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# COMMUNITIES

journal of  
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living

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April/May  
1982

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## Introducing this issue...

Once upon a time (in a short story I read years ago) the daily run of life on this planet was halted. The final and authoritative pronouncement was made, "Prepare yourselves for the day of Judgement."

Specifically, people were given six months to get their lives together. And the people heard. For six months, milk and honey flowed, peace and love flowered. No murder, rape or rip-off, only a respectful retrospection.

Six months later, to the day, the people of the world were ready. The lion and the lamb peacefully awaited the call and their judgement.

And once again the voice was heard: "Due to urgent circumstances in other parts of the galaxy, it will not be possible to process the planet Earth at this time. You have an additional year before Judgement Day."

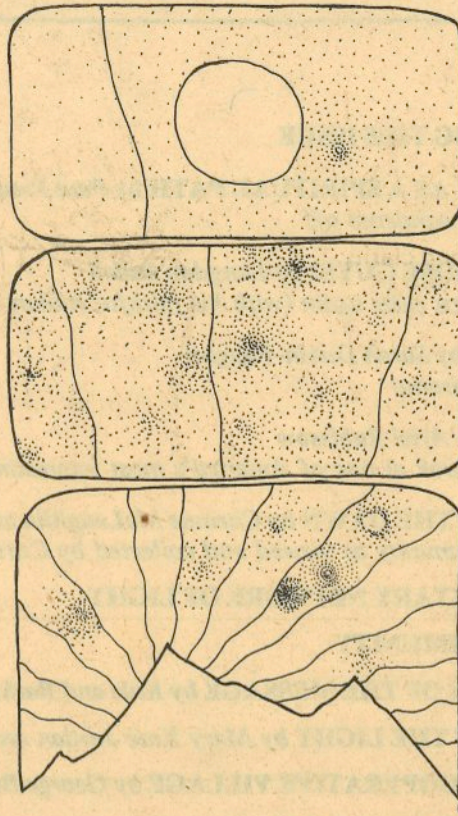
And all Hell breaks loose. It's drugs, sex and rock 'n roll; debauchery, war and bad goings on.

• • •

Will God smile upon an inconsistent flock? Well, if the universe bestowed upon us this curious blend of spirit and flesh, it can hardly be surprised at the results.

It remains to be seen if our tolerance for goodness can be significantly improved when conditions are sufficiently nurturing. The theory is that in the co-creation of loving, supportive communities, we have a better chance to express our "best" selves. Well, that much is true. I know it from my own life in community in New Haven and at Another Place, and through visits to such diversely ordered communities as Alpha Farm, Reba Place and Kerista Village. Or, as I wrote in the first issue of *Communities* I edited (once upon a time):

"We need situations in which to break prior conditioning (**cooperatives, communes, collectives**). By working together in a new practice, we develop a structural and personal



understanding of our new world (**community**). The ways we relate to this new world are our **culture**. The events which become emphasized and agreed upon as significant take on a symbolic content (**ritual**) and those rituals relate the culture to the universe (**and we might even derive a religion**)."

• • •

The articles in this issue came together in a variety of ways:

Corinne and Gordon have been doing an excellent job of networking spiritual communities (much like Susan Campbell on the West Coast) and we hope their overview is useful. They worked hard amidst their busy schedules to shed some light on the "new age" for our readers. Some of the communities like **The Abode of the Message, Ananda, Renaissance** and **Sirius** have been represented in these pages before. Others like **Lama** and **Center of the Light** are included for the first time.

I read Ariel Rubissow's manuscript almost a year ago, and found the chapter on **The Farm** particularly fascinating. Here it is at its full length — which is one of the special delights of this journal.

When I was traveling in Oregon last summer, I appeared on a radio show on spiritual directions, hosted by Ananda August. Her friend, Langdon Bedell, enlivens the issue with **Who Are Those Guys?** which moves from the Lone Ranger to eastern Gurus faster than a speeding silver bullet.

My radio interview developed into a workshop on **Community As A Spiritual Path** which I gave at the Pilgrim's progress Conference in Orono, Maine, last summer. The opening remarks are included in this issue.

I met Sarah Dubin-Vaughn at a new age spiritual network meeting in New York City and **Dromenon** (although it keeps sounding like a cold tablet) seems a lively and provocative group.

Friends who've taken **Shambhala Training** speak well of it.

In **Coming Together**, a brief excerpt from Reba Place member Dave Jackson's excellent book, we get some idea of the extent of and reason for Christian community.

Reba Place was the last stop on summer '81 travels. Neither the language nor much of the belief system are either "new age" or mine. But I found folks struggling with many of the same issues of living in the midst of American society. Watching them care about each other, their neighborhood — always through the medium of their spiritual commitment...

Finally, Gordon and Corinne complete their work in **Principles of Spiritual Community**, and Swami Beyondananda proves that spiritual folk have a sense of humor.

The last issue I edited was on politics, and the next (October) will be on a cooperative economic development. Interesting universe.

Peace,

Paul

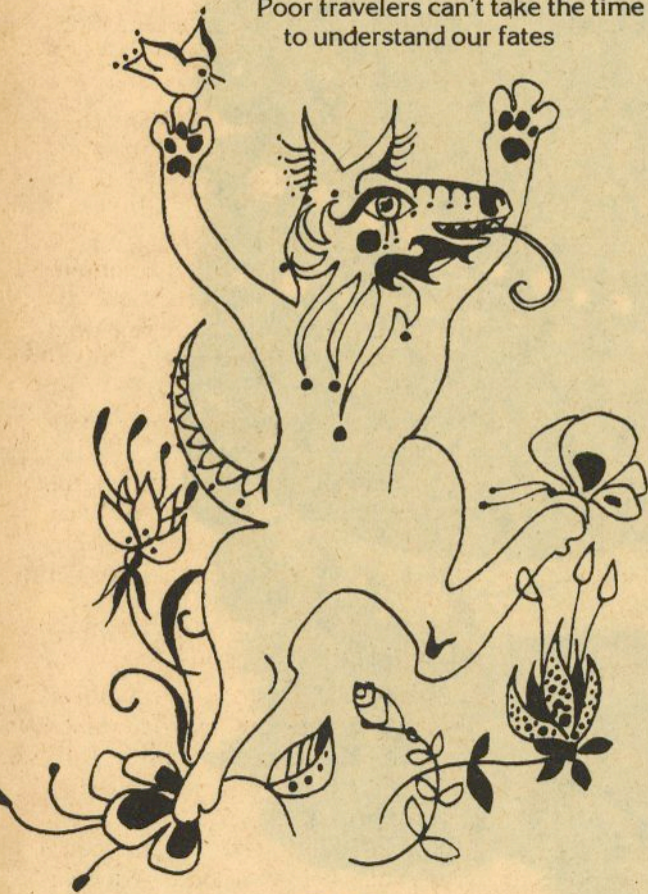
## CODA

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

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

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

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



## STAFF

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**Special Thanks:** Margaret Flinter, Lew Bowers, Ananda August, Dennis Pearson and the staff of the Advocate Press, Pathways Magazine



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

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

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

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

*Paul*

## CREDITS

**Cover:** Chinese rubbing

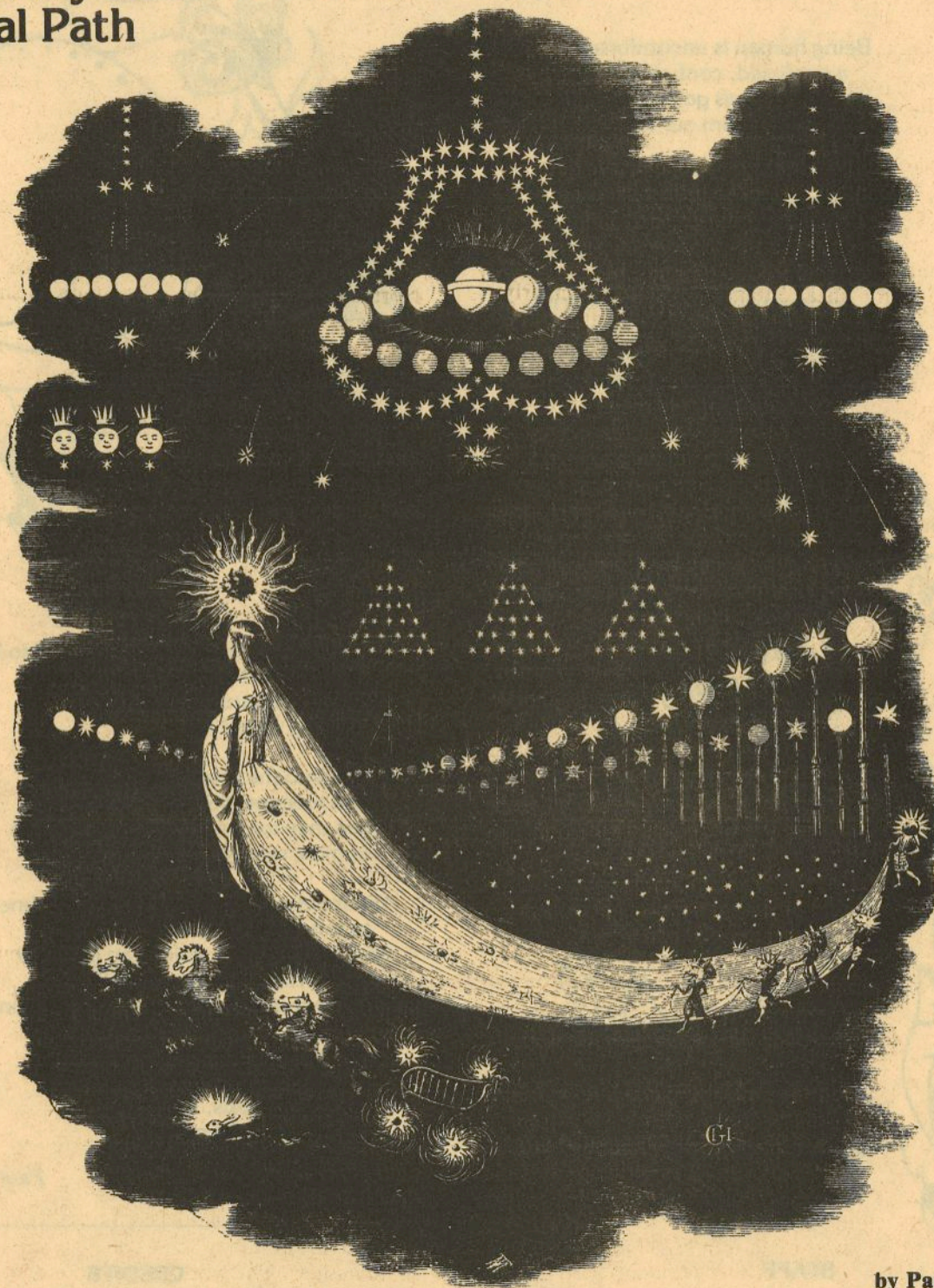
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**Photographs:** George Beinhorn, 30-35; others, courtesy of their communities

## CONTINUITY

**Community Publications Cooperative:** Paul Freundlich and Chris Collins in New Haven; M'lissa Wenig and Chip Coffman at Twin Oaks Community, Virginia.

# Community as a Spiritual Path



by Paul Freundlich

*Community as a spiritual path proceeds from two understandings: First, that family/tribe/community are where we began as humans, and our most natural and continuous reference. Second, that in a vast universe, ultimately and infinitely involved in a passage of which we are but a small part, community is a useful medium for survival, understanding and communion.*

I have two problems when talking about spiritual matters. It's hard not to be cosmically pretentious and personally

presumptuous: I assume whatever the metaphor, we're always talking about spirit.

I will suggest in these remarks that family/tribe/community is a legitimate spiritual path and that communion is a result of that shared experience; that politics, therapy and meditation are equally deserving of our attention — therapy to clear the underbrush; meditation to center our passage; politics to mediate with willful forces along the way.

Besides exploring community as a useful path, I will

confront the key issue which has kept spiritual and political people apart, and show that through community there is no contradiction between them.

Who-eee, now there's an agenda. Let's begin with anthropology, biology and history. They show that humans enter the world as part of families, extended families and tribal groupings. Humans continue those forms in respect for the satisfactions they bring, as well as for protection.

Early humans had no trouble identifying their scale in the universe. In comparison to the forces about them, they were fragile, temporal beings. They grouped naturally.

The increments of civilization and survival, particularly language, gave humans the capacity to speculate about their fate. Those speculations within a tribal, cultural context became the basis for ritualized mediations with the awesome forces which controlled their lives.

Over the last 20,000 years, two things have affected that understanding. First, the scale and complexity of human groupings has overwhelmed other phenomena on this planet. Not only has it seemed increasingly reasonable that the Gods were interested in humanity, but over the past 2,000 years we've even been able to conceive of a more personal God who might care about individuals.

Second, the scale and complexity of human civilization has overwhelmed the medium of our spiritual understanding. The more sophisticated and intellectual the religion, the more it depends on a body of tradition separable from the context which nurtured it.

The net result is that in a less awesome, more comprehensible and personally manipulatable world, many humans have been cut free of family/tribe/community.

Before our fully-independent, self-realized human rides off into the sunset, however, the other side of freedom is alienation. Of those individuals freed of their supportive structures, some few may be satisfied intellectually, but where is the emotional tonality provided by family/tribe/community?

And in the process of overwhelming the natural forces on this planet, we have created an almost equally awesome complex of institutions and technologies. The individual, once again, needs the mediation of supportive, continuous reference groups.

Which brings us to the intuitions of spiritual failure behind the personal, social and political changes of the sixties. In rock, dope, eastern mysticism, human potentializing, hippy socializing and political demonstrations, the connecting experience was communion. Once minds were blown with the glory of universal brotherhood and sisterhood, the work of the seventies became the development of supportive contexts for communion — how in the midst of mobility, to create a reason for staying together?

Collectives, rap groups, co-ops, communes, community and neighborhood organizing, intentional communities, back to the land, localism and self-reliance were one set of responses. Another stream poured into communities defined by structural or charismatic religious beliefs. Most people, of course, came down off their high eventually. They compromised with the realities of traditional institutions and paths and took their communion where they might — including in nostalgic reminiscences of 60's hype.

But there's more than hype. Personally, for the past dozen years I've devoted my life to community, and received at least as much as I've given. I've worked hard and played a lot. With many others, including our kids, we've created extended families and tribal rituals; Sufi danced and sung our songs; struggled for democratic process; developed the cooperative infrastructure to support our communities.

We have developed, above all, a great awareness of our interdependence — not separatism, not homogenization. The "we" occurs in communities most prevalent in centers like Austin, Eugene, Santa Monica, Albuquerque, Northampton, Madison — medium to small cities where our values can be manifested in institutions which can be connected (enough potential jobs and not too big to overwhelm us). The most intense, though less diverse communities occur in rural centers like Twin Oaks, the Farm, Ananda and the Abode. In larger cities like Philadelphia, San Francisco and Boston there tend to be numbers of communities, often with only peripheral awareness of each other.

But anywhere in this country, it is possible to find communities which share a culture, rituals and language. Communion comes over potlucks and massage; in anguish over John Lennon or anger about El Salvador; in shared meditation about our inward journey and noisy demonstration against those nuking the environment and punking the ERA.

This is a very spiritual generation. It cares about this small piece of the universe. It has affected a major paradigm shift by correctly identifying scale as a critical problem, and restating community as the beginning of a solution.

The sense of spiritual connection is there; many of the rituals and symbols are established, but an appropriate religion/cause has not emerged. It may not. Something will, even if only an Ecotopian vision of our interdependence; a unifying understanding of our federation.

Is that spiritual or political?

Which brings me to my last point. To engage our spirits in the flow of the universe; to express our nature is a process which if carried out with great skill and harmony (and within the mutual support offered by community) has a reasonable potential for producing whole, healthy and happy lives. Wholistic communities tend to produce whole, healthy and happy children. What a nice cycle.

Where does this exist? In millions of quite decent villages, towns and traditional families around this globe, as well as in many new age centers, communes and communities. The world is no more than half-crazy.

Still, we can look inward and outward to violence and pain and know there's some work to be done. That's my point on the political/spiritual cusp: through inward work we clean up our own confusion so that we may correctly identify what trips are being laid on us. Engaging with those trips, struggling with ourselves and outside oppression is as much our karma as meditation and retreat.

Taken from the other direction, the interdependence of community and the continuity of its communion are the most supportive basis for a spiritual quest and outward struggle. □

# Who Are Those Guys?

by Langdon Bedell

Remember the Lone Ranger? Remember how you felt about the Lone Ranger? Remember listening with your ear inches from the speaker and how the place inside the heroic sound of his voice made you feel? Well, they don't want us to forget. No, actually they want us to *remember*.

Did you ever feel like you were dancing on a mountaintop with brilliant flashes of burning lightning flashing around you when you heard the music of the late sixties? Were you ever moved to the place in the reverberating echos of that epic music that you could no longer deny the feeling within you that surely you must be God?

In your meditation, where do you think that goes?

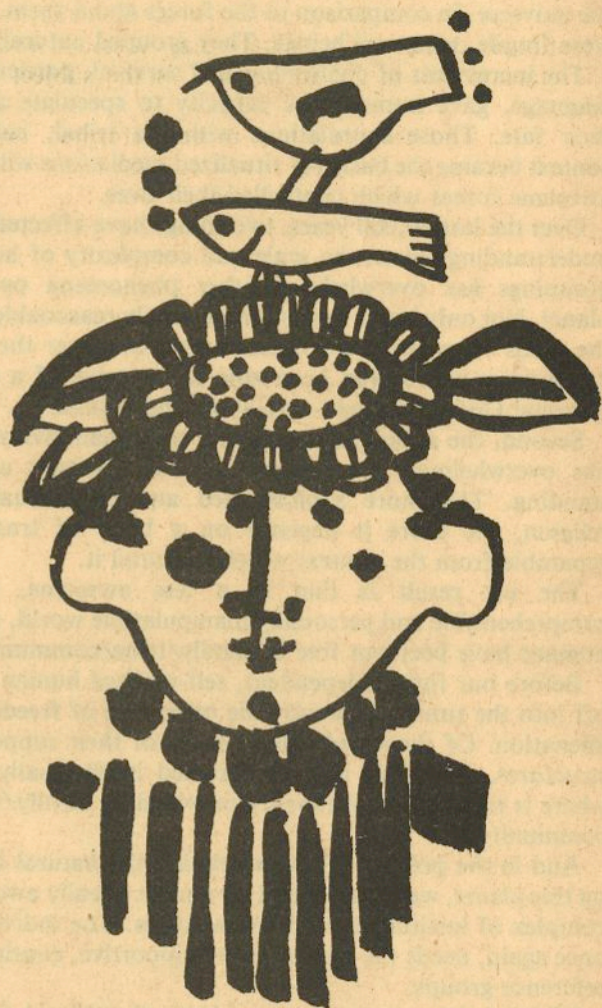
How was that feeling the best day you had blasting up a pretty road on a bright afternoon under a blue sky on a good bike swifter than the wind with the scenery darting past so fast and flying pretty that it pulled tears from the corners of your eyes? How was that? How did it feel to stand quiet in the giant woods with the bike's vibration, the wind's roar still humming through you, knowing that even when you have to leave the forest that you don't have to go indoors to do it. How did it feel to feel good?

How does it feel to feel good now when you chant in an ashram with a hundred other people the Hare Krishna beginning with such profound patience that you're *waiting* for the world, feeling the beating of the ceremonial drum, tuning deeper as the chant accelerates, singing louder, faster and faster, until you're nearly one of *them*. Instead of being only a child at their feet.

We asked for them to come, remember? First we began to realize we needed something we didn't have, some new level of understanding and faith in ourselves, some more profound way of grasping the world so that we could stop doing the things to it that looked like they were killing it, the things we thought our parents were somehow doing, or letting happen, or helpless in the face of, or whatever it was that, though we loved them, made us feel they'd let us down. It was, let's remember, the sincerity of that love that made us go looking throughout the Orient for the teachers who could tell us what we did not have.

We grew up and saw our world and knew we had to help it, and help ourselves from the way it made us feel. We needed strong medicine, and went out looking for it, far away looking for it, and found teachers over there, and they heard us asking, asking them to come, and so they have.

Yogis and swamis and lamas and zen masters came to us from their Asian sources providing us with, of all things, techniques to evolve with, and metaphors for comprehending ourselves in ways that resonated with cosmosity, and as they've come, their love, their bearing,



and their invisible certitude have inspired us with the measure of their truth.

Their warmth and love so attracts us that we tend, it seems, to forget some of our best selves "Western energy", some of our natural dance, some of the mood that that music of the late sixties gave us, that put us in the frame of mind to start asking questions in the first place.

The I Ching tells us that every gathering together needs a head, a center of crystalization. While we are learning how to unfold our hearts, we must be sober enough to use our own natural talents.

Our new teachers now accept us as their children, but their message is that we can be their brothers and sisters. By learning from them yet not abandoning ourselves, perhaps we can evolve beyond being one sided either way. □



# Dromenon

by Sarah Dubin-Vaughn

I am a member of Dromenon, a non-residential transformational community. What that means, and what Dromenon has meant in my life, is the subject of this article.

My life had become a task to be performed, not a joy and blessing to be experienced. Cynicism and despair had replaced the laughter and tears that had previously emanated from my belly realm, and I understood completely what it means to be "invisible." I consulted a psychiatrist who implied that I was expecting too much, that coping with life was all one could ask for. He sent me home.

Physically, I was in perfect health, but whatever work I undertook, be it teaching, political organizing, or socializing, left me tired and depressed. The world outside looked ugly and horrible; the world inside felt heavy and wobbly, as if the very substance of life had evaporated. I was a hermit crab in an empty shell.

One day a good friend invited me to a weekend outing. Dr. Jean Houston, a teacher of "The Nature of Consciousness" at the New School, would be conducting something called "Dromenon" (my friend wasn't sure what the word meant).

On an icy day in December, near the time of the winter solstice, we drove from southwestern Connecticut to Pomona, New York. Some thirty of us settled ourselves into a wood-heated living room of a private home. Jean delivered a lecture — a well-researched paper, really — on the "Old Chaos of the Sun." It was the best kind of lecture; dramatic, logical, intellectually stimulating. It was at once religious and secular, poetry and prose.

Jean traced the custom of bringing back the light at midwinter through various historical traditions. She placed our own frenetic preoccupation with the Christmas season in a mythic context, explaining how the diminishing light affects us at an organic level, linking us to the ritual and celebrational responses of ancient cultures. For the first time in a long time I felt how significant each life-bearing body is to the process of life-keeping on this planet. I felt in the presence of a true priestess.

This was an afternoon of preparation. On Sunday, we came together again and enacted the myth of the birth of Christ; the birth of the light from the depths of the winter darkness. We all danced as Marys and Josephs, incredulous at this gift, at being designated the parents of the divine child. Eventually we danced the birth of the Christ child, met the holy men in a guided imagery exercise and heard their advice. Ultimately we joined a large circle to become the shepherds, leading to laughter and caroling.

For me, Jean offered a blend of literature, myth, psychology, philosophy, religion, history, science and physical exercise. The integration was an experience of homecoming. It included, but felt greater than, my own family home.

So that was the beginning of Dromenon for me. In January I began her advanced monthly weekends, exploring the nature of the *journey*. We told stories. We accumulated myths. We identified the myths that underpin our existential beings. We borrowed exercises from the Tibetan masters on altering the nature of time and space. We searched for allies in the nature kingdom and in imagery exercises. Weekly groups were formed as a means of continuing the sharing between the monthly weekends.

Working with Jean is like exploring a multi-layered archaeological dig. Exercises elicit responses and heightened awareness at the sensory and psychological levels, at the symbolic-mythic and religious levels of the self. The

**drom-e-non** (drōm' ə non), n. [*Gk. draō*, to do, to act, to make, to accomplish; *drōmenon*, something to be acted or performed—cf. "drama," dramatic movement, from the same root] **1: Ancient Gk:** a ritual pattern of dynamic expression,



**2 THE LABYRINTH OF CHARTRES**

a therapeutic dance rhythm in which participants experience second birth into a higher order of consciousness and community; *esp.*, an initiation rite of Spring. **2: Medieval:** a dance movement of turning through a maze pattern on the floorstones of such cathedrals as Chartres; a "therapy in stone" whose turning and stretching stimulate motor-perception and in-

spire profound kinesthetic intuition; "remembering" of the original pulse (cf. *religio*, to bind back). **3: Modern and Post-:** **a:** a metaphor of the accelerating evolutionary growth of consciousness with a new vision of the possible human; creative orchestration of mental processes; expansion from local to ecological awareness in preparation for unprecedented challenges facing future "planetary man." **b:** a center for change founded by Drs. Jean Houston and Robert Masters offering contemporary people the opportunity to move beyond conditioned capacities toward creative development of their potential. **c:** a journal of new ways of being, published in the spirit of all of the above.



lengthy enactment of stories from well-known classical literature (Odysseus, the Divine Comedy, the Holy Grail) allows spiritual growth to take place in the context of Western tradition, under the influence of Eastern mysticism, with modern scientific theory having its place, too. The objective, of course, is to achieve the potential of our human self that has not yet evolved.

Early on in my work with Jean, several of us from the New York area, felt the need to meet on a regular basis. We wished to celebrate our companionship on the journey and to continue the work of transformation with each other. With no agenda but to set aside a few hours a week to be, share, and grow together, we agreed to meet in a member's New York loft. We've been going there every Wednesday for over three years now. Sometimes strangers hear about us and join us for the evening.

We share a communal meal, then enter into a sacred circle. Sometimes we set up a ritual washing and drinking table where, to the heartbeat sound of an Indian drum we concentrate on washing away attachments, old skins of habits we would shed. Drinking from the ritual goblet, we accept intentions for specific changes. Exercises in *knowing* through art, music, drama, and movement are offered.



We open and close our time together by creating a spiral with our linked bodies and singing, dancing, meditating. We argue, give comfort and support. Above all, we attend to our bodies, thoughts, feelings, and our behavior, willfully allowing shifts in personality and being.

As a group we remain amorphous and undefinable; even so, I want to explain us. Victor Turner, anthropologist, speaks of the experience of "Communitas." Whereas the units of social structure are relationships between status, roles, and offices, *communitas* is a relationship between "Concrete historical, idiosyncratic individuals" who are not segmentalized into roles and statuses, but who confront one another rather in the manner of Martin Buber's **I and Thou**. It occurs to me that we are the threshold people, daring to experience the dying of the patriarchal, family-structured sense of social order, and rebirthing into an order in which we become brothers and sisters — hetarchy rather than hierarchy, Jean Houston calls it. My vision of such an order is one in which we acknowledge our ancestors — human, animal, plant, elemental. We agree to dance out the events of our lives, rather than to simply endure a process imposed upon us by our world parents. The Dromenon community joins other communities in our willingness to struggle through the creation of this new mythic model.

Where will the journey lead us? Jean Houston prepares to offer a doctoral degree in the cultivation of human capacities. Our New York Dromenon community is experiencing growing pains (300 people came to an extended weekend workshop). We've rented temporary quarters for weekly meetings from another new age group; this involves a different involvement with money and with each other. With growth and rapid change, we feel an excitement that seems appropriate to Spring.

Our current way of operating seems to be in the order of the natural world. I think what terror the budding plants must feel when, on March 1st, the ice still covers the water and the earth is solidly frozen. Yet I have no doubts but what they will burst forth this Spring, and that the human community will bloom again when our Spring comes round and the natural order is renewed.

I, like that small steeped temple  
 On yonder gentle mound  
 With brilliant autumn leaves swirling round,  
 I, in my middle age, rich with experience,  
 Solid as time-saturated stone  
 And constant as the temple's form,  
 Sure and certain — of joy, torture, and death —  
 Wait here to be entered  
 By that holy Being  
 Who will cause my bells to  
 Sound their loud carillon melody,  
 To make the Birth  
 From my dark secret source  
 Of my becoming.

Sarah Dubin-Vaughn

□

*Dromenon publishes a journal of the same name, available at p.o. box 2244, NY NY 10001.*



# The Farm

by Ariel Rubissow

Illustrations by Eve Franklin

*The Farm is an impressive and successful community of 1200 people in Tennessee. Its history began in San Francisco, within the peace and love movement of the sixties. A philosopher named Stephen Gaskin, who had been teaching in San Francisco for several years, was crucial to the birth of the Farm. Preaching spirituality, 'astral' communication and the need for a new, healthy and loving way of life, he announced one day at an open forum that he was leaving on a college lecture tour of the States. He invited those who shared his beliefs to come along. In his wake traveled a caravan of schoolbuses,*

*transporting 250 of his young followers. By the end of their trip the group felt too close to each other and too committed to the ideals they shared to split up. The charisma, idealism and spiritualism of Stephen Gaskin, and the responsibility he took for the group, helped to provide a real basis for their allegiance. In spring 1971 they decided to settle in Tennessee and join together to build a community where they could live, work, eat, farm, meditate, love each other and pursue human spirituality in an attempt to realize their vision of a better world.*

*"The Farm" is part of Off the Beaten Track, a book I've been working on for 3 years. The book looks at some of the innovative, alternative communities in America today. This chapter is based on a one week visit to the Farm and background research. It was cleared for publication by Michael McClure, one of the managers of the Farm Book Publishing Company. In it, I interweave factual material with images/impressions (fictional).*

The Farm has evolved and grown over the past ten years. In the early days, the group's way of life was simple and rigid; a lifestyle that was in many ways a rejection of the larger society. Over the years they have realized their limitations and encountered problems with their original goals. Almost every aspect of life in the community has evolved into a more complex, realistic and holistic approach to living. The evolution of the Farm has been a product of the expansion of the community, the diversity of individuals, and the consistent re-evaluation of the goals and vision of the original community.

In the early days, the Farm had no educational facilities. Many of the original families came from college backgrounds which they rejected along with the whole academic approach to thinking, living and working. These people wanted to erase reading, writing, criticism and analysis from their lives. They did not even want a library.

The attitude towards education was something like that of the Mennonites and the Amish; education should be nothing beyond what necessity required, and necessity was living and surviving on the Farm. But as one person described the Farm, "We are a jet that can make a right turn going 200 miles an hour. We changed out ideas very quickly." Realizing the need to teach their children basic skills such as reading, writing and arithmetic, they built an elementary school. Once Farm people were confronted with the development of their own children, there was a general reacceptance of the value of a high school education. This factor coupled with the growth of the community and the increasing complexity of its organization and activities resulted in the building of a high school. Recently, some of the younger Farm members have even sought college training, in response to the need for more specialized information on how to efficiently and creatively maintain the complex organism that the community has become.

Birth control, and attitudes toward it, have also changed over the years. In the original philosophy and even today, life in every form was considered sacred. Everyone had babies to celebrate the wonder of life. Suddenly the number of children became quite large; most families had at least two children, sometimes five or six with adoptions. People began to feel burdened by the consequences of their philosophy. Many couples just didn't want more children. In response to growing concern the Farm decided the rhythm method of birth control was acceptable. As the community developed, birth control became more specialized and scientific. Although still completely natural, people now use the "cooperative method", a combination of temperature readings, rhythm, and mucus analysis in which both sexes participate.

Similarly, Farm agriculture became more complex, specialized and scientific over the years. Originally the community tried to pursue an entirely natural, organic, small-scale agricultural system. Many people simply had their own gardens. At the same time their diet was very limited by this method of food production. As vegetarians they rejected all animal products and so needed to be careful about maintaining a properly balanced diet. Expansion, particularly in the communal growing and processing of soy beans, demanded a different agricultural approach. The Farm developed an integrated, mass-production agricultural system using both high technology and human labor with composting and fertilizers. Without animals to produce organic waste the use of fertilizers became necessary, despite their commitment to the "natural" way.

Health care evolved in much the same way. In the early days, the Farm didn't even have a clinic. Very soon the need for some kind of communal health service became apparent, especially with the cost of outside care. The first clinic provided totally natural cures and therapy for its patients. Over the years a full clinic and pharmacy have developed using technologically-advanced equipment and refined modern medicines. Because natural cures did not meet all their immediate needs they have compromised and use modern Western medicine on their own terms, sticking to as many natural methods as possible. Preventive medicine is the basis of health care activity.

The evolution of the Farm is a historical progression from simplicity to complexity. This shows that though a group may want to retreat to an extremely primitive, simplistic and natural way of life they soon learn that modern knowledge and technology are, to a degree, necessary to fulfill their needs. They should not seek to negate so completely their background and culture. Rather, the re-evaluation and re-integration of certain positive aspects of the larger American society into these new communities can be invaluable to the success of their endeavors.

### **Philosophy and Vision**

The philosophy of the Farm arose predominantly from the teachings and guidance of Stephen Gaskin. A religious man of Judeo-Christian background, his spiritual beliefs are all-encompassing, drawing from many other religions, particularly Buddhism.

*Religion only seems different if you are dealing with a retailer. If you deal with a wholesaler, they all get it from the same distributor.*

*The real proper practice of religion is a balance between honoring the old source and recognizing the incredible dedication of trying to pass something hand to hand for two thousand years. It is also important to recognize that we live in the here and now, and we must have native, home-grown Holiness of our own . . .*

Gaskin is considered the guru of the Farm. He preaches love, peace, telepathy, vibrations, meditation, honesty, truth and unity of human beings through spiritual enlightenment.

*The practice of real love and impeccable correctness and politeness and care among each other is only the beginning stage of the kind of peaceful society in which you may talk seriously about spiritual enlightenment.*

The Farm is a peaceful society, a spiritual and religious community. It has a human, natural, open-ended religion based on belief in an innate kind of human spirituality that is omnipresent. Stephen Gaskin calls this God. The Farm religion has its roots in the Buddhist regard for the sacredness of life and the unity of all spirits. It is a religion based on telepathy and attunement to the "astral" (higher, cosmic) level of human relationship and nature. As Stephen says:

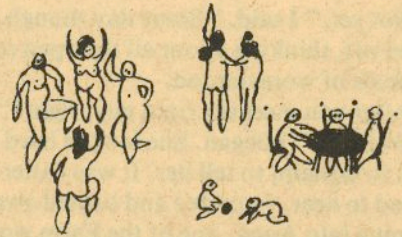
*The thing that gives me the most peace is the feeling of presence, the telepathic awareness of my fellow men. You can feel it through your body, and you don't even have to be with anyone to feel it. You can be by yourself and just relax with that, because it's around us all the time. It's the Holy Spirit, always there to sustain us, inhabiting each one of us, indestructible and immortal.*

The spiritual unity of the Farm provides its overall guiding purpose and extends into all aspects of community life. Cooperation and equality are necessary outgrowths of a religious unity. All wealth, resources, materials, services, work, sustenance and activity on the Farm is a cooperative and spiritual venture. Thus the spiritual vision of the Farm is based on the pursuit of a good healthy, loving way of life.

Central to the unity and vision of the Farm is the work ethic. There is a firm belief in the need for everyone to work hard together. Working for and with others is considered a spiritual experience. Not working, not supporting and not giving to others is not acceptable at the Farm. If people don't do their share they are not a part of the community; they are either given a "heavy trip about responsibility" or turned out.

Spiritual unity also extends to people's relationship with nature. Feeling and experiencing the sky, the birds, the growing trees, and attuning one's self to nature are an important part of spiritual enlightenment. The Farm is situated in a beautiful rural environment which people experience everyday all around them. Nature and her ways are highly valued: natural birth control, natural spiritual midwifery, natural food, natural materials, natural relationships, natural everything. In this way, they feel they are in greater touch with nature and feel healthier, happier and more spiritually united. Nature is an expression of the unity of the whole spirit on earth. Through the natural we find our place and participate in the spiritual, organic rhythms and cycles of the earth and the cosmos.

## Images



### THE GATE

At the entrance to the Farm, a huge wire gate, stands the gatehouse. This brick building, with its all embracing veranda, lies about a mile and a half from the main bulk of the Farm. It keeps visitors from disturbing the balance of community life. There were twenty-five of us staying at the gatehouse, and some others camping at a small site one hundred yards down the road. We had our own little community. Our companions, the gate crew, consisted of five or more Farm people who changed shifts every twelve hours. They played the role of interviewers and caretakers, asking numbers of searching questions about our backgrounds and ideas. They filtered out those who seemed radically disruptive or unsuitable. Few were turned away. The crew also assigned us various jobs every day and supervised us as much as necessary.

While dinner was in the making John (one of the gate crew) was on the phone for an hour with a man from Georgia. John listened to ravings about visions that included the descent of the Virgin Mary to the man's bedroom, the bolt of lightning he had talked to on a clear day, and God's personal advice to him to go to the Farm. He insisted on arriving the next day. The conversation ended abruptly when John described Farm people as long-haired, meditating, retired psychedelics and hippies. The Methodist visionary from Georgia hung up. The phone rang again almost immediately and John was once more absorbed. Another call came in on the internal phone; someone in the Bakery wanted to know what time it was.

People lined up for the bathroom. There was no hot water, so none of us could take a shower. The composting toilet could only take two or three of us in a row. That meant I'd better walk to the woods. From the veranda a high pitched voice was reassuring itself.

"Well, I believe that it's a woman's job in this world to bear children, so I ain't complaining. After all, that's what women were put on this here earth for, so I ain't gonna be unhappy about doing it. It's the will of God. It's the whole point of a woman's life." The voice belonged to a fifteen year old runaway from Kentucky who was wanted by the police for truancy. Her lover (sixteen) already had two illegitimate children. She was pregnant and had nowhere else to go. The couple — Ellie and Bob — made me sad . . . my life was so different from theirs in every way.

"Bob, can we sneak out to MacDonalds and get some meat?" Ellie whispered to him. I looked at her and then at myself.

"Have you had any kids yet?" she said, smiling at me through the fear in her eyes.

"Not yet," I said, "Some day though, after I . . ." I trailed off, thinking about all the open roads, the careers, my ideals of womanhood.

"After you meet the right guy, right?" she said.

"Well . . ." I began. She looked hard at me. I couldn't begin to explain, to tell her. It was easier to say what she wanted to hear. I nodded and turned away, nearly bumping into Anna, one of the Farm women. She had been standing in the door. Her eyes in contrast to Ellie's were open and wise. She seemed so strong. As I moved by her into the kitchen she whispered, "You were right not to say anything. It takes time, care . . ." I decided that Ellie was in good hands and brushed off the responsibility I had so suddenly felt for her.

After dinner I went for a walk with Clive, a young man who was almost at the end of his soaking period (5 month trial membership). The fireflies made a milky way of the soybean fields. I asked him how he felt about joining the Farm.

"My parents are a little upset, of course; you know, with the education down the drain and the trust fund going to the Farm with my pledge. For myself I feel liberated. It's not just giving up my material possessions, it's a new lease on life, a new consciousness. It took me a long time to get used to it, though. Sometimes I wonder about how it would have been if I had gone on down the beaten track and become a lawyer. From the time I was twelve I've always wanted to be a lawyer.

"I miss my family but it's getting better now; I feel free, really open to new things. Of course it takes some getting used to, not smoking or drinking, no violence or anger, that long list of unwritten rules. And what's even harder is accepting the criticism that people make of you without feeling hurt, and giving criticism in a way that doesn't hurt someone else. This being **loving and compassionate** all the time is hard work." He paused to look up at the stars embedded in black velvet above. Then he continued.

"I've been reading some of Stephen's books and I can really see how he leads the community. His philosophy has

seeped into almost every aspect of the Farm. And yet it's so subtle. He's such a wit too. You know what he said? He said, "*Sometimes the Farm seems like a great burden each one of us had to drag along, and sometimes the Farm is the note you wrote yourself to remind you who you are when you forgot again.*" I think that's kind of neat. It appeals to me. It's a two way thing; you have to work for it but it works for you too, helping you be yourself and be a part of something else."

"But are you sure you trust that something else? Don't you think you could lose yourself in it?" I said.

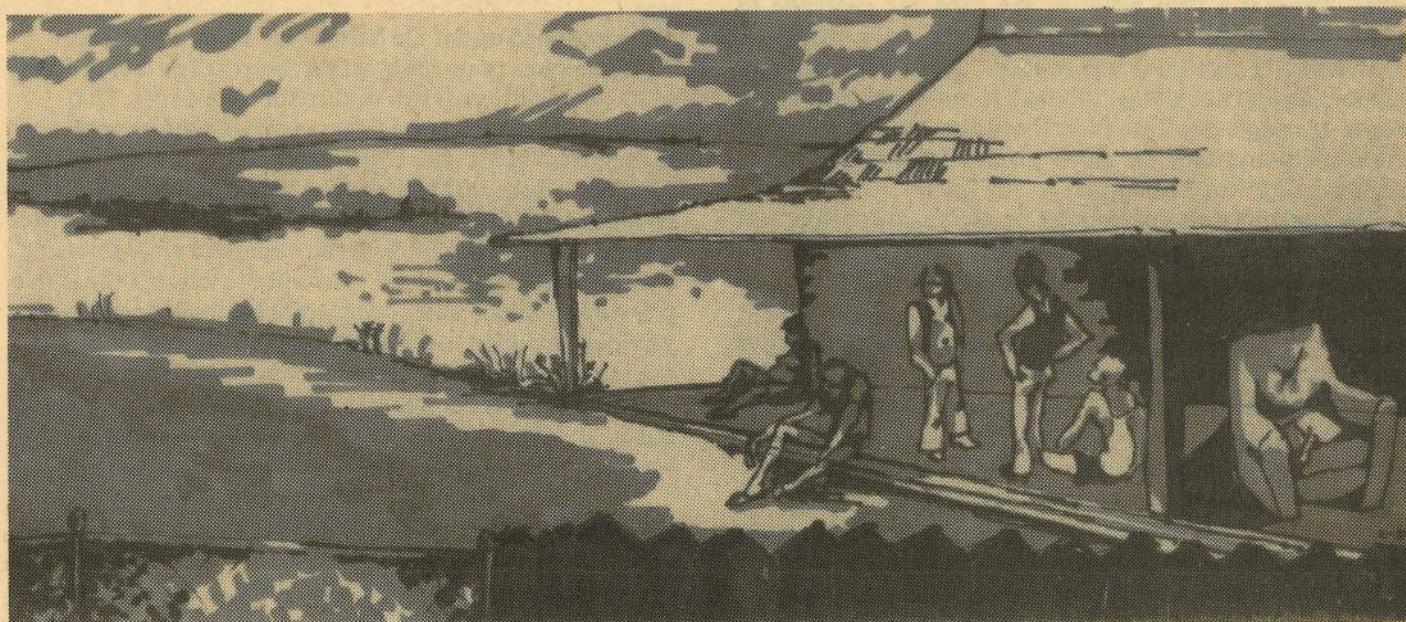
"Oh I don't know, maybe I would but not for long. I'd have to resurface again. People wouldn't let me stay here without contributing something of myself, and I would contribute. You have to believe in something."

"Well, what about the case of the orange man? They can do down pretty hard on him," I said.

"Oh, you mean the guy who always wore orange clothes and that long beaded necklace with the yogi's picture in it?"

"That's right."

"We came at the same time. He seemed pretty serious about being here too. Then he started making love to one of the visiting women. They told him he had to abstain from any kind of sexual/love relationship for five months. Stephen says that before all else, one must fall in love with the Farm. I guess he's right. Anyway, the orange man left with the woman. It's amazing the different characters who come through here: convicts, Hell's Angels, religious fanatics, lost and lonely women, delinquent children, Ph.D.s in all subjects, back country people, refugees from high society, or commuter suburbia, everyone . . . Some of them seem really committed and then one little thing bothers them about the place and sends them off searching for a new utopia. I feel the same way. I'm willing to believe in the Farm but at the same time, certain things make me skeptical of its value." And he went on, "It's true, we all really want to believe in utopia but we must always compromise when it comes to reality. Adaptability is the



key, and valuing the good aspects of the community above the bad.”

“And that’s a questions of subjective values . . . ” I said, remaining skeptical.

The road was very dark. The stars awakened the skies and the moon yawned on the horizon. I suddenly felt a million miles from home, a million miles from civilization. America hid, distant and foreign. I had no home there either. I was here, in the here and now, here to stay momentarily in this island of special people. There were people whose faces looked so peaceful that in their confrontation I felt hyper and alienated, as if I was missing something. I had the feeling they were looking beyond me, beyond everything. Were we really so far from reality out there that we didn’t see anything but surfaces? I felt like leaving for a moment just to ground myself in the outside again. Besides, the strict vegetarian diet was making me ill with its heavy, eggless bread, and the endless soy products: soy milk, soy yogurt, soy ice cream, tempeh, tofu, fried tofu, tofu salad, and tempeh again . . . I craved a piece of meat. We walked home in silence.

The next day I asked if I could go into Summertown on the pretext of buying some film. When they said they could find someone from the Farm to buy me the film I made other excuses. I promised to be gone only for a short while. I finally appealed to their sympathy and told them I was feeling cut off, not to mention sick from the diet. They told me to go to the Farm clinic. I fussed some more, feeling caged. “Well,” one of them said, “if you really are so keen on going to Summertown, why don’t you just take all your things and don’t come back.” First fear and then anger took hold of me. I felt like driving off in a huff without a backward glance. They had no right to tell me what I should or shouldn’t do. On second thought, though, it was very important to me to stay a few more days. The man was smiling unnervingly at me. I mustered an embarrassed grin and said I’d really like to stay a little longer. I asked him, with an outrightness that I’d learned on the Farm, why it was so important that I didn’t go to Summertown.

“First of all,” he said, “we believe that if people are really committed to trying to live in this community they should be able to stay here for more than a few days without leaving. Secondly, Summertown is just as much of a community as we are. If we allowed any number of our one thousand visitors a week to go in and out as they pleased, Summertown would be ridden with strangers and we would lose track of how many people were on the Farm. Some of our visitors aren’t very considerate social beings. Sometimes they act superior by virtue of their supposed “consciousness”: people trip on their hipness you know.”

When we first arrived here, we were two hundred and fifty long-haired, bearded weirdos from outer space to the Summertown people. They didn’t like us suddenly settling in their midst, playing loud music and growing marijuana in the woods. We had a tough winter and we worked hard and ate little. Stephen and two others were put in jail for a year for growing pot.”

“After awhile, they realized we were just as poor and just as hard-working as themselves. They came to offer help and advice. They even employed us on their own land.

Over the years, we’ve tried to help each other out as much as possible. The Farm would love to be able to hire some Summertown people but we don’t have the capital. We do trade sweet potatoes and seeds though. We go to barn dances, and invite them to try our soy milk. We even give them free emergency medical service. Communities have to be sensitive to each other. We can’t let anything endanger that. You might not feel that you are going to make a difference, but if we let you go we’ll have to let others go too. So it’s up to you . . . ” I apologized, seeing the reason in his argument, and went to wash the dishes. I put lids on all the left-overs. You can only see, smell and eat so much soybean in one day.



## Location and Environment

The Farm is located in summertown, Tennessee, an hour south of Nashville where the Virginia mountains open their blue-green arms to the flat plains. Summertown is a tiny town, with a smaller population than the Farm. It lies in the heart of rural, backwoods Tennessee where people lead simple lives on the land. There are only a few small shops, one or two bars and a post office in the center of town.

The Farm is situated on 1,750 acres of green, rolling, lovely land a few miles from Summertown. The nucleus of the community lies at the center of the property about two miles from its boundaries. The road makes a wide sweep, curving around the open fields and skirting extensive woodlands. The landscape stands in gentle relief. A ravine carved by a wide stream meanders through the property on one side. Its valley and the surrounding hills are heavily forested with deciduous trees. The homes and buildings of the community nestle in these woodlands, and on the border between the fields and forest.

The climate is hot and humid in the Spring and Summer and cold in Winter. Due to the humidity insects are abundant. Farm members have to maintain careful hygiene as the environment and climate are conducive to the breeding and spreading of various diseases and germs. Wild animals on the Farm property consist of rodents, snakes, birds and an occasional deer.

## Facilities and Buildings

There are a large variety of facilities and buildings on the Farm. It is one of the most diversified communities I visited. The Farm phone book lists Ambulance, Bakery, Bandland (Music Studio), Bank Office, Bicycle Shop, Book Company, Canning, Charge Center, Clinic, Computer, Dental Clinic, Electrical Crew, Emergency Medical Treatment, Farm Foods (Store), Farm News, Firewood Crew, Flour Mill, Gas Station, Green House, Horse Barn, Information, Infirmary, Lab, Laundry, Legal Office, Machine Shop, Meeting Hall, Motor Pool, Petty Cash, Pharmacy, Phone Building, Plenty, Post Office, Pottery Shop, Solar Electric, Solar Energy Works, Solar Utilities, Soy Dairy, Store, Swimming Hole, WUTZ (radio station), Yeast Company, Practicing Midwife, Print Shop, Radio Room and School. From this list it becomes apparent what a variety of facilities and buildings are provided on the Farm, and by extension, the diversity of jobs and services.

Most of the buildings are built of recycled or scavenged materials. They are currently building a Buckminster Fuller-type dome constructed entirely from the remains of a local, derelict gym and rejected beams from the telephone company. All buildings are of relatively simple and plain design. Many are roofed with corrugated iron. Homes are varied. Most were built by their occupants. Some are log cabins, some more complicated conventional homes, others old school buses with built-on additions. The pre-existing original buildings on the Farm property — several old homes — have remained intact. The two state accredited schools, one elementary and one high school, are perhaps the most architecturally and aesthetically sophisticated structures on the land. One of the buildings is brand new. It was designed and built by the people of the Farm according to passive solar principles of energy use. They are lovely large buildings, broken up by huge windows and a jagged solar panelled roof.

There is a cluster of central buildings on the Farm including the Soy Dairy, Farm Foods Canning (the community kitchen), the Fuller Dome, the Clinic, EMT Center and a few others. In general all the rest of the facilities are strung out along the main road. The School and Bakery are back in the woods off side roads. The homes stretch out in all directions in neighborhoods, some more than a mile and a half away from the center of the Farm.

### Agriculture and Land Uses:

Of the 1,750 acres of land communally owned by the Farm, 150 acres are used for agriculture. During one year 75 of these were used for vegetables, 35 for pasturing workhorses, 20 planted with fruit crops — apples and grapes, and 20 seeded with fallow crops and rotated out of production. Crop rotation is an integral part of the community agricultural system. 200 acres are share cropped off the Farm for wheat and soy beans. At the moment there is more land easily available off the Farm.

The strict vegetarian ethic in the community prevents them from having any farm animals such as chickens, pigs or cows. They do have a number of horses for both work and pleasure. As I mentioned before, the lack of organic animal waste has necessitated the use of some “natural” but produced fertilizers to supplement the rigorously produced compost made from human and plant waste. No pesticides are used. The Farm has a wonderful old wagon, with a carved and brightly painted roof which, with the aid of two glorious Shire horses, transports compost daily.

Farm equipment such as combine harvesters, seeders, etc. is supplanted with workhorses and human labor. Most of the implements and machinery for a relatively efficient food production system are available.

Land use on the farm is varied, ranging from agricultural to residential to semi-developed to completely wild. Most of the land serves as a wilderness for the enjoyment of community members and the preservation of nature.

## Images



### WORK

With the ascension of the sun to its highest and heaviest reach, my shoulders curved inwards. Favoring the arch of my back I plied like a ballet dancer to bring myself to the level of the tomato plants. I no longer carefully turned over each leaf in search of the persistent beetles. Instead I aired the plant in one smooth stroke — from bottom to top — affording myself a quick glimpse of the pale undersides of the leaves. I found a cluster of invisible orange eggs and crushed them between my fingers. Crawling beneath the plant was an adult Colorado potato beetle, half the size of my thumb. The beetle was red and yellow, puffed from its feast of tomato plants and traced with black. I closed my palm tightly around it, hesitating a moment in disgust before opening my hand to view its beautiful bright orange insides. At the top of the plant I found the larvae, the half-grown beetles that bore no resemblance to either the tiny orange eggs or the hard-topped beetles. They looked like a section of a black work with red notches, sinister and slow to move.

I rose to stretch, shielding my eyes from the sun. My forehead and arms tingled with sunburn; my body sweated, drenched with work; my hands cracked with their new orange skin of countless beetle bodies. Around me the low forested hills of Southern Tennessee rolled one upon the other. The fields of the Farm made a clear open space in the landscape. Everything was a verdant, vibrant, vivacious green. The air, perfumed with magnolias, was soft and sweet, brushing over me like cotton wool.

Ralph nudged me from my reverie. His long hair was braided with ribbons. A South American woven headband circled his head. He wore a tie-dyed T-shirt, jeans and rubber thongs. No one wore leather on the Farm. “Stephen says make work a meditation,” he said, handing me a bottle of Tab. “Working can be a spiritual experience, an attunement between your body and nature, a sharing of your soul in the oneness of all humanity’s service to itself. You’re out of line, you’re just standing around letting everyone else do the work for you.” His criticism came gently, sounding not in the least remonstrative. His eyes sought mine, peaceful and compassionate. I looked down a little confused. My inklings of anger felt out of place, and yet he had no right to rebuke me for not working. Here I was, slaving in the summer sun, at not the most pleasant of tasks and I didn’t even live here. I deserved some rest. I retaliated.



"If I am to work all day killing potato beetles by hand so that you don't have to use pesticides or unnatural chemicals on your vegetables then I'd rather you didn't hand me a bottle of Tab. Don't you think that's a little hypocritical?" I said, glaring at him angrily. Deep inside I wished fervently that I hadn't said anything. His direct acknowledgement of the truth in my little tirade confused me. He simply took the Tab, looked at me pleasantly and said, "You're absolutely right."

I looked around me at the bowed figures, stooping and crushing, row upon row; I dropped down to ruffle the plant before me, feeling sheepish and petty. Ralph tapped me once more on the shoulder. "Think about what I said and I'll think about what you said," he urged and strode off. I thought about meditation; I tried to be rhythmic and smooth in my movements; I hunted down and banished my negative thoughts, the heat of the sun, the pain in my back, the bitter aftertaste of the Tab; I sought peace and satisfaction in my work. After some time I gave way to dizziness. The heat was too much. I decided meditation could be dangerous and I slipped away.

### Finances and Organization

To join the Farm one makes a pledge of "peasanthood," giving up all worldly goods and money to the communal fund. Outside accounts, property or income are forbidden. There are no wages and no one pays for anything on the Farm. Individuals can procure money for articles that have to be bought outside the community from the communal fund. About 50 men comprise the crews that leave the Farm everyday for work outside the community. Most of their work is in the area of construction. Farm crews have built several private solar homes, and money made by these crews is given to the communal fund. Their wages provide a much needed steady flow of income into the community. The only money members are allowed to keep is money earned on weekends.

Everyone eats healthfully and is well taken care of on a per capita income of less than two dollars a day. (One quarter of the U.S. Government's official 1977 national poverty level). "Peasanthood" as a concept is taken very seriously by the community. There is no opulence nor waste of wealth on the Farm. The community provides an extraordinary contrast to American society; it shows us exactly how well people can live without all the material appendages of a consumer society.

The Farm has a somewhat hierarchical decision-making structure but the entire population is always given a chance to voice its opinion. The Farm considers itself completely egalitarian and would reject any notions of hierarchy in the community. On the lowest level there are the Sunday meditation meetings. After meditation there are rap sessions in which people discuss issues on the Farm and make loose decisions based on consensus. On the next level there is a council of appointed people from each work department; a group of work crew leaders who have established their skill and responsibility in the community. The Council may make decisions regarding the organization and allocation of work on the Farm and other



important issues, but all these decisions are re-referred to the Sunday rap sessions. All decision making on the Farm is loose and flexible and everyone has an opportunity for input. At the highest level of the hierarchy is Stephen Gaskin. His voice is the most powerful, lucid and respected in the community. It was my impression that he did not abuse his influence over the people. He was always ready for criticism and contradiction.

Work is organized into specific areas, such as motor pool, farm crew, phone crew, etc. Every crew appoints a work manager. Except for one case, to be mentioned below, no one is allocated work in any particular area. Everyone seems to be happily ensconced in their own area of interest, working in the soy dairy or the bakery, or one of the offices, etc. There are a multiplicity of different kinds of work to be done. The variety of jobs seems to be amply staffed in every area. To my knowledge, only the Farm crew needed more help. While I was there, the Farm crew was made up almost entirely of visitors directed by about ten members of the community. At one of the Sunday meetings the community discussed the commitment (often ignored) and decided that every member should work a certain number of hours a week on the Farm crew. This was the only sign of allocation of work to individuals. At the same time everyone in the community is expected to work consistently. People who don't participate in the work of the community are rebuked by their fellow workers. *Earth is a spaceship with all crew and no passengers.*

The Farm reaches out beyond the community in two ways. One is in the growth of sister Farm communities throughout the U.S.A. The other is through its international daughter organization, "PLENTY". Plenty is a non-profit service organization primarily involved with helping Third World People. Projects include free ambulance service in the Bronx, health care and reforestation in Lesotho, and soy dairy and soy agriculture in Guatemala. All these projects have been successful because their workers are people who have had to struggle with some of these problems in their own lives.

In general the organization of the community is fairly efficient. The idealism of the members is complimented by an essential pragmatism and practicality. It is this mix that makes the Farm tick.

### Alternative Technology

Alternative Technology is a growing part of the community's way of life. This interest in appropriate living is an outgrowth of their awareness of nature. However, it is only in the past few years that they have had the funds to research and use alternative technology.

The Solar research laboratory is working towards fitting out all Farm homes with solar systems. All forms of energy derived from the sun, including wood, wind and water systems are the main thrust of their research. They are concentrating particularly on an efficient use of wood heat. Due to lack of funds, every home is not necessarily equipped with a woodstove and few buildings have solar panels. However, the intention and knowledge exist in the community to employ a wide variety of appropriate

technologies as soon as possible. There are several windmills around the Farm. Compost-producing toilets are in use, to generate organic waste for fertilizer. In general the groundwork has been laid for an integrated system of appropriate technology — Farm wide.

Recycling and the minimization of waste are important ecological principles enmeshed in the daily existence of Farm inhabitants. Everything is recycled. Glass jars and containers are more often reused in the community than sent off for recycling. Paper products such as cups, napkins and paper towels are never used. Waste is minimal because of the tight budget of the community. There are always some striking contradictions, however in "ecologically oriented" communities. The Farm, for instance, uses Ajax washing detergent, a highly abrasive and non-biodegradable soap.

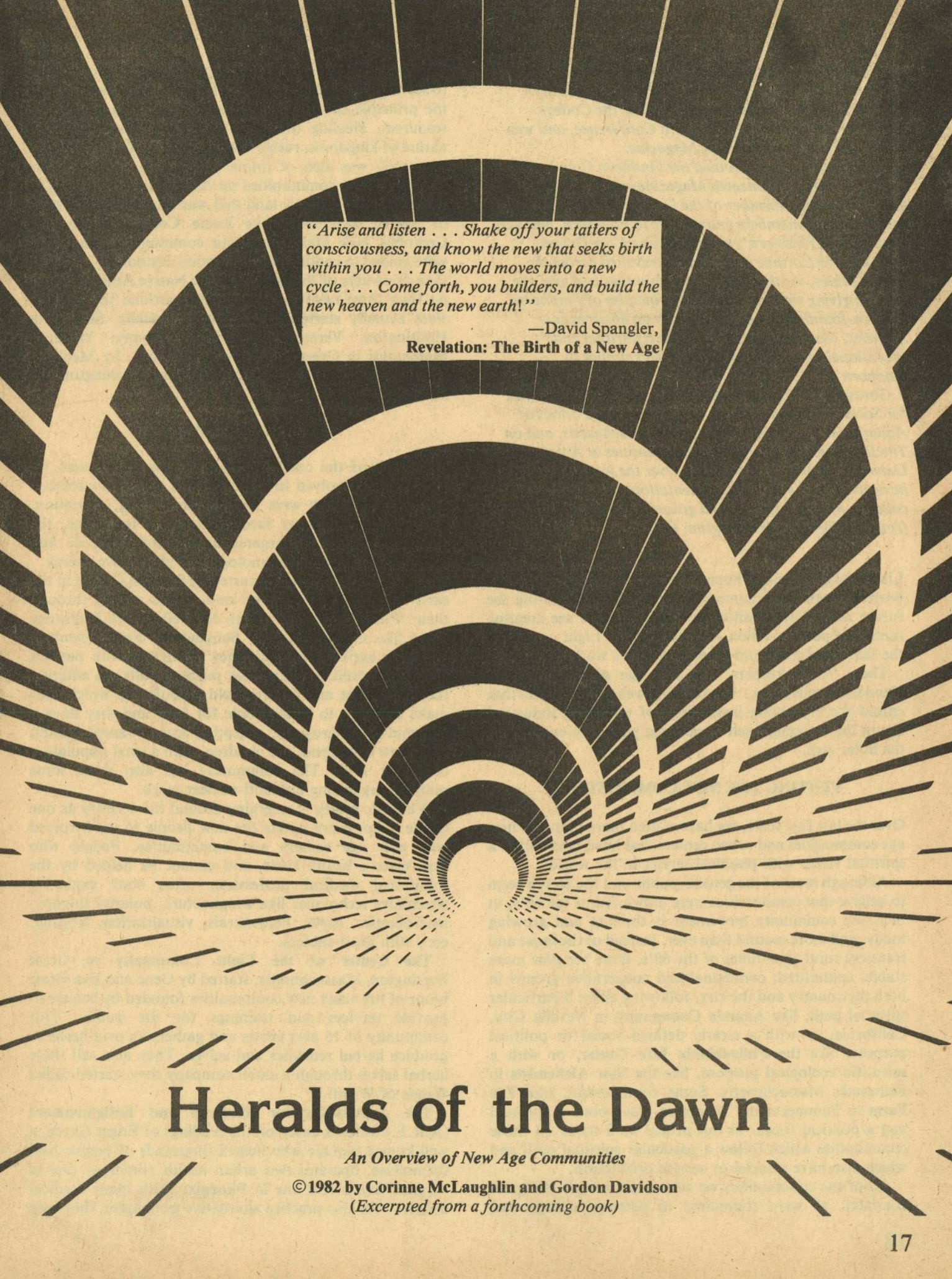
### Population

There are 1,200 people on the Farm, 650 of whom are children and one third of those are adopted. The population of the community has grown steadily over the years. New people are welcome as long as they go through a "soaking" period of 5 months before making their pledge to the Farm. There is a transient population of visitors and prospective mothers coming in and out of the Farm. As an outgrowth of the community's belief in the sacredness of life the group offers pregnant women, not only inside but outside the community, the opportunity to come and have their babies at the Farm. Abortions are seen as contrary to the holy perpetuation of life. Any prospective mother can come and have a natural childbirth at the Farm, prepared for and attended by the Farm midwives, and completely free of charge. The midwives recommend six weeks residence on the Farm prior to the expected due date of the child. If the Mother does not want the child, then the community offers to adopt it indefinitely. The Mother can return for it, if and whenever she wants. This accounts for the large numbers of adopted children on the Farm. There are children everywhere on the Farm. Adults generally refer to them as the "crop." Only 55 of the 650 children are over twelve years old.

The adults range from their late teens through middle age. The majority are in their twenties and thirties. Most of them come from privileged while middle and upper class backgrounds. Many are educated. Recently, more people from lower class backgrounds have been living on the Farm. Some are poor couples who came to have their baby on the Farm and stayed on; others are people from the Southern rural communities or those who have come in contact with the various outreach programs of the Farm.

One of the most difficult problems that the Farm shares with other communities is the orientation of the future population. When the second generation reach maturity will they want to leave, leave and come back, or simply stay on? If they do leave, then who will take care of the present older inhabitants ten or twenty years from now? The Farm has not really faced this problem, since the children are still young and the adults have not yet reached old age.

(continued on page 45)



*“Arise and listen . . . Shake off your tatters of consciousness, and know the new that seeks birth within you . . . The world moves into a new cycle . . . Come forth, you builders, and build the new heaven and the new earth!”*

—David Spangler,  
**Revelation: The Birth of a New Age**

# Heralds of the Dawn

*An Overview of New Age Communities*

©1982 by Corinne McLaughlin and Gordon Davidson  
*(Excerpted from a forthcoming book)*

*Gordon Davidson joined the Findhorn Community in Scotland in 1976. He gave workshops for community members and for visitors as a member of the College faculty, focalized the 1977 Onearth Conference, and was editor of Findhorn's Onearth Magazine.*

*Corinne McLaughlin joined the Findhorn Community in 1975 as a writer for Onearth Magazine and The Open Letter. She was a member of the College faculty, giving workshops for members and visitors to Findhorn, and was a member of Findhorn's policy-making Core Group.*

*In 1977-78 Corinne and Gordon travelled across the United States, visiting over 50 communities and new age centers, giving workshops on the principles of Findhorn. They co-founded Sirius Community on 86 acres near Amherst, Massachusetts in 1978, as a spiritual and educational center, based on principles similar to Findhorn's.*

*Gordon and Corinne have taught courses on Strategies for Social Change at Boston College, on The Politics of Aquarius at Hampshire College in Massachusetts, and on The Dynamics of Alternative Communities at American University in Washington, D.C. Over the last 5 years they have given workshops and presentations in over 200 colleges, new age centers, and governmental agencies, from California to Washington, D.C.*

Like bright citadels of hope heralding the dawn on distant horizons, new age communities and centers are living the future now. These builders of a new world are creating centers of positive vision — a network of Light — amidst the fear, confusion and greed in today's world.

These "earth-keepers," as new age economist Hazel Henderson calls them, "are creating webs or networks that enfold the crumbling institutions of the dying industrial age in the emerging, self-organizing planetary cultures of the Solar Age."

### VISITING THE NEW COMMUNITIES

Over the last five years, we have visited more than 100 new age communities and urban centers that have synthesized a spiritual vision with practical service in the world.

Although most of the general public and the media seem to believe that communities were only a fad of the 60's, in fact, the community movement is thriving and growing today, and more mature than ever. Instead of the loose and transient rural communes of the 60's, there are now more stable, committed, communal and cooperative groups in both the country and the city, following either a particular spiritual path, like **Ananda Community** in Nevada City, California, or with a clearly defined social or political purpose, like the **Philadelphia Life Center**, or with a scientific/ecological purpose, like the **New Alchemists** in Falmouth, Massachusetts. Some communities, like **The Farm** in Summertown, Tennessee, have both a spiritual and a political focus. In this article we'll focus on those communities which follow a particular spiritual path and which also have a social or service orientation.

All of the communities we visited had certain things in common: all were committed to personal change and

planetary change — to spiritual/psychological growth and to serving the needs of society. The groups also emphasized the principle of cooperation, and some form of sharing resources. Healing the earth and cooperating with the nature of kingdoms, rather than exploiting the land and its resources, was also of prime importance. Some of the founders of the communities we visited had been guided in their meditation to buy land that was sacred to some tribe of Native Americans (like **Lama Community** in San Cristobal, New Mexico and our community, **Sirius**) and were guided to continue to act as good custodians — rather than as owners of the land — as the Native Americans do. At least three new age communities around the country were actually started by Native Americans: **Sunray** in Huntington, Vermont started by Dhanyi Yawhoo; **Mettanokit** in Greenville, New Hampshire, by Medicine Story; and **The Bear Tribe** in Spokane, Washington, by Sun Bear.

### PATHS OF SERVICE

Nearly all of the communities and new age centers we visited were involved in some kind of service to society. The most common were healing, counseling, education, political change, inner meditation work for peace, the development of new organic agricultural methods and appropriate forms of technology and alternative energy.

**The Farm** in Tennessee, started by Stephen Gaskin in the early 70's on 1300 acres of land, serves society through their "Plenty Network," which does relief work in disaster areas like Guatemala and Bangladesh. Farm members share the agricultural skills they've learned with peasant farmers, as well as teach basic medical skills. In addition they've bought and repaired old ambulances which they make available to local people for free, and they have a free midwifery program, accepting any unwanted babies. They now have about 450 children, with a total population of about 1100. The community has also done some political organizing and anti-nuclear work.

Wholistic health is emerging around the country as one of the major entry points for new people to get involved with new age centers and communities. People who experience a health crisis, and cannot be helped by the traditional medical profession, often start exploring alternative techniques like acupuncture, polarity therapy, macrobiotics, herbs, Feldenkrais, visualization, Roling, etc., with great success.

**The Center of the Light Community** in Great Barrington, Massachusetts, started by Gene and Eva Graf, is one of the many new communities founded by healers to provide services and trainings for the public. This community of 15 also grows and gathers its own herbs to produce herbal remedies and salves. They also sell these herbal salves through a small company they started called Weeds of Worth.

**The Association for Research and Enlightenment** (A.R.E.) which is based on the readings of Edgar Cayce, a well-known psychic who helped thousands of people heal themselves, operates two urban health clinics — one in Virginia Beach and one in Phoenix. With many medical doctors who also practice alternative techniques, they help

patients take responsibility for correcting their negative thoughts and emotions that contributed to their illness, and then teach them alternative techniques for self-healing. **Meadowlark** in Hemet, California, where staff live in with patients, and **Sunray** are two other good examples of healing communities.

Another form of service around which some communities are organized is psychological counseling and therapy. **The Pathwork Communities — the Center for the Living Force** in Phoenicia, New York and **Sevenoaks Community** in Madison, Virginia are residential communities which offer an in-depth process which combines bio-energetics with a spiritual approach to release negativity and transform "the lower self."

**Springhill Community** in Ashby, Massachusetts offers workshops on "Opening the Heart" to help people become more loving towards others, and release their anger and fear. They also do counseling work with the dying in local hospitals.

**Chinook Community**, located on some beautiful forest land in Clinton, Washington, is a good example of an educational community, offering workshops and classes on themes from Planetary Consciousness and Christianity in the New Age to Building a Solar Greenhouse, and Attunement to Nature. The Community was started over 12 years ago by a former Presbyterian minister and his wife, Fritz and Vivian Hull, to help bridge new age ideas and ways of living with the traditional churches.

Other types of educational communities and centers (which do not have a particular spiritual focus, but whose members usually follow their own individual spiritual path), are **The New Alchemists** in Falmouth, Massachusetts; **Farralones Institute** in California; and **Windstar** in Aspen, Colorado. All of these offer demonstrations of solar and wind energy systems and greenhouses, and teach people how to build these systems through classes and books they have published. **Heartwood Owner-builder School** in Washington, Massachusetts is a community that teaches people how to build their own solar-passive home in a three-week class, with lots of hands-on experience. **Arcosanti** in Mayer, Arizona teaches people how to build "arcologies" — ecologically balanced architecture. Based on the ideas of Paolo Soleri, Arcosanti is building a model solar community for 5,000 people, with massive solar greenhouses for food production. About 30 members live there full time, and up to 50 students each term take a five week construction course.

Another form of service is prayer and meditation for peace and for planetary healing. **Meditation Mount** in Ojai, California, **The Lucis Trust** in New York, and **The Aquarian Educational Group** in Agoura, California, are all groups who offer instruction in meditation techniques and spiritual principles.

**Lama Community** in San Cristobal, New Mexico synthesizes many different spiritual traditions. They might begin one day with a Buddhist prayer, followed by karma yoga work projects until noon, with a Christian prayer before lunch, and a Sufi Dance or Hindu prayer in the evening. Individual members of Lama choose one of these spiritual disciplines for intensive study and practice, and



summer workshops are open to the public on these spiritual traditions, as well as on themes like wholistic health.

## ECONOMICS/MONEY

New age communities have very diverse approaches to money and to providing an economic base. Some groups, like **Ananda Community** and **The Abode Community** in New Lebanon, New York, ask people to contribute a certain amount of money to become members (in their case about \$1,000). This builds commitment to the community and a sense of investment in its continued success. Some groups like **The Abode Community** have members contribute a monthly sum to cover their food and rent and their share of community expenses, like paying off the land or buying new machinery. Members must then find jobs outside the community to make an income, or work at salaried jobs inside the community. This system helps develop a sense of personal responsibility and contributes to the whole. The disadvantage is that even though people would rather work inside the community, usually the community can't pay as well as outside jobs. So most people feel they must work outside to pay for their personal needs beyond food and rent. This has also re-created the differences in wealth and life-style that are found in society, with some people being able to afford to build beautiful houses for themselves, and others having to live in over-crowded group houses.

Other groups like **The Farm** have more equality, but then sacrifice some individual freedom and responsibility by pooling all income. Basic individual needs and community expenses are then paid out of this shared income, but there usually isn't much left for personal expenses like outside travel or entertainment. Both systems have their positive and negative aspects, and we've seen both working successfully. Some groups are beginning to explore the possibility of a system based on a cooperative, worker-owned and managed business model. We have not seen this synthesis fully operating on a community level.

A stronger sense of unity is created when most of the members work within the community, unless the outside work is a community-related business. **The Renaissance Community** in Turners Falls, Massachusetts has a bus

## NEW AGE COMMUNITIES IN THE ARTICLE

### **Chinook Community**

P.O. Box 57  
Clinton, Washington 98236  
(206) 321-1884

*Educational programs, bridging with new age consciousness in churches; gardens; urban bookstore*

### **Ananda Cooperative Community**

900 Alleghany Star Route  
Nevada City, California 95959  
(916) 265-5877

*Follows teachings of Yogananda; yoga and meditation; retreat center; farm*

### **Integral Urban House, Farallones**

#### **Farallones Institute**

1516 5th St.  
Berkeley, California  
(415) 525-1150; (707) 874-3060

*Alternative energy — wind, solar, etc.; organic gardening at urban house*

### **Holistic Community**

1 West Hanover Ave.  
Mt. Freedom, New Jersey 07970  
(201) 895-4577

*Community in large resort hotel, studying Rudolph Steiner and Edgar Cayce; cooperative businesses*

### **Meditation Mount**

P.O. Box 566  
Ojai, California 93023  
(805) 646-6300

*Correspondence courses in meditation and spiritual studies; conferences*

### **Sunray Community**

RD 1, Box 87  
Huntington, Vermont 05462  
(802) 434-3685

### **Aquarian Educational Group**

30188 Mulholland Drive  
Agoura, California 91301  
(213) 889-0678

*Classes in meditation, spiritual studies, esoterics; book publishing*

### **Meadowlark Healing Center**

26126 Fairview Ave  
Hemet, California 92343  
(714) 927-1113

*Wholistic healing community based on inner spiritual healing process*

### **Windstar Foundation**

P.O. Box 286  
Snowmass, Colorado 81655  
(303) 927-4777

*Solar energy demonstration center started by John Denver, classes*

### **A.R.E. Clinic**

4018 N 40th St.  
Phoenix, Arizona 85018  
(602) 955-0551

*Wholistic health center started by Edgar Cayce Foundation, focusing on inner spiritual healing*

### **Arcosanti**

Cordes Junction  
Mayer, Arizona 86333  
(602) 632-7135

*Ecologically sound architecture, classes, workshops*

### **Lama Foundation**

Box 4444  
San Cristobal, New Mexico 87564

*Community blending Eastern and Western disciplines connected with Ram Dass*

### **Mettanokit Community**

Rt. 123  
Greenville, New Hampshire 03048  
(603) 878-9883

### **Lucis Trust**

866 UN Plaza #566  
New York, New York 10017  
(212) 421-1577

### **The Farm**

Route 1, Box 197A  
Summertown, Tennessee 38483  
(615) 379-7248

*Spiritual community with Stephen Gaskin as teacher; "Plenty Network" international relief organization and midwifery*

### **The Abode of the Message**

Box 396  
New Lebanon, New York 12125  
(518) 794-8850

*Sufi community with Pir Vilayat as teacher, offering seminars through Omega Institute*

### **Sevenoaks Community**

Rt. 1, Box 86  
Madison, Virginia 22727  
(703) 948-4100

*Pathwork process of spiritual and psychological growth; rural communities in Virginia and New York*

### **Springhill Community**

Box 124  
Ashby, Massachusetts 01431  
(617) 386-5622

*Spiritual community offering workshops, psychological counseling*

### **New Alchemy Institute**

P.O. Box 432  
Woods Hole, Massachusetts 02543  
(617) 563-2655

*Demonstration center for alternative energy technology*

### **Rowe Conference Center**

Box 273  
Rowe, Massachusetts 01367  
(413) 339-4216

### **Renaissance Community**

Box 281  
Turners Falls, Massachusetts 01376  
(413) 863-9711

*Community developing self-sufficiency; several cooperative businesses; bringing spirit into music*

### **Center of the Light**

Box 540  
Gt. Barrington, Massachusetts 01230  
(413) 229-2396

*Healing center and community started by Gene and Eva Graf, with classes on wholistic health and spiritual growth*

### **Heartwood School**

Johnson Rd.  
Washington, Massachusetts 02135  
(413) 623-6677

*Owner-builder school with 3-week courses in building solar passive homes*

### **Sirius Community**

P.O. Box 388  
Amherst, Massachusetts 01004  
(413) 256-8015

*Community living, meditation, workshops, organic gardening, cooperative businesses*

company, a silk-screening company, and a construction company.

Yet too much time within the community, as at **The Farm** and many 19th century communities, and members can become too isolated, close-minded and self-righteous.

Recently, many spiritual groups have realized the importance of working and helping transform the business world. Some have started cooperative, worker-owned and managed businesses; some are offering trainings in humanistic techniques and workplace democracy. All of this is helping build better bridges with society as well as helping alternative groups learn to deal more effectively with money and become more grounded and stable. Cooperative businesses are a powerful way to demonstrate that cooperation and spiritual values **do** work in the marketplace, and they often have a transforming effect on people who wouldn't feel comfortable visiting an alternative community. Because the workers own and manage their own business, there is a strong sense of dedication to doing quality work, as well as to developing better relationships with fellow employees and with customers.

**The Abode Community**, started by Sufi teacher Pir Vilayat 7 years ago on an old Shaker Village, has started several cooperative businesses: a wood-stove company, a VW repair shop, and a bakery. **The Holistic Community** in Mt. Freedom, New Jersey, based on the teachings of Rudolph Steiner and Edgar Cayce, started a real estate company and a construction company. Members of **Sirius Community** in Massachusetts, started **Rainbow Builders**, a worker-owned and managed solar construction company, and recently a doughnut business. Members of **Ananda Community**, started by Swami Kriyananda, a disciple of Yogananda, over 12 years ago, support themselves through several small businesses: a publishing company, a children's school, a health food store, a dairy, and an incense and oil company. A guest program provides additional income for the community. We found that many communities generate a large part of their income through programs for visitors: educational programs, retreats, counseling, and healing services.

Many communities that we visited have financial problems, or a feeling that they need more money to do all that they could. This often seemed to be the result of what we call "poverty consciousness" — the belief that it isn't spiritual to have money (or that one isn't worthy enough to have everything work out smoothly). Often there was a subconscious lack of faith in God or the Universe to provide for all of one's needs. There was an understanding in these groups that to increase their financial flow it is as important to overcome these negative attitudes as it is to seek practical solutions.

Many spiritual groups tithe 10% or more of their income (even if they perceive themselves as needing money) to other non-profit groups whose work they support. And whatever is given in love, always returns 100-fold.

### LEADERSHIP/GOVERNANCE

Some of the characteristics which distinguish true new age groups from "cults," in our opinion, have to do with issues of power, authority and freedom. A cult has a

strong, authoritarian leader whose word is law. There is usually no involvement in decision-making by the membership, except for a select few, personally chosen by the leader. In addition, the leaders use a great deal of force (physical and/or psychological) to demand members' total conformity and adherence. Members are not permitted to leave the group of their own free will. There is a great deal of control and manipulation, and a total lack of respect for the all-important spiritual principle of individual free will in deciding one's life direction.

In contrast, in true new age groups, there is a great deal more respect for the individual's own choice about joining or leaving a group. If a group is truly working with the Light, there is no need to coerce people.

Although some new age groups have a guru providing strong centralized leadership on spiritual matters, they usually have day-to-day administrative policies decided by members. This is the situation at **Ananda Community**, **Sunray Community** and **Center of the Light Community**, for example. The process of moving from dependence on one strong leader or guru figure toward more of a group process seems to be very widespread in American communities at this time. Every good guru realizes that his/her main task is to help the student or disciple move beyond the need for outside authorities toward discovery of his/her own inner wisdom. As individuals trust their inner wisdom and prove they can take on more responsibility, the guru can release more responsibility to them. Often it's difficult for **both** leaders and followers to break the hold of their mutual creation of dependency — it's more comfortable and secure than new patterns of equality.

In groups where there has been a successful transition from hierarchy to government by peers, such as the **Pathwork Communities** (Center for the Living Force and Sevenoaks), **Chinook Community**, as well as **Findhorn Community** in Scotland, members are encouraged to get their own inner guidance, and decisions are made by consensus. If the group is large, there is usually a smaller policy-making group with rotating membership. Leadership in these communities often rotates for different functions and different tasks, and leaders function more as facilitators or "focalizers" of energy. They serve as focal points of communication between the work group and the rest of the community; the work flows smoothly and everyone has input into decision-making. In these groups, members are **expected** to be responsible, and this expectation helps to draw that out of them. The old assumption was that people don't already have "it," and so "it" has to be poured into someone, or hammered into them by someone else. A true new age leader draws out the leadership potential in others, rather than trying to do it all.

### RELATIONSHIPS/FAMILY

Most new age communities presently encourage and support monogamous, committed relationships based on a deep spiritual bond. Couples who come to a community whose relationship is already on shaky grounds or is not whole on all levels — physical, emotional, mental, spiritual — often find themselves breaking up, and searching for

new relationships. Many communities go through periods of relative stability in couple relationships, and then other periods of upheaval.

In some communities, like **The Farm** in Tennessee, formal marriage (and a courting process) is required if a couple wants to live together. In most other communities, marriage is approved of, but not mandatory. Some groups have experimented with more open and casual relationships, with frequent trading of partners, but have found it caused much pain and jealousy, and drained too much energy from the community.

In most of the communities we visited, like **The Abode**, **Ananda**, and **Chinook**, there are nuclear family units, some living separately in their own homes, and some sharing houses with other people. Responsibility for child-rearing is mainly with the parents, but often with child-care programs. Sometimes schools are provided for the children to free the parents to participate more in community life. In most cases, there have been limits placed on the number of children a community can support or that it has room for. **The Farm** is the main exception to this, as one of their major services is providing a home for any unwanted baby. They even provide a midwifery service.

In a majority of the new age communities we visited, there is a consciousness about freeing up the traditional male/female roles. Men often work in the kitchens and play with the children, and women often work in construction and auto repair. Only in some of the more traditional, Eastern spiritual groups are there strongly defined sex roles.

A few communities have chosen a communal child-rearing practice over the traditional family, like some of the Israeli kibbutzim, where the children live in their own house and are attended by a rotating group of parents and/or single adults. Whether this communal child-rearing system is superior to the nuclear family still remains to be seen. In our experience of visiting many groups, the most important element seemed to be not so much the particular system used, but rather the amount of love and attention given to the children. In general, children raised in communities seems to be more open and friendly to newcomers, with more facets of their personalities developed, than children from traditional families. This seems to be due to the many different types of people that a child is exposed to in a community.

### SPIRITUAL PRACTICE

Not surprisingly, the spiritual practices of the communities we visited were one of the strongest unifying and harmonizing elements. In groups we visited which did not have a common spiritual path or share some kind of spiritual practice, there seemed less harmony and unity.

Spiritual practices we observed included many different forms. In groups following an Eastern spiritual path, like **Ananda**, there was yoga, Hindu chanting and meditation. In the more Western groups, like **Chinook** and **Springhill**, there were silent meditations and prayers. Groups led by Native Americans, like **Mettanokit**, included Indian sweat lodge rituals for purification. **Center of the Light** and other

healing communities have healing services to help those at the service and friends and family who may be ill, as well as offer prayers for planetary healing. Other groups do T'ai Chi exercises together.

Many groups have silent "attunements" — a practice of holding hands in a circle before beginning work or a meeting together, to feel a sense of at-one-ment with God, with others in the group, and with the tools and materials that the group will use.

**Lama Community** and **The Abode**, as well as a number of other groups, do Sufi dances, which are universal dances of peace from the world's religions. Dancing and singing sacred songs is common in most groups and helps bring members together in a joyful way.

### CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Most of the successful communities we visited felt it was important to not push conflict under the carpet. There was usually an agreement to use some kind of process or technique for resolving interpersonal problems. They recognized that conflict is inevitable in a group, but that if you assume it can be worked out, this helps greatly in achieving resolution. Some groups have a weekly "personal sharing" session where problems are aired with the whole group, and neutral parties help the antagonists resolve differences. Other groups use a specific technique like **The Pathwork's** "core-energetics" or psychosynthesis, co-counseling and forgiveness techniques. Some groups like **Ananda** primarily use a meditative process to work on personal negativity.

All the spiritual groups encouraged the individual to try and resolve the problem within oneself first, taking personal responsibility, before bringing it up with others. In all the groups there seemed to be a feeling of love and support to help people work through their problems with each other and learn to be more cooperative.

### NETWORKS/COOPERATION

We realized in our travels that all groups and communities seem to go through a similar growth process. Each passes through a necessary stage of self-centered building and integration in its early years, and then through an adolescent overconfidence in its own particular approach as being **The Best and Only Way to Go**. Later a more mature attitude usually evolves in which the group recognizes its own focus as a valuable part of the whole, and that there are many paths to God. The group then begins to establish communication links with other groups, recognizing value in mutual support and cooperation.

From this awareness, networks of new age groups are developing all over the country and around the world. As each group comes to respect the uniqueness and pioneering efforts of the other groups, a growing recognition emerges of the power and potential of their combined work. They realize that their groups are like the seeds of a new culture and civilization. And like the alchemists of old, they are together adding the small but potent catalyst to the social mixture that transforms the whole world into a new and radiant order — a new hope for our world! □



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**Cooperative Communities**, Swami Kriyananda; Ananda Publications, 900 Alleghaney Star Route, Nevada City, CA 95959; 1968.

**Shared Houses, Shared Lives**, Eric Raimy, J.P. Tarcher, Inc. Los Angeles, CA 1979, Distributed by St. Martin's Press, New York.

**Communes in the Counter Culture**, Keith Melville, William Morrow and Co., New York, 1972.

**Co-ops, Communes and Collectives**, Edited by John Case and Rosemary Taylor, Pantheon Books, 1979.

**Onearth Magazine 3** (on Group Consciousness), Findhorn Community Publishers, The Park, Forres, Moray, Scotland.

## The Planetary Network of Light

Regional Networks  
in New England and Washington, D.C.



by Corinne McLaughlin and Gordon Davidson

The New England Network of Light and the Washington, D.C. Network of Light are two examples of many autonomous, regional networks of new age groups emerging around the world — all part of a vast network of light. Each of our groups in this network are points of light and positive vision, building for the future in a time of world upheaval and uncertainty. These points of light together create a golden web of light, an etheric web that is like a conscious membrane encircling the earth, linking the planetary family of new age groups together, with little outside organization.

Each of our groups are like seeds of a new culture and civilization, based on cooperation rather than competition, and on love and respect for all of life, living in harmony with the earth, with each other and with God. Together, all of these networks of groups represent pioneering efforts and creative change in nearly every aspect of life — alternative energy, wholistic health,

worker-owned and managed businesses, appropriate technology, organic agriculture, humanistic politics, transpersonal psychology and counseling, and self-sufficient, inter-dependent communities.

Each of our groups is working on creating solutions to many of the problems currently facing our country and our world — in energy, food production, inflation, environmental pollution, health, poverty, etc. We are like experimental “research and development” outposts for society — as well as meeting our own needs in a more joyful and peaceful way. Because each group is developing something unique in a particular area that is their special contribution to the whole, we realize that we can learn from each other — successes as well as failures, so that we don't each have to re-invent the wheel.

Each autonomous regional network seems to have a unique character. In New England there is an emphasis on agriculture and alternative energy, as there are many

rurally-based intentional communities in the Network. In Washington, D.C., being a major urban center, groups in the Network tend to focus on healing, psychological counseling and meditation.

### THE NEW ENGLAND NETWORK

In New England the impetus to learn from each other and to create a sense of mutual support and cooperation among our groups led to our first gathering together at the Spring Equinox of 1979. Nine groups met to celebrate the coming of Spring and to share information about their work: Sirius Community, Renaissance Community, the Abode of the Message, Heartwood Owner-Builder School, the Institute for Wholistic Education, Springhill Community, Another Place Farm, Mettanokit Community and Temenos. The Network has grown now to 60 groups in 6 states gathering together four times a year, on weekends near the Solstices and Equinoxes, with one of the groups hosting the gathering at their center as a way to get to know each other better and learn of each other's work.

We feel we are a regional Network, but we don't draw an exclusive circle around ourselves, either in regard to other local new age people or to all the local inhabitants of this region. We feel the reality that we are all connected and interdependent with all of humanity. Rather than striving for "self-sufficiency" as individual groups or as a network of groups, we have a new understanding of self-sufficiency as an increased capacity to serve others.

Each Monday evening, groups in the Network link up with each other in meditation, lighting a fire or candle to symbolize the re-kindling of the light within us, and sending love and light to each other to strengthen the Network and to share our healing energy with humanity and with the earth, wherever it is most needed. In our united efforts we can have a transforming and harmonizing effect on our region in these troubled times.

In our evolving wisdom, gained over the last three years, we've learned that "network" is essentially a verb, rather than a noun — an on-going *process* of building personal connections with people in other groups, and finding common purposes in our work together. There has been a definite learning from experience that the identity of the Network should follow the cooperative functions that people have energy for, rather than creating a lot of structure and organization for its own sake.

Our purpose as a Network of Light is not just to create a sense of support among our groups, but also to reach out to the general public to meet people's needs, and to provide a sense of stability and inspiration for the future. We support alternative and cooperative businesses, and are developing local resources to help build self-sustaining local economies. We are aware that we are creating a new structure for social interaction, and we feel we are demonstrating how groups of any kind (business, governmental or educational, etc.) can cooperate and mutually benefit each other.

On a practical level, Network groups have set up bartering arrangements with each other for goods and services, exchanged work days, visited each other's centers,

participated in each other's educational programs, and co-sponsored events together. Each Network Gathering generates new contacts and friendships, and new projects are created.

Currently, there are several projects which Network groups are working on: (For more information, contact these groups)

- **An on-going newsletter** with reports of Network activities and projects (\$5/year subscription — from Sirius Community)
- **Local fairs and festivals** organized by several groups within the area of a few towns to offer presentations of new age ideas, crafts, activities, etc. Contact Konnie Fox at Sirius Community
- **A Directory for the New England Network** A 40-page display of the activities of over 60 new age communities, wholistic health centers, cooperative businesses and ashrams in New England. Available for \$2.00 plus \$1.00 postage and packaging from Sirius Community, P.O. Box 388, Amherst, MA 01004
- **A Network of Light Poster**, giving information on Network groups and their programs, to be posted around New England (contact Kule at the Abode)
- **A facilitating council**, composed of representatives from various groups, to coordinate activities of the Network, to plan the agenda for the Solstice and Equinox Gatherings, and to provide a sense of continuity between Gatherings (contact Owen de Ris at (413) 528-9181 or Gordon Davidson at Sirius Community, (413) 256-8015.

"Whatever happens during the coming decade we can be sure there will be more than a fair share of difficulties for humanity to surmount. The successful resolution of these challenges may well depend on the application to society at large of the values and insights being stabilized by the New England Network and similar networks around the world. It seems that we need to realize that wholistic lifestyles are no longer 'alternative' or peripheral but, in fact, constitute the *center*." — Ralph White

For further information on the Network, information on participating, or to purchase a Directory write to Gordon Davidson or Corinne McLaughlin, Sirius Community, P.O. Box 388-C, Amherst, MA 01004.

### THE WASHINGTON, D.C. NETWORK

The Washington, D.C., Network of Light first met in the summer of 1979 when Peter Caddy from the Findhorn Community in Scotland spoke to representatives from 22 spiritual groups in the area, who were invited to hear about his experiences visiting Light centers around the world. Peter was very inspiring about the need for spiritual groups to support each other. The groups realized that they couldn't expect the rest of the world to cooperate if they themselves, as representatives of spiritual groups, were not demonstrating cooperation with each other. They felt it was important to affirm the uniqueness of each spiritual path represented by the groups, but at the same time to celebrate the underlying unity among them.

Since that first gathering in 1979, groups in the Washington area have continued to meet every month or two, and there are now over 150 groups in the Network. Each meeting is hosted by a different group in their center, and the hosting group will offer a special service or prayer or experience relating to its work. This is followed by a group meditation and a pot luck meal or picnic, and sometimes by sacred dancing or Sufi dancing.

The purpose of the Network is to bring people of many different spiritual groups in the area together to experience the living love that is their mutual bond. Through the Network, groups are sharing their experiences, ideas and resources. There is a strong sense that building the Network among the groups is helping to create a synergistic energy necessary to bring a new age into full bloom, and to help transform the planet. As these groups are all located in the area of the nation's capitol, a particular urgency is felt in the necessity of generating more Light, love, and positive energy, as Washington has such a great effect on the rest of the world.

The Network organized the first day-long "Heart to Heart and Center to Center" Festival in 1981, with 50 groups participating, and over 500 people attending. The Festival was held on Valentine's Day as a way for groups to share the love energy of that special day, and expand it from individuals to groups.

In February of 1982 a second Festival was held, for two days, with over 1000 people attending, and over 70 groups participating. Each group had an opportunity to present itself to the public in a room, share literature and discuss its services, goals and purposes. In the large unity room

on-going musical events and speakers from the spiritual community gave presentations, including Barbara Marx Hubbard of the Futures Network. With food, meditation and a wonderful heart energy, a deep sense of support and shared vision and work has developed among the Washington area groups.

In August of 1980 a Council of Light was developed consisting of representatives of the area's spiritual organizations and light centers, with everyone welcome to participate. The Network was incorporated in January 1982 as a non-profit, tax-exempt organization.

A Light Leadership Conference was held in November 1981, emerging out of the networking efforts of five groups who were the co-sponsors of the Conference and who worked together for many months to organize it. The leaders of 31 spiritual groups in the Washington area were brought together to dialogue with each other around the theme of "Spiritualizing the Nation's Capitol: Transformation Through Cooperation." The conference was very successful in generating ideas and inter-group projects to bring greater Light to Washington, and a deeper sense of love and respect among the groups' leaders. One of the upcoming projects emerging from the Conference and from the work of the Network of Light is a Meditation for Universal Peace and World Unity to be held at the Jefferson Memorial on the Mall on June 5, 1982.

For further information on the Washington, D.C. Network of Light, contact Barbara Carpenter, 4617 Hunt Ave., Bethesda, MD 20016, (301) 986-1223. All spiritual groups in the Washington, D.C. area are welcome to join! □

## Sirius Community

A Center of Light and Positive Vision



by Gordon Davidson and Corinne McLaughlin

Living close to the earth, listening to the spirit of the land, and having a quiet sanctuary to feel our oneness with God and with all of life — this is the beauty that blesses our lives at Sirius Community. In the midst of the crises in the world, it is inspiring to us to know that it is possible to create a new way of life that is peaceful and loving, without totally cutting ourselves off from society.

Our community has been able to create its own form of self-government, as well as a unique economic system. We

pool our income so that we need a great deal less money to live comfortably. We're not dependent on multi-national oil companies to heat our homes, or on chain supermarkets to provide chemical-laden food, nor do we have to breathe polluted air. We have created a nurturing environment at Sirius where we can fully be ourselves, and can develop the kind of supportive and loving relationships that are essential for a new society.

It's also important to us not to isolate ourselves from

the world, but to build good relationships with our neighbors and with businesses in town. We are working to bring energy conservation awareness to the local area, through a solar construction company which specializes in energy efficient retro-fitting. Through our political work with the New World Alliance, we are working to transform the political process itself and create new public policies at the state and national levels (on everything from environmental protection to equitable tax structures to global security). Sirius has helped develop a network of new age groups in New England, to make all our work more accessible to the public. Our members have also taught courses at the local colleges.

The energy and the enthusiasm to do all the hard work that is needed to pioneer this sanctuary of a new life has come from learning to work with God's help; to co-create with the powers of the Universe. We've dedicated this center to help our many visitors transform themselves and to help transform society. People have often told us that it gives them strength and hope just to know that we're here, living this life. They see that it works even if they can't come to live with us themselves. In a sense, we feel like a research and development unit for society, pioneering solutions to some of the problems facing our world.

Our community is called Sirius (after the star Sirius, esoterically the source of love/wisdom for our planet), and it is located on 86 acres of forests and gardens near Amherst, Massachusetts. Sirius was founded in 1978 through an inner direction we received in our meditation to buy a particular piece of land and start a community. This inner guidance came as quite a surprise to us, as we were on our way back to Scotland and had no intention of starting a community at that time.

We had lived at the Findhorn Community in Scotland for several years and it had been a very powerful and transforming experience for us that totally changed our lives. It was like living decades in the future — a very beautiful and inspiring future. We had just completed a year-long tour of the United States, giving Findhorn slideshows and workshops to over 50 new age groups and communities who had invited us to come visit them and share our experiences of Findhorn. We in turn learned a great deal from the experiences of other communities, which came in very useful in starting a community ourselves.

As we had very little money at the time, buying a large piece of land seemed rather ridiculous. The people at the bank just laughed at us when we asked for a loan. We had no regular jobs nor permanent address. But we'd been learning to trust our guidance and to have faith in God, so we kept exploring all possibilities. We had three days to raise the \$30,000 downpayment. At a conference we attended that weekend, we talked to various people who knew of our work and knew of Findhorn and were in a position to help financially. Three out of four people we asked said "yes" to us. We had over \$30,000 in donations and loans in three days. Needless to say, that convinced us that starting a community must be right.

(Three and a half years later, our community is still based strongly on faith in God to meet our needs.

Whenever things aren't working out well financially, our whole community has a meeting to re-affirm our faith and to explore whatever negative attitudes of fear, or unworthiness, or poverty consciousness might be blocking the financial flow.)

After the purchase, we learned from the local historical society that the land was sacred to three tribes of the Iroquois Indians. This added confirmation that we were guided to the right piece of land. We've committed ourselves to carry on the Native American tradition of honoring the earth and protecting the ecological balance of our nature sanctuary.

The purpose of Sirius Community is to be a demonstration center of attunement to the will of God and expression of universal spiritual values: love, cooperation, sharing, and living in harmony with all life. We help people actualize their full potential and find their life purpose by deepening their experience of the Divine Presence within themselves, and understanding that presence within others. We see everyday life as our spiritual teacher, and work as "joyful productivity." We feel the importance of practical applications of our spiritual values through teaching skills such as organic gardening, solar building, vegetarian cooking, creating cooperative businesses, and recycling. We feel these skills are needed to live more lightly on the earth and conserve the earth's resources.

Sirius' full-time membership has grown over the years. After an initial visit to Sirius, exploring life in the community, people interested in becoming full members are asked to spend a month or two joining in the daily work flow and spiritual practices, and contributing for their food and rent. A personal sharing with members and a group meditation determines whether membership is for the highest good of all concerned.

If someone is interested in being involved with Sirius without being a full-time member, supporting membership is also available. A number of Supporting Members have joined the community and bought houses nearby, forming our extended family. Supporting Members participate on a more part-time basis, contributing to the community financially and/or through work projects, and in turn are supported by the community.

Sirius has been governed from the beginning by an egalitarian group process where inspiration and leadership can come from any member, and leadership functions are rotated. All decisions are made by group meditation and consensus. When there is an issue to be decided, we'll have a group meditation and work on releasing our personal opinions co-creatively attuning to God's will, and asking that the highest good for the whole group be made known to us. We then share what we each experience in the meditation, and work towards building a consensus.

We meditate as a group twice daily to strengthen the inner unity of the group and to share the spiritual energy generated for healing the earth and humanity. Weekly sharings are held to work out interpersonal problems, and to discuss business matters — and we find the two are often inter-related and hard to separate.

We support ourselves through our educational programs and materials, donations, and cooperative businesses and

all current income is pooled. Sirius also has a slideshow and cassette tape business, with lectures and meditations from its workshops. Faith in God and the abundance of the universe is the community's keynote, and provides a continual opportunity for growth in consciousness for all of us. Rainbow Builders, an independent worker-owned and managed solar construction company, was started a year and a half ago by some Sirius members and several friends. It has been quite successful, both financially and in terms of expressing spiritual values of cooperation, honesty and good quality craftsmanship.

The community currently has several houses, each one housing an average of three to six adults and up to three children. We've remodeled a garage for use as an educational center and community room, and an attic for use as a sanctuary for meditation. We built a tool shed with recycled lumber from a nearby farm, as we value recycling as an important way to conserve the earth's resources. We built a solar grow box for vegetables, and a new solar retreat house was started last fall. We recently completed a pond for swimming and aquatic food production. We've also been using permaculture methods to change forest to farmland and to develop our agriculture in harmony with the natural ecosystem. To conserve energy, we heat all our buildings with wood from our forest.

We have a large organic garden, using French Intensive and companion planting techniques. We work with attunement to the nature forces and the devas, relying on intuitive gardening methods. The garden is a source of great beauty and healing energy, as well as providing a good source of nourishment for the community as we move towards greater self-sufficiency and inter-dependency with others. We currently grow all our vegetables and herbs for ourselves and our many guests in the summer, and we can, freeze and dry our produce for the winter.

Before beginning work in the garden, or in any area of the community, we have an "attunement" (a time of silence) where we hold hands, close our eyes, and affirm our unity with God, with each other, and with the plants and tools that we will be working with. We've found that this is a very powerful way to create a sense of harmony in the group, and the work always goes much faster and smoother.

Sirius is open to visitors living and working in the community to learn practical skills like organic gardening, vegetarian cooking, and solar construction, and to join in the spiritual practices of the community. Arrangements can be made by calling or writing in advance, as accommodation is limited. A donation is requested to cover meals and accommodation. We also have an open house for more short term visits every Sunday from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., with a meditation at 11:00 and a pot luck lunch at 1:00. We'd love to meet you! Please write or call the community for directions and for a free brochure on current programs: Sirius Community, P.O. Box 388-C, Amherst, MA ;1004, (413) 256-8015. □

#### **Saturday Workshops**

May 29 — A Course in Miracles; June 5 — How to Start a Cooperative Business; June 12 — Organic Gardening and Attunement to Nature; June 19 — Building Community; June 26 — A spiritual Approach to Personal and Societal Crisis; July 10 — The Transforming Power of Music

#### **Weekend Community Living Experiences**

May 15-16; June 12-13; June 19-20; June 26-27; July 17-18; July 24-25; August 14-15; August 21-22; September 11-12.

#### **Gardening Apprenticeships: (1, 2, or 3 weeks each)**

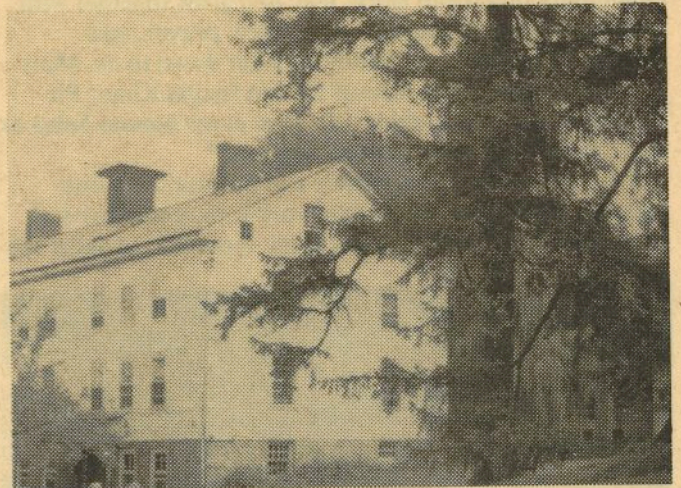
June 12 — July 2; July 10 — 30; August 7 — 27

## The Abode of the Message

by Kule and Barkat Jackman

I stand with my bare feet snuggling into the moist rich earth on the edge of our recently plowed field.

The earth is awake after its long winter slumber, ready to accept the seeds of our summer garden, the seeds of our good thoughts, and the seeds of our aspirations toward that great oneness which unites us all. People are gradually gathering for our regular Sunday service, strolling from



their nearby dwellings, or driving in from the local area. Today is unique, in that we are celebrating Universal Worship here on the farm. The sense of festivity and celebration become more apparent as the many pilgrims, some dressed in lively colors, continue their arrival to the field. One newcomer brings candles, and a few others prepare an altar out of field stones in the center of the

garden. The air itself seems charged with some magical spirit.

A bell rings out from the nearby buildings telling any stragglers that the celebration is about to commence. Several small groups arrive shortly, many of them children, joining in the large loose circle of several hundred. Several guitars, drums, and a violin accompany some of the pilgrims. Hand in hand, the circle finally closes, symbolizing our oneness and completeness. Every face and heart radiates with the light of the sun. The warmth draws us all towards a listening silence. And then, after a short while, a voice rises, growing to include all those present in an invocation to the One Being . . .

*“Toward the one, the perfection of love, harmony and beauty, the only being, united with all the illuminated souls who form the embodiment of the master, the spirit of guidance.”*

Why have all these people come here? They have gathered on the farm of The Abode of the Message, a spiritual community in New Lebanon, New York, to celebrate the Earth's springtime awakening at planting time, and to seek a deeper experience of Life's spirit.

On the hillside above is, majestic spruce trees shelter a cluster of Shaker buildings. These are the main buildings of the Abode. As the heart of the community, they provide housing, a main kitchen, dining room, meditation hall, bookstore, library, woodshop, recreation space and childcare space. The Abode family consists of 60 resident adults and 25 children living on 450 acres, located 25 miles east of Albany, New York. We have a 5 acre farm, an herb garden, a few fields in grains and hay, a flock of chickens and several horses. Ten new houses have also sprouted up since our first planting in the spring of 75.

Our roots as a community took hold as a result of an inspiration of our teacher, Pir Vilayat Inayat Khan, head of the Sufi Order of the West. The vision was of a community that could work, live, and grow together with understanding, compassion, tolerance, prayer, and ecstasy. Many spiritual traditions filter down to us. Most strongly, though, are those of Hazrat Inayat Khan, Pir Vilayat's father, who said, *“To treat every human being as a chalice of God is to fulfill all religion.”*

We find that living our ideals and putting them into action is a daily challenge. Our work is to remember and awaken to the Divinity within us all. Activities to assist the

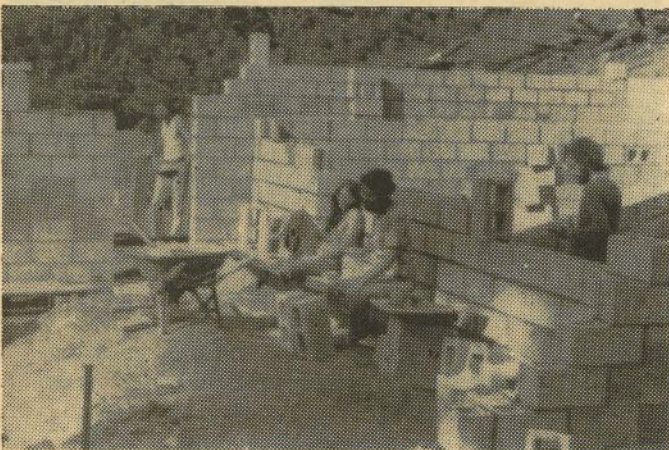
remembering process include prayers which are held three times a day in the meditation hall. Each Sunday we hold a Universal Worship service, a celebration honoring the major world religions. We also offer classes on the Sufi teachings and the Sufi dances of Universal peace. For those interested in pursuing spiritual practices in a more intense program we offer guided individual retreats. People come from all over the country to do retreats here in one of numerous individual retreat huts on the land. Delving into our spiritual heritage, we hold monthly seminars, as well as week long summer camps, with visiting teachers. These have included David Spangler, Reb Zalman Schacter-Shalomi, Sun Bear and Wabun, Ram Dass, Taj Inayat, and Pir Vilayat.

The Abode welcomes visitors (with advanced notice) who wish to spend time participating in the community life. During the warmer months of the year, our “Earthlight” Apprentice Program offers week-long intensive workshops in the areas of organic gardening, herb gardening, food preserving, whole foods cooking, and construction. During the interim weeks between the practical intensives, participants may stay and continue their concentration in a more informal atmosphere, working hand in hand with the Abode family members. For those who wish to study the Sufi teachings in depth, we offer two month-long Sufi Studies programs which also integrate activity with the community life. A weekly or monthly charge covers the cost of the program or monthly visit, while visitors of short or indeterminate periods pay \$10 per day. For further information on the Earthlight, Sufi Studies, retreats or any other Abode activities, contact Jami Klein at the Abode office, (518) 794-8090.

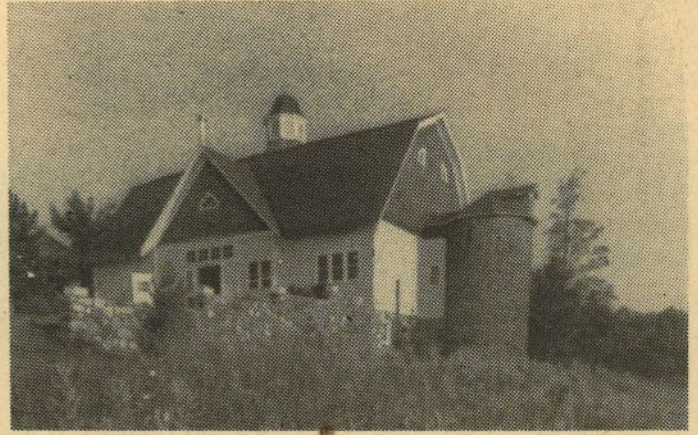
As people stay on longer they may wish to consider becoming a family member. This entails a process of regularly checking in with an admissions committee to determine if such a step is in the interest of all concerned. There is an admissions fee and family members pay a monthly rent.

The spectrum of family members include representatives from a wide range of occupations and interests. From professionals working in the nearby cities of Pittsfield and Albany to farmers and bakers working on the land, from jewelry craftspersons to electronic engineers. The flow of individuals thru the family member experience seems to indicate that The Abode of the Message is a stepping stone or learning center for some while a permanent home for others. As change is the nature of life, so the many activities create an ever blossoming dynamic in the context of a balanced whole.

As a community we have experimented with a number of economic systems and work arrangements. We are continuously evolving and these changes are signs of our growth. The final goal is beyond our vision, yet we can make our daily work the eternal goal, awakening to perhaps a more illuminated way of proceeding with our day's events. We must live as if we were to live a thousand years, and as if we would die tomorrow, experiencing the fullness of daily life within the context of planetary evolution. *We are seeking to more fully awaken to the Message of our time, which Hazrat Inayat Khan states as “the awakening of humanity to the Divinity in Man.”* □



# The Center of the Light



by Mary Kate Jordan and Charlie Stuart

The Center of the Light is a natural healing center located in the southern Berkshire mountains of Massachusetts, near the juncture of Massachusetts, Connecticut and New York State. We run a full program of week-long and weekend workshops throughout the summer months on a wide range of topics, and also have an in-depth, two-year-round healing course for those interested in a comprehensive study experience. This course is based largely on an extensive and complete system of natural healing developed over many years by Eva and Eugene Graf, called the Graf Body Systems.

*We've chanted and prayed and centered our attention on the Source of the energy and connectedness flowing from hand to hand around our circle. Now our hands are no longer joined; each of us has returned from our statement of unity in purpose to contain that unity within each individual presence. Within this understanding, one of us begins to share the things that have touched-to-the-heart since the last time we have been together. One by one we speak until the circle is filled.*

We are a community of dedicated therapists, and offer personal counseling and on-going classes on nutrition, herbology, psychosynthesis, healing with energy and prayer, various forms of massage and body work, music and crystal healing, visualization, yoga and T'ai Chi.

*The ground rule for our go-round — no one responds; each of us is free to say whatever we feel without fear of being jumped on or attacked — is flexible; often now the circle dissolves in waves of shared humor as we deepen our trust of ourselves, the process and each other.*

Our main purpose in doing this work is to bring people to a greater sense of self confidence in dealing with personal health problems on their own. We believe each person has within them the ability to discern what is right and true for themselves, and we work to sharpen the individual's own knowledge and intuition so that they can take greater responsibility for their own total health. We also strive to help people establish a personal connection with the moving spiritual force behind all experience.

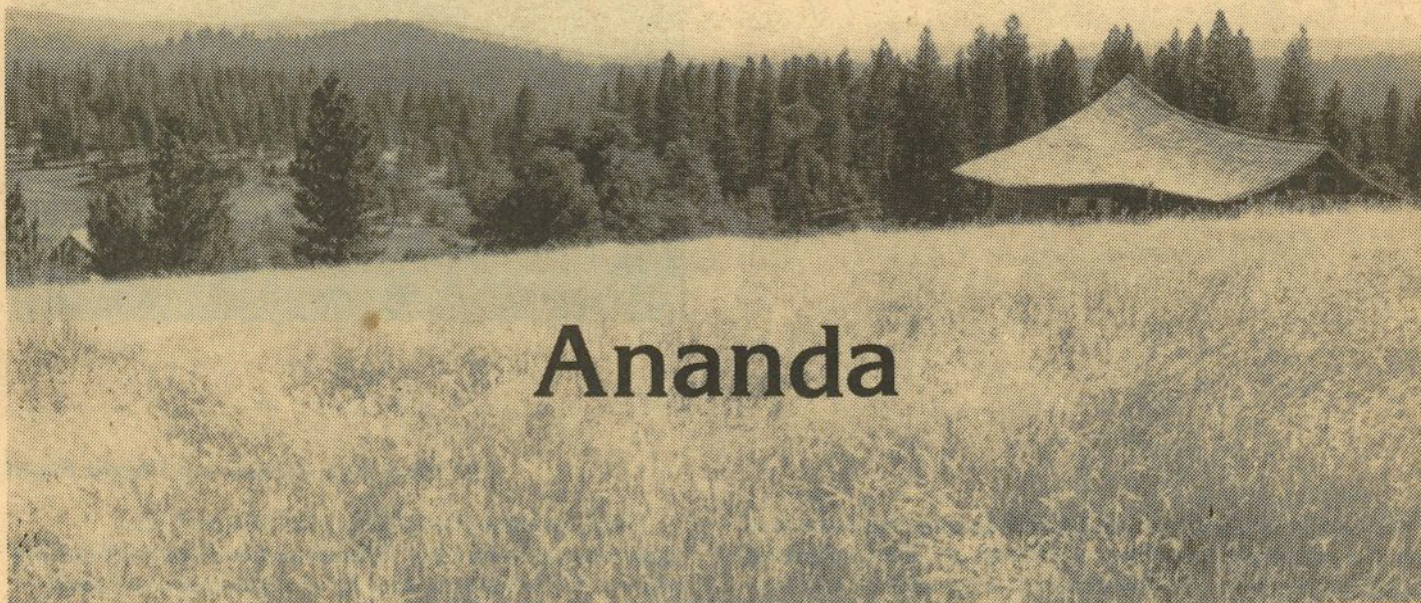
*The focus moves to healing. Any new insights, inspirations, research or information we have available are shared. We bring here, too, news of changes and healing within ourselves and within those we know, relatives, friends, those who've come to us for help. And then we pray — asking, praising, thanking, communicating with God.*

*With the most important items covered, now it's down to business. Someone with a paper and pen takes down agenda items. How much are we going to spend this month for food to store for emergency use? The staff photos for the catalog are ready; which of yours do you want printed? Are we going to purchase shares in that portable computer system? The communal pantry in the barn needs cleaning. How large is the volunteer cleanup crew? How many more are willing to be volunteered? Shall we do it before lunch or after? Alright, then, let's go upstairs and eat.*

Communion with the Divine is an integral part of the way in which we live, work and receive information and guidance. Our spiritual focus is strong and central to our work, but it remains essentially open and non-dogmatic. We accept all forms of sincere spiritual expression. Our work is in teaching, doing healing, and sharing our love for all creation.

*The Center of the Light is parented by the Church of Christ-Consciousness, a healing church believing in the divinity of the entire human family, and founded by Eva and Eugene Graf. Reflecting our belief that the "Center of the Light" is within the human heart and that healing the earth through love can be done anywhere, we are not seeking to expand the community of people who live at the Center. Those feeling a strong desire to do so are invited to come to the surrounding area to seek housing and employment.*

Summer catalogs, our quarterly newsletter, *The Light Journal*, and further information about the Church and the Center are available through: The Center of the Light, P.O. Box 540-CM, Great Barrington, MA 01230, (413) 229-2396. □



# Ananda

by George Beinhorn

*Probably the most successful community in the world, it offers a model, for seekers on all paths, of a simpler, more meaningful way of life.*

Ananda Cooperative Village is a spiritual community with about 140 permanent residents, located on 690 acres of Sierra foothills land near Nevada City, in northern California.

Though we who live here are all disciples of Paramhansa Yogananda, as far as human types goes we're quite a mixed bag. Evelyn Miller is 74 (she teaches our seminar in 'Yoga — the Art of Agelessness'). Sheila Rush is a former law professor from New York City. Professionals are abundantly represented, so are artists, carpenters, housewives, writers, farmers and dairymen.

What we have in common is the desire to build a life founded on harmonious cooperation as an alternative to cutthroat competition, and Self-realization as an alternative to a fruitless search for happiness in outward things and conditions.

Composure is the keynote of daily life among adults at Ananda. Calmness, Yogananda said, is the oil that smooths the way for harmonious relations between people. I remember how, during my first visit, in 1974, I walked around the hills to all the houses here at Ananda, talking to people and taking pictures — ostensibly to supply Ananda Publications with photos; but more importantly for me, to find out whether it was all too good to be true, or if I ought to quit my good-paying job as a magazine editor, and move here.

Day after day I found the same thing: this wonderful peacefulness in people, the eyes that shone with a special quality I couldn't yet define, but that my instincts told me was worth any sacrifice to get for myself.

I visited Lakshmi, living alone with her small daughter Gyandevi in a rustic cabin. I asked her if it had worked out well for her here at Ananda, if despite divorce and a low income she'd considered leaving. No, she said with an open laugh; it was everything she'd looked for. Lakshmi has lived here over ten years now. Life at Ananda, not the easiest existence for a single mother, far from wearing her down into attitudes of sullen survival has brought out qualities in her of a bubbling joy that ripples over calmness. Her eyes still express the same sweetness that I saw in them when she stood on the porch of her cabin, which burned down in the Ananda forest fire of 1976.

I don't think that without that quality, which comes from an inner relationship with God, we'd have been able to survive as a community. In just five hours, on a hot and very windy July afternoon, a forest fire burned 450 heavily wooded acres of Ananda's land — and something like 90 percent of our dwellings. I remember racing down a rough dirt road in the back of a pickup truck, personal belongings from Jyotish's house piled amid sloshing fire extinguishers. Jyotish, then the community manager, had laid every board of his lovely geodesic dome by himself. His wife, Devi, had given birth to their first child in that home just ten days before the fire. The flames had taken Lakshmi's cabin and Vidura's house, and were roaring through the trees behind us. Yet Jyotish quipped philosophically, "Well, I guess that'll solve the problem we were having with leaks in the roof!"

A few members left after the fire, but most were sustained by the inner practice of God-communion, and stayed. Indeed, the fire **forced** us to take our attention off the struggle to establish our own little household plots — as far away as possible from the neighbors' — and to live our claimed philosophy of cooperation with each other and dependence on Him.



Ananda was founded first as a meditation retreat for visitors. The retreat was built in 1967-68 on the original 75 acres purchased by Swami Kriyananda. From that first effort to serve others with spiritual truths there grew the support for a cooperative village. In 1969 the papers were signed for the purchase of Ananda Farm, 300 acres of meadow and forest six miles down the road from the retreat. Last year we held a mortgage burning ceremony to celebrate the final payment on that land.

The first years were very difficult materially. Jobs? There were certainly none at Ananda. We were a farm in name only; the soil was the worst our 75-year-old head gardener had seen in 60 years, and we were able to keep our little garden under cultivation only by labor-intensive year-round composting. No prospect of an income there!

Jobs were to be had only in town, on Forest Service tree-planting contracts that required crews to be away from Ananda for weeks at a time, and in struggling little mail order industries located in the community itself. When residents came home at night, they were fully ready to indulge the dream that brought them here, of solitary, even secluded, communion with nature and thoughts of God.

But Swami Kriyananda had said at the start that if it were to survive, the community would always have to exist on two levels; first for the residents, as a better alternative to life outside; but also as an example and instrument of service for others. In other words, we could never expect to have a lasting good life for ourselves unless we gave our lives and Ananda back to God, to show others that a spiritualized, dedicated life provides real fulfillments hardly conceivable in a world as chaotic as ours.

The fire flushed us out of the woods. Community manager Jyotish described the period when he and other householders were putting up new homes after the fire: "We've begun to think of Ananda as a whole now. We're working more cooperatively. When we started we were people from the city who came to the country to be hermits, so we put our houses as far away from each other as we could. Now, six or seven years later, we're a spiritual family that wants to create that sense of family, and we're putting out housing in clusters. If we hadn't been open to the lesson, the fire would have been a disaster for us; instead, it's brought an opportunity to work closer together."

It wasn't as if the members had no other alternative than to humbly rebuild. An easy way out offered itself. A county truck with a faulty spark arrester was discovered to have set the blaze. Ananda could have sued and collected as much as \$2 million. But we declined to do so. In a letter to the county board of supervisors, Swami Kriyananda expressed the members' feeling that the fire was our own hard luck, not to be borne by the taxpayers of Nevada County, who are our neighbors and friends. The result of that decision was that we faced our task squarely, without self-pity — and grew tremendously in the effort it took to maintain a positive, constructive outlook in the face of all those ashes still smoldering where the houses once stood.

Swami Kriyananda said in an interview six months after the fire, "The more you are open to superconsciousness, the more you'll see it's all there— everything you could

want, even practical things. The path isn't only meditating and chanting OM; it's also trying to introduce spiritual consciousness into all the things that you do — cooking, working, talking, and joking. We're not trying to run away from the world here at Ananda. We're trying to spiritualize our relationship with the world."

Ananda consciously takes on the role of a model community. Visitors come from all over the world and from all paths to study the essential, nonsectarian aspects of our lifestyle. We also have members living in many city centers, proving that you don't have to go into the hills to prove the validity of truths that lead to a harmonious life.

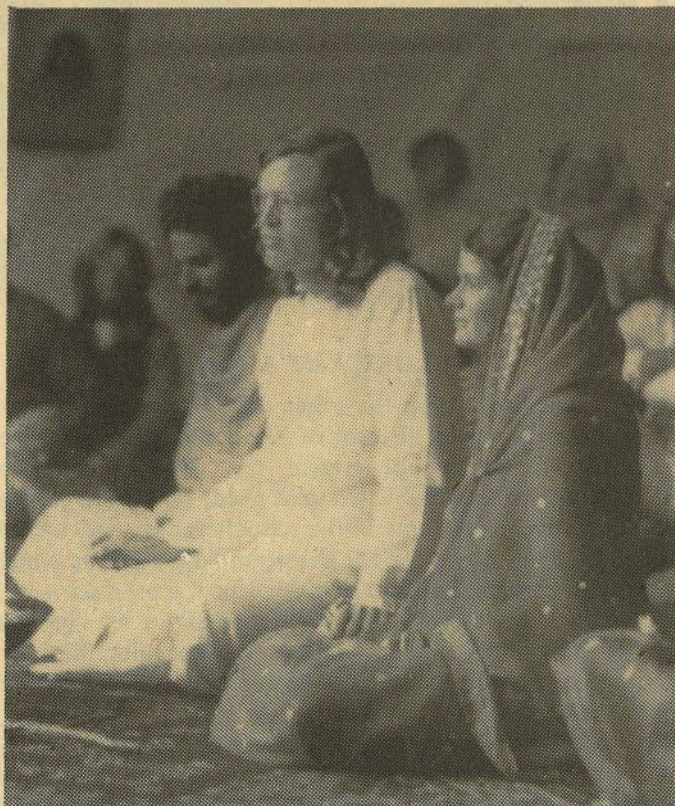
If Ananda has any specialized interests, it's in developing spiritual models for marriage and child-raising.

As indicated in the long introduction about the schools, we put great emphasis on developing the child's innate sense of morality, and on the cultivation of a strong, calm personal center.

In marriage, the greatest gain to be made spiritually is considered to be the development of one's inner qualities of kindness, loyalty, and respect. The unavoidable frictions between two people living together spur us to make the effort to rise to higher levels of self-control and unselfishness — which are in fact the **only** way out of the unhappiness inherent in a narrower, selfish point of view.

Thus, the ideal marriage relationship is held to be one of deep friendship and mutual respect, rather than romantic expectations and emotional dependence. As Swami Kriyananda put it in a talk on marriage last summer — and he spoke very forcefully — "Let's face it, it's a battle of duty all the way, and only in that attitude is there, then, the possibility of true happiness."

"Our real harmony is in God alone," a former Ananda member said of his marriage, "And the closer we come to



God, the closer we feel to each other also, and the more real inner security and happiness we feel.”

Another area in which Ananda is developing new models is work. I remember how, during my first visit to Ananda, I dropped by the publications building and volunteered a few hours of time to help with chores in the print shop. I was put to work running a folding machine and then collating the pages of a brochure. The pressman told me, “That kind of work is bound to get to you after awhile, so feel free to stop and do something else.” I worked and thought about this for some time, then asked him, “But this is a rush job — you told me it had to be out tomorrow morning. Shouldn’t the job have priority over how I feel about it?”

“Well, **your head** has priority!”

“You mean, if I wanted to take five minutes to go off by myself and get centered, I could!”

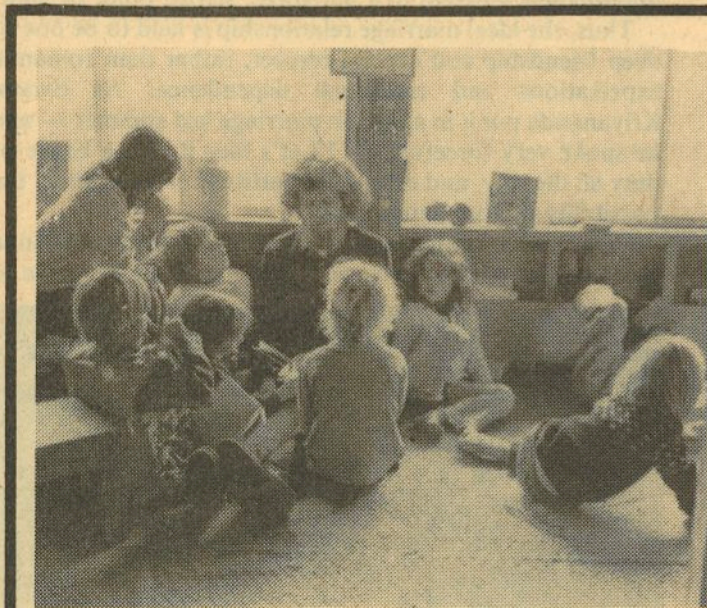
He looked at me in surprise. “Of course.”

At Ananda we try to put into practice an old saying from the Bhagavad Gita — that work goes best when it’s done without personal desire for its results. In practice that means trying to remind ourselves during the day just who it is we’re working for, where the power comes from to do any good work, and finally that God knows best what He

wants done, so it’s good to listen sensitively for those whispers of intuitive guidance. Thus, if we begin to feel frantic and frazzled, our heads, as the necessary instruments of intuitively guided, efficient work, **do** have priority.

And at Ananda, responsibility goes to those who seek it. If a person shows great eagerness to do a project, and it’s a good project, he or she will be given full responsibility for it — no matter that “channels of authority” are bypassed. Such chains of command mean little here, and major business directions are often decided in consultation with the entire business staff. I don’t imagine this would work as well elsewhere as it has for us, if there weren’t that underlying desire to do, not what our personal enthusiasms dictate, but what God wants, as perceived in daily moments of calm self-offering.

We have only two rules: no dogs (they tear up the garden and chase the deer), and no dope or liquor. All the permanent residents are disciples of Paramhansa Yogananda, though visitors and apprentices commonly live here for months at a time without affiliating themselves with our path. Somehow, this works out to be rule enough for the smooth functioning of the community. Responsibility is kept at the level where the work is being



### CHILDREN AT ANANDA

I listened to a tape the other day of a class given by Michael Deranja, director of Ananda Schools. Michael founded the school system ten years ago in an abandoned and renovated goat shed, with eight pupils. There are 65 students in the schools today, and I think that before I give you the theory of education by which they’re taught, I should first describe the product — the children themselves. We’re all probably a bit skeptical of nice-sounding theories that contrast with the inept and wayward children who should be serving as models for them.

Children are everywhere at Ananda, and one observes their behavior daily, in all kinds of situations. I’m not

going to claim that they’re all good little boys and girls in the sense that Mark Twain used to mock so cleverly: dispirited and compliant. Nor will I claim that they’re all equally virtuous, but what they do have of good qualities, they have to an amazing degree, qualitatively and in numbers.

I’ve lived here five years. I think I’ve heard a child swear twice. I’ve never seen children fight— verbally, maybe, but not with their fists. They’ll thank you when their parents aren’t around. What’s more, they seem to **like** the behavior models their parents give. One sees adults and children talking at ease every day here at Ananda. Little wonder: they’re taught that right behavior feels good: and wrong behavior feels in-harmonious. “How do you feel when you do that?” very often takes the place of “Shut up and stop that!” as parental guidance.

In that taped talk I was listening to (“How to Bring Out the Best in Children”), Michael said that the teachers at Ananda are trained to analyze the child’s physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual development according to a chart composed by Paramhansa Yogananda. The teacher gets an idea from the chart of what the child will need in order to be motivated to make forward progress. An eager, serviceful child may need no more incentive to do the dishes than to be told that they need doing. (I swear, there are children like that here!) Whereas a lethargic, disengaged child may need to be offered a reward of something good to eat, to get him or her to taste the inherent joys of service.

Children, this system says, go through six-year phases of development, 0-6 being, for example, the stage at which they can be taught most effectively by appropriate adjustment of their physical surroundings. A child is absorbing and learning to deal with the physical

done. Swami Kriyananda, who does advise us on major decisions, is nominally president of the village council, but he hasn't attended a council meeting in years.

Spiritual models for many other areas of life are being created here: for sports, for example (about a third of the adults run), the arts (Ananda has an incredible supply of musical "parts" that are constantly being refitted to form new performing groups for sacred choral works, folk music, madrigals, contradance jigs and reels), and health and healing.

Why does Ananda exist? Toward the end of his life, in almost every public lecture, no matter what his announced subject, Paramhansa Yogananda would digress to urge people to act on a proposal, dear to his heart, for the formation of cooperative communities, or "World Brotherhood Colonies," as he called them.

"The day will come," Yogananda predicted, "when this idea will spread through the world like wildfire. Gather together, those of you who share high ideals. Pool your resources. Buy land in the country. A simple life will bring you inner freedom. Harmony with nature will bring you a happiness known to few city dwellers. In the company of other truth seekers it will be easier for you to meditate and to think of God." Yogananda was unable to create such an

plane then. If you want him to grow up to be neat and orderly, make sure the classroom or house is kept tidy.

From 6-12 the child develops its capacity to feel. He or she begins to be strongly affected by hero stories, by music, by color, by rhythmic movement. The feelings **must** be developed, as without feeling there can be no acute sense of right and wrong, nor any strong motive for constructive action.

From 12-18 the child develops will power. A teacher or parent will find that teenagers eagerly accept challenges that stretch their abilities, teaching lessons of endurance, perseverance, and intensity of effort. If the adolescent likes sports, he can be encouraged to go all out in exploring the limits of his potential; if he or she likes math, problems should be assigned that really test and stretch their ability.

Paramhansa Yogananda wrote just two articles on the system he called "how-to-live education", yet in those articles he gave principles so central and universal to the educational process that our teachers have found them pertinent to the most varied situations.

Above all, Yogananda said that it's extremely foolish to neglect the child's moral development. In public schools, children are given the skills to make a good living, but not to think for themselves, or to stand in a strong, principled center amidst contrary temptations, or to find inner fulfillment through serviceful work and harmony with the soul.

How-to-live education says that public schools have failed completely to educate the thousands of children who are secondarily motivated by material rewards, but who would be highly motivated to enter careers of social service, selfless dedication to basic research, the arts, and philosophy. For even in the arts and philosophy, which **are** taught, the schools have failed to give

environment for his disciples during his own lifetime. But the seeds were planted in receptive soil, for Swami Kriyananda had dreamt since age 15 of starting just such a community.

Anandaites are frequently asked whether our lifestyle isn't merely a "cop-out" in the face of the terrible social problems facing our country today. In replying to this challenge, we generally improvise on the answer given by Swami Kriyananda in his book, **Cooperative Communities — How to Start Them, and Why:**

"Consider: What need is there to cling to city life? If it doesn't suit one, what moral end can be served by sticking grimly to it? The chance that somehow it may be moulded in time to become a universal blessing? It is not his systems that bless man, but man who blesses his systems by having the good will to make them work.

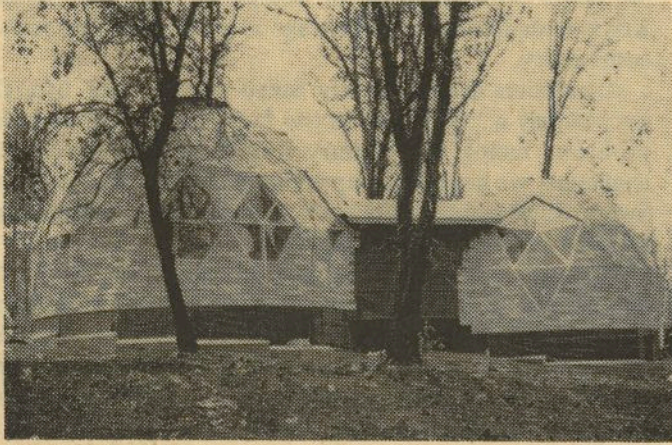
"No, it is not necessary from any standpoint — social, philosophical, personal — to remain in an environment that is not conducive to one's own welfare. For the man of aspiring mind, the megalopolis of modern times ceases to be what it is for so many people, a convenience. It becomes, instead, an obstruction. He must find his way, just as soon as circumstances allow him to do so, to the sanity and peace of a simpler way of life.

children positive, practical, life-affirming roles and values.

I went to the Ananda Schools assembly two months ago in my role as Ananda's staff photographer. The atmosphere was hardly the rumbling suppressed rebellion one sees at every public school assembly. Naturally, the smaller children were restless, but what struck me as amazing, and as something I can't remember ever having been true of my own participation in this type of gathering, the children believed in what they were doing.

First, the younger children demonstrated their ability at memory games and math tricks. The junior high class sang several songs in four-part harmony, and the intermediate boys did some pretty incredible yoga postures. The boys sat in meditation, were given a few minutes to get settled, then had feathers passed under their noses and behind their ears while the other children breathlessly awaited the first snicker or giggle. Only one boy, who was new to meditation, let out a muffled laugh during this difficult test of inner composure. I doubt that many adults could easily pass such a test.

How do I know they believe in what they're taught? I walk behind them up the trail to the publications building and hear one seven-year-old say to another, "I don't think I want to play with X today. He gets into crazy energy too much." I listen to four-year-olds, a little boy and a girl, and the boy asks if she knows where his mommy is. "Well," she says a bit self-righteously, "your **real** mommy's God!" I go for a five-mile run with an eleven-year-old junior high school boy, and I tell him in the course of a discussion of philosophy that I think the best revenge on people that treat one badly is to cultivate love for them. He tells me no, that I shouldn't be thinking about revenge at all.



## THE INCORPORATION OF ANANDA VILLAGE

*The first "new-age city" is just one step away from being born.*

Ananda Village is nearing the end of the process of incorporation as a legally constituted California city.

Two years ago the residents of Ananda, tired of endless delays in approval of construction projects on their land due to an understaffed county planning department, decided to investigate the possibility of taking over some of the basic functions of governing themselves.

They filed for incorporation and entered a long process of drawing up feasibility studies and filing environmental impact reports, with subsequent public hearings.

The prospects for the incorporation look favorable. So far, no individual or group has filed objections that could legally prevent the formation of the new city.

Neighbors of Ananda have become extremely emotional in their opposition to the project, for they fear that Ananda might use the condemnation and annexation provisions of the law to take over neighbors' land. But in 15 years Ananda has demonstrated its complete lack of interest in the kind

of development they fear. So this concern is unfounded on the basis of past performance. Under the provisions of Ananda's Master Plan, development will be simple and centralized, far inside the existing boundaries of the land. Though as a city Ananda could revise its building plans, it would seem impractical to do so, since existing water and power are centralized.

The incorporation of a religious community raises the interesting question of separation of church and state. To prove its willingness to accept residents of all religious faiths, Ananda has drawn up a charter for a proposed "housing corporation" to screen residents by nonsectarian, non-religious standards: non-consumption of alcohol or narcotic drugs, adherence to a generally moral philosophy of life, etc.

Asha Praver, coordinator of the project, says, "It's kind of ironic that Ananda, of all places, should be forced by practical necessity into making this move. We're a spiritual community, and politics is by no means our central interest; but in many ways we are forward-thinking, so it's perhaps appropriate that we should be the ones to take this step."

Swami Kriyananda, Ananda's founder, views the incorporation as an interesting model for other small populations who find themselves increasingly oppressed by county regulations concerning approval of construction plans. Though bigness has its place in providing helpful services efficiently, he feels that there are certain decisions better left to the people directly affected by them. This, in fact, is the basic principle of American government: responsibility at the level of practical control. Perhaps we should amend the current phrase to "new-age federalism."

The final public hearing on the proposed incorporation will be held on March 10. The Local Agency Formation Commission will then make their final ruling, perhaps creating the nation's newest city, Ananda, California.

"To 'hie away' to the country, then, need in no way imply a rejection of one's social responsibilities. It can become, rather, the beginning of a sincere assumption of such responsibilities."

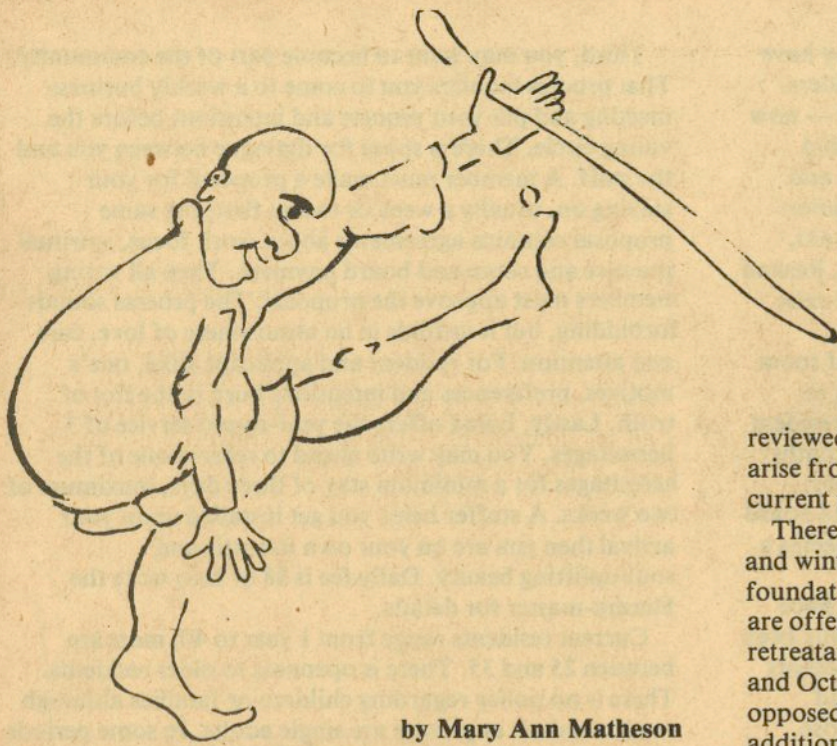
The members of Ananda House, our branch center in San Francisco, were negotiating to rent a large residence in the Pacific Heights district. The realtor phoned Ananda's bank in Nevada City for a credit reference. "Oh, Ananda!" the bank office exclaimed. "What's wrong?" the realtor asked. "Is there something about them that I should know?" "No — their credit's excellent," the banker said. "It's just that they're so — complex!"

I remember those ten days I spent walking around from house to house here at Ananda in 1974 — trying to find out whether it was all as harmonious and positive as it seemed, or if I was being shown only the thin outward, public

vener of the community. I've since discovered that, yes, Ananda is complex, because we follow our inner guidance, and God's ways are sometimes labyrinthine.

But I remember too, and see renewed in the speech, in the faces, in the actions of the people here, day after day, that same quality that I saw during my first visits in the homes of our members: that inner peace, that joyful security of dependence on God, not at all complex but very simple and deep. □

*Ananda wants to share its discoveries with others. If you'd like to know more about any aspect of the community, or about books dealing with spiritual marriage, childraising, work, etc., or our guest seminars and public retreat, please write: Ananda, 14618 Tyler Foote Rd., Nevada City, CA 95959; or call (916) 265-5877.*



# Lama

by Mary Ann Matheson

Construction of the first buildings at Lama Foundation began in 1967. The following year, the foundation was incorporated as an "educational, religious and scientific" organization. The purpose and function of Lama is still what it was in that first set of by-laws:

*The fundamental purpose of the Lama Foundation shall be to serve as an instrument for the awakening of consciousness, individual and collective, thereby aiding its membership and all sentient beings in achieving a more complete awareness of their position in the universal structure through integration of the threefold nature of man into one harmonious being operating to the fullest possible potential in all spheres of existence. The Lama Foundation shall found and operate a center for the pursuit of studies and disciplines leading to the fulfillment of these purposes and shall make known by various and diverse means to interested individuals and groups the way leading to this fulfillment.*

The name "Lama" comes from "la Lama," the term locals use to identify the mountain on which the foundation sits; many have mistakenly assumed the name referred to rinpoches or characterized Lama as a singularly Buddhist group. Another common misconception has been, since Lama is known as a "spiritual community," that all members share one tradition or are devotees of one guru or teacher. This is not at all the case; it is perhaps one of the most unique features of Lama that so many different traditions and paths exist side by side. This very diversity encourages seeing the unity beyond form.

Prospective members are expected to have a strong desire to pursue personal spiritual practice as well as some group practices. Many have sought Lama for the experience of sangha, for the supportive environment conducive to daily practice and remembrance. In the current winter of 81-82 some of the residents are sharing in small groups daily practices from 3 major living traditions: Buddhist; Christian and Sufi-Islamic. These practices are

reviewed every 6 months at spring and fall meetings and arise from and serve the needs, desires and interests of current residents.

There are two distinct phases of Lama life — summer and winter. To fulfill the purpose and function of the foundation and as a means of generating income, retreats are offered in summer. Teachers and thousands of retreatants and visitors pass through Lama between May and October. The Lama staff may swell to 35 or 40 as opposed to its intimate winter size of close to two dozen. In addition to the camps, summer stays very busy with the normal business and maintenance plus seasonal construction and gardening. It is a commonly held view at Lama that communal life offers the opportunity to learn Service. Members are encouraged to create or maintain a balanced perspective in regard to what they stand to gain from participating in the community and what they can give, how they can serve.

The coming of winter sees the staff shrink to between 20 and 25, the number largely determined by limited housing. The foundation closes to visitors October through April. Residents refer to this period as "winter space." The contrast to summer is striking. The outdoor picnic tables that accommodated 200 for meals in July are buried under snowdrifts. Deep snow, deep silence, deep peace. (Lama's altitude is 8600', only 30 miles south of the Colorado stateline.)

If summer is the outbreath of service, of "greeting guest," winter is the inbreath, the time to deepen study and practice, to nourish the interior, the contemplative life. Chopping wood and carrying water is real. The physical life is very strenuous summer and winter. Visitors may imagine that in joining in the Lama schedule they'll be sitting on a zafu 6 hours a day. Not so! More likely they'll be toiling in adobe pits making bricks, servicing the outhouses, trimming kerosene wicks or carrying compost to the garden. Only two hours of meditation are scheduled per day: 6-7 a.m. and 5-6 p.m.

In addition to the summer camps which provide over half of the annual income, Lama operates three cottage industries: a book and tape service called Bountiful Lord's Delivery Service; a pottery; and Flag Mountain Silkscreens which offers prayer flags, banners and T-shirts (brochures available on request). Ram Dass engaged in collaboration with Lama in '70 to produce **Be Here Now** which was the beginning of the book service. Because of this collaboration and his frequent summer camps at Lama some have assumed that Lama is "Ram Dass' place." He

would be the first to deny this. Over the years, many have served Lama as teachers and guides, trustees and elders. Besides Ram Dass they include Joshu Sasaki Roshi — now at nearby Bodhi Mandala in Memez Springs, Murshid Samuel Lewis who was of the Chisti Order of Sufis and who is buried at Lama, Br. David Steindl-Rast, Zalmon Schachter, Stephen Levine, Robert Bly, Nanao Sakaki, Baba Hari Dass, Bhante Gunaratana, Pierre Elliot, Reshad Feild and Grandfather David Nonongye. Close ties exist with elders from the Taos Pueblo nearby.

The remainder of operating income is made up of room and board payments and donations; we are striving to become more financially self-sufficient. Each new resident is expected to pay or assume a debt for the first 6 months of room and board. Residents are not paid any salary. After the initial 6 month period, one earns room and board by a contractual work agreement the voting circle deems a fair exchange.

An Intensive Studies Center has existed at Lama since 1971. Its focus of study and practices has traditionally been in the Sufi-Islamic line. It provides for its dozen residents additional opportunities for communal interface and group practices over and above the general Lama dose.

The most interesting political feature of Lama is the operation of consensus as the legal decision-making process. Until 2 years ago all decisions required 100% affirmative vote of qualified voting members. That still holds true in case of membership, but a decision by the board of trustees modified to 80% the vote necessary on long term decisions. Even with the change in rules there is commitment to strive for the unanimous vote, for the strength and unity that is gained when, as they say at Taos Pueblo, "we move as one mind, one body."

Those wishing to visit Lama will want to write for a brochure that details events of the summer 82 season. Sundays are the only days one may visit Lama, this year beginning May 2. Please note in the brochure which Sundays will *not* be open for visiting due to camps in progress. There is no phone; do not expect to make calls to or from the foundation. Drug or alcohol use is prohibited in the public buildings and discouraged in general. Pets are not allowed. All meals are vegetarian.

Besides participating in a Sunday visitor program, there are four other ways to come to Lama. You can pay \$7.50 a day and join fully in community life, work and play during the Spring (May 10-23) or Fall Work Camp (Sept. 6-24). This is an excellent way to taste the normal routine of the community. You may choose instead to come to one of the summer camps.

Third, you may want to become part of the community. That process requires you to come to a weekly business meeting and put your request and intentions before the voting circle. There is space for dialogue between you and the staff. A member must make a proposal for your staying on, usually a week or two at first; the same proposal contains agreements about work focus, spiritual practice and room and board payment. Then all voting members must approve the proposal. The process sounds forbidding, but it unfolds in an atmosphere of love, care and attention. For resident and applicant alike, one's motives, preferences and intentions burn in the fire of truth. Lastly, Lama offers the year-round service of 3 hermitages. You may write ahead to reserve one of the hermitages for a minimum stay of three days, maximum of two weeks. A staffer helps you get installed upon your arrival then you are on your own in rustic and soul-uplifting beauty. Daily fee is \$8 or less; write the Hermit-master for details.

Current residents range from 1 year to 40; most are between 25 and 35. There is openness to older residents. There is no policy regarding children or families although most members at present are single adults. In some periods the number of K-6 children merited running a Lama school; some years there are few children. Experience has shown that the community has little "carrying capacity" for single parents who seek community help in parenting but aren't committed to the community's goals.

Besides the slate of camps, on-going projects at Lama this summer include completion of a large passive solar greenhouse family dwelling unit; completion of a food storage larder; drilling a well to supplement spring water and expansion of photo-voltaic electrification. New projects to be undertaken are construction of additional dormitory space for retreatants and a major exterior re-mudding of the main dome complex.

Little has been said of how it *feels* at Lama. The beauty of its mountain perch, the panorama of its vista over the Rio Grande plateau, the feeling one is brushing the sky — all this quickens the spirit and bathes the heart in peace. The love and service made visible in the labor of many thousands who passed before, inspire one to give all and to pass on, equally anonymous.

Mailing address: Lama Foundation, Box 444, San Cristobal, New Mexico 87564.

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### LAMA FOUNDATION SUMMER PROGRAM 1982

**Vipassana Meditation Retreat**, bante, May 30 — June 6, \$120; **The Way of Dance**, Zuleikha and Nirtan with Jelaluddin Loras, June 11 — June 17, \$175; **Retreat into Love**, Ram Dass, June 25 — July 10, July 10 — July 23, \$850. \$435; **Camp Winnarainbow**, performing arts camp for kids, July 31 — August 8, \$225; **Rocky Mountain Plant**

**Use Seminar**, Gary Schrodt, August 13 — August 15, \$70; **Lama Backpacking Trip**, Sacred Mountain Rendezvous, August 16 — 22, \$60; **Our spiritual Nature as Americans**, John Kimmey, August 27 — 29, \$75; **Advanced Astrology**, Sept. 17 — 19, \$44; **Spring and Fall Workcamps**, May 10 — 23, Sept. 6 — 24, \$7.50 per day.

# The RENAISSANCE COMMUNITY

by Robin Paris and Daniel A. Brown



~Oneness~  
Khalil Gibran

*All things in this  
creation exist within you  
and all things in you exist  
in creation; there is no border  
between you and the closest  
things, and there is no distance  
between you and the farthest  
things, and all things, from the  
lowest to the loftiest, from the  
smallest to the greatest, are with  
in you as equal things. In one atom  
are found all the elements of the  
earth; in one motion of the mind  
are found the motions of all the  
laws of existence; in one drop of  
water are found the secrets  
of all the endless oceans;  
in one aspect of you  
are found all  
the aspects of  
existence.*





*The Renaissance Community is made up of many different kinds of people, from a wide variety of social, economic, educational and geographical backgrounds. We do not discriminate on the basis of anything, including whether a person has had an experience such as ours or not. We know we can dissipate all problems through love.*

*There are currently about 100 adults and 45 children living at Renaissance. We meet as a group several times a week to either meditate, or discuss business, or look at a slide show, or have a party, or sing, or work on healing, or plan an event, or sit together for an hour in silence.*

*Anything that is positive is acceptable.*

*We have found that through coming together as a whole, we can generate an increase in energy from which each of us can draw.*



*We have no specific structure for teaching inner development. We do, however, teach that you have to at least stay positive if you want to get anywhere inwardly. We know that people will naturally grow to a deeper, transcendent nature in a positive environment. We frequently have meditations as part of our group meetings, and most members meditate regularly on their own.*

*Many of the people here have a strong psychic attunement and have had experiences of their past lives that they can relate in detail. While we know that "mystical" awareness is a vital part of evolution in a community, real balance is achieved by spiritually "putting your money where your mouth is." For example, try giving of your kindness in a stressful situation, or applying yourself totally in doing what you aren't good at because it is needed to help out. We value the practice of giving from what you've gained, or in the words of an old saying, "what goes around, comes around."*



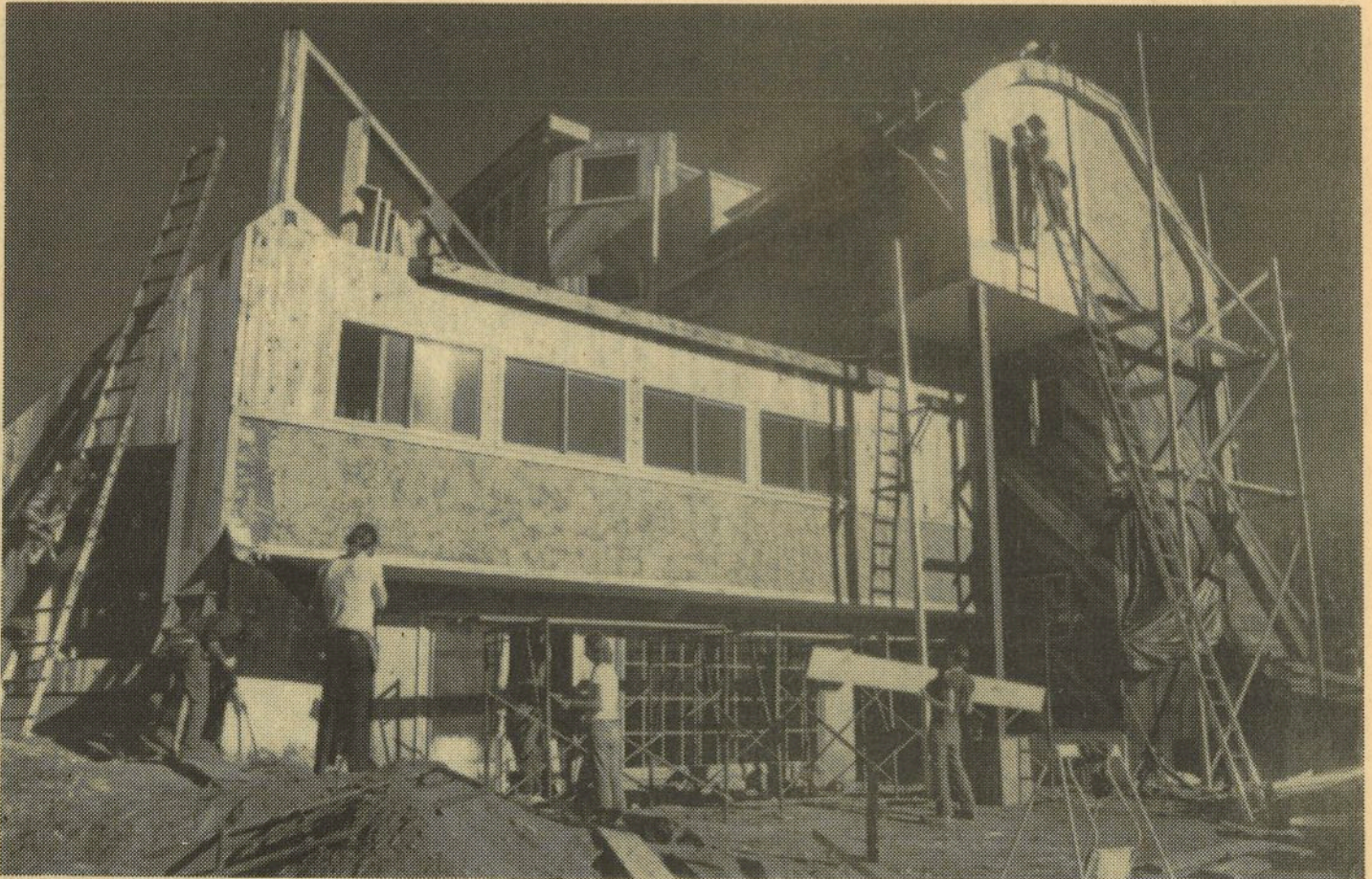
*We have come a long way since the days of '68 when Michael Rapunzel began this community in a tree house on Blueberry Hill, in Leyden, Massachusetts. Our living facilities are now located on 80 acres of land in Gill, Massachusetts, where we have been designing and building a self-sufficient village since 1975. We call this place The 2001 Center. We have already built several communal houses and an office building/meeting hall that use passive solar heating systems, with wood heat systems for a back up. In addition to this we have put in a large orchard, greenhouses, solar and wood hot water systems, organic gardens, and a barnyard full of farm animals.*

*Converting to self-sufficiency is a very large project that will take us some time to complete. In materializing our vision, our goal is step by step to add on each of the elements we have dreamed of together — craft studios, a school, a center for the healing arts, windmills, root cellars and on and on. This summer we are planning to increase the amount of food we are going to grow and store, and will be needing more help in that area.*



*We call The 2001 Center a School of the Ministry because it is a place where people are growing in the knowledge that oneness among men/women is God. Our concept of self-sufficiency isn't just a material one. We are learning to be self-sufficient within ourselves, learning to guide our lives from a plane beyond logic and emotion, and learning to be in tune.*

*In-tune, at-one, at-one-ment, at-tune-ment . . . with ourselves, and each other, with nature, and our instruments and machines, with other light centers, and with all of the grandness that is more than a person could express in words.*





*On the material level, there are many aspects at Renaissance that currently play an important role — art, music, photography, carpentry, the education of our children, businesses that support us, and building our self-sufficient village. We have a professional recording studio, a nationally known silk-screen company, our own pre-school, food co-op, excavating and building concerns, and a bus company that converts large greyhound size buses into plush mobile homes that service the rock and roll industry. Everyone in our community is asked to work, and to take on some part of the responsibility for our physical and financial well-being. In our commitment to our community, and especially in our appreciation of it, we are willing to do whatever it takes to insure its health, its growth and its prosperity. We also know that we've got to function fully on every level, including the physical, to become totally aware of our brother/sisterhood.*

*We have eliminated the need for a great deal of structure and government just by continuously helping each other out on a day to day basis. What structure and government we do have arises from the practical needs of organizing and operating a community of our size. Individuals with motivation and some measure of expertise in a given area will take on the responsibility for organizing that area and watching over it. We tend to trust our "experts" and respond supportively to them.*



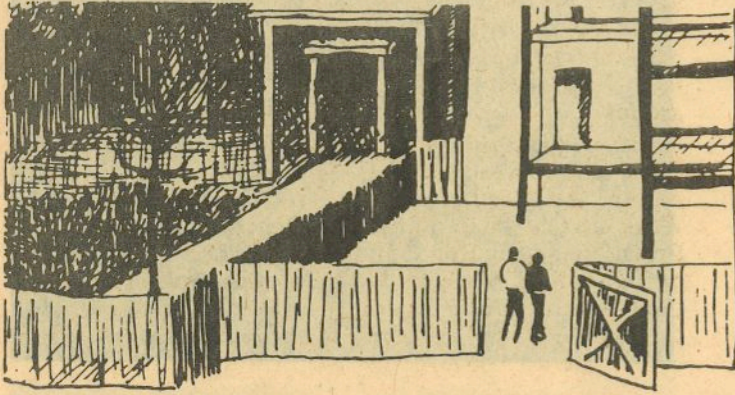
*One of the really intriguing aspects of the future for us, is to meet and collaborate with our counterparts around the planet. Those of us who have lived in community for a time, have been through stage after stage of personal and group development. Through this, we have gained an ability to communicate a message of positive being and love to many levels of people. We are not perfected, nonetheless we have progressed far beyond the standards prevalent in our world today. We can provide alternatives of every kind . . . hope to the desperate, inspiration to the listless, determination to the suppressed, and peace to the anxious.*



*Now we stand at the zenith in outgrowing an age of messiahs and kings. All signs point that the next fifty years will be the most critical in the history of this planet as nature demands recompense for all that she has suffered. Whether you live in community or not, the basic common denominator is your own comprehension of the god/dess within you and how it works. We know that love is how you grow in understanding, and that communities like Renaissance are places that allow love to be a priority. If the spirit moves you to write, call, or visit, you can reach us at: The 2001 Center, Main Road, Gill, MA 01376, (413) 863-9711. □*



# Coming Together



by Dave Jackson

Over the past several years, the Lord has been leading us into a clearer and more explicit covenant among several Christian communities. The same kind of sharing which we find so significant within our communities, also has an application in the relationship between communities. We are grateful for this opportunity to be learning about this and putting it into practice. Some of the things which we hold in common are as follows:

To develop a sub-culture there must be interaction, and for there to be interaction there must be proximity. It's no longer enough to meet on Sunday morning in a beautiful sanctuary, sing some songs, and hear words of inspiration. It's no longer enough to have an annual crusade to convert the lost. If God is building a society, there must be responsibility for each other, accountability to each other, and a self-consciousness as a people. And that is happening.

This aspect of God's plan found new life with the development of Christian communities, and it is influencing the more traditional churches where members are establishing relationships with other members. Older Christians are discipling younger Christians, teaching them how to live in the Kingdom, helping them with their problems. Pastoral responsibility is being shared and focusing on the task of nurturing a flock of God's people.

But even more outstanding: during the last five years God has been leading these groups to reach out to one another. People who had learned the value of a deep commitment to each other within a community could envision the same kind of relationship between communities, and they began to draw together.

For instance, four years ago Reba Place Fellowship in Evanston, Illinois, entered into a formal covenant with three other communities: Plow Creek Fellowship in Tiskilwa, Illinois; Fellowship of Hope in Elkhart, Indiana; and New Creation Fellowship in Newton, Kansas. Our commitment to each other is unlimited and has, in fact, had the effect of making us feel like we are one body in four locations. We felt that there was value in formalizing our covenant, not that we could put on paper the totality of our commitment or that what we wrote would be restrictive, but we wanted to put into words at least the minimal elements. It is as follows:

## **Reba Place Fellowship**

727 Reba Place, Evanston, Illinois 60202. Phone: (312) 328-0772  
Contact person: Peggy Belser, guest coordinator

This church community of about 300 people began in 1957. The 15 households and numerous nuclear family apartments are all located within walking distance. About half of the adults work in various jobs outside the community and the other half work within the community maintaining the life of the households, families, or ministries of counseling, neighborhood crafts for the youth, a day care center, low-cost housing, and others work on the construction crew or in oversight of the church life and outreach.

1. A total commitment to Jesus is the basis for membership in each of the communities. This involves faith in Jesus as God's chosen Messiah. We believe that He has been raised from the dead and exalted as Lord. Our faith involves us in a personal relationship to Jesus growing out of repentance and giving everything to Him. From Him we receive forgiveness and the gift of the Holy Spirit.

2. Each of the communities has a style of life based upon the radical teachings of Jesus. This involves many changes in the way we live our lives, including, specifically, a renunciation of property rights and full sharing of all that we have; sacrificial love as an alternative to anger, violence, and war; faithfulness in marriage as the context for sex; a servanthood stance in all human relationship as so clearly revealed by Jesus; and communal organization of our personal lives as the setting in which we live out this discipleship.

3. Each community has the consciousness of being a local church, with all of the duties, privileges, and responsibilities of the body of Christ. This includes the authority to bind and loose in controversial ethical decisions, as Jesus suggested in Matthew 18. Maintaining open and honest communication among all the members, with each one subject to the authority of the church, is an important aspect of this understanding.

4. Each community seeks to carry out the Great Commission (Matt. 28 and Luke 24), both in its definition of world mission and in an openness to the Baptism of the Spirit in power, with all of its accompanying ministries, miracles, and growing pains.

5. Within the circle of these communities, we want to encourage and develop ways of helping each other:

—encourage the sharing of spiritual gifts and resources through visits of leadership persons, letters, phone calls, and meetings for specific purposes.

—respond seriously to any word of correction that may be brought to us by other groups or individuals.

—be more free in personal visits between communities, exchange of people for work projects, and other similar activities which strengthen and enrich our common life.

—be ready to transfer members from one group to another whenever this is the best way to serve the needs of some individual or meet the needs of a particular group. Such transfers need to be carried out with a clear leading from the Lord which is carefully tested in both communities.

—be ready to share finances. Financial emergencies too large for one group could be met

through pooling of resources from various groups. The initiation of unique projects or the funding of joint ministries would be other areas of cooperation.

—schedule occasional gatherings of as many members as possible from all of the participating communities. These might continue to occur about once a year, although more frequent gatherings could be called as necessary. Leadership persons from the various communities would also continue meeting and consulting with each other as necessary.

6. As we affirm our relationship to each other within this circle of Christian communities, we also want to affirm our desire to be as open to other Christian groups as we are to these Christian groups. We are grateful for these relationships, but we know that this cluster is just one small fragment within the larger Christian movement. Recognizing what God has given us in this relationship and making the most of it should not prevent us from seeking the deepest possible relationship with other Christian groups and organizations. In fact, the positive nature of our relationship to one another within this circle should encourage us in developing other relationships.
7. We welcome the participation of other Christian communities who wish to join with us. The process by which new communities are added will be similar to that by which individuals become members in each of our local communities [through a time of exploration and testing]. The specific procedures for this will evolve as we get more experience in relating to new communities.

Since the formation of this network several other communities have explored the possibility of joining and are at various stages in that process. And we have adopted the name "Shalom Covenant" for our cluster.

The covenant has had a lot of practical testing despite its newness. The elders of all the communities get together at least four times a year to work on policy questions. We try to bring most of the members from all communities together for an annual conference. Each community receives an annual, week-long visitation from a team of one or two elders from each of the other communities. We have frequently had short or long-term exchanges of members. Money, at times in substantial amounts, has gone back and forth according to need.

Shortly after our circle of communities reached out and joined one another, the same thing began to happen in another circle. More than two years ago about a dozen other communities began an exploratory courtship with each other. They are already-established communities which had been strongly influenced by Graham Pulkingham, earlier involved with the Church of the Redeemer Community in Houston, Texas. Known as the Community of Communities, they include the Fisherfolk Communities of Celebration in Colorado, England and Scotland; Sojourners in Washington, D.C.; Voice of Calvary in Mississippi; Christ's Church (Christian Reformed) in Grand Rapids, Michigan; the Church of the Messiah in Detroit; the Church of the Redeemer in Houston; and several other communities based in Episcopal parishes.

After a year this circle of communities established a "fellowship-based" commitment to one another. They did not choose to express that in a formal covenant, feeling that might restrict their commitment or tend

to exclude others from participation. Instead, these communities wanted the intensity of their life together to grow out of their practical experience. They've now been together as a circle of communities over a year and are continuing to deepen their relationships.

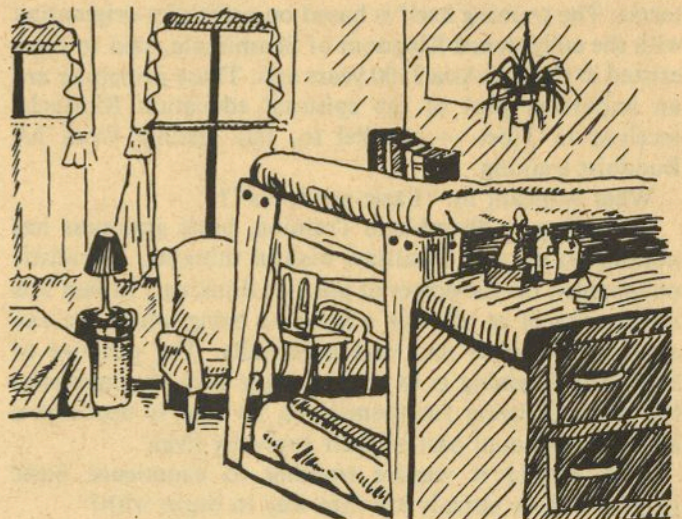
In the meantime another type of network had been developing among the ecumenical communities, many of which began from Catholic charismatic prayer groups.

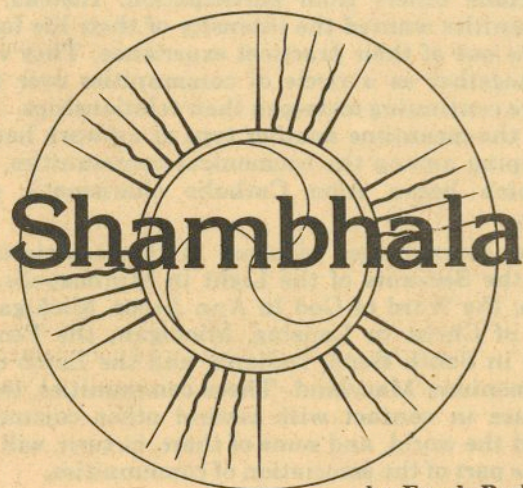
The communities involved in this association include the Servants of the Light in Minneapolis, Minnesota; the Word of God in Ann Arbor, Michigan; the Work of Christ in Lansing, Michigan; the People of Praise in South Bend, Indiana; and the Lamb of God in Timonium, Maryland. These communities, in addition, are in contact with several other communities around the world, and some of these, in turn, will likely become part of the association of communities.

## Church-Communities and the World

Are church-communities good retreats for escapists? Are they a way to evade the problems of today and the troubles of tomorrow? "Will you flee the world or heal it?" someone asked, anxious about the apocalyptic emphasis of some of the prophecies, the close-knit and disciplined life of the communities and the report that some groups had pulled up stakes and moved across the country.

Yet we are encouraging *all* Christians to become part of a solid, community-type body, not necessarily one with households and a common purse (as useful as those are), but a church with fully coordinated and submitted members who will stand as one. And we are hearing the Lord call those communities to grow and create trusting relationships between each other. The testimony of that kind of unity within the body of Christ may be the most important role of service that the church has to offer to the world in these days. Every Lone Ranger evangelist, missionary, healer, social reformer, prophet, peacemaker or teacher who has had an effective ministry can only improve that ministry by submitting it to the supervision of the body in which the Lord intends it to be based. If we are truly interested in serving the world, I believe that we must begin from a church base. That is not a withdrawal. It is a call for integrity and strength. □





by Frank Berliner

Are human beings basically good?

In a society where violence is so pervasive that it is taken for granted, and even the possibility of nuclear destruction is trivialized by endless media repetition, it would seem hopelessly naive to ask such a question, much less give an affirmative answer.

Yet Shambhala Training begins with the unshakeable conviction that we are basically good. All that keeps us from realizing this simple truth is that we are in the bad habit of thinking otherwise.

The program, first presented to the public in 1978, was envisioned and created by the venerable Chogyam Trungpa, Rinpoche, a meditation master of the Tibetan Buddhist tradition who had been living and teaching in the United States since 1970. Rinpoche, educated at Oxford after leaving Tibet during the Chinese invasion in 1959, had already established himself as one of the leading exponents of the Buddhist teachings in the West. In 1974 he founded Naropa Institute in Boulder, Colorado, to provide an environment where American students could learn to integrate Western fields of study with the wisdom of Eastern traditions.

Rinpoche developed Shambhala Training with a similar inspiration. He realized that there was a potentially vast Western audience which could connect to the truth of what he had to say if presented in contemporary, non-sectarian terms. The training itself is based on principles originating with the enlightened Kingdom of Shambhala, said to have existed in Central Asia 2500 years ago. These principles are an important part of the spiritual education Rinpoche received in Tibet — parallel to, but distinct from his Buddhist training.

What is meant by "Basic goodness"?

According to Shambhala Training, basic goodness has nothing to do with idealism, wishful thinking, moralistic philosophy, or 'the power of positive thinking'. In fact it is not a concept at all, but a state of being which we can experience directly and very personally. The purpose of Shambhala Training is to teach people how to experience this state of being for themselves, so that it becomes a natural, continual part of their everyday lives.

Why should it require training to experience basic goodness if we already are that way to begin with?

In a sense it doesn't. There is nothing special, secret, or elitist about the experience of basic goodness. But it does require training to understand fully that we spend most of our time ignoring that experience, and that our ignorance narrows the possibilities of our lives.

One of the most important insights people gain from Shambhala Training is that everyone, without exception, tends to rely on familiar, seemingly comfortable patterns of relating to their lives, until they are trapped in the staleness of the world they have created.

It is like driving with a dirty windshield without even a memory of what it might be like to look at the road through a clean one. From the viewpoint of Shambhala Training, realizing that the windshield is dirty and that it is obstructing our vision, is a necessary starting point.

How do we begin to clear away the obstruction to our vision?

In Shambhala Training, we do this through the practice of sitting meditation. Meditation is a simple discipline which enables us to begin to let go of our fixed ideas about ourselves and the world, and to release our inherent dignity and confidence.

The result of this process is referred to in the Shambhala tradition as a "warrior's attitude" toward life. Contrary to our pre-conceptions, we discover that a real warrior is gentle as well as brave, and that warriorship has nothing to do with aggression or macho logic at all. In fact, we begin to discover further that aggression is always based on cowardice.

We have never been brave enough to look closely at the situations we find ourselves in instead of just reacting to them over and over again.

Sessions of sitting meditation are the core of the weekend intensives, or Levels, or Shambhala Training. The weekends also include lectures by the program director, group discussion, and individual interviews in which students can talk about their meditation experience with an instructor. There are five Levels, which are scheduled so that they can be completed in twelve to fifteen months. Level Five is directed personally by the Venerable Trungpa, Rinpoche. There is also a Graduate Program for students who wish to take their training beyond Level Five.

The first lecture of the Level One weekend program, which is presented on Friday evening, is free and open to the public.

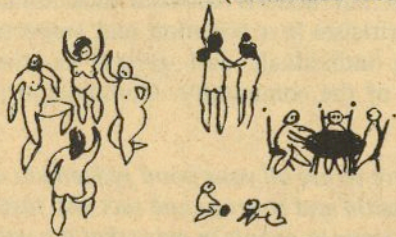
Where can people do Shambhala Training?

The program is currently being offered in 25 cities throughout the United States and Canada, including New York, Boston, Philadelphia, Washington, Atlanta, Chicago, Austin, Denver, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Berkeley, Seattle, Vancouver, Toronto, Montreal, Halifax, and a number of others. Shambhala Training also has administrative offices in most of these cities. If you are interested in finding out more about the program, or would like scheduling information from the various local centers where it is being offered, you are invited to contact the Shambhala Training National Office, 1743 Walnut Street, Boulder, Colorado 80302 (303) 444-7881. □

*Frank Berliner is the National Administrative Director of Shambhala Training.*

# Images

(continued from page 16)



## INHIBITION

The dirt track, weighted with cumbersome white rocks, ventured straight and steep down into the ravine. My skin, sticky with sweat and dirt, clung to me like a plaster cast; hampering my movements. I followed the bed of the stream past the seething bee-hives into the foliage of a wild nature, coming upon a pool large enough to bathe in. A moment later, I stood naked before the tiny sea and dipped my wrinkled white and black foot into the water. Insects hovered electric around me and feasted on my skin. I smacked at them viciously. I eased in over the rocks without grace, eager to feel the cool, eager to drown the thirsty mosquitos. I soaked, arched over the protruding rocks, legs dangling in the deepest access of the pool, breast just covered with water.

There was a movement on the road above me. Two people and several children were walking together. The children flung themselves about, chasing flies, lifting stones to see what crawled beneath, throwing sticks into the air and laughing. One struck off towards me while the entourage carried on. I lay quiet, wondering whether to leap out and throw my clothes on before the child arrived. But the cool was too sweet. Perhaps I would remain hidden. I closed my eyes. A voice, inquisitive and unperturbed, demanded my attention. The child clambered over me into the water. I drew my knees to my chest, embarrassed, but the plump and pretty child was making a raft of sticks. I stared at her, unsure of myself. She dropped her raft and climbed onto my stomach. She began to play with my hair, squeezing water from it onto my breasts and tickling my belly button. The cool drew the blush from my body before it reddened. I noticed the child was male. It was hard to tell on the Farm: all the children had long braided hair and beautiful faces.

"My name is Abraham," he said carefully. "What's yours?"

"Ariel," I said slowly.

"I'm a Leo, a lion, what are you?" he said.

"Cancer," I said.

"Jenny says I'm a real Leo."

"Who is Jenny?"

"My Mom," Abraham said. "Let's go find her."

We got out of the water. A monster bug landed on my hip. Abraham took it by the leg, deftly holding it without hurting it and placed the insect on a stone. We dressed and found our way back to the road. Abraham took the lead and I followed, entertained by his babble about trees and birds, the things around us. We walked and walked, Abraham turning off on this path and then another in the maze of previous human footsteps.

We suddenly rejoined the stream as it opened out into a tiny lake. Abraham's family was bathing there, his father lying unclothed on the grassy bank, Jenny and her children in and out of the water. I hesitated, hanging back. Jenny got out of the water and lay down close to the figure on the grass. Her leg loosely flung across his body, she stroked his head. Abraham impatiently called out. "Jenny, I've just been swimming with Ariel . . ." he said. I stepped from the protective leaves into the open, feeling as if I'd been spying. "Abraham's found a new friend, I see," Jenny said, remaining as she was but propping herself up on an elbow. Her husband blinked a sleepy hello to me and nestled into her breast. Feeling awkward I commented on the beauty of the day, the warmth, the leaves . . . I was caught between an initial impulse to leave immediately and the feeling that that would be wrong. Abraham began to tug on my shorts and drag me down into the water. I undressed and, stepping into the pool rather too quickly, slipped on a mossy stone and collided with a large lily pad. Everyone laughed and I dived down deep. Abraham and I splashed with the other children. The other children clambered onto the bank and began to chase each other. I swam to the far side of the pool. The children cajoled me out of the water and then fell on me, tickling for all their worth. I fought them off, tingling all over. The case ended and we fell panting to the ground.



## Community Togetherness

"Community" permeates the Farm, not only mentally but physically. All activity is cooperative and guided by community principles and vision. Cohesion and solidarity on the Farm is strong. People are extremely committed to the community for a wide variety of reasons. The first reason is the vision of the Farm. The strength of their ideals and goals reflect a commitment and cohesion in the community. Secondly, each and every individual has made a sacrifice in joining the Farm, renouncing strong ties with

the outside world and contributing all worldly goods to the community fund. Thirdly, the Farm has strong boundaries and members must have good reasons for leaving and visitors good reasons for staying. Boundary control on the Farm has been cultivated to the degree that internal cohesion is maintained. Fourthly, the homogeneity of background of Farm members facilitates unity and communion. Fifthly, the mechanisms on the Farm that get people involved with others through work, meetings, confessions, decision making, etc., bring people into continual participation with the community. Communal labor emphasizes joint effort and joint reward. In general the Farm is full of mechanisms that breed commitment and cohesion in the community.

One way in which the Farm succeeds in protecting itself from internal stagnation is its missionary work outside the community. The emphasis on cooperation and growth inside the community is enhanced by its outreach.

*These two aspects of Farm purpose, self growth and global outreach provide the tensions and the balance that make the Summertown Community such a lively place . . . If the members there did not have the purpose of doing good for others and instead concentrated all their energies on making their own material lives and environment better, in time the Farm would become complacent and probably extinct. The dedicated at-home work makes the outreach possible and the outreach gives that at-home work an important reason for continuing . .*

One of the tensions endangering community cohesion today is the difference between the goals and ideals of the original members and those who have joined in the past few years. In the eyes of some of the newcomers, longstanding residents are resistant to change and a little dogmatic in their ideas. This kind of tension is healthy if the feedback is properly channeled and dispute over community direction takes appropriate and positive forms. The Farm already has those channels and methods for popular input built into the community structure. Hopefully this tension will foster positive re-evaluation and evolution in the future community.

The Farm schools and the commitment of the members of their "new age" crop of children unites the community. Education emphasizes participation and feedback. Conventional subjects are taught together with arts, crafts, politics, environmental awareness, etc. An additional part of the educational experience of children is the loose apprenticeship system to all Farm jobs. Through this children are free to join work crews and learn specific skills.

## Interaction

Interaction between members of the Farm community is constant. People, although private, are not reclusive. Everyone participates in a wide variety of community activities which ensures a large number of interactions. Openness, honesty and compassion are the attitudes

present in interactions between individuals and groups. Mutual criticism is a common and respected method for balancing individuals and groups in the day to day existence of the community. Compassion is the bread of life.

*You have to use all your good judgement and all your compassion and courage and tact and taste and say heavy things to people in ways that are valuable to them, rather than just knocking them off their own center.*

Farm people have a certain detached, peaceful quality about them which I believe is brought to them by their personhood (brotherhood and sisterhood) and by their spirituality. Honesty and the voicing of valuable perceptions to others comes easily to them. This is not to say they do not get angry — everyone is human — but they have learned how to control their anger and channel it in positive directions. Violence and crime are non-existent in the community. Any display of violence is dealt with severely. Violent visitors are quickly asked to leave. Love, not hate or repression, governs interactions.

Relationships between men and women on the Farm are unstructured but conservative. Married couples make up the majority. Promiscuity is disapproved of, in contrast to the rejection of traditional faithful relationships that permeated the sixties. Farm members have high ethical standards when it comes to marriage. Homosexuals are discouraged from joining the community.

Sexism on the Farm is largely an outgrowth of the conservatism of their relationships and the common regard for the sacredness of life. Mothers are considered the natural nurturers of the newborn. Many women on the Farm spend a large part of their time at home with the children. This is not "sexism" in the modern sense of the word, rather it is a function of their belief in "natural" sex roles.

However, there are two factors that lighten the burden of the role of motherhood for Farm women. Firstly, because it is a closed community, mothers share in the care of children. If a woman wants to go off to work, or do something else, she can always leave her children with someone nearby. Since the Farm is a safe and caring playground for the children there is no danger of them getting lost or abused. Secondly, Farm Fathers participate much more than most modern American Fathers in the upbringing of children. Their presence is constant, close and supportive to the Mothers. Farm Fathers do not shy away from feeding, bathing, playing with or taking care of the children. At the same time, because the majority of men are at work during the day, women are left with a large responsibility.

The role of mother and the spiritual and special attributes of motherhood are sacred on the Farm. Spiritual midwifery as a profession has become a strong focus of the community; for at the Farm birth is a difficult but miraculous thing, and more importantly a spiritual experience. Fathers are often present and help with the natural childbirth. Midwives, it is believed, must attune themselves to the feeling and spiritual experience of giving



birth for the mother. These two quotes from the Farm book called "Spiritual Midwifery" can perhaps illustrate this better.

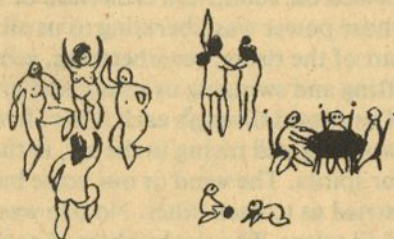
*Pregnant and birthing mothers are elemental forces in the same sense that gravity, thunderstorms, earthquakes and hurricanes are elemental forces. In order to understand the laws of their energy field you have to respect them for their magnificence at the same time that you study them with the accuracy of a true scientist . . .*

*Spiritual midwifery recognizes that each and every childbirth is the birth of the Christ Child.*

*The knowledge that each and every childbirth is a spiritual experience has been forgotten by too many people in the world today, especially in countries with high levels of technology. We feel that returning the major responsibility for normal childbirth to trained midwives rather than have it rest with the predominantly male and profit-oriented medical establishment is a major advance in self-determination for women.*

In general, interaction between Farm members occurs on every level; members may eat at home at night but with others on their crews, or at communal kitchen during the day; members constantly have opportunities for private and deep discussion on any level particularly during Sunday meeting.

## Images



ADRIAN

One day, in the late afternoon, I was helping unload a weekly delivery of food to the Farm. A truck from a cooperative distributor was backed up to the door, packed with yeast, nuts, honey, pasta and other supplies. A man came in with his wife and child and began to help me with the work. He was extraordinarily handsome, with huge, deep, beautiful eyes and a lovely open face. I couldn't take my eyes from him as I worked. I began filling small bags with nutritional yeast. Each bag was marked with a family's name and had been brought in the day before delivery. I measured exact portions according to the number of individuals in each family. The air around me swirled with yellow dust. My face and skin took on an oriental hue. A woman pouring honey gave me a strange, penetrating look and seemed angry. I worked harder.

Later in the day, as I sat in the shade of an oak tree, the same woman approached me. Her name was Adrian. She reminded me of a close friend at home, blond, soft-featured, velvet-eyed and heavy-browed. She lay her

baby in my arms. "Seth", she said in a sweet Virginian voice, "my son Seth." I was scared to hold him.

"Mind if I tell you something very straight?" she said. "You know, you shouldn't have acted like that in the store. It was very offensive."

"What did I do?" I said, caught off guard.

"You made cow eyes at that nice man, with his wife and baby sitting right there. There was a man obviously in love with his family and you flirted with him outrageously. People don't do that here. We don't play those teasing, superficial, social-sexual games. No one needs to and they are out of place." I tried to remember my behaviour in the store. Was it really that obvious? I hadn't meant to flirt with him so much as just admire him. And yet, when I thought about it, flirting was such a subconscious thing, something I was used to doing without even thinking about it.

"When I first came here," Adrian said, "people said the same things to me. It's all part of your maidenly ego, your ideal of self-beauty, esteem, your vanity. We all have that problem, that's the way we're brought up to behave. And here on the Farm, we've all had to overcome it, suppress and sublimate an ego we were never really aware of before. All the automatic games people play with each other just don't work anymore. They're too superficial. You can't deal with people in anything but an open and honest way here. Men are just other people . . . most men around here are married anyway. Hands off, attached types, you know? Don't look so upset, I'm not getting down on you. We have all been through this here, men and women alike. It's part of becoming a real loving human being. Farm therapy."

We walked on down First Street. Houses of every imaginable kind faced onto the road, each on its own plot, each hidden in some part by tangled trees, piles of obscure building materials, or firewood. The young were gathered in a crowd around a wooden tub of water, splashing, sprinkling, spraying and swooning so as to be quickly revived with a thrown cup of water. One mother watched them from her porch while she sewed. Further down the street several women were digging a pipeline together. In the height of the afternoon no men were to be seen. They were all out in the fields, at the motor pool, or various shops.

I thought about the Farm — what it provided and what it expected. There was a completeness: It all made sense. But I didn't know if it was my sense, or if in the time of my visit, I could even find that out.

I smiled at Adrian. "Thanks," I said.



## Leadership

Stephen Gaskin is the leader/teacher/guru of the Farm. Gaskin has been in control of the community since its beginnings. The people that followed him around America were his disciples. Many new people on the Farm have not been as close to him as original members. Some are intimidated by him, some question his authority, but his charismatic appeal is strong, and the purity that emanates from him wins the majority over.

He is a tall, thin, stooping man who looks just like other Farm inhabitants. He is not awe-inspiring. His influence is subtle and powerful, founded in the strength of his convictions. The nature of his personal vibrations lends him the quality of guru. Stephen Gaskin is an honest and compassionate man who feels a real responsibility towards the Farm. He has never faltered in shouldering this responsibility. Once in the early years some members of the community were arrested for growing marijuana on Farm property. Gaskin went to jail for a year with them, as the leader of the community. After that there were no drugs allowed on the Farm.

Stephen Gaskin has written several books outlining the philosophical and spiritual explorations of his mind. He has a knack for making his ideas and beliefs accessible to everyone. The language he speaks is easy to understand and more often than not has a humorous twist to it.

*One of the highest and holiest religious experiences that is available to mankind is to get outside your head for a couple of seconds and realise that the sun does not rise and set in your arm pit . . .*

His leadership is gentle, firm and appealing. He is gifted with the sweet insight of spirituality and his pragmatism bears the sense of responsibility and the charisma of a true leader.

Many people, particularly those outside the community, question his authority. Most of the criticism directed towards him has been a reaction against particular Farm policies, like the forfeit of all worldly goods to the communal fund. The American populace is suspicious of his good intentions. One wonders what will happen to the Farm when Stephen Gaskin is gone. For the community to continue long into the future this is an important consideration. Gaskin has really played a critical role in balancing, encouraging and organizing the disparate elements of the Farm, not to mention helping the community consistently redefine its vision. Hopefully the Farm will be able to carry on as always. The community has firm foundations of strength in itself, and people are committed and experienced enough so the Farm could work without a leader.

## Images



### COMMUNICATION

*The universe is a vibratory entity, and you can affect the vibrations one way or another by what you do. The vibration is more than the sum of its parts — the totality of all our vibrations go together to make one pure vibration which is God.*

The hill was golden; golden with the straw grass and the rising Sunday sun. It sloped away from me, down in three dimensions, the shape of a quarter sphere. A deep stream, far below, carved the land into mounds. The hill had ragged edges at the bottom, etched out by the deep running stream. Mosquitos and other insects lurked down there. But up here on this hill, the air was clear and silent. All around the hills were blanketed with forest. Ours was the only open hill, open nature, bared of her coverlet, naked beneath us. The sunrise, like a huge autumn-colored tree, reached out branches of light from the earth to the sky, lying lazily in the lap of the world.

People sat a little apart, in all attitudes of yoga and alertness . . . on cushions or on grass, eyes closed and eyes opened, preparing. Suddenly, without a signal, even the noise of people being quiet hushed. Three hundred souls breathed in our bodies, rhythmically, seriously and slowly. Together we drew in and expelled the soft breath of togetherness; together our faces turned to the sun, burned; together our bodies ached and subsided, and finally paid no attention to themselves. No one slouched. Each human being was upright in an attitude of awareness. Meditation enveloped everyone for one or two hours.

The hill lay solid beneath us and we reached invisible roots down into the soil. The earth seemed to heave with our breathing. The wind filled and sucked the air from our lungs. The grass rippled from root to tip, anchored by the hill.

Concentration reached a pitch and a voice reversed the vacuum. "Ohmmmmmm . . ." One by one, every voice formed the sound in a crescendo of human chords, a sound whose power was liberating to us all. Everyone became a part of the rising, reverberating, echoing wavelength, lifting and swinging us round and around the ravine. Each of us passed through each other. It was like being the wind, swooping and racing in the air, in the trees, in the hills, in our spirits. The wind or our voice hugged us close and carried us to each other. No one was of him or herself, only of all selves. The sky brightened as the strength of the sunlight increased, replenishing the earth, living and non-living, with a splendid radiance.

*Being spiritual is not to meditate until you blow the top of your brain out, and it's not to go off and take that one big trip on the mountaintop by yourself. It is to realize, once you know we're all One, that our energy has to be in the service of mankind.*

*You are the people,  
you are the season's people . . .  
there are no other people this season.*

A tall spindly, straggly haired man in mid-life stands at the end of the meditation. He is kindly looking and wears glasses and a jean cap. He speaks carefully, leaving short periods of silence after each spoken thought. People love him. He calls himself "a truly ambitious hippy." The sun has risen nearer to the ceiling of the sky. We lie on the hill, molding ourselves to its contours, breathing the sweet, still air. Stephen Gaskin begins to speak.

"Well folks, it's good to be back home, especially after



the outrageous bus ride we had from Guatemala. Did everyone hear about that? In the middle of the night, while we were all asleep in the Scenic Cruiser, there was a sudden explosion in the side of the bus and fire. People really trucked out of that bus fast! A propane canister had blown up in the luggage compartment. We must have had good karma though because nobody was hurt and we all made it home safely.

“Guatemala is experiencing some heavy trips. Violence is becoming an everyday thing. The other day a rock group was playing at a festival in the capital city and the army came in and took them away, without explanation. We are so lucky to be living here in America. You don’t realize . . . This is one of the only countries in the world where we can live the kind of life we choose without harassment and trouble. People can do their own thing in America. If we lived in Guatemala the Farm wouldn’t exist.

“Our people down there are really respected by the

natives. It made me feel so wonderful to walk through the village and have people look at me like I was really special, like I’d really done something for them. I think we have. The Guatemalans have learnt everything we know about soybean crops and processing. The new soy dairy is almost finished thanks to your support here at home. We came back with two Guatemalans who are going to work in our soy dairy for a few months to learn the ropes. Things are looking good as long as the Guatemalan government tolerates us . . . We have to be really cool, honest and compassionate, and lay it on the line openly. And no matter what happens in Guatemala the people there have the Farm, and you have the Farm. The Farm is holy. Even in the face of all those demons out there it is blessed by the efforts of thousands of serious people, trying hard and praying hard to make it blessed, and it really is.

“And that brings me to something else. I hate to break the bad news to you but there’s a recession going on out

there. I know it doesn't seem like it on the Farm, but out there the system's breaking up. We have to face it. I think we need to ask people from all the satellite Farms scattered around the country to come back. We need to pool resources, bring our energy together, and move that energy, working hard to prepare for the coming crisis. There are going to be many crises that affect us, even on the Farm. I'm really sorry to lay this heavy trip on such a lovely Sunday but that's reality. In these hard times, more than ever before, we have to nurture our little culture of essential human values. We must continue to provide hope outside the mainstream culture."

Other people got up and spoke. They talked of recent media attention centered on the Farm, of whether they had enough money for the long hoped for internal cable television system. Nature's elements around us, the air, the water, the earth, remained aloof. A flock of miniature grey birds chased each other in the wind. A tall red-haired man stood up to speak. "The book publishing company is beginning to make a profit again. Last time we made some money we lost it because we didn't know what to do with it, how to invest it, etc. I think we need some expert advice on this."

A woman said: "Don't you think that detracts from the learning potential here on the Farm? We have never brought in experts on anything and look how much we can do that we never could before? People have taught themselves incredible things."

"But we'll just lose money again," the red-haired man continued. "What's more important? Bringing in some expert advice for a couple of hours or fifty people working for two weeks to make the money we lose?" Someone else took up the argument: "You're missing the whole point. Besides, what about the people who were involved in it last time? Didn't they learn from their own mistakes? Don't they know something about it now?"

"Well Bob and Zach are in the Bronx working on the free ambulance service. They're all tied up at the moment. Apparently high lead concentrations have been found in the children's blood. The women and children are going to the upstate New York Farm. Bob, Zach and the other men are staying to strip the lead paint and refinish the walls. They can't come . . . they are so busy with that and the EMT they can't even answer the phone."

Stephen responded this time. "There must be others. There are so many people on this Farm. We have all the pages of the book here . . . or at least a feeling for what they are about. Let's try again, the next time we really won't need an expert and some people will know some new and useful things."

The sun had climbed still higher into the blue dome. The creek below murmured from far away, continuous in its motion despite our presence. The grass tickled the backs of our legs. Ants and other creatures tasted our skin. William Santana, the Farm crew manager rose to speak.

"I'd like to bring up something different. Not enough people are doing their two hours suggested time per week on the farm crew. We need more workers. Can I see a show of hands of how many people have been doing their bit?" No one raised their hands. Santana didn't seem surprised. His crews had been made up mostly of visitors in the past

month. He continued, "Well, we need more of you to work. It's not that much of a commitment. The farm work has to get done or we can't eat. Aren't we trying to be self-sufficient here? We can't have that unless we have effective and efficient work crews. Do you think two hours a week is too much to ask? If it is then does anybody have any suggestions for how to get this thing going?" There was some mumbling and grumbling in the crowd. People were obviously feeling a little guilty about not doing their share. Some vowed to do it next week and to motivate friends.

A young man got up and said, "I'm working on a survey right now, and maybe if you people all help me out then I can figure out just how much time we need to put in to get things done. I know that everyone around here is working, and things do get done but I'm interested in knowing just how the balance works. For instance, does the work done really meet the needs of the Farm? If you people would fill out my questionnaire maybe I can make some useful evaluations."

Stephen responded. "You know, sometimes I too look at the Farm in a sort of statistical way, like looking at graphs or something. I say it's got to shape up, we have to do this, that, this Farm's got to shape up, got to get it together . . . and then I go out and look for folks who ain't doing it, and people hardly have time to talk to me because they're all working."

The man became defensive. "Well, I'm not saying they're not working. I'm just saying I think it would be useful to know exactly how much our actual work helps the Farm, and what people do with their spare time."

"Seems like some folks might think you were trying to peg the ones who weren't working, don't you think?" someone said. Another man broke in, "And it also seems kind of regimental, like you want to recommend a schedule, make everyone work at certain times. It undermines an individual's capacity to be responsible. I think that could be destructive."

The surveyor's response was quite heated. "No, no, no! I'm not trying to do any of that at all. I'm just trying to assess in a very general way, and without any personal involvement, what people do with their time here and how that works into our community goals, into the whole."

A relatively short-haired man wearing a bright red khaftan spoke next. He rattled on about how long it took him to overcome his hostility towards certain people on the Farm, and Stephen. People listened sympathetically but moved on. There was nothing to say that he hadn't said himself. The meeting came to a close with the heat of midday. Some left, others stayed on and talked in small groups scattered over the hill, not yet ready to break with the sharing of the morning. A soft southern drawl hung in the air, tempering the quiet of nature. Southern idioms of speech were mixed in a sweet discord with the hippy language of the peace and love movement. On the other side of the ravine, the forest echoed with our voices. The sun had reached a summit high in the sky and was beginning its descent. The golden grass lay bent and trampled in places, but the wind soon coaxed it upwards, restoring the hill to its original wildness. □

# Spiritual Principles for Building Communities and Groups

©1982 by Gordon Davidson and Corinne McLaughlin  
(Excerpted from a forthcoming book)

In starting and building Sirius, our community in Massachusetts, living at the Findhorn community in Scotland, and visiting hundreds of other groups and communities, we have found some general principles and guidelines that have helped us and others develop successful, effective spiritual communities and groups. These guidelines may save new groups time and energy in learning from other's experience, but they need to be used with your own intuition and inner guidance of what is appropriate for your group.

We hope these principles will be of help to you and your group:

1) **Meditation and Spiritual Focus** — Individual and/or group meditation greatly helps a group discover its spiritual purpose, goals and methods. Daily, ongoing group meditation helps reaffirm and expand the spiritual focus of a group and create a sense of unity and harmony. Receiving guidance from our Higher Self or God for the good of the whole group depends on the purity and spiritual alignment of each individual member, and his/her ability to truly meditate and release individual opinions. The basics for maintaining clarity and purpose are discrimination, detachment and self-discipline. The uniting, fusing energy that allows a group to administer its will and purpose is love.

2) **Sound the Right Note** — As a core nucleus of people in a group develop a clearly shared purpose and vision, this focus on inner levels will draw, through the law of Resonance, those who respond to the group note. Clear people, strongly committed to an inner, spiritual purpose will draw to themselves other dedicated people. A confused purpose and goals will attract confused people. Having a strong sense of inner purpose creates a strong energy field of a specific frequency.

3) **Faith and Manifestation** — Once a group has a unified purpose, pure motive, positive thoughts and beliefs and practical action will bring into manifestation all that is needed to accomplish the purpose of the group. Faith in the co-creative process with God grows into *knowing* as you experience it. We have also had to learn patience, as the Divine has Its own timing which is often different from our human wishes.

4) **Soul or Unity Consciousness** — The illusion of my soul and your soul disappears when we realize that soul consciousness is group consciousness, and Soul of Humanity is One. We have discovered that individual good is intrinsically united with the good of the whole, the group soul. The true good of the whole will also be good for the growth of all individuals within it. We have seen that as the individual grows, the whole group is strengthened. As

energy is returned to the group by individuals everyone grows, including the group's ability to give to everyone.

5) **Service** — The soul of an individual or group is invoked by serving, by putting ourselves in situations where we cannot possibly meet the needs of others from the level of our personalities alone, and our soul always responds. When our energies are flowing out in giving to others, more energy can enter from the soul, without the danger of spiritual congestion. We have seen groups accomplish amazing achievements in the effort to truly serve.

6) **Timing and Organic Growth** — Groups go through cycles of growth, development and consolidation similar to those of individuals. It is important to recognize the cycle your group is in and be realistic about your expectations. Observation of the workings of the universal laws of right timing, the development of long-term vision and accompanying patience will do much to help overcome the widespread human frailty of wanting to see everything happen now. Solid, deep spiritual roots in the ground of experience and slow, organic growth are essential for sustained and balanced development.

7) **Organism Not Organization** — A group entity is a living, vibrating energy field with soul rapport leading to telepathy and profoundly unified group functioning on all planes. The emphasis in spiritual, new age organizations should be more on the spiritual purposes, consciousness, life energies and needs of the organism, than on the needs of an organizational structure. Order and organized rhythms of living are necessary to accomplish goals, but the real structure is in the energies and consciousness of the group organism.

8) **Relationship Process** — It is essential to have a clear, agreed upon process for handling differences that arise between individual personalities. These conflicts should neither be dwelled upon nor suppressed. We've found it is important to assume that the underlying right relationship is love and unity, and work to bring all relationships to that state. A regular time for "personal sharing" can be very helpful, as the spiritual energy, support and clarity of the whole group is available to individuals to work through problems within themselves or with others. Specific techniques like psychosynthesis, role playing and active listening can be helpful. This can also be a time for people to share their concerns about the group, and areas of group life that need attention.

9) **An Orderly, Beautiful Environment** — Group meetings and group work is more joyful and effective conducted in an environment that is clean and beautiful on all levels. Spiritual energy flows most clearly when mental,

emotional and physical channels are clear. Putting light and love into the physical environment through cleaning, painting, flowers, art, meditation, singing and laughing lifts the vibration of a room.

**10) Good Custodianship** — Resources need to be used wisely and efficiently and be well taken care of. We harmonize with universal laws when we keep our resource channels clear and flowing. Planetary economics work when the circulatory flow is moving well through the whole system. When we have released to others things we don't use, we have seen an inflow of new abundance. Projects already started should be finished before new ones are undertaken. And an attitude of gratitude brings plenitude. It is also important to have clear initial agreements about member's resources and finances, to be sure everyone has the same understanding.

**11) Positive Thinking** — Energy follows thought, so we are continually creating our own experiences by the focus of our thinking. By using our co-creative mental powers in harmony with the positive building energies of the universe, we dramatically enhance our power to create new ways of being and living together, as an inspiration to others. It is important to see the best in everyone and in every situation, avoiding undue criticism and worry. Our experience has been that holding people in our thoughts in old patterns of how we experience them can make it more difficult for them to grow and change. We have seen many instances when one person in a conflict changed their thoughts about the other person, seeing them in a new way, that allowed the other person to change very quickly.

**12) Balance of Love, Light and Will** — Love creates unity, co-operation and connectedness. Light provides discrimination concerning readiness for group work. Will helps a group focus on its purpose and goals and overcome all obstacles. Groups can be imbalanced and have too much or too little of any of these energies. Groups that are too loving will take in anyone whether they are ready for group work or not, and are then often taken advantage of group work or not, and are then often taken advantage of and have their energy dispersed in dealing with overly overly critical of people in their own group or in other groups and see themselves as "special" or better than other people or groups. Groups that are too willful focus on purposes and goals, with little or no attention to group process, creating a harsh and alienating group environment that drives people away.

**13) Attunement to All Kingdoms of Life** — Awareness of life in other kingdoms — plant, animal and mineral, both on the land in nature and in our homes in the materials and tools we use helps harmonize us with all life around us. As a spiritual community we consciously acknowledge these kingdoms, bless them and through an intuitive receptivity and careful listening try to always work in cooperation and co-creation with them. As the nature of kingdoms are already complete at one with new age energies we find our contact and co-creative work with them a constant source of joy, refreshment and strength.

**14) Synthesis** — An effective process of synthesis allows each individual in a group to contribute his/her perspective, and the group as a whole then synthesizes them all into a higher awareness that enhances everyone. Synthesis is not just adding some of everything, but a group working to build, with a variety of inputs, a transformed, completely new way of seeing and understanding an issue or situation. It requires learning how to feel, think and intuit as a group. It is also the capacity to hold different perspectives in consciousness simultaneously, seeing what is positive and useful in each of them, and finding the transcendent perspective where they all fuse and unite.

**15) Synergy** — a quantum multiplication of each individual's energy and ability results when everyone in a group is attuned to the group purpose and is fully and freely giving their love, attention and energy to manifest that purpose. The group as a whole then becomes magnetic and radiatory, functioning as a powerful center of light and energy, fulfilling its destiny in giving itself to those who can benefit from its service.

**16) Consensus Decision Making** — Building or discovering a decision to which everyone can give their consent through an open sharing of views and discussion works well in committed, spiritually focused groups. As everyone has participated in making the decision, everyone will be committed to carrying it out. Consensus sometimes occurs as an intuitively sensed unity on an issue, and sometimes it is the conscious building of a synthesis of different perspectives. We have found an effective consensus process requires: the assumption that there is a right decision for everyone, and that it is possible to discover it; a commitment to the integrity of the whole group, not just to one's own views; sufficient time; an appropriate size group; a willingness to listen to others as well as one's own inner wisdom; a willingness to state differences clearly and deal with conflict; an honesty about one's personal clarity and the ability (if necessary) to maintain "positive neutrality" if one is not clear.

**17) Inter-Group Cooperative Networks** — Building networks of groups to co-sponsor and carry out larger projects is essential to Aquarian group work. Recognize if your group is integrated and ready for this next phase of growth, service and evolution of consciousness. Inter-group work requires a mature sense of intuitive evaluation, knowing what your group has to contribute, the ability to see the best in other groups and recognize their unique contribution without being blind to their limitations, as well as much patience and goodwill towards other groups. The rewards are enhancement of your group's power to aid world transformation, through aiding in building the framework for the new civilization and culture emerging everywhere.

For further information on these ideas, send for a copy of a cassette tape for \$8.00 produced by Sirius Community from one of our workshops on "Principles for Starting Communities and Groups." A one-day workshop on this theme will be offered at Sirius, June 19. Write Sirius, P.O. Box 388-C, Amherst, MA 01004, (413) 256-8015. □

Swami Beyondananda presents

# Tantrum Yoga

the latest rage on the path to Ire Consciousness

**Says the Swami:**

"People keep asking me what it's like to be a higher being and I can tell right away they don't get it. Listen, the food I eat is the same that you eat (except I put ketchup on everything). The way I sleep is no different from the way you sleep. I put my pants on the usual way, one leg at a time. And I get mad! Plenty mad. I mean *furios*, just like you do. The only difference is, I've learned how to put my rage to work for me through daily practice of **Tantrum Yoga**. And I create enough energy to heat my ashram and several adjoining buildings.

See, a lot of people get angry. Well that's great. Except they feel ashamed of their anger, and they feel angry at themselves for getting angry. Which makes them even angrier. Finally they stub their toe on something just to release all the steam! Blam! They've shot their wad, and what do they have to show for it? Energy splattered all over the place—and a sore toe. So I say, don't hide your anger like a big baby!

**Act Your Rage!**

**Swami Beyondananda  
answers Your Questions  
about Tantrum Yoga:**

**Dear Swami,**

I've tried your Tantrum Yoga techniques and for the life of me, I just can't get angry. It's making me furious! What can I do?

*Ira Zentit,*

Los Angeles, California

**Dear Ira,**

Whatever you do, don't get angry at yourself for not getting angry! The best way to bring anger to the surface is to try not to get angry.

**Dear Swami,**

I agree with Tantrum Yoga in principle but I can't seem to get into the practice. I guess I feel it's not ladylike to express anger. Any ideas?

*Tanya Hyde*

Nashville, Tennessee

**Dear Tanya,**

Now I know in the past women have been taught not to tell their rage. Listen, I have news for you—Your rage shows anyway! So don't lie about your rage! Be proud of it. And people will say, "You know, she's not bad considering her rage—in fact she's a rav-ing beauty!"

**Dear Swami,**

Sometimes I'm in a fit of rage and I begin doing Tantrum Yoga, but the anger wears off in the middle of the process. So my question is should I make myself feel angry to complete the process or should I just let it go?

*Hyman Dignant*

Burlington, UT

**Dear Hyman,**

Hey—if the fit wears, shoo it.

**The four basic postures of Tantrum Yoga**

**Posture One: The King Kong**

When you experience the first twinges of anger or frustration, adopt the King Kong pose (also known in the Niagara Falls area as "Slowly I turned...") Hunch your shoulders, clench your teeth and fists and make snorting noises.



Figure 1

**Posture Two: The Funky King Kong**

When you feel you can no longer stand still, begin to stomp around the room, grunt ing loudly, and bring you arms up and down in the King Kong mudra (Figure 2).



Figure 2

**Posture Three: The Frantic Tantrum Mantra**

Lie on your back, flailing your arms and legs and shouting the mantra, "No-o-o-o" at the top of your lungs. The vibrational quality of the word "No" really helps to clear the air—not to mention the apartment building. When you feel you are about to collapse with exhaustion, tighten the muscles and *hold your breath*. This is an ancient practice and it works! How do you think Krishna turned blue?



Figure 3

**Posture Four: The Volcano**

Here's where you channel all that energy. Still holding your breath, get into a seated pose, stick your mouth straight up and ex-hale with a roar. This is also known as the "breath of fire," and it's a sure-fire way to find out if your smoke-alarm works.



Figure 4

**Sign up now for Tantrum Yoga—it's guaranteed to be a pique experience.**

And don't forget Swami's advanced training in bi-location. At the end of the training, you'll be beside yourself with rage!



# Conferences on COMMUNAL LIVING



**1982 Calendar** Explore communal living as an approach to social change at our Conferences and Communal Living Weeks throughout the spring and summer of 1982.

Co-sponsored by the Federation of Egalitarian Communities, our three-day Conferences and our Communal Living Weeks are designed to broaden awareness and understanding of intentional communities, to help more people find a communal alternative, and to celebrate our own communal lives.

The **Conferences** offer participants a look at communal life, its rewards and its problems, through workshops and presentations facilitated by people living and working communally.

The **Communal Living Weeks** are intensive communal living experiences for small groups of ten to twenty people — each one an opportunity to experience community -building first hand.

June 4—6	<b>Conference on Children and Community</b>	Dandelion
July 10—17	<b>Communal Living Week</b>	Twin Oaks Community
July 9 — 12	<b>4th Annual Conference on Women in Community</b>	Dandelion Community
August 7 — 14	<b>Communal Living Week</b>	Twin Oaks Community
July 30 — August 2	<b>Annual Communities Conference</b>	Dandelion Community
September 3 — 6	<b>Twin Oaks Communities Conference</b>	Twin Oaks Community
September 4 — 12	<b>Training for Social Change</b>	Dandelion, Community

**REGISTRATION FEES: All fees are set on a sliding scale according to your income.**

**Conferences** \$35 — \$75 (Children \$20)

**Communal Living Weeks** \$70 — \$100

The Communal Living Week fee includes a \$30-\$40 contribution to a communal treasury to be managed by your group in addition to the registration fee to the host community.

**Training for Social Change** \$70 — \$150 (Children \$35)

Write for more information:

## Dandelion

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

## Twin Oaks

Twin Oaks Community  
Route 4F  
Louisa, VA 23093  
(703) 894-5126





# RESOURCES

*Resources is a gentle critique [I try] format column of books, magazines, newsletters, and records directly related to cooperative living or of possible interest to those involved in alternative lifestyles. If you have a publication-resource that might be relevant to this column or if you have*

*favorite resource materials that others should know about, please get in touch. Feedback on my work is very helpful in making this column more responsive to the needs of its readers.*

*Upcoming features in the column include social change, land-use planning and design: systems design, graphic*

*design, and environmental design. Your participation is encouraged.*

*Have Fun!  
Gareth*

*Correspondence to:  
Gareth, Communities Resources, 431 N.  
Fillmore St., Arlington, VA 22201*

## Spirituality

**A Pilgrim's Guide to Planet Earth**  
Spiritual Community Publications  
Box 1080  
San Rafael, CA 94915  
320 pages \$8.95

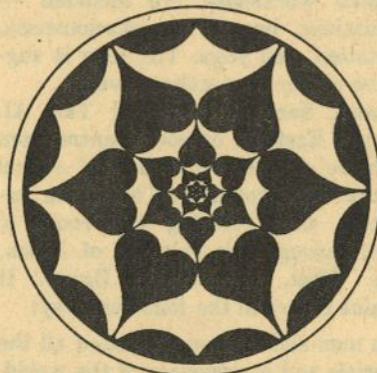
Spiritual Community Publications has recently released the second edition of its popular book **A Pilgrim's Guide to Planet Earth**. This all new volume follows the same format as its predecessor, presenting tips for world travellers and spiritual seekers on many aspects of travelling logistics and the planetary philosophy.

The first section of the book contains small articles by well-known spiritual teachers and other notable personalities. The articles in this edition are much the same as the previous book and suffer a bit (like the first edition) due to their short length and general overview approach. I don't see how these pieces could be very informative to anyone who has other than the most superficial understanding of world religions. I would suggest that if new Guides come out in the future, the authors might consider only doing one or two articles that delve deeper into aspects of world travel and spiritual seeking. Perhaps a travel log written by an eloquent writer-traveller could provide an inspiring introduction.

The main body of the book is divided into countries with an introduction to each outlining its major religious influences and points of interest. These

intros are followed by listings of spiritual centers, bookstores, restaurants, food stores and communities in cities and regions throughout the country. Major spiritual centers and monuments are highlighted, many with photographs and drawings. The listings of communities are sparse although most of the more famous spiritual groups are featured.

The Guide is tastefully designed with excellent artwork and photographs. Its 320 chock-full pages make it somewhat heavy for weight-conscious travellers but if you're travelling through so many countries you can't copy down the important addresses listed — you'll probably want to cart **The Pilgrim's Guide** along with you. This book, along with S.C.P.'s other health store best-seller **Spiritual Community Guide** (\$5.95) offer an excellent two volume directory to the many-petaled lotus of world religions and important spiritual movements. Happy trails.



**Visions of a Peaceful Planet**  
Ancient Futures L.P.

The innovative performing bay area world fusion music band Ancient Future has just released its first album on the new label, Beauty Records. The album contains six instrumental compositions scored for a mini-orchestra of instruments from around the world. Three of the compositions were written by Matthew Montfort, and the other members of the band each contributed one composition. Ancient Future is: Matthew Montfort, on sitar and steel string guitar with custom scalloped fretboard for bending notes; Mindy Klein, North Indian bamboo flute, silver flute, and tabla bol recitation; Benjy Wertheimer, tablas, cymbal, esraj, and zither; and Phil Fong, sarod, flamenco guitar, Irish harp, zither, and tanpura.

Ancient Future is devoted to the idea of World Fusion Music, an art that draws on the resources of the whole earth's musical traditions. All of the members of the band have a background of extensive and serious study in both western music and World Music. Amongst their teachers are Ali Akbar Khan, sarod maestro; Zakir Hussain, young tabla master; Ram Narayan, master of the sarangi; G.S. Sachdev, North Indian flute master; K.S. Subramaniam, vina master; Wayan Suweca and Pac Sinti, Balinese gamelon leaders; K.R.T. Wasitodupuro, Javanese gamelon leader; Don Cherry,

World Music innovator; and Colin Walcott, member of Oregon.

"Visions of a Peaceful Planet" is especially devoted to bringing the people of our planet closer together through music. The album has been commended as "... an absolutely brilliant performance... The East-West fusion as presented on your tape is one of the finest of its kind that I have ever heard... a fusion breakthrough of this kind will do much in the way of expanding the close perimeters of today's contemporary music," Alan Ames, Executive Producer, 7th Ray Productions. In the February, 1980, issue, *New Age Magazine* recommends the album as being "indeed quite soothing." Yet, because of the special attention given to complex oriental rhythms as well as popular melodies and harmonies, this music is of as much interest to percussionists and free-form dancers as it is to those who wish to relax and the connoisseur of fine listening enjoyment.

"Visions of a Peaceful Planet" was recorded in the spring of 1979 at John Altman Studio in San Francisco and Tres Virgos Studio in Mill Valley, California. It was produced by Ancient Future. It is available as both an album and a cassette at health food stores and metaphysical book stores nationally, and directly from the artists by writing Ancient Future, 12 Maple Ave., Kentfield, CA 94904. The list price is \$7.98, and those ordering through the mail should add \$1 for shipping. The record is distributed nationally by Heaven on Earth, Inc., P.O. Box 867, Fairfax, CA 94930.

#### **Sexual Secrets**

Nik Douglas and Penny Slinger  
Destiny Books  
377 Park Ave. South  
New York, NY 10016  
Oversized 383 pages \$12.95

#### **Tantra for the West**

Marcus Allen  
Whatever Publishing, Inc.  
158 E. Blithedale, Suite 4  
Mill Valley, CA 94941

Tantra is a sanskrit word derived from root words meaning to expand, weave, or extend consciousness. As a spiritual method it takes into account both inner and outer realities or the whole of life, if you will. Because of the vague, all-encompassing nature of the word and meaning of tantra there is presently a plethora of books on the subject approaching it from a multitude of angles. Two of the best books to be published

recently are **Tantra for the West** by Marcus Allen and **Sexual Secrets** by Nik Douglas and Penny Slinger.

Allen's book focuses on Tantra as a method of personal transformation in a similar vein to many of the other human potential books and methods. He sums up his basic approach stating:

"The practice of tantra involves every moment of our lives. It involves an acceptance of, and a willingness to deal with, all of our thoughts, feelings, and actions — both the so-called positive feelings and the so-called negative feelings."

The message here is that rather than running away from our feelings or trying to shove them under the rug, we should



wholeheartedly experience them, and using various principles and techniques transform them to our benefit. The author travels through the activities of daily life (food, work, sex politics, etc.) and offers his insights, stories, and exercises for each. Many of the basic new age tools as taught in most human potential workshops are included — affirmations, prosperity consciousness, meditation, and yoga. The tone is suggestive rather than exhaustive.

**Sexual Secrets**, subtitled *The Alchemy of Ecstasy*, explores tantra from the more classical approach of sexual practice and eroticism. This is an exhaustive study tracing the roots of tantra through the cultures of Japan, India, Tibet, China, and Egypt. It explains tantra in the following way:

"In man and woman are found all the materials and experiences of the world.

When they unite, these experiences and materials can be distilled into a vision of and a harmonization with the dynamic unity underlying all reality. For centuries this vision of unity has been observed by individuals and institutions that have promoted a schism between body and mind, between religious feelings and sexuality. The fear of mysticism and sexuality has only been overshadowed by the fear of the inherent liberating power of human sexuality."

Author Nik Douglas is a scholar of oriental art and philosophy and a student of tantra, having studied in the Himalayas for eight years. Artist Penny Slinger, a gifted European artist, contributes over 600 illustrations, both contemporary portraits of tantric practice, and her renditions of classical tantric drawings and sculpture.

Hundreds of topics such as breathing, massage, bathing, visualization, masturbation, and erogenous zones appear with a several page exploration of each, complemented by drawings and excerpts from tantric texts, some of them translated by Douglas and appearing in English for the first time. Just about every aspect of sexuality, eroticism, and mysticism is covered, creating an all encompassing encyclopedia of Eastern sexual wisdom.

Because of the confusion that exists over Tantra and Tantric practice and because of its many diverse schools that claim the real roots of tantra, it is impossible to say which of these books is talking about "the real tantra." In my own understanding and experience of tantric practice I have always placed more emphasis on the sexual metaphor than Allen does. **Sexual Secrets** seems to swing a bit far in the other direction; with its sensational cover and title, it does much to perpetuate the myth that tantra simply means kinky Eastern eroticism and sustained lovemaking. Both books are similar in their emphasis on experiencing life to its fullest, and recognizing that as a form of reverence and a spiritual practice. Perhaps together they form complementary volumes for exploring the full range of approaches to Tantric practice. Don't make the mistake, however, of thinking that either one of these or any other books on Tantra are giving you the one true meaning of it, for its meaning is forever scattered among the myriad of traditions and interpretations that sprang from the original inspiration.

**The Marriage of the Sun and the Moon**  
Andrew Weil  
Houghton Mifflin Company  
2 Park St.  
Boston, MA 02107

"Consider this: By an extraordinary coincidence, the sun and moon appear to us to be the same size in the sky. The sun's vast distance from us exactly compensates for its much greater diameter, so that it appears no bigger than the moon. If this relationship did not hold, total eclipses of the sun would not occur. Human consciousness has developed on the one planet where the lights that rule day and night are equal."

And with that thought, drug and consciousness researcher Andrew Weil dives into his most recent book, **The Marriage of the Sun and the Moon**. For those of you who came in late and are not already familiar with Dr. Weil, he came into some notoriety in the early seventies with his book **Natural Mind**: A new way of looking at drugs and the higher consciousness. In it he asserted the simple theory that human beings have a natural desire to seek altered states of awareness (states other than normal waking consciousness). The most controversial aspect of this thoughts was that "specific triggers, such as drugs, may elicit these states, they do not cause them. Alternate states of awareness arise from interactions among purely intrapsychic forces." He saw external triggers simply as a means whereby people "allow" themselves certain experiences out of their usual waking state.

After publication of **Natural Mind**, Weil was awarded a fellowship from The Institute of Current World Affairs to travel and do more research on his theories of the interaction of psychoactive substances and consciousness. **The Marriage of the Sun and the Moon** is a collection of essays or reports he submitted to the institute during his three years of travel. The articles cover a wide range of subjects from psychotropics to laughter as therapy to Indian sweat lodge ceremonies. Most of the pieces are well written in Weil's clean, straightforward method. His participant/observational style is refreshing with its sense of childhood innocence balanced with level-headed wisdom. The chapter on Uri Geller was the best I have ever read on this enigmatic and controversial figure. It should be read by skeptic and believers alike.

The only grope in the book is its attempt to tie all the diverse chapters into a cohesive unit expressed in the subtitle: "a quest for unity in con-

sciousness," and in the beginning consideration. Sure on some level all the essays deal in some way with consciousness and yes in some symbolic systems the sun and the moon represent the left and right hemispheres of the brain (respectively). And we can even find logical ways of eventually tying this esoterica to the effects of eating chili peppers, but mostly I felt slightly hyped by the title and the promotional come-on. After the initial confusion and some expectation adjustments I found **The Marriage of the Sun and Moon** very engaging and thought-provoking. Andrew Weil has the gift of gab in subjects that are too often boring and/or clumsily communicated. If you were a fan of **Natural Mind** you'll probably find this latest work an adequate continuation of similar explorations.

are you  
content  
with where you  
are right now?



because "right nows" are all you have

### **Beginning to See**

A. Sujata  
Unity Press  
235 Hoover Rd.  
Santa Cruz, CA 95065  
140 pages Paperbound \$4.95

In the spirit of **Be Here Now**, **Das Energi** and **Space, Time and Beyond**, this little book of epigrams and funky line drawings is a simple and concise introduction to Buddhist insight meditation. Through

## **Education**

The Danes define "folk schools" as those particularly Scandinavian adult education schools which are private, residential and funded to a large degree by the state. There are 90 such schools in Denmark today, a country less than half the size of Kentucky.

**The Danish Folk High School Today** is a 40-page booklet which attempts to "draw a contemporary, all-round, in-



stories, exercises, and aphorisms, Sujata, a former (American) Buddhist monk who studied in Sri Lanka, outlines the basic teachings of Buddhism and their relevance to the demanding pace of today's lifestyle.

My favorite page, littered with drawings of all manner of edibles, cautions: "If we do not approach the matter of diet intelligently we will only constipate our minds. Isn't freedom achieved when we can appreciatively accept any type of food that is offered?"

"Attachment to any diet is spiritually poisonous. Food in itself is not a means of transcendence. It only sustains the body while the mind works for its enlightenment."

Food fanatics of both the carnivorous and vegetarian varieties would do well to heed these words.

The part of this little meditation companion that impressed me the most was the last page of the book which informs those who want to know more about the author to send him your name, address, phone number, and the money to cover a 20 minute phone conversation. Now that's communication!

formative picture" of the schools today in their diverse and changing roles. It is written by folk school leadership and is a useful document for Americans who are curious about these schools or who need more up to date information than that which has been available.

Finn Slumstrup, in his chapter on the history of the schools, states that the ideas from which they sprang "were

almost anarchistic in their boundless confidence in the ability of human beings to govern themselves and work towards the common good . . ." Yet, there have been problems in attempts to translate the folk schools into other cultural settings.

The chapter on methodology and educational philosophy is written by Svend Slipsager who has studied at the University of Michigan and understands American education. Historical references and cultural illustrations have been avoided so that this chapter is unusually free from the Scandinavian influence which often fogs descriptions of these schools for foreigners.

In addition, Danish social problems today are much closer to the problems facing most industrialized countries. This booklet shows the folk schools adjusting to problems associated with youth, unemployment, urbanization, specialized education and democratic process in today's society. Reports directly from four of the schools sketch their different approaches to the issues.

The description of the legislation which supports these schools financially will be amazing to Americans unfamiliar with Danish educational philosophy. Every American leader in Congress should receive a copy!

Statistical trends are given in the final

chapters and the booklet ends with a list of the current Danish schools, their addresses, addresses of the national folk school offices in all Scandinavian countries, regulations covering foreigners wishing to attend Danish schools, and a very short bibliography.

Readers wishing for more information about folk schools or a copy of the booklet may write to Berea College, Box 287, Berea, KY 40404. The following materials are available:

**The Danish Folk High School**

Today, enclose \$1.00 for postage and handling.

Bibliography of selected materials in English, free but enclose stamped self-addressed envelope

Proceedings of the first conference of the Folk School Association of America, \$5.00 postpaid

Announcement of the October 7-9, 1982 conference, "Folk School in Community" which will be held at Berea College and attended by 15 leaders from Denmark.

**The Danish Folk High School Today**

Hojskolernes Sekretariat  
(The Folk High Schools Information Office)

Vartov, Favergade 27 G  
1463 Kobenhavn D, Denmark

## Miscellaneous

**The Outsider**

Colin Wilson  
J.P. Tarcher  
9110 Sunset Blvd.  
Los Angeles, CA 90069  
302 pages \$7.95

J.P. Tarcher has reissued this controversial book first published in 1954. Ahead of its time, *The Outsider* was young Colin Wilson's exploration of society's great and eccentric artists and visionaries. In it he looks at the lives and effects on society of such greats as Kafka, Camus, Hesse, Van Gogh, Dostoyevsky, and Blake.

"It is a seminal work on the alienation and creativity of humanity — of individuals engaged in self-exploration who live on the edge, challenge cultural values, create their own set of rules, and live them in an unsympathetic environment. The outsider is born into a world without perspective. Where others simply drift through life the outsider searches for the meaning and purpose of existence."

## American Indians

PCB's — in industrial contaminant known for its carcinogenic effects — is the most current threat to Akwesasne Mohawks. A recent article in the local press broke the news to the people here that the General Motors plant on the edge of Raquette Point, over the past decade, has dumped substantial amounts of the deadly substance into a "sludge pond." It is quite possible that the water wells on Raquette Point — where the Akwesasne Freedom School is located — have been contaminated. Lab tests are currently underway.

A group — Mohawks Agree On Safe Health (M.A.S.H.) — has been formed. It is requesting information of other cases of communities and organizations struggling with PCB contamination. The goal of the group is *clean drinking water* for the future generations.

For more information or donations, please write: M.A.S.H., c/o Akwesasne Freedom School, P.O. Box 198, via Roosevelttown, NY 13681.

The above piece appeared in the *Emergency Response International Net-*

## Media

*New Pages* is a fairly new publication that serves as a kind of *New York Review* for progressive books and independent publishers. In the last couple of years there has been an increasing interest in independent production of both books and records. New wave music has created a large group of independent record companies (Indies) and artforms involving mimeo, xerox, and quick copy. In the independent book and magazine trades, reduced printing costs and increasingly effective networks of special interest groups have caused a swell of independent publishers. For these publishers to be successful, papers such as *New Pages* become more and more important. Exposure to the many books and magazines through such vehicles must replace the large promotional efforts of mainstream publishers.

The New Pages Press staff has made a large contribution to small press success by their work with the quarterly paper *New Pages* and the yearly *New Pages Guide to Alternative Periodicals*. The

paper includes feature articles on the varied aspects of independent publishing, news of shows and conferences related to the small press, and spotlights of groups and individuals noteworthy in the alternative press field. Plenty of book and magazine reviews as well as a large listing of recently published titles with brief sketches are also included.

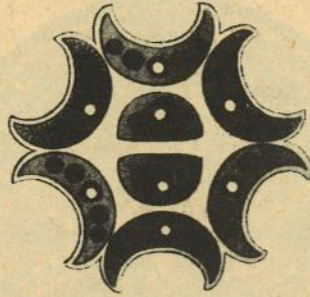
*The Guide to Alternative Periodicals* lists hundreds of magazines and papers that deal with citizen action, art, and social change. Listings include a short sketch of the periodical with ordering information for libraries, bookstores, and individuals.

Both *New Pages* and *The Guide to Alternative Periodicals* have proved very valuable in my work. For those seriously interested in independent publishing or the fruits of it, I recommend you subscribe to both the paper (\$10/yr) and *The Guide* (\$3.50/yr).

Write:

New Pages Press  
4426 S. Belsay Rd.  
Grand Blanc, MI 48439

work, a small bulletin put out by the folks at *Akwesasne Notes*. It has been being mailed out free of charge but now its publishers are asking for donations of \$10.00 a year to produce the bulletin monthly and to carry out other network activities. If you are able to give more they would greatly appreciate it. If you're unable to afford \$10.00, write and



explain your situation and they will work something out.

To get on the mailing list write:

**Emergency Response International  
Network**

c/o Akwesasne Notes

Mohawk Nation

via Rooseveltown, NY 13683.

## Health/Wellness

### Home Care

Evelyn M. Baulch  
Celestial Arts  
231 Adrian Rd.  
Millbrow, CA 94030

Understanding the ins and outs of effective home care for a sick or dying person is not something most of us think a lot about. As with health and sickness in general, we usually wait until we're in the thick of things to wish we had prepared in advance. Well whether you're a 'pre-planner' or a 'late learner', Evelyn Baulch's book **Home Care** can provide you with much of what you need to know about home medical treatment, care, and therapy.

Having been a member of a home health care 'team' I was able to review this book with some first hand experience of the subject. Ms. Baulch does quite an adequate job of outlining the whole process from the initial shock of diagnosis through all of the stages of care and the arrangements to be made for each stage. Her own credentials for writing such a book come from her experiences caring for her dying husband. Interspersed throughout the main text are journal-like accounts of her husband Larry's progress.

Besides the physical aspects of care, which are well covered, the author explores some of the non-physical aspects of care and healing such as emotional support, patient entertainment, communication, etc. I was pleased to find a section on humor but disappointed that only passive forms of humor (watching funny shows on T.V., comic books, etc.) were discussed. Cultivating a sense of humor and the ability to laugh at oneself and the ups and downs of life is probably more important to healthful living than the mechanical action of laughing. I also found it disheartening to see the number of references cited from the *National Enquirer* on meditation, pain relief, etc. Any association with this fanzine of sensationalism shakes my

feelings of trust in those referring to it. But the rest of this manual is sensible enough to make up for this apparent lapse of discrimination.

Two topics included in **Home Care** that can't be stressed enough are burnout of the care team and learning not to be afraid of medical emergencies and changes associated with a long-term or terminal illness. Oftentimes the emotional turmoil experienced by patient and care workers can be more traumatic than the illness itself. Ms. Baulch's treatment of the subject provides much encouragement and helpful suggestions in dealing with these important aspects of care. Also articles on pain and pain management, "games" patients and the elderly play, and a chapter on death and dying were all well noted by this reviewer.

The author states in her introduction: "Your experience will be different in some ways because you are another human being and you will have your own unique needs." Taking this qualifier into consideration helped me not be so critical on small points of semantics or in areas where I'd have done it differently. All the adding and subtracting from it aside, **Home Care** stands complete as an excellent primer for anyone faced with the task of organizing home health care.

### Focusing

Eugene T. Gendlin, Ph.D.  
Everest House  
1133 Ave. of the Americas  
New York, NY 10036  
Hardbound 179 pages \$7.95  
(Also available in Bantam Paperback \$3.50)

### Building Supportive Community:

Self-help through peer counseling  
Kathleen McGuire Boukydis, Ph.D.  
I.S.C.E.P.  
186 Hampshire St.  
Cambridge, MA 02139  
8½ x 11 Spiral bound 238 pages \$12.00

In 1978, Eugene Gendlin published **Focusing**, the result of fifteen years of study on the effectiveness of various psychotherapy techniques on patients. In his research he discovered that it didn't much matter what type of therapy technique was being employed; it was the ability of the patients to tune in to their bodily and emotional feelings, the "sense" of their internal process, that determined the success of therapy. By studying thousands of hours of taped therapy sessions, Gendlin and his colleagues were able to further isolate the elements of successful therapeutic change and create a "new" technique called focusing.

Focusing, simply explained, is a process of inner inquiry that seeks to go beyond the analyzing of experiences and external triggers to a "felt sense" within the body. These tangible bodily feelings are brought to the surface in a series of stages that work to isolate the real roots of the problem. Gendlin reports that for many people simply identifying and facing the real source of trouble is a large step in overcoming its power. By continued application of the focusing techniques, problems can be kept on a conscious and approachable level rather than descending into subconscious bad feelings and bodily tensions.

Besides focusing which can be done on an individual basis, Gendlin's book also describes how focusing can be done by groups of people in a supportive community setting — called listening community. **Building Supportive Community** is a manual which outlines the steps necessary to create such a listening community. In a clear, straightforward style, Kathy Boukydis draws upon the experiences of the Changes Listening Communities based in Chicago to illustrate a step by step process in building this type of support community. Chapters of the book discuss empathic listening, experiential focusing, interpersonal processing, consensual decision-

making, and starting a community.

Ms. Boukydis writes: "The manual actually teaches lay people many of the skills basic to individual and relationship therapy. As an approach to self-therapy, it attempts to overcome our culturally learned fear of feelings and to give everyone skills for dealing with feeling wherever it appears. Peer counseling provides an alternative for costly psycho-therapy and a model for egalitarian, non-hierarchical relationships. I think the approach, in turning mental health skills over to individuals, and in emphasizing the role of nurturing relationships, is a powerful tool for positive social change."

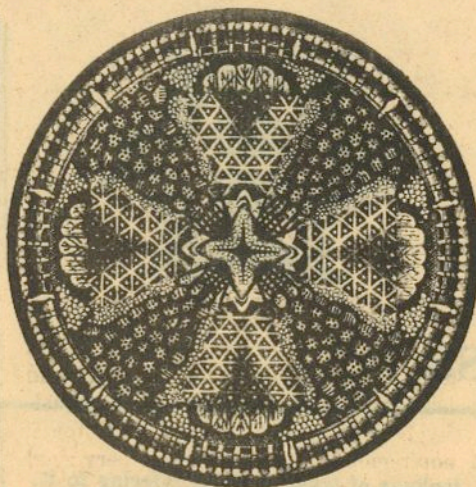
## Theatre

### By Popular Demand: Plays and other works by the San Francisco Mime Troupe

San Francisco Mime Troupe  
855 Treat St.  
San Francisco, CA 94110

This exciting book presents four plays and four actos by the popular radical theatre group, The San Francisco Mime Troupe. The Troupe, which boasts over 20 years of performing experience, presents a rare and confrontative form of consciousness raising theatre that is both enlightening and professionally performed. Through high drama, humor, irony, and satire, the troupe's productions speak to the very hearts of those concerned with the oppressed and those forces that are the perpetrators of subjugations. They expertly use their craft to present the struggles of women, blacks and other minorities and to expose political corruption, environmental destruction by corporations, and the folly of war.

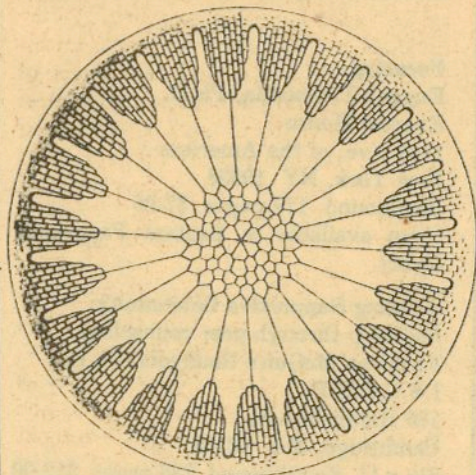
False Promises, San Fran Scandals, The Dragon Lady's Revenge and The Independent Female are the four plays included in **By Popular Demand**. The four actos include the popular Eco-man, a wonderful skit about a counter-cultural super-hero out to save his friend Earth from final destruction. Of course these scripts can't begin to capture the magic of the S.F. Mime Troupe or as Peter Solomon states in his introduction, "In performance, the company is fluid. Lines change. so these printed scripts can only provide a good example of particular



(performances)." Besides the above listed scripts, the book contains musical scores for the pieces as well as reproductions of the original promo posters and photos from the performances of each.

A chapter on mobile stagecraft outlines the construction of several types of staging and includes designs for some of the troupe's other stage gear. A photo essay of one performance of Bertolt Brecht's *The Mother* is also included.

If you're involved in theatre, especially of the street/guerilla variety, and are interested in the contributions the S.F. Mime has made to the art, **By Popular Demand** will be helpful in giving a flavor of their work. And if you're ever in San Francisco don't miss an opportunity to see the troupe in action.



## Travel

The Council on International Educational Exchange (CIEE), the largest student travel organization in the United States, publishes an interesting Student Work, Study, Travel Catalog. Now in its ninth year, the 64-page Catalog is packed with information on travel abroad, work exchanges and overseas study. While some services offered are available only to students, many are open to all.

The Catalog contains full details on the worldwide discounts and benefits available to holders of the International Student Identity Card (ISIC), the internationally recognized proof of student status. CIEE, the official U.S. sponsor of the ISIC, has embarked upon a national campaign to establish in America a network of student discounts (on planes, trains, hotels, theaters, restaurants, museum admissions, etc.) similar to those offered abroad. ISIC holders who participate in the campaign have a chance to win free trips to Europe.

CIEE's Work Abroad program provides not only the opportunity for an overseas experience at very little cost but also the advantage of seeing a foreign country as an insider. By virtually eliminating the red tape, CIEE has helped thousands finance their travels. Permits can be issued for work in Great Britain, Ireland, France and New Zealand. CIEE's latest program, International Work Camps, will place students in community development projects in Western and Eastern Europe, Scandinavia and Mexico.

The Catalog includes information on Eurail and Britrail passes, low-cost tours of Europe, Israel, Egypt and the U.S.S.R., car plans, budget accommodations, trip insurance, transatlantic and transpacific air fares and the extensive network of student and youth flights linking cities in Europe, Asia, Africa and Australia. These special student and youth fares, available in the U.S. only through CIEE or its appointed agents, provide air travel around the world at prices well below the regular air fares.

The 1982 Student Work, Study, Travel Catalog may be obtained from CIEE, Dept. STC 82, 205 East 42nd St., New York, NY 10017 (212) 661-1414 or, 312 Sutter St., San Francisco, CA 94108 (415) 421-3473, enclosing \$1.00 for postage and handling.

## **The Findhorn Family Cookbook**

Kay Lynne Sherman

Findhorn Publications

The Park, Findhorn, Forres

IV36 OTZ, Scotland

144 pages Laminated Paperback

I visited the Findhorn Community for a month several years ago. My first reaction to its impeccably ordered and clean environment was slight shock and mild intimidation. Being someone who had grown up in a neurotically clean household, I had come to associate cleanliness and orderliness with a bourgeois coldness, rigidity, and oppressive regimentation. After being in the community for a while I came to understand a much different motivation for such ordering: artful living. Findhorn sees this type of artful environmental ordering as a form of reverence and love of the physical (and spiritual) world or as "a celebration of the wholeness of life" as they put it.

The aspect of Findhorn with which I was immediately impressed was the food. Besides the meals being top shelf vegetarian fare, the manner in which they are prepared, arranged, served, and eaten was near poetic. Kay Lynne Serman explains some of the Findhorn approach to cooking:

"One thing we notice at Findhorn is that the attitude of the cooks has a tremendous effect on the whole community. It is a pivotal job, and must not be performed by someone who considers it

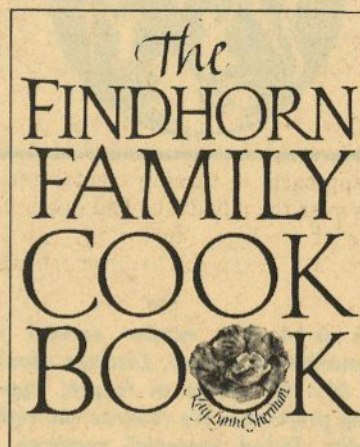
to be drudgery. The consciousness you bring to the job is transferred to the food and from there to your family. So cooking is really a way of giving, a daily ritual of bringing spirit into matter.

"Each tool you work with becomes a good friend if you take care of it and learn how to use it appropriately. Quality is preferred to quantity in kitchen equipment: better to have one very good knife than a whole set of mediocre ones."

Contrary to my experiences in other communities, meal preparation at Findhorn was relatively relaxed, efficient, and lots of fun. A lot of energy goes into the arrangement of the dishes and the results are almost worth framing (or photographing for deliciously beautiful cookbooks). The dining rooms at Findhorn (especially at the main caravan dining room) are decorative and elegant without being oppressively fragile. The tables and benches are of hand hewn wood, with tableware of beautiful pottery and wood all crafted at Findhorn. It is a dining environment that even Tolkien's hobbits might find suitable. The energy and craftship with which the whole food ritual is infused at Findhorn had a profound effect on my awareness of food and its role in building a healthy, happy community.

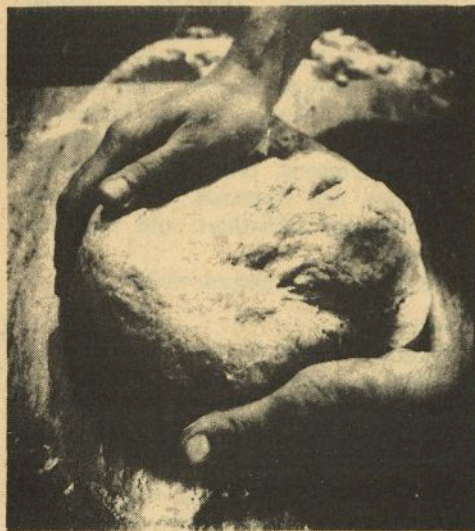
The above account of my experiences at Findhorn is included as an introduction to this new cookbook by Findhorn because so much of the spirit of Findhorn cooking, which I took part in first hand, is restimulated by this cookbook. The overall sense one gets from thumbing through it is that quest for perfection that Findhorn is famous for. High quality materials are used, the artwork is warm and homey, the photographs approach food and food preparation with such clarity and wholeness that mushroom caps, onions, and containers of dried beans become beautiful mandalas. Attention to detail and a pervading sense of reverence for all life is evident on every page of this impeccably designed book.

Unfortunately, I didn't find the content of the cookbook as exciting as its design. It does contain good introductory material on attitudes in the kitchen, preparing vegetables, making tofu, and other simple cooking tips plus lots of basic recipes of soups, omelettes, and breads. But people who have been cooks



for a while are probably already familiar with most of the material contained here. Some interesting desserts including traditional English trifle, chocolate leaves, and a Findhorn version of a huge French wedding cake made out of a mountain of creme puffs are presented. My main disappointment was that unlike the earlier Findhorn cookbook by Barbara Friedlander, this new cookbook doesn't include versions of the recipes for large groups. Anyone who has ever tried to cook for a hundred people from a recipe for four knows the ingredient juggling that can go on, sometimes unsuccessfully. Friedlander's book contains several versions of each recipe (for 10, 25, 100 people, etc.) which makes it useful to small and large families alike. **The Findhorn Family Cookbook** does include measurements in both metric and American measurements.

As an introductory "course" in conscious cookery and as a statement of cooking as an edible artform, **The Findhorn Family Cookbook** is a vibrant and joyful contribution. From the standpoint of seasoned (pardon the pun) cooks feeding groups of people, Friedlander's book is still highly recommended.





# REACH

*Reach is a free reader service of Communities magazine. Listings should be a 50-150 words in length, type-writing preferred. We reserve the right to edit. Dated material requires a minimum of six weeks lead time. Feedback on responses to listings, as well as donations, are welcome.*

*Thanks, Gene*

## Conferences

☆Fifth Annual Summer Solstice Gathering — Intensive macro-biotic seminar. June 21-25, 1982. The seminar will feature Bill Tims, Jaques De Langre, Jerome Canty, Helene Weisbach and others. Topics will include: Visual diagnosis, Oriental medicine, Do-In, the Alexander Technique; also, macrobiotic architecture, farming, gardening and much more. Attendance is limited, so register soon. The gathering is sponsored by the Spiral Inn, a non-profit corporation organized to sponsor educational activities by members of Moniteau Farm, a 405 acre homesteading community in central Missouri. For more information, write:

**The Spiral Inn**  
Jamestown, MO 65046

☆Since 1975 the Farallones Institute has conducted a wide variety of educational programs in appropriate technologies related to energy and food. Each summer the Institute hosts a workshop aimed at technical assistance for community organizations and neighborhood activists desiring self-help skills and information in low-cost alternative energy systems. The Community Techno-

logy Workshop is four two-week courses between July 5 and August 28 which focus on Weatherization/Conservation (July 5-17), Solar Water Heating (July 19-31), Solar Space Heating (August 2-14) and Community Food Systems (August 16-28). Each course concentrates on the hands-on skills needed to initiate projects: basic carpentry, drafting, metalworking, gardening skills, workshop organizing, use of media. There is emphasis on understanding the economics and politics of energy and food production, model projects and additional resources available. Discussions, tours, library access, curricula, and guest speakers are part of each course.

The training site is on 80 acres of rolling coastal farmland just north of San Francisco; there are 7 solar residences, 3 attached solar greenhouses, 3 acres of organic gardens, full wood shop, resource library, and more. Participants live on site during the workshop. Tuition, room and board, and materials for each course is \$350.00. Scholarships are available to low-income applicants. Early inquiry is encouraged to assist in workshop planning and to assure financial support. Applicants are encouraged to attend more than one course; in the past several have attended the complete workshop. Travel is provided from Santa Rosa which easily connects with the San Francisco airport via airporter express. For application/information contact:

**Betsy Timm**  
15290 Coleman Valley Road  
Occidental, CA 95465  
(707) 874-2441

☆The Healing Arts Festival for Women Albuquerque, NM 1982  
April 17th and 18th, to be held at the University of New Mexico, Woodward, Ortega and Honors Building  
Sponsored by UNM's Women's Center

and Women's Studies, Moontree Press and New Mexico Women's Political Caucus.

Two Days of over 80 Different Workshops • Body • Mind • Spirit • Lifestyle • Political Women • A Dance • Networking/Juice and Wine Gathering • A Concert • Rituals • Meditations • Movement • Sharing • Bag Lunches • and much, much more.

Come experience this festival as joyful self-care, as gaining knowledge of choices, as taking responsibility for development and maintenance of your personal life and health.

Workshops include:

Acupuncture, Affirmations, Alternative Pain Control, Art of Mothering, Art Therapy, Astrology, Breath for Headaches, Building Support Systems, Cancer, Central American Women and Health, Color Therapy, Consumer Health Issues, Dance Therapy, Divorced Women, Domestic Violence, Feldenkrais, Fertility Awareness, Grief, Herbs, Homeopathy, Dreams, Women's Spirituality, Humor and Health, How to Create Ritual, Infertility, Interpersonal Communications, Intuition, Journal Writing, Lesbian Health Issues, Life and Politics of Native Americans, Macrobiotics, Massage, Middle Age, Midwifery, Music Therapy, Poetry, Politics of Rape, Pre-Natal Nutrition, Reflexology, Rolf Movement, Self Help for Food Allergies, Self Hypnosis, Sufi Dancing, Women and Addictions, and Wholistic Prosperity.

For more information write:

**Festival**  
UNM's Women's Center  
1824 Los Lamos  
Albuquerque, MN 87131  
(505) 277-3716, 345-1766, 421-2681

☆Women: The Leading Edge of the New Age — A conference on Women, Spirituality and Healing. Held April 24th



and 25th, 1982 in Temescal Canyon, Pacific Palisades.

Keynote speaker is Charlene Spretnak, editor of the new book, *The Politics of Women's Spirituality* and author of *Lost Goddesses of Early Greece*.

Two days of more than 60 different workshops including: rituals, meditations, dance martial arts, visual thinking, death and dying, acupressure, herbs, gestalt, voodoo, polarity, t'ai chi, movement and astrology.

This conference is sponsored by the 35 women facilitators and is organized by Suzanne Vilmain and Linda Barone.

For more information:

#### Conference

12581 Venice Blvd., Suite 206  
Los Angeles, CA 90066  
(215) 660-3579

## Help Wanted

☆ We are looking for a dedicated teacher, willing to share a simple, rural lifestyle, and consider a sincere community commitment. Community members are provided with a cabin, food and major living expenses, such as car upkeep. A small stipend of \$150/month is provided. This is an alternative school, K-8, with 50 children attending. If interested, please contact the hiring committee for further information and to facilitate a visit. Write:

**Carol Camerer**  
c/o Mariposa School  
P.O. Box 387  
Ukiah, CA 95482

☆ We are yoga teachers and social activists committed to the development of intentional communities as a means of social transformation. We are certified to teach an "Introduction to Yoga" class by Zenith Manwell, instructor at Delta College Yoga Institute. Her teacher is BKS Iyengar, author of *Light on Yoga* and a world renowned master teacher of Raja Yoga. We are interested in teaching 5-10 day yoga seminar to intentional communities and cooperative groups seeking to deepen their spiritual and activist commitments, entitled: "Yoga for Personal and Social Liberation." Included would be daily classes in hatha yoga, meditation and lectures leading into group discussion on the Eight Limbs (i.e., Ghandian non-violence, Right Livelihood, Truth, etc.). If your community is interested in setting

up a seminar or needs more information, please contact us. Costs negotiable, but travel, room and board minimum. Peace, **John Carroll and Jeanne Stoppels**  
3660 Murphy Lake Rd.  
Millington, MI 48746

## People Looking

☆ I'm 32, finishing work on an M.A. in music, a non-smoker, vegetarian (non-fanatical variety), quite self-sufficient, skilled in print journalism, and have some construction and auto repair skills. I recently realized that my prime interest lies in finding a lifestyle which is satisfying and in accord with my ideals. My ideals are anarchistic: I believe in self-management, equalitarianism, collective decision making, and non-coerciveness. I want to move beyond external expressions (anti-nuclear, anti-war, etc.) of my ideals and integrate them into my personal life. I've come to see that monogamous coupling is both unsatisfying and contrary to my values, so I want to explore multi-person relationships; it seems the only way to overcome jealousy/possessiveness and to make family structure democratic and equalitarian.

I'd like to hear from similarly inclined individuals or groups. I'd prefer to stay in the Bay Area, but I would consider relocating. Contact:

**Chuck Bufe**  
161 Vicksburg  
San Francisco, CA 94114

☆ Have Land — Need People with open minds, free spirits, a sense of humor, honesty and energy for the hard work of creating a rural, self-sufficient community and an extended family, based on open relationships and maybe a group marriage someday. We are a farm family of five — 34, 33, 6½, 3½, 1 — with 75 beautiful, secluded acres (25 tillable) on which we grow (organically) specialty grains and beans. The rest is woods, hills and pasture on a river. We prefer non-smokers with children, but will consider any compatible, creative person. Write:

**M. Winegarner**  
1402 Fox Rd.  
Sandusky, OH 44870

☆ My name is Peter. I'm 26 and live in Boston. I seek land where I can rent an acre cheaply. My plan is to "live lightly

on the land;" that is, in a small wooden cabin with no plumbing or cellar, wood-heated.

I have experience living like this, having spent several winters in a small 8 x 12 wood-heated cabin, getting water from a tap twenty yards away and working a part-time job in town.

Also I'm interested in access to tillable land for some subsistence farming. I have experience in this area, having had four successful tomato and cucumber crops, the surplus of which I pickled or boiled down to paste and gave to friends in the "big city."

Also, I envision a community, loosely knit, with a community cottage and cabins for individuals.

Would also welcome correspondence with people, particularly nearby, with similar ideals.

#### Peter Sibson

104 Charles St. #376  
Boston, MA 02114

☆ A prayer, a dream — living off the countryside. Spiritually-minded people, becoming one with God and Nature and expressing their talents to the fullest; above all having love for each other and those in great need. Moral standards; dedicated to the joy of living. Motto: "Laugh and live with the Universe." and let God be your guide. Do I relate to anyone out there? I have prayed the prayer of faith; now I am waiting for the answer. Christian; Yogic-vegetarian, spiritual healer. Animal lover (three dogs); in mid-fifties, have a little land, will relocate. Please send SASE:

**N. Bigelow**  
7500 Coonlake  
Howell, Mich. 48843

☆ Looking for a yoga commune in the country where there is a spiritual teacher or guide. Would like atmosphere of love, tolerance and flexibility.

**Livingston**  
P.O. Box 7724  
Albuquerque, MN 87194

☆ I'm a feminist, anarchist, lesbian, but not separatist. I'm looking for a rural community in a warm area with people who are anti-authoritarian, feminist, diverse in race and class, some lesbians involved.

Am I asking the impossible? Anyone with any leads or ideas, similar desires, please write:

**Valerie Hibe**  
Rt. 12, Box 375  
Tallahassee, FLA 32304

☆Family of five, vegetarian and non-smoking, seeks like families to share with in a rural, communal setting. Prefer the type of community where each family leases or purchases its own building and/or land. Prefer Northern or Central California, Oregon or Washington. If interested, then please contact:

**Mick and Lois Kirkey**  
El Sobrante, CA 94808  
(415) 223-3451

## Groups Looking

☆Unadilla Farm is a 65 acre organic vegetable farm and living cooperative in Western Massachusetts. We have been in operation two years during which we have built a barn and a passive solar central house. We have established asparagus beds and raised beds for intensive vegetable growing and planted some fruit and nut trees. Beacon College has selected us as its regional collaborator for its Program in Community and Neighborhood Change. We try to be non-sexist, non-racist and non-agist and we are committed to sustained agriculture and political decentralization. Many of the details of our community sharing have yet to be worked out. We seek members who would like to join us in market gardening, permaculture, small scale husbandry, building a commercial scale solar green house, and developing learning alternatives for the exchange of rural skills.

Thank you for your help.

**Unadilla Farm**  
Liz Henderson  
P.O. Box 142  
Turners Falls, MA 01876

☆A small campfire in the northwoods. A new people walking in a sacred manner. We are open to other brothers and sisters of similar vision, of living lightly and joyously upon our Earth Mother joining us here to share in this experience. Write to:

**3 Creeks Camp**  
RR 1, Box 76  
Little Fork, MN 56653

☆In the land where the hermit thrush sings with the rippling Tannin Waters dwell two gentle Spirit People who seek their balance with Earth, Water and

Sky. We garden, forage and gather the native herbs which our Earth Mother so abundantly provides. We're exploring the crafts, spirituality, and lifeways of our Native Predecessors to learn to grow in the Circle of Balance with our Woodland Kin, and the Circle of Peace with our Fellow Humans.

**Coldfoot Creek Community**  
Rt. 1, Box 110 AA  
Pembine, WI 54156

*A man named Kim from St. Paul, Minnesota wrote us recently but we lost his address and would like to make contact with him. He was a member of a northern Wisconsin community which has since moved to New Zealand [or possibly Norway], and is part Indian [Cree?].*

☆1982 Calendar of Conferences and Workshops on Communal Living and Social Change at Dandelion,

June 4-6 **Children in Community**, a conference exploring communal living as it affects the lives of our children.

June 18-20 **Our Spring Herb Weekend**, exploring the collection, growing and drying of both wild and domestic herbs, as well as their uses as food, medicine and natural pest control.

July 9-12 **A Women's Conference**, examining communal life, its feminist roots and how it affects our lives as women.

July 30-August 2 **Dandelion's Sixth Annual Communities Conference**, offering 50 to 100 participants a look at the rewards and problems of communal life through workshops and presentations covering a wide range of communal experience.

September 4-12 a nine-day **Training for Social Change** coordinated by trainers from the Movement for a New Society.

Fees: Our fees are on a sliding scale according to income. The range is:

Conferences — \$35 to \$75  
Training for Social Change \$70 to \$150  
(Children \$35)

You can register by sending a \$20 deposit per person per event (half refundable up to two weeks before event). Send to:

**Dandelion**  
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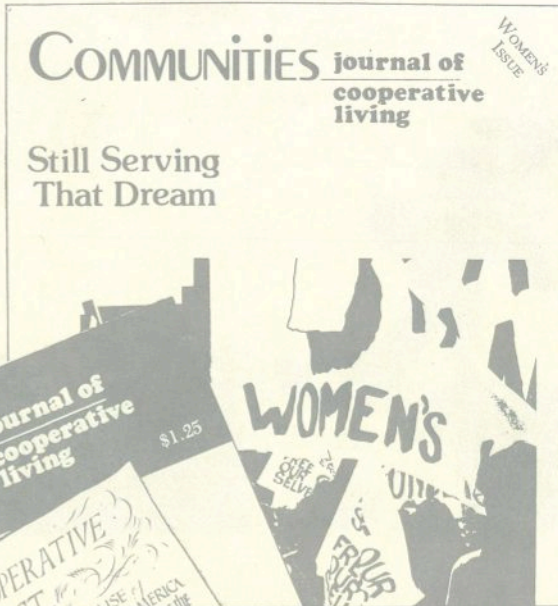
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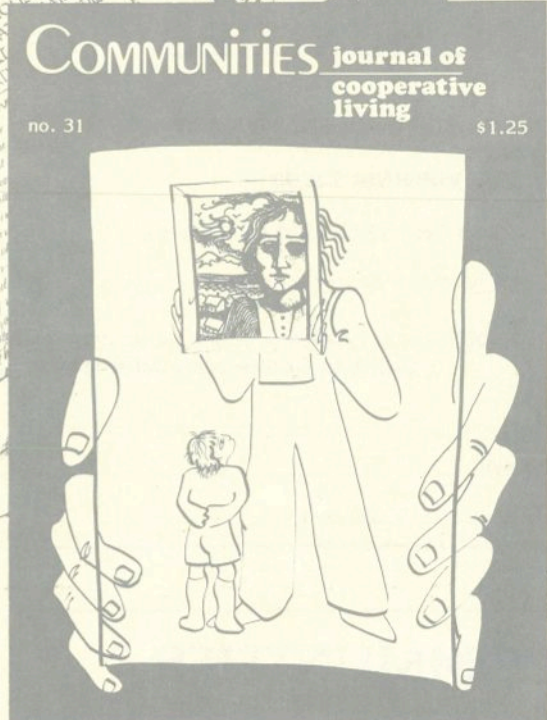
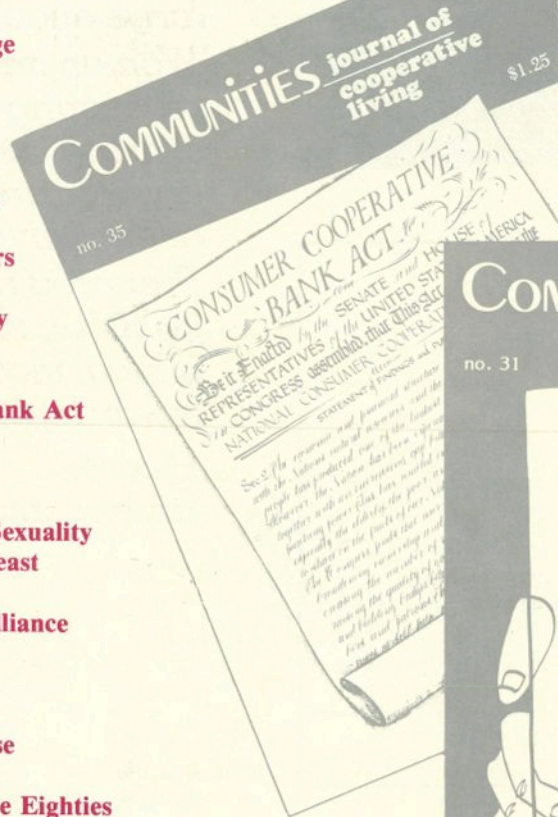
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