low-income people. Write: **Working Papers**, 4 Nutting Rd., Cambridge, MA 02138

The Center for Conflict Resolution is a non-profit, educational organization which provides skills to organizations, groups and individuals in the areas of group process, conflict resolution, decision making, problem solving and planning change. We do this by conducting workshops and conferences, by providing consultations and interventions, and by creating and distributing literature through our Resource Center. The goals behind these activities are to promote greater cooperation, democracy and individual participation in social institutions. By sharing our skills, we hope to make people aware of the values implicit in the structures they work in and we hope to empower people for working toward constructive social change.

The Manual for Group Facilitators is one publication of CCR. Its 90 pages are

a guideline on how to lead a group to accomplish what it wants in a meeting or workshop. CCR's values of democracy, non-hierarchy, individual responsibility, cooperation, honesty, and egalitarianism are clearly stated and are reflected in the material. Definition of terms are offered and the responsibilities of a facilitator are spelled out. By reading this book a person becomes aware of the planning, the structure, and the cycles of meetings. Group process, group dynamics, exercises and techniques, problems and problem solving, evaluations, and more are all addressed.

Anyone planning or presenting a workshop, leading or participating in a group will find the **Manual for Group Facilitators** a valuable resource and a consciousness-raiser. The book is organized in outline style. It is neat, but not flashy. To obtain a copy, send \$3, plus 50 cents postage to: 731 State St., Madison, WI 53703

The Creative Women's Collective is a non-profit organization comprised of women artists: painters, sculptors, graphic artists, photographers and others - who share a commitment to feminism and social change. We have been working collaboratively at our workspace in Chelsea (New York City) since 1973.

We collectively design and produce our own silk-screened graphics on women's issues as well as work collaboratively with other groups to design and help then. produce their own T-shirts, stationery, posters, etc. to use for fundraising and communication purposes. We also teach workshops in silkscreen, photography, plumbing and electricity, as well as silkscreen fine art editions for artists. Our studio and darkroom facilities are available for use by Collective members and non-members at reasonable fees.

A new program in 1977, "Women Artists of Chelsea", has provided a forum for the presentation and discussion of work by women artists who live or work in the Chelsea community.

Our newest project is our "Community Arts Outreach Project", through which the Collective is offering art workshops and art therapy for three age groups not heretofore substantially reached by our on-going workshops program: older children (10-15), youth (16-25), and older adults (55 and over). Except for a small material fee, there is no charge as staff for the new program has been provided through funding under CETA.

For further information on any of our programs, please phone or write: **Creative Women's Collective**, 236 West 27th St., 12th fl., New York, N.Y. 10001 [212] 924-0665

(continued from the inside front cover)

Heaven Can't Wait

prisons, they didn't start there either. The People's Temple found its membership among the contradictions, confusions and poverty which exist-in-the-midst-of-plenty; people who were conditioned to jive, hustle and dodge the failure they knew to be their inalienable right. For those who had medicated hopelessness through the drug of their choice [whether smoked, drunk, sniffed, popped or watched] - were they any worse off investing their lives in a cult? The People's Temple offered a way out of hopelessness, costing only the freedom which was a glut on the market.

What is the line between engagement and escape? Certainly the spiritual reaching for hope, the partial withdrawal from the mainstream to build communal alternatives can become the context of satisfying, productive lives.

This is not an apologia for Jim Jones or the People's Temple. Murder is awful and the decisions which were taken for the children like something out of a Greek tragedy. But I don't have to be enthused about National Socialism to admit the conditions which seeded it, nor the values of collective support and discipline which made it such a high for a generation of Germans.

Hitler and his coterie also took cyanide at the end of their hopes. The Nazis from their Berlin bunker also preached *Gottterdammerung* for the German people. If their last act had taken place in one of those giant sports stadiums, with suitable reinforcement (exhortations, peer pressure, armed guards and no exit) that *suicide* toll might have been in the hundreds of thousands. Might it not have been said of them, "Yes, they were coerced, but they made their choices long before?"

In contradiction to Maslow's Hierarchy of Values, *hope* is always the priority. The lack of social and economic justice and the need for a productive, hopeful role can be strong enough to cause a sacrifice of judgement. The renunciation of judgement and imbuing a symbol with salvation-from-hopelessness leads to desperation in preserving that symbol:

There was the Yippie who tried to pie Guru Maharaji and had both arms broken. There's armed guards at Synanon. There's the kidnappings, programming and deprogramming of the Moonies. There's Malcolm X murdered, and do you exclude Biafra, Belfast, Palestine and that little, family quarrel in Vietnam?

So people get excited about politics and religion. What does that have to do with community? With the free choice of human beings to join their energy and resources to build a better life?

1. What if outside forces don't accept that free choice? (As for Israeli kibbutzim.)
2. What's the difference between the assurance of having developed community solutions to matters of survival and growth; the commitment to social change which leads to outreach and education; and the arrogance of having discovered *the way*? At what point does wanting to expand involve overselling,



and how do you avoid that in a society which depends on media hype? (See the Kerista Village article in this issue.)

3. Is our standard to be participation in decision-making, or simply consent without coercion? How much human confrontation or peer pressure is acceptable?

4. If the *communities movement* rests on rationality, love and trust, hard work and playfulness of vision - where does that leave folks who have been driven nuts by the society, see work as oppression, love and trust as jive, whose playfulness is getting back some of their own? (Which brings us back to the heavy hype groups like People's Temple who do engage with the pain of the society.)

5. Can we accept (along with our valid criticisms of the society, and our personal and collective choices to live in a more communal style) that the USA offers us an incredible amount of flexibility, much of it due to the affluence we criticize, and a liberalism the Left has often derided? Without applauding what is, can we face that life has been, is elsewhere, and could be here...a lot worse? Can we maintain our integrity of purpose without the rhetoric which at its most extreme and radical extrapolation leads to People's Temple?

We raise questions and answer them with more questions. I believe the real answers lie in evolutionary commitment as an act of faith, recognizing our frailty and foolishness in a very large universe. That takes time and healthy human beings. I don't know if we'll ever have enough of either to provide more than a small alternative (from which to offer socially useful models and skills: within which to nurture and support more healthy human beings).

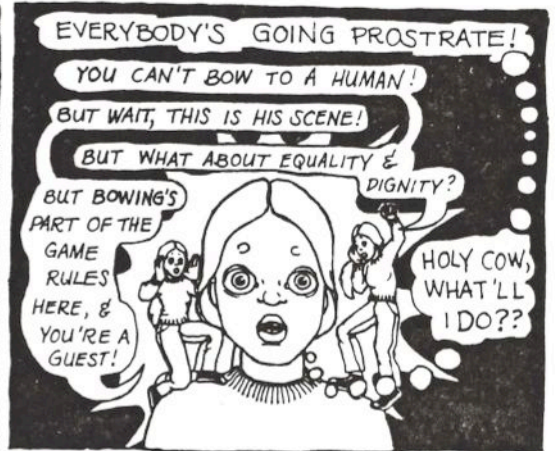
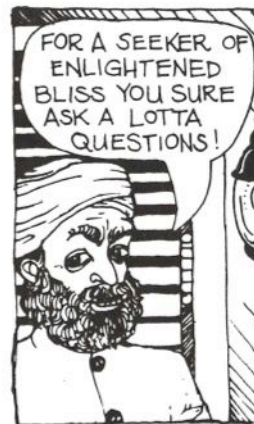
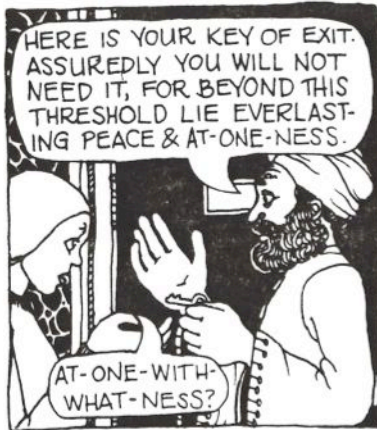
So be it. If the giving of ourselves in this lifetime, the receiving and sharing with others is our *communion*, then at least we will have done our best...

*Oh brothers, oh sisters
let's all gather round
and share in the stories
of where we are bound*

*Well one to retreat
and one to stand firm*

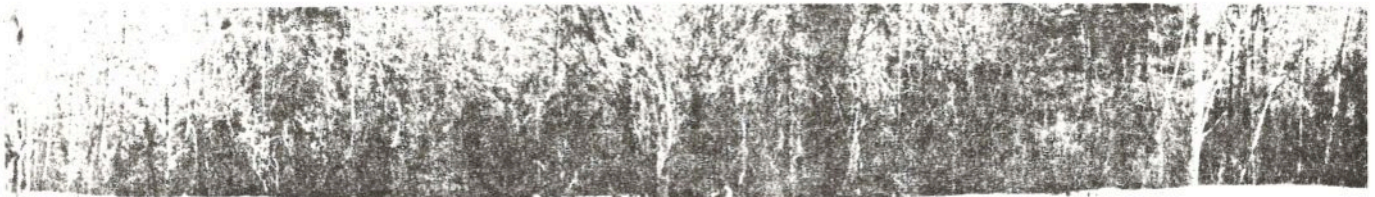
*One step backward
for each one we earn
The dues for the struggle
we'll all have to pay
The price is our passage
Let's be on our way*

PAUL FREUNDLICH



© Guru Mahagoochi Disci
 Matching Reports
 Kumu-Si - Disciple
 has worked unquestioningly for me for 4 years in sewerage factory. He
 would be eternally loyal if rewarded with Simmunda (also obedient & well adjusted) as bride on the first of next





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