

# COMMUNITIES journal of cooperative living

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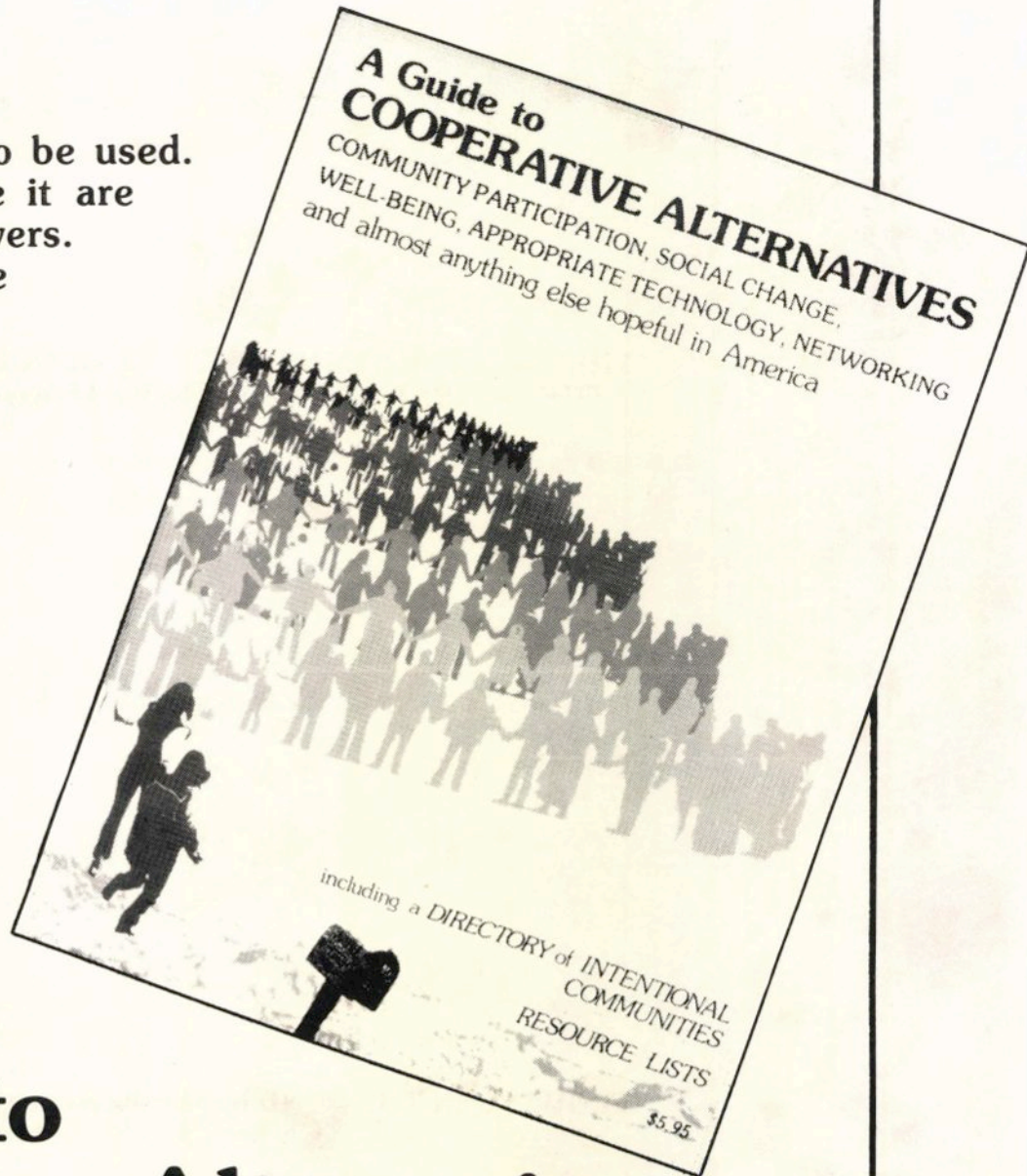
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**RELATIONSHIPS:**  
**Friendship, Family and Sexuality**

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 The people who wrote it are  
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 Our task is to make  
 involvement as easy  
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# A Guide to Cooperative Alternatives

A GUIDE to Cooperative Alternatives  
 Communities Publications Cooperative  
 Box 426, Louisa, VA 23093

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# COMMUNITIES

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## Introducing this issue...



I have a weakness for anecdotes...

1979

Stopping by to check in with a friend about having my son spend Saturday with her kids. I bang on the door and the kids come running. I hear an adult male voice, and call a hello to the man she lives with.

But it's her ex-husband visiting the kids for the day. So what we have is two kids who live there, and two men who don't: one ex-husband and one ex-lover. Some strain, but generally warm.

After sharing juice and a sandwich, I ask him what visiting plan he's on.

"American Plan, I think. No breakfasts and no dinners."

1974

There was a woman in our house who'd do this *kootchy, kootchy, wooty, booty* over her cat. I was sitting in the kitchen one day, and she was hugging the cat and making baby sounds. And I said (*with unjustifiable exasperation*), "If you do that once more, I think I'm going to throw up."

She came right out of it. Still holding the cat, she looked at me clearly and said, "Would you rather I do it with a person?"

1972

Walking down a path at a conference. Coming from the other direction a woman I know.

"Where are you going?" She asks.

"To a workshop on sexuality."

She stops in the middle of the path, hands on hips, incredulous. "You mean you're gonna *talk* about it?"

## Communities, Journal of Cooperative Living

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Just as we were finishing up this issue, I called my mother to work out Christmas plans. She wasn't feeling too great, working through a difficult relationship.

We take our turns.

I didn't know what was happening with her because she'd written the letter to my son, and he hadn't passed it on. They're very good friends, so maybe he felt it was *their* communication — or perhaps there have been enough adults going through changes in his life, and his grandmother sufficiently special, that he just preferred to forget about it.

I'll ask him.

— A child wants to grow up with friends and parents in some kind of stability, and develop creatively from that base.

— Adults need forms which allow some hope of continuity to love each other and have children.

In the introduction to *the Guide to Cooperative Alternatives*, I said, "Poor us. Even with great patience and skill, we still spend most of our lives trying to figure out what's going on. How in the face of vast complexity and confusion to follow the light of our truth into a new age? In little pockets of community around the continent, people have been redefining how we can make our lives together..."

Some of the variety of how we can make our lives together is in this issue.

Norman and Claire chose a structure of cooperative living, and have watched their friendship transcend ordinary definitions.

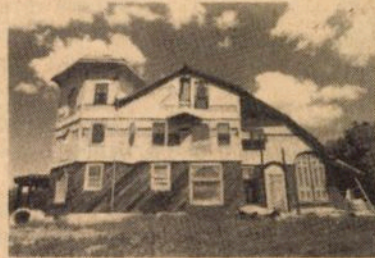


In *The Great Alternative Life Group in the Sky*, the structure of cooperative childcare and alternative, urban community has allowed us to break up marriages without wrecking our kids or ourselves [mostly].



At Family Synergy, a tribal form has developed within which adults may explore variety while maintaining continuity.

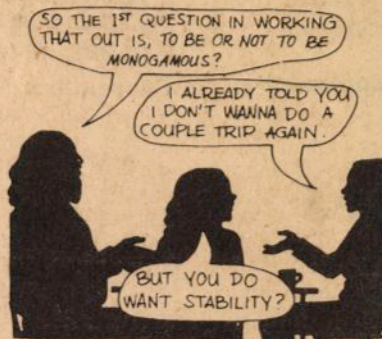
Renaissance Community has moved from a group of casual hippies with a vision, to a hard-working, hard-playing community [still with a vision] which among other things, provides a strong framework for couples and kids to grow.



Gordon and Corrine, ex-Findhorn members, explore the spiritual center of their love.

At East Wind Community, we get to see the developing themes of relationships over six years.

From Far Out West, Even Eve brings us her comic strip family come to life. And folks, whatever your prejudices, *polyfidelity* and *rotational sleeping schedules* really do work at Kerista Village.



In two poems, first Sara Pirtle evokes the context of our growing together, and Dan Dolen reaches toward his child's birth.

In this Year of the Child, Martin Bradley looks at his generation confronting parenting.

There are no theoretical articles on the future of family or relationships in this issue, but... There's a great deal of human history which tells me that extended families, tribes and community structures are necessary for healthy individuals and healthy relationships. We are building those structures, and through this issue of *Communities*, passing a few of them on.

I believe that all of us are saying, above all, that we do not have to be helpless. We do not have to accept traditional patterns which seem hopeless. We can take strength from each other. We can plan and work and play toward a future worthy of our respect and our children's.



Next issue will offer the conclusion [for the next five years] of *The Great Alternative Life Group in the Sky*, and will primarily explore *Regionalism*. As part of that, Tana McLane, an editor of *Spectrum* in Tallahassee, Florida is coordinating a look at community in the Southeast.

— PF

# Friendship Conquers All

Stormin' Norman, painter of pictures, writer of songs, midnight marijuana elf leaving packets on coop porches, all star chocolate freak, the terror of the neighborhood flower gardens, my friend Norman and I have lived together for over two years, and that's a lot of loving. There are lovers who live together and ponder what to call themselves and their relationship. Well, we live together, not as lovers, and sometimes wonder the same. We are housemates, co-conspirators, intimate friends and confidantes, war buddies in the struggle for truth, beauty and justice. We sometimes seem like an ancient couple that have been married for years and are as comfortable as old shoes. Sometimes we get wrapped up in our separate lives and lose touch with one another, but then in time we come back together again as if back from a journey with tales to share and thought to chew over.

I love Norman, no two ways about it. And he loves me by my definition of the word, tho' his definition is more conservative. He is one of my Best Friends, with the true weight of these words as we first come to know them in childhood. We know the patterns and movements of one another's lives like the chiming of a clock, regular and familiar. I know all the colors of his bandanas and that he always wears corduroys and never wears blue jeans. I know his taste for Prokofiev and Tchaikovsky and his distaste of The Clash and The Cramps. I can tell from the state of his desk whether he is feeling harried and over-extended or calm and on top of things. We know one another's natures, the moods that move us, the issues that impassion our lives. We trust one another with our intimate interiors, the soft and vulnerable parts, the uncertainties and painful conflicts of living in the world as a self aware being, trying to live gently, to love without possessing and to work for positive change without becoming bitter or dogmatic. You don't live so openly with someone for as long as we have without coming to love them (or perhaps hate them) and so I have come to love Norman.

continued

**by Claire O'meara**

The first time that I saw Claire was when she answered the classified ad Roger and I had placed in the Washington Post: "Group House looking for other artists." She danced up the front steps and onto our porch, energy scattering about her. Dressed in a dirty t-shirt, a long, torn skirt, and muddied tennis shoes, she looked almost as run-down as her 1965 Volvo double-parked (later to be hauled away) in the alley. Roger liked her energy, I had reservations but liked her friendliness. And so we agreed to move in together along with two other women.

Three months later, all of our artistic-sensitive nerves were burnt to a frazzle. In addition to our household being poet, painter, dancer, writer, and psychologist, we were also respectively paranoid, schizophrenic, withdrawn, withdrawn, and withdrawn. An argument at two in the morning with people throwing silverware at one another convinced me that it was time to move. Three of us found that we had compatible shortcomings, and by good circumstance Claire, Cassandra and I found another, large house for rent in the neighborhood and we quickly moved in.

That was two years ago. Since then eighteen people have moved in and out of the seven bedroom house, El Nido ("The Nest"). Tens of people have passed through for varying periods of time, from one day to three months (including one fellow who left us holding the bag courtesy of both his unpaid bills and seven pounds of marijuana). Hundreds of people have shared in our weekly Thursday night pot-luck dinners. But through all of this, through thick headed and thin skinned people; struggling through crises of acutely high unemployment in the house (80%, in the dead of winter '79) when we didn't know where rent, heating oil, or food for the house would come from; luxuriating in warm summer evenings of long dinners, fresh flowers and candlelight, lots of friends and laughter, endless food and an (almost) endless supply of wine; through all of this, for two years, Claire and I have continued to

continued

**by Norman Davis**



## Claire

Then why not lovers? Friends of mine have asked me this on more than one occasion, — “You care so much for one another, you are both attractive people, lord knows you’ve had plenty of opportunities, why not lovers?” Part of me responds with incredulousness — Norman and I become lovers? Why, I know him too well. My sense of romance is sparked in part by mystery, and there is no mystery to Norman, I know him inside and out, better than an ex-ray machine. I know which phone calls he will return and which he won’t, what people he will find attractive, what tasks he is juggling and which will have top priority. And enough of my soul is made of tin that I know that faults I can abide in a friend I wouldn’t abide if we were lovers, and, alas, I have come to know his faults too well. I know that when he does not feel like extending himself to friends and lovers he simply withdraws and becomes inaccessible, and that his drive to get done what he wants often consumes him and blinds him and he will unknowingly trade on his personal relationships, often taking more than he gives.

Perhaps there was a time when we might have become lovers, before we got to know each other, but I doubt it. I think there are incest taboos involved in living with someone in a group situation such as ours. And there is always the risk of a love relationship not working out, and the ex-lovers no longer being able to live compatibly in the the same household. No one wins and everyone loses, the two individuals and the rest of the household. Many people I know in group houses, ours and others, have expressed these same reservations.

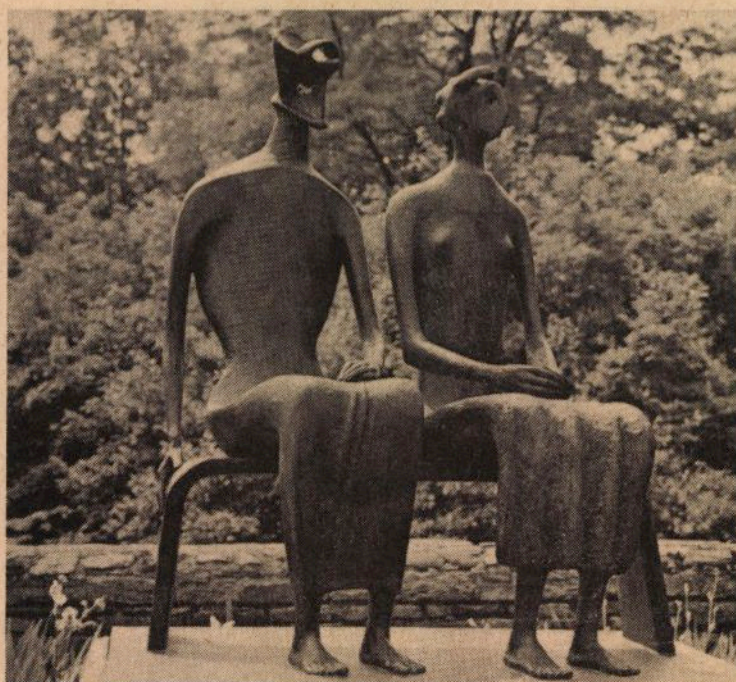
And finally I would not risk our present relationship to the potential pitfalls of becoming lovers. I value Norman as a friend and confidante. I am

## Norman

live upstairs on the third floor, in our two rooms, side-by-side, as friends.

Intimate friends: I know almost all of the details of Claire’s daily life. I know for what time she sets her alarm and when she really gets up; when she likes to bathe and thus, I cannot use the bathroom for the next hour. I know that she does not like to water the plants but rather to just admire them. She likes to curl up in her cubby-hole of a room and read “The Origin of Consciousness” and “the Breakdown of the Bicameral Mind”, eat cabbage salads with mayonnaise and vinegar and leave the plate until tomorrow. I can tell what kind of excuse she is going to give her boss or a soon-to-be-ex-lover even before I overhear her on the phone, respectively in despair because she is in a hospital in rural Virginia with an undiagnosed kidney infection (and thus cannot make it to work), or soft and serious as she candidly assesses the incompatibility of her heart and his life, an existential statement that goes right over the young man’s head. I know of her struggles for responsibility and control in her own life as a forceful and independent woman, and her pursuits to master who she is and how men fit into the dynamics of her life. The directness of her intensity, and her comfortable sensuality sometimes leaves me speechless, but I have grown accustomed to her impassioned ways and have even taken some of the openness for myself, incorporated into my own nature and way.

Buddies: about a year ago Claire and I sat down (on a park bench one late evening) and talked about our being buddies. What did we feel toward one another? Why not lovers? Why just friends? Neither of us knew. Claire says that she feels that it is too risky; I say that I have a great fear of entrapping attachment and commitment. Maybe we do not “love” one another. But something has happened between us because of the enduring living experience with one another. All of the barriers are down between us except the sexually-related ones. It is often like talking with myself, except that it is my feminine side. We share emotions, ambitions, fears, dreams, fantasies. Consistently for two years there has always been a supportive voice sitting across from me, calm, direct, not always reassuring but with a sense of caring and honesty. Equally important, there is a letting go, periods we do not share, when we are absorbed by ourselves and other relationships in our lives. These times are not without possessiveness, jealousy, and hurt. All too often we are attracted to the same friends and lovers. But, each time it becomes easier to acknowledge these feelings and to let out the accompanying emotions instead of keeping the feelings inside and letting them consume us. On this point of friends and lovers our friendship has been tested to some extremes and it has so far survived without either of us having to be so self-sacrificing that we contradict our own needs.





## Claire

probably more open and honest with him than I am with my lovers. There is still so much I need to work out in myself of what I desire in my love relationships. As a babe of the fifties I was raised on "Some day my Prince will come" and "I will Follow Him". But coming of age in the seventies and receiving my first political schooling in feminism, I find myself a massive knot of uncertainty and conflict when it comes to love, wanting on the one hand complete fusion with HIM, Mr. Wonderful, and on the other hand fiercely guarding my independence and solitude. It is still too easy for me as I struggle to become a strong, self reliant woman to look to a man to "take me away from all this", carry me off and take care of me, and once safely imprisoned behind some white picket fence I would probably resent the hell out of him for it. Now why would I want to put my good friend Norman through these hoops? I would much rather have affairs with other men and be able to talk with him about them!

I have learned so much from knowing Norman, from watching him struggle to understand himself, to allow his feelings to surface from the bag of male bravado and aggression, to venture softness, sensitivity and vulnerability, to risk letting go of control. Because we are so close and share so much I have had the rare opportunity to really see the affairs of his life through his eyes. I've learned to forgive a lot of what I have held unforgiveable in men and to accept the forces that drive him to have power in the world. His attention is so consumed in his passion for the whole of humanity and he often doesn't see what is immediate and individual; the parts that make up the whole.

When I moved to Washington and first began living with Norman I was coming from a low point in my regard for men. I had just burnt out after five months as a counselor in a women's crisis center in New England, living with and working with women whose lives had been shattered by men. I lived in a twilight world of rape, beatings, abortion, murder, fear, and despair and to balance all this was female bonding and stoking the fires of anger and hatred towards men. Men became the universal Them, the enemy.

I had my own personal enmity towards men. On my earlier rounds of looking for the prince I had kissed my share of toads. My trust and compassion were sorely depleted. This state of affairs was worsened by the other man in our household who held a bitch-goddess view of women, and when our strong wills came into conflict I quickly became the former in his estimation.

One fall Sunday after Michael and I had a particularly unsettling blow-up in which he screamed at me that I was an evil witch, I was terribly distraught. Norman and I walked for hours, trudging through sodden leaves, the colors fading

## Norman

Community companeros: two years ago Claire and I went to an ACORN community organizing workshop and self-consciously presented ourselves as members of El Nido Coop. Two months later we had progressed into an informal network of coop houses in Washington, D.C., and boldly taken on the consensus-derived name of "Wholesome Households Group Living Network". Today Washington, tomorrow... Now, we've joined with other people in Washington Community Futures, Cooperative Association, and are foreheads deep in the planning of the National Consumer Cooperative Alliance institute to be held in Washington in the summer of 1980. All of this is new testing ground for our relationship. In addition to being housemates and buddies, we are also social activists together and colleagues-of-sorts. Although not without having to work at it; Claire's struggle for self responsibility impacts on my work, and my hard sense of professionalism leaves out so many of the important, softer human details, and this offends Claire's sharp sensibilities. In spite of the personal differences the focal point is the same: some new sense of community that is not formed yet, that we are in the process of forming through commitment in our lives. What is significant in contrast to old world dreams is that these new visions are common among the two of us as a man and a woman.

On friendship: there is an enormous consciousness between us as friends. Many of the routine details of our two lives are now second-nature to us but we seldom take our friendship for granted. The depth of the matter is that we are both struggling to loosen ourselves from limiting and uncomfortable traditional roles and from personal histories of male-dominated family patterns that have strongly affected each of us in different ways. Living in a cooperative household has given us a supportive social setting for pursuing personal growth, close and intense personal relationships diffused by other good relationships and personal autonomy. As Claire says, "The revolution begins at home", and we have taken that life-changing step. Other personal relationships are being affected. (If Claire's and my relationship is less intimate for lack of sex between us, then it is also made more intimate by the increased vulnerability and trust. Because the relationship has formed without the games and roles and prolonged emotional issues that so often accompany a sexual relationship. We place enormous amounts of ourselves in the trust of the other person.) As part of my own life I have observed a woman struggling to understand and express her full self, free of old social roles and from much of her personal history. Through the friendship with Claire I have learned about women without the sexual connotations that we men often assume.

## Claire

before a relentlessly grey and overcast cityscape. We pushed past closed shops and empty movie theaters, carried along by the force of my restlessness, and anxiety. We talked of my fear that Michael was paranoid, unstable and potentially violent, and that I was his most likely target. Conversely, I wondered whether I was overreacting to my fear of violence in men. The tension in my body pushed us endlessly on through the chill and damp of that hollow day. While I talked in safe social work words, fear whined in my ears and tightened my heart. And Norman walked with me, his head bent, curls drooping with rain, brow furrowed, locked in my struggle and his own. Norman trying to be supportive, trying to be fair, trying to be objective when the lines had been drawn and there was no safe place for an innocent bystander. Norman hating having the serenity of his world disrupted, struggling to overcome his desire to walk away from the problem, yet doggedly staying with me as I rammed my boots on the wet sidewalk, struggling with my anger and my fear. His hands opened and spread around him as he searched the air and his own heart for answers, his soft words trying to soothe the shrill edge out of my voice, trying to cover the misery in his.

At one point I was struck with amazement at this man who I had turned to at a time when all my defenses towards men were up, this man whose softness, sensitivity and support had earned my trust, amazed that whatever obstinacy or affections carried him along at my side, he was there, swallowing his own fears and discomfort; not to rescue me, not to make it all go away, bearing the pain of having no answer, but there for me none-the-less.

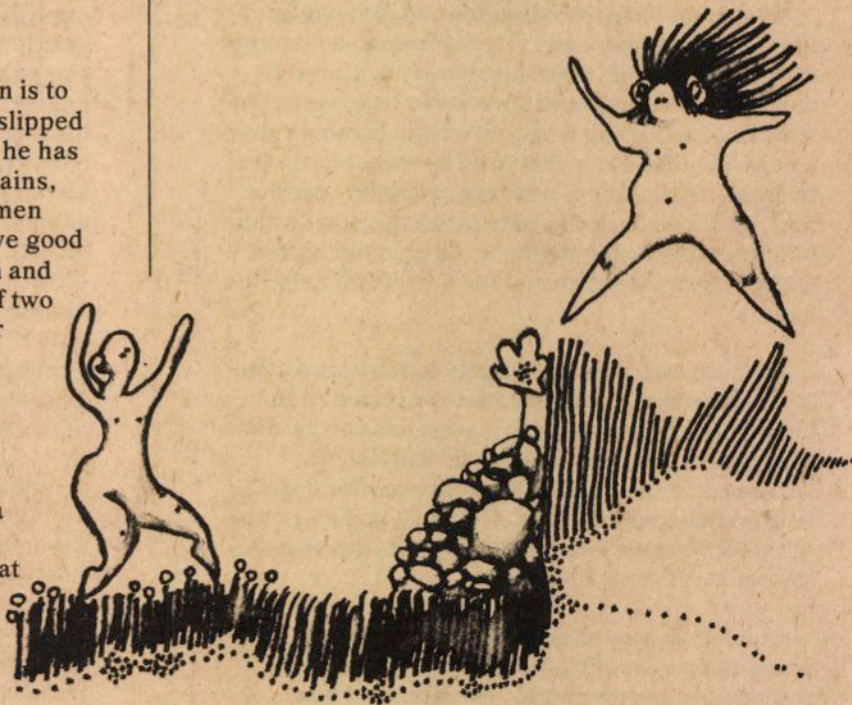
I realized then what a special friend Norman is to me, that whatever our relationship is, he has slipped inside my walls. By his presence and concern he has taught me that there are no heroes and no villains, no good guys, no bad guys, only men and women struggling with inner demons and trying to live good lives. All the roles and dramas of expectation and experience fade beside the concrete reality of two people caring about one another. His care for me extended like an umbrella on that wet day, outlasting my driven anxiety, slowing my footsteps, bringing me home.

So what are we, Norman? Cosmic twins, reincarnated siblings? I don't know. Maybe a vegetarian and a meat fascist can't find true love, but we've found true friendship, and that is rare and valuable in itself. □

## Norman

The still unresolved question, after all of this, is how do we feel about one another? All I know is this: last night we were at another person's house for dinner. This time it was my lover and Claire's friend, and the occasion was to meet Carolina's parents (and, as the situation would have it, to meet Carolina's other lovers and friends). Claire sat across the room talking with Carolina's mother. As the older woman talked on about wishing that her daughter were living just a little closer to their home in rural New Jersey, Claire listened attentively. I watched my friend, sitting composed, her white cotton dress and pale colored leotard accenting a trim, well cared-for body, rising to a beautifully full face intensely radiating with self-possession and clarity. There was an enormous feeling in me; I could not take my eyes off her. But the fascination is for who Claire has become in her own right. I know that we are part of one another, that we have supported and encouraged and affected one another, but her beauty is all hers, self contained, strong, deep. Emanating and attracting. And I am drawn to it. Whether it is love and, if so, what kind of love, that I just do not know.

What do you think, Claire? □



1974

I was hitch-hiking into New Haven in the snow with my six year old son, having left my car with a friend so she could drive in later, and on my way to my teaching shift at the free school my son attends, which is part of the Morning Sun, a sort of cooperative around childcare, which is part of a network of alternative institutions in New Haven, including the communal house in which we live.

And after about sixty cars had gone by and we'd walked a mile, my kid turned to me and asked, "How come nobody's stopping?"

And I said to him, "Because they're a bunch of pigs."

So he started yelling "pigs" at every car that went by. After a while I began feeling bad about that, so I pointed out we don't always stop ourselves; sometimes we're in too much of a hurry.

But that didn't seem to cover much, so I told him that this was a "learning experience." And we were learning a number of things: First to accept the consequences of our choices, because both of us had been feeling adventurous, but now we were beginning to get cold. Second, that not everybody in the world is going to reach out in a loving way (to this child who had been growing up for the last four years in an increasingly homogeneous and supportive world).

So he said, "Okay."

I felt it had been a really useful learning experience, but I sure was glad when somebody stopped and picked us up in a nice, warm car. Or, as they say in children's books, "And that was the best learning experience of all."

...Increasingly we've blown traditional definitions of family and tribe apart, without replacing them with any serious, integrative forms to support the individual. The burden is not only painful, it is unacceptable, for no individual is capable of redefining a culture... Structural alternatives both create a more supportive environment, and by dealing with a wide enough range of life situations, develop the conditions within which new patterns of wholeness may be explored. There is going to be, however, some time before new patterns are developed, and that's very confusing. What people have the most trouble with is not trouble, it's the lack of any dynamic. Too many possibilities, even attractive ones, is just another variety of chaos.

## THE GREAT ALTERNATIVE LIFE GROUP IN THE SKY

Five years later  
1979

...I believe that in New Haven we have created the first level of coherent units — communal houses functioning as extended family. I believe that Morning Sun is one of a number of second level structures, which beyond providing a service, are struggling toward a kind of tribal function.

I know that our lives and our expectations have been changed by what we have created. It's obvious that the network of cooperative structures — job collectives, food coop, day cares — not only make our lives more consistent, but taken together, give the feeling of a third level; that of community.

But we are often caught in the contradictions of our lives; in the weight of past traumas; in the enormity of integrating what we are doing into the larger structure of New Haven, much less America. The strain of building cooperative patterns of behavior and supportive institutions at the same time often overwhelms individuals. Pain and breakdown are not strangers. And the better we are, the greater the danger of becoming alienated from those who remain caught in oppressive patterns; both in the slums of cities and suburbs.

I believe that the possibility of a more loving future lies in our own hands, and nowhere else. If we can't build a cultural, conceptual, and above all practical base from which to proceed, the future to which we will be driven will be, quite simply, unacceptable.

— Paul Freundlich, March, 1974

excerpts from, *The Great Alternative Life Group in the Sky*



That was the introduction and an excerpt from the *Great Alternative Life Group in the Sky*, an essay I composed five and half years ago out of our alternative community experience in New Haven. In it I described the institutional context of urban interdependence, a philosophical base for non-attachment — and because that's the way we worked, I brought in some friends who lived together, loved together...or at least brought up our kids together. And we talked.

Five and a half years later, in preparation for this issue of *Communities*, I reconvened the *Great Alternative Life Group* to look at what we'd said; tell what we'd been up to in the intervening period and speculate as to what patterns of family and relationship make sense.

Turn the page, please.

**PAUL** I think a lot of what makes this interesting is the idea of us getting together again five years later. I was mentioning this to someone visiting our house from out of town, and she was amazed we were still all here in New Haven. We take that for granted.

**DONNA** Why are we all still here? It's because we still have connections.

**PAUL** How about you, Peter? Do you ever think about moving?

**PETER** Far away? No, mostly because of having to deal with my kids and step-kids. That's been the reason for some time. But I'm also sinking some deep roots. I'm doing things like planting trees that will bear fruit twenty years from now.

**PAUL** What I've been seeing around the country is that there aren't a lot of urban centers where the alternative and cooperative institutions were built around kids the way it happened in New Haven. Whether what we thought five years ago was *true*, we certainly have put a great deal of our intensity and curiosity into relationships and family.

So I got to thinking about what we've done here in New Haven, and that led me to dig out "The Great Alternative Life Group in the Sky" manuscript. As I was saying to Ruthann, reading it left me somewhere between amused and amazed. I thought that reconvening this group would be a trip in itself. beyond that we could take a look at what we thought five years ago; what's happened to us since then; finally, what do we think makes sense for family and relationships for the future?

**DONNA** Why don't we start with personal histories?

**PAUL** Is that consensus?

**PETER** Wait a minute!

**PAUL** Was that too easy?

**DONNA** Talk about restimulation. This is doing it.

**RUTHANN** Well, I'll start. This is the first time I have been in a room where there are more men than women in probably three years. And it's quite an experience for me.

**PAUL** It's not a lot more men than women.

**RUTHANN** It's a lot for me, Paul. It's real culture shock.



*Peter*

*Donna*

*Gail*

*Ruthann*

*Steve*

*Paul*

# RUTHANN

I've thought about how our pasts haunted us. Literally ghosts. I lived with that spectre of *I'm not really okay because I used to be this suburban housewife, this ridiculous woman*. But I've realized I was never a ridiculous woman. I've always been who I am, but I lived in a ridiculous setting. I pretended to like where I was.

I remember coming home from parties. I'd had a great time and my husband would be standing in the bedroom while I was getting undressed. I'd had a great time and he'd be complaining, "Every man there was saying, *Thank God she's not my wife*. Boy, did you embarrass me again." And I'd feel rotten instead of, *Great, you deserve to be embarrassed because you're a turkey*. Or, *I should get out of here*. One or the other. It was a ridiculous setting for me to be in.

I guess I got tired of pretending to be who I wasn't: that I like hanging out with men, because I don't; that I was a socialist — I got real tired of that one. And I realized that my community is women; that I don't like men very much; that I don't understand them - what makes them work. You all, I'm baffled by you. I understand women. I'm connected to women psychically, emotionally, spiritually, intellectually. The words women say make sense to me.

So I stopped trying to pretend being with men made sense and decided to do what felt comfortable, and that was be with women. I did that for a while, then I realized, *Well, if this feels so good, then why don't I just sleep with them, too. That will probably feel even better*. And I was right, it did. Then I stopped and went, *Whoa, this means I've got to change my whole life...because my support systems aren't going to be there*.

Even five years ago I was thinking about support systems. When I first came to New Haven I couldn't find them...and that was because I was looking in the wrong place. So I began looking in the right places. I met other lesbians and began talking about what it meant to be a lesbian in the world.

At first it was, "**I'm a lesbian.**" You know, "**Here I am and I'm wonderful!**" Now I feel I'm lucky I'm a lesbian. It has these good parts and these bad parts. I think all women should be lesbians. I tell that to all my friends who are and all who aren't. If you're not, I'm sorry. I wish men would figure out how not to be sexists, because that would make my life a whole lot easier.

Knowing these things, I need a support group that understands and reinforces my thinking and doesn't make me feel crazy. But also doesn't accept everything I say, and pushes me if I'm not thinking.

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*I was terrified when my lover moved out. I thought, "Oh my Goddess, what am I going to do now?"*

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I was married for a while...to a woman. For about two years I was as married as any married person could be, although we didn't have that paper. I don't know that I would have chosen legal marriage, but it wasn't an option.

We were clearly very married, and I felt stifled by the commitment and demands of living with another person. She wanted me to be home, not doing a lot and attending to her. If I had a meeting and she didn't, she got mad at me. It could have just been our dynamic. That's certainly a possibility, although in the last year since we've not been living together I've not wanted to be in a couple. I feel much more comfortable with a larger group of friends. Rather than one intimate person, I have four or five intimate friends who I can go to for various things. Each of them provides something different: With each I get into conversations which reflect our common interests.

I've realized that I have different facets. Some part of me is very psychic and spiritual. Some part of me likes doing Karate and self-defense. Some part likes being a mother. Some part likes being an executive at the Women's Center. And I'm not going to find one person who's going to connect with me on all those levels. But I will find various people to connect with on each. I was trying to find one person to fit it all, and that doesn't work. Maybe it will again.

Everything I say, I say with total conviction. Everything I said five years ago I said with total conviction. Everything I say five years from now I'll say with total conviction. It's all built on what I'm learning now. I might change and in three or four months be in a couple, and you might come back to me and say, "Hey, I thought you weren't going to be in a couple?"

**PETER** One change you might make is to not say it with total conviction.

**RUTHANN** Maybe, but I doubt it. I like saying, "Here's where I am, absolutely, right now, at this moment, today." And with equal conviction, "Maybe I'll be at a different place tomorrow." But I feel better with conviction.

I want to share my views on living alone, because I'd never done that. I was terrified when my lover moved out. I thought, *Oh my Goddess, what am I going to do now?* It took a while, but I came to appreciate even sitting and staring out the window. Because there was no one to say to me, *Stop doing that. Come interact with me. Or, Give me something only you can give me that I need.*

Right now I have a roommate who is totally complementary to me. She is very quiet, doesn't know many people in New Haven and likes a quiet house. We've divided the house so it's like two apartments, sharing the kitchen and living room. We have our own bedrooms in separate parts of the house. I feel like I'm living with someone, but I don't have this expectation that we have to relate. She likes my stories about the Women's Center: I like her stories about her work. She's a lesbian also, so we can gossip about other lesbians around the country. It's great. We have a great time. I can go in my room and close the door, and no one is going to come in and disturb me.

Last night my roommate was studying and I closed the doors between our halves of the apartment. I'd come home

from a massage. I opened a bottle of wine, lit candles, turned off all the lights...and had a candlelit, wine dinner with myself. And let me tell you, I loved it. I thought, *This is really nice*. I couldn't think of anyone I would rather have had a candlelit, wine dinner with last night than me.

It was liberating because I didn't need anyone else. The phone rang and I went, *Oh, no*. I answered it and said, "I'm sorry I answered the phone. I don't want to talk to anyone." I hung up and left it off the hook.

The other choice I made was about not being a full-time mother. Being a lesbian is about *coming out* - in all these different parts of my life. One thing I didn't want was to be a mother anymore. I've thought and been asked, "Well, if he weren't a boy, would you still have wanted to give him up?" And the answer is, I don't know. I probably wouldn't have kept a girl-child, but it would have been harder. It was hard deciding not to live with Michael, but I was tired. I'd done it for eight years. I just wanted someone else to do it for a while. I'm glad I made the decision. I'm much happier.

I've given up custody. He's living with his father. My ex-husband and his wife have a new baby who Michael is totally into. He's totally into Woodbridge (an expensive suburb of New Haven). He's totally into the money. He thinks it's wonderful.

Michael thinks I am very exciting. He comes to me and

**Ruthann then: sharing an apartment with Gail and their children; a member of the Morning Sun; recently left her marriage.**

*"When I first split and started meeting people in the Great Alternative Life Group in the Sky, people were cold to me. What I think is that people are into so much and changing so quickly...it's a matter of energy and overload...trying to make so many things work. We're trying so desperately hard to hold on to what we really believe in, that we often don't notice people who are really bummed out..."*



**Ruthann now: sharing an apartment with a roommate; staff at the New Haven Women's Liberation Center; given up custody of her son.**

says, "Mommy, I love being with you. You're so exciting." He never told me that before. He always gave me a hard time. Now I don't get the hard time, his father does - and that's just fine.

I've also become a professional. I dress up when I go to work. When I visit with some of the society people who support the Women's Center, I shake their hand, smile nicely and say, "You're a lovely woman. Thank you so much for letting us use your house. Will you give us some money?" I've learned how to do that, and I think it's wonderful. I've become a professional without going to college and I think it's great. I think we should all be professionals.

I like my life. I like it much better than I did five years ago.

## DONNA

I'm living in quite a married state with Phil, a man I've been involved with for the past four years. Yet I call myself a single woman because of my relationship with my children. When they are at the house, they're my children not ours - though that's changing for the better over time. They're sixteen and thirteen.

Phil is family. So are my ex-husband, his wife and her kids. We don't see each other a lot, yet I feel strongly about our two families staying put. Any transitions would be fragmenting.

The children are with me half-time, but lately they've been around a lot more. That's because the schools they go to are in my neighborhood. We've been in the neighborhood long enough for them to develop their own friendships. They can't always get themselves around without my help. Driving them to their friends takes more time than I thought it would. I find myself trying to maintain my half-time space.

Five years ago when we last talked as a group, I was living at Two Chapel Street. There was a good balance of male and female adults and children. The only trouble was that it was a seasonal house, so we had to be out in nine months. It wasn't a fair test of whether it could work long-term.

After living there in a really good way, I moved in with a woman friend. She was also divorced and had children about the same age. She and I, coming from similar past experience, found we could be together easily. But we differed on how to raise children.

After I lived there three years, Phil moved in. As a man, his play with the kids helped the balance of adults to children. But the childrearing differences were never really resolved.

Since my kids were getting to high school age, I was also concerned about the schools. After a year Phil and I bought a house together and moved to a suburb. You can see a real child orientation, and that's a lot of what family is about.

When I was living with the woman, I went back to

school in anthropology because I wanted to find something that was exciting. I'm close to my Masters.

Phil has helped me focus on my own education. He and I

## PETER

**Donna then: living at Two Chapel St. communally; sharing half-time childcare with her ex-husband; a member of the Morning Sun.**

*"There's a point at which you have to start helping yourself."*



**Donna now: living in a coupled relationship; teaching and finishing her Masters; half-time responsibility for her two teen-age daughters.**

seem to exist very well together. It's been four years now, which seems quite a long time. We can always be open. We see each other very much as individuals, yet we are quite together. We don't hide our faults from each other. We've always been there through crisis for each other in ways I've never experienced with anybody before.

An important part of our relationship right now is that we're both strongly involved in the Re-evaluation Counseling community. It's helped both of us to attain a sense of our individual power. I feel a lot of love from that community. It's not that people are fainting over me; just that people care whether I stay grounded.

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I threw myself into the alternative and new left community the way I do everything else in my life, with a vehemence. Finding a group to do something with and pour myself into was always where it was at. I was tremendously involved in the alternative school; in communal living; in every kind of sane and insane experiment that most of us did.

I'm still working this out, but I've come to think a lot of what we did was out of a sense of being pretty desperate. What we did was both for the political reasons we said, but also for more personal reasons than we wanted to admit: we knew what we wanted to get away from; we knew what we were rejecting; we didn't know as much about what else there was, or what we could create instead.

One of the things that bothered me about the group we had and the house I lived in, which was a very successful house, was that it was sort of taboo to talk about the future. That was the one way I was put down. You were a *future tripper*, or *you should be in the here and now*. And what I was really asking (though I didn't know it then) was, *"Hey folks, what is our commitment to each other? I know what I said when I married my ex-wife, but I don't know what our commitment is. I know we have an ideology which says that commitment is a bourgeois notion, and we talk about changing society — but what are we talking about?"*

When I was living at Harrison Street, the woman I was living with and I broke up. That was unbelievably traumatic. One other woman decided to leave, I decided to move out and the house just sort of collapsed.

You know all the talks that I wanted to have about the future and what is our commitment? Well, when I was leaving it was as if they had happened and people had a whole set of assumptions which now I was going to be accused of breaking. It was horrible. People were angry. I was very angry because Barbara, the person I was coupling with, was seen as some kind of *thing* who was pulling me away, not as a person.

We wanted to live together. We bought an old farmhouse in the country and moved into it in the summer of '75 — without the blessings of the community. We lived together for two years and then got married.

**DONNA** Why did you get married?

**PETER** It was a combination of being deeply in love and wanting to do something that would signify commitment... Neither of us were born yesterday; *being hubby and wifey and live happily ever after*, but we found ourselves wanting to do that. Also with all the step- and half-kids, it just made things easier. There were some economic and legal advantages, too. For me, it was another way of saying, *I'm not kidding, we're in this together, as partners*. It's almost too easy for men, economically and socially to be single. Maybe you don't have to get married to symbolize the commitment, but that's what I needed to do.

I dropped out of everything, though I stayed in the After School Program the longest. I miss the community a great

deal. Barbara and I were both used to going to 27 meetings a week; people in and out of our houses. To people who live in New Haven, Northford is country and people just don't drop in. I now have a family, which is one of the weirdest families, statistically at least: one of the people has joint custody with his ex-wife and has the kids half the time; the other person has custody of her kids, but they're all adopted and they see their father every other weekend; and one of the kids doesn't live with us at all.

I have discovered just in the last year that I grew up without a family. It's the simplest truth imaginable. It was in front of my eyes for 37 years, and I never, never saw it. And it was devastating to me.

I think family life is crazy, and is the source of most of our problems. I also think that for a lot of us, it's where we live, in the deepest sense. There's something I see and want which is a new place for me.

I feel like I've begun to seriously settle down for the first time in my life.

I want our family to work. That's where a great deal of my energy goes. In the long run, I'm hoping it will ease up because it affects everything else I do. But it's what I choose to do right now.

This is the second year Barbara and I have been working together seeing couples and families, with a special interest in blended families; people who've tried again, putting together an instant family. We're in a research group which used to be called "Blended Families" and now is called "Remarriage". I guess you folks are aware the remarriage rate is as high as the divorce rate. People are doing both like crazy. So in the 1980's the blended family will almost be the model family.

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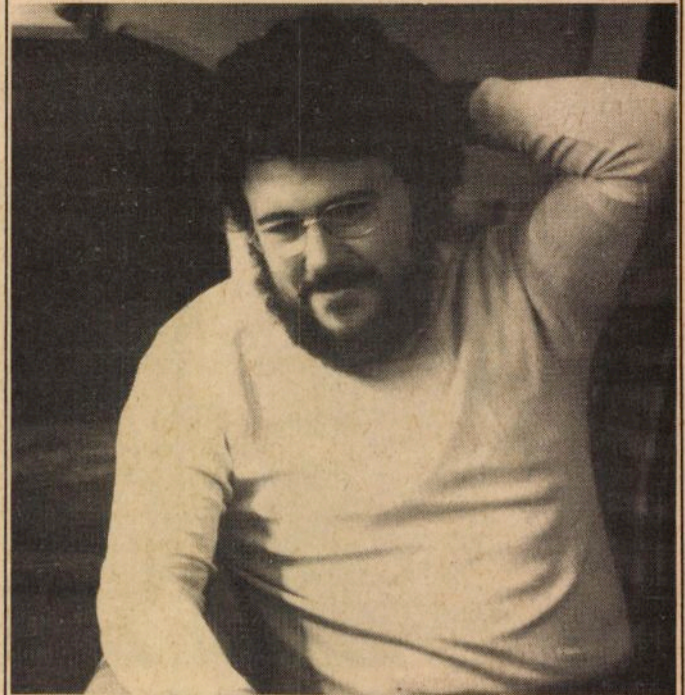
Five years ago, we were talking about how wonderful it was that even though we were divorced or separated, we were still together...sharing childcare, in meetings...in the same coop together...and all these things that I consider to be quite messed up now. And by that I don't mean that we were *bad* or to make fun of us. But I think what we did, whether we intended to or not, was to stop ourselves from going through a process that was absolutely, vitally necessary.

It's like when people die: you can figure out how not to mourn and then you're screwed for the rest of your life — and that's what I think a lot of us did...figured out ways to not really separate. For damned good reasons too. I don't put down the reasons. And I'm still not finished with it.

I'm still doing the old "New Haven plan" with my kids' mother (half a week with each parent) even though we live in different towns. Just recently both our kids reaffirmed with more conviction than ever that this is their first

**Peter then: living communally at Harrison St.; sharing childcare; a member of the Morning Sun; a clinical psychologist.**

*"I find that even if it's a together house, people start feeling bad unless they have a primary relationship...one person who's special. We know what it used to be called, and what you used to do with with that. What's not clear to me is, if it's valid, what you do with that now."*



**Peter now: married and living rurally outside of New Haven; half-time responsibility for his two children; a clinical psychologist.**

choice; that either alternative would mean missing me or Liz too much. And I'm finding it crazier and crazier, without being close to any radical change in that plan.

Liz and I get along, probably better than ever. We don't relate very much. I don't consider her family, but sort of extended family.

I should mention that for years work was a way of making enough money to free myself to do the things that were really meaningful, like daycare organizing. Now, work has become pretty interesting to me. Making money has become exciting for the first time in my life. That's still so new it positively shocks me. We put in a pool this summer, and I keep waiting for this pool's parents to come and take it home.

One thing that's different for me from what I'm hearing from the rest of you is that I left the community in New Haven in a heavy way, and that's left me with very mixed feelings. My leaving was quite traumatic and is still difficult and sad for me and Barbara. On the other hand it was a tremendously exciting beginning. And now I'm involved in my present life with even more zeal and vehemence than before.



## STEVE

The main thing I was having trouble with five years ago, and I don't see as a problem now, is that my life was split up into a lot of compartments. I was teaching, which I'm still doing (in the English department of a nearby college). I was communitying, which I'm still doing to some extent. I'm still scheduling for the afterschool program. I've done more scheduling than anyone in the world.

**RUTHANN** We should all get certificates and hang 'em on the wall. You can be the scheduler.

**STEVE** I'm still living communally, and have been with a brief interruption. Living communally is clearly my preferred style for a house. More and more.

I think that what's happened in the past five years is that I have become more accepting about what in me is *characterological*: what I don't feel comfortable changing, some of which I like and some of which I feel vaguely uncomfortable about. On the other hand, I've gone through a combination of very pleasant experiences with people, sometimes in very surprising ways and with people I never dreamt I would get close to.

And with the choices which I've made which seemed powerful and heavy, almost none of those have worked out. Just incredible. I guess that Ruthann and I most share in this room the experience of not being in a coupled relationship, not looking for one, and at this point I would say I think that for the rest of my life I will be totally unable to operate in a coupled relationship that's ongoing. I'm absolutely convinced of that.

**PETER** Do you have the tape on? I want that documented.

**STEVE** And I want you all to know, I've entered the Catholic Church... (laughter)... as a nun.

I think in some ways I want things that are *family-like*. I feel very comfortable when I visit Peter's house. I feel very comfortable around Paul and Margaret, around the two of them together, it feels like family to me somehow. I feel uncomfortable with what I hear Donna saying about her relationship with Phil, and I don't mean that judgementally: it would be too close to what I don't want, yet I'd be tempted to make it into that. That is, to make it into a greater centering force in my life. I've tried coupling, and as no one knows better than Paul, it's been absolutely disastrous everytime.

It's not that I think I couldn't successfully be in a couple, but I think it would be wrong. It would involve kind of artificiality I couldn't tolerate.

I said I was becoming more comfortable with the split-up character of my life. I love my teaching, but I used to come home to 2 Chapel Street (the house I lived in with Paul and Donna) five years ago, and feel as if I wanted the whole world to have what we had, or were going to have. Now I don't want that, though it's still at least as good as anything else. I've accepted there are too many contradictions for that to happen.

What's important to me these days is my teaching, and

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writing poetry. My house is important. Certainly being a parent and even being a father is important. Some of my friends are very concerned fathers, concerned about sexism, too. Playing the viola is important, because it confirms my attachment to myself in ways which in the past I've never allowed to develop, because they might be irrelevant to connecting with other people.

I'm not sure what idea I have left of community. But there are many people I'm strongly in touch with, most of whom we know, whom I feel I can depend on in serious ways. And that's very important to me. I find that I'm increasingly able to derive the most pleasure and benefit

**Steve then: about to move into Two Chapel St.; sharing childcare with his ex-wife; a member of State St. Coop; teaching English at a nearby university.**

*"I can see that individuals respond to each other, and even draw strength from their collective structure — but I'll feel more confident to the extent the collective structure itself responds to individual needs."*



**Steve now: living communally in New Haven; teaching English; half-time parent; involved with After School Program.**

out of the scattered things in my life... I almost said *lives* because it often feels like that. And the unification in my life is me. In a sense, that's the symbol of me playing the viola.

I feel very alone (and that's not quite the right word) in significant ways. I feel that one of my problems as a person was difficulty making heavy decisions about my life, and I feel much more capable of making choices without advice from friends, at a time when I have easy access to better advice than ever before.

My daughter Haika is very important to me, and I strongly trust her development. Specially as she's been able to tell both her mother, Marcia, and I to go to hell at times we were messing wrongly in her life. I have a lot of confidence in someone who can do that at an early age, and can come up with some alternatives to what we offer.

Marcia lives a block away. I like her. It's important to me that we share childcare and she continues to live in New Haven. My need is for joint custody. I would prefer to have a full-time kid, but unfortunately that's not in either Marcia's nor Haika's best interests. We don't have the closest relationship, but in an absolute sense, I think Marcia and I can depend on each other when necessary.

I love kids being around the house. In that sense I'm jealous of Peter's situation. I wish I were living in a house with a warmer feeling on a continuous basis, doing rambunctious things with kids. Haika's getting to be not a kid anymore (she's nine) and every once in a while she asks me to let her grow up. And it's hard for me to let her grow up.

And I've gotten to be, in certain ways, much more of a loner than I ever was. And that's a side of my personality I needed to pay attention to. I've learned to operate in relationships with people that are often discontinuous; to some extent that's a theme of my relationship with Haika because of the plan we have — our relationship stops and starts as she travels back and forth between Marcia and me.

I don't feel enormous continuity with my friends. We do take up where we left off, but there's no *daily*ness about it. In some ways I get that continuity from our house. There's another Steve in our house, and in the morning when he or one of the women in the house, Evelyn, tumble into the kitchen and we stumble around is about as close to family feeling as I get.

## PAUL

This is the tenth year I've lived communally at Two Chapel Street. My son Timothy lives with me: he'll be twelve this year. Like Steve, living communally is my preferred state. As good as the friendships in the house can be, and as rich as the complex of playing and working relationships I have around the country, the trade-off has mostly been to give up the intimacy I can have with one person.

And if indeed, at some point a relationship of a more continuous depth with one person does seem probable, well, let's explore that. Let's find out what can happen.

In the past five years I've been in and out of love several

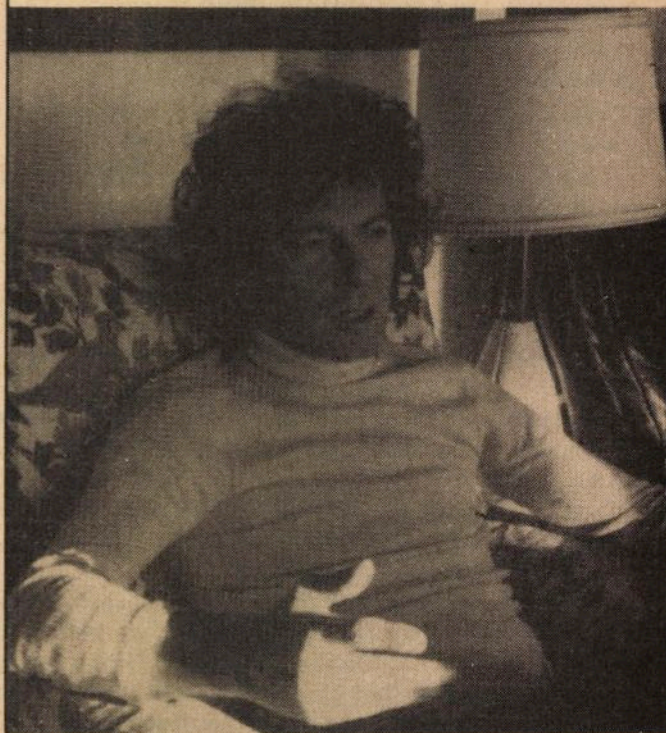
times; involved multiply, sequentially and not at all — but last year was the first since Pony (my ex-wife) moved out in '72 that I'd been lovers in any sustained way with someone who lived in the house.

I've done some thinking about the path I've been on — exploring alternatives and community — these last ten years. How much of it is that you do alternatives and complex solutions because you can't simply have what you want? Peggy, who lived in the house a few years ago, said she was going to be very disappointed if it turned out that all the commitment to *self-realization, interdependence, non-attachment, etc.*, was a rationalization till *Mr. or Ms. Right* came along.

I know when I was married to Pony that for many of those years I was very deeply in love. It was tight and committed. I know eventually that didn't work and a lot of why it didn't. I know that for any number of years thereafter, I was very careful about relationships of that kind of depth.

I came to some of the same conclusions that it seems Ruthann did: as complex a person as I am, as many aspects as there are — that the chances of running across one person who hit in some important way on all those levels would be a very strange circumstance, indeed. And who

**Paul then: living communally with his son at Two Chapel St.; a member of Morning Sun; creating an umbrella organization for local alternative groups. "When people are building something together, they're not only going to be more aware of each other's needs, they're going to be more interested and able to meet them."**



**Paul now: living communally with his son at Two Chapel St.; an editor of *Communities Magazine*.**

knows, if as Steve says, considering all those dialectics between men and women, that if you did hit with a woman, whether that would be bearable? In fact, I've approached that with a few women I've been close to. Our intensities met in similar ways — and it wasn't necessarily easy. Exciting, rich, but obvious contradictions growing out of the strength of our characters and choices.

**STEVE** I believe you do like understatement.

**PAUL** Part of the adjustment I've made over these years is to accept that truth — also accept that I have a yearning and nostalgia for the sustained communion I can have with another person I'm mated with. But only take it when it seems appropriate.

I've found a range of situations where I can reach communion: I try to appreciate when it's possible and miss it when it's not. When the house doesn't have a sense of family, I miss that. If I'm not in love, I miss that. When I don't have a larger sense of community and comradeship, I miss that. When my work is flat, or seems disconnected to any sense of evolution, I miss that. When my son, Timothy, isn't around, I miss him. I try and reach my own dynamic and peace with all that.

I've tried to wait until the possibility of greater commitment or intimacy grew out of what was already happening. That's been possible because in spite of occasional disasters, I've lived in a world where men and women try to treat each other with respect and sympathy. The pain we cause each other seems mostly situational and understandable. Perhaps I remain more hopeful about sustained relationships than Steve only because my threshold for pain is higher.

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The person I've been most continuous and close to is Timothy. He's lived with me except for two years. Theoretically he alternates years with us, but with school that's stopped being practical. Pony and I have been mostly good friends, and it's seemed important and successful that he grow up with two parents.

Now there's a chance Pony will move to Maine, and Timothy might go there for a year or two. And I'm facing one of those fundamental questions: *Attached to Timothy?* Of course I don't own him, yet I love living with him — watching him grow and change; helping where I can. If there is a path of resolving commitment and non-attachment, my relationship with Timothy is where I've learned the most and what I most trust.

I tend to be very settled in the house. I do a lot of cooking. I enjoy my friends. I've arranged my life and work so that's possible.

## GAIL

I think the most important thing I learned is that a physical living situation doesn't answer all the questions you have about yourself.

My first living situation in New Haven after I left my husband was with Ruthann. That was six years ago. We lived together for about nine months in the most incredible chaos and nervous tension. We were both out there on the fringes of sanity. Trying to figure out what to do, living every minute. We never got to bed before three in the morning. My daughter Nina and her son Michael were fighting each other and us.

When I finally moved out, I remember telling Ruthann that I couldn't pay the rent (she'd been supporting me for a number of months). That wasn't quite honest. It was easier than saying that I didn't want to live with her anymore because it didn't seem to be taking me anyplace — and I still felt that my living situation was supposed to take me some place.

Then I went away for a few weeks and I decided that it wasn't just Ruthann. It was everything, and I didn't know where I wanted to be.

When I came back I decided to end the relationship with Paul. It didn't seem to be going anyplace either. It had been built on the assumption that people don't live together, or if they do, they live in separate rooms. All that stuff was very strange and I spent a long time learning to accept that. I learned to be busy doing something else Saturday night, or not make assumptions about where I was going to be, or what I was going to do. But that was what relationships has always meant. A relationship meant that you didn't worry about who you were eating dinner with. That was the good thing about it. Now I was told, and believed, that was a bad thing. But I never liked it. And that's why I'm in a coupled relationship now with someone who needs security and is very upfront about that.

I didn't see there was anywhere to go with Paul. It seemed the kind of thing you did with those relationships was you got into a new, more romantic relationship which had the passion and the fun. So I moved into another relationship. That was much the same, except we did live together in what would be hard to describe as a communal house. Also that relationship was much more scheduled — we'd get together on Tuesday and Sunday and that seemed easier. I said, "Tuesday and Sunday, I can deal with that, and I'll find things to do the rest of the time." So I went about my business and got quite happy with that. Eventually he got threatened by what I was doing the rest of the time. It turned out he was also experimenting. It got very complicated because we'd mixed it up with a living situation which moved into a real communal house.

We'd spent months and months putting together a group of people to create this ideal house. There were a few couples, but we talked about how the couples would all interact with everybody else. There were all kinds of rules. We found our dream house and moved in and it was an

utter disaster. Everybody had been lying to themselves. The other couple stopped being married and split within months of moving in. Soon the man I was with and I were barely speaking to each other. For the singles it was pretty crazy, too.

What we discovered we could do well together was have parties and dinners: what we couldn't do at all was talk to each other. We weren't very good friends and we didn't mean very much to each other as a whole house. Some of us remained very good friends. That living situation went on for me for two years. We did the whole thing: the house meetings and the work charts. It was a serious house, but it still didn't tell me what I wanted to do during the day or who I should be in a relationship with. It didn't tell me anything except when I should clean the living room. So it finally became clear to me that a living situation was not by itself going to answer questions which you have to answer by yourself about what you want to do. It took me that long to figure that out.

And what was most important for me was to decide I was going to move out, but take a year to do it. I liked the people enough and I had a strong enough sense of myself so that I didn't have to act on the spur of the moment. I could face telling people who I was going to see at the breakfast table that I was going to do something different. That's what had been hardest for me. I didn't have the trust in the relationships with men, or in living situations to put out, "This is what I'm going to do. You might not like this." And to still have to interact. It took that house and that group of people to reach that point of development.

At that point I decided to stop living communally. It gave me too many people to bounce off, too many opinions, required more time than was useful to me. What I needed then was to *not* check things out. To do things and have the discipline to deal with my own mistakes — which meant taking myself much more seriously, and assuming that other people took me more seriously.

During those two years I was staff at the New Haven Food Coop. That was critical because it was really my first work.

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### *What I needed was the discipline to deal with my own mistakes.*

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The second year I lived at the Howard Avenue house, I was in a relationship with Jeff who was also staff at the Coop. It was important that I had worked at the Coop on my own steam. In the previous relationship and with Paul, I felt like I was coming into their world. Work, living situations, friendships, all seemed to run together — it became impossible for me to separate out which parts I liked, and very difficult to stay connected after the relationships were over.

The first thing I remember discussing with Jeff when we entertained the possibility of getting involved is that we felt we were of the same generation. We had been involved with people who were older, and because of that, different. It seemed that everyone in the community was older, at least the ones who stuck around. Growing up in the late

sixties where drugs and sexual experimentation came early, and having been very messed over by that, was not an experience many others had. Nor were they very interested. Everybody seemed to have their Ph.D. and be downwardly mobile. That seemed a very lucky position to be in, and very alien to me.

So Jeff and I started with that sort of comraderie. Then we both wanted a *non-struggle* relationship — where things were just *okay*. We could talk easily. We had a lot of fun. We worked hard. We didn't hassle each other a whole lot — that's changed some. But still, as people, we don't like hassles and that's part of the basis of getting along and being able to live together compatibly. We're both pretty rational.

One of the rules of the game in my relationship with Jeff is that there's a lot of things to get done in a day, and it can't get too intense: we don't have the time for it. Which doesn't mean that if something threatening to the both of us came up, we couldn't put everything aside and cope with it. But it hasn't yet. We've been in this relationship four years and we've always been able to go about our business. Neither of us is sitting on a powder keg.

What working does that relationships do not, for me, is create an objective product that you can build off; that you can evaluate; that you can throw out if you don't like. A

**Gail then: sharing an apartment with Ruthann and their kids; a member of Morning Sun.**

*"While the personal timing of the separate relationships in conjunction with their mutual development is being mutually affirmed, it keeps working out. And there's always the possibility that won't happen."*



**Gail now: living with her husband and daughter; President of the Board of the New Haven Food Co-op.**

relationship goes through changes, it evolves. It's important to me that what I focus my attention on I can get regular closure on. The Food Coop is never done, but every day gets done. At the end I can say, "What did I do today? Was it what I wanted? Do I feel good about it?"

The third thing was that we both wanted a serious relationship, and were able to say that. The intent of becoming involved was to see if we were going to have a serious, long-term relationship. The intent was more than just spending time together when it was convenient. That was fine — we still had our own lives — but the intent was to check out whether we wanted to spend a good bit of our lives together. We were very self-conscious about that, and that was very useful.

I preferred that to relationships I had before where you put out first, *I don't want to be involved*.

And Jeff and I came at it with a different perspective. We end up some of the same places as those other relationships intended (independent, respectful). But for us it was a better way to go about it — to assume that we wanted a high level of commitment to each other, and to be honest about it if we discovered that didn't work. It was healthier to face our insecurities and be in a relationship where we knew that. You were out there in the world all the time and you had to be very strong. You needed a smile on your face, or whatever, and you needed a safe place to just let your defenses down. On a theoretical level I can imagine being able to do that with a lot of people, but I haven't found that as useful as with one person.

It's absolutely remarkable. I've moved in the last four years from no sense of my self-worth and competence, no skills. I write, I speak. I administer. I train and I create things. There's nothing else out there in the straight world that allows me to have that much room for growth, without formal training.

I've found I'm quite driven. And that had never seemed the thing to do because you were supposed to be in happy relationship with one-too-many-people. It's a whole sexist number. For most women, life is centered around relationships, nurturing. The political rhetoric argued against that, but the reality didn't.

It's not that relationships take care of themselves. But they're better because there's a context for them. A bad day's a bad day, and the next morning you get up and make it a better day because people are counting on you. And that's bigger than yourself. It's bigger than a single relationship.

I think that changes happen slowly, and I didn't think that five years ago. Things were happening fast. Every few months there were major changes, and that was true of most of us. I feel much more patient.

In the course of being involved in the community five years ago, I couldn't see my own family. I couldn't have any interaction with my sister or my folks, all of whom live in New Haven. I didn't feel fine about my living situation or my relationships, and I couldn't explain it. Now I see them with reasonable frequency. I can draw the limits because I understand where they are and what I'm doing. I feel fine about it.

## DISCUSSION

**PAUL** As we've been talking, I've been thinking that one of my speculations five years ago was that we were very much into relationships, but we didn't talk very much about love...

**RUTHANN** Or commitment...

**PAUL** It seems that some of what we've done in the last five years, in different ways, is explore what love and commitment mean to us. We've definitely come to some different conclusions...

## LOVE AND COMMITMENT

**STEVE** Sometimes I think that if I could play out a healthy intimacy with one woman in a way I have not been able to before, it would mean that my relationship to myself was stronger than it's ever been. But I don't find myself drawn to doing that. I don't know if anyone else thinks of this, but I don't know to what extent I'm being scared, and what extent I'm being smart.

**RUTHANN** Oh, yes. Whenever I get attracted to someone, which is about twice a day.

**STEVE** Do you find you avoid specific people because they're more challenging to you?

**RUTHANN** I find I go through phases. Whatever I'm working out in myself, that's who I get attracted to. Whatever part of myself I'm most scared of, that's who I pick. When I was being scared about being *good*, I was attracted to *stars*: stars doing Karate, stars being professional people, political people. Some I acted on, some I didn't. But I got over it. I realized, *Oh, I'm a star, too. Now I don't have to do that*. Now I'm attracted to other kinds of women who touch other parts I need to work on.

**PAUL** I tend to pick up on other people's strengths and connect with those. Where I see aspects which seem unhealthy, either in them or myself, I tend to say that in those areas there's no basis for relationship. *Let's relate in the present, through our strengths to build the best, most probable relationship*.

Part of the reason I have so many wonderful relations with so many people is that we relate through our strengths. A wonderful hit of this, a wonderful hit of that (*here a hit, there a hit, everywhere a hit, hit*). It doesn't mean there isn't emotion shared, or help with hard problems in each other's lives, but you don't merge each other's confusions without consent, coming together and creating a new, destructive pattern...

**STEVE** Unless you talk about a relatively greater commitment than that sounds like...

**PAUL** Yes, then it starts getting tricky...

**STEVE** When the destructive patterns start modulating what happens in each of you...

**PAUL** Absolutely. And that's the one I've grown very careful about. The problem is that there's always more going on than you think...

**RUTHANN** Always...

**PAUL** And if you spend enough time with someone, at some point it all comes out. I've found myself in deeper than I had any idea I was, and in trouble. It's not anybody else's fault, because it was not part of what the relationship was based on.

It probably never happened more clearly and painfully than with Gail. I wiped out completely on a relationship which was supposed to be so clear. At the point where you began pulling back, I found myself in much deeper than I thought. I did not know how I'd gotten there, but God knows, I was...

**RUTHANN** That's the one where you want to go hide away in bed for three weeks...or three months...

**DONNA** When I've gotten caught that way, there's been a real soul connection, and it somehow sets up that you're reflecting and reflecting and trying to solve something that's unsolvable...

**PAUL** While I'm busy hooking up with all that positive stuff, as we slide into a deeper connection, I'm beginning to project that's who they really are. Intellectually I should know there are some parts of both of us I've chosen not to deal with, but it's not within our emotional reality. Because we never explored that dangerous area before, if we run into trouble, there are no obvious pathways out. Caught in a crisis, we're suddenly strangers. It turns out I'm not unattached, just uninformed. I'm learning that past a certain point of involvement, it's necessary to explore some of the tougher contradictions; to build those understandings as part of the choice to get in deeper.

**STEVE** Sometimes at that kind of depth, I'm feeling the intensity of my feelings, rather than the feelings themselves...

**DONNA** Unless you go back through all of those feelings and somehow get to the core...

**GAIL** What I've noticed in relations that have not turned out the way I had anticipated is a projective level of where we had wanted to be as whole people. What happened with Paul was the same dynamic. You came on strong as to the way things should be: not being in dependent relationships and not counting too much on somebody. I learned my lessons terribly well. So when things changed and the relationship seemed like it should be over, I was fine.

But it's a very complex dynamic. It always exists because you're operating with your own feelings, your own emotions, your own desires - and then there's another person who's operating on all those levels at the same time. It's very difficult.

**PAUL** One thing I figured out by talking with women friends like Donna over the years is that men tend to define what the relationships are. Women bust out of their marriages because at some point they find they're not *real* within them. Something calls the relationship into question, they look around and say, *Who am I and what am I doing here? I've got to get out.* And the husband says,

*I don't understand. The relationship's been fine as far as I knew.* Which is reasonable, because of course it was his definition.

What I'm hearing from Gail is analogous: I defined what the relationship should be. You got liberated, and once again, the man was left holding the definition...

**STEVE** Perhaps the most important thing I have to say is that I probably would not touch an ongoing relationship with a woman that was heavy and meant living together with a proverbial ten foot pole. I simultaneously respect and detest the sexual dialectic too much. I know too much what goes into it. I know the distrust. I know that love is the reverse side of hate. I know that from current politics as well as from reading Euripides, which I teach...and I teach it because it's in my heart. I don't sufficiently trust the possibility of any heavy relationship with a woman to want to do that to either of us. I have discussions with every one of my friends about the combination of love and antagonism which goes on within relationships. It modulates so much of people's lives.

Sometimes I worry about myself as a man who is unwilling to make a commitment to a woman. Then I think, what is the content of the commitment? And then I think I'm doing what is right...for me. That does **not** describe me characterologically: It does describe a likely condition in the present historical situation.

I choose to compound neither the problems nor the blessings which flow from the choice of close relationship. I'm cutting myself off from some possibilities which I know Peter has, or that Donna has. I know that and I'm unwilling to take the mix that I know has to be there, partly because I've known both of you.

And it doesn't feel painful to acknowledge that because it's so important to face where I am. Five years ago I would have said, as Paul often says, "I don't know what to do with that, because we don't have the models." I'm not so sure. I think we're living the models that are available. I'm not sure we're going to find any models which are better. Perhaps the models are just variation of playing out the same themes.

The women who I feel most separate from are those whose anger I'm afraid of because it's unaware. One of the reasons I've always felt comfortable with Ruthann as a person (even through political differences) is that sometimes we've hugged and said, "That's the human condition." That Marxism or anything else can only change the world so far, and then we're back to the human condition.

Men and women, pardon the terms, are a dialectic and continue to be. Some people find abridged solutions to that

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*You got liberated, and once again, the man was left holding the definition.*

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dialectic which resemble traditional family structures...to all appearances. So I'm working on alternatives because I'm absolutely convinced that what Peter and Donna are doing would be a disaster for me.

Five years ago I would have emerged crying from a statement like that, feeling awful and lost. I guess I don't feel very lost.

## FRIENDSHIP

**RUTHANN** I really feel differently about friendship than Steve. I'm willing to get angry with them, cry with them. I fear doing that with one person overwhelmingly. Some time that one person will not be there when I want her. So I make sure I have lots of those people I do it with and who do it with me. It does take a lot more time...counseling with my friends.

**GAIL** I think one of the reasons I don't relate to friends the way Ruthann and Steve do is that transitions are just hell for me. I can't stand being in the middle of something that's changing. With friends, there are too many transitions all the time.

For me, laying all my stuff on one person is not *laying it on*. It's being able to push something to closure when I need to. But the amount of time it takes to work that out with friends and the anxiety that puts me through absolutely prevents me from living my life. Maybe another level of maturation will allow that to work, maybe not. I'm not terribly worried about it.

**STEVE** For me, it would be more frustrating maintenance time in a relationship like you have than I have with my friends...

**RUTHANN** Really!

**STEVE** That's always been the case, partly because I make very poor choices in primary relationships.

(Steve and Ruthann shake hands)

But this is a theme of yours, Paul...or maybe it's Peter: The power in a twosome can't be replicated in any other way...

**PAUL** Sounds like Peter.

**RUTHANN** Sure wasn't me.

**GAIL** No, no. I don't feel that way about it. I remember thinking when Jeff and I decided to get married after having lived together for a year, it seemed like such a weird thing to do. It went counter to everything I'd been saying for years. I was just petrified and didn't know exactly why I was doing it. There were a number of rational reasons, although I recognize what Peter said about just wanting to prove a commitment.

But it wasn't then and isn't now the rock I go back to. I don't think of myself as being married. I don't think of myself any different than before I got married, or before we lived together. The coupled relationship or my married relationship is not the source of my stability at all. At least not in the *love and rock* kind of way.

That was more or less what I married for the first time. And it was totally scary. It never fulfilled the expectations I had of it. There was always that let down: that's why the love/hate was so threatening because when you were in a hate phase, you had lost the rock. Now the rock isn't there, so the love/hate is okay.

**PAUL** It sounds like you've found someone who's a good person to live with, satisfies you in lots of ways, and it's a good thing to do. It still leaves you as a spiritual being. It still leaves you connected to a wider community and a wider universe. You still have to go on about the business of living your life.

**GAIL** That's how it worked out. It hasn't changed a damn thing. It's really quite nice.

## SEXUALITY

**DONNA** Something I've been thinking about lately is the objectivity I have these days — except for Phil, not even feeling the sexual nuances, much less exploring them. It was a flow I used to get involved in, and as I remember, extremely enjoyable. Now I feel much less sexual. Other people I know who see themselves in an attractive phase — and I view myself as attractive — are having all kinds of sexual things coming up, and I'm not other than with Phil.

**PAUL** I'm aware of people checking each other out; particularly that first look-in to see what's up. If there's some mutuality to the attraction, then there's a choice of whether to explore that. But that mutuality almost completely depends on the cues we give each other. When I'm in a satisfying love, which I am now, I'm not giving those cues. Sometimes that's confusing because the attraction may be there, but a catalyst is missing. Also I'm capable of engaging or playing in many ways, and so I'm not turning off all the juice, and that can get confusing.

**GAIL** I'm in a stage like after what Donna's talking about. I might be attracted to other people, and I don't know what that's going to be about. As of now, I don't feel terribly threatened about it. I don't feel driven to act on it, because everything else in my life makes sense and the intimacy with Jeff is so satisfying. But it doesn't seem as impossible as it has for the past four years that I might be drawn to other people.

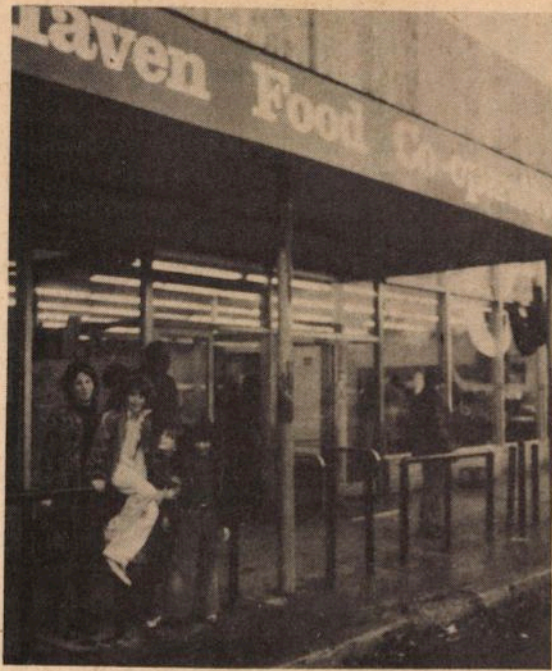
It goes back to what we were exploring five years ago — which is, can people maintain multiple relationships and their sanity at the same time...?

**STEVE** How about multiple fantasies...?

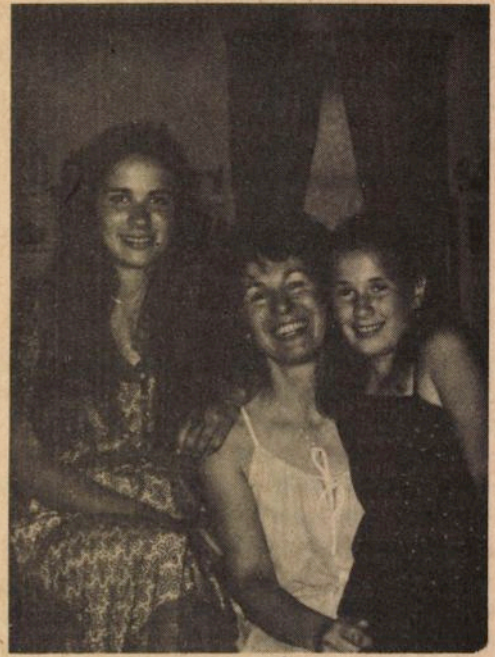
**GAIL** And that I still don't know and have some very serious doubts about.

**PAUL** Five years ago it was Peter who had the doubts. You thought it was easy.

**GAIL** Unlike five years ago, I don't feel the need to check everything out. I'm curious where I'll be in a couple months.



*Gail with her daughter and Ruthann's son at the Co-op*



*Donna and her daughters*



*Steve, Haika and friends from the After School Program*



**DONNA** Now I'm curious where I'll be in a couple of months!

**RUTHANN** I'm attracted to so many people I can't count them. Someone once said to me that she expected to sleep with me that night because I flirted with her. And I said, "Honey, if I slept with everyone I flirt with, I would be so tired." I should mention that because I'm a lesbian doesn't mean I don't get attracted to men. It just means I choose not to act on it.

I was thinking when Donna was talking, *Oh, that would be so nice to feel that way...* to be objective about it. Because I'm not. I'm totally subjective. I feel silly. I feel this silly grin on my face as I'm talking. My friends tell me, "Just feel good about it. If you're turned on, that's great. Feel that way all the time."

**DONNA** It's good to hear that. Because I'm not turned on a lot, and I think I must be missing something.

**RUTHANN** When I was married I felt that way a lot...very satisfied. And it wasn't just sexual. I was not turned-on because I was satisfied in the whole relationship.

**STEVE** What's fascinating me is that the components of sexuality and intimacy come down differently for each person. And that's not simply because we're different people. I don't think the average person has as much volitional control over our lives as we do.

**PAUL** Well, we're not as mystified. There are whole areas which western culture puts into *The great mystery of life*. There's a whole set of romantic and sentimental notions which hopefully we've learned something about. We should have; we've spent enough time on it.

## GROWING AND FLOWING

**RUTHANN** One thing I'm very conscious of is that we've focused our lives. We've put away what is unessential and we've taken on very seriously what is essential. Choices about work and friendships, saying no to what I used to say yes to. It's different for each of us. I think our kids have been watching us, and they're going through the same process. I'm struck by our honesty.

**PETER** It seems easy, doesn't it?

**RUTHANN** It does. No investments. That's part of what I was realizing: I want to tell you where I'm at, and if you don't like it, you're not going to hate me or never talk to me again. You're just going to say, "Oh, that's really interesting what you're doing now. Tell me more about it. What do you learn from it?" And I feel that strongly. I'm impressed.

I think we're maturing. No matter what our chronological age five years ago, we're all much wiser. We're learned from what we went through...all the people in this room. That's why I've been able to trust that we wouldn't be judging each other, to not put down what I've done.

**PAUL** I've had a speculation similar to Ruthann's about

refining ourselves toward what is *essential*. It's also like Steve's riff about accepting ourselves as *characterological*. One of the things I do a lot of is dance. The last year and a half the best form has been Dance Haven, which is a cooperative renting a hall, making tapes and dancing out on Friday evenings. Steve's a regular, too.

There's maybe a few hundred people who've come, but a steady core of 30 or 40 who are usually there. And each of them has their own style, their own movements. In the flow you connect with other people and feel what that's like.

It's fascinating. Sometimes I dance and sometimes I sit there and just watch. I watch these beings, these spiritual/physical beings doing their numbers. And it all comes out over time. All the combinations, all the subtle interactions. I can watch it and I can dance it.

I've always thought of dance as a metaphor for relationships. As Gail was talking, I was thinking she's found this dance that she and Jeff do. It's a good one. She tried out one variation with Ruthann, and she said, *I like that, but it doesn't quite work*. Then she tried out something with me, *No, that's interesting, but that doesn't work*. Now she's found someone she likes dancing with a whole lot. Enough to say, *I'm going to settle down for a while at least. Maybe the rest of my life. I'm going to do a dance with this person*. And everyone of us is doing some variation of that progression.

Ruthann and Steve are doing things in a somewhat different way...not the same, but some similarities. *If I go this way with this person, it just doesn't connect. Or we bump, and who needs that? But I do like that move, and I'll find someone else to do it with*.

I had the image of samurai. Close your eyes and see all these characters (myself included) doing these Aikido movements, samurai movements...

**RUTHANN** When you started talking, it made me think of Karate. I spent three years studying karate...

**PAUL** Right. These very defined movements. And that's that person. That's how they do it...the expression of who they are in the universe.

**RUTHANN** I believe this is only one of many lives we all live. I believe each experience is another way to learn what we need to in this life; whatever the schtick that we have to work through. I know that I have done the same thing over and over again. I'm getting to the point where I'm saying, *Oh, this looks like a pattern. Maybe there's a pattern I've been missing the other eleven times that I've done this*. And maybe I figure out how to learn from it and maybe I don't. Maybe I'll have to do it twelve or thirteen more times. And that's how I see relating to everything and everyone.

I learned some lesson somewhere which made me able to sit in this room comfortably and expose a large part of myself that I haven't to men in years and years, and not feel bad about it — in fact, feel good about it. And learn from some of what you men have said, which I've also not done in years. So there's a lesson I came in this life to learn that I've learned. I couldn't five years ago, but I can now.

[to be continued next issue, with a look to parenting and the future.]

# FAMILY SYNERGY

In May of 1971 sixteen people responded to an ad placed by Pat LaFollette in the **L.A. Free Press**, inviting all those interested in group marriage. The group held their afternoon discussions, went out to dinner together, and ended the evening by deciding to meet again. Several weeks later Hy Levy and Pat LaFollette attended a conference on group marriage with Robert Rimmer in Anaheim, California. Hy and Pat were at that time thinking about forming an organization out of the original discussion group. They discussed their plans at the conference, met with encouragement, and were given permission to use the conference's mailing list to advertise the next meeting of the discussion group. Fifty people attended the next meeting in August, and Family Synergy was born.

Family Synergy's focus the first year was on group marriage, understood as three or more adults under the same roof in intimate sexual and emotional relationships with one another. Synergy's original official statement of purpose mentioned only group marriage, and general meeting topics focused around group marriage — the advantages of the structure, the role of women within the structure, etc. By the end of the first year this focus had broadened considerably in response to several needs and pressures. First, Synergy's members were definitely interested in other family forms besides group marriage — open marriage and communal living, for example. Second, Synergy's leadership originally held the belief that the necessary and sufficient conditions for the formation of group marriages were getting interested people in a room together, discussing the advantages of the structure, and letting those interested take it from there. Much else might have been happening in Synergy, but the actual formation of group marriages was not one of the happenings (although the slate was not entirely blank; there were one or two expanded families formed that first year which could be credited to Synergy).

It became apparent that helping people to understand the structure of group marriage was not nearly as important as helping them through the process of approaching that structure. It was not the structure as such which posed difficulties for people; it was dealing with anxieties, inhibitions, and jealousies related to the process of moving into that structure. More concretely, many of Synergy's members were excited by the idea of group marriage, but were also experiencing anxieties about their ability to cope with the emotional dimensions of such an unfamiliar situation. For this reason, and because many were interested in other alternative forms, the new focus for Synergy became process rather than product. The attempt was to facilitate the growth of openness and of healthy relationships within any kind of expanded family structure. Swinging was one lifestyle specifically excluded from organizational focus, as being incompatible with Synergy's ideas of long-term, intimate relationships and families.

Concrete implementation of these changes in focus took several forms. Topics of monthly meetings became more general — the process of meeting people, open marriage, sexuality, jealousy, intimate networks, extended family programs, and communal living. Intensive workshops in open relationships were then developed, running 10-15 weeks with a maximum of 8 couples. Three such

workshops have been held to date. They are planned and staffed by Synergy members. Weekend workshops in jealousy were developed. More surveys were taken of the membership. The number of social events increased. Area Representatives were chosen to facilitate communication within a geographic sub-area and possibly to form geographic sub-groups. Orientation meetings were held more frequently. The influence of the Women's Movement came to be felt, and separate consciousness raising groups were formed for men, for women, and for men and women combined. Professionally-led therapy groups were offered. A Synergy library was started. The People Dictionary, the Membership Directory, and other services were begun.

Synergy has thus grown rapidly from a small core of people interested in discussing group marriage to be a large and quite diverse and active organization, sponsoring an average of one event per day, serving many different needs related to several different kinds of alternative family, and serving an educative and public relations function. This opportunity for personal choice and the scope of the organization are regarded by Synergy's leadership as a definite strength.

During Synergy's first year, the median age of the members was 37. The youngest member was 26. The leadership was disturbed by this scarcity of young people in the organization. People in their 20's consequently were urged into the leadership in an attempt to draw more young people into the organization. This attempt was unsuccessful, and the leadership reluctantly came to accept the fact that Family Synergy was not to be a young peoples' movement. Quite recently, however, the age distribution has shifted downward markedly. The membership now has two model age groupings, one at 26-30 and one at 41-45. Furthermore, most of the actual expanded families (triads and two-couple group marriages in particular) that we now encounter are in the 25-30 age group, which is a reversal of our previous experience and a reversal of the reports of the research literature. It may be that we are witnessing a rapid social change here. Perhaps the older generation pioneered in these lifestyles because of human needs and dilemmas they were facing after 15 years or so of marriage. The younger generation may have then followed out of excitement and ideology, after the recent spate of books and publicity provided some public models of expanded families.

An extensive demographic study of Synergy members was undertaken a couple of year ago. From its findings, we can report the following:

The Synergy membership can be generally characterized as successful unconventional people. They are well-educated, two-thirds of them having college degrees and better than one-third have graduate training.

Politically, they are overwhelmingly Democrats, with a sprinkling of Peace and Freedom and Republican party members. They are committed citizens; 95 percent of them vote. They do not belong to very many conventional organizations; they are perhaps more likely to organizations such as the Association for Humanistic Psychology, Humanistic Education Network, or Parent Effectiveness Training.

The ration of males to females is 10 to 8. There are approximately equal numbers of singles and family members. Of the singles, most are separated or divorced. There are somewhat fewer than two single males for each single female. Of those members in families, there tends to be one committed couple for every three married couples. (These statistics are as of September, 1976.) The religious groups are less than 1 percent Catholic, 10 percent Protestant, 10 percent Jewish, 15 percent Unitarian, and the rest either no religion or "other".

Many Synergy members bring with them experience with alternative family forms. Approximately 20 percent have had communal experience, either urban or rural. Over 30 percent have had previous experience in a triad or group marriage, and an additional 10 percent are currently in such a family form. Over half have experienced intimate sexuality outside of their primary relationship. Approximately 30 percent have been swingers, though only 1 percent currently are swinging. These latter figures suggest that Synergy attracts evolved swingers — people who have experienced and adapted to the open sexuality of swinging, but who are now dissatisfied with the lack of other dimensions in swinging relationships.

In their social and personality characteristics, Synergy members do not seem to be strikingly different from the norm. They do tend to be informally dressed, open, friendly and gregarious, not overly respectful of formal structures, and much given to physical expression of affection. This intuitive impression is supported by the fact that fully 40 percent of Synergy's members are not interested in an alternative lifestyle which involves intimate sexuality with more than one person. Such a large proportion of members whose aims are rather out of phase with Synergy's is explained by their attestation that they come to Synergy because of the warm, friendly group of people they meet there. This situation is a testimonial either to the warm ambience of Family Synergy or the anomie of life in Los Angeles, or both.

by Hy LEVY





## A different kind of family

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How did I get into all this? It's difficult to remember just how it began. In June of 1972, I started on a new job as a messenger clerk in a major public library. One of the first people I met was Mrs. LaFollette. She was a round and friendly librarian who was just a few years older than me. Over the next few months we became close friends, taking lunch and breaks together, and just enjoying each other's company through the day. Our friendship continued to develop despite pressure from above to conform to the library caste system, which separates the clerks from the "pros" in a desperate effort for status in a bureaucracy where the librarian's position on the ladder is already down too many rungs. All this being the case, my primary objective with Mrs. LaFollette was friendship. I liked her and she liked me. Even though I called her Ann, I was very conscious and accepting of her being married. I never thought that our relationship would ever go beyond personal friendship because of that, although I fantasized a good deal while sorting books in the stacks.

Then a pivotal event took place. I'm an actor by profession. I had an interview (alias cattle call) to go to, and Ann offered to drive me to my car parked light-years away on the street. When we arrived I asked her to wish me luck and we kissed and embraced. She held on a bit longer than I expected. I had to rush off, but was anxious to see what would develop the next day. If she hadn't shown me she was open, I probably wouldn't have pursued an affair. The next day after work we walked to the parking structure where her car was parked. She was going around to the driver's side when I asked her to come over to where I was. She crossed over and I made as if I were going to show her something interesting across the street and put an arm around her. We

embraced and kissed. This went on for some time and when it was over, time seemed to speed up. I thought, "Well, smart boy, where do you go now? What happens next? What about her husband?"

All these questions she answered simply after a few more amorous embraces. Where shall we meet? What about your husband? It's OK with him? How does he know? We have an open marriage. He and I both have relationships with people we care about. Well this was a fine answer, so I decided to follow it through.

Upon hearing of this episode, one of my friends told me that these things don't last. Something had to give — either the affair would end — or hubby would shoot me. I told another friend of our making love in their bedroom and he started laughing. I told him her husband knows and there was no controlling him. I was told that one night while on the marriage bower, I'd feel cold steel against my ear and my life would flash before me in that last second.

All of my friends who met Ann liked her, and with every meeting would come cunning looks that said they knew what we were doing and that they were accomplices.

"But you don't really like sharing her."

"What's wrong with their marriage?"

"Doesn't she love her husband?"

I didn't like the point of view of each of these because it was misplaced. Clearly Ann and Pat had a very good marriage. The quality of our relationship couldn't have been possible without it. As our love grew so did my image of their marriage, and I began to learn and to believe some of

their philosophy. You could love more than one person at a time, and not love either one of them less because of it. Jealousy didn't have to be part of a relationship. Their kind of marriage started to make sense to me.

My family didn't care for what was going on because Ann was neither single nor Jewish. "Why do you have to bother with her? Let her husband take care of her."

Ann kept telling me that Pat wanted to get to know me. I was reluctant to meet him. I was afraid we wouldn't get along. I was worried that if I didn't like him it would affect my relationship with Ann. I wanted to be warm and friendly but still watch him at a distance, see what he was like. It seemed like I was preparing myself to search out all of his defects and then it occurred to me what turn my mind had taken.

When we met I noticed how slowly he spoke, how long he took to consider what he was going to say. How loud he burped, how his nose honked when he blew it, his ghostly fair complexion. Nothing was good. Everything counted against him. How could she care about him? Oh well, I loved her and she loved him first.

Well, all of these gross illusory perceptions changed. He took time to think things out because he is very mindful of the scope of things. He talked slowly because he measures his words. A good deal goes on both beneath and about the surface with Pat. We got to be friends, we went to parties together, and the more I saw him with other people the more I understood about him and the more I grew to love him.

So we became three close friends. A couple of years earlier Pat had started an organization called Family

Synergy, which is essentially a meeting place for people and information on alternative lifestyles. I went with Ann and Pat to a couple of meetings and met a lot of people who had happy families, many with children grown and leaving home, or very soon to. These people — who had experienced monogamy for years, loved their partners, had good relationships with their children — were here at Synergy looking for or exploring ways to expand their love. This is how Synergy struck me after my first couple of meetings.

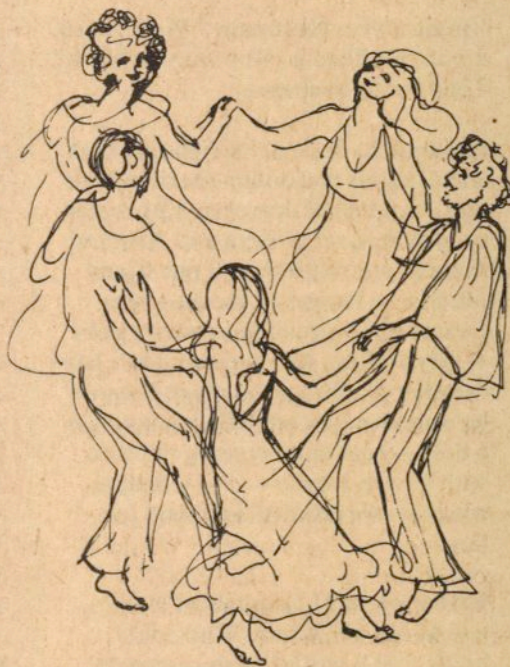
Soon after this my friends went to take part in an alternative lifestyles conference at DeBenneville Pines (a Unitarian Church conference center in the mountains). There they met a triple, three people, two women and a man, who in this article shall be referred to as C, C & D. Pat and Ann both seemed to glow with the effects of these three. So we three drove down to visit them on the following weekend. My first step into internalizing the idea of Ann, Pat, and me together as a threesome came with meeting C, C&D. They were three people whose personalities opened up and drew me close. One sees them and knows how good life can be. I needed this example to think of us together. Now, because I had seen how well it could work, I let myself go forward.

In the following months we lived together. At first I confided my apprehensions about Pat with Ann and she got upset because I wasn't dealing with any of it, I was shoving it on her. So I started to talk them out with Pat, or understand them as fantasies and wait for reality to happen and deal with that. This became the working mode. When something came up, whether it be taking out the garbage, cooking the dinner or with whom Ann sleeps (before we got a bed big enough for three), we dealt with it at the moment. The alternative to this is resentment over a series of petty incidents, it seems to me, that just cements itself into a general resentment.

After being together for a few months we facilitated as group leaders at an Elysium (growth center) workshop on

multilateral relationships put on by Family Synergy. Questions asked us in the course of the workshop brought us to examine and put into words some of what had been happening to us and with us up to them. Our friends had, for the most part, been accepting of the relationship. The worst reaction has been tolerance. In terms of family, we have good relationships with our respective parents, but aren't close-knit with them, so there isn't any pressure from constant interaction. Here again, most are accepting, the worst reaction being toleration. Our suburban neighborhood is relatively anonymous and we have had no problems with our neighbors.

We work well together. When two of us have a problem, the third member



stands outside as a neutral translator to make sure that the other two know what is being said. Mostly the arguments are based on misunderstandings. Those that are real arguments are moderated by questions from the third person to clarify issues, and then to facilitate a solution that both will be happy with. So in talking about what we had, it clarified in mind how our relationship worked, and it was good, and it felt good.

After we had been together as a threesome for a little over a year Ann started talking in earnest about wanting to have a baby. At this time I decided that it should be Pat's baby because I had to really analyze where I stood and if I wanted to be a father, and because I thought that it was a natural complement to all the years Pat and Ann had been together.

By the time the baby was due, the idea of fatherhood was really beginning to appeal to me. We all took the Lamaze natural child-birth class together. Our teacher was surprised at first, but was very accepting, and told us that a baby needs all the parents it can get.

The hospital was another story. They had a rule about there being only one labor coach in the labor room. We decided we'd both try to get in anyway. It worked for a few minutes, until a nurse came in and asked which one of us was the father. We told her we both were and she got rather confused and left. A few minutes later we overheard bits and pieces of a hurried conference in the hall outside the room. "What?" "Both the father?" "I've never heard of such a thing!" "They both have Lamaze cards?" "Yes." "Who's the Lamaze teacher?" "Will someone call her and find our what in H---'s going on."

A few minutes later the head nurse came in and asked who the husband was. "We both are." She finally put the question to Ann who was in no condition to argue. "Which one is your legal husband?" Ann identified Pat, and with that I was assigned to the fathers' waiting room to smoke cigars, watch the Lakers lose, see **Jubal** (one of Glenn Ford's more forgettable films) and an Italian spectacle movie. Between all this poor TV, I'd beg the nurses to let me in, and finally they let Pat and me change places for a few minutes while he went out for a cup of coffee and a cigarette, and I coached Ann through a few contractions. Ann's labor lasted hours. I got Pat some pie and coffee about two a.m., Ann's ninth hour in the hospital and twenty-third in labor. It was four more hours before a nurse came to me in the waiting room and brought me into a hall next to the

delivery room to a window through which I could see Ann on the delivery table, and Bryndon on the far side of the room being put through his reflex response paces. I was incandescent. A little later they brought him out in a baby warmer and I was allowed to look at him for some minutes. He was an ashen pink with blue eyes and red hair like Pat. Now not only were we a triad, we were also three parents.

The nurses were very nice about visiting hours for the couple of days that Ann was in the hospital. We told them the situation and all the nurses gathered round. They asked me if I loved her, how I feel about the baby, and I told them that we were all "married" (feel married to one another) and that Bryndon is a son to each of us. One nurse said, "I don't know why you're in this thing. Don't you see you're the only one gonna lose in the end." I left the other nurses arguing with her. I certainly didn't feel that way.

Ann's mother stayed with us the first week Ann was home. She is a terrific person and she fit in comfortably with our family. Bryndon looks clearly like Pat. So much so that everyone constantly remarked it. After a few days Ann's mother became concerned and asked her if I felt bad because of it. Ann answered that she didn't think I did, which was right, but it showed me that Ann's mother was there for far more than seeing her grandson. She really cared about all of us. Needless to say, we were all sad to see her leave when it came time for her to go back home again.

Bryndon is now four months old (when this was written, Ed.) and has met all six doting grandparents. We three feel good about each other and our beautiful baby and have high hopes for the future. Though the shape of the future can't be predicted in an open relationship like ours — it's possible that we could become four (or even five) in the same way that we became three — we expect that it will be good,



## INTRODUCING ISAAC DYLAN

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So there I was cutting my baby's umbilical cord; the baby perched on his mommy's tummy and his brother and his other daddy watching.

"What are you going to call this baby? What's the new baby's name?" asked the midwife.

"Isaac," said Ann. "Bryn, what shall we call him — Dylan or Nicholas?"

Bryn said, "Dylan! Isaac Dylan Hoffman."

"Isaac Dylan Hoffman." We all tried it out. We liked it. How do you like it? That's your business.

Holding the baby in his Leboyer bath, watching his meconium shoot out his rear into the 102 degree F. bath water — looking over at Bryn and Ann and Pat and our midwife and our friend, Freddie — images of the past year floated by — deciding to have a baby — Bryn telling Ann she shouldn't have used her diaphragm so much because he wanted a brother. His predicting it a boy — Ann and I coming to terms with having a baby — Pat telling us whatever we decided was good for him.

Bryn's was a 27 hour labor; Isaac's was about 6½ hours. Who could know that it would go so smoothly. When we were first talking about it, labor was a big issue. We decided, not

because we were sure that we could cut down the labor this time, but because we both wanted another child.

I wanted the baby to have my last name. This brought up another issue, legal paternity. In California, you can name a baby anything, but that doesn't mean a hill of beans. If Pat is married to Ann, then every child she has during the marriage is legally his. This worried Ann. She thought that maybe they should divorce, and I should marry her.

We talked it over with a lawyer, and we researched it ourselves, and we found that most prior decisions were in cases where either the unmarried partner was denying paternity or the husband was denying responsibility for support. Also, our midwife told us that my name on the birth certificate would be strong evidence for paternity.

When the baby was born, I listed myself on the birth certificate as father as well as birth assistant (I cut the cord and in California that means I delivered the baby).

There are some other legal things we need to do. But they can all happen in terms of wills. And that's the best way for us to go. Our children know that they have one mommy and two daddys who love them.

August, 1979 □

by JOE HOFFMAN

June, 1975



## *The Network*

*We used to meet at a water hole  
with pitchers on our heads,  
and hear together the bucket clank  
and dip and then come sailing upward,  
and pass the water  
from neighbor to neighbor  
until all the pitchers were full.*

*Now the water moves invisibly.  
The underground streams are silent  
and people brick themselves up  
behind separate doors.*

*We are changing all that.  
We have come together with pickaxes,  
breaking down the asphalt,  
and getting down to the earth.*

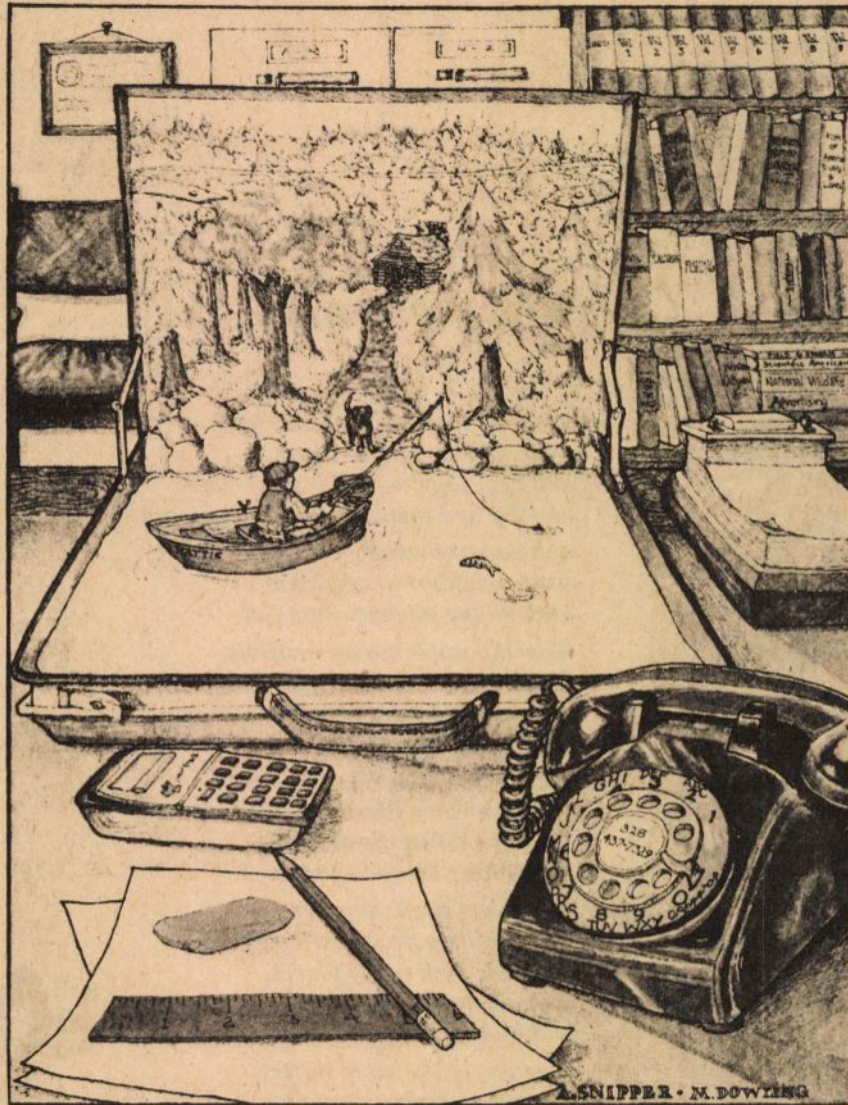
*Our rivers swell their banks,  
come spilling down in rivulets  
from the high rocky places,  
dashing down  
and joining in a common stream*

*We meet at the same waters.  
Nothing can pave us over.  
We stand at our new well  
bellowing out the news of our village,  
laughing at the town drunk  
(whom we have reclaimed as ourselves).  
We are back.*

*— Sarah Pirtle  
originally published in "Big Mama"*



# RENAISSANCE



## COMMUNITY

by Monica Palmes, Bill Grabin and Gary Cohen

The Renaissance Community in Northwestern Massachusetts is one of the largest and strongest communities that came out of the Sixties. We came together at the close of a decade which had inspired us, crystalized our ideals, and catapulted us forward. We were very much intent on rapidly transforming the world, changing it into one that

conformed more closely with our vision of what life on earth should be. Eleven years later, we're still at it. The world has yet to respond to the snap of our fingers. Yet our vision is as real to us as it ever was. Improving the quality of life on earth has gone from being an overnight process to a day-by-day one.



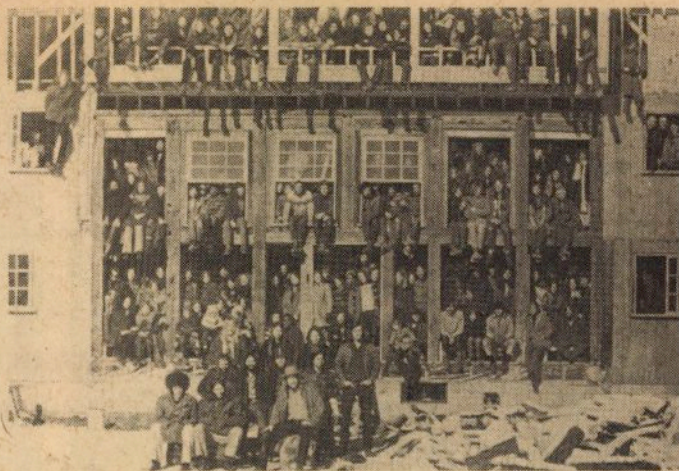
Our history goes back to the spring of 1968. Michael Rapunzel, then 17, returned from Haight Ashbury and the "Summer of Love" and went off on his own to build a tree house in his native town of Leyden, Massachusetts. As with many at this time, Michael was dissatisfied with the society in which he had been raised and the options it offered. The only clear path that lay before him was to start from scratch, to follow, cultivate, and recognize his inner feelings and where they might lead him. His intention was to explore these feelings and newly emerging values. He began working for farmers in exchange for the crop he was working on. He spent his evenings alone exploring the possibilities of his inner self.

Soon after, some of his friends joined him, wanting an experience where they too could freely share their abilities and thoughts. In the first few months, the group grew to eight people and developed into a tight knit unit. The members began to realize the possibilities of what they could do together. There was strength, enthusiasm, openness, friendship, love and excitement. "If we went to town, for instance, we were totally high, everybody else was down. They talked without any enthusiasm as if they had nothing going for them, whereas we felt we had everything going for us, and yet, we had nothing physically." The high was not drug induced. It came from their spirit of togetherness, openness and adventure. The rules were clearly understood: no violence, no alcohol and no drugs.

The eighth person to come to the small community was a girl that Michael had previously known. She stayed a week and wanted to join. It was evident that the community had a collective power which enabled her to feel more herself. However, she was not on compatible terms with Michael. When she asked to join, a decision had to be made as to how far this experiment should be allowed to grow. It was decided that if this was to be a brotherhood of people who shared ideals, it should be open to the world. (To this day, this ideal has been maintained: the single most determining factor of eligibility for community membership remains sincerity of purpose. We strive to maintain a total openness to every visitor.)

Shortly thereafter, someone torched the treehouse while the members were away. (In the early days, there was considerable tension between the "hippie commune" and local townspeople. This resulted in a number of confrontations, largely resolved as the community became more established and more aware of its rights.) A month later, just before snowfall, the group constructed a fifteen by thirty foot cabin using funds offered by a visiting psychologist. Over the next two years, the group moved a number of times within western Massachusetts and southern Vermont. It was a period of trying circumstances as they were confronted with both physical hardship and emotional conflict.

As the winter of 1969 approached, a 17' by 40' summer camp bunkhouse in Heath, Mass. was rented. It was uninsulated and heated by a single woodstove. By midwinter, there were 80 people somehow squeezed into this space. Despite these difficulties, a light-hearted attitude prevailed. The group's resolve and overriding sense of purpose provided strength. They sat together,



*Warwick, 1970*

meditated and learned about each other. It was one big happy family inside this one building. They had meetings, getting together what seemed like every five minutes. They grouped and regrouped, doing everything they could to realize there's more to brotherhood than talking about it. "It's important to function on every level, both the spiritual and the physical, to be totally aware of brotherhood. It's got to be everybody putting out, doing the things you do want to do. Gradually, it becomes part of you. The relaxation, the confidence, the ability to use yourself correctly become natural."

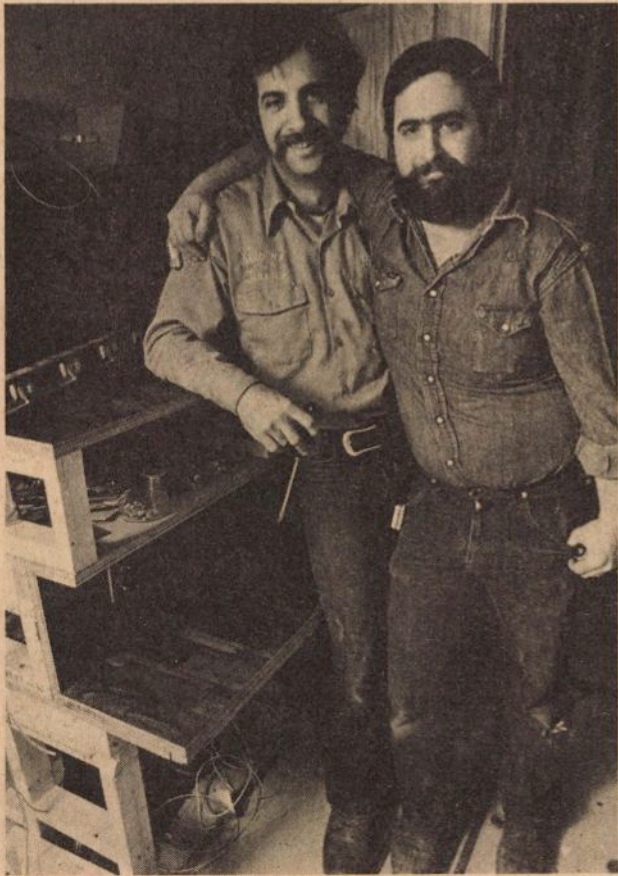
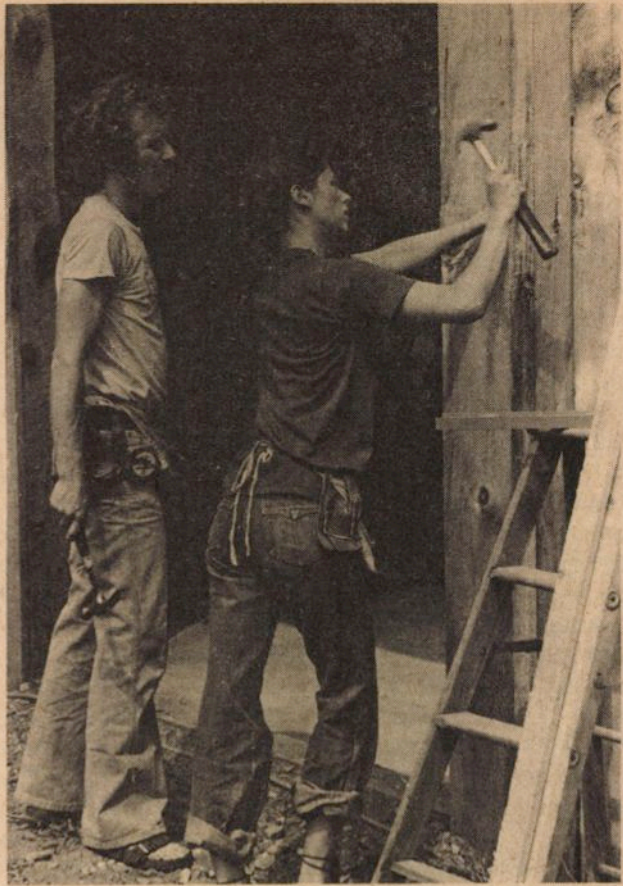
It worked. Others were attracted. Visitors swarmed to Heath each weekend to share in the group's experience. The membership grew. The following spring, the group purchased its first piece of property in Warwick, Massachusetts, and chose a name in keeping with its principles, "The Brotherhood of the Spirit."

It was in Warwick that the group began to grow explosively and gain "notoriety." Within a year, the membership quadrupled to three hundred. To accommodate the growing numbers, a large three story dormitory was built. The lifestyle remained simple. Farming, construction and group meetings were the principle activities.

Many of the new members (including ourselves, the authors) came from large cities: Boston, New York, Philadelphia, and Los Angeles. The tone of the community was dynamic, if immature. We did not wish to establish a



*New building, 2001 Center*





retreat: we wanted to demonstrate the possibilities of brotherhood to the world. It was soon realized that the Warwick environment was not conducive to doing this effectively. Its rural setting was ideal for developing unity among the members, but offered little access to others. Using funds gathered by members, we purchased properties in the adjacent towns of Northfield, Gill and Turners Falls. These properties were used for residential housing for the growing membership.

In the wake of this huge influx of people, it became obvious that a more stable financial basis was necessary — in other words, it was time to get some paying jobs. This marked a major turning point in the evolution from commune to community. The membership tightened up, stabilizing at about 200 and the evolution continued.

We tried to keep our work experience creative and meaningful. For over two years (1974—1976), close to 50 of us worked at a state school for the retarded. The school was undergoing drastic changes at the time, leaving behind its “institutional” 19th century methods and moving toward more humane and modern attitudes of care. We felt this was a tremendous opportunity and challenge, and found positions in all departments of the school, from floor scrubbers to administrators. It was an ideal type of mutually beneficial relationship in which we and the school had profound effects upon each other. Not all of our work situations were so ideally suited for such meaningful experience. Many worked as waitresses, in factories, etc., yet always focused their energies on making something positive happen in every situation.

In that same period, we purchased the Opera House Block in Turners Falls. This building, located on the main street, had actually housed an Opera House from the 1870's through the turn of the century. The developers of Turners Falls had envisioned it as an industrial boomtown. The Connecticut River runs right through Northfield, Gill, and Turners Falls and for years, logs had been herded down the river from New Hampshire and Vermont to the mills at the falls. When we came to Turners Falls though, its glory days were a distant memory. The Old Opera House and Shea Theatre (a closed down 500 seat movie theatre) were a lucky find. We gave the theatre and

accompanying storefronts a complete overhaul, providing ourselves with a facility that we badly needed. We built a recording studio in the balcony of the theatre and purchased film and video equipment. We opened a number of shops and restaurants in the town, giving it life that it hadn't seen in decades. Our philosophy gained strength in the flourish of activity. Positive thought was being put into action.

In 1974, a new and comprehensive legal structure was devised consisting of the Renaissance Church and the Renaissance Community. One can be a member of the Community, the Church, or both. Members of the Community pool their resources and live in Community owned housing; they are all members of the Church. Others are members of the Church, yet live outside the Community and involve themselves with it to varying degrees. We have created this structure to serve and support us in attaining our goals, not to inhibit us. We encourage people not to feel limited by our structure, but rather to involve themselves with us in any way in which they feel comfortable.

In October, 1975, the Renaissance Community purchased 80 acres of land in Gill, Massachusetts and began planning and construction of the 2001 Center. We had come full circle — starting as a backwoods, farm-working commune, then evolving into a business and media oriented community; it was time to integrate the two. The 2001 Center is conceived of as being a self-sufficient community, an environment where people from different backgrounds can live together and learn about each other, demonstrating both the economic and personal value of collective efforts. At present, we are incorporating as much appropriate technology as possible, including passive solar design, underground design, gravity fed water with wind powered pumps and wood heating. The Center is largely residential. There are also community and craft facilities and a large garage and shop. It's a place where we can come into closer harmony with nature. Gardening, planting an orchard, creating a walking path, building a wildlife sanctuary are activities which allow us to see ourselves more clearly through nature's examples.

Over the last few years, we have developed a number of our own businesses. Each one is foremost an opportunity for us to do something together and to grow in our understanding and expression of love. Within these businesses, we are able to work directly with each other as we strengthen ourselves financially, generating income to apply toward development of the Community and the 2001 Center. As is true of virtually everything about our Community, our businesses have grown out of our talents and desires: what we do well and what we'd like to do. Our greeting card company started with silk screening a few Christmas cards to send to our friends. The response was so good that the following year, we printed six black and white cards to send out again. In addition, we offered them for sale to the people on our company mailing list and the response this time was even greater. It was clearly a perfect opportunity for the development of a business through which we could express ourselves and extend our thoughts or sentiments to many, many people. Full color cards and wholesaling to stores were the natural next step. Today we



*Equinox Gathering at the Opera House, 1979*

have a thriving business, Renaissance Greeting Cards, with distribution throughout the country, as well as Canada, Australia and the United Kingdom.

Our other businesses have similar stories behind them. One of the guys here had gone to work as a truck driver for a major rock group. Later he decided to transport the groups himself. "Rocket's" now designs and builds custom coach interiors to lease and sell to touring musicians and executives.

Silver Screen Design produces original and custom hand silk screened shirts and other garments. It had its start in Liverpool, England. A half-dozen of us were living there for a while, working with an organization that was developing programs and opportunities for poor and disadvantaged kids in that city. Unable to obtain work permits and needing a source of income, they started designing, printing and selling t-shirts to the fans at the big "football" (soccer) matches. When they returned, they started up the business here.

The Noble Feast Restaurant serves from a predominantly whole food menu in an informal setting and grew from our own experience with preparing food. The Mobile Feast tours the East Coast doing whole food concessions at fairs, concerts, and other events.



*Noble Feast restaurant, Turners Falls*

Burstin' Sun Sound Co. provides professional sound reinforcement. This grew out of our desire to perform our own music and present it effectively. We built a P.A. system for ourselves, then made it available to others. Renaissance Builders contract carpentry, excavation and other related work. Renaissance Painting contracts large scale painting jobs. In our own Renaissance Recording Studio, we record and produce our original music. Music is important to us as a way of communicating our love and energy. We have several musical groups that play out locally and throughout the Northeast. It's clear that the pooling of resources provides us with opportunities for initiating projects that would be difficult if not impossible for the single individual to get off the ground. Today, virtually all of us are able to work in our own businesses; few need seek outside employment as in years past.

Our life in the Renaissance Community is quite active. We continue to be a diverse group with the strong conviction that learning how to live with other people is the

most important task we face on this planet. We know communal living is a viable lifestyle in which one can be exposed to large numbers of people from different backgrounds and witness the various facets of other personalities. Just listening to differing viewpoints is not enough. People have to share life's ups and downs together to gain a broader perspective. We believe in learning by doing, and doing it together. Our internal structure is minimal. We meet frequently as a group and express our concerns and experiences. We're not a democracy; we don't vote; the majority doesn't rule. Neither are we a monarchy; no one individual dictates the community's direction. Somehow we manage to combine an ongoing search for consensus with a lot of leeway for individual initiative. A central finance committee meets weekly to oversee income, ongoing expenses and funding of projects. Anyone's welcome to participate in the committee's workings. The various businesses function largely autonomously, yet they're all divisions of the Renaissance Community, Inc., a non-profit corporation.

Our Community membership now includes many kids. Our children are our greatest challenge and our greatest inspiration. They are a reflection of ourselves and mirror the aspects where we most need growth. Our pre-school age kids attend our own day care center. The older ones attend the local public schools. The nuclear family is clearly maintained within the communal context.

Our basic needs are being well covered by avenues we've set up. Our own co-op purchases food and household supplies in bulk. We eat together, having breakfast in our restaurant and dinners in the individual houses. Recently, we built our own private laundromat. Our cars are maintained by a central garage. Our office is a center for information and communication.

As our own community has grown stronger, so have our ties with other groups and communities. In the early years, our knowledge of other groups was minimal: we were strongly focused on our own growth. Within the last four years though, this has changed. One of the first links we made was establishing an exchange program with the Findhorn Community in Scotland. Soon after, we began to discover and see more clearly the importance of linking with groups in our own immediate area. We're fortunate to find many similarly intentioned groups and individuals nearby. Our neighboring groups include the Abode of the Message, Sirius Community, Heartwood Owner-Builder School, Another Place Farm and the Institute for Wholistic Education. We welcome this type of exchange and see it as a natural and integral part of what we are doing.

Our intent is to foster personal growth, creative expression and growth of consciousness through incorporating spiritual values into our daily lives and affirming our lives as a creative adventure. We feel that no dreams are too great to realize and that limits are meant to be surpassed. We are interested in pursuing any way in which we can work together. Please contact us:

The Renaissance Community, Inc.  
Box 112CM  
Turners Falls, Massachusetts 01376

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# *Relationship as Education*

If all of life is a classroom, as it's often said, then spiritual relationships might be seen as a crash course in practical divinity! They seem to be a kind of experimental laboratory of the New Age where spiritual ideals are tested in intimate day-to-day living with a partner who gives instant feedback on how well you're doing. Relationships between people on a spiritual path quickly invoke more challenges because commitment to a spiritual life is asking to speed up one's evolution and one's lessons in the school of life. And it seems spiritual relationships are the ultimate in home study courses.

Because there seems to be so little written about the dynamics of spiritual relationships from an experiential perspective rather than an idealistic one, we felt it would be useful to share something of what we've been learning together. We found the process of writing this article to be very helpful to our own clarity in being together, as well as providing some interesting challenges, because we wrote (and had to agree on) each word of the article together. Now we know why few people have written about their relationship! It's a great exercise in getting clear about where things are really between partners.

The two of us met a year and a half ago at the Findhorn Community (in northern Scotland) and experienced a beautiful, deep communion together. We both felt a profound joy in our shared soul contact — a sense of being totally in the moment in a new and expanded way. We realized that we had been drawn together because we had learned to 'sound the right note' — a note of what we really wanted in a relationship: someone to share the spiritual and mental levels of our being with, as well as the emotional and physical. We both wanted a partner with whom we could share our work and our interests, and who would also help us in our spiritual growth. Anyone who consciously asks for the kind of relationship they really want, holding a clear image of it and trusting it will come in right timing, will sound a note or a vibration on the inner planes that will eventually draw it to them. But the important thing is to release other kinds of relationship while you're waiting, otherwise the note gets confused. And it's best to just go about the work you have to do, rather than spending a lot of energy searching for the right partner. We both had to learn all of this through the school of experience.

We see our relationship as one based on a deep soul love for one another, which has as its central, flaming purpose a love and commitment to serve God and humanity. We can see ourselves as a spiritual triangle composed of three facets of divinity: each partner is an individual expression of God, and God expressing through the world is the third point symbolized for us now as the community we live in. Like any triangle, this can have its complications if one partner focuses too much on either the other partner or on God and service in the community, as it upsets the delicate balance of energy flow between the three points of the triangle. The challenge is to recognize God in each partner, as well as see God as the transcendent creator. Maintaining right relationships around this triangle seems to be a major part of the work in a spiritual partnership.

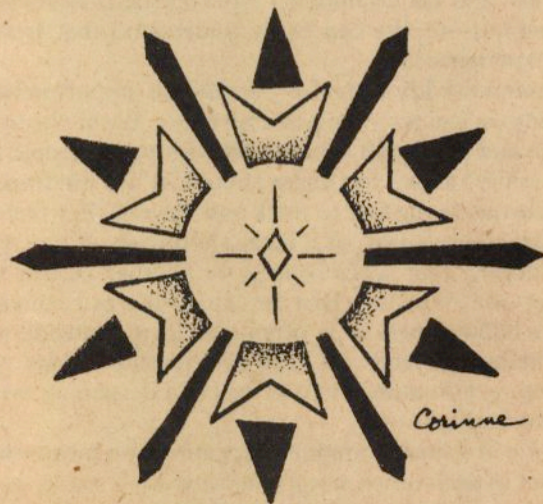
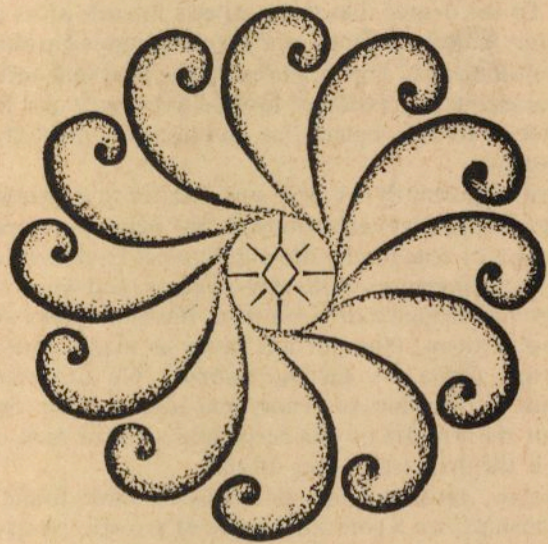
Gordon Davidson & Corinne McLaughlin

For us, this work began after a blissful initial six weeks together. We then moved into the challenging process of working through emotional patterns and mental attitudes that were coming up and blocking our full oneness with each other on all levels. Being in a close relationship is the ideal situation for each of us to be a mirror for the other so we can see ourselves more clearly. This is especially true of certain aspects of ourselves that other people don't see expressed in working or meeting situations with us. For instance, through the reflection and feedback provided by the other partner, one of us learned about a difficulty in expressing love and affection, and the other realized some deep-seated fears about being dominated. Thus we are helping each other to discover 'shadow' elements in ourselves, those negative traits and attitudes which we deny in ourselves but which often unconsciously keep us separate from each other. Bringing these blocking shadow elements into the light of our conscious awareness is the first step towards accepting and transmuting them. They're only emotional and mental reactions from past experience that have crystallized within us and play like old tapes. We have found that we need only identify with the eternal dimensions of our being and we have the creative power to transmute these patterns from the past. We feel this process of purification is essential for our effectiveness in being able to truly serve humanity.

Because of the deep subconscious link we have, each often reflects to the other in an uncanny, yet beautiful way exactly what we most need to see and release to allow us to fulfill our true service. Some faults we often reflect to each other are a preoccupation with power and recognition, and a self-centered sensitivity. As we do this, we find there is a fine line between clear, loving reflection and cutting criticism. We have to be clear and honest within ourselves as to our motives for reflecting something, to be sure it is not a projection of our own faults or a reaction out of defensiveness or competitiveness, but it is only truly constructive and helpful. And most importantly, we also need to keep affirming in each other the positive aspects we see and appreciate, as this helps them to grow stronger and provides a needed balance.

We have also found that being with each other tends to polarize the will aspect in the masculine partner and the love aspect in the feminine. As we learn about the opposite quality in the other partner, we are learning to integrate it in ourselves in balance with our own qualities.

Another dynamic we experience is that in loving each other more and growing closer together, we gradually come to identify with one another. When this happens, we find that behaviour we can easily tolerate in other people from a distance is immensely irritating in each other. This is especially so when the other person isn't living up to our ideals and expectations, such as being loving and considerate every moment. What we've learned from this is that our ideal images of each other are only a projection of the unexpressed potential of our own inner selves. What is needed is that we each become our ideals ourselves. This then allows the other the space to grow into a fuller expression of their true being. True relating seems to flow



*Corinne*

Originally published in  
**Oearth Magazine**  
(Findhorn Foundation  
The Park, Forres,  
Moray, Scotland)

from identifying with the oneness of soul consciousness which always allows different individual expressions. To the degree we can achieve this true state of oneness with each other, overcoming the fears and blocks which keep us separate, we are making it possible to experience the same oneness with others.

Loving one person more deeply than others seems to make us try even harder to lose our separateness and seek this state of oneness. We've found that the sexual union is symbolic of what is seeking to express through all aspects of our being: emotional, mental and spiritual union as well. To the degree that these aspects in each of us are in harmony with the partner, our sexual union is harmonious and fulfilling also. For us, the exchange of sexual energy as a spontaneous expression of love between male and female also seems to help balance us emotionally, mentally and spiritually.

Most importantly we feel our relationship provides a loving, supportive environment to help us meet the challenges of community life and service. Each evening we share our experiences of the day together, and when one of us is going through a difficult time, the other seeks to help and uplift them. Humour has saved us many times, and even our fights are getting funnier. We are eternally grateful for the times of beauty and joy we share together and for the wonder of our deepening love for each other. Love is the greatest teacher of all!

Like us, most couples at Findhorn have found that relationships, are a constant source of growth. Nearly half of the three hundred or so adult members there are couples, and of these, about half are married. A good deal of energy goes into working out relationships here. Someone once half-jokingly remarked that her relationship was her full-time work programme as it seemed so difficult, and her community work in the office was play by comparison! We can easily understand that from our own experience.

Community life provides tremendous opportunities for working on jealousy and possessiveness. We are learning to release and trust each other to be with other people in the community, as we feel there should be no hindrances to each partner being free to work and serve as they feel right. This isn't always easy, as it means letting go of a lot of past conditioning that seeks security in another person rather than in God. We know that we cannot live as isolated little couple bubbles here as is often true in the outside world. The main challenge of our relationship seems to be developing non-attachment as well as a deepening love and communication.

Living in a small community together also means that we see a lot of each other, not just after a day's work, as often happens outside here. This intensifies our relationship, as both of us work in the same areas as well as live together. So there are even more opportunities to harmonize other aspects of our beings with each other. We have both been learning more acceptance and respect of our partner's ideas when they are different from our own, and learning to release competing with each other, or having total agreement in our thinking. This has come from the experience of giving college classes together for members and for guests, and in writing and editing articles together.

We're beginning to trust that each of us have unique gifts, abilities and perspectives to give in different areas. We learn from each other, as well as seeing points of synthesis between us. It's often said that our greatest teachers are the people closest to us in daily life, and when we open ourselves to this awareness, amazing insights and lessons follow.

We see our relationship as a microcosm of our relationship with the larger whole, with everyone else. Every time we work through a difficulty with each other and release our personality attachments and separateness, we have then cleared that area in our relationships with other people around us. We know that each couple who does this is transmuting archetypal patterns such as dominance/submission or attachment/jealousy that influence all of humanity, thus making it easier for others to break through similar patterns in themselves. For all of our thoughts and emotions create our own reality and affect other people everywhere, whether we know them or not. This is why we're trying to be models in our own lives of what we talk about because people not only consciously observe us, but are also affected by what we are on an inner level. To us, relationships are a vital classroom in this living planetary process of new age education. And what a blessing to have such a loving supportive classroom in which to learn, especially when we can take all our lessons with a sense of humour!



*Biographies: Corinne and Gordon were members of the Findhorn Community in Scotland for 3 and 2 years respectively. Corinne was a member of Findhorn's policy-making core group, the College Faculty and the Editorial Board, and Gordon was the Editor of Onearth Magazine, focalizer of the 1977 Onearth Conference, and member of the College Faculty. In 1978 they founded Sirius Community on 86 acres of land near Amherst, Mass., and the community has grown now to 11 members. Sirius offers weekend workshops on "Relationships in the New Age" and Community Living experiences. The next workshop will be Feb. 23-24. For more information, write Sirius, P.O. Box 388-c, Amherst, Mass. 01002. Tel. (413) 256-8015.* □



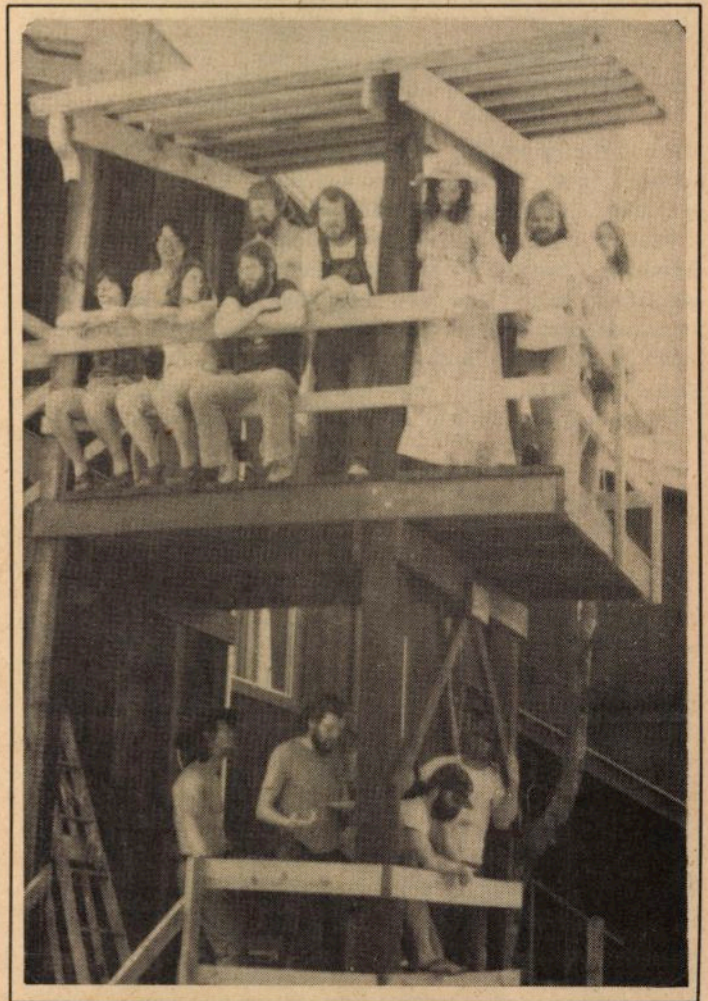


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*An article on "family life and relationships" — (but we don't live in families; oh well, I'll tell them what we do instead) — based on 5 years of alternative experience (with 6 years under our belts, that qualifies us all right) — how are your projections and dreams holding up? (oh good, we can tell them what we're up to!)*

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# flowing in the wind



*by Marsha Aitken*



This is the beginning of our story about East Wind Community, and what a story we have to tell. Currently (October 1979) we are 46 adults and 3 young people (ages 1 year, 4 months, and 4 months) living on 160 acres in the Missouri Ozarks. We began with four former Twin Oaks members in 1973 in New England. From that nucleus, eleven people moved to Missouri in May, 1974, complete with 2 cats, 2 cars and a van, a beginning set of by-laws, some common values and goals (to be a community of 750 among them), and that familiar sense of pioneering



adventure and anticipation of dreams about to unfold.

A lot of excitement was about the kinds of relationships that an alternative lifestyle would not only allow for, but encourage and nurture — at last a place that truly would be interested in replacing sexism, racism, ageism and any other oppression with loving acceptance. Competition would be replaced with cooperation, eliminating violence, and providing a society in which people could "...mutually respect and tolerate individual differences of belief, opinions, and taste, and where personal possessiveness is not supported." (EWC By-laws) Imagine peoples' excitement at the thought of being able to interact, however intimately, with whomever they wanted, and hopefully not be punished for differences of opinion, or sexual preference. The concept of equal access to the community's goods and services would foster a strong sense of sharing and caring and therefore little need for extra privileges. There was also the intention of creating "...a society where positions of responsibility are not positions of exploitation." All would share the responsibilities and not need to do more than a fair share.

What has this to do with family life and relationships? We spend a good deal of our time working. It affects the nature of relationships if it's possible to disagree with someone over a hammock jig, and an hour later find yourself cleaning the kitchen with that person (who might be, socially, anything from a casual acquaintance to a lover).

Back to our original dreams — how were we going to relate to each other? Most folks wanted an alternative to nuclear families, marriage and dependence on biological parents for raising children. So the vision was a rather undefined sense of living altogether, each with co's own room, and with centralized kitchen/dining, shower/laundry/clothes, work/industrial, and recreation/cultural facilities.

There was a fairly strong sense of not wanting to live in clustered homesteads or private houses. Rather it was to be a large family. Although it would have sub-groups, it would primarily relate to the group as a whole. This family would raise its children communally, with day to day care of the young people being done by child care folks (metas), who could be biological parents but need not be, and who would take turns being with the children. This did not rule out the option of being married, but did limit the possibility of living in a traditional nuclear family.

So, in summary, what we were striving for was a less restricted view of human relationships — one that could see beyond the bounds of heterosexual coupling and the jealousy and competition that often arises from it; beyond the necessity of dependence on couples (especially women) for the nurturing of children; beyond the mobile, highly independent American lifestyle which often destroys friendships, home and roots; beyond materialistic consumption and beyond being "ripped off" by the American economic and labor systems.

How are we faring? For the first year the community was in Missouri, you were lucky if you found much privacy for any sort of relationship. People were doubled and tripled in the few rooms available. If you were having an intimate relationship with more than one person, it was either accepted or squelched in the interests of keeping peace. There seemed to be a fair amount of mul-

tiple and sequential relationships, especially while membership was growing rapidly and visitor influx was consistently high. Turnover was high in those days, too, so you never knew when your friend or lover might leave.

As space and population began settling down, trends, if there were any, became clearer. Since we put our children's program on hold until we felt sufficient economic stability, there were none of those concerns needing attention. From the beginning, most of the people who came to stay were into heterosexual relationships. In the long run, there never has been the kind of support network that seems necessary for gays to live at East Wind. We have had members who are bisexual, though not in great numbers. There were, then as now, folks who seemed to get most of their support (or lack of it) from a variety of people rather than from one or two close relationships.

Quite a few people seem to be managing well with what has been called "serial polygamy". Person A has individual relationships with B and C, then goes on to relationships with C, D and E, maintaining two to three close personal relationships at a time. Sometimes one relationship would be more primary than others, sometimes equally so. This appeared to be easing the potential strains of jealousy, because people had more than one person to rely on. With the serial effect, chances were probably higher that fewer people would feel socially isolated. Sometimes, the overall closeness and support would be enhanced by overlapping groups socializing together.

This is not to say that there were not occasional squabbles and sometimes undercurrents of hard feelings. As A ended the relationship with B and went on to D and E, it was clear that, in community as elsewhere, changes in relationships can hurt, make us feel depressed and angry, and interfere with work.

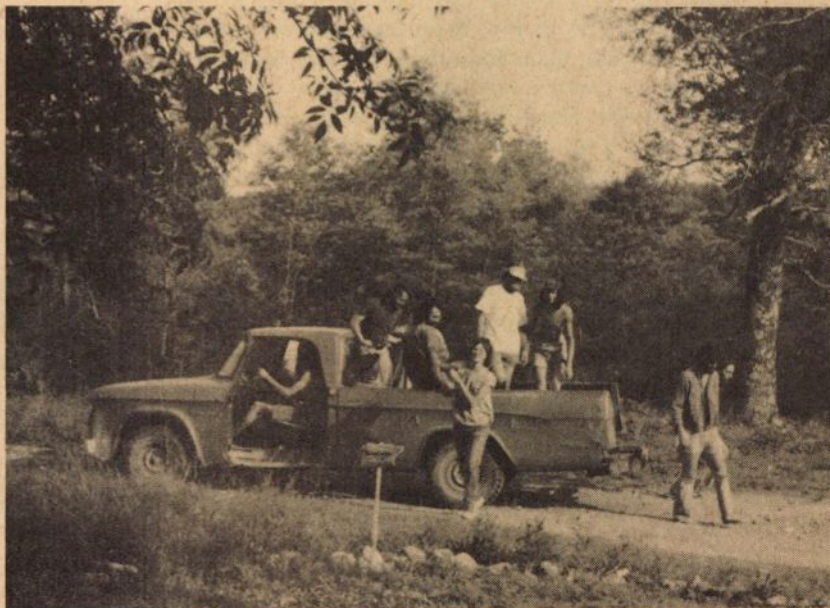
By and large, most of us have weathered these changes well, and we have rarely lost a community member solely because of heartbreak. We lose more people who come to community looking for a relationship and not finding it.

*This seems true of triangle relationships. In the early days before Steve, Jeanie and Paul became the happy, fairly inseparable trio they now are, Paul would come in to dinner and find the other two dreamily staring into each other's eyes. Only rarely would someone move out of co's discomfort to go give him a hug, but somehow we have all survived. And then there was the time Ellen and Keith came to live at East Wind paired forever, and within 7 months they had, with much trauma, switched partners with Patty and Tom, at least one couple of which remains, although not at East Wind. And there is Carol, who cried and screamed and threw things when Ed moved on to relationships with two different women, yet they are friends and occasional lovers today.*

I arrived in late 1976, as a visitor. Serial polygamy was still the most visible form of intimate relationships, although most people had one relationship which was primary. Over the course of the past 3 years, the situation changed. While the tendency toward heterosexuality remains, multiple relationships have decreased and coupling has been on the increase. In fact, we have cycled through a strong period of monogamous coupling and now have quite a few folks who are in a primary relationship and only occasionally get involved with a second person. Plus we have a number of people who do not have primary relationships, some of whom are satisfied and most of whom are not. We still live in individual private rooms within residence buildings and couples usually maintain separate sleeping spaces in addition to sleeping together. A handful of married couples have come to live at East Wind over the past few years; their tendency to get involved with other people has, for the most part, been mutually acceptable.

Along the way we have sharpened our visions of child rearing and also encountered some typical problems. On a day-to-day basis the young people are cared for by metas doing 3-4 hour shifts. We have further clarified the idea of primary relationships for children providing 2 hours of scheduled time per child per day for someone to establish and maintain that close bond. To relieve the dependence on biological parents and to provide the opportunity to other community members, we suggest that each young person have three "primaries". One or two are usually the biological parents, the others are people who are interested in children. Primaries can and do spend more than 2 hours per day with a young person; that is simply what is guaranteed by the community.

How is all this working? It depends on whom you ask. If you ask the two families with children who came to live at East Wind in 1978 and left, the system is weighted too far in the direction of meta care. If you ask the primaries who are concerned with the meatie-veggie issue, use of medications, vaccinations, etc., you will get approximately



half leaning that way and help the other. What we have is an unresolved situation, with the main question being whether, how much and in which areas we want primaries to be making decisions. We are still raising our children communally and will continue to do so. It remains to be seen how involved primaries will be.

How are we doing as adults? There is still a strong sense of family and large group-as-a-whole, especially at dinner time, holidays, community celebrations, and crisis times, when we all pull together. Otherwise, we relate in smaller informal groups of friends or people working together. The issue of formally supporting small groups living together (whether it is with or without separate facilities and economic systems) has been raised frequently over the years and is again a topic of interest. We are not at this point, however, ready to abandon the concept of large community and return to nuclear families. Even among former members, there have been only 2 or 3 marriages and a dozen permanent couplings, with a large percentage of the rest living in group situations, such as small communities or co-op houses.

Our tendency toward coupling and the developing issue of small groups, though, indicates some needs were not being met. The lack of small group living has been posited as a reason for our membership stabilizing in the 45-70 person range. The thinking is that humans cannot successfully relate to more than 5-30 people. Therefore, 45-70 is really stretching it, but in the realm of possibility if you have a small group with which to hang out. As usual, there are reasons why we have not resolved the controversy over this issue. To begin with, when we established a goal of 750 people, we did not outline how we were going to get there, and we still have not done that. Most of our planning for the past 5 years has been geared toward economic survival and economic stability; how best to use our resources of money, labor, land and facilities. Thus we chose to build residences without public common spaces in them because we needed every square foot for private rooms. As we have gotten more stable and potentially nearer to creating more public space/small group space, fluctuations in either the U.S. economy or East Wind's have resulted in few resources being available, forcing us to set aside plans for our social environment.

Gender balance and prior conditioning are other reasons for people's social needs not being met. There have always been 1½ - 2 times as many men as women (except for one week in August 1978, says Jennifer). The effects have been consistent and are now quite familiar: Women feel overwhelmed and withdraw somewhat; men feel even lonelier and either approach women more persistently or withdraw. This is heightened because we are indeed creatures of our prior conditioning, with men and women still looking primarily to each other for support, physical intimacy, and attention.

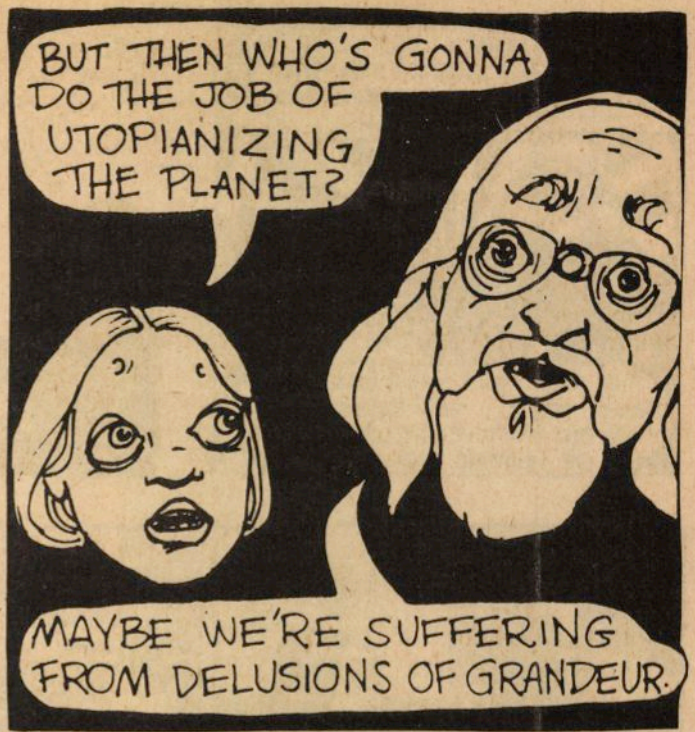
When the ratio approaches 2 to 1 or higher, the situation intensifies. Some women withdraw further; some even occasionally feel responsible for attending to 2 men. The men either become assertive with new women visitors

or withdraw, get involved in work, and try to stay out of depression and loneliness. Of course, generalizations never apply to everyone, so there are people who do not mind the gender ratio, but they are the exception rather than the rule. It is possible that the above conditions subtly reinforce coupling as a way to avoid the whole thing. There is little doubt that men turning to men and women to women would ease the situation, but it has not happened much. A small women's group has been around for a year now, and for those women it helps balance the male energy. The absence of blatant sexism helps create a more accepting atmosphere for everyone, especially women. Some subtle sexism remains, but our awareness is rising steadily. Attempts at increasing the numbers of women visitors and members have had little effect thus far, but we will continue to try.

The prior conditioning that keeps women from venturing to change their lifestyle is probably the same conditioning which makes it easier to be involved in a heterosexual couple once they are in community. Of course, men have their own version of conditioning about marital and business success. Security often takes high priority in the American culture. It seems to be less of a priority at East Wind. Members still want less turnover of people in their lives, economic stability, regular opportunities for vacation, a new building every now and then to show us we are really progressing, and a greater degree of self-sufficiency. There is much less clutching at things and a strong sense of progress, however slow it might appear at times.

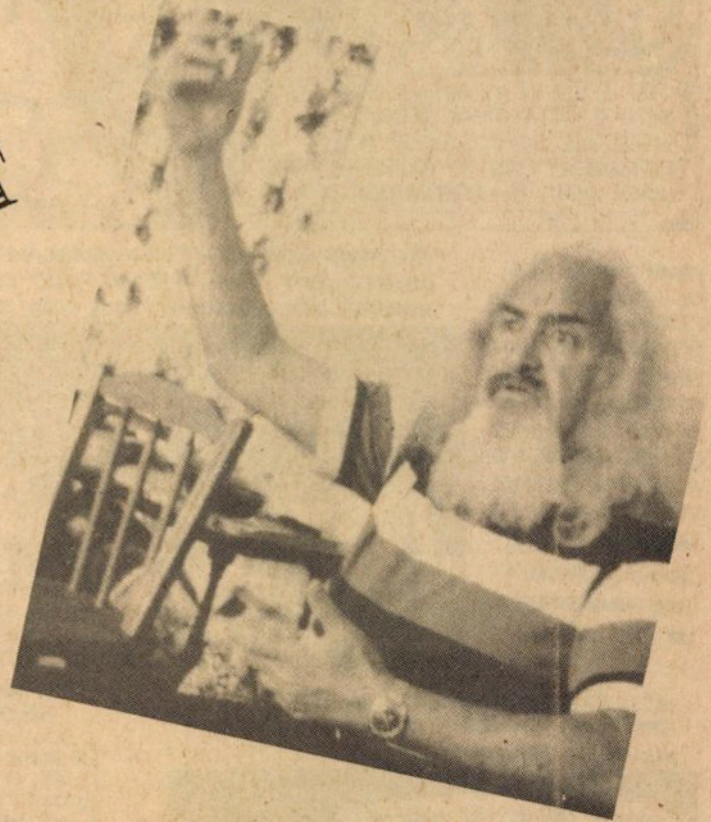
There are some positive signs of stability and maturation. The average length of stay has increased steadily for three years. Full members (meaning membership of 6 months or longer), are 87% of total membership, the highest it has ever been. Of the 46 adult members, 30 have lived at East Wind longer than two years and are a very stable core group. We are providing an alternative culture for ourselves and others. It is clear that as an economic alternative we are successful. The challenge is how successful we will be as a social alternative. □





# FAR OUT WEST

BY EVEN EVE



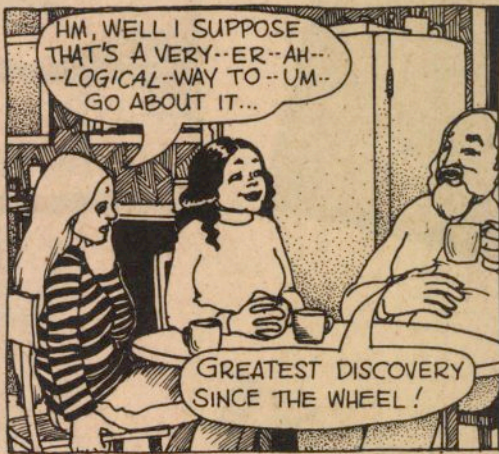
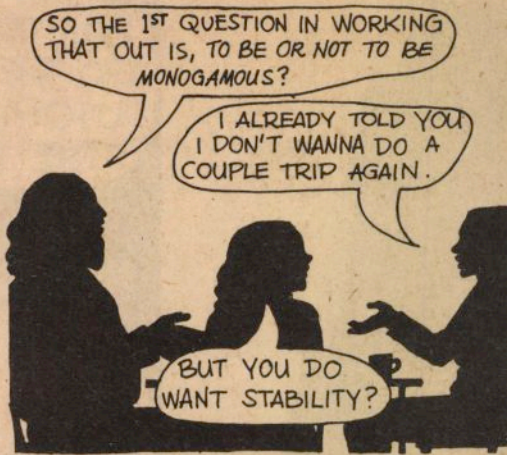
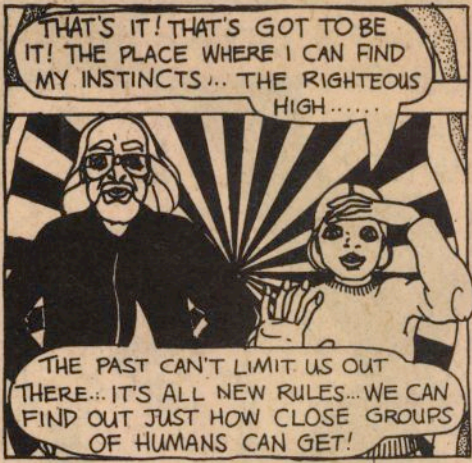
*Now it can be told: the story behind the comic strip about the family ahead of its time. Watch your favorite characters come to life. Thrill to a real birth. Be amazed as life and art prove to be complementary.*

There is a curious thing I've noticed over the years. The more I seem to gain a clear understanding of the world and life around me in realistic terms, the more life seems to resemble a storybook, fairy tale, work of fiction...or, more precisely, a comic strip.

This is perhaps not so strange, actually, if you consider that for seven years I have been recording many of the major events and adventures in my life in a comic strip, **Far Out West**. Since the heroine of the strip, Polly Morfus, is my autobiographical counterpart, and her friends and daughter bear great resemblances to my friends and daughter, I suppose it really isn't so strange that I would

start to view our real-life antics in terms of conversation balloons and "bits of business" (funny sequences). Nor is it too hard to see why I long ago began to see people I meet as comic strip characters. The only unexpected thing is that while I once would have thought that only certain people had comic strip potential, I now find that everyone does.

Comics all over the world have a unique ability to entertain and capture the attention of readers. Perhaps this is one of the reasons why I picked the comic as the medium

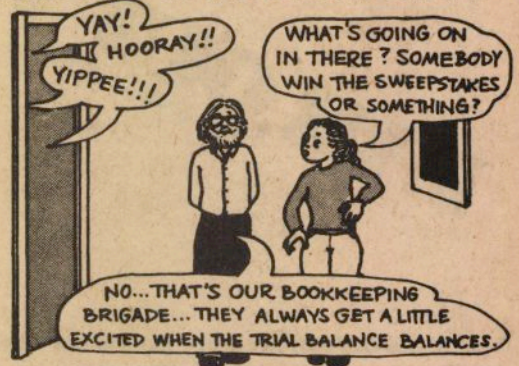


MANY THOUSANDS OF HOURS OF BRAINSTORMING, TALKING & THEORIZING; MANY THOUSANDS OF UNITS OF OUTREACH ENERGY & MANY THOUSANDS OF PERSONAL MEETINGS WITH POTENTIAL COMMUNITY MEMBERS LATER, THINGS IN POLLY'S LIFE HAVE SHAPED UP THIS WAY.....

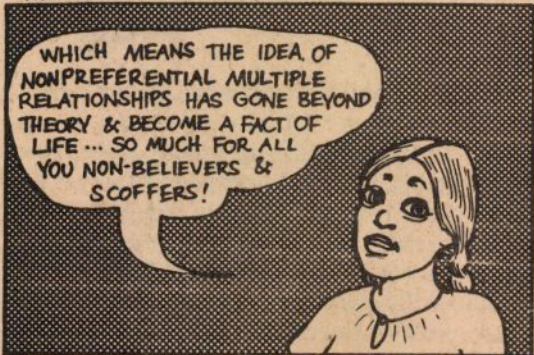
THE "MASS MOVEMENT" HAD NEVER MATERIALIZED, BUT AFTER 7 YEARS POLLY DID FIND HERSELF IN A COMMUNITY OF 16 CLOSE COLLEAGUES...



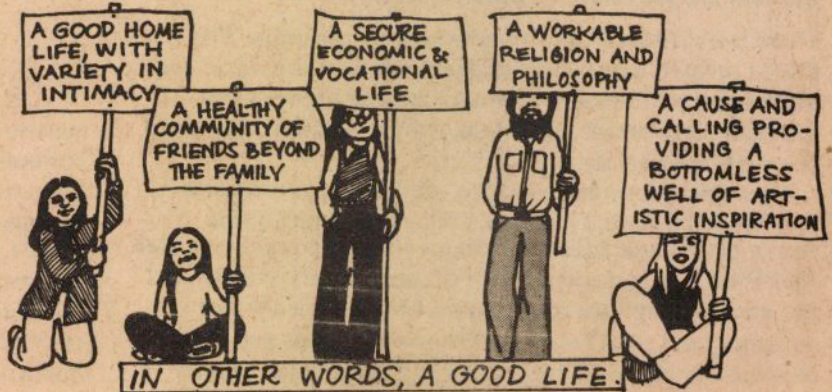
...WHO WERE MAKING IT ECONOMICALLY AND COULD SHARE THEIR RESOURCES IN COMMON...



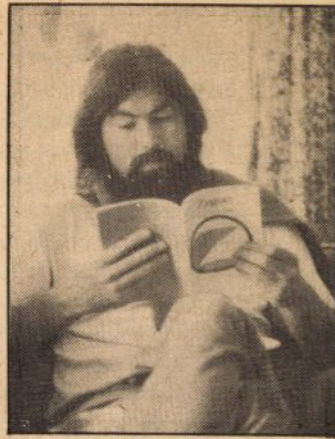
...WITH ONE OF ITS SIGNIFICANT FEATURES BEING THE PRESENCE OF AT LEAST TWO MEMBERS OF EACH SEX...



THIS MEANT THAT AFTER APPROXIMATELY 782,918,400 SECONDS OF EXISTENCE, POLLY HAD ARRIVED AT.....



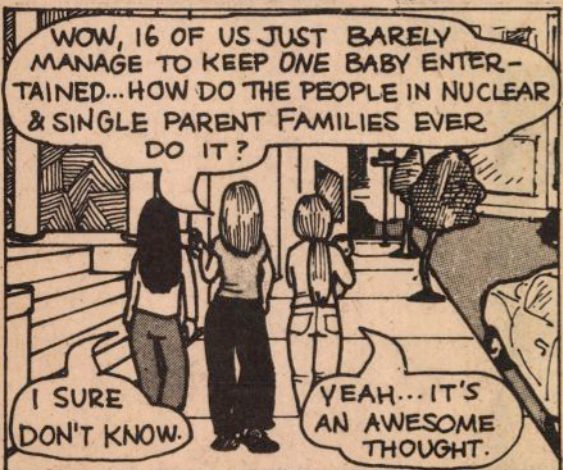
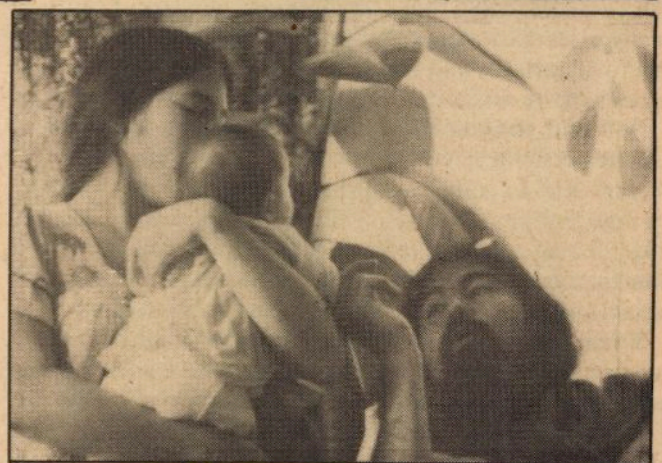
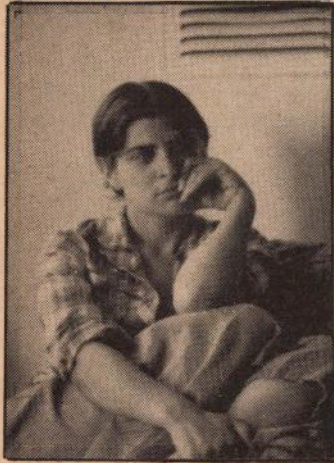
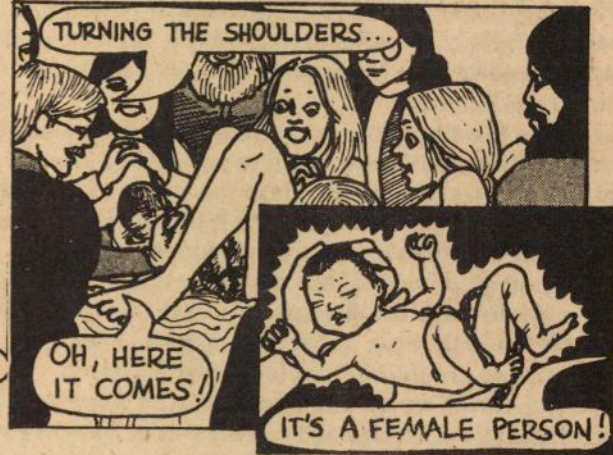
ON TOP OF ALL THIS, POLLY'S OWN FAMILY CLUSTER HAD GROWN TO SEVEN PEOPLE...



AND SO IT SEEMED TO POLLY & HER PARTNERS THAT THE TIME WAS RIPE TO COMMENCE THE CREATION OF THE FIRST MEMBER OF THE 2<sup>ND</sup> GENERATION OF UTOPIANS...



...AND BEFORE LONG A LITTLE BUBBLE WAS ON ITS WAY.



I would use to tell my story... Art for art's sake is all well and good but in addition to that, I wanted an audience.

Anyone of us can reflect back upon our years of contact with television, movies, popular music and literature. Whatever the many themes we absorbed from the multitude of media presentations we've witnessed, none have been branded more prominently into our minds than romance, marriage, seduction and sexist roles. These images have been so overwhelmingly powerful that many of us — most — don't even realize they come from outside, learned sources; most people simply presume, without thinking, that these things are innate.

Art imitates life; people emulate art, which in turn shapes life, on and on in a continuous spiraling cycle. What chance has a new lifestyle (devoid of romance, marriage, seduction, sexism) to grow if it has no capacity to implant its own artistic images in the minds of the people? The answer is, none.

**Far Out West** has been many things to me, but one of its primary thrusts has always been to portray the new, polyfidelitous, cooperative village way of life that I and my partners have been developing. We learned long ago that the images of romance and coupling lodged in people's consciousness or unconscious minds are strong enough in most cases to make this lifestyle impossible for them. Why? Because **they can not even imagine it**. They have absolutely no program structures in their brains to understand what we are talking about. And so we have had to marshal all our artistic and literary forces, and do all we can to create media that carry this new message. I can't really assess how successful we have been. That task will be left to historians, and besides, we really have only scratched the surface of the communications world.

As I said, the comic strip has been many things to me. On the personal level, I would say it's been very therapeutic. In communicating the story of Polly Morfus, an innocent young woman who sets out in search of a lifestyle that offers "the Righteous High", I have been able to review my own life and pick out those turning points and episodes that have been most significant.

When you're boiling years of living down into a few succinct little boxes, it's real hard not to be wordy. Yet the aesthetic side of the comic has always been very real to me. I've always tried to make every box its own distinct work of art.

There's no question that a moral message is intended in the strip. I believe in all the ideas the story brings forth — multiple parenting, cooperative living, polyfidelity, the need for a religious base and a deity (Sister Kerista, a black hippy goddess), intellectuality. I don't try to hide my views or apologize for having them. Yet always, I have most of all wanted to transmit to the reader a **feeling** of what life inside a Utopian Laboratory (U Lab) is like. I have tried to show the human foibles as much as idealistic strengths (more foibles, then strengths, actually; they're funnier), the periods of discouragement as well as moments of confidence.

When Polly wrestles with a decision, Little Pollys usually appear on her head and shoulders, giving counsel on both sides of the issue. In the first volume of **Far Out West**, Polly's ambivalence over the matter of polyfidelity itself was probably the key element in the drama. Would she hang tight to her ideals and dreams, or succumb to the rapacious pulls of old fashioned psychology, as voiced by her parents, old friends, and her own "other side"? Would the winds of doubt and paranoia blow her away?

Of course, they didn't. Polly signed on as a Utopian pioneer; she and Jake (who can never figure out if he's a true prophet of things to come or merely a deluded nut) and Lindy and all the others who joined them went on to establish a successful, if slightly zany, little urban village. In the final chapters, Limerick, the first Ulabian baby, is born, and someone observes that, with a new baby, new car, and polaroid camera they are, after all, merely ordinary, middle class people looking for a good life.

**Far Out West** is going on vacation for a while. I've decided that after seven years I'd like to take a break from it and focus on some other artistic endeavors. How much it has helped our cause is, as I said before, something we can't know for sure, though I would guess that the images that people have been absorbing from the strip all these years have affected their thinking, even if only at subtle or latent levels... levels that will take time to gestate and come to fruition. Whatever the outcome, the experience for me has been marvelous, and for my partners as well. When people stop us on the streets of San Francisco and say, "Hey, didn't I see you in a comic strip somewhere?", it makes our day. □

**KERISTA VILLAGE • BOX 1174-C, SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94101. (415) 566-6502 / 566-5640 .**





## *And Now I*

1.

*Two bodies lying naked, touching  
in the candle lit shadow dance night  
Love called up from deep within  
Arcs across minds in flight,  
Pulses through tongues that frolic  
Like dolphins mating; in the  
Warm sunlit lagoon of our mouths  
Flows through genitals in seed-form  
Search for silent, estatic unity*

2.

*Two months more, then the womb-door  
Openings, of cunt-flower dilation  
and muscle down expulsion of...  
I am father expectant  
I am cross-legged sitter  
in sunshine morning  
I am heart-open recipient and  
Generator of love make me whole*

3.

*Dear faceless loved one  
Our seed is your road this time  
As perhaps, you've been to us  
or will be  
We pray you safe passage  
Into this world of thought  
Hidden beauty  
We will purposely sculpt  
No mask to encase your face  
of wisdom innocence...  
So that when you gaze into  
The mirror of the world,  
No reflection will hide the truth  
You've come to seek*

4.

*On a hot humid New York  
August afternoon,  
I have felt you move in your  
mother's womb 3,000 miles away  
and also in this heart  
that weeps with joy*



— Dan Dolen, Cheap Thrills Crew, Hoedads  
from "Together," Fall, 1979



## Some fleeting thoughts on family during the year of the child

by Martin Bradley

Every week or so I am reminded it is the "international Year of the Child". It made a very popular postage stamp. The "Year of the Child" has called attention to itself in my life through a number of relationships that have culminated in either the couple marrying or conceiving a child. Through these friends I have seen some unusual twists to what we call "family life".

Hitchhiking the two mile stretch of road between Cotati and Sonoma State University provides an excellent medium for three minute get acquainted conversation or an opportunity to catch-up on news between old friends. Hitchhiking between campus and town has regulars, both the hitchers and the ride-sharers.

The last time I gave Mirian a ride was late last winter. She and her son Chad were leaving Sonoma Grove, a trailer court occupied by students and young families in vintage Airstreams and old San Francisco Muni busses. I stopped just as she was deciding whether or not to assemble a stroller and start pushing Chad out to the University or persist in her hitchhiking. When I got out to help her, she was most apologetic for the effort it took to load mother, infant son and stroller into my truck. She won my heartfelt sympathy. On the road, I asked her how old Chad was (two months) and something to the effect of who was the father in this new family. "Chad's father's not around, I'm raising him myself." And as he squirmed on her lap, she added, "It's very difficult at times."

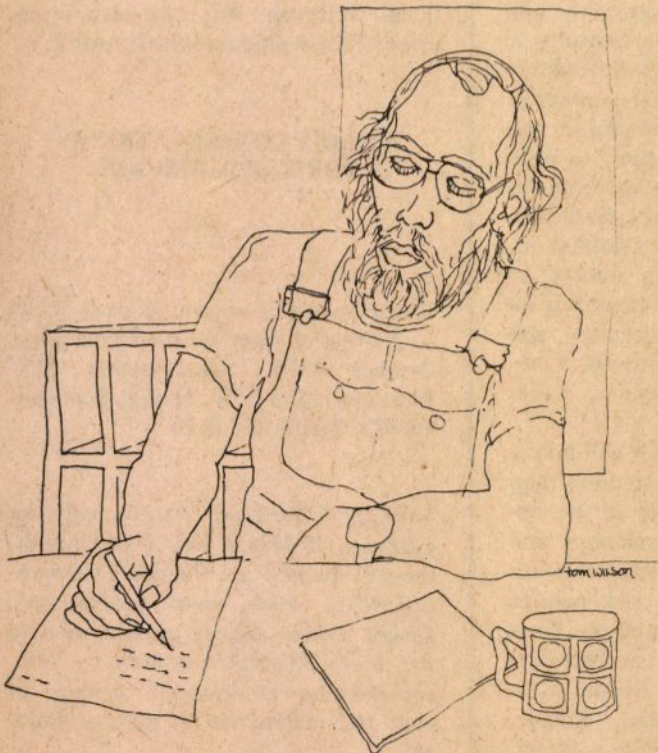
Eight months later, on a sunny Indian Summer morning, I saw Mirian hitchhiking — alone. This time, the three minute elevator-like ride to the University was too short for merely catching up on old news. When I asked her about Chad, she was very careful and precise, and explained that late last spring she was having an increasingly difficult time raising him and was finding herself slipping into madness. "It can be done alone, but you need a lot of support. I just didn't have that support." Mirian is one of the clearest and most articulate people I know. Her involvement with the Humanistic Psychology program at Sonoma State and a desire to find an alternative to the encroaching madness led her to a counselor who worked with adopted children as adults. She helped them both legally and psychologically find their way back to their biological parents. Mirian reversed the situation and sought help in placing Chad in a home that would be nurturing and supportive of his needs as well as her own in giving him up. In the brief ride out to school, she told me that they had found a family in a community in Oregon where she and Chad spent the summer. Chad was being adopted by the family, with Mirian and the mother sleeping together with Chad to affect as much bonding as possible under the circumstances.

I wanted to talk to Mirian further about this adoption alternative because the woman I am with has chosen not to have any more children at a time I am just wanting to have a child of my own. Mirian and I agreed to have dinner together later that week. At that meeting though, I felt I was intruding in a private matter that was in a hazy area of how much you share with a casual friend. So called "new-age" alternatives emerge painfully from difficult situations. Mirian's counselor had recently published an

article in a popular ladies journal that brought the alternative to the surface too quickly for Mirian and her own mother. Mirian was withdrawing and I was imposing, so I withdrew myself, with my curiosity intact. My own painful conclusion was that there is an incredible, unrecognized (or ignored) trauma among parents who place their children in other people's homes and families.

More "Year of the Child" mail arrives. Two close friends of mine confide in me that they are pregnant. Again, I go through my late-twenties doubts of "When me?" Then I cringe when I read that Julian is going to have an abortion. "It's not the right time for Michael and me to have a child. We don't feel we could support one right now, or for that matter that we have the support to have a child now." The vague and ephemeral reference to needing support surfaces again.

Sarah too is pregnant. "Let's not call it unwanted, but undesirable at this point" she writes. Sarah is going to have the child though. I'm crying a little before I slip into a sleep of recurring dreams that night. In the dream, we are all close, Sarah, Julian and myself, and we are all living in a community together. I see their children, my archetypal new-age cousins, playing together. I remember waking up the next morning with that "the-time-is-now" feeling of pulling our loose knit network together to support ourselves. But 400 miles separate us, and slowly, the urgency is dissipated by time. Shortly after Julian's abortion, a letter without a "Year of the Child" stamp arrives with news that Sarah has miscarried after being knocked down by a cow at the dairy where she is working. That night, the dream recurs, but Marian, Julian and myself are not in it, only the children — playing.

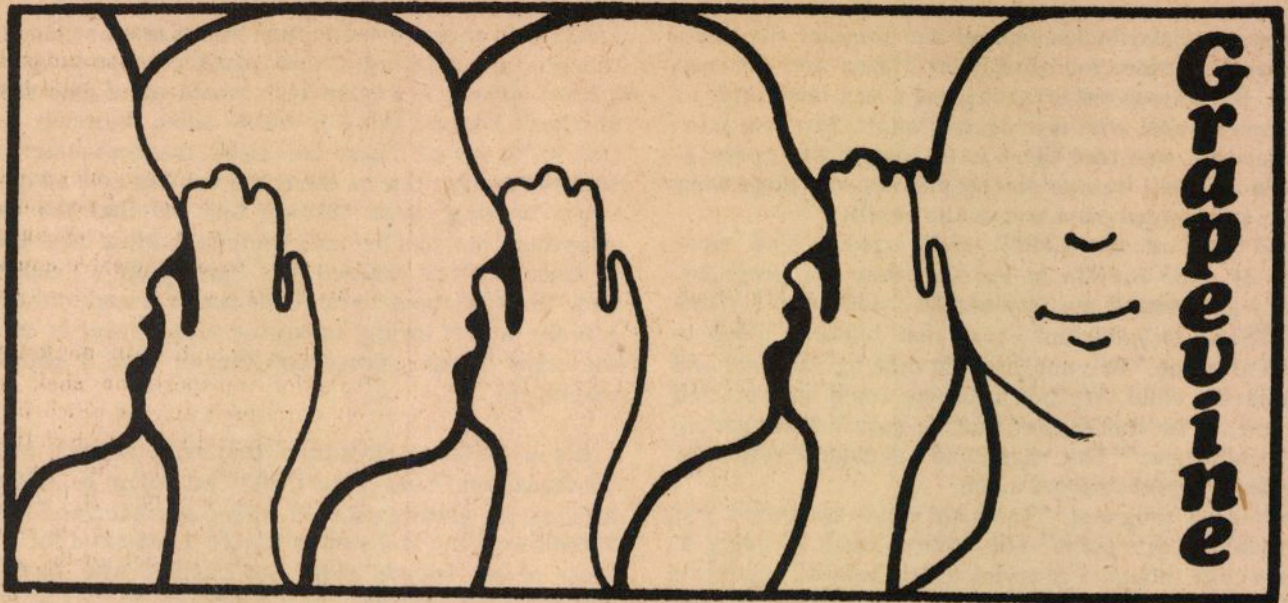


Mirian's alternative adoption makes more sense to me, though I'm still trying to work past the heavy judgements I have against a woman who would place her child in another's home. I think of the so called 'bummer sheep' that we've raised. These are lambs, that for whatever reason, the mother rejects them and another ewe adopts and starts nursing them. (Mirian told me that the mother adopting Chad had her milk come back when he attempted to nurse.) Once I realized that "giving up", "rejection" and "abandonment" aren't the issues, I understand that it is the lack of loving, nurturing support that is creating the crisis in our culture and that is what I should be reacting to.

It's a wedding invitation that next arrives with an "International Year of the Child" stamp on it. Julian and Michael are getting married. I head south to San Francisco to their wedding and stop in my old home-town for a visit. Most of my friends there are couples who have consummated their relationships in marriage. We are all peers, our major difference being that they have married. It's only a handful of people, but these friends that have formalized their relationships through marriage have come up with an unusual twist to family life. Now that they are married, they are spending massive quantities of their time trying to earn large sums of money by working two jobs each for an average of twelve hours a day. Our dreams are pretty much the same, they want to buy a house and settle down. (I would just like to have a little more land around my house.) So how are they different than me? It seems that in marriage they have proclaimed an exclusiveness to themselves. Their dreams and visions seem to say "just us", where as the other singles and non-married couples I know are more open to "me and whoever else we can involve to help get where I'm going." Not that any of these impressions are true in every case, but my initial impression is that couples that marry are working very hard to achieve by themselves what so-called non-committed, un-married couples are trying to do with other. This "openness to others" among my close friends seems to dilute the need for the exclusive and seemingly neurotic pursuit of my married friends to get their share of the pie during this period of economic upheaval, even if it means working two jobs and foregoing any "family life".

I'm trying to look way down deep for some clear underlying cause for all the madness I see among couples, families and single parents. I keep coming back to a culture that is encouraging alienation and ignoring a need for loving, caring support. It's the support that Mirian didn't have, and the support that Julian and Michael were missing and are now trying to create in their marriage, and the support that my other married friends are lacking and that has driven them to a fast-lane life-style of working and hardly spending any time with each other. Where I find that support is among small clusters of people living together and taking care of each other. In our present society, that is difficult to achieve.

"So what else is new?" you ask. I don't know. The message is not getting out. The obvious is being obscured, scrambled. And sadly enough, a lot of my friends and their children are suffocating among themselves. □



## THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNES FESTIVAL

The International Communes Festival held in late September in Scotland's Laurieston Hall drew over 100 communards from 16 countries. Early publicity resulted in 4 pre-festival newsletters crammed with letters from communes all over the world. In simple words and small sketches people wrote about themselves, their lives, and what they were involved with at the moment.

At The Festival meetings — "wordshops" — time was split between presentations of the various communes and discussions fo a variety of topics relevant for communes all over the Western World:

- Existing international networks - Community Action and Nordisk Samaktion
- spiritual and political communes developed on the Findhorn presentation
- establishing communes with a social contract
- technology and communes, how computers and the like were used in communes
- therapy in communes, uses and misuses
- financing of housing and communal real estate, this is a problem in many countries because of restrictions on the giving of a mortgage

- communal decision-making
- establishing an international communes network based on the groups represented at the meeting

The decisions of the 1979 International Communes Festival were to make a report on the festival including excerpts from the newsletters and contributions from the participants to be distributed by national coordinators, to establish an international communes network with regional networks for the dissemination of information, to publish a bi-annual magazine covering international trends and developments in communal living, to try to establish information offices in each country, to look into the possibility of compiling an international communes directory, and to have another International Communes Festival in two years, somewhere else.

Between now and then, it will take a lot to make the meeting into more than a one-shot thing, to make it the beginning of a mutual exchange and strengthening of the social and communal attitudes in our very sick nations around the world. Please plug in. For a list of national offices in Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Great Britain, Germany, Holland, Belgium, France, Switzerland, Italy, Spain, Israel,

Japan, Australia, Canada and the U.S. (the nations represented by communes in KoKoo — the Danish commune Christiania's magazine. Herredsvejen 7, sivedst Mark, 8581 Nimtofte. Tlf. (06)39 84 64 Denmark.) Humorously, Twin Oaks — despite our absence at the festival — was listed as the U.S. contact. I hope that someone in the Federation of Egalitarian Communities will take a working interest in International Outreach. Any one else interested? Please plug into the Network.

## ENERGY CONSERVATION IN PORTLAND, OREGON

The following is reprinted from RAIN — Journal of Appropriate Technology. October 1979. Subscriptions \$15/10 issues. 2270 N.W. Irving, Portland, OR 97210 (503) 227-5110

The City of Portland, Oregon, with the guidance of Mayor Neil Goldschmidt, recently passed an Energy Conservation Policy which, when implemented, should reduce energy consumption in the city by 30 percent or more by 1995, representing a financial savings of over 162 million (1979) dollars annually.

This plan has already been hailed as the most comprehensive and innovative attempt by a municipality to save energy yet devised. Official recognition of Portland's plans has been high — from Walter Cronkite right on up to Jimmy Carter — and requests for information have been coming in by droves to the City Energy Office. After one takes a look at this plan, one can see why it has been so popular.

A most important part of the plan — and my favorite feature — is how it was drafted. A group of local citizens who were appointed by the City Council volunteered over 3,500 hours of work to develop this document. This committee represented neighborhoods, utilities, industry, organized labor, environmental groups and elsewhere — quite an unusual working group! The perspectives these people added truly made it an effort of the community. After the committee had met for over a year, a "Discussion Draft" was written and the proposal was brought to the people for input. The city held a number of workshops where people were encouraged to comment on specific aspects of the policy, ask questions of the committee, and to make specific suggestions for amendments, etc. After two such workshops were held in different parts of the city, two days of formal hearings were held where people were able to make their feelings known and their suggestions became part of the record. As an effect of this process, new objectives were added — e.g. making recycling options mandatory for all garbage collectors in the city, certain sections of the policy strengthened — e.g. requiring the commercial sector to prepare energy audits not just on heating and cooling use, but industrial processes as well, and many other small items included, which increase the overall effectiveness of the plan.

We here at RAIN, as well as many other groups throughout the city, have been getting numerous calls for information about this important document. Because of this great interest, we have decided to outline the general goal and individual policies of the plan. Even so, this listing does not include the many pioneering objectives of the different policies, including such things as the establishment of Local Improvement Districts to help finance neighborhood power facilities, help for local oil distributors in finding alternative

business to help offset the reduction of business through conservation, encouragement for transportation companies to establish terminals within the city to reduce energy consumption and encourage small, independent trucking firms, and many other worthwhile intentions.

The Energy Conservation Goal of the City of Portland is to:

Increase the energy efficiency of existing structures and the transportation system of the city through policies and programs which encourage conservation of nonrenewable energy resources, while maintaining the attractiveness of the city as a place to live and do business. In order to accomplish this goal, the following six policies have been adopted as the Energy Conservation Policy of the City of Portland.

1. The role of the City is to ensure the accomplishment of the goal. All of the energy policies are to be policies of the City and depend on City action. The City shall implement conservation actions directly within City government and encourage conservation actions by the private sector. This shall be accomplished through education, incentives, and mandatory actions. The City's efforts shall include promoting conservation; informing all sectors of available programs and conservation techniques; developing financial incentives; advocating the support of the City efforts at the state, regional and federal levels; and regulating conservation actions where appropriate. The City shall evaluate indicators of energy consumption to assure the effectiveness, comprehensiveness and fairness of private sector actions.

2. All buildings in the City shall be made as energy efficient as is economically possible as determined by costs of conservation actions and price of energy. The retrofit of existing buildings for the purpose of energy conservation shall be accomplished through voluntary actions initially, with mandatory requirements imposed five years after the adoption of the policy. Retrofit programs and the requirements must be cost-effective, comprehensive, and have the most equitable impact possible on all sectors of the community.

3. The City shall develop land use policies which take advantage of density and location to reduce the need to

travel, increase access to transit, and permit building configurations which increase the efficiency of space heating in residences.

4. The consumption of nonrenewable resources for residential and business use shall be reduced by encouraging the application of renewable and alternative energy sources.

5. All consumption of nonrenewable fuels for transportation shall be reduced through actions which increase the efficiency of the transportation system operating within the City. These actions will encourage individuals to choose the method of travel which is the most fuel-efficient for the purpose of the trip; promote the energy-efficient movement of goods; and provide incentives for the use of fuel-efficient vehicles.

6. City bureaus shall reduce energy consumption by investing in energy conservation opportunities and changing operational procedures to the most energy- and cost-effective extent possible.

Clearly, the Portland plan is a momentous event — one which is sure to inspire others to draft their own. Due to the heavy volume of requests, the City of Portland is making copies of their plan available from the President's Clearinghouse for Community Energy Efficiency. This office has been set up at the White House to assist local officials in preparing their own conservation plans. Copies of other communities' efforts as well as technical assistance are available from:

President's Clearinghouse for  
Community Energy Efficiency  
Suite 185  
400 North Capitol St., N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20001

## ACT II COMMUNITIES

The following is taken from "The President's Notes — A Perspective on Act II" in the August '79 Act II Communities newsletter.

Since May 1977 Act II Communities has been discovering itself. Most people who hear about Act II immediately think it is a group of people who are organizing themselves to live together as a community. We are not that.

Act II stands for a concept — a new lifestyle for mid-life people — that is cooperative and fulfilling rather than competitive and frustrating. This lifestyle de-emphasizes material belongings, and asserts the much greater value of caring human interaction. The end result is living together in intentional communities. This is easy to say, but harder to do, and this is where Act II is proving its worth.

Mid-life people have different needs and desires for community than the young people who began communal living groups ten or fifteen years ago. One of our needs is for a sense of permanence, as contrasted with a sense of excitement and experimentation. But when we look at "permanent" successful groups, some of the best models are those founded ten or fifteen years ago by young people who had little capital, but abundant enthusiasm and energy. In contrast, many Act II people have substantial assets, acquired over many years of hard work, and a sense of caution about investing heavily of their time and money in a whole new life style. But there is so much to be gained by community living, that we continue to grope for an aggregation of successful experience, and proven techniques which can be adapted to our own circumstances.

At every conference, we have heard from people who have lived in community, and have learned of things that work, and of problems that arise. We have explored the legal and economic forms which a community could take, and we have taken lessons in interpersonal relating techniques that have been successful for others. We have meditated together and danced together, and talked to each other. We have considered what shared visions might form the basis of a community for us, and we have met people with whom we might be comfortable in community, and others with whom we could not be comfortable. For at least some of us, the concept of mid-life community is much more tangible and rather less frightening than it was a year or two ago. There may still be a long way to

go, but it seems undeniable that some progress has been made. Considering the magnitude of the challenge involved in our seeking, even "some progress" is a rewarding feeling.

Act II Communities  
9803 Roosevelt Blvd.  
Phila., PA 19114

### FEDERATION OF EGALITARIAN COMMUNITIES by Allen Butcher EWC

In early August of this year four of the six communities comprising the Federation of Egalitarian Communities met at Dandelion Community in Ontario. This meeting was the seventh Assembly of the three year old federation. In addition to the on-going joint outreach and recruitment projects, Assembly VII saw a marked emphasis on internal projects.

The needs of women received acknowledgement and support in the form of increased recruitment emphasis and a training program which will bring women with technical skills to our communities to share their knowledge with women members. Other training programs being developed include a behavior seminar at Los Horcones Community in Mexico this coming February and, hopefully MNS training programs at Twin Oaks and East Wind later this year. To facilitate communication between our communities for these and other projects such as agricultural produce exchange, industrial coordination, and the support of inter-community friendships, we are continuing plans to develop ham radio facilities.

During a needs assessment exercise within Assembly VII, two needs were found to be common among all our communities. Complimentary to our desire for more women was the desire for more children. Dandelion is currently the only community in the Federation without children, and that will change in 1980. All the other communities including Twin Oaks, are feeling the need for more space to develop

their children's programs, and more development of educational programs for those growing children.

The second common need is a constant one. Our communities are essentially little twentieth century towns with many of the technological trappings of a comfortable modern lifestyle. All this requires constant maintenance and development: with youthful short-term members, our skill level lags behind. We see the need of continuing education for every child, woman and man within our communities; schools of living is a very appropriate ideal.

Current growth includes much more planning for and use of energy efficient design and solar heating in new buildings. East Wind has not begun any new structures this year but is over-hauling the solar heating system on the kitchen-dining building and has received a \$5,600 grant from the DOE for retrofitting Enterprise, the industrial building. Twin Oak's new building for the Tupelo branch has both passive and active solar heating systems designed in it, much of it experimental. Other new buildings in the Federation include a three story residence at Dandelion, a planned woodshop and increased housing at Aloe, and a whole new community for Los Horcones. Industrial development in Los Horcones' area has required a move to more remote land.

Industry in our communities is at the same time becoming more diverse and more concentrated. The polypropylene rope used in our hammocks is now also being used to make two kinds of hanging chairs and two models of sandals. All these items are selling well. East Wind has developed a deck or reclining chair, finally getting our furniture line out of the air and onto the ground. This diversity has been welcomed, yet hammock orders continue to grow beyond our production capacity and willingness. Because we are working toward greater industrial diversification we are spreading the hammock load around. Now four Federation communities make hammocks and we are considering inviting a fifth entity.

Agriculture is one of those areas enjoying continued development as industry as well as means of domestic support. Aloe has begun an herb project planning to sell herbs live, dried, and processed into sachets. Twin Oaks

is expecting a big wheat harvest, some of which may be available for sending to other communities. East Wind is also planting wheat, as well as pinto and soybeans, has begun an innovative chicken program, and plans to build a dairy barn. The processing of hard cheeses has been East Wind's agricultural success of the year.

Dandelion's agricultural consciousness raising meetings have brought greater commitment to the community's garden, dairy and chickens, by reminding members of the link between self-sufficiency and agricultural work. North Mountain, unfortunately, may be going the opposite direction with the loss of their only member who worked the community's horses.

In the way of reward for all this community building, a few of our communities have gained recreational opportunities. Dandelion had a swimming pool installed, and in the future, plans to solar heat it and enclose it as part of a kitchen dining complex. (Winter of 1981 at Dandelion, anyone?) Twin Oaks acquired a 24 foot sailboat and the whole federation was offered a destination to sail to. The two founders of Tierra del Ensueno, before joining Twin Oaks, built a house and planted a large garden and orchard on their land in the Guatemalan cloud forest. Recently they offered Tierra del Ensueno as a vacation spot for Federation members. Assembly VII turned down the offer of legal ownership of the land because of ideological reluctance to being an absentee land owner in Latin America. The site remains available for folks traveling in that direction.

Other external legal realities have been affecting things in our communities, and Twin Oaks has received an overdose of it. The community never formally received 501-d federal tax exempt status though they have been filing under that status for many years. Now if T.O.'s lawyer can not win for them that status, they may owe the government much money, including back taxes.

East Wind got its federal 501-d status over a year ago, and has now joined a project to help write and lobby for a new state statute for cooperatives in Missouri under which to incorporate. In conjunction with the food cooperative movement in its area, East Wind will be helping to make the legal environment more conducive to the establishment and growth of cooperatives

and communities.

Outreach to other organizations advocating cooperation and other ideals we share is slowly gaining greater support. The list of organizations includes anti-war and anti-nuclear groups, feminist and gay pride organizations, food and housing cooperatives and their national organizations, counseling groups, and community organizations of all kinds from the Historic Communal Societies Association, to community Services, MNS, and most notably the Israeli Kibbutz Movement.

As a movement of our own, the Federation of Egalitarian Communities is remaining an association of very dynamic communities ever growing in internal activities and in the development of cooperation among people engaged in every form of the cooperative ideal.

#### FEDERATION OF FOOD CO-OPS

This Federation of Food Co-ops report is reprinted from Subscriptions to this bi-monthly publication are \$10/year.

MOFGA

Box 188

Hallowell, ME 04347

Sponsored by the Main Consortium for Food Self-Reliance, the Grower-to-Co-op Linkage Project was a research and organizing project aimed at increasing the sales of Maine grown foods to Maine food co-ops. The project ran from March to August 1979. It was staffed by Leslie Goldenthal and Ken Morse from the Federation of Cooperatives, and by Donna Doel, a student intern from the University of Maine.

In the beginning of the project, we focused on studying the level, and limits, of co-op buying practices. After collecting and collating 1978 co-op buying records, it was evident that some co-ops have systematically bought local crops while others have done very little local buying. It was seen that these systematic buyers could be buying even more local produce and that those co-ops with very little produce purchases might not be doing so, among other reasons,

because they simply are not as familiar with the practice.

We say that there were several factors, or needs, which had to be dealt with if we wish to see an improvement in local buying practices among co-ops. One of these is the need to educate some co-op buyers on how to buy locally. A second factor which should help to increase the use of more local produce sources would be a directory which would help buyers locate local suppliers. There is also evidence that some co-ops need to purchase from growers beyond the local area, when local supplies are limited. Finally, there's a need for improvement in the actual exchange system, particularly in regards to pricing, planning, packaging, storing, and trucking.

We have been working to satisfy these needs and studying possible solutions in a number of ways. Interviewing the most experienced co-ops buyers on how they do local buying, organizing local buying workshops, and preparing descriptive guides on the subject have been our strategies towards making this kind of information available to the less experienced buyers. We are compiling a statewide Buyer's Guide /, a directory listing growers and their crops. As a means to stimulate the development of inter-regional exchange among co-op regions in the state, we are preparing a series of Co-op Market Notes for storable crops, surveying "supply and demand", production, storage details and trucking information. We are also studying the possibility of the Fedco Warehouse handling produce. As a means of uncovering the most limiting problems in the exchange system itself, we surveyed current suppliers for Maine crops.

We also looked at the developing level of organization amongst Maine producers, especially vegetable growers, figuring the more organized they are as marketers, the easier it will be for buying co-ops to deal with them. We have also tried to develop technical resources to aid their organizing. Finally, we hope to link marketing co-ops buyers.

We have studied the role of government and other public bodies in the organizing efforts of both consumers and producers. Extension agents, and community service workers, as well as Dept. of Agriculture and university personnel have all played some role in


recent years. We are trying to see what kind of activities and resources these groups may best contribute, and propose new ways that the public can act, through its agents, to further the organizing of producers and consumers, and the direct linkage between them, as a way of moving Maine towards our goal of food self-reliance.

As mentioned earlier, we are still compiling a directory of growers who wish to sell co-ops. If you would like to be listed, just send us a card with your name, address, phone, and crops you wish to sell. We may not get you this year but there's always the next. Also, we would appreciate any additional information people may think helpful, especially any growers' groups that may be just starting. The address is:

Federation of Cooperatives  
P.O. Box 107  
Hallowell, Maine 04347  
623-1722  
Donna Doel

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SIGNATURE AND TITLE OF EDITOR, PUBLISHER, BUSINESS MANAGER, OR OWNER <i>Mikki Wenig</i>			





# reach

*Reach is a free reader service of Communities magazine. Ads should be 50-150 words in length. Typewriting preferred. We reserve the right to edit. Dated material requires a minimum of 6 weeks lead time. Feedback on ad response, as well as donations, are welcome.*

*Thanks,  
Margaret*

## Conferences

★Weekend Workshops: featuring "an introduction to building your own low-cost, passive solar heated home" and discussions on "rural cooperative living". A new living/learning experience in more self-sufficient and cooperative life-styles offered by a community that's doing it. Workshops will start in the late Fall. We're located near the college town of Athens in scenic rolling southeast Ohio. For information write:

Sunflower Farm  
Rt. 1, Box 90  
Amesville, Ohio 45711

★The Deep Run School of Homesteading and Organic Agriculture, a one year program for people of all ages who wish to learn the skills of self-sufficiency, is beginning a new admissions policy. Realizing that many people are not able to stay an entire year, it is now accepting people for shorter periods of time and at almost any time of the school year. People can come for long weekends, for a week, or for a month or two.

The school is reality oriented; that is, students actually homestead under the

guidance of more experienced homesteaders and are involved in all aspects of maintaining a small homestead as well as working in the larger community gardens and with community livestock. The school believes that experience is the best way to determine whether or not to pursue this life-style.

The curriculum includes organic agriculture, food preservation, animal husbandry, folk-crafts, building solar shelters, woodlot management, alternative energy sources and many others. The school is organized to be flexible and students are encouraged to pursue their individual goals as well as be cooperative members of the school community. The program is designed to help people make the transition from a consumer-oriented society to a more self-sufficient, productive, home-centered life-style. Though the year long program offers the fullest and most valuable experience, the shorter experiences also offer an excellent opportunity for people who cannot afford a year and want to spend their available time learning the skills of self-sufficiency.

For further information, write to:

Deep Run School of Homesteading  
P.O. Box 388A, RD 7  
York, PA 17402  
(717) 757-4174

## Groups Looking

★Dragonfly is the name of a piece of land and a group of people in the backwoods of eastern Ontario. We came here just over a year ago. There are about twelve adults, of which half are

living in a house on the land. Two young children will be with us this winter. Next year, there will be three women and five-six men. Consequently, we are looking for more women to live here.

It is hard to describe ourselves in a way that is accurate and that differentiates us from the other communities. It's easy to say what we're against — hierarchy, religion, rules — but it is more difficult to say what we are striving for without using words that have been battered out of shape such as freedom, spontaneity, creativity. We share a passion not to be dominated by people or things and so the social structure is anarchic. Some of us are involved in politics that include anarchism, feminism, situationism and our own analysis. We are active in the local community and the anti-nuke movement. In terms of personal relationships, no couples have lasted but not everyone is against monogamy. We have started developing a shared vision to explain what we are doing here.

We are setting up an alternative library for use by local folks. To provide income, we have started looking into crafts such as musical instrument making and selling baked goods. Other long-term projects include growing food for the animals and ourselves and building more structures.

We are open to the idea of a group of women moving onto the land if they wish to build their own house and share the property. If either a single woman or a group is interested in joining they can write or visit:

Dragonfly Farm  
Mink Lake Rd.  
Lake St. Peter, Ontario  
Ontario Canada K0L 2K0

★ The Cooperative Communities — An Eutopian growth center. Let us explain first that utopia means, no such place; hence, our spelling, Eutopia, which means a beneficial or a healing place.

We are establishing a supportive atmosphere that will allow people to grow and realize their own potential.

We believe that anyone coming into a new lifestyle should experience as few as possible unpleasant surprises. This is why we feel it necessary to issue a "statement of purpose" and explain as much as possible where we are coming from. To further define our position, and what norms and values we live by, we have drawn up a "social contract" that is open to revision and change as we receive new input from members, and gain in consciousness and wisdom.

Some excerpts from the "statement" and the "contract":...happiness of the individual is of primary importance... a supportive community regardless of their lifestyle or sexual preference... a lifetime intention of involvement based on ideals and friendship... children will be treated as equals commensurate with their degree of judgement and experience... no sexism, racism, ageism, etc... 13 categories of sexual preferences... no one insists that another person must behave, feel, or think any way other than how she/he chooses to act... democratic decision making... lifetime of growth... not use pets for companionship... a comfortable living standard will be provided by the communities to each member... support other egalitarian communities.

If you are interested in what we have to offer send a donation for the complete literature to:

Bob Brown  
1421 Tenth Ave. #204  
San Francisco, CA 94122

★ We are expanding a small, intensely intimate community (to 6-8 people). We seek people who, out of their own passionate desire, are living so that the following four premises are sine qua non: 1) No "private business" — there is nothing I want to keep from you. If I have secrets from you, you cannot be known. (No "private business" doesn't mean "no solitude". Alone time and space are important. 2) Non-mono-gamous sexuality; 3) Consensus decision-making; 4) Transpersonal exploration — non-doctrinaire inquiry into the I who is you who is me is One.

Those four concerns, taken together,

synergize a group living together in a powerful way.

Originally three people in 1975, we are now two. Soon to be rural in New England with a community earthworm farm which can provide solid income for any number. We want children, home-birthed, home-schooled, and community-parented. Politics are basically anarchist/collectivist. For fuller details write:

David Pursglove and Ellen Rosenfeld  
235A Highland Ave.  
Somerville, MA 02143

★ Dandelion Community is continuing to grow and develop. We are expecting our first child in the spring and are actively planning our child raising program to involve all the community. As more rooms are finished in our new residence, we have increasing elbow room and nicer personal spaces. We are also continuing our efforts to provide more of our basic needs by getting bees in the spring and using our greenhouse all winter. These add to our chickens, dairy cow and successful organic garden.

We have lots of room for others in our communal adventure. We welcome visitors (who make arrangements in advance, of course). Dandelion is a 4½-year-old cooperative egalitarian community in southeastern Ontario, near Kingston. We have a successful labor credit system, communal property and are economically self-sufficient. We are a founding member of the Federation of Egalitarian Communities. For more information write:

Dandelion Community  
R.R. 1B, Enterprise  
Ontario, Canada K0K 1Z0  
(613) 358-2304

★ Bass Creek Commune, 30 miles south of Missoula in the Bitterroot Mountains, is looking to include more members with similar goals. The commune has been in existence for 11 years and is not at a low point in its membership. Our goals are to live a life of cooperation with others in an egalitarian and non-sexist fashion while preserving the ecological integrity of the earth. We view collective child-raising as beneficial and the sharing of income, at least for basic needs, as important. Presently 2 adults and 3 children live

on the 160 acres of mountainside. A cabin for cooking and eating now exists, plus a "quiet" house with several bedrooms and a common living area. A large solar heated building is being completed which would provide people with space to work in, hopefully to pursue an economic venture which would provide us with income. Two wind generators provide us with most of our electricity. Because of the location of the place, it tends to require a good deal of physical energy and an interest in living relatively isolated. If you are interested in sharing this land for communal purposes, please write, ask questions, and schedule a visit. Please enclose SASE.

Bass Creek Commune  
Stevensville, Montana 59870

★ Glen Maples is located on 34 high mountain acres in Southeastern Vermont. The land is beautiful and magical. We want to respect it and inhabit it. We grow a lot of our food, cut our own wood, and hope to gain our sustenance from the earth more and more as time goes on. To this end we're planting fruit trees, beginning a nursery and hope to add a green house.

We're committed to personal honesty and emotional sharing within the group. Our spiritual search is eclectic and we encourage each other to share our paths and visions through ceremonies, poetry, sweats, readings, etc. We hope to bring this more and more into our daily lives. We are looking for new members.

Glen Maples  
RD2, Box 224A  
Putney, Vermont 05346  
(802) 387-4081

## Groups Forming

★ Right Livelihood Community now forming in Minnesota. We need potential members to help in the organization of a self-sufficient lodge/camp, providing a great variety of expressions in all levels of work and community living. We see a community where there can be individual fulfillment for all.

Now picture a lodge/camp. The specifics will be decided upon by the members, but even in a normal lodge/camp there are numerous functions: various programs, recreation activities, office and administrative positions, landscaping, carpentry and other maintenance, craftspeople, kitchen and dining room needs, etc. Also, being self-sufficient will also require alternative energy, full-scale farming activities, etc. Plus the various community activities including domestic chores, educating, homesteading, and the many more areas.

In short, we're saying there is an almost unlimited area for each of us to find fulfillment, live a meaningful community life, and to offer meaningful, beneficial services to the outside world.

Our immediate goal is to attract serious people like ourselves to organize this community. Initially by correspondence and, when the time is right, together under the same roof — even though it may not be our final community location.

If interested, please write.

Dave and Roxanne  
111 Carlisle Ave.  
Duluth, MN 55803  
(218) 728-3944

★ Travellers Network — National Network forming for Travelling Communitarians.

Corporate Communities of America, Inc. is in the process of establishing a network of individuals, neighborhoods and small communities across the USA that would permit its members to travel almost anywhere in the country and stay with congenial communitarians. For members seeking to establish a new residence in another part of the country, CGA would be able to refer them to people and communities in the new locality who could assist the newcomers to find suitable living quarters.

Host services would range from a phone call of advice about local facilities, a place for sleeping bag, or a room and bath and food.

All those who would like to participate in establishing this network — either as travelers, migrants and/or hosts — should write to:

Dan Loubert, President, CGA  
7501 Sebago Rd.  
Bethesda, Maryland 20034  
(301) 229-2802

★ We are two adults with three older children (10, 11, 13); our skills (in computer programming) have given us the money to buy — pretty nearly — an old farm where the skills are of little use. But we learn. And look for something more; we would like people to join us. Possibilities: a land trust; an egalitarian community with some measure of independence of the Industrial Economy; joy in living. We are not ideologues, but if you have a bag, bring it along.

Pam Retzlaff/Jim McCall  
R.R. 1  
Caneyville, KY 42721  
(502) 879-3683

★ Rural Resources and Information was started in 1973 to assist people to move into rural areas and provide them with the information that would enable them to stay out here. Stressing self-reliance. As a one-man-band, with help and cooperation from friends throughout the Pacific Northwest, I started the Rural Apprentice Program which matches apprentices and farms, Tilth Association which promotes agriculture which is environmentally-sound and socially equitable, the Northeast Washington Barter Fair, Antahkarana Circle — a healing gathering, and a Gathering Book — a directory of healing/spiritual gatherings. My latest effort has been the founding of the Friends of the Trees Society, a seed network to collect and disseminate hardy tree and shrub seeds.

I am looking for partners, preferably with experience in agriculture/horticulture/alternative agriculture movement, to share the work and visioning. I want to start a self-sufficient agricultural community, which would also be a learning center. I have a number of friends interested in such a community and am looking to contact others. High degree of interaction with other people, love for nature, low consumption, 10-20 members of all ages, 100plus acres, diverse agriculture, herbs, fruits, nuts, berries, grapes, vegetables. For more information about any of the programs or ideas contact:

"Skeeter" Michael Pilarski  
Rural Resources & Information  
P.O. Box 567  
Moyie Springs, Idaho 83845

## People Looking

★ Family of three (Jennifer, 3; Corinne, 29; Paul, 32) are seeking a rural home with good neighbors, ideally, a community with individual homesteads, in N. California or southern Oregon. We would be interested in hearing from like-minded people to make a group land purchase in these same areas, if suitable communities do not yet exist. Write:

Young-Flaherty  
24 Swallow Drive  
Key Largo, Fla. 33037

★ Hi — I am looking for a job somewhere in the alternative community and I am wondering if there is anybody out there who could help me?

I believe very strongly in the principles of right livelihood and appropriate business and want very much to associate myself with people who feel likewise. My orientation is towards worker owned and managed small business — I have had a considerable amount of experience in running my own alternative service — but I would be glad to consider any and all opportunities.

I have had practical experience in photography, trucking, broadcasting, sound work, staging, and general handywork. My finest strengths, though, are that I am honest, intelligent, hardworking, and conscientious. I am a generally competent person and I sincerely believe that I could be an important asset in almost any business or organization.

Because of family commitments I would prefer to live and work in New England or New York state — but, as I said above, I'd be glad to consider anything.

If you need help or know someone who does — Please Write! If you're like me and looking work, please write too! — maybe we can help each other out.

All replies will be answered — that's a promise!

Jim Wilson  
31 Otsego Rd.  
Worcester, MA 01609

★ I am a mid-life Quaker woman looking for another over 40, spiritually based, non-smoking woman to share a Philadelphia, Penn. (Gmt. area), established, simplistic living space. And to

share two jobs (typing skills needed or desire to learn). One is with a national activist social change organization, and the other with a woman-owned, 90 year-old printing shop. Contact:

Jo Reese  
6344 Greene St.  
Phila., PA 19144

★Have sawmill, will travel. I have spent the past several years in Arkansas learning the skills of small-scale sawmilling. I own and operate my own equipment. Trees can be turned into houses, barns, fences, bridges, etc. The mill and other equipment is portable. It is also a potential source of community income.

Ideally, I would like to join a group of gentle folks who are developing or expanding a wilderness community. I will be free of obligations in the summer of 1980. I am single, male, heterosexual, a humanist, and a realist. If you have a place for me and my skills, please write:

Ron Garrusibm  
Rt. 2  
Dardanelle, ARK 72834

★I am a 30 year old male looking for a West Coast community that is rural, agriculturally-oriented (organic), and economically self-sufficient. I prefer a stable community with a moderately large number of members. I have experience with vegetable gardening, carpentry, child care, and bee keeping. Please write:

Larry Shield  
General Delivery  
Florence, OR 97430

★The two most important things in my life are community and mariculture, and for the past three years I've been trying to fuse the two. I am a former member of East Wind Community, currently employed on a commercial oyster farm and enrolled as a student in marine biology. In the summer of 1980, I plan on moving to coastal North Carolina (or thereabouts) to begin actualizing my dreams, which include agriculture, mariculture, and whatever else we have energy for. Although I am most familiar with the Walden II approach to community, the whole is somewhat related to the sum of the

parts, and everyone who shows interest will make a difference. I would be more than grateful for any letters expressing interest, criticism, information and/or support from anyone interested in such a project, or involved in one at present. For further dialogue, please write:

Ted Uhlman  
c/o Moss Landing Marine Labs  
Moss Landing, CA 95039

★I am looking for a small organic farm collective of 10-12 people who share the following: non-hierarchy, leader-lessness, consensus decision making, group responsibility, task rotation, economic equality, non-denomination, non-violence and utopian-wise. I am looking for a home where communal and individual development are shared, feelings are expressed, and political objectives are common or complimentary. I'd like a group rich in their autonomous social life, mellow in their spirituality and respectful of nature. I am a woman who has lived all her life urbanly, the last 10 years in New York City. I am an anarchist. I want to learn biological farming, be at least partially self-sufficient, and engage in political activity and learn more about the art of leisure.

Sharon  
c/o Peter Stuyvesant Sta.  
P.O. Box 902  
N.Y., N.Y. 10009

★To people with high sense and goodwill, a distress appeal for help. I urgently need accommodations and information to make a good choice of community. I am distressed and disadvantaged and need and will pay for good, responsible information and other help. I can help liberal communities of honest people solve their common problems in a way better than academic experts. I can offer many ideas, intellectual and moral integrity, talents and vast general knowledge and experience — the most unique perhaps on the over populated and polluted Blue Planet. I have had too much of selfishness, stupidity, ungratefulness, coldness, apathy, dishonesty and malice. I need better citizens and/or local government.

Apostolos J. Kontos  
P.O. Box 973  
Minneapolis, MN 55440

★Love my work but hate my job. Does that hit a nerve? Let's do something about it! I'm 36, a skilled machinist and welder. I am vegetarian and married with 2 kids. We have some capital, a lathe, milling machine, and two welders. We desire to form or join a rural co-op/community in which to practice my trade. Prefer to return to PNW. Write for a survey sheet and more information:

Don  
P.O. Box 774  
Fond du Lac, WI 54935

★I am looking for people to share ideas with so that the process can begin to start communities of traditional north american lifestyles. Communities of traditional, pre-European lifestyles are the only long-term alternatives. Skills needed in hunting, dwellings, tool-making, cultivation, clothes, love, crafts, medicine, nature. I am slowly gaining these skills. A knowledge of native culture is essential. Legal knowledge for land acquisition and maintenance would be helpful. Native people, please respond. White folks have a lot to learn.

Are there such communities set up now? Have any failed? Why?

Ben Larkey  
3440 34th Pl., N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20016

★When I first picked up Communities earlier tonight I was feeling depressed and a sense of emptiness — feelings not too uncommon in prison. By the time I finished the issue my mood had drastically changed. I was surprised by the depth and sense of optimism that the authors portrayed. Upon reading "Reach" an idea has come to me. I know that some of my friends inside of here view some of my ideas as strange, such as alternative lifestyle — a nuclear family holds no appeals for me, women not as chattel, and vegetarianism. But I recognize that they, as I 6 or 7 years ago, had no contact with those who believe in other than the predominant cultural themes. Of course it takes more than contact, but that can be the start for one who searches.

The idea I had in mind was to have community-oriented people correspond with prisoners. There is a lot of raw, undeveloped potential within our penal

systems and there would be some guys who would be receptive to the community idea. The direct contact would be advantageous for the prisoner and community members. Regretably, there might be some trouble between nonassertive women and prisoners who interpret the correspondence as sexual, but these problems could be minimized.

The immediate problem is coordination. Some one on the street would have to be willing to coordinate. To have a coordinator that resides in a prison would limit the scope to that one prison and regulations would most likely hamper the effort. I'd be willing to help with as much of the planning as I could.

I am not asking for anyone to show charity to "poor criminals". What I am asking is that some community-minded people extend their sense of community to let those receptive to it know that there are societal members who care and that there are options for an individual's life style.

Gary A. Hendrix  
#34681, Box 888  
Ashland, KY 41101

★ I am looking for a stable, equalitarian democratic commune (does one exist?) to help a worker-owned and controlled production co-op. For starters, the co-op would produce wood heaters, because that is what I am an expert on, having built and sold a hundred or so. My shop and home are near Charlotte, N.C., where I visualize most of the production would be done to begin with. Sales, distribution, bookkeeping, etc. would be the responsibility of the commune or members of the co-op who were also members of the commune. Probably later the co-op would integrate production also. The heater I now make can be shipped by bus and sell for around \$100. Write or call:

Bud Lucas  
RR 4  
Matthews, N.C. 28105  
(704) 537-5678

★ We are a small family (4 people) in Northern California looking for like minded persons to buy land, build simple, and live in nature. Any responses appreciated. Describe yourselves or family, finances and wishes. We will

match-up respondents if there seems to be something in common. No gays, no booze. Would love those with Native American understanding, breastfed children, peaceful ways.

Busch family  
1493 Fern Dr.  
Eureka, CA 95501  
(707) 455-8692

★ I would like to start an alternative creative education program for the children (ages about 5-10) in my community. I am attempting to research other similar alternative or new school programs. I am interested in dialogue with like-minded folks who have experiences to share, and in connecting with whatever network might exist within the alternative education community. Any information, ideas, or advice would be greatly appreciated. Write:

Katie Hickey  
Box 179  
Provincetown, MA 02657

## Help Wanted

★ Farallones Institute, a non-profit research and educational community, seeks steward for the animal/agriculture project at its Rural Center, 80 acres in Sonoma County, CA. Applicants should have experience in milking, making dairy products and daily farm chores. Room and board is provided as well as opportunity to participate in other facets of the Center's work, including solar space and water heating, waste and water recycling, intensive horticulture, whole systems design and construction, and educational programs. For more information call or write, re: animal/ag steward:

Rural Center  
15290 Colemand Valley Rd.  
Occidental, CA 95465  
(707) 874-3060

★ Participants are needed for the cooperative research projects on tenants history. Students and teachers are encouraged to get involved in this project. Research instructions have

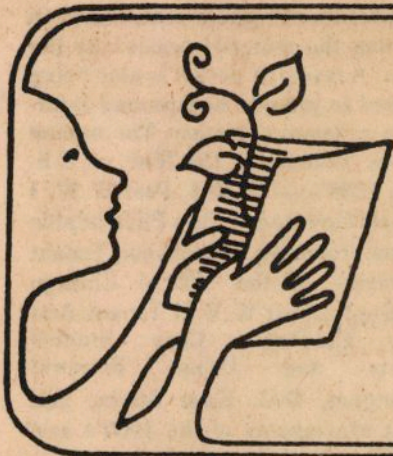
been prepared to guide researchers in gathering the material needed by the project. A research packet is also being prepared to provide background information on tenants' history. The outline includes Tenants & the Rise of U.S. Cities: 1880's — W.W.I, Post W.W. I Tenants Movements: /the Philadelphia Tenants Protective Association, Tenant Movements of the 1930's: Chicago Case Study, Post W.W.II Tenant Activities: California Case Studies, Tenants and Urban Renewal: Washington, D.C. Case Study, and Tenant Movements of the 1960's and '70's. For more information, contact:

Shelterforce  
380 Main Street  
East Orange, N.J. 07018  
(201) 678-6778, 675-6240

Shelterforce is a publication collective which analyzes housing problems from the people's point of view. Subs. \$5/six issues/individuals.

★ Management Opportunity: Director of Circle Pines Center, a 41-year old educational cooperative in southwestern Michigan. Responsible for overall operation of children's camp, family camp and year-round conference center. Facilitate good working relations with resident staff using democratic decision-making techniques. Develop educational programs, conduct promotional activities, oversee business aspects and maintenance of forty buildings. Protect ecology of 286 acres. Direct inquiries and resumes no later than January 31, 1980 to:

John Robbins  
1115 Spring St.  
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48103



# resources



*Though Communities strives to be non-sexist in language, changing the self-descriptions of organizations listed here to comply with our own values would be deceptive. We apologize for the unconsciousness to this important aspect of social change on the part of many otherwise worthwhile organizations.*

## Publications

★ Canadian Renewable Energy News is Canada's only alternate energy newspaper. This national monthly keeps up with all the facets of renewable energy — from harvesting sea kelp for methane, to electric vehicles, to wood stove installation, to the potential of hydrogen power. The 30 ample pages include feature stories, interviews, regular columns, editorials, book reviews, a calendar of events, and advertisements. Existing without government subsidy, CREN relies half on advertisements and half on paid subscriptions. Subs are \$7.50/individual in the U.S. and Canada

CREN  
P.O. Box 4869, Station E  
Ottawa, Ontario K1S 5B4  
(613) 238-5591

★ Nuclear Education is the topic of Green Revolution's mid-summer issue. It provides the necessary information to understand the issues of nuclear energy. The publisher's expectation is

that once a person understands the nuclear issues he/she will want to join with other concerned persons to take appropriate action to safeguard family, community, and future generations. \$1 to:

Green Revolution, School of Living  
P.O. Box 3233  
York, PA 17402

★ September '79 marked the premier issue of "Living Alternatives — the human side of appropriate technology" Feature articles tell an individual's story: how Bill Smith got involved with and worked out the wrinkles in a wind generator; how Peter Karter organized a profitable recycling project for his community; what the benefits will be of insulating your home. The easy reading style minimizes technical details. This first issue of Living Alternatives contained an extensive calendar of alternative technology conferences and events, along with a 5 page guide to government grants and a few pages of "Connections" which is equivalent to Communities' "Resources" section. Every fourth issue promises to be a directory of people working in alternative technology. Published monthly by:

Living Alternatives Magazine, Inc.  
P.O. Box 189  
Newton, MA 02195  
(617) 965-5656  
\$9/year in U.S.

★ The Mobilizer is the 4 page newspaper of Mobilization for Survival — a coalition of over 250 peace, environmental, religious women's, labor, and

community groups working toward the following goals: Zero Nuclear Weapons; Ban Nuclear Power; Stop the Arms Race; and Meet Human Needs. The newspaper reports on protest actions and conferences, gives legislative alerts, and a calendar of events. A substantial portion of the paper is devoted to regional reports which are accompanied by local resources for further involvement. Paraphernalia supporting MPS goals, such as T-shirts, buttons, slide shows, books and pamphlets are advertised. Suggested donation for subscriptions is \$10/year. The Mobilizations for Survival would also like to contact more groups to join the coalition.

MFS  
3601 Locust Walk  
Phila., PA 19104  
(215) 386-4875

★ Third World is a 100 page monthly publication which aims to "provide alternative information about the realities and experiences of Third World countries; promote the awareness of Third World people on the causes of underdevelopment and means to overcome it; and to promote cooperation among progressive sectors throughout the world."

Publishing editions in Spanish, English, and Portuguese, Third World is an independent, non-profit association of militant professional journalists in over 40 countries. If there were no freedom of the press, this publication would surely be suppressed because it exposes imperialism, politicians, and

multi-national corporations as unrespectable and oppressive. Third World supports nationalist and independence movements. Articles are extremely well researched. A tremendous amount of information is presented concisely. Third World reading is educational and politicizing rather than recreational. Subscriptions: \$22/10 issues (including airmail). Make checks payable to:

Periodistas del Tercer Mundo  
Apartado 20-572  
Mexico 20, D.F.

★ **The Self-Publishing Manual: How to Write, Print & Sell Your Own Book**, by Dan Poynter (Parachuting Publications) is the complete guide to self-publishing. The book actually begins with how to generate saleable material, from finding authors to writing it yourself, and goes on to detail in step by step fashion how to: start your own publishing company; print your own book; announce the book; estimate its worth, press run, charges; promote; find markets; sell; distribute, and provides a check list for production, a bibliography of other useful sources and people who can help. There is nothing left out, little left to chance in this guide. Its careful and confident tone provides assurance that you can, indeed, do it. The book is a must for those considering publishing as a business, for writers who want to investigate self-publishing, and is eminently useful for its new and old ideas to those who have already begun to do it. A fine and handy guide by a fine and successful publisher. 6x9; 173 pages; \$9.95; paperback, perfect bound.

The Self-Publishing Manual is available from:

Parachuting Publications  
P.O. Box 4232-G  
Santa Barbara, CA 93103

★ **The Communicator** is an unusually outspoken publication from inside prison walls in Nova Scotia. Its articles range from in-prison news to Native American updates. This bi-monthly costs \$6.00 a year to those on the outside and \$5.00 to prison inmates and/or staff.

★ **Cross Currents**, a quarterly review "to explore the implications of Christianity for our times," is ecumenical international, interdisciplinary. Those who seek instant salvation or will settle for revolutionary slogans will be disappointed; we insist on the need

for prayer and politics, scholarly judgement and active commitment. Teilhard de Chardin, Simone Weil, Martin Buber, Dorothy Solle, Elie Weisel, Rosemary Ruether, Ivan Illich, Raimundo Panikkar, et al. Recent issues on Sri Aurobindo, Native American Wisdom (The Good Red Road), Africa, the crisis of the church in Latin America, and World Spirituality (Word Out of Silence). Subs: \$8 a year, from:

Cross Currents  
Mercy College  
Dobbs Ferry, N.Y. 10522

★ **Signs of the Times** is a quarterly journal for socialist christians. The 24 page first issue included numerous analytical news articles: the closing of a multi-national steel plant, the development of a plan to reopen it with worker ownership and control by an ecumenical coalition, an interview with a Mary Knoll sister deported from Rhodesia, a bible study, a report on the Black Theology Conference, including the text by the organizing group, an article on CIA exploitation of the church, and a few pages of news briefs, and resources.

Signs of the Times is a noteworthy publication by Christians courageous enough to keep their heads out of the sand, and address meaningful contemporary issues. It is published by an organizational collective, Old Chelsea Religious Education. Subs are \$5/yr, 4 issues or \$7 domestic airmail, \$8 foreign airmail. Write:

Signs of the Times  
P.O. Box 43  
N.Y., N.Y. 10011

## Women

★ **Boxcar** is the seasonal journal of the Women's Itinerant Hobo's Union. It is published as material accumulates.

"Boxcar is for the exiled, the dispossessed, and the traveler, in body or mind. For those bitten slightly by the temptation to go, what can we do to push you over the edge?"

Told aloud and written down, passed along tales, and exaggerated rumors gratefully accepted. Portraits, journal notes, and short articles about the road and anyone on it sought. Anything con-

tributing towards dissolving the world's ridiculous boundaries urgently needed.

Recent issues include adventure stories from across the world and tips on how to get work on the road. Boxcar's journal-style writing is disjointed and unpolished, but it's lively. Subs. \$2/yr.

Boxcar  
1001-B Guerrero  
San Francisco, CA 93110

★ **The Second Wave** began in 1971 as a project of Female Liberation in Boston; it is one of the oldest feminist publications in the country. As "A Magazine of Ongoing Feminist Struggle", The Second Wave is committed to the development of women's culture by providing a forum for political issues, feminist analysis, health, sexuality, and continuing struggles and evolving topics of importance to the women's community. It also presents poetry, fiction, and graphic work by/about women, and reviews books printed by feminist or small/leftist presses. The product is neat and professional, without being glossy. The content is thoughtful and intelligent. It's a quarterly literary magazine whose gears have teeth.

The Second Wave is interested in contributions from women who have never been published, especially materials written from an anarcha-feminist perspective. Subs. \$6/year/4 issues.

The Second Wave  
P.O. Box 344  
Cambridge A, Cambridge, MA 02139

★ **The Longest Revolution** is the bi-monthly publication of the Center for Women's Studies and Services (CWSS). Subtitled "news and Views of Progressive Feminism", Longest Revolution covers international as well as national news. Political topics such as Affirmative Action, International Women's Day, Men Against Sexism, Abortion Rights, and ERA Extension are emphasized. Some cultural items like an article on Adrienne Rich, and a book review of Rita Mae Brown's "Six of One" were a balancing influence. A special feature of the Longest Revolution is a High School Women's News Page. While the feminist calendar and legislative news bias this newspaper to the San Diego and California areas, there are sufficient attractions to those outside the locality to make it worth subscribing. Subs \$3.6 issues.

Thrown in free is the CWSS Feminist Bulletin, also bimonthly. No profits are made on this publication. Free to women in prison and mental institutions.

CWSS  
908 'F' St.  
San Diego, CA 92101

★New Women's Times is a biweekly feminist newspaper which announces proudly on its masthead that it is published "from the hometown of Susan B. Anthony." The five year old paper is run by an all-volunteer collective. Each issue features a topic such as prostitution, abortion, marriage, the arts, or violence against women. Articles on health and herstory are regular features. New Women's Times reprints news briefs from HER SAY news service (see Communities #33, #37) as well as printing local news, editorials, and a national and local calendar of events. New Women's Times support of women's businesses — both through their local directory and through their support of HER SAY deserves notice. A good feminist newspaper. Subs. \$10/year/individual.

New Women's Times  
1357 Monroe Ave.  
Rochester, N.Y. 14618  
(716) 271-5523

★Womansplace Bookstore is a three year old women's business. They have an extensive mailorder service, as well as a storefront, for non-sexist children's books, feminist, lesbian books. Write for a booklist.

Womansplace Bookstore  
2401 N. 32nd St.  
Phoenix, AZ 85008

★Feminary: a Feminist Journal for the South, emphasizing the Lesbian Vision, is for women living in the South and in exile, and for women everywhere who want to know more about the lives of Southern women. \$5/3 issues. Send poetry, stories, essays, b.w. graphics and subscriptions to:

Feminary  
P.O. Box 954  
Chapel Hill, NC 27514

★Women Can Win is a southern California-based organization which offers women a chance to build their

self-confidence, knowledge, and contacts. An intensive 2 day seminar on focusing one's personal and career goals starts the program, then women are placed in small groups that meet weekly, with the aid of counselors from WCW. Meetings offer sounding boards, chances to share experiences and create an "instant Old Girl Network" that includes the program's Advisory Committee with law professor, commercial artist, stock broker, educator, etc. Seminars teach the tools of time management, personal journal writing, brainstorming, and sharing of contacts and career development plans. Additionally, WCW publishes a monthly newsletter, and sponsors other activities which maintain the network. For more information:

Women Can Win  
8383 Wilshire Blvd., Ste. 517  
Beverly Hills, CA 90211  
(213) 653-5991

★Teenage Women, before you volunteer for the military, be sure you know what happens to those tricked into enlisting. Read "Women: The Recruiter's Last Resort", 75¢ plus 25¢ postage,

RECON  
P.O. Box 14602  
Philadelphia, PA 19134

★Goddess Films is the distribution company for the art/work of Barbara Hammer. The subjects of her 19 films are in the areas of goddess, lesbian, personal, and general women's films. Some are black and white, others color. All are under 25 minutes; the rental costs are low, all under \$50.

I recently had the pleasure of seeing Barbara present 4 of her films. I witnessed the development of her art. I laughed; I enjoyed the symbols and her humor. The films are sensual. They don't have a story like a novel, but they made me feel good. Strong women, sensual women, very positive. A brochure is available at the following address:

Goddess Films  
P.O. Box 2446  
Berkeley, CA 94702  
(415) 658-6959  
(review by Margaret, a magazine, not an art reviewer)

★Aradia is a community and a non-profit corporation offering a one-day intensive workshop which is designed

to give a woman a sense of her potential for conscious evolution. The day's activities, including group exercises, slide show, and individual conferences, all are created to enable a woman to see the process of her own life, to understand it, and to become responsible for the directions in which it unfolds. These Mythmaking Workshops are a prelude to the opening of the Feminist Consciousness Center in Fall. Donation of \$25 is requested. Aradia has other activities and projects including concert production and a wimmin's photo exhibit. Members are expected to work with a task force and pay annual dues of \$10.00. Write for more information, contact person:

Linda Smith  
14078 68th Ave.  
Coopersville, Michigan 49404

★The Feminist Press announces the beginning of their ambitious series on Women's Lives, Women's Work. The four books now available are a wealth of documentation of women formerly forgotten: Rights and Wrongs, Women's Struggle for Legal Equality (\$3.25); Women Working, An Anthology of Stories and Poems (\$5.50); Out of the Bleachers, Writings on Women and Sport (\$ not yet set); and Black Foremothers, Three Lives (\$ not yet set). The Feminist Press is also offering a screenplay, commentary and illustrations of Salt of the Earth, a classic 1954 "film of persuasion" that was denied distribution during the McCarthy era because of its subject matter (true story of a strike in a New Mexico mining town with a wonderful feminist flavor to it). The Feminist Press has many other publications; write for their brochure:

The Feminist Press  
P.O. Box 334  
Old Westbury, NY 11568

★Cervical caps are a form of birth control that few women know about or have access to. The New Hampshire Feminist Health Center has a packet of information on cervical caps available for \$3. They also fit caps for about \$16, in about 1/2 hour. Not all women can wear cervical caps; there is a minimum size and certain shape necessary for an effective fit. Caps can be worn for up to a week without being removed. Spermicidal jelly is used with it. For more information contact either N.H. Feminist Health Center  
38 S. Main St.  
Concord, N.H. 03301  
(603) 225-2739 or



the women who did most of the research,  
Irene Snair  
c/o New England College Health  
Center  
Henniker, N.H. 03242  
428-2253 or 428-7610

★Feminist Financial Consultants has 2 functions: service and education. The aim is to help women achieve financial independence — to demystify the world of figures through understanding the processes involved in personal and business finance. With tools to construct a sound financial base, women will have greater control over their lives. Services: personal, small business financial aid counseling; accounting, systems, record keeping, budgeting, and planning; investment, insurance, and pension counseling, career exploration, and seminars and workshops in financial management. Each client is encouraged to structure a financial environment to her own best advantage, and based on her own value system.

Reva Calesky, FFC  
175 W. 79th St., 1A  
N.Y., N.Y. 10024

## Miscellaneous

★Alliance of Bread and Roses is a loose network of anarchist communists who are writing and helping each other. Anarchists are people who hope for, construct theories about, and act to promote the abolition of government, the state, and the principle of authority that is central to contemporary social forms; and to replace them with a social organization based on voluntary cooperation among free individuals. Communists believe in the following principle: From each according to his abilities, to each according to his needs. Alliance of Bread and Roses serves to bring anarchist communists together so they can concentrate their efforts. For more information contact:

Jeliby  
c/o Freespace  
339 Lafayette St.  
N.Y., N.Y.

Bruce Allen  
Box 223  
Jordon Station  
Ontario, Canada L0R 150

★National Organization for Non-Parents (NON) is a clearinghouse-type group dedicated to educating the public about the realities of bearing and rearing children. Their many pamphlets range from "Am I Parent Material?" to the brand new "Searching for Alternatives to Teenage Pregnancy". The latter is geared toward parents and educators, while "Are You Kidding Yourself?" is information on parenthood that's specifically for young people. NON's News Bulletin keeps members up to date on the organization as well as related national news. For their publications and/or more information write:

NON  
3 North Liberty St.  
Baltimore, MD 21201

★Optional Parenthood Today is the voice of National Alliance for Optional Parenthood, membership of which costs \$15 a year. The bulletin includes articles about the organization as well as anti-natalist tidbits and various demonstrations of pro-natalist propaganda, so prevalent in our culture today. Write for membership to:

National Alliance for Optional Parenthood  
3 North Liberty St.  
Baltimore, MD 21201

★Friends of Peaceful Alternatives is a loose collection of people who wrote and signed a "Declaration of Friendship" in December, 1976. The signers believe the solution to unfriendly competition is friendly mutualism. Friendly mutualism is demonstrated in co-ops, worker-controlled enterprises, ecumenical churches, equal pay, democracy built by people, not government, non-possessive love, voluntary reduction of wants, celebration of life, conservative, cooperative ways and friendly persuasion. F.P.A. recommends Hazel Henderson's 1978 book, "Creating Alternative Futures". Copies of the Declaration and other peaceful alternatives literature may be obtained from

Friends of Peaceful Alternatives  
P.O. Box 841  
Winona, MN 55987

★ "Taxation and the draft are two words for the same thing: conscription, i.e. labor forced into the service of the State. The draft does this directly. Money represents labor and therefore

does the same thing indirectly. Taxation is another word for slavery. Therefore peace and freedom are inseparable: by destroying the bondage of the draft and/or taxes, we destroy the war system." In these words, The Peacemaker explained war resistance in its October issue. Every issue of the Peacemaker brings moral and practical discussions and solutions for those who oppose war and refuse to support it. The Peacemaker is the organ of the Peacemaker Movement. Its 8-16 pages are printed once each month. Suggested subscriptions rate is \$4-6/year. This paper will keep readers in touch with a movement that has the courage of its convictions.

The Peacemaker  
P.O. Box 627  
Garberville, CA 95440

★Amnesty International is an organization that works for the release of "prisoners of conscience" — individuals imprisoned and tortured because they profess the wrong politics, or pray to the wrong God, or were born the wrong color, who have neither used nor advocated violence.

AI won the Nobel Peace prize in 1977 for their work.

AI researches particular cases, adapts the prisoner, writes influential officials, presses embassies, arranges legal aid, supports the families of prisoners, and raises funds for their own program. The most effective weapon is international public opinion and pressure. AI has helped secure the release of nearly 13,000 prisoners. They need money to continue this work. For more information and donations, write:

Amnesty International  
2112 Broadway  
N.Y., N.Y. 10023

★The NEWS of the Columbus Gay and Lesbian Community is a bi-monthly publication of the Columbus Gay Alliance, an Ohio State University recognized and funded organization. Primarily of local interest, the News prints letters, notices of events, ads, and brief articles on news of interest to gay people. In addition to publishing the News, the CGA has an active speaker's bureau, and an office-based gay information service. CGA is designed to eliminate homophobia

(irrational fear of homosexuals based in ignorance) and to provide support to lonely gay people in the area.

Gay Alliance, Ohio State Univ.  
Ohio Union, 1739 North High St.  
Columbus, OH 43201

★The Prison Research Education Action Project (PREAP) has Prison Abolition Workshops and Facilitators available now. Workshops range from two hours to an entire weekend and are geared to both those working for justice and the uninitiated. Workshops provide a framework and ideology by which current prison work can be evaluated and future work planned. They can be used as consciousness raising/educational experiences for developing new program directions and for organizing groups to work towards the abolition of prisons. Contact:

Fay Honey Knopp, Coordinator  
PREAP  
5 Daybreak Lane  
Westport, CT

★The Human Survival Insurance Policy is an outreach project of the Rainbow Network. The 12 page document encourages people to spread the information of the New Age "like wildfire!" It gives suggestions about how to do it in an enthusiastic, lively spirit. For more information:

Rainbow Outreach  
Box 5577  
Eugene, OR 97405

★A group called Progressive Education is compiling a directory of Southern Progressive Periodicals. This comprehensive directory is being published "to fill a need for greater communication between community periodicals and community organizations in the South." To suggest a periodical to be listed, or to obtain a directory, contact:

Progressive Education,  
P.O. Box 120574  
Nashville, TN 37212

★Free For All is the only large-scale non-barter services co-op in existence. It is non-barter because members engage in free sharing rather than exchanging. There is no "balancing

out" of what is given against what is received. Upon paying the \$15 annual dues and one-time registration fee of \$30, members receive a list of members and services complete with names and addresses. A newsletter updates this information regularly as well as publicizes social events of Free For All. Members are skilled in such services as academic counseling, backgammon, flight instruction, shirt making and weight control. Within the pre-arranged maximum number of hours a person is willing to donate, a person is expected to provide that service to other members upon request (or within the week). Continuing services such as guitar lessons, would be provided not more than once weekly. The expenses, exclusive of labor, are paid by the receiver of the service. Other guidelines of the exchange are set-out by Free For All. Co-habitants pay a single registration fee. Students and the temporarily unemployed have the first year's dues waived. Minor children are free when accompanied by adult membership. For more information, contact:

Free For All  
1623 Granville Ave. #11  
Los Angeles, CA 90025  
(213) 826-9665

★The New World Foundation, a small, national grant-making organization, has initiated the "Community Self-help Recognition Project" in an attempt to increase recognition/support for groups reasserting authority and responsibility over the forces that impact their lives. We have undertaken this project because we believe that the community self-help movement deserves the serious consideration, support, and nurture of those funders who are interested in strengthening our popular democratic institutions and practices. The Project will identify the various types and kinds of community groups, the work or issues with which they are presently involved, and the funding sources the groups have been able to attract. All information regarding budgets and funding sources collected in the questionnaire will be held confidential. For a copy of the survey, contact:

The New World Foundation  
100 East 85th St.  
N.Y., N.Y. 10028

★Periodicals-By-Mail is a project designed to give wider accessibility to worthwhile periodicals not distributed through many newsstands. For a free list of over 70 alternative periodicals which can be ordered by mail, send your name, address, and a 15¢ stamp to:

Periodicals-By-Mail  
A Periodical Retreat  
336½ South State  
Ann Arbor, MI 48104

★People and Energy in the Southwest:

A 40 minute slide show that takes a personal look at the effects of uranium and coal booms on Indian and Chicano land. Script and 130 slides available. Show sells for \$125 to individuals and community groups and \$200 to institutions.

Contact:

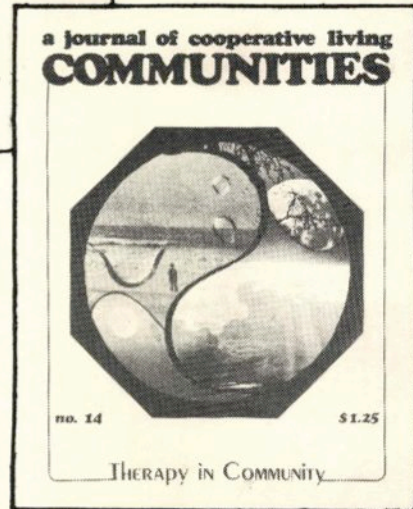
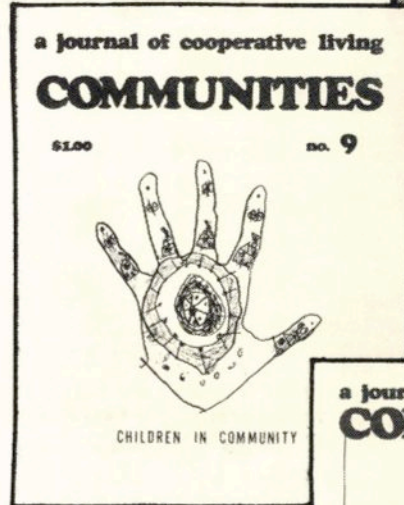
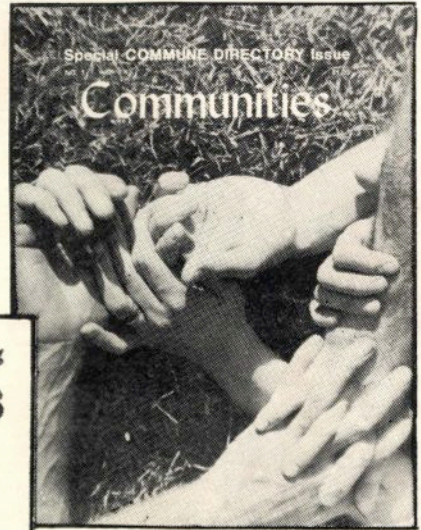
New Mexico People and Energy Research Project  
810 Vassar NE  
Albuquerque, NM 87106  
(505) 266-5009

★Environmental Defense Fund works to protect wildlife, control toxic chemicals, conserve energy, curb air, water, and noise pollution, and more. Since 1973 when EDF won their struggle to ban DDT in the U.S., they have worked to save dolphins and to identify and eliminate carcinogens in our environment. The scientists and attorneys working together in EDF present a triple threat attack — thoroughly researched scientific evidence, sound economic analysis, and persistent legal action. It works; EDF has won many legislative decisions. EDF needs donations and supporting members to continue its work. Individual membership \$15. All members receive the bi-monthly newsletter.

Environmental Defense Fund  
1525 18th St., N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20036  
(202) 833-1484

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