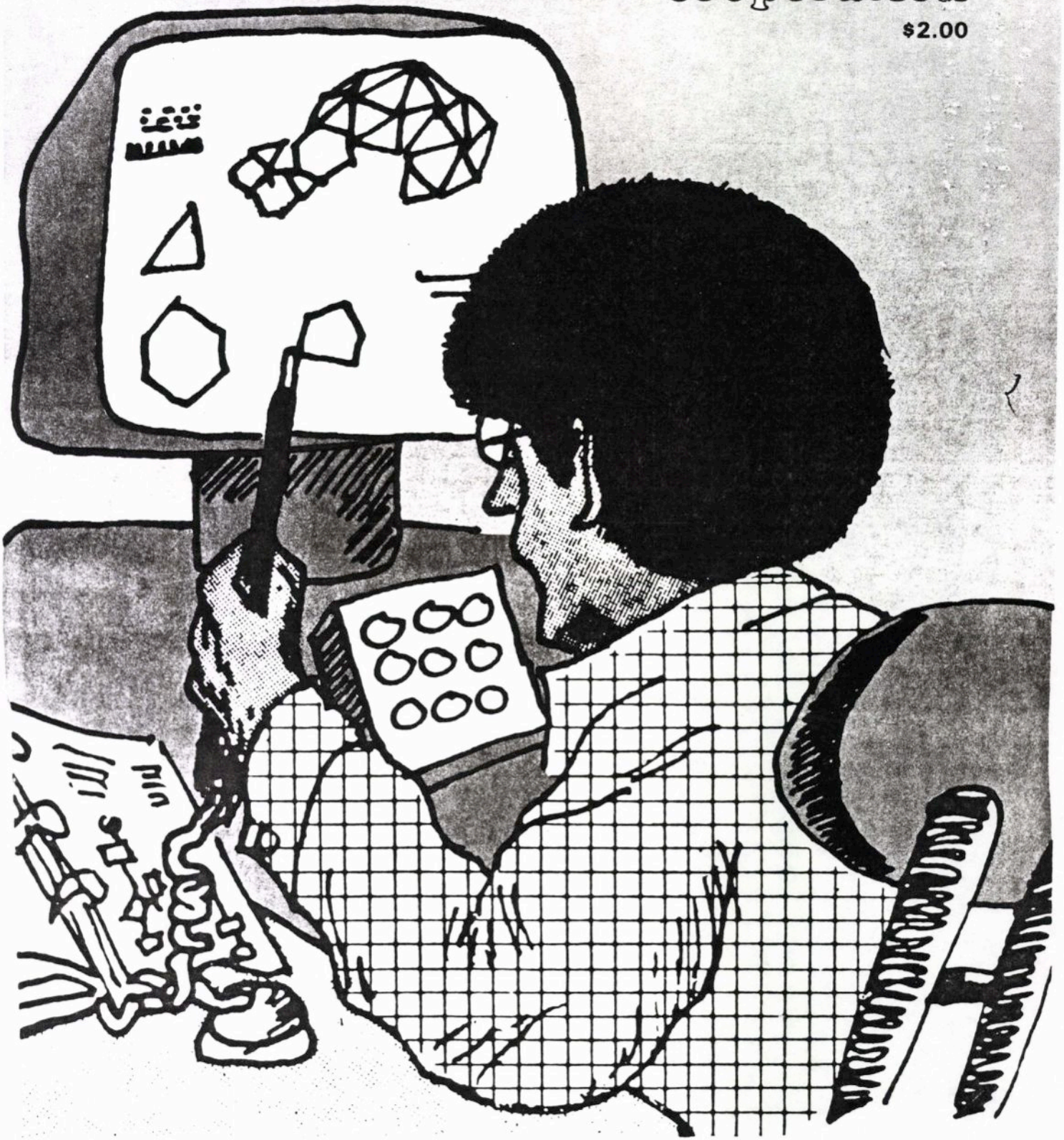


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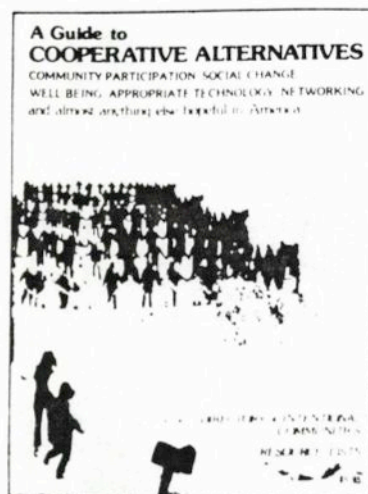
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COMMUNITIES

July/August
1983

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TO OUR READERS

Apologies for getting this issue out late. We are still experiencing slight technical difficulty in setting up schedules, deadlines, communication, etc. so that things flow smoothly between three locations: Twin Oaks, Virginia, New Haven, Connecticut and Nyack, New York. The smaller size of this issue is also a reflection of this change. Thank you for your patience and we hope you will continue to stand by.

In addition the current U.S. economy resulting in rising costs of materials, printing, labor, etc. has forced us to make the decision to go quarterly. In some ways we feel very good about this change. We have been talking about it for years with the hope of bringing more focus to each issue. We promise you the usual 64 pages of mostly unadvertised material and hope that you will find the change an attractive one.

Audrey Hirsch of Twin Oaks got her feet wet in the role of editor this issue. She was responsible for the



gathering together of all the articles.

We were particularly pleased to get an article from Kat Kinkade. Kat is the author of *A Walden II Experiment* and has published several articles in *Communities*. Kat has just returned to Twin Oaks after several years in Boston working with computers and shared with us what groups should consider in their decision to buy or not to buy a small computer. She was assisted by computer whiz Keith Davidson.

From Syracuse, New York, Nancy Riffer documents how good networking can lead to the

development and stability of worthwhile projects — in this case the Center for Holistic Living.

Lewis Emanuel and Taylor of Dandelion and Twin Oaks Communities share with us some of the joys and struggles of living and growing in community.

Although most of us are still working on keeping our houses cool this summer, folks working on Project WARM will soon be gearing up to keep the elderly and handicapped of Louisville, KY warm through the winter.

In my opinion, one of the best overview articles written on computers and networking is the presentation given by Trudy and Peter Johnson-Lenz to the Community Education Leaders Renewal Institute in 1983 in Keystone, Colorado. We were pleased that they sent it to us so we could share it with our readers.

Enjoy the issue.

Melissa

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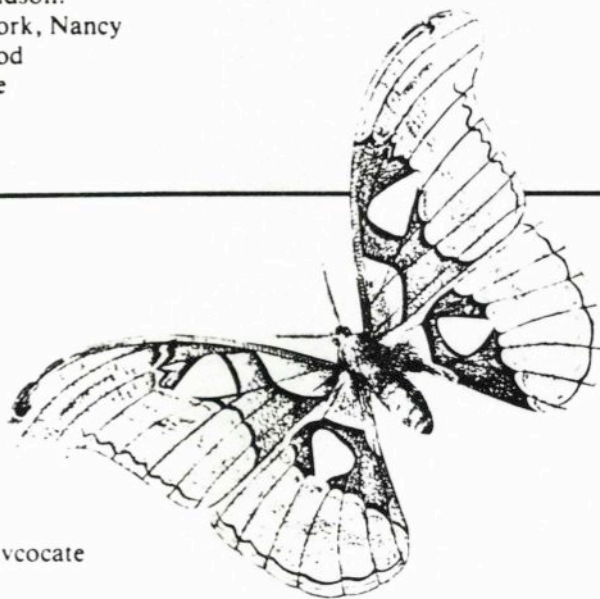
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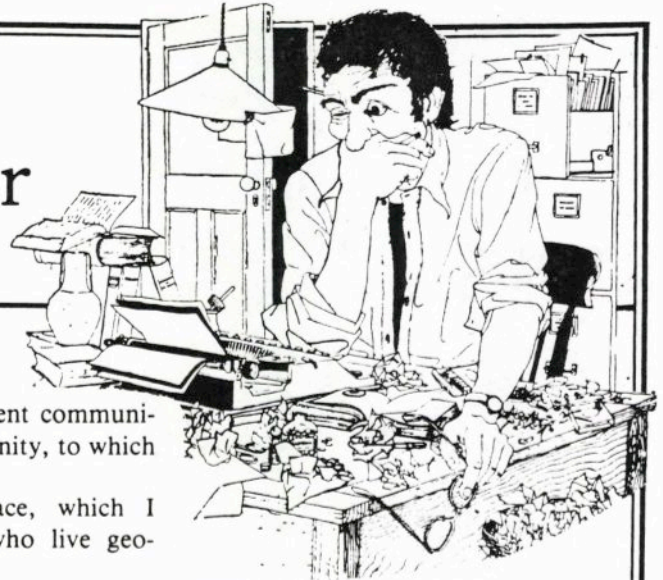


Community Publications

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represented by Audrey Hirsch.

A Letter to the Editor



Dear Communities,

I am sorry to tell you that I can't get an essay to you as planned. We talked on the phone of my combining several different things I sent to you, plus a polemic against professional writers that had been published in *Alternative Media*. Sad to say, after too many hours of wrestling with them, I still have only pieces, no coherent whole.

Part of the problem comes from a personal idiosyncrasy regarding public writing: I hate doing it. While private letters flow easily, — almost of their own accord and no effort on my part, it seems — writing to some unknown audience just doesn't work. When I don't know whom I'm writing to, I don't know what to say.

If you see a tie-in here with my proposed essay on literacy and community, you're absolutely right. I like to think that my difficulty with public writing is not just a personal quirk. It may, in fact, be one symptom of our cultural malaise regarding community and communication. Without some sense of communion, or community between writer and reader, the act of writing becomes impossibly difficult. Written words should flow from one person to the other as easily as living speech leaps from talker's mouth to listener's ear; that they do not strikes me as an accurate indication of our loss of community. Writing has become an arcane craft encased in superstitious ritual largely because of the simple fact that we no longer know the people we address.

In addition to this difficulty in talking to strangers, the topic at hand is very large and becomes more so each time I poke at it. In my own case, for example, I've come up with

some half dozen different communities, or kinds of community, to which I belong:

1) community of place, which I share with all those who live geographically near;

2) community of blood ties, connecting me to my mother in the Sierra foothills, to my two sisters who are 200 and 2,000 miles distant, respectively, and to a host of other relatives (and my wife's relatives) scattered around the continent and beyond;

3) community of common interests and leisure, such as child-care co-ops and my daughter's softball team, made up of people whom I may never see or talk to at all but for these certain activities;

4) community of experience and background, in which I am tied to friends of childhood and high school days, to another group from college, and to a roughly defined age-group of men who went to Vietnam, and who dropped out of college and mainstream jobs for various alternate lives;

5) community of work, which connects me to other people in the building trades because of my livelihood as a carpenter; and

6) community of mind and spirit, for want of a better term, which involved me with a wide range of writers, some of them dead for centuries but whose books maintain their hold on my feelings and perception. Is it too far-fetched to talk of Virgil, Shakespeare, and Jane Austen as being members of one's own community? Not if such writers continue to name one's own experience and speak to one's consciousness in significant ways; and they happen to

do both for me. As for living writers, I spend much time in correspondence with a few dozen people I've never met but for our letters. Call this a poor substitute for community if you wish, but for me it is life. Words on a page can ignite mind and heart like no other kind of communication.

This may be just autobiographical trivia, though I suspect that a great many other people could fill in their own particular experiences in such a list and find their own lives similarly splintered into a host of different communities. For better as well as worse, we live in pieces.

In some cases, to be sure, the various community groups I cited overlap considerably. In small, more or less self-sufficient communities of long standing, the people who figure in one's childhood and adolescence, present leisure time and work, and one's later years and death, may well be the same individuals. But such communities are few and far between. They may, in fact, be little more than relics of a much earlier organization of human life on this planet — a dream of Eden rather than the experience of here and now, and the likely face of the future.

But in any case, such coherent or wholistic communities have little place for that sixth category I mentioned, the community of mind and spirit which ties us individually and in innumerable ways to a host of different writers, poets, and singers of our

songs. Imagine all the other groups of people somehow coslescing in a single community, if you will: there would still remain this literary community on the outside, at a distance, and irresistibly attractive.

Writing and reading almost demand distance. Their benefits are of a different order from those that come with speaking and listening face to face. Unwilling to give up these benefits of literature, I regard my own situation as one of making do with a divided life. It's a matter of dual residency, if you will, with one hand reaching for the physical touch of other lives in the here and now, while the other pokes at typewriter keys or traces a path through the words which have come here to me from afar.

In this regard, the plural form of your magazine's name strikes me exactly right. I cannot hope nor do I desire to live in a single community which will tie up all the threads of my life in a unified whole. Community is dead; long live Communities!

As for my great interest in letter-writing, let me just say that I find

such literature a wonderful way to bring community — or rather communities — back into communication. Like so many other activities in modern life, writing and reading have become all too specialized. A few professionals produce, we amateur readers consume, and the words sent from one to the other take on the characteristics of a mere commodity. As with other commodities, these words have a habit of traveling in only one direction, from seller to buyer. Only through our dollars plunked down at the bookstore or sent through the mail for a magazine subscription do we have any *voice* in the proceedings. We cannot effectively communicate with our communicators.

So I like to write letters instead. Community absolutely requires mutual interaction, as far as I can see. Where only a few people talk and a great crowd of us merely listen, true community is absent. There have to be ways to talk back to those who talk to us.

In this present case, for instance, I can only throw this hodge-podge in

your general direction with a kind of desperate frustration. Not knowing whom I'm talking to, as I mentioned before, I don't know what to say.

So if any of this sounds right to you or worth pursuing, (or downright foolishness!) then by all means toss some words of your own back this way. I believe that thinking, like writing — like loving, like living — requires at least two parties to the affair. And when the subject just happens to be community, we've all the more reason to explore it together, not as individuals.

Feel free to publish this letter, in fact, since a proper essay may be a long time coming, if not entirely beyond me. You've just got to include my address if you do, though — P.O. Box 6218, Albany, CA 94706 — for without it my words are, at best, a mere half of a thing, the sound of one hand clapping in the wind.

Cheers and best wishes to you.

Yours,
Stephen Sikora

P.S. Good lord, I used "community" or "communities" 30 times in this letter. Do you suppose this is a record for dubious repetition!

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Should Your Group Get a Small Computer?

by Kat Kinkade
and Keith Davidson

I'm addressing this article to groups, because individuals don't have to ask it. Individuals either want a computer or they don't, and if they do, can buy it if they have the money. Groups are different. The average group is made up of people of varying opinions. There'll be somebody who doesn't want anything to do with them, and usually somebody who just wants to see the clerical work done efficiently and is willing to buy computer hardware if that will help. To such groups Keith and I are offering our advice, for what it is worth. Speaking of that, let me introduce ourselves. Keith and I are co-authoring this article, because neither of us could write it very well by ourselves.

Keith is 31, lives in Boston now and has been working with computers since he was a high school kid. He is one of those natural computer-genius types, and he understands computers down to their little electrons. No bit or byte passeth but that Keith observeth whence it cometh and whither it goeth, if you get my drift. He's worked professionally on monster IBM mainframes, DEC minis, and various micros. These days he's in business for himself as a computer consultant and has all the work he can handle, earning hourly rates that I have worked whole days for. His understanding of alternative-style groups comes mostly from having been a Twin Oaks member for three years. He remains a good friend of Twin Oaks and gives us a lot of advice and help.



Drawing by Harold Montiel

As to me, I'm Kat, and I'm a member of Twin Oaks now. For a while I worked in Boston and spent two years making a living as a business programmer on a DEC-20. My knowledge of computers is superficial. My mind is teflon-lined when it comes to holding technical information, and I have no great talent for programming. What I really am is a sophisticated User. I can articulate what I want a computer to do for me, and if I have to, I can write a program to make it perform. I love the planning part and hate the debugging part. My credentials for writing this article are basically these: I've dealt with group clerical needs of 12 years; I know generally what a cheap computer can and cannot do; I'm manager of the computer services area here at Twin Oaks and have personal experience to offer; I get a kick out of writing articles.

Since Keith is a computer-nut and I'm not, one would think that it would be Keith urging you to go ahead and buy a computer, and I who might say "Wait until you're sure you can justify it." But my interview on this subject with Keith didn't turn out that way. I find from my experience that I think buying a micro is generally a good idea and will eventually pay off, in spite of unexpected drawbacks and confusion along the way, whereas Keith's message can be summarized as "I hope you end up buying one, but don't say I didn't warn you."

First we'll talk about the hardware itself. By "computer" in this article we mean microcomputer, and by microcomputer we mean a Radio Shack or an Apple or an IBM PC or an Osborne or a KayComp or an OSI or any

one of a hundred or more similar machines. We mean something with a video monitor of some sort, at least two disk drives, and a memory of 64k or better. For most purposes we also mean some sort of printer. All together we're talking about \$3000 to \$7000. More money will get you more features. The ability to hook two terminals to one computer, for example, costs more. So does a letter-quality printer, or a disk storage device that will hold a lot of data, or additional memory. Here's Keith's opinion on the memory question:

"These days it is unnecessary to waste your time on a machine that has significantly less than 64k of memory, simply because it is so cheap that you may as well have it. Beyond that point, however, more memory may be useful for certain complicated tasks, but it is tricky to be able to make effective use of more memory than that, because most of today's software wasn't written assuming it. In times to come it will be very important to have more memory, because the software of the future will require it."

What about the cheapo machines, the \$150 computers you see advertised? For learning purposes they are a great buy, but don't buy one expecting to do serious work on it. Although it's perfectly true that a little hand-held computer can be hooked up to a TV and a tape recorder, a TV screen is a miserably inadequate monitor, and a tape recorder unendurably slow as a storage device. The keyboard is also too small for speed. Attempting to do bookkeeping with such a computer is like shipping a railway carload of coal from Seattle to Anchorage in a VW van. In principle it's possible, but even under the best of conditions it takes a long time and it isn't worth it. If you want one for learning about computers, Keith recommends the Timex Sinclair, which lists for \$100, and the VIC-20, which is frequently discounted below \$200.

In the \$3000 to \$7000 class there are a lot of good machines on the market, and they have various strengths and weaknesses. Keith has this to say on the subject:

"You can't go too far wrong if you choose a machine that there are a lot of. There are a lot of Radio Shack computers around; you can get them fixed when they break; you can probably sell them. Other than that, Radio Shack is very uninspiring. They have gone in for an unnecessary proliferation of models and pointless non-standardization of hardware and software.

"IBM is a good machine, and a good choice because it is IBM. That means there's going to be a lot of backing, service, software, and accessories on the market. It's a little more powerful than the average micro on the market also, but the average little organization may not particularly need that power.

"Any CP/M machine is a good choice because CP/M is so widespread. In a way, buying CP/M is buying

obsolescence, because CP/M is based on hardware that is obsolete. However, it is not at all clear what system will win the battle to be the successor to CP/M, and in the meantime more software is available for CP/M than for any other option, and that will sometimes mean more to the serious user than anything else.

"My own choice is Apple. I got into Apple by accident, stayed with it because it is a very good machine. It is usually friendly and easy to use. It is also unusually reliable and unusually flexible. What's more, there is an incredibly rich marketplace of people inventing and selling accessories for it. So for almost anything that I would try to do with a computer, I would try to do it with an Apple unless there was a damned good reason to choose something else."

But the hard work pays off. This is the joy of computer use and this is the source of all the hyperbolic statements and general euphoria . . .

For the computer-innocent I should explain about CP/M. CP/M (which stands for Control Program for Microcomputers) is an operating system. That means it is a program, in this case a program that instructs the machine how to run other programs. It does handy things like create files, copy them, erase them, and rename them. Neither Radio Shack nor Apple nor IBM comes with CP/M as standard equipment. All of them can be modified to run CP/M if you need it. The modification of course costs money. (I paid about \$600 to modify my Apple.) All of these big sellers have their own operating systems, and their own sales people will probably argue that their operating systems are better than CP/M. They may well be right. The point of having CP/M is not that you are buying the best thing in the computer universe, but that you are buying a tool that makes hundreds of other tools usable. You may not want hundreds of other tools. In our case we wanted two programs in particular that we needed CP/M for, and those two tools alone made the changeover necessary and desirable. I'll talk about them later in the article.

The most important consideration in the purchase of a machine is the way you feel about it. Or rather, the way your main computer person feels about it. No organization is going to have a happy relationship with a computer that is despised by its technicians or programmers or users. You have to ask yourself, "Who is going to interpret it when it



gives odd messages? Who will fix it if something goes wrong, or will even know whether it needs fixing? Who is going to sit at it and learn all its little ins and outs and be the local interpreter for the computer?" If all these questions point to one person, then that person had better be the one making the choice of hardware.

One thing some organizations have to deal with is the advice of sales people. Sales demonstrations to the innocent can be dazzling, and you can easily end up buying what you later discover is either a bad choice or overpriced. A common package being sold today is something styled the "business computer." Its sales people are trying to persuade the small and middle-sized organization that their product is distinct from a "personal computer" and therefore more capable of doing serious business. The truth is that these "business computers" and "personal computers" are the same sized machines with the same basic capabilities. The differences are usually in the peripherals (disk storage especially) and these peripherals can be bought for any microcomputer at any time and be attached as needed. The other item often included in a "business computer" is a piece of business software — probably an accounting system of some sort. Software is also sold separately. There is no reason whatever to buy the whole thing as a package, particularly if you are not really financially ready for the big investment. Don't be drawn in by arguments that show that the peripherals are more expensive bought separately. The separate pieces can be bought at various prices, quite low if you shop by mail and know what you are looking for. "Business computer" packages are very unlikely to be a bargain. If the hardware is non-standard, they are even less of a bargain. Buy only what you know you need.

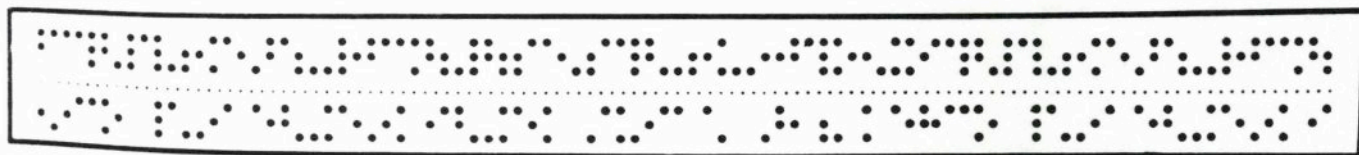
The reason to avoid non-standard hardware is that the competition in the microcomputer market is fierce. There are still little companies challenging the industry leaders, and it will be a few years before we know who the winners will be. One thing we can guess is that buyers of oddball machines produced by the companies that fail will have a hard time with service and resale.

The Peripherals

The video screen. I would not advise anybody to try to make do with a TV set as a monitor, other than for fooling around and learning. TV screens get only 40 characters on a line, and the quality of the print is lousy. A decent monitor costs only \$130. (If you have an Apple, you also have to buy a device to adapt the Apple to the 80-column monitor, which costs another \$250.) Many micros come with 80-column monitors as standard equipment. I'd hate to try to do serious work with anything less, especially word processing. Seeing your page layout on the screen may be an important part of what you are trying to do.

The printer. I have no experience with letter-quality printers. I know there are a number of good ones on the market. The work we do here at Twin Oaks doesn't require high quality printing at this point in our history, so we have cheap, dot-matrix printers, perfectly adequate for most purposes and amazingly sturdy for their price. Our little 80-column Epson MX-80 cost \$600, and its big 128-column brother a couple hundred more.

Disk storage. Usually when you buy a microcomputer, you buy two disk drives along with it. Trying to get along on a single drive is not practical at all, because you have a constant need to copy from one diskette to another. Our little Apple has 5¼ inch disk drives. They are adequate for a great number of tasks. We do word processing on it and run programs with relatively small data bases. But they would be inadequate for anything like the mailing list for *Communities Magazine* or Twin Oaks' accounting system. They just don't hold enough information. We have another computer that has 8-inch drives and will run the diskettes double density. This is just barely enough for our accounting. We get a lot of data on those floppy disks (605k each). Twin Oaks' accounting is rather more complex than that of the average small business, so most groups would find this arrangement plenty good enough. However, not every computer comes with 8-inch drives as standard equipment. They can, of course, be bought separately and your machine modified to run them. Before very long we at Twin Oaks are hoping to be able to buy a hard disk storage system or "winchester." A hard disk will



give us all the space we could possibly want, quickly retrievable. It will doubtless have its own tradeoffs, the major one being the difficulty of backing up all the data on the hard disk on a regular basis and storing it in case of disaster. Without a second winchester, backup may be clumsy, and the high cost of the winchester (around \$2000) means that most people don't buy two. Theoretically they're supposed to be so safe you don't need to worry much about backup. But Keith doesn't have perfect faith in this, so we'll have to deal with this backup problem when we upgrade to hard disk.

Software

I think the best thing we can do for our friends is to tell you about our own experience with software, the tools we bought and how much or little we like them. There's an awful lot on the market, and we are of course familiar with only a small fraction of what is available. Attempting to examine everything available would be like looking at every size 12 dress in New York stores. It's not really feasible. You just buy something that seems good and get used to it.

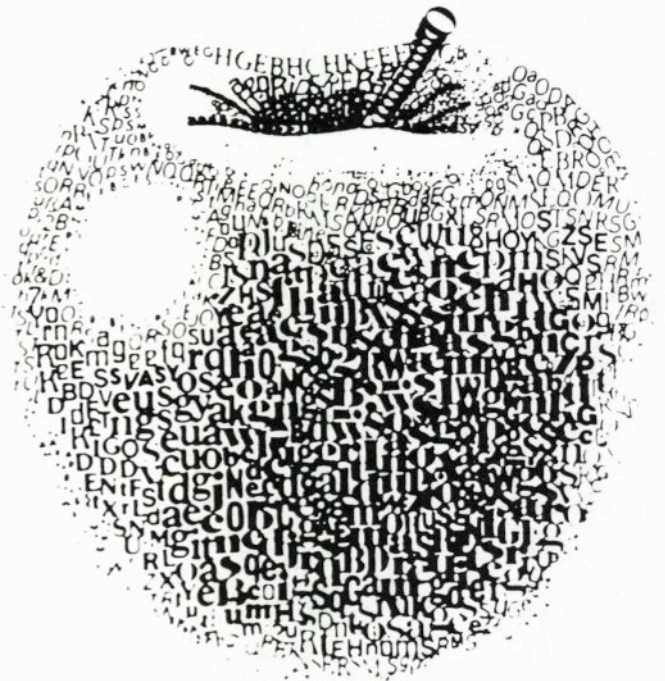
dBASE. I despair of explaining dBASE or any data base manager to a computer-innocent. I have tried, and I always run into the same problem. Though dBASE does indeed perform wonderful magic and permit incredible flexibility of input and retrieval, I find that the naive computer person has already been oversold on computers and already assumes that all computers can do those tricks, simply by virtue of being computers. In fact, I find that beginners are frequently dismayed that they have to learn to manipulate commands in order to get a computer to do anything. Somehow they have been led to expect more, with less effort.

This expectation gap is caused partly by enthusiastic journalism, which tends to emphasize the potential future and gloss over the imperfections of current computer systems, and partly by the economics of mass marketing. A program that costs \$20,000 (as did the one I used in my Boston job) cannot be marketed to owners of \$4000 microsystems. Micro software has to be cheap, and its makers have to get it to market fast, before somebody beats them to it. The chances are it will not have all the advanced facilities of the more expensive programs.

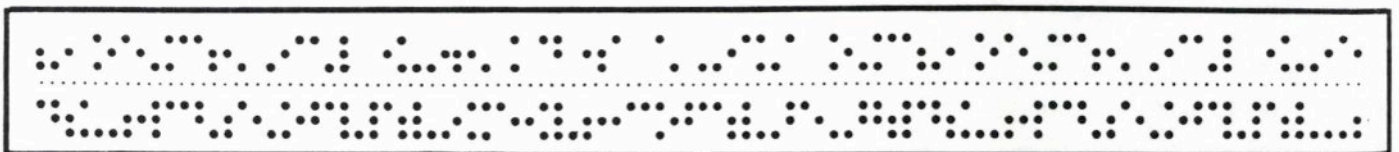
dBASE, however, considering the difference in price (dBASE is about \$500) and the size of the machine, is an amazingly productive little tool. What it does, briefly, is make it easy for you to enter any kind of data in an organized fashion, then select out of that data any information you may want afterward, without necessarily knowing ahead of time what questions you are going to want to ask. For example, Twin Oaks is entering labor data

from all its members' weekly labor sheets. Anytime we want to know, we can ask questions like "Which members were involved in Forestry in the first quarter, and how many hours each?" or "How much of our total hammock-making labor is done by visitors?" or "How many hours ended up going into this pig-pen project, compared with the projection?"

dBASE has weaknesses. One is that only two files can be used at a time, and even using two is a slow business. Another is that its repertoire of automatic report formatting is primitive, and if you want a report that is much more than a mere selected listing of the file, you have to learn some programming. However, dBASE is an adequate programming language, a lot easier to handle than BASIC, with dozens of built-in utilities that you soon learn to take for granted. It is worth your while to learn to program in it.



SuperCalc. This is the CP/M version of the popular "Visicalc" — a spread sheet program that permits you to set up numbers in relation to one another, then change any one of the numbers and watch the others change in proportion. For instance, you might set up columns on the screen with projections for the coming year for your business profits. You tell SuperCalc what to multiply by what and which figures to add up, and it does it. Then you can change any variable — for instance the number of



items projected to be sold. Your overhead figures stay the same, and your variable costs and profits change with the changing projection. It's no trouble to plug in dozens of projections and watch what affect they would have on profits. SuperCalc is a planning tool. At Twin Oaks only two people have learned to use SuperCalc in the eight months that we have had it. Both are managers, and both use it extensively and with great pleasure. Both of them claim it is highly useful in their planning.

WordStar. The most important piece of software we have, by far, is our word processor. We bought one called WordStar. It does just about everything you could want for plain text writing, though it lacks the capacity to do calculations. WordStar serves Twin Oaks as an introduction to computers for members who have never used a computer and want to get acquainted. They can write letters on it to start with. A very good tutorial is available which assumes the beginner has no knowledge and introduces the facilities step by step.

Canned packages. We've been talking about general-use tools: a word processor, a database language, and a spread sheet program. These are tools that can be applied to a thousand different uses. There is, however, another level of program that can be bought, tools for specific applications, programs that do only one thing but do it in great depth. Twin Oaks owns several of these, and the most important by far is our accounting program, called Accounting Plus.

Every canned package has its tradeoffs. This is what Keith has to say about them:

"There are a number of canned packages available. Some are fairly expensive. All of them are no doubt usable for some people in some situations. It is extremely difficult to make a good decision about what software package to buy. It is very difficult for a newcomer to the computer world to understand and accept how bad things are in computers as a service industry, that it is an area in such turmoil that the level of support and confidence that a person is used to getting from a specialty is frequently not available or very expensive if you're lucky and can get it at all. There is a lot of sleaziness, a lot of quick bucks, a lot of fly-by-night, and it takes an almost inconceivable amount of time to familiarize yourself sufficiently to make a good decision. As with all such priesthoods, you are essentially stuck with deciding whom you are going to trust."

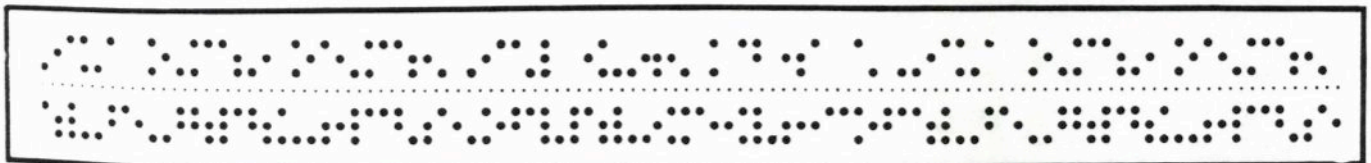
Q. But can't we assume, Keith, that if we buy a package, it will work the way it is supposed to?

"No, you not only can't assume it will work but you should assume that it will screw up not only in major ways but also in very devious ways. You may also not assume

that anybody, either the people who sold it to you or the people who made it, will be very helpful with your problems. Let the buyer beware. Once you have paid for it, you may well be stuck with it. Your most risk-free approach is to find somebody who is doing something very similar to what you want to do, talk to them about their problems, and when you find somebody who has a setup that they consider satisfactory, buy that exact same hardware and exact same software. You will find this very difficult to do, however."

At their best, there is still the tradeoff between getting exactly what you want by writing it yourself (if you can, and if you have time) and getting approximately what you want by buying it (and getting it fairly soon). This is not an easy decision to make. The company I worked for in Boston agonized over such a decision for months and finally bought a canned package, even though it took another year to work the bugs out of the one they bought. Here at Twin Oaks we did less agonizing, because the view was that we didn't have the time to write our own accounting package (Keith said he and I could do it in about a year). We too bought a package. Having been through this twice now, I notice a couple of things that both experiences had in common. One: Neither package was truly as advertised, though my Boston firm paid \$120,000. The packaged program had to be worked with. The documentation was not really adequate, either. Two: Both packages gave us lots of information we didn't particularly want and facilities we couldn't use, but lacked fundamental things we needed right away. Three: Both of them are slow and clumsy to work with and were written with no consideration of the data entry person's time as a valuable resource. We still have to live with the unconscious managerial assumption that data entry labor is cheap. This is most annoying in the micro world, where most of us are our own data-entry clerks!

Just the same, I suspect we did the right thing in both locations. Twin Oaks bought Accounting Plus, put out by Software Dimensions in California. I'm not knocking Accounting Plus. In fact, if pushed, I'll even recommend it. Here are some of the good things about it: It is heavily protected against operator error — it is almost impossible to introduce garbage into the system by carelessness (Exception: woe unto them that put in the wrong date. Accounting Plus is extremely date-dependent.). It produces useful reports in attractive format. It is of course standard double-entry bookkeeping, and what you get is readable by accountants and bookkeepers the world around. It makes a real try at being complete. It is flexible enough to handle a complex organization's accounting needs. It is almost bug-free. It puts its data into files that can be read not only by its own program but also by other



programs (like dBASE) and also by human beings. (This is not a given; some programs encode their files and make them useless outside their own system.) We have had good experience dealing by phone with the company's customer representative. And our main accountant has grown fond of the package.

But personally I hate it, in spite of all its virtues. I think it's a quite decent package, but I loathe canned packages. I thirst for a system written for Twin Oaks and geared precisely to its needs, and can find no affection in my heart for this clumsy approximation. But make no mistake; the tradeoffs are real! Accounting is an extremely complex business, and writing an unflawed program that would do what Accounting Plus does would have been a terribly difficult and time-consuming project. The community didn't have the time, and most other people don't either. That's why packages sell. Accounting Plus, by the way, sells for about \$500 to \$700 per module, and our application here uses 4 of the modules out of the 6 available.

I'm feeling a certain irony as I write this article cheerfully recommending computers, because in fact our main computer that we use for accounting is not working this evening. It went down this morning, and nobody has the faintest idea what is wrong with it. I imagine somebody will figure it out tomorrow or the next day, and we'll be back in business. I also suppose that one of these days the computer will die beyond the power of our people to resurrect, and eventually we'll have to buy another computer. You see, some of this article is written with sharp hindsight. Twin Oaks bought a non-standard machine. Not without trepidation did it go against professional advice, but we got the machine on terms it was hard to turn down. The non-standard machine worked for us just fine in a limited way as long as we used the non-standard operating system it came with and the non-standard software that went with it. But after the first year of computer use Twin Oaks began to get ambitious. We wanted an accounting package — not just a little expense journal that we could and did write ourselves, but a complete, balanced general ledger system with accounts payable and inventory built in. What's more, we wanted to access those files with dBASE and write our own reports. The marketplace offered accounting packages, but as far as we could see the best ones ran under CP/M, and so does dBASE. Instead of retiring the non-standard machine to the Children's Building or the Recreation Department and buying a CP/M machine, we hunted around for a way of adapting the computer to CP/M. We found and bought an adapter board (almost \$1000) and bought the CP/M software to go with it.

It worked, but since then we've had hardware trouble. Not every day. More like three times a week. Sometimes three times a day, but there are also days that are trouble-free. We have a technician who sweet-talks it into running for us most of the time. We get a lot of useful work out of it. Of course there are people who know how to fix this non-standard machine. But not with our CP/M configuration. We're on our own there.

What I'm leading up to is not merely the standard moral of getting expert advice and taking it. It's a more dismal message than that, and it goes like this: There is no such thing as a cheap computer.

Earlier in this article I mentioned a price tag of \$3,000 to \$7,000. This must be understood as the initial investment. There are ongoing cash expenses. If you have a printer, you use paper. A lot of software automatically wastes paper for you, too at about 1 cent a page. We recycle ours when we can. It's wonderful if you can find a friendly university department that will give you used computer



Kat Kinkade



runs. But most people are selling theirs to recycling companies for coffee money these days. We're reduced to buying it new. Also ribbons. A new one every month at a minimum. They cost anywhere from \$1.50 to \$13 a ribbon, depending on various things. We wrecked the printhead on one of our printers too — no idea how we did it — and a new one cost \$130 and took 6 weeks to get here. By the time it arrived, the printing using the damaged head was so bad that we had customers calling us up complaining they couldn't read our invoices.

Then there's diskettes. We're paying \$2.50 each for the 8-inchers and \$1.70 for the 5¼ inch. These bargain rates are available buying by mail from cutrate outfits. Sometimes the diskettes aren't any good. They're guaranteed, but there is the nuisance of sending them back. It's amazing how fast one goes through diskettes. We buy them in increments of 20, usually 80 at a time, and throw very few away, but they get gobbled up by the storage of data that people aren't quite prepared to throw away, and by the making of multiple backup copies of this and that. After one has wasted 10 hours or so reproducing data that accidentally got destroyed, the cost of backup diskettes does not seem important.

Another frustrating thing a beginner runs into when first getting acquainted with a computer is that computers sometimes don't live up to expectations about speed. One thinks of computers as being very fast, but there are often situations when one can sit in front of the screen and make good progress knitting an afghan while waiting for a program to do its thing.

There are several possible reasons this happens. The program itself may be written in a clumsy fashion which tells the computer to take an inefficient route. Or the program may be accomplishing several things that aren't apparent on the surface but will turn out to save time in the long run. Sure, it's all measured in microseconds, but even microseconds add up, especially when you're just sitting there waiting. My advice: go get a cup of coffee and be patient. It's only a little machine.

Anyway, a bigger time-gobbler by far than complex or clumsy programming is the temptation to use sophisticated facilities before understanding them. Here you are with a neat new program you paid \$95 for, and you've read the manual and get the general gist of what it will accomplish. You also have before you a task for which this program is apparently appropriate. The temptation is to try immediately to get your work accomplished with your new tool, using every facility advertised, all in the first project. The first attempt will almost certainly fail. So you find some of your errors and try again. The second try is better, but still not what you want. Fifteen hours later you are just about at the breakthrough point in a job that you could have

done in 6 hours by hand. Of course this experience doesn't prove that computers aren't fast or even that the program isn't good for your task. It just means that initial learning takes a much bigger chunk of time than we were probably led to expect. This expectation gap is sometimes caused by

Fifteen hours later you are just about at a breakthrough point in a job that you could have done in six hours by hand.

led to expect. This expectation gap is sometimes caused by enthusiastic sales people, telling you how easy it is to use such and such a machine or program. They're not even lying, really. Modern programs are indeed a great deal easier and a great deal faster than what preceded them. The software industry is in truth experiencing a revolution in the production of programs that make learning easy — compared with previous software. But nobody can make a program that is quite as easy and quite as fast as the naive beginner expects. The public has been led to expect something approaching magic, and instead finds the reality of hard work.

But the hard work pays off. This is the joy of computer use, and this is the source of all the hyperbolic statements and general euphoria on the subject. Anybody who will put in the hours learning to use a particular machine and a particular program to the point of mastery can then perform the expected magic. No more 15-hour investment in a one-hour job. As soon as you have learned the capacities and limits of a particular tool, you can create solutions almost as fast as people can present you with tasks. What's more, at that point it's a lot of fun.

For any given organization with a microcomputer, there are not likely to be more than two or three people who have the time and motivation to develop their knowledge to this point, and those few people then become very useful to the group. By the same token, the group becomes dependent on them for its information. The software industry is trying terribly hard to minimize this dependence, by writing programs that, in theory, everyone can use and thereby eliminate the "priesthood" of computer experts. To a degree they have succeeded, and programs like SuperCalc and dBASE are the products of their efforts. An ordinary person with some time and interest can do in a hundred hours of work what it used to take months or years of studying to accomplish. But those initial hundred hours (or thereabouts) are still necessary, and the people



who go through them become, in their small way, a mini-priesthood for those who don't have the time or energy to do even that much. There is still nothing on the market which gives instant information to management on all aspects of the organization without the intervention of a knowledgeable specialist. If you have heard of such a thing, you were probably hearing either sales talk or science fiction or enthusiastic predictions. It's not here yet.

Computers now proliferate, and the organizational landscape is littered with failed attempts at computerization by small businesses. The major cause of such failure is probably the expectation gap I've been talking about, but the second cause is related to it — over-ambition. It's easy to take on too much.

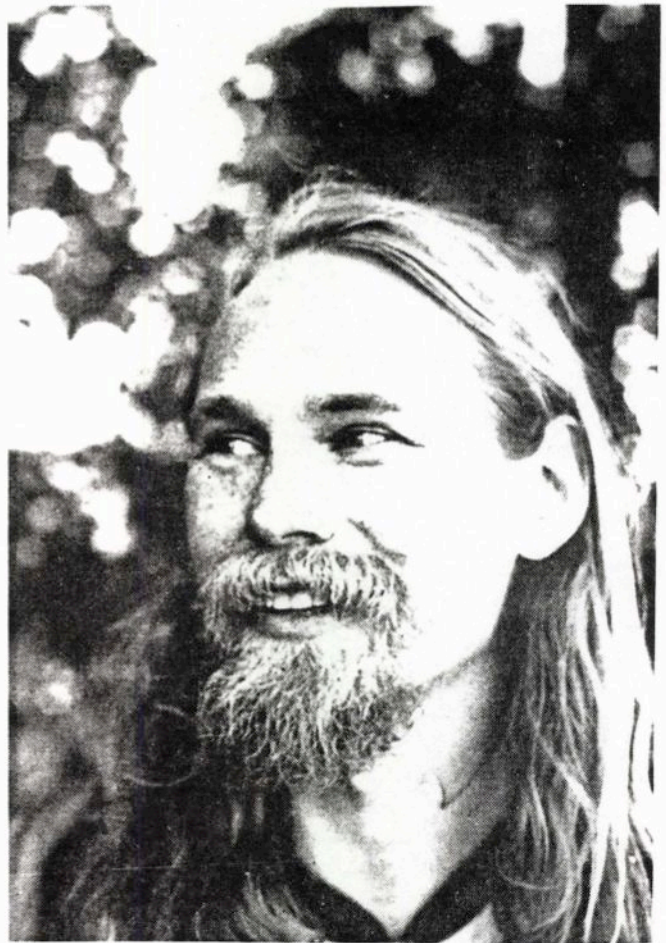
Take for example the organization that has been doing hand bookkeeping. The very process of writing things down by hand compels the organization to simplify the data. A person who understands the organization is on hand deciding what is important to keep and what is not. A certain amount of chaos perhaps inherent in the "alternative" organization can be tolerated, because there is a human being paying attention to things.

When the group gets a computer, there is a temptation to put all possible data into the system, with the idea of using the computer's formidable power to get information never before seriously considered retrievable. In the process the element of human awareness is removed, and obscure mistakes both in content and in procedure can be masked. Given some time and attention, all these problems can be fixed, but it is a mistake to assume that the process will be trouble-free.

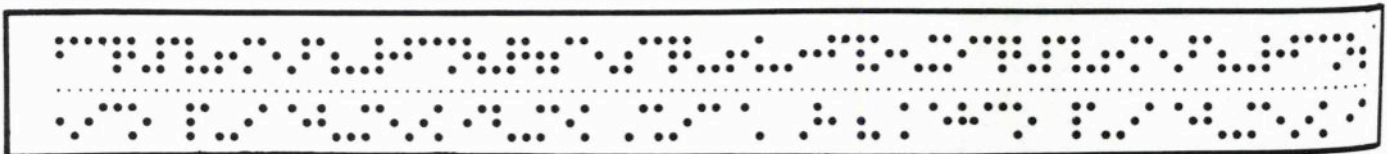
It is almost surely a mistake to try to make a single leap from simple hand bookkeeping system to a complex computerized system in one year. At the same time it is hard to avoid doing so, because the canned accounting packages are standard and will probably not conform to what you have been doing before using them. The odd group that can resist the canned package and can afford to move slowly, computerizing bits and pieces of its systems to remove tedium and improve accuracy, is probably in the best position to use the machine intelligently and avoid risk of disaster. However, this advice is somewhat empty, because most groups don't computerize until their need is too urgent for the slow approach. Certainly this was the case at Twin Oaks. We were in fact on the path I am recommending — a little computerization of small parts of the system, continuing to do the overall work by hand, when our economic planners began to make urgent demands for more detailed and consistent information. At that point we felt we could no longer afford to move slowly, because we couldn't afford the risks we were taking

with the businesses, for lack of such things as sales analysis, cost accounting on a product-by-product basis, control of inventory, and the like. So we jumped in over our heads, and the results aren't in yet, so I can't tell you whether it was worth it. We can tell you that it's taking a lot of time, and it is not going smoothly. We can't compare it to the hand system that preceded it, because we are getting a lot more information than we used to get, and a direct comparison isn't relevant.

For many groups the main attraction of a computer is the capacity to handle a mailing list for subscriptions or the like. Any computerized list can be easily edited, entries added, entries deleted. In principle, also, any computerized list can be sorted and kept in order — alphabetical, zip code, or whatever. Furthermore, with a tool like dBASE, a single list can be accessed by either alphabet or zip code at will, simply through manipulation of multiple indexes.



Keith Davidson



This is all wonderful and it all works, but there is one major problem: size. The main reason for wanting a computer to do this task is that it has become too large to be done easily by hand. If the list is several thousand addresses, long, it may be too big for your machine's diskettes. There is no limit to the number of diskettes that can be put into use, of course, but the machine will not be able to search the entire file, nor sort it, nor index it, on multiple diskettes. The program can work with only one diskette at a time. A solution that suggests itself is using a different diskette for each subsection of the alphabet (or zip code), leaving space for additions on each one, and using them in order when making up labels or lists. This will work, provided only one ordering is required. If you need the list sorted two different ways, you will have to keep two sets of diskettes and edit and update both sets. The initial creation of the one set from the other is a tedious and error-prone task to start with, and after it is created, both sets have to be edited and updated independently.

One solution is a "hard" disk, where there is plenty of storage space. Whether an organization needs hard disk enough to pay the price for it should probably not be decided by the needs of this particular job, unless you're going into it in a big way. At least you should first check out the cost of having your mailing lists done by commercial outfits that specialize in this work. They are fast and efficient precisely because they specialize, and the chances are good that you would save money by using them, rather than by investing in the hardware and effort to do the job yourself.

What are the really good reasons for buying and using a computer? I'll quote Keith directly on this question and then give my own opinion. Keith says:

"The fundamental use of computers is to educate people about computers. Our society is going through very rapid changes, and computers are deeply involved in this. Those who have the interest should have an opportunity to pursue computer familiarity and computer use in standard applications and even programming if they have a mind. That's really the true reason to have computers around. The specific applications that they are most effective for are word processing and spread sheets. Beyond that, it is highly unpredictable what will work out.

"Computers are a gamble. On the whole, they are a gamble that has to be taken, because on the whole they are awesomely capable. But the price and the risk are heavy. Don't invest anything that you can't afford to lose."

Without disagreeing with Keith, I'll add this: computers are best when you either have or want to have a big, unmanageable bunch of data that you don't have the

patience to look through by human energy but do have good use for an organized version of the contents. If you have the capacity to get decently accurate numbers to start with and can find time to enter the data into the computer, then it isn't hard to figure out whether the information you want is worth the price, and the answer is almost certainly yes. If, like Twin Oaks, the sheer volume of data is too big even to contemplate keeping track of by hand, and you really need the information, then there isn't much question about it. True, it's not easy, but yes, it's worth it.

Twin Oak's start in computers has been clumsy. Here's what Keith has to say about that:

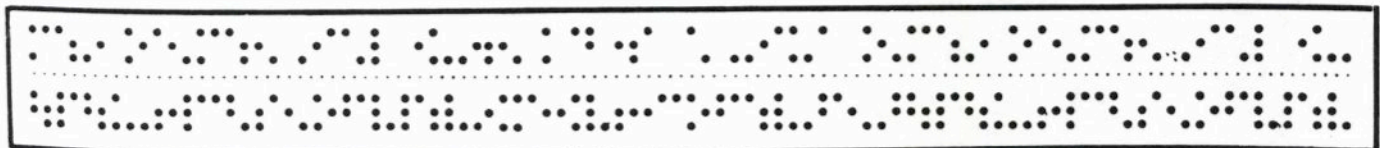
"I would say that Twin Oaks has never really made a decision to buy a computer. It is typical of Twin Oaks to insist on doing something cheaply before it is ready to do it well, and the computer experience has run true to form. Inasmuch as it seems to be a requirement to do things cheaply first, it's nice we're getting that part over with. It is difficult for a conservative organization to allocate sufficient resources to a new area, and hard to make wise decisions about something it knows nothing about. Twin Oaks has been trying to get by on a shoestring, and that is very expensive. It is very expensive to become familiar with the effective use of computers. That expense is unavoidable, so Twin Oaks is getting around to incurring it.

Q. Isn't the main expense labor?

"Yes, labor and hassle and confusion. In the ultimate sense everything coming to a grinding halt at unpredictable times in terms of organization and information."

Things have, in our experience, come to a grinding halt at least four times since the beginning of this year, but it hasn't stopped us. Keith doesn't mention it, but another thing typical of Twin Oaks is that it doesn't make extravagant demands of itself in terms of success and doesn't get discouraged easily. We've managed to get a few things done this year, like:

1. First quarter's financial accounting, in spite of terrible hardware problems, was ready before the middle of April.
2. First quarter's labor accounting is all entered, and an ongoing weekly labor budget variance report is in use.
3. Business invoicing is done daily by computer, and the accounts receivable information entered at the same time.
4. About 20 members have learned to use the word processor or another of the major programs.
5. Various small files are kept on computer now, including mailbox numbers, weather records, and depreciation for taxes.
6. SuperCalc is in use to estimate the labor hours needed each week for desired production in the woodshop.
7. Our Indexing Collective uses the word processor to



make the final copy of each index for our customers.

8. At least one member is using it to write a book.

Some of the above has been done economically and well. Some of it has cost us agonies of frustration as well as numerous wasted hours.

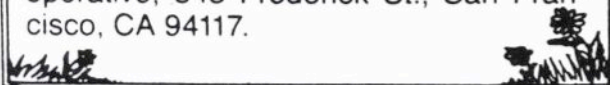
To me it is obvious that some of the worst of the beginning costs are behind us, and we won't have to pay another big lump of foottax until we try our next big leap. If we continued on our currently planned path — doing our accounting and various other tasks I've mentioned — for the next 5 years, there is no question but that the computer will have paid for itself many times over. It is more likely, of course, that we will continue to explore the machine's potential for other jobs we want done, and that we'll never reach a plateau from which we can calmly analyze the cost-effectiveness of the tool. For some people cost effectiveness is not the main point. Some people like computers just because they like computers, and they want to be involved with them for the same reason other people like to dig in the garden — because it feels good. People like me need a computer around because we want the

output — we want to see the numbers and use them. Other people are glad we are demanding numbers because for them it simply means good work for them to do. In any case I think the computer is here to stay.



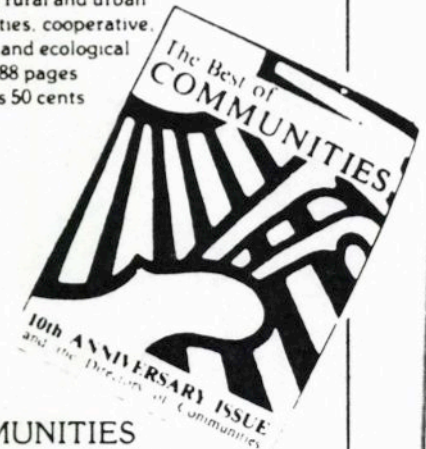
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Computer Networking



By Peter and Trudy Johnson-Lenz

Peter and Trudy Johnson-Lenz are computer and communications consultants. Working from their Lake Oswego "electronic cottage," they use computers as a medium of communication with clients and colleagues in North America. They have been co-principal investigators on a National Science Foundation research project studying the effectiveness of computerized conferencing for setting standards in the electronics industry, and they developed a system for state legislative research units to exchange information among themselves. With futurist Robert Theobald, Peter and Trudy developed a computerized "tour" of alternative futures and natural resource issues for the USDA. They also facilitated a project that electronically linked small communities in the Southwest undergoing rapid growth so they could share common problems and solutions. Currently they are consultants to the Western Behavioral Sciences Institute's School of Management and Strategic Studies which is using teleconferencing as the central medium for its two-year course for top-level executives.

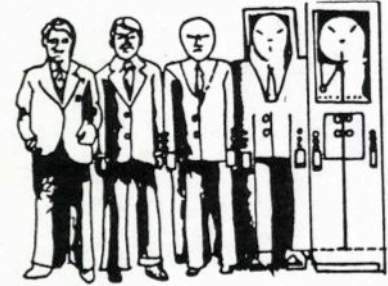
Peter and Trudy's work has been featured in the BBC documentary, "Goodbye, Gutenberg," on NBC's Today Show, in the Christian Science Monitor, and in the local press. They have given presentations at the World Future Society's Third General Assembly, at a World Future Studies Federation conference in Berlin, and to various local groups. Their publications include a number of popular and journal articles, as well as several research reports for the New Jersey Institute of Technology. In addition, they have just completed development of a software system for microcomputers, MIST 2.0, which transforms a personal computer into a "networker's electronic toolchest."

For more information on MIST call or write: Fox Hedge, Inc., 810 E. Street, San Rafael, CA 94901, (415) 454-8292. or: New Era Technologies, Inc. 2025 Eye Street, NW, Suite 922, Washington, D.C. 20006, (202) 887-5440.

Some would say that this is the era of computers and high technology, and even *Time* magazine named the personal computer its Man (or rather, Machine) of the Year for 1982. While computers and microelectronics are

an important driving force in our move from an industrial society to an information and communications society, they are only part of a much larger transformation.

The Information and Communications Revolution



People who study and discuss the future generally agree that our society is undergoing a profound shift. This shift will be at least as broad and dramatic as that from the agricultural to the industrial age, in which we went from a decentralized agrarian society to a centralized industrial society. It is a move away from heavy manufacturing and toward enterprises which deal primarily with information. While the recession has recently highlighted the decline of smokestack industries, the shift toward the Information Age has actually been underway for several decades now. In fact, today over 60% of employed Americans work with information — teachers, accountants, bankers, secretaries, computer programmers, writers, managers, politicians, lawyers, and on and on. These information workers, or knowledge workers as they are sometimes called, are an expanding part of the workforce.

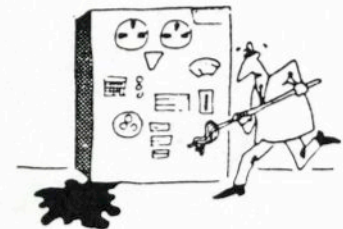
Just as the industrial revolution changed the ways in which people lived, worked, played, educated themselves, and conducted the business of society, so too will the information and communications revolution alter our lives in as yet unforeseen ways. Some of the trends have been identified: a move toward a more decentralized society, changes in organizational structures from hierarchical to networking models, migration from the Frostbelt to the Sunbelt, migration back to rural areas, a more pluralistic society with increased use of information and communications technologies as the "electronic nervous system" of society, changes in how knowledge is structured, and more.

But there will be other impacts as well that we can barely imagine. Who would have predicted that Henry Ford's Model-A would eventually lead to suburban shopping malls, one of the major places people congregate? Who would have imagined drive-in churches, dune buggies, fast food restaurants, changes in sexual mores, and gridlock?

As John Naisbitt has written in *Megatrends*, "In the computer age we are dealing with conceptual space connected by electronics, rather than physical space connected by the motorcar." He goes on to say, "As our transportation network carried the products of industrialization in the past, so too will (the) emerging communications network carry the new products of the information society."

What will be the communications era equivalent of the shopping mall?

The point is that we are well into the middle of this shift into the Information Age of the Communications Era, and no one really knows what the long-term impacts will be. This transformation is broader than simply the introduction of information and communications technologies into our lives, although they are an important driving force. If you would like to know more about this broader shift, there are a number of books which describe it in much more detail: Naisbitt's *Megatrends*, Alvin Toffler's *The Third Wave*, Robert Theobald's *Beyond Despair* and his more recent *Avoiding 1984*, and Willis Harmon's *An Incomplete Guide to the Future*.



The Emergence of the Microcomputer

The *Time* magazine issue on the personal computer is just one indication that small computers are playing an increasingly visible role in our lives. A recent issue of

Newsweek had as many advertising pages devoted to computers, typewriters, and copiers as there were for automobiles, including car leasing and rental. In a poll

commissioned for the *Time* magazine computer issue, 80% of those surveyed said they believed that in the near future, home computers will be as prevalent as TVs and dishwashers. Some 68% also said that the computer revolution will improve the quality of their children's education.

What are these new machines and what can they do for us?

It is useful to remember that the first fully electronic digital computer was built in the United States in 1945, a year that also saw the first atomic bomb and the end of World War II. That computer weighed 30 tons and had 18,000 vacuum tubes which failed at a rate of one every seven minutes. In contrast, almost 40 years later, we have brought along a highly reliable portable computer weighing only 26 pounds. *Time* quotes one computer expert's estimate that "if the automobile business had developed like the computer business, a Rolls-Royce would now cost \$2.75 and run 3 million miles on a gallon of gas."

A computer is a machine which can perform numeric computations very fast and with great precision. It can also process information — storing, sorting, and retrieving all kinds of data. Those applications currently most prevalent emphasize computation and processing. Examples include everything from payroll and inventory control to video games, from word processing to computer-aided instruction, from tax form preparation to controlling lights and appliances in the home. These are useful applications which are transforming the office, the school, and the home.

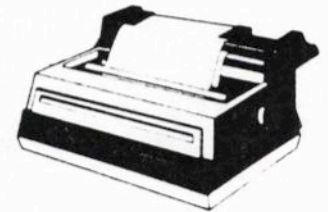
But there is another way in which computers can be used. They can be linked together for communications and networking applications. A computer can be used to call up another computer, large or small. Once connected in this way, you can search for specific information, meet

with other people electronically, leave messages, play games with other people instead of against the computer, exchange ideas, and much more. We call these "networking" applications. Networking has been defined by Jessica Lipnack and Jeffrey Stamps as "people connecting with people, linking ideas and resources." And computers can be used to do just that — organize information about people and resources, exchange that information, and link people into electronic networks.

These networking applications of computers reflect several of the megatrends cited by John Naisbitt and his colleagues: the movement from centralization to decentralization, from hierarchies to networking, and from institutional help to self-help. It is our belief that these networking applications can contribute to empowering individuals, decentralizing power, and helping us move from a highly competitive to a more cooperative, interdependent society.

The communications and networking applications of computers are part of the foundation of the emerging electronic nervous system of society. Yet these applications are largely unknown and at best poorly understood. The form and functions of the electronic networks will be determined by their designers' beliefs about human nature. Do people need to be managed, monitored, and controlled, or are they trustworthy and capable of individual initiative and judgement? While there is great potential for good in electronic networks, their development will be governed by economic and political forces, many of which reflect a fundamental belief that people cannot be trusted to manage their own lives.

Fortunately, it is possible to have small electronic networks in communities where the computers and information are locally owned and controlled.



Networking Applications of Computers for Communities

Let's consider these networking applications in more detail and see how they can be used in community settings.

Networking involves information exchange. It means that information must be assembled and organized first. It also means that information is moved from one place to another, from person to person, even if it is being exchanged between organizations. It also means that

people are linked together through communications in order to make the exchange. Remember Lipnack and Stamps' definition of networking: "people connecting with people, linking ideas and resources."

Networking is as old as civilization itself. But electronic networking using computers is very new.



Assembling and Organizing Information

Microcomputers can be used to assemble and organize information of all sorts. For community application, a

microcomputer is an important tool for organizing and maintaining: community calendars, skill banks, tool pools,

barter exchanges, hot lines for information and referral, housing files, employment files, membership information, mailing lists, classified ads, land-use information (including zoning changes), crime prevention information, telephone trees, and much more.

With the proper hardware and software, someone at the keyboard of a microcomputer can search for a particular piece of information and retrieve it very quickly. In addition, someone across town or across the country can also call up the microcomputer remotely and do the same kind of search. As appropriate, information can be printed out in special formats for general circulation, such as a directory, a calendar, a mailing list, and so on.

Here are several examples.

In Portland, Oregon, the RAIN Community Resource Center has used a microcomputer to assemble files of information about community self-reliance. This information includes an index to periodical holdings, an index to selected articles from fifty basic publications, 2500 descriptions of organizations, and 2000 bibliographic citations.

The RAIN Community Resource Center is associated with *RAIN: Journal of Appropriate Technology*. Some of the bibliographic information in the RAIN computer has been used in *RAIN* magazine, and recently the computer itself has been used to write and edit all the copy for the magazine.

RAIN also used its computer to prepare a report on "Information and Communications Technology for the Community" and maintains an up-to-date database of resources to go with that report. In the past year, RAIN has received 75 requests from organizations around the country for assistance in the design of electronic information systems and in some cases to manage the information resources of an organization.

In Denver, the office of Open Network uses a computer to organize its files of network "events." In their terminology, an "event" is any item in the file. It can be an actual event like a meeting or a marathon, a need, an offer, an idea, or whatever someone wants others to know about. A user of the Open Network can search the files for matches or engage the services of a "weaver" to look for patterns and help make connections. Unlike a membership organization in which people have common values and goals, the Denver Open Network is deliberately and consciously open to the entire community. According to the office for Open Network, "users have found writers, babysitters, chimney-cleaners, seamstresses, salespeople, teachers, lawyers, doctors, carpenters, translators, therapists, accountants, anthropologists, business partners, bankers, exorcists, mathematicians, publishers, consultants, cooks, and a husband." They have also "located

free cookies, cheap paper, a place to hold a conference, Spanish lessons, grant money for non-profits, office help, vitamins, fine wood for carving, electronic parts, jobs, computerized databases and a place to stay in the British Isles."

While the computer used by the Open Network is larger than a microcomputer, their information could be put into a smaller machine and used just as effectively. And although they use the computer as a tool for assisting people, the office of Open Network considers itself a generator of human networks, not a computer network.

In West Newton, Massachusetts, Jessica Lipnack and Jeffrey Stamps have used a computer to assemble and organize information about networks themselves. Through a networking process, they did research on networks and networking which they incorporated into their recent book, *Networking: The First Report and Directory*. The book was written, edited, and prepared for typesetting on the computer in their home office. In addition, they have a database of over 1500 groups in the United States and abroad using networking process for their work. The computer was used to print out the directory of these groups and associated alphabetic, keyword, and location indices. They are continuing to use a computer to maintain and update this database, and they will be using the computer to produce two networking newsletters, one for grassroots groups and one for business and professional people.

Back in Portland again, the Center for Urban Education, an agency of the Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon, used its microcomputer to prepare a directory of participants at their conference on Information and Communication Technology for the Community. The conference database, from which the directory was produced, was also used to facilitate the conference itself. The computer was used to print out lists of people's preferences for box lunches so that food orders could be placed. In addition, the database was available during the conference so that attendees could find others whom they might like to meet.

In each of these examples, the information has been assembled and organized using a small computer. The information is locally owned and controlled. In contrast, *Time* magazine estimates that there are 1450 electronic databases on large computers which are available on a subscription basis. These range from The Source, an information utility that is a subsidiary of *Reader's Digest*, to a pesticides database at Purdue, to Lockheed DIA-LOG's 100 or so bibliographic databases. While it can be very useful to search these subscription databases for specific information, there is no way to add information to them or to comment on the information available.

Exchanging Information

Organizing and assembling information is just the first step. The heart of networking is exchanging that informa-

tion, interacting with other people. As John Naisbitt writes, "in an information society — for the first time in

civilization — the game is people interacting with other people. This increases personal transactions geometrically, that is, all forms of interactive communications: telephone calls, checks written, memos, messages, letters, and more.”

A single microcomputer can be used as an information and communications node in a network. This requires that users can call up the microcomputer using a terminal or microcomputer, much as one would call up a large computer database system. This is known as telecommunication, or communication at a distance.

For example, in San Francisco, the Glide Foundation at the Glide Memorial United Methodist Church used a microcomputer for about two years to link a small group of people active in social change in the Bay Area. Most of those people had video terminals in their homes or offices which they used for sending and receiving electronic messages via the Glide computer. More recently, that computer has been used to organize a database of members of the Briarpatch Network, an association of small businesses, and to act as the central communications node for the Common Good School, a school and support group for community organizers.

At our electronic cottage in Lake Oswego, Oregon, we leave our own microcomputer “in remote” from midnight to noon every day. During those hours, friends and colleagues call up our microcomputer, search through our demonstration databases, and leave messages for us. We leave our responses in “mailboxes” set aside for each remote user. They can also exchange messages with each other.

As we mentioned, in May, 1982, the Center for Urban Education in Portland had a conference on Information and Communication Technology for the Community. CUE commissioned Steve Johnson at the RAIN Community Resource Center to write a background report for the conference. After Steve drafted and edited the report on the RAIN computer, he transmitted it electronically to the CUE computer where it was printed out.

Not only can text files and reports be exchanged this way, but portions of or even entire databases can be exchanged as well. In order to show a variety of databases

at our workshops on microcomputer networking, we asked RAIN and CUE for permission to make copies of several of their databases for demonstration purposes. Using our computer, we called up the RAIN and CUE computers and pulled copies of their databases out of their systems and into ours. As Steve Johnson remarked, the ease of moving such information from one place to another “makes for interesting information economics.” This is particularly true since the RAIN Community Resource Center charges for some of its information services.

With the exception of the Denver Open Network, all the groups mentioned in these examples are using microcomputer software for networking that we have developed. Our system is called MIST, for Microcomputer Information Support Tools. We’ve dubbed it “the networker’s electronic toolchest” since it contains all the necessary tools for assembling, organizing, and exchanging information. And of course, we used MIST to prepare, edit, and print out these remarks.

Using other computer software, there are also literally hundreds of microcomputer-based community bulletin board systems all over the country. These systems can be called up with a simple computer terminal or another computer. Many of them are used by computer hobbyists who chat back and forth about equipment, programming tips, and so on. Some are special purpose systems, devoted to such things as genealogy, science fiction, humor, medical information, and even sex. Generally, these bulletin board systems are conversational in nature. In most of them, it is difficult (if not impossible) to search for and retrieve information by subject area. In that sense, these systems are like CB radio, in which people chat but their conversations are not well organized.



Linking People Together

The real power of electronic networking is in linking people together. Over the past six years, we have been using a computerized conferencing system for a variety of activities. The system we use is called EIES, the Electronic Information Exchange System. It is a system for human communication via computer located at the New Jersey Institute of Technology. Although EIES uses a larger computer than the ones we have talked about so far, it is an

important example.

On EIES, members can send electronic mail to individuals or groups, have on-going meetings in conferences, develop and access databases of information, play games, and participate in other communications structures. EIES members are located across North America, and a few are in foreign countries. They call up the EIES computer at times and from places of their own choosing,

getting new material and leaving messages or other responses. In this way, the system is asynchronous — that is, out of time. We can send a message to our friends Jessica Lipnack and Jeff Stamps in Boston at our convenience, and they pick it up and respond on their own schedule. This completely eliminates missed connections and telephone tag, when you keep missing the person you are trying to talk to.

In addition, communication via EIES produces a written record. In some ways it is a disadvantage to have to type everything into the computer, since people generally talk faster than they type. But it is very useful to have a written copy of a message or a complete transcript of a conference for reference. If a new participant joins an on-going meeting via computer, he or she can be referred to the transcript to date, rather than having to be briefed in hurried whispers on the side. The written record can also be searched, and individual items can be retrieved by keywords, date, author, and so on.

There is also a democratizing effect from communication via computer. It is difficult to bring social pressure to bear to influence group members, and people are judged on the basis of their ideas rather than their looks, status, race, gender, and so on. It is also much easier to challenge someone's points than it might be in a face-to-face setting.

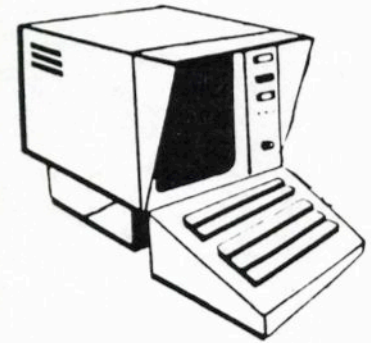
Over the years, we have written papers, signed contracts, collaborated on projects, given and gotten emotional support, maintained personal and professional relationships, planned conferences, played games, and even meditated via EIES — in some cases with people whom we have never met face-to-face!

With regard to community applications on EIES, we worked on three projects of note. A group of people interested in neighborhoods and grassroots community activities used special software we developed to exchange information, news, gossip, inquiries, and so forth. The software allows users to raise a short topic or question which is sent to all members of the exchange. Then each person receiving the question can select it to receive further

information and responses or ignore it. Once a topic is selected, all future responses will be delivered automatically. In this way, people get information on topics they have interest in and have selected themselves. The computer "filters" out the rest automatically. This is one way to deal with the problems of information overload, a very real hazard in the Information Age. There are also features for voting and for displaying a keyword index of all the topics in the exchange.

A second project involved small communities in the Southwest which were growing rapidly due to oil and mineral development nearby. With Robert Theobald and people from Cooperative Extension offices, we conducted an action experiment over six months to see if linking these rapid growth communities via computer would be effective in helping them exchange local problems and solutions. Besides regular asynchronous communication, we also held two on-line "parties" in which the communities were all linked together via computer for several hours.

Third, we worked with the Neighborhood Information Sharing Exchange (NISE) to develop databases on EIES of community-based organizations and of print information of interest to those organizations. Unfortunately, just as this information was finally assembled and organized on EIES, the Reagan Administration cut funding to the project. The purpose of NISE was to provide a means for networking between neighborhood and other community-based organizations. Besides providing information to these groups directly, NISE also acted as a broker between groups, putting them in touch with each other to share common problems and experiences. And unlike databases on large computer systems, the NISE databases on EIES included places for users to make comments on and to rate the usefulness and quality of the information they received.



Education Via Computer

EIES is also being used for some very interesting experiments in education in which teachers and students are linked together via computer. Before describing these experiments, it is useful to mention computer-assisted instruction and how microcomputers are being used in schools.

For the most part, microcomputers in schools or terminals hooked up to a central computer in the school district are used for individualized instruction. A student interacts with the computer which presents information and asks questions. The student gets immediate feedback

from the computer about the correctness of his or her answer, and then either goes on to the next lesson or repeats the current one until the questions can be answered correctly. The computer is very patient and responsive. It doesn't get tired of presenting the same material over and over, and it responds quickly and with full attention to each student. The student can work through new material at his or her own pace, and the computer can keep records of each student's progress. In addition, the computer can be used to maintain the teacher's gradebook.

There are several limitations to this approach to

education. First, the computer is good for training and for teaching skills, but it doesn't do as well in teaching concepts and interpretation. How would a computer correct and grade an essay question? Second, it does not encourage discussion between students or between a teacher and student. Third, it doesn't help students learn to work together cooperatively.

In contrast, education via computer network allows students and teachers to meet together over a period of time, presenting material, doing assignments, discussing ideas, and engaging in whatever group exercises are appropriate. Furthermore, the students and teachers can be geographically separate and still work together.

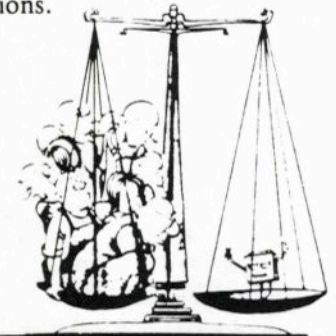
For example, the New Jersey Institute of Technology is offering a series of continuing education courses via EIES. The faculty members are located from New Jersey to Vancouver, British Columbia, and the students are similarly dispersed geographically. Each participant "goes to class" at his or her own convenience and joins in the discussion from home, work, or wherever there is a computer terminal. In this sense, "school" is open 24 hours a day, and there is always something going on.

The Western Behavioral Sciences Institute in La Jolla, California is also conducting classes via EIES. Their program is for top-level executives in the private, public, and volunteer sectors. Its purpose is to teach participants how to be leaders in this time of uncertainty and transition. Their School of Management and Strategic Studies includes faculty and students from Victoria, British

Columbia to Caracas, Venezuela.

There are several reasons for conducting this school for executives via EIES. First, other programs of this type usually take participants out of their positions for a period of time. When they go back, they often have trouble fitting into their organizations once again. In contrast, participants in the WBSI School attend two week-long seminars a year in La Jolla and then go back to their regular positions, continuing their course work on line. For busy executives, the asynchronous feature of communication via computer is also very helpful, since they can work whenever they have the time, rather than on someone else's schedule. Some participants have even taken portable terminals on business trips so they can go to school from their hotel rooms, much as we use a portable computer to stay plugged in while we travel to meetings like this. The network is available everywhere.

Second, at the end of the course, the participants keep their computer equipment and can continue to network and exchange with each other if they like. After two years on line, they will have enough experience with electronic information exchange to continue using it for personal and professional growth through informal networking as well as consider how such electronic communications tools can be used in their own organizations.



Finding the Right Computer Tools

We have discussed some of the aspects of networking applications of computers for assembling, organizing, and exchanging information and for communication and education. While there is tremendous promise in using computer tools for these kinds of applications, there are also some barriers and some questions to consider.

Not all computers are created equal. The machines themselves — the hardware — come in various sizes, prices, and with more and less power. The programs which tell the computer what to do — the software — can be simple to complex. While some of the newer software is "user friendly" and easier to use, a lot of it has been designed for specific and limited applications by programmers who tend to think in computerese rather than English.

There is another significant barrier. Computers and programs are not standardized. You can't use all programs on all computers, and the magnetic disks on which programs and data are stored are not compatible between computers. This is somewhat like stereo equipment operating at non-standard speeds and the records them-

selves coming in varying sizes with grooves of different widths.

For example, we have three computers in our electronic office. They are different brands. Two have compatible software, but we cannot use disks from one in the other. The remedy is to have telecommunications software for all three machines so that we can exchange information between them via phone lines, thus creating a local computer network of our machines.

It is important to understand this barrier as you move into considering microcomputer applications for community education. After you decide what you want to do, find the necessary computer programs for the application and only then get a microcomputer. If you get the machine first, it may not operate with the right software for the job. In addition, if your application involves any kind of information sharing, be sure to get telecommunications software so that you can send your information to another computer over phone lines and so others can call up your computer to enter and retrieve information.



Using Electronic Communication Tools

Even more important than finding the right software for the application is considering the application itself in some detail. As we mentioned earlier, we believe that these networking applications of computers will play a major part in the evolution of society's electronic nervous system made up of computers, communications satellites, television, radio, and telecommunications networks. This information and communications network will carry the products of the Information Age, linking us all together in new and as yet unimagined ways.

But unlike the highway system that links us physically, there are some special features of the electronic systems that will link us conceptually. First, aside from the wires, chips, and transistors, these systems can be programmed and reprogrammed as appropriate. Once constructed, a bridge is very difficult to change. A computer-based communications system, in contrast, can be reprogrammed to structure the information and communication flows to fit the needs of its users. Murray Turogg, designer of EIES, is fond of saying that it is just as easy to program dictatorship as a democracy in the electronic medium. The questions are who can communicate with whom and who has access to what information?

A group of people can be forced to communicate only with a central authority and not each other by programming the computer to enforce those rules. Or the computer can be programmed to mediate conversations between people. IBM is experimenting with a program called *Epistle* which translates letters and memos into proper sentences for business communication. Imagine having all your communications with others edited into "good English." This might be a good way to improve communication by helping people express themselves more

clearly. Or, it might create communications problems if the text is edited in ways that subtly change the intended meaning. It all depends on how the editor is programmed.

Second, information itself is a special kind of resource. It cannot be depleted. Unlike cement, it does not crumble. It is not part of the natural biosystem. Its value depends on individual need, not the cost of its material form. And it seems to generate more of itself.

For community applications, consider how to make information available to the public in a way that is easy to find and understand. Consider how to get the right piece of information to the right person at the right time, without information overload. Consider what kinds of communications needs you have, in addition to organizing information and making it available. Also consider matters of privacy and security.

Several years ago we coined the term "groupware" to refer to the combination of consciously chosen *group* processes and procedures and the *software* to support those procedures. Groupware suggests the programmable nature of group work via computer, including various kinds of information exchange. Groupware forms can be simple or complex, open or restrictive, divergent or convergent, all depending on the needs of the application. Groupware begins with the group of people interacting together and their needs and then adds the appropriate computer tools to meet those needs.

What kinds of groupware forms are most appropriate for community use and community education?



Creating Our Electronic Future

There are now about five million personal computers in the United States, with sales climbing. Over half of those were brought in 1982. It is estimated that there may be 80 million personal computers in use by the end of the century. In addition, there are increasing numbers of computer systems for office automation, computer-based

communication, telecommunications, public-access information, electronic funds transfer, and so on. The electronic networks are rapidly being put into place, even as our highways and bridges are in dire need of repair.

As we approach 1984, we must be mindful of Orwell's reminder of what can happen when information and

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communications tools rest in the hands of a totalitarian regime. Big Brother gets his power from having centralized information and control over people and their communication. Even now, there are questions about bureaucratic uses of computerized information. Should social security records be used to find young men who have failed to register with the Selective Service? Should an insurance company have access to your computerized medical history? What about unauthorized use? What about errors you can't correct? Sweden has stringent laws protecting individuals' rights to privacy with regard to computerized information about them and who can access it. There are no similar regulations here.

But John Naisbitt reminds us that trends are generated from the bottom up. We can help create a positive electronic future by using microcomputers for decentralized networking, for community building, for cooperative information exchange, for communication, for education. We can overcome our fear of the technology and learn to apply it well. Since microcomputers are small, relatively inexpensive machines, they can be locally owned and controlled. Using the telephone system, they can also be linked together as appropriate for information exchange. Short of outlawing the use and possession of personal computers or tapping the telephone network, there is no way to control and centralize the use of these tools. May they proliferate and be used well.

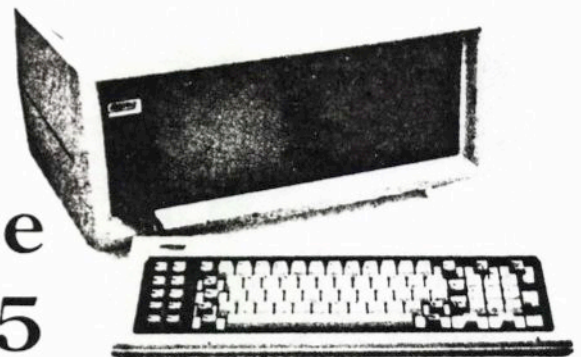
You can join the ranks of those using computer tools in the Information Age. First, find an opportunity to learn more about how microcomputers work, how they can be used, and what you need to do to get them to do what you want. Like anything new, computers may seem unfamiliar

and even scary at first. But you can learn to use them in a remarkably short period of time and you'll soon be thinking more about what you want to do than worrying about making mistakes. Gain competence in using computers. If you are technically inclined, there are many levels you can explore, from hardware repair to very technical programming. But you don't have to be a programmer to use computers in effective and even creative ways.

Then find ways to use microcomputers for educating and informing the community. There are many possibilities to explore beyond computer-assisted instruction and even computerized bulletin board systems. Computers are wonderful tools for assembling, organizing, and exchanging information, and they can also be used for communication, discussion, and the development of community that naturally follows from that.

Although the transition to the Information Age began several decades ago, it is only very recently that its dawn has been generally noticed and accepted. The shift to a world in which information is the strategic resource rather than capital, in which the name of the game is interacting with people, in which we are all linked together in a vast conceptual network, is a shift which demands new ways of organizing and governing ourselves. Because of the programmable nature of computer-based systems, this is a new, and perhaps unlimited frontier. The possibilities are many. The limitations are few. Microcomputers are an important tool in this new age. It remains to be seen whether we can learn to use them in compassionate, empowering, and truly educating ways to develop and sustain community. □

Vision of a Neighborhood Office in 1985



by Peter and Trudy Johnson-Lenz

Janice Robertson felt the mugginess already, even at 9 am, and wished the August heat wave would pass. As she watered the plants and drew water for her "solar" tea pot in the Neighbors Together office, a discouraged looking woman walked in. "Hello, can I help you?" asked Janice.

"Buenas dias," responded the woman, "Habla usted espanol?"

"Si," said Janice, who then invited the woman to sit down and explain her problem. The woman was new to the area and was having terrible difficulty finding housing for

herself and her three young children. She also needed a job. After a long conversation about the woman's needs, talents, and resources, Janice asked her to relax for a few moments while she checked her housing and employment files.

Janice walked over to the microcomputer in the corner and put in the community information disk. After a quick search, she found five apartments which seemed suitable, including one offered by a Hispanic landlady just yesterday. She also consulted the employment file and found three possibilities. As these were printing out, she asked the woman about her preferences for food and neighborhood services so she could enter keywords into the electronic welcome wagon program. Soon the computer printed out a series of ads and coupons for local shops where Spanish was spoken. The woman was confused about the machine clattering in the background, but after Janice showed her the results and explained them, she smiled broadly and said several times, "Muchas gracias, muchas gracias!" As the woman left, she seemed to walk taller and step more lightly.

Janice smiled to herself. The microcomputer really was the "superorganizer" as the staff jokingly called it. By keeping the neighborhood office files and handling routine work like mailing lists, newsletters, reports, letters, meeting minutes, lists of volunteers, and more, it freed up time for Janice and other staff members to get out into the community or be in the office to work with people and their problems, rather than paperwork. Later on that afternoon, some folks from the Clinton neighborhood would be coming over to enter and print out their newsletter, as well as a current mailing list. And to think that people used to have parties to hand address newsletters! Now they can get together for other reasons. Although a few neighborhoods used small computers as early as 1976, it would have seemed strange to rely on a microcomputer in a neighborhood office five years ago, in 1980. Now it was a necessary tool.

The microcomputer was also essential for the skill banks and the barter exchanges which developed during the 1981-1982 mini-depression. Even now with a healthier economic climate, neighbors continue to barter and trade skills, services, information, and goods. Energy audits with computer support were more popular in the early '80s before mandatory weatherization took effect, but even now the computer helps analyze potential energy loss from homes on request, usually when homes are bought and sold. And the 1985 interim census data for neighborhoods is going to be formatted for neighborhood "micros" in compliance with the Neighborhood Act of 1984 which will be of tremendous help to Neighbors Together in preparing their yearly plans and budgets.

By now, several other staff members had arrived in the office and the usual bustle began picking up, with phones ringing and people going in and out. Janice took this opportunity to use the microcomputer to call up the city teleconferencing system and join in the ongoing neighborhood coalition meeting. Since she checked last, there were new comments and responses entered on the city-wide Office of Neighborhoods budget, the topic on neighbor-

hood balloting and the cable TV system, minutes from yesterday's Planning Commission hearings, and discussions of how to spend funds from tax revenues returned to the neighborhoods. As she studied the new material and began thinking about her responses, Janice remembered all the time she used to spend going to meetings. Now she could participate in many more electronic meetings and task group activities from the office at times of her own choosing and meet with others in person only when it was important for social reasons or to resolve difficult interpersonal problems.

But before she could get to entering her thoughts and ideas into the teleconferencing system on these matters, Janice needed to do some work on the joint proposal she and a friend from the Community Coalition were writing for a pilot project involving day care centers in city government offices for employees' children. As usual, the government was lagging behind the private sector where this had been done on a broad scale for several years. Again, Janice used the microcomputer and city teleconferencing system to enter her draft section on implementation objectives and timeline. Her material would be waiting for her Community Coalition friend to read whenever it was convenient. After they finished their drafts and did some text editing to correct spelling and format the budget and other tables, they would print out the proposal ready for duplication. How nice to have the machine to print out the final draft with no massive retyping!

Janice still had some time before meeting some other staff members for a late lunch and their daily afternoon walk around the neighborhood. She used the "micro" to connect to the national Neighborhood Information Sharing Exchange (NISE) to see what experiences other community organizations had had with in-house day care. Looking through the NISE database, which was established in 1981, she found no information about day care centers in government offices, so she raised an inquiry in the community inquiry-response network. After stating her question briefly in five lines, she also composed a page of background information to expand the question. She knew that the brief question would be sent to the hundreds of community-based groups in the network and only those with interest in the topic or information to share would get the background material. She would check again in several days to see what responses had been entered to her question. Sharing problems and solutions like this between communities on a regional and national basis started in 1979 with a small project connecting rapid growth communities. As inquiries are answered, all the responses are shared with all those interested. After sharing information among people in this way, it is then condensed and entered into the NISE database.

Janice logged off the system and turned off the machine. She had had a very productive morning, thanks to the electronic "superorganizer." Time for lunch. It was still hot and muggy, and she would be glad to see the later afternoon thunderstorms that were forecast. She walked out the door with the other staff members and they began sharing their mornings' experiences. □

A Letter from Israel



Dear Friends,

I hope that the formality of a printed letter does not color your ability to read it. "A Letter from Israel" is intended to be both personal and as far reaching as possible. I will publish it as long and as often as I have something worth printing, and the money is available. I hope to reach as many people as possible, thus, some of the articles that appear may be suitable for reprinting or adaptation. Feel free to quote, use, or mangle my words, but please try to be true to the truth, as I too have attempted.

From time to time the Letter will contain articles by others; if you are interested in contributing, please let me know; also, if you have suggestions, please forward them.

For those of you not familiar with me or my work, I have for the past four years lived in Washington, D.C., working with the Community for Creative Nonviolence. CCNV is a dedicated group of full-time "volunteers" (if you can call people who forgo more than the essentials in life "volunteers") who struggle to offer simple services to the street people and the homeless that abound on the streets of America's Capitol. At the same time, CCNV pushes, confronts, and plainly tells the truth to all, willing to listen or not, through a variety of creative vehicles.

I left there to come work in Israel knowing that the need here was great for strong, nonviolent voices and spirits. Upon arriving here, I do find a vacuum waiting to be filled.

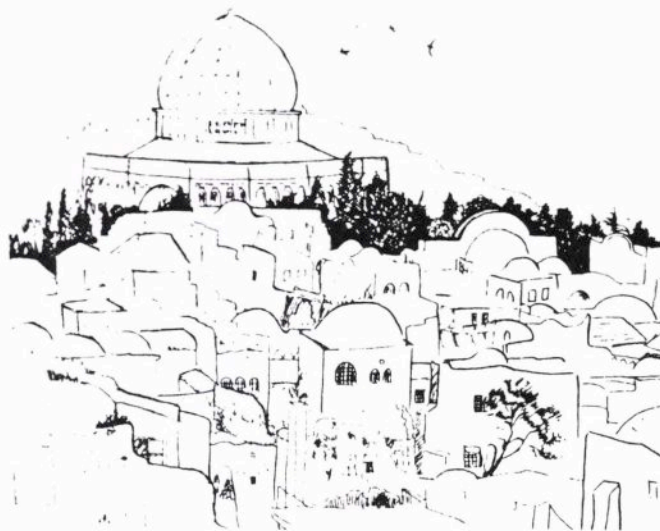
I'm now into the third month of an open-ended stay at Neve Shalom; the following is a report of my first impressions.

Neve Shalom (that's "Oasis of Peace") is a joint-planned cooperative Arab/Jewish settlement in Israel, the only one of its kind in this country, and probably in the world. On a slightly dusty hilltop, midway between Jerusalem and Tel-Aviv (on "no man's land" the Green Line of pre-1967 Israel) on land owned by a sympathetic monastery, the settlement blossoms, the fruits of hard work and little money.

About 35 Jews, Muslims, and Christians have settled here, some from other countries, but by and large the majority are born and bred in Israel. Living in houses and pre-fabs, they are "roughing it", with the dream of building an example of peaceful co-existence. Mostly young families and singles, the children are taken care of in the settlement nursery, staffed by Aishe, who speaks to them in her mother-tongue, Arabic; thus the children start their lives on a bi-lingual footing. The settlement struggles for an independent future, free from the current dependence on contributions and the restrictions of a tight budget. Until that day comes, the sheep, bees, olive trees, and maintaining the settlement provides work for the volunteers and a few members; others work or study outside, and the remainder work on the other half of the dream — to provide an opportunity to youngsters (mainly) and oldsters alike to meet the "other" nation, be it Jewish or Arab. Thus the classrooms and youth hostel of Neve Shalom serve as a neutral environment away from the pressures and borders that reinforce the stereotypes that are so much a part of Israeli society.

The children (who make up most of the "camps") come for four days — a different set of Arab and Jewish classes each week. Classes come from villages and settlements in close proximity to each other, giving the children the possibility to build further ventures and meetings once they return home.

The staff begins each camp with the simple: names, ages, likes and dislikes are compared, and common ground is found. "New Games" (non-competitive games) exercises, art, etc., are utilized creatively, breaking down the walls that separate the two cultures. Next comes the more complex — as the last day of the camp approaches, and the children are ready to broach the more difficult subjects of



political views and societal stereotypes, ready to begin to overcome some of the "emotional baggage" that makes these discussions so difficult. Many a participant has said, 'I would rather go to the beach and not deal with the problems of my country, but I think it is important and worthwhile to come to Neve Shalom even if it isn't the easiest thing in the world.' Such it is that throughout the year 1500-2000 participants pass through Neve Shalom School of Peace, taking with them something to think about and to *work on*.

This year a resident staff for the School of Peace came into being; with a wide variety of experiences and knowledge, they are able to offer programs for all age groups and backgrounds, even designing workshops for visiting groups from Germany and the States. The results of the hard work of such an underpaid staff is clearly evident in the faces of the children.

Such an "experiment" as Neve Shalom clearly is, does not come into being without vision or even just hard work . . . problems and conflicts come into account and must be overcome . . . this too is part of the journey. The generator that runs constantly noisily reminds us that there is not the money, help, or "proteciza" (protection) to bring electricity from the National Power Grid. The periodic water shortages, the lack of bus service, and a million other things from no bank loans to having only one vehicle and tractor for settlement use, places a little extra pressure on everyone, pressure that wouldn't be there if Neve Shalom was a "recognized settlement." Besides physical plant problems, you might expect that Neve Shalom's societal problems would arise out of the meeting of two cultures, but by and large the problems arise more out of the fact that Neve Shalom is an experiment in close community, and strives to set an example for the country (and the world). Anytime you throw 35 people in a "pressure-cooker" of struggle, you are bound to have a little steam.

For those at Neve Shalom, the rewards are somewhat less tangible. They are not an increase in pay, or other material advantage; sometimes a smile after a child has broken through the silence of ignorance and distance is enough. The participants that come back again and again, the growing circle of members, supporters, and friends, are the "return" on the investment of hope and sweat. The programs are in ever increasing demand and the number of persons using techniques in Arab-Jewish relations, first encountered at Neve Shalom, almost doubles each year.

Thus through the ups and downs, the lean times and the less lean times, the members of Neve Shalom know that all these "growing pains" of problems and pressures are a part of "getting there." Where "there" is, is still a question, but after 5 or 6 years of existence, they know that they are not "there" yet, but they also know that they are on the right path; the path to Peace.

I would like to close this "Letter" with a few comments and reflections.

Understanding Hebrew has made it possible for me to sit, listen, and absorb; this is the most important role I can play here for the next few months. What I've experienced and worked on elsewhere affecting problems and prejudices may or may not work here. Plugging into other "projects" will follow this period.

Not knowing Arabic continues to bother me, and I've already started lessons with friends in Neve Shalom. Knowing Arabic is not a necessity — most everybody knows Hebrew or even English — it essentially is a sign of respect to at least try and learn the language.

Lastly, Israel has long been a heavily militarized state, but it is still a shock to hear stories of abuse by the police or army, especially to the Arabs. Abuse unfortunately is inherent in the basing of strength and security on force. Probably, the States are just as militarized — its just quite open here with soldiers "everywhere."

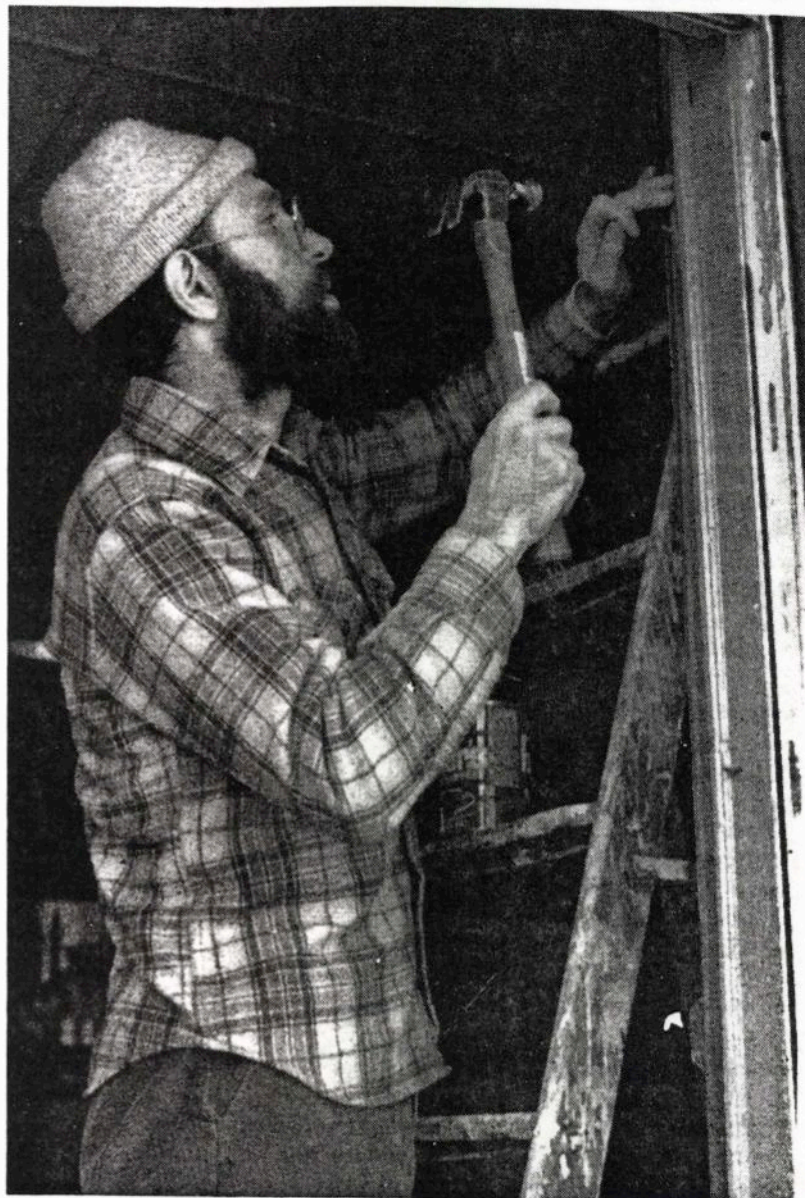
The current investigation into the massacre of Palestinian refugees in Beirut seems to be through, and may lead to Begin and Sharon's ouster. Most people here have little confidence that a change in leadership or ruling party would make a difference, considering who is available and what they might do.

Possible future "Letters" in the works include a look at "Peace" groups in Israel, and other organizations that work with Arab/Jewish relations. Again, do send your comments and suggestions, questions or answers . . . also contributions are welcomed to keep this "Letter" coming.

Peace,
Todd S. Kaplan



PROJECT WARM



by David Ross Stevens

David Ross Stevens, 48, is co-director of Urban Shelter Associates and Project WARM. Formerly energy/environment writer for the Louisville Courier-Journal, he has written a book on The Solar Electric Home and writes a syndicated column on alternative energies. He was formerly director of the Jefferson County (KY) Energy Conservation Office. He also designed and built his own solar home.

Norman Jones is 72 years old. He reclines on a day couch most of his waking hours because his ailments prevent him from walking. Stationed by a window, he can observe the activity in his westend Louisville (KY) neighborhood or he can read by the sunlight.

However, as his wife pointed out, the draft from the window last winter was nearly enough to do him in. Now there is no air coming in and he really loves it by the window.

Not far away on Lytle Street is Leona Jarvis. She had the windows and doors of her house weatherstripped up last winter. "I could tell the

difference. I didn't have to turn on the electric heater in the bathroom at all."

Hanna Drake, not elderly like the Joneses and Mrs. Jarvis, is crippled with arthritis. "It has been so much better than last year. My gas bill would have been way up if Project WARM hadn't been here."

Project WARM? Another government agency handing out freebies to the poor? Not at all.

Project WARM is the brainstorm of a handful of Louisville people who would not object if you called them "energy nuts." For years they have followed the energy scene both globally and on the local level. Their collective conclusion is that energy conservation and the encouragement of alternative energies can bring some sanity to a vital segment of everyday living — shelter and warmth.

Forming a non-profit organization called Urban Shelter Associates, Inc., they solicited money from both private and governmental sources, and established a free weather-stripping service for the elderly poor and the handicapped in Jefferson County (Louisville, KY).

The results? In 14 months Project WARM has trained 800 volunteers from all walks of life, who in turn buttoned up 1,300 homes. Each house has reduced energy consumption from 10% to 30% and all of them are considered by their occupants to be more comfortable. Other benefits have included lowered heating bills, and the volunteers received free training and free materials to weatherstrip their own homes.

Knowledgeable energy conservationists consider the Louisville program one of the best local energy conservation programs in the country.

Director James P. Walsh said that the success of the program involves several key elements:

a) A plan. Steps were outlined on how to raise money, attract volunteers and to get the materials to the needy in a cost-effective way.

b) A cooperative utility. The Louisville Gas & Electric Co. pledged to pay for all \$50,000 worth of materials besides providing one of its officials to serve as a board member.

c) Low overhead. Training classrooms have been held at 60 different places (schools, churches, Lions Clubs, government offices) and the coordinating office is operated out of the director's home.

To understand how a Project WARM could work in another city, one should learn the history of the Louisville group and how its program has evolved. Some of its story would be applicable in other cities, some might not.

Director Walsh trained as a professional energy auditor and is a graduate of an owner/builder school. His ideas for a Louisville owner/builder school caught the attention of a young architect interested in alternative energies. A bank employee with energy interests and a director of a non-profit credit agency were attracted to the ad hoc group and then an energy/environment writer joined them.

The group held several long sessions to plan their project. They discovered that in Louisville there was more need for home energy aid to the elderly and handicapped than for a self-help house-building school. The credit agency director, James Davis, told of hundreds of cases of

people who could not pay their utility bills. Even if federal money were used to help pay their heating bills, that kind of aid was essentially only a stopgap solution because the houses — as energy disasters — would continue to waste valuable heat.

The need to tighten up houses became as apparent as the need to help pay bills.

After three months of brainstorming, the ad hoc group wrote a charter, voted on bylaws, established a board and elected officers. The strategy was to get at least \$5,000 to \$10,000 in hand to carry the project from January 1 through March of the first heating season. The quickest money source appeared to be Community Development funds in both the county and city governments.

The Urban Shelter staff at this time was Director Walsh and Co-Director David Ross Stevens, the energy writer. This pair and the board members lobbied the city aldermen and the elected county officials and somehow squeezed \$5,000 from a County/City Community Development program. With this leverage, Walsh and Stevens approached the Kentucky Department of Human Resources, which handles weatherization funds, and the local utility. State organizations normally move more slowly than local governments and this proved to be the case for Project WARM. State/federal weatherization money finally did find its way to the Louisville group, but much later than local money.

More quickly, Louisville Gas & Electric decided to pay all the bills for materials, up to \$50,000 for two years. The utility made the decision for three reasons. One, as part of a rate agreement with the state Public Service Commission, the utility had promised to spend a hefty sum of money on energy conservation. Project WARM fit right in with this pledge. Actually, this minor emphasis on energy conservation is mandated by a 1978 federal law. Second, the utility had found that rising fuel rates had raised the number of delinquent bills to about 26,000 per month. Project WARM's recipients would have their bills lowered, allowing them to pay more easily. Third, a program with the characteristics of Project WARM is the best kind of public relations. In fact, during recent rate hearings the only positive sound from the public toward the utility was directed at Project WARM.

A few local foundations were also approached for money. And they responded. The mix is approximately 60% from the private sector and 40% from public funds.

When the first training session was held — in a Presbyterian church meeting room — no money was yet in hand but the media announced it and covered it. The onset of winter prompted several television stations to broadcast Project WARM's phone number.

Here's how it works: A potential recipient calls for help at the Project WARM office. Within a few days a staff member is at the recipient's house with a form that determines his or her eligibility. This form also satisfies state requirements. More important, from a weather-stripping standpoint, the initial inspection produced a walk-through audit and a floorplan energy diagnosis. It points out to subsequent weatherstrippers where to weatherstrip and lists the type of materials to be used.

by Nancy W. Riffer

Creating a Center for Holistic Living



Gerry Edwards, a yoga teacher and counselor, and Mark J. (Jim) Sicherman, a pediatrician, shared a dream of offering holistic health services in Syracuse, New York. They envisioned a center which would help people become more responsible for their own health and well being. Through counseling and education, it would empower people to make the choices that would allow them to live vital and satisfying lives. This is the story of how they shaped that dream into the reality which is now called the Center for Holistic Living.

The Center for Holistic Living is noteworthy because of the congruence between the values taught at the Center and how the staff and volunteers embody those values. Consider the organizations that lack this kind of congruence: the school which uses lectures to teach its students the importance of student participation, the church which invests in exploitative corporations, the hospital which cannot accommodate the diet of someone who has chosen to eat natural foods. The Center is distinctive because it does practice what it preaches. Clients are taught to take responsibility for their health; staff and volunteers take responsibility for the health of the Center. Clients are encouraged to make choices that lead to vital and satisfying lives; staff and volunteers use the Center to add to the vitality and satisfaction in their lives. Clients learn to use their innate power; staff and volunteers use theirs to create the Center. The consistency between the expectations for clients and those for staff and volunteers makes the Center a congruent organization.

I became involved in 1978 when my former yoga teacher, Gerry Edwards, told me, "We're having a meeting of people who might be interested in starting a center for holistic health in Syracuse and I'd really like you to come." I protested that holistic health wasn't really an interest of mine. Gerry replied, "Well, there may be a role for you. I really hope you'll come."

The first meeting was made up of about thirty of Gerry and Jim's friends and acquaintances. Doctors, nurses, social workers, psychologists, meditation teachers, a dietician, a muscle equipment salesman, and a bookstore owner shared why they were interested in holistic health. The group has tremendous energy and good listening skills but they lacked a process for channeling their combined energy. I took on teaching group meeting facilitation skills from a pamphlet by Movement for a New Society entitled: *Meeting Facilitation: the No Magic Method*. I taught them to develop a public agenda, share leadership, and decide by consensus. When this task was completed, I turned to other commitments.

This spring, curious to learn how the project had developed, I talked to those who had been involved. I found that the Center had been through four types of structural organization.

Nancy W. Riffer is a social psychologist who works as a consultant to social inventions.

Types of Structural Organization

A Network. The original meetings, which Jim and Gerry initiated, enabled people interested in holistic health to form a network. People who had been working alone or with one friend in state bureaucracies, local hospitals, or private practice, saw that there were many others with similar concerns. Many contacts made at those first meetings developed into working relationships, referrals, and personal support.

Associations. People came and went. Those who felt part of the growing consensus stayed. The group decided to form the Wholistic Health Association of Syracuse (WHSA) to offer educational programs on holistic health in the fall of 1979. WHAS sponsored courses and workshops on such topics as nutrition, yoga, stress management, how to deal with the health care system, women's health care issues, and Eastern health techniques.

When WHAS decided to stop offering courses and become a study group on holistic health, those who wanted to offer clinical services decided to form a new group. Gerry and Jim were the nucleus of this group and they had support from others. In January of 1980 they rented space in a midtown building and began seeing clients. Jim trained Gerry to be a health guide, i.e., to help clients complete a health-related self-assessment, identify their problem areas, and adapt community resources to solve them. Gerry worked with clients to help them plan a more health-inducing lifestyle. Jim, employed by the state, began to build a private practice. They wanted physicians to refer clients to the Center so they designed their services to be compatible with western medicine.

The network spawned other activities. Two people founded a community education center based on macrobiotics. The bookstore owner began stocking more books on holistic health. A psychologist set up private practice and shared his office with other holistic practitioners. Holistic health became a visible entity in Syracuse.

A Not-for-Profit Corporation. Gerry and Jim, both working part-time, aspired to provide more services. They could not hire more people because the Center was not providing an income. So they organized an ad hoc

committee made of members of the network and health systems professionals. The committee assisted with fundraising and took on the task of incorporating the Center. Incorporation would make the Center eligible for grants from funding sources, make contributions tax deductible, and make the employees eligible for insurance. The group was unfamiliar with cooperatives as an alternative form of organization. One member of the ad hoc committee used his expertise to complete the required papers and The Center for Holistic Living became a not-for-profit corporation.

Gerry was an employee of the Center and Jim was not. He preferred to maintain his private practice, collect his own fees, and rent space from the Center. He did continue to supervise the health guide(s).

During this period, JoAnne Cocciole, a registered nurse, began to volunteer at the Center. She did mailings and answered the phone. Jim invited her to become a health guide, and she accepted his offer. After being trained by Jim, she built up the number of clients she was seeing. She quit her job and accepted employment at the Center even though pay was much more tentative. She took responsibility for many of the administrative details of running the Center. The Center had now become the actualization of the "dream" of Gerry, Jim and JoAnne.

An Independent Board. The health guides maintained control of policy decisions by serving on the Board of Directors. After two years of taking this responsibility, they decided that they could be more effective if they concentrated their energies on the delivery of services to clients. The Center is in the midst of making a transition to a fourth form of organization in which the Board will function as a semi-autonomous unit. Gerry and JoAnne want to retain control of how day to day services are provided, but they also want the Board to help them make policy decisions and to take responsibility for fiscal matters, public relations and community liaison. They want to go from a two-person operation to a more differentiated structure.

Guiding Principles

The structural forms of the Center have developed out of the interactions of the people involved. Those people have been guided by their understanding of people and organizations.

Utilization of Talent. The Center has elicited the best skills of its supporters. Individuals have been able to identify a need and apply their skills to it. One contributed the writing of the constitution, another the conceptualization of the new Board, a third her knowledge of accounting, insurance and fundraising.

Confidence in Serendipity. Volunteers and staff had an expectation of success which led to an appreciation of what

each had to contribute. Even bad fortune was seen as providing an opportunity for growth. For example, JoAnne remarked that she was really glad that the Center had not gotten a large grant at an early date; if it had, she would have become the executive director without learning how to be a health guide.

Clarifying Images. At every stage of the Center's evolution the people involved have held an idealistic image of how they would like the Center to be. The clarity of Jim and Gerry's initial vision led them to open a health-guide service when others around them had different interests. JoAnne's ideas of what she wanted to see in health care led



Gerry Edwards

her to make a wholehearted commitment to the Center. Gerry's vision of an independent Board is guiding the development of new training for board Board members.

Operating by Consensus. Since the beginning decisions have been made by consensus. Participants in early meetings learned to assume that common ground could be found, to listen for points of agreement, and to share the risks of taking action. JoAnne and Gerry operated the Center by consensus and new training for the Board includes consensus building.

Initiating Action. Major changes have taken place at the Center when someone has taken on a project and carried it through. Such a person has structured the points of choice, but all participants have had to agree on the decision. For example, all staff were dissatisfied with the basement location of the Center. Jim investigated alternative locations and presented them to the others; problems were identified until the staff and the Board unanimously agreed on the present offices. JoAnne thought a newsletter was essential to the visibility and legitimacy of the Center. She took the lead and other staff concurred in her decisions. Gerry led the development of the new role for the Board. These actions have resulted from the initiative of one person and the consensus of the group.

Accepting Support. The Center has drawn on temporary and long term support. Some participants in the networking meetings came and went, others remained involved. One person has served on the Board since its beginning, others have served for a year or two. Participants in the Center have not lost energy wondering why people have moved on or why their interests have diverged from those of the Center. Each contribution has been accepted as a gift.

The process by which the Center for Holistic Living has developed is holistic: it draws on the strengths of



JoAnne Cocciole



Jim Sicherman

individuals, it puts power in the hands of its participants, it makes dreams a reality, and it builds trust — in each other and in a guiding spirit or evolutionary process. □

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Why do people join our communities? What do they leave behind? What are they looking for?

— Before I came here my life was typically American. I lived in an apartment by myself and didn't feel satisfied. I felt a sense of distance from people, even though I had friends. Also, I was doing counselling for drug addicts and alcoholics. The work was rewarding, but I felt stifled by the system I was working in. This was the worst for me, not having the freedom to do what I knew was best, and having to work by rules made by people who were never around and knew very little about what I was actually doing. Here there is nobody standing over my shoulder making rules. Even the people who manage areas share the work with me, we share the same frustrations, the same good feelings.

— I was dissatisfied with working in a job that didn't have much meaning to me. My job was teaching visually impaired children daily living skills. Sounds like meaningful work but it didn't give me what I wanted from life, it was too separated from my real life.

There are more people I am interested in that I can talk to on all levels here than anywhere else I've ever been.

— I lived in a group house before I came here . . . we shared the space, some of the chores and one meal a day. We had few interests in common outside of the household. I wanted to live with people I had more in common with. I also wanted work with people that I respected. I didn't want to do work that I didn't emotionally or ideologically relate to.

— I'm more able to be myself here than I've been anywhere else. Also, there's the opportunity to work and learn. In the little bit of time I've been here I've learned so many things which I wouldn't have had a chance to learn on the outside, like working in the woodshop, and working in the dairy. I'd never worked with wood, I'd never worked with machinery, I'd never worked with animals.

— I guess it has been a fantasy for most of my life — living out in the country and still having my friends around me.

— I want to learn to deal with issues which I haven't dealt with on the outside, like ending a relationship and not hating the person, and getting along with people. Living in a community will give me a better idea of how society

could be. For years now I've been seeing how the outside society doesn't work, and I've always speculated about how it could be different.

— The lack of agreements in my previous living situation was very frustrating. I wanted things like communal meals, shared responsibility for work, and an understanding that we would communicate about the difficult things.

— I didn't have control in my life, I felt like GM owned me. Even working on an alternative job, I still felt too tied down, didn't have enough control over what happened with the fruits of my labor.

Work is a recurring theme. Many people look for more satisfaction in their work, more feeling of control. What do they actually find?

— I have a degree in architecture and sociology, and carpentry is my main work. Yet if I did only carpentry, I would get tired of it. With our systems, I do 4 days of carpentry a week and get a chance to do other work. I make hammocks because I like having a social way to work. I cook because its creative. Cooking is a high pressure job here, but the longer I cook the more comfortable I am with it. It gives me a feeling of competence, being able to cook a meal for this many people. It also feels like I am doing something for other people. When I cook, I am right there and I see them eating it and I get feedback right away.

— Before I came here I only had jobs where I was at the bottom of the line, taking orders. Since living at Twin Oaks I have been manager of a few different areas. I was co-manager of the dairy and it was a big responsibility. I am discovering things about myself that I never knew before; I can handle responsibility, I can learn to do things, even things like fixing fences. I've gotten stronger, I feel more capable. Physical strength is really important to me. I'd always felt small before.

— I used to work with kids, but when I came here I got into business, something I never imagined I would do. I learned a lot of business managing skills like accounting, administration, and dealing with customers. I like it here because I have control over my workspace. On the outside I would have done this work just to earn money, here I feel like I have a stake in it, and I put more energy into it.

Many statements about work touch on community ideals and give some indication of how we are moving toward our goals. In particular, the following quotes speak to the ways our communities provide alternatives to our larger society's sexism and discrimination.

— I recently became a mother. It is special to have a child here because I can have her and my work. I don't have to hold down three jobs to have enough money to support her and then not have enough time to be with her. The child care workers provide almost full time child care. They're on all day and all night except between dinner and bedtime.

which is usually time parents spend with the kids. Leah sleeps near me, since she's under a year old, and I can spend as much time with her during the day as I want to. Or, I can leave her in the children's house, and go off and do something else. There are people who enjoy being metas (child care workers) and being with the children, and that's wonderful.

— The community supports women taking on work that is not traditionally women's work. I do forestry and wood work. I never would have attempted something like that on the outside. I was conditioned to think I was clumsy, and that I should work at a desk and use my brain.



— Women are encouraged and expected to take on managerial work. I see myself being more interested in that kind of work as time goes on, because I become more and more committed to living here, and therefore want to be involved in the government, the direction we take, maybe even the businesses.

— I'd say Twin Oaks deals pretty well with sexism, although it is still present. Anybody who says we are a totally non-sexist community isn't very observant, or doesn't know what they're looking for. The general setup is non-sexist. People are given support for trying non-traditional work. A lot of things we do in raising our kids are really good. There are subtle ways though, in which our children are still learning traditional roles, and I think that has to do with their imitation of us. They're doing what we're doing, rather than what we're saying. People don't see that a lot. So I think we have a ways to go.

— As a man in community, I'm not caught in an expectation of what work I do, or what ways I act. I can freely show affection towards children or towards men. I can learn about all different levels of life, from cleaning houses to working a computer.

— As a minority on the outside I always had to be aware that I am black, or be aware that the other person is not black. Here I don't feel like a minority. I don't feel separated from people and that feels good. There are differences between people and myself, but I haven't run into anyone who is not open to closing the gap. There are times when I am lonely, when I just want to be around other black people who already know a lot of the things

I've experienced. I think a lot of the work I do, like recruitment, helps me to go past the loneliness. People are willing to be supportive of me as a black, and their openness to hearing what I have to say helps too.

Living in community is living with people. It is an essential part of our experience. We are experimenting with living close to other people, and being deeply involved with more people than we are used to. It is wonderful for us, it is hard and painful.

— Here I work, cry and get angry with people and I am still here. On the outside my relationships were categorized — there were people that I worked with, then there were people that I lived with, then there were people I shared intimacy with. Here I do everything with the same people. Relationships run deeper here than on the outside, you get to see so many facets of each person.

— I don't make close friends easily. I know a lot of people here well. I respect and like them, but we aren't close friends. I feel that lack, especially when someone I am close to leaves the community. I am not in a relationship and have been fairly nonsexual for a while, and I miss the intimacy.

— Relationships in community are different. I'm not sure why. I'm not as close with women as I like to be. I think I had a lot of expectations and people withdrew from that. I think if people live in such close proximity to each other they tend to get more private.

— Lack of personal space here is a big problem. We haven't the funds and the labor right now to build another



residence. We need to have more members to have the extra resources to build with, but if we get more people we have no place to put them. When I want to sit alone at lunchtime or breakfast, I put up a kind of barrier and people stay away. The other night there were a lot of people here with a lot of energy. Eve was needing to retreat and she was sitting in an easy chair and she was just dreaming and looking at people and no one disturbed her the whole time, she was alone and she was surrounded by 55 people.

— The first day I was here I got extremely sick. I didn't know anyone yet, so I crawled up into my little loft in the visitor's space and Woody came and brought me some tea and Spring had made the tea and Susan who is a nurse came and checked on me later.

— There are more people I am interested in that I can talk to on all levels here than anywhere else I've ever been.

— We have some spacey people here and we have some industrialists. I like that. In college, it drove me crazy to be surrounded by peers. I heard the same conversation all the time. I like the fact that people have different ideas here.

— Since I've been here I've gone through some intense periods of personal growth. I think I would have gone through them no matter where I was but it has been more accelerated here. I had to deal with things I could have more easily turned away from, especially in personal relationships.

— I get so involved with people, every time somebody leaves I still could cry if I think about it. That's one of the biggest problems here, you have to let go of a lot of people you like.

— There is a lot less antagonism and competition between me and other men. I can walk in the woods with any number of men here and talk about emotional things, spend intimate time with them.

— Living with a lot of people I experience all the fluctuations in their lives. We give up predictability in favor of being more human and alive. I am subjected to people's vagaries, to their ups and downs. It takes a lot of energy to go through all that with 60-70 people.

— I love the feeling of walking down the path at 3 o'clock in the morning and knowing that whoever I meet will be OK. It will be the same person I have breakfast with in the morning.

— Perhaps the most difficult part of learning to live in community has been learning that other people's ways of doing and being are just as valid as my own.

The interviews go on and on. It's hard to choose a place to stop, hard to decide not to include so many other statements. Yet, I'm pleased with the images I've fit into this article. Many of us find work in our communities to be clearly satisfying, relevant, and full of opportunity for variety and personal growth. Relationships look like a less advanced frontier. Some of us find the relationships we want, but loneliness is still part of our reality. In this, as well as in learning to live without competition, sexism and racism, change doesn't come easy. We bring our past strengths and limitations with us, and we find there is no magic, even here. Still, I'm pleased with the picture. We are special. We are young alternative societies, and we're already surprisingly close to reaching our stated reality. I hope this article gives you a glimpse of our communities. I hope it encourages you to come visit and see for yourself. □



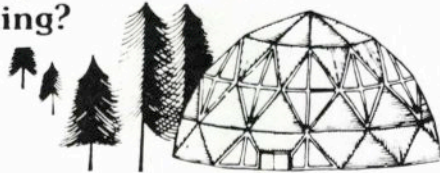
Taylor, Twin Oaks



Most communes are NOT hippy dope scenes
or gurus exploiting innocent babies.
That's just the media trying to sell papers
to bored suburbia.

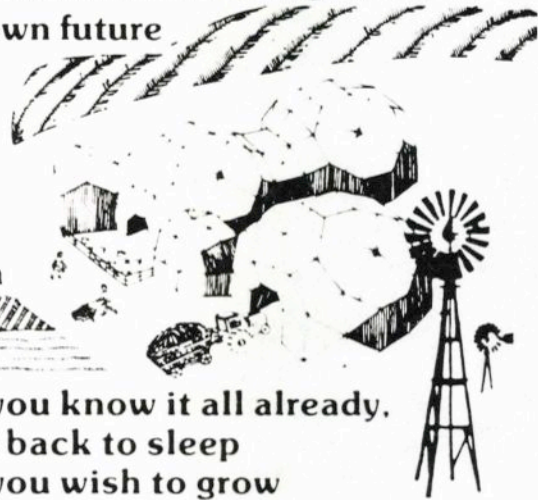
There are at least 100 communities in
Britain already — why don't you live in one?
Someday most people will live in communes
— why are you waiting?

become part of the future
join the culture of the future
you don't have to live in a bedsit
you don't have to get married 'cos there's nothing else to do

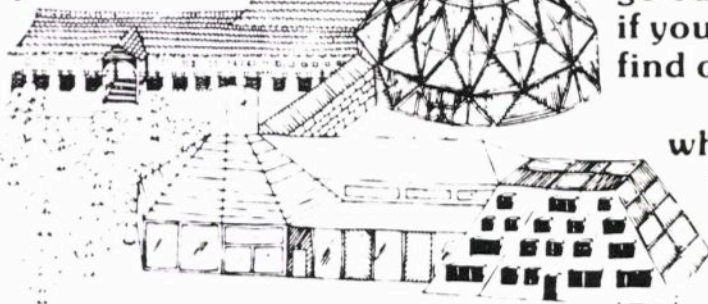


get lots of friends and work for your own future
leave the fossilised culture of the past
All you have to lose are your chains

stop worrying about your security
learn to make friends instead
So what, you make mistakes —
those who don't take risks don't learn
so what, you're shy
so what, you're scared
who's running your life?
you or fear?



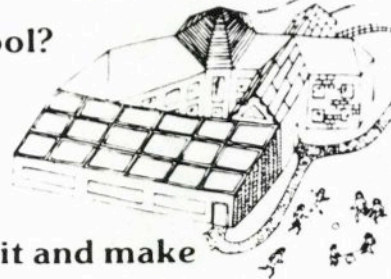
if you know it all already,
go back to sleep
if you wish to grow
find out about community living



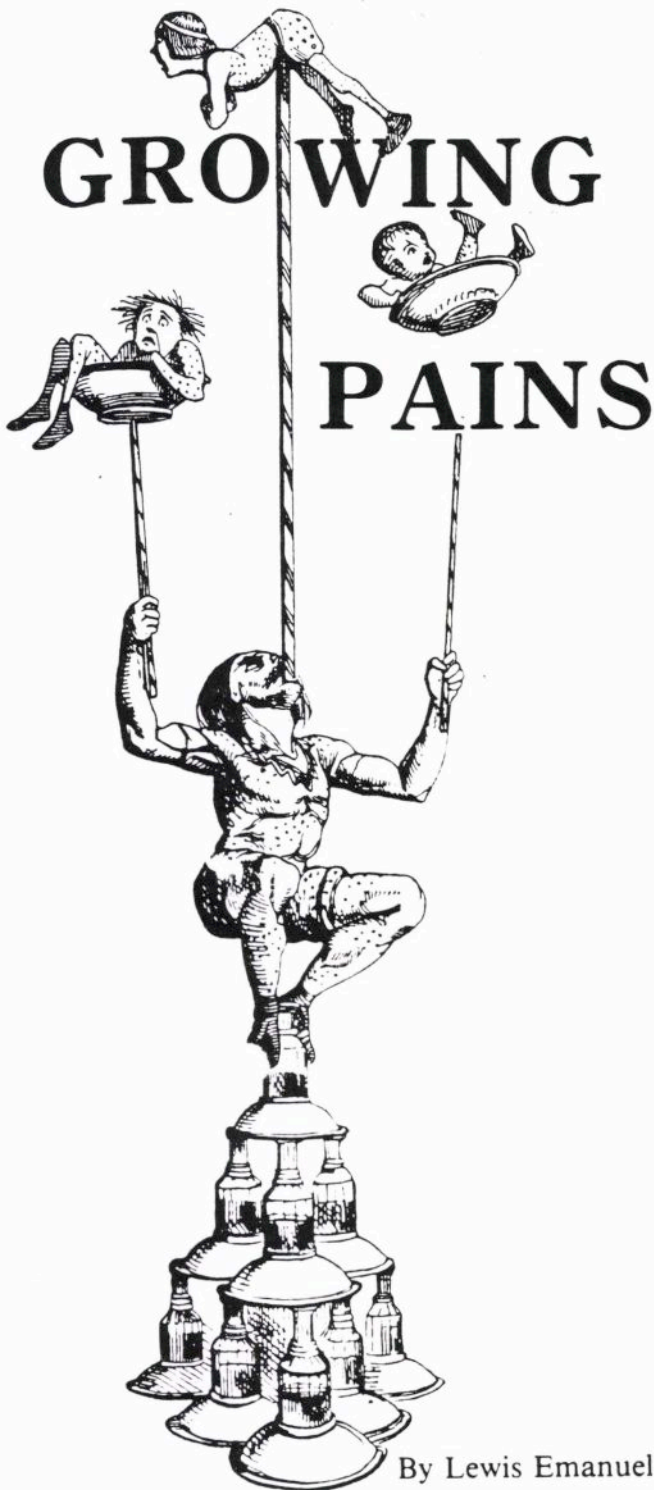
why lock yourself in a house
with one person, when
you could join
a commune?

Worried about the standards of the local school?
Why not join a commune
and run your own school?

Stop thinking about communes — join one
Stop being put off by problems — solve them
So what, the first one collapses — learn from it and make
sure the next one is better —
else you'll always be trapped by fear
you only live once



send off for more information
Alternative Communities Movement
18 Garth Road, Bangor, N. Wales, Gt. B.



By Lewis Emanuel

Lewis Emanuel is a member of Dandelion Community in Ontario, Canada. Dandelion is an intentional community and is one of the 5 communities in the Federation of Egalitarian Communities.

Dandelion Community is growing larger. This means a great deal to the people who live here. Dandelion is our work, our social life and our home. It is the context within which we live our days. The community supports each of us, in that it provides us with security and a well-lit stage on which to step forth and act. Yet, as it grows, the community changes and in its changing we must realign ourselves. In the midst of Dandelion's growth it is of value, perhaps, to describe these happenings and to reflect on the ways in which we are responding.

Dandelion has been in existence for eight years now. For most of that time growth has been slow, with people acting on the assumption that slow, steady growth would ensure stability. Over time we came to realize that we would have to grow rapidly and increase our membership by leaps and bounds if we were to avoid stagnation and decline. After looking at the development of other communities and living through a period of ominous decline, it was decided that a commitment to rapid growth was called for. A five-year growth strategy was constructed in a remarkably realistic tone. We are two years into our strategy now and live with the feeling of being irrevocably on our way.

When the growth strategy was developed in 1981 we were only five people. Now eighteen members are working for the objectives which were laid out two years ago. We envision a community of approximately fifty members, all of whom would live and work on our fifty acres in the Canadian Shield country north of Lake Ontario. We seek a diversification of our industry, based now almost solely on rope products such as hammocks and hanging chairs. We emphasize not only a quantitative growth in terms of membership and financial stability, but a development of services such as health care and education for ourselves and others. We look towards cultural growth within the community; space for art, music and other mediums of expression. Finally, we want to create an accepting and supportive environment for all of our members, wherein each individual is allowed and encouraged to become all that they would like to be. Thus, as our membership increases we open ourselves to allow for the divergent needs of all the people who choose Dandelion as their home. All of this is incorporated into our growth strategy.

As we grow it becomes more apparent to us all that everything will have to grow at once if a sense of balance is to be maintained. But it becomes equally apparent that we can only focus energy on certain things at any given time. We're living the push and pull of the range of our growth strategy. Often things change because they must change in order to keep up with the rate of growth in other areas. Often it happens that development occurs in a specific area when a new member offers the energy and commitment to initiate development. What is obvious, and yet not always perceived, is that we are living through a period of constant change. Change involves frequent reprioritization and redefinition. These activities can feel threatening to individuals and to the group. Change in the context of growth is both exciting and enervating. How then, as a group, are we meeting the very real challenge of building

community and therefore of living a commitment to growth?

On a physical level, in terms of our work and daily living, there is a constant effort to build and rebuild, to organize and reorganize. We do our industry work in a community-made building that is not big enough. We

We're living the push and pull of the range of our growth strategy.

rearrange the space and are building more shelves, more hammock jigs, more racks. There are more albums on the shelves in the workshop, more speakers pouring out Vivaldi and The Kinks. Instead of one hammock manager, we now have four. One person manages the actual production, another makes sure we have well-made maple-wood stretchers to frame the hammocks, another handles the orders that come in for our goods.

This increased division of labour can be seen all over the community. One person took on the difficult task of straightening out our accounts and of creating an accounting system to hold the flow of income and expenditure. Now we have an accounting team of three people to share the responsibility for our finances. This autumn we arranged a sales effort which called for the creation of a wholesale team and a retail team, working alongside the production managers toward economic security and growth. We have always used a labour system which stresses equal division of labour and responsibility. Now, in the demands of our increasing size and complexity, we have members who are specialized in various areas and who, as a consequence, have very little to do with other areas of the community. This tendency toward specialization would be true of any other expanding business, but with our concern for equality and cohesive-ness and our collective decision-making process, division of labour and specialization can have negative connotations.

We have become large and individually specialized to the extent that certain people hold knowledge which others don't fully grasp. News from one branch of the operation may not reach all of the people who live here intact. We believe strongly in the importance of access to knowledge for all people. Knowledge is empowering for the individual and is also essential to conscious decision-making for the group. So, in the area of communication and skill-sharing we are working to keep pace with our increasingly complex division of labour.

We have various methods of maintaining the channels for the passing on of knowledge and skills. Our managers work within the agreement that they will be open to any requests for information. A person who would like to become involved in some aspect of the community work or who wants to acquire skill in some area has only to make

these needs known and arrange for a learning time. As the group becomes larger, the difficulty lies in allowing for the announcement of each new development in any area and for the expression of each opinion on a particular community issue. We have a recently enlarged notice board where news items and opinion papers can be publicized. We write announcements of various happenings that affect us all and make our opinions and personal developments known through printed words and the use of cassettes. Our increased size is witnessed by the fact that our newly enlarged notice board is already over-crowded.

Various community meetings also serve as vehicles for communication and must be adapted to meet our changing needs. We feel good about our process for meeting and making group decisions. We work to aid clarity and effectiveness in our meetings by routinely structuring the gathering and by carefully respecting the words of each individual. Decisions must be made quickly and collectively. With a larger group this is sometimes challenging, but we seek to use the strength of our growing numbers and to come together more cleanly each time that we meet. After a meeting we go through a quick evaluation to determine what factors made the meeting worthwhile and what events hindered us. Thusly do we attempt not only to maintain our decision-making process, but to improve it.

In attempting to improve our daily interactions and behavior, with the goal of truly cooperative living, we meet three times a week to allow each individual to express their



sources of satisfaction and dissatisfaction. These after-dinner gatherings serve to reinforce our cooperative acts as well as heightening our awareness of behavior that is discouraging or irresponsible. As we become larger group regulation of the group's behavior becomes more difficult. However, if we are to continue to work toward our ideal of cooperative living, an allowance of collective evaluation and encouragement is essential. With each person taking the time to give a thoughtful contribution, the meetings become longer, but they also provide a valuable service by helping our increasingly diverse group to maintain contact and to work together in cooperation.

Another valuable tool for maintaining the group's sense of direction and for giving us a sense of where we are, is the series of meetings focusing on planning. Planning occurs every six months and lasts for about two weeks. Planning is an intense and exciting time for all of us at Dandelion. It

As a smaller community we were like a family. Now we must change our perceptions of the community.

is also a difficult and demanding time. The managers of all of the various community functions must first determine where we are in relation to where we want to be and then must project their opinions of where we, realistically, can get to in the proceeding six months. Since everyone at Dandelion is active in managing some aspect of the community, everyone is directly involved. Each individual is more or less attached to projects of sub-goals which, as a whole, must remain consistent with our primary goal. Our primary goal is exemplified in our growth strategy so that the focus during planning is on growth and development.

Growth, development and reorganization of the community require a lot of energy and time. The expansion of our business and the diversification of our industrial base take up a large chunk of our collective strength. The building of new facilities for incoming members is another major undertaking. Planning is difficult because we stop then to look at the scope of what we are working to accomplish. This stepping back, and the sudden view of the whole of it, is extremely valuable, but also frightening.

In the final stages of planning we work out how much money and time we will need to carry out our six-month plans. At this point we must come to terms with our limitations and prioritize accordingly. As we become larger, with each individual carrying their own set of interests and expectations, prioritization becomes more difficult. We must collectively decide into which areas we will place our money and energy. The common goal of community expansion then clarifies the muddle of priority. Only with this clear sense of the group's movement toward a common goal can we plan and prioritize cohesively. Although planning can be difficult, it serves to reawaken us to this sense of group direction and to invest our daily actions with purposefulness.

On a more personal level our growth strategy affects us deeply and we are responding to the living of it in fairly dramatic ways. On one day there is a clear sense of this group movement upward and outward which is laid out at planning and put down on paper. There is a wonderful energy and a closeness which can fill the day. On another day we seem fragmented, rushed and off-centre. We are many people trying to do many things rather than an integrated group trying to build and strengthen the unit. There is a continuous coming and going here. People go out to market our rope products or to work with other communities. There are visitors to the community; new faces and new personalities to be welcomed and settled in. There are pressures of family and friends not in community to divert the attention of the individual. All of this movement adds to the energy and noise level of the community. At times laughter seems to emanate from the walls of the mainhouse and the hand-holding ritual before dinner is full and rich. Still, living in the midst of a flow of people and within the demands of our goals causes tension and anxiety. There is a tremendous amount to be done. In a close group of committed people there is no escape from the immediacy of our living. There is no television, there is no sense of leaving it all behind at five o'clock and there is no indifference. The joy and the difficulty of our communal effort is always with us. We all care a lot.

Each one of us is responding to the group's purpose by issuing personal challenges to ourselves. We try to improve our behavior, our relationships, our work. We try to do things that we have never done before. We take on responsibility for various things, large and small. Our success or failure will directly affect the community, yet there is no lessening of support for the individual who finds they have taken on too much. We all have moments of anxiety and doubt. We falter with the influence and



uncertainty in ourselves and even in the community. We get angry at ourselves for not being all that we're trying to be. We have problems building that new bookshelf or cooking for thirty hungry people. We find tension in changing relationships. We miss friends or family who are not here with us. A lot of energy goes out to support people who are in need at any given time. In the individual's wilderness of depression there are all these people cultivating, planting and putting up signposts. There are always people willing to listen and to comfort when one is caught in a personal problem.

On one day there is a clear sense of group movement upward and outward . . . on another day we seem fragmented, rushed and off center.

Living through a demanding time of change and adaptation is made easier by the presence of the group. However, one person's doubt or tension can spread through the group. We are still small enough to feel these influences. We have set up a special time for furthering honesty in our relationships by sharing our fears and concerns. Personal Sharing Meetings serve this function and are an important manifestation of our belief in clarity and mutual support.

We are at an in between stage, where we are small enough that each person comes into close contact with all others, yet where there are too many people for us to have the time to fully interact with. This can be confusing. We do not always know where we stand with each other or what is happening to a friend. As a smaller community we were like a family. Now we must change our perceptions of the community and our expectations of each other to fit the growth that has occurred. We are large enough for interest groups to form around specific activities and for support groups to rally around specific individuals. We are small enough to feel the loss of an individual's energy or presence keenly. In many ways we are living in between large and small and though we live in the quiet of a farming community, we do not live quiet lives.

About half of the people living at Dandelion have been here for under twelve months and half of that group have been here for six months or less. Coming to live at Dandelion meant joining a group who live an alternative lifestyle. Thus, coming to Dandelion meant change and adaptation for all of us. Those who are joining us now will also go through the process of making an alternative way of being their own. When people decide that they would like to live with us they become provisional members for a period of six months or more. It will take six months for incoming members to fully understand and integrate themselves into the existing structure. Yet, during that time, through the collective decision-making process, the seasonal nature of our industry and the growing population of the community, the structure itself will change.

All of us live within the fluctuations, the comings and goings, of this unfolding dream. It is our flexibility and our adaptability as a group that allows for growth and that challenges us personally to deal with change. Recent members and long-term visitors can find the time of assimilation and acclimitization disorienting. Also, they may find it awkward to take advantage of the unannounced, yet very real, support system which feeds us love and acceptance when we need it most. For many people, coming to Dandelion, exploring our community, and finding space here, is a joyful and opening experience. However, expecting a lot from ourselves, perhaps we expect a lot from newcomers as well. Living within this constant movement we do not always perceive the needs of our in-coming members, although we try to make the workings of the community as clear as possible. We welcome visitors and accept many different kinds of people into our home. We are a noisy, friendly group and are genuinely interested in people approaching us. We don't always take the time to talk about change and how it affects us all. We don't, as yet, have a clear process for introducing new members to our growth strategy and the implications of the words therein. We don't always realize the implications of the growth strategy for ourselves, making it difficult to explain our growth and change to others.

Often, what we lack in clear understanding, we make up for in enthusiasm. Dandelion Community is growing larger. Our goals and aspirations are being realized.

Change within the context of the unfolding of a dream is the joyful change of self-realization. Work that holds meaning and purpose for the worker is the self-directed work of actualization. Living at Dandelion Community now is all of this and more. We're working through changes and growing together.

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





REACH

Reach is a free readers service of Communities magazine. Listings should be 50-150 words in length, typewriting 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.

Dondi, Twin Oaks

Conferences

☆Twin Oaks Community will be holding a Communal Living Week on July 1-8, 1983. The week will feature workshops on various aspects of communal life, an introduction to Twin Oaks and our 16 years of communal experience, as well as camping, swimming and hiking. With the help of Twin Oakers and 10-20 other participants, you will set up a temporary community. This involves communication, work distribution, money budgeting, and decision-making as well as other fundamentals of community building.

Total cost depends on how your group manages its money. Registration is \$35, with another \$30 to go into the group treasury for food and living expenses (unspent portion will be refunded). Please register as soon as possible!

**Carolyn — Communal Living Weeks
Twin Oaks Community**
RD 4, Box 169
Louisa, VA 23093
(703) 894-5126

☆The Center for Popular Economics, a non-profit educational organization located in Amherst, MA, is offering a week-long course in economics for activists in labor unions, women and minority organizations, tenants groups, media projects, the environmental movement, and other social change groups. There will be three one-week sessions of the Summer Institute for popular economics at Hampshire College in Amherst: July 10-16, July 31-August 6, and August 14-20. Topics covered include unemployment, inflation, the tax revolt, the U.S.

and the Third World, unions and labor markets, the economics of racism and sexism, occupational health and safety, the environment, runaway shops, and Reagonomics. The goal of the institute is to provide activists with economic knowledge and skills that will help them in their organizing and political work, and in combatting "New Right Economics". For more info, write:

C.P.E.
P.O. Box 785
Amherst, MA 01004

☆An open country space in which to explore how we can face crisis as challenge. Working from the perspective of psychosynthesis, a transpersonal approach which views the spiritual as present within human nature, we move from the experiential to the concrete using the resources of earth, air, fire, and water. Open year round between Burlington and Montreal. Write for summer program:

**Gissa Israel
Pigeon Hill**
St. Armand, Quebec
J0J 1T0
(514) 248-7756/248-2524

☆The 1983 Community Service Conference is scheduled for September 16-18 in Yellow Springs, Ohio. Our topic will be "Democracy in the Workplace: Worker Cooperatives as an Alternative for Local Community Empowerment" and will feature Wes Hare, Director of Twin Streams Educational Center in North Carolina, which provides adult education toward workplace democracy and worker empowerment.

A film produced by the BBC entitled "The Mondragon Experiment" will be shown Friday evening, the 16th. It describes the history and development of the system of educational and worker production cooperatives founded in 1956 in Mondragon, Spain, which has a membership of over 200,000.

For more information write:

Community Service, Inc.
P.O. Box 243
Yellow Springs, OH 45387
(513) 767-2161 or 767-1461

☆International Communes Festival, Scotland, August 26th to September 5th.

A celebration of the joys of communal living by communes around the world — Britain, France, Denmark, USA, Canada, Belgium, Norway, Sweden, Italy, Holland, Germany, Spain, New Zealand, Israel, Australia, Finland and elsewhere . . .

A meeting of people active in the alternative movements of their various countries exchanging experience on the successes and failures of many projects, including alternative technology, anti-psychiatry communities, Third World groups, peace movements, worker cooperatives, communal villages, etc.

This is the 5th International Communes Festival. We have built up a wide network of people active in the alternative movements of Europe and abroad. The network is coordinated by whatever group is organizing the festival. For more information, write:

Laurieston Hall
Castel Douglas, S.W.
Scotland *

Groups Looking

☆Womyn's household looking for housemates. Farm house in the heart of the country. Womyn who love animals and like farm related work. Rent or work options. Write to:

Caroline Schumaker
Box 151
Kendall, WI 54638

☆We own a small, 215 acre farm with earth sheltered homes for 5-6 family units. Ecology, peace-oriented. Contact:

Rock Ridge Community
Rte. 3
Dodgeville, WI 53533

☆ Friendly Homes retirement complex and workers production crews invite you. A co-op community founded March 1, 1982. 114 beautiful acres, organic health foods, 2 hour noon fellowship and meal, all generational, all are co-op members, democracy: 1 member = 1 vote. Spiritual but not sectarian, seniors pre-pay \$20,000 to \$30,000, refunded on departure, payroll deductions for workers. Money with a conservative interest, 0% to 6%. No radical 12% rate. Low interest makes borrowed money available for new enterprises like Friendly Homes. Land speculation is replaced with land trust in perpetuity.

Friendly Homes is an intentional community which is solar, delete of chemicals, pedestrian, has a clinic, no-till, lake for irrigation and fish and fun. Four crews divide the work, there's a shuttlebus for transportation, dry toilets and a goal of self reliance.

Friendly Homes

111 Bobolink
Berea, KY 40403
(606) 986-8000 (before 8 am)

☆ Springtree is a small, extended family type community, established in 1971. We now have 12 members and are seeking several more, a family or individuals. We live in the country (garden, orchard, bees, dairy, sheep, wood heat) 25 miles from Charlottesville.

We are a diverse group with no dominant ideology or charismatic leader. We govern by consensus and practice income sharing. Our ideal new members: a harmonious, energetic, loving couple with a child 4-6 years old. We would prefer open to long-term commitment, interest in ecological use of resources and homesteading skills, but are open to the adventure that new people are bound to bring. Write to us. Please send SASE.

Springtree Community

Route 2, Box 89
Scottsville, VA 24590

☆ For several years we have been creating a village based on self-reliance, cooperation, community, personal freedom and ownership. We have a large and beautiful place — over 1000 acres of pines, firs, oaks, and grassy meadows, with views of the valley, Columbia Hills, and Mt. Hood. We have done all the paperwork that keeps the bureaucracy happy. Several 'pioneers' have joined us in the exciting, but demanding, job of creating a community that is and will continue to be a satisfying place to live. Workshops and several houses are under construction — orchards and gardens have been planted.

Now we need more people to join us in making it all happen! We would like

people of all ages, with a variety of skills and the resources to become self-reliant.

This is not a commune, nor is it a religious community as such, though many recognize the importance of spiritual awareness in their lives. In this respect, as in all others, we stress individual freedom and responsibility.

We have the concepts, the land, a beginning, and knowledge and ideas we can pass along to help each person get started — the basis on which each can create his or her own situation in their quest for self-reliance, self-fulfillment, and community.

Will you be among those who build Ponderosa Village?

Ponderosa Village

Rt. 1, #17-30B
Goldendale, WA 98620
(509) 773-3902

☆ Neighbors looking for another neighbor (preferably with children) to buy one half of an eighty acre farm. For more details, write:

Stephanie Mendelson

Box 538 B, Rte 5
Renick, WV 24966 (SASE please)

☆ After looking for a portable community or group for several years and not finding any, we are attempting to start one.

The Portable Village seeks a blend of cooperation and independence. Member families will each have their own back-packable dwellings, separate from each other, but within hiking distance.

Presently we have nine members who have made a commitment. As soon as there are 20 members we will come together in a remote mountainous area.

For more information, please send a SASE to:

PVR

c/o LLL, POB 190
Philomath, OR 97370

☆ We are in the process of forming the Prairie-Life Cooperative. One of our many goals is financial security. We have several businesses in the works, grow most of our own food, and are working toward self-sufficiency. We are not hard core survivalists, but we feel we should be ready and able to deal with any crisis.

We believe in the Mother Earth philosophy; that is, respect for the laws of nature with a rational use of technology. Our lifestyle is holistic-healthful to body and mind. We seek harmony with nature and ourselves. Trust, self-respect, friendship, love and understanding are our goals.

We are seeking members who will fit in

with out goals. All religions, races, and lifestyles will be accepted, with none dominating. We seek people with skills, who can learn and have a desire to share the work load. To succeed, our cooperative must have the best effort of all involved.

The members will own the cooperative on a share basis. The members will run the cooperative and all will have equal status. Decisions are by consensus.

Currently we have 55 acres with two houses in and around Sinai, South Dakota. We chose this area because it is part of the breadbasket of the world, with a low population density.

Visitors are welcome, but please call or write first. For more information, write:

Lynne O'Neill

Box 499
Brookings, SD 57006
(605) 826-4147

People Looking

☆ I am a 43 year-old woman who has moved to the country as a way of choosing life. I am in the process of renovating a space which includes half of an old hotel (called a Bruideen in the Irish tradition) and an old country store (called "the studio") one hour from Montreal and Burlington. These resources are situated right in the middle of a small, bilingual, multi-cultural village of 18 households, no stores, a doctor, a mechanic, potters, weavers, artisans, farmers, forests, gardens, animals, growing things and growing people. Presently this space is offered as a non-denominational retreat centre for anyone needing time for reflection. I am open to visitors interested in exploring new models for community, spirituality, and politics. Write:

Rosemary Sullivan

Pigeon Hill Bruideen
Avenues arc-en-ciel
St. Armand, Quebec J0J 1T0

☆ We would like to form a community based on the good things in one strand of our Western tradition: Christian simple living of the Anabaptist vision with young families being the basic unit. People interested in modern technology (plastics, computers, TV, high-technology medicine) need not contact us. Basically the community will be like the Amish ones in refusing to participate in the destruction of the earth and the human spirit by modern technology, and in taking as its model early Christian community; but, unlike the Amish, it will not glorify ignorance and Calvinistic practices (like

banning musical instruments), nor will it have a patriarchal structure.

You must have some country skills or interest in organic gardening/farming, commitment to non-violence and ecology, and love for traditional arts, music, dance, and architecture. Contact:

John and Becky Angell
P.O. Box 7221
Winston-Salem, N.C. 27109

☆ Writing is an inherently solitary career, even if most writers must intermingle with society to obtain their material. However, collective living or working arrangements may suit and enhance the advancement of some writers. Chapel Hill, the home of the University of North Carolina, affords excellent library facilities, an active literary population and a somewhat central location on the Eastern Seaboard.

I am interested in trying to establish a communications collective there. While the details would be worked out collectively, I could see a collective facilitating the work of the writers by being a clearinghouse for marketing efforts, and a way of dividing costs such as word processing, dark room improvement and possibly the purchase and operation of a printing shop. Further, we could periodically carpool to Washington, D.C., political and government-story capitol of the world, or be supportive of the co-op movement as a whole, but if not, I must ask at least tolerance of my support. Lots of ideas are whirling in my head, but I'm being intentionally sketchy here because I want to hear your ideas. I have a personal computer-word processor, dark room equipment as well as some collective experience. If the idea appeals, please write:

Robert Thomason
107 Haled St.
Winston-Salem, NC 27107
(919) 777-8297

☆ We are 4-6 single women and 2 children interested in combining strength, money, etc., to form a living situation. As utility rates and general cost of living keep going up, it becomes harder for individuals to own/operate an independent home, not to speak of upkeep of the house and a yard.

We would be interested in any information on ground rules, insurance, finding suitable living quarters, etc., that you may share with us. Thank you.

Monna E. Monk
908 Illinois St.
Sheridan, WY 82801

☆ Hi! We are 33 (female) and 44 (male); tall, slender, liberated, open-minded, in-

dependent individuals committed to expanded family living, cooperative sharing, peer relationships, and an intentional community-based economy. We are looking for a serious person or persons, who in doing their homework find themselves ready to make a commitment to an expanded family kind of lifestyle.

Such person(s) would enjoy a holistic approach to living, a very rural setting, emotional/sexual intimacy and commitment among the adults, hard work, outdoors, animals, plants, and trees; shared parenting (perhaps leading to the development of an alternative form of education for children); the joy of family life, the fun of living, the enrichment of self and others.

We are looking for a couple with or without children, or a woman with or without children. Our home, Middle Earth, is 132 acres of hilly farm land evolving into a self-sufficient homestead. Music, crafts, books, fun, sharing and joy are very much a part of our daily lives. Middle Earth is located 1½ hours away from a major city that offers many cultural/educational opportunities. Our climate is very midwestern; all four seasons to enjoy. Both of us operate from a land trust point of view. Consequently, financial arrangements relative to sharing Middle Earth and our lives as an extended family are negotiable and will evolve as we get to know each other. Interested? Please call or write:

Denna Morris/Parker Moore
Middle Earth
1250 Sullivan Road
West Union, OH 45693
(513) 549-2241

☆ I am about to graduate from Cornell University and spend the summer traveling across the country and back. I have no firm future plans, but a lot of energy and creativity.

I hope to find a way to unite my personal and professional goals. I wish to find a cooperative, intentional community, and work in one of several areas: family planning (or more general health services); publishing, editing, or for any feminist organization or cause. Past experiences have prepared me for any one of these options. I lived and worked on kibbutz for four months, worked at summer camp for several summers, organized the 12-person house I currently live in, and am head buyer for the Ithaca Real Food Coop. Anyone with suggestions, especially of job or community situations, is encouraged to write:

Amy Sheon
4339 Sadaua
Toledo, OH 43623

☆ I am looking for new members for a commune I am forming in England. I am a trainee in homeopathy, and I want to gather together a number of people interested in natural healing, therapy, personal growth, etc. Children are welcome, as are non-sexist people of all ages from 0 to 100. I am in my 30's and am a single parent. I am asking for members and also for people to donate money if they're able. Contact:

Dianne Francis Rodriguez
11 Bridge Ave.
London, WG
England

☆ Twenty-five year old male wishes to join or start community, preferably in the Appalachian region. I am non-vegetarian and non-religious and of course non-violent. I am a hard worker and have had considerable experience farming, although mostly without livestock. My goal is to obtain economic self-sufficiency so myself and anyone sharing in the community won't have to worry about the economy. I hope to hear from existing communities.

Tom Bailey
535 4th Ave., Apt. 3
Huntington, WV 25701

☆ I'm Peter, 27, (by Saturn's reckoning), Taurus, year of the Ram, live in Boston, near statehouse. My home's a small room shielded from noisy Cambridge and Bowdoin St. by a cloister-like stairwell where I grow things. I'm a member of a tree farm with squash court and community hall of sorts. I'm also a church goer. Quaker, U.U., but shy from crowds. Am also a Zarastrian. I imagine a part-time community; an ashram of theists, an atheneum of friends. It could lead to something or just be a wonderful thing in itself. Hope to hear from you local people. Please write:

Peter Sibson
104 Charles St., #376
Boston, MA 02114

☆ Couple looking for communities to visit and set up health clinic. Wholistic oriented chiropractor and massage therapist looking for community areas to visit and set up a clinic. We are both emerging medical technicians and interested in alternative therapies and body work. Give us a call or drop a note at:

Dr. Gary Earl Goren
715 E. Locust St.
Milwaukee, WI 53212
(414) 263-7066

☆ I am a disabled male, self sufficient physically, emotionally and economically. Over the years I have learned that sharing, cooperation and community can be beneficial to us all. For me they have become major vehicles in coping with my bodily limitations. I am interested in communicating and meeting with folks participating in or interested in forming responsible nonmonogamous family relationships. Your experiences, feelings, and visions will be appreciated. Please contact me. I will be glad to reciprocate with information about myself.

Dan Wilson
1015 NE 14th Ave.
Gainesville, FA 32601

☆ Can some individual or group develop, manufacture and sell new products starting with just the new product idea alone? I am a senior citizen with several new product ideas but no experience. Would like a royalty for my share.
Love Joy Peace

K. Emmons
1720 S. King Ave.
Lakeland, FL 33803

Land

☆ Twin Oaks Community is selling the 87 acre property on which its Merion Branch was located. Situated in the mild climate of central Virginia's Piedmont area, the property is unmistakably rural, yet lies within 100 road miles of Washington, D.C., and less than 40 miles from Richmond. Most of the property is gently sloped woodland, bearing timber professionally estimated at excess of \$10,000. Of the approximately 10 acres which are presently cleared and tillable, the garden portion has been strictly organically managed for at least 8 years. The land adjoins a year-round creek, and abounds with deer and other wildlife.

Buildings on the property include a 6-bedroom house, large barn, and several small cabins (all with electricity) in addition to various sheds and outbuildings. The main house has an oil-fired, hot air furnace, 2 chimneys for woodstoves, gas kitchen range, kitchen sink, bathroom tub/shower and sink, a well, septic system, telephone, etc. The property fronts on paved, all-weather State Route 646.

We are asking \$65,000 for this property, complete, because of the two principal factors that hold down its otherwise greater value among potential middle-class purchasers: The highway frontage is short (less than 100 feet) and the house,

though structurally sound, (built ca 1930, extensively enlarged 1972) does need remodeling, including major plumbing work.

A communal group or other purchaser willing to accept those two principal liabilities can obtain an excellent value in this property by contacting:

Rob Jones
Twin Oaks Community
Louisa, VA 23093
(703) 894-5126

Opportunities

☆ Americans concerned about peace and nuclear issues will have an opportunity to visit Japan this summer on a two-week peace pilgrimage. They will join the World Conference on A & H Bombs organized by the Japanese peace and anti-nuclear movement in Hiroshima and Nagasaki August 6-9 and will hold special seminars and discussion with activists from Japan and other countries.

The group will also take time to explore Kyoto, Japan's ancient capital and spiritual center, and other places of cultural interest and natural beauty.

The Peace Pilgrimage will take place July 31 to August 13 with an extended stay possible. The cost from the West Coast is \$1750; some scholarships are available. Please inform Grassroots Tours that you learned of the Peace Pilgrimage from *Communities* magazine so one of our staff may join at a reduced cost. For information:

Grassroots Tours
1346 Connecticut Avenue, NW #533
Washington, D.C. 20036
(202) 293-6949

Help Wanted

☆ Bay Community School, an alternative, ungraded day school founded in 1969, is offering teaching positions for the school year 1983-1984. Our New York State chartered, non-profit school is located on the south shore of Long Island on 42 wooded acres. We are a small school with a low student-teacher ratio. Student ages range from 4-13 years.

We are seeking individuals who are committed to humanistic education and who are capable of teaching in an open environment. Previous experience in alternative education is preferred.

Salaries this year are \$4750 plus free room and utilities. We are expecting to

have an increase for next year. Teachers and Parents take collective responsibility for the administration of the school. Please contact:

Naomi Cohen, Hiring committee
Bay Community School
Box 172
Brookhaven, NY 11719
(516) 286-8026

☆ Staff Opening: Business Consultant for the Industrial Cooperative Association.

ICA is seeking a new staff member to deliver business and management assistance to worker cooperatives. The ICA is a non-profit technical assistance cooperative that organizes worker-owned and controlled enterprises throughout the U.S., with a concentration in the Northeast. The Business Consultant will report to the Field Services Director.

Qualifications: 1) MBA or equivalent training, two years of work experience, strengths in business planning and organizational development. Teaching or training experience will be preferred; 2) ability to work well with individuals from different racial and economic backgrounds; 3) commitment to workplace democracy; 4) willingness to travel. Considerable travel may be required. The ICA is especially interested in minority applicants and women. Starting salary is \$18,000 to \$20,000, depending upon qualifications and experience.

Contact:

Business Consultant Job Search
(Please send resume and cover letter)
249 Elm Street
Somerville, MA 02144

Publications

☆ *A Walden Two Experiment* by Kathleen Kinkade is a candid report of the first five years of Twin Oaks Community. To order, send \$7.50 to cover book and mailing costs to:

Book Sales
Twin Oaks Community
Louisa, VA 23093



RESOURCES

Well friends, an intra-staff miscommunication has caused the deadline for this column to catch me by surprise. I had hoped to do a lengthy series on alternative/new age music but alas that will have to wait for another time. If you have

any pertinent material (L.P.'s or books) please let me know.

Please note some of the resources (the ones without reviewer's name at the end) below were taken directly from publisher's press releases.

Hope you're having a great summer.

Gareth Branwyn
404 N. Nelson St.
Arlington, VA 22203
(703) 525-8169

Energy

NUCLEAR TIMES

298 Fifth Ave.
New York, NY 10001
Monthly. \$15/year

Nuclear Times, a newsmagazine about the anti-nuclear weapons movement, has begun monthly publication with its 32-page October issue. The magazine is the first of its kind, devoted exclusively to reporting on the grass-roots disarmament movement.

Written and edited by professional journalists, *Nuclear Times* is not affiliated with any political organization. It is therefore able to provide both in-depth and independent coverage of the personalities, events and issues comprising the growing anti-nuclear weapons movement.

The magazine was conceived by journalists and activists who have been concerned with disarmament issues for many years.

THE NEW ALCHEMY WATER PUMPING WINDMILL BOOK

Gary Hirshberg
Brick House Pub.
14 Essex St.
Andover, MA 01810
141 pages. \$8.95

This do-it-yourself construction guide to inexpensive water-pumping windmills offers comprehensive information on selecting, building and operating practical and attractive windmills. Written for homeowners or landowners who want to increase their independence of commercial power sources, this book offers advice on deciding if wind power will work for you, selecting the proper system, and choosing the best possible site.

Although their primary use is to provide water for domestic and agricultural needs, for family gardens or acres of fields, water pumpers can be adapted to many other uses such as air compression, aeration, grinding and threshing. They can be utilized whether the well is located outdoors or in the cellar.

Hirshberg gives complete plans and directions for building and installing the New Alchemy Sailing windmill, the product of over seven years research and field analysis, along with a discussion of the increasing economic value of windmills, the book also contains full instructions on maintenance. (On the right site a water pumper can pay for itself in less than four years.)

A WINDSTAR TOUR

Peggy Wrenn
Windstar Foundation
Box 178
Snomass, CO 81654
48 page booklet. \$5.00

A Windstar Tour is a new short book which describes and illustrates appropriate technologies at Windstar in Snomass, Colorado. Comprehensive and readable it introduces the philosophy, spirit, and technology of soft energy, or "living lightly" on the planet. Installed, operating examples of appropriate technology at Windstar include a wind generator, conservation methods, passive and active solar, wood and wood fuel production, biodynamic gardening, composting toilets, and biodome systems. Windstar demonstrates purposeful experiments like Buckminster Fuller's full scale deresonated tensegrity dome (erected at Windstar in 1982).

THE ENERGY ANSWER:

1982-2000
Richard C. Dorf
Brick House Publishing
34 Essex St.
Andover, MA 01810
107 pages. \$8.95

Richard C. Dorf, Professor of Electrical and Computer Engineering at the University of California, Davis, writes of the energy dilemma of technological innovation, development of existing energy sources, and prospects for the next two decades, 1982-2000.

He analyzes technological innovations and lays out the several stages essential to their adoption. As an example of the lag between the introduction of an innovative energy source and its wide-spread use, it took 40 years for coal use to increase from providing 10 percent of the nation's energy to 50 percent. Similarly, it took 40 years for petroleum and gas use to increase from 10 to 50 percent.

Professor Dorf analyzes existing energy sources: petroleum and natural gas; coal; nuclear fission; solar; biomass. His conclusion is that the "energy answer" is to be found in a combination of techniques: conservation; greater use of coal; continued exploitation of oil and gas; increased development of renewable sources; modest controlled use of nuclear fission; the development of new institutional and cultural arrangements. Exotic potential energy sources such as fusion and wave and tidal power, he argues, will not contribute significantly to the solution.

Here is a rare, carefully reasoned and pragmatic vision of our energy future in the United States.

Miscellaneous

MARIJUANA: YOUR LEGAL RIGHTS

Edited by Ralph Warner
Addison — Wesley
General Books Division
Reading, MA 01867
267 P.B. \$6.95

Growing, using, or transporting marijuana is still illegal. But 60 million people in this country smoke marijuana and it is a major cash crop in several states. Although the powers of the police are extensive, so are a person's rights. *Marijuana: Your Legal Rights*, by Attorney Richard Jay Moller, simply and clearly explains the legal rules and constitutional rights relating to marijuana. The Fourth

Amendment guarantees the right to be free from unreasonable searches and seizures; the Fifth sets forth the right to remain silent when accused of a crime. "By asserting these amendments, the chance of arrest and conviction for drug crimes can be reduced," states Attorney Moller.

Marijuana is a necessary guide for anyone who smokes or grows marijuana. It gives the straight facts on all the marijuana laws — what they are, how they differ from state to state, how they are applied in special situations, and how legal loopholes can work both for and against the accused. Using actual legal

cases to illustrate these points of law, Moller gives practical advice on how to avoid a warrantless search of home, garden, or even mail. He offers information on:

- wiretapping and entrapment;
- special searches, including airport, boat, and customs searches;
- marijuana in motor vehicles; and
- surveillance.

Marijuana: Your Legal Rights provides all the vital information marijuana users and growers need to guarantee their constitutional rights and protect their privacy and property.

Special Feature

THE NIGHT SKY

The Science and Anthropology of the Stars and Planets

Richard Grossinger
Sierra Club Books
530 Bush St., San Francisco, CA 94108
484 pages. Hardbound, \$16.95

"*The Night Sky* is a book about the stars, the planets and the creation — that is, about the attempt of our species to locate itself in the vast universe in which it has arisen. It is an account of the various myths, sciences, and other systems that have developed over the several million nights of our brief sojourn in this physical cosmos."

And so begins a book I've been waiting a long time to read. Having fantasized for years that one day a book would come along and excite the very foundations of my own search for meaning, I was overjoyed to read the above introduction and know that I'd found something... big! Although I didn't know what I was looking for in my dream book I knew I'd know when I found it. Several paragraphs into *The Night Sky* I knew what it was. I have been searching for reassurance that all the travelled avenues and apparent side tracks of my (and every else's) life was not all meaningless fragmentation — ideological schizophrenia. I wanted somehow to sew together, effectively synthesize my labyrinth of contradictory interests, from science (biology, astronomy, and space travel) in my early years, to metaphysics and philosophy in my adult life, into a wholeness that made sense. Richard Grossinger has done this. In the preface

he explains:

"This book shifts from one system of creationary events to another. None of them can be wholly right, but none of them is wrong either, for all are part of the universe and reflect it from within. What makes a particular system or image more or less interesting is how it engages us in understanding our own coming to be in this pool of light, how it somehow parts time to give us a glimpse of the beginning which our being contains."

The Night Sky is essentially a primitive work that seeks to unearth passions and gut level feelings. The writing of the work was a method of the author to explore and expose his own partially buried dreams and visions and he asks us to use the reading of it as a similar exercise: "They (referring to this book and a previous work, *Planet Medicine*) ask the reader to be active, to reach to the same level of paradox and disquiet in himself or herself, and work with the text in making a curative act of vision."

Anyone who is familiar with the eastern disciplines of Zen Archery and Kung Fu knows that they are not merely elaborate forms of target practice and self-defense. They are vehicles for the imparting of a philosophy of life (a vision of the universe) made applicable through the art form. And so it is with *The Night Sky*:

"This is an astronomy book not because the structure of stars and planets or the physics and geography of the heavens are its main subjects but because they stand both functionally and symbolically for its actual subject: the creation."

The bulk of the text is devoted to a re-evaluation of the history of astronomical thought, from the early Greeks, to the revolutionary discoveries of Galileo and Einstein, up to our modern theories and discoveries. Grossinger also delves into the other systems and philosophies that through the ages have attempted to explain stellar phenomena: astrology, alchemy, primitive mythology, and religion. Additional chapters also explore U.F.O.'s, extra-terrestrial life, science fiction, and the star theme in popular music and culture.

The basic premise of *The Night Sky* is that we have lost track of our cosmic identity as we have refined our understanding of celestial mechanics. The history of modern astronomy is, in some ways, a history of alienation. Not that we should abandon scientific knowledge for a reversion to primitivism. This would be foolish and is simply not possible. No, the beauty of this book is that it seeks to heal the wounds mutually inflicted between science and metaphysics. All systems of understanding are important in that each serves a different function and adds to the whole sense of who we are and where we are going. In re-discovering and cultivating our sense of cosmic destiny, myths and dreams are equally as important as telescopes and space probes.

Make no mistake about it, this is not a scientific (not even soft science) work and never pretends to be one. Richard Grossinger is a hopeless romantic and at times the book aches with the pains and passions of a poet. This style of divinity

misses the mark. The last chapters of the book suffer from lack of clear purpose and the writing becomes strained and pretentious. In general however Grossinger does a commendable job of attempting an almost impossible (and scary) task: stimulating collective visioning.

The Night Sky is actually the second book in a three volume trilogy. Volume one — *Planet Medicine* — deals with the history and anthropology of healing, including ancient medicine, non-Western therapeutics and the origins of contemporary holistic health. Volume three will explore the plant and animal life on earth . . . "not in the singular context of the cosmos but in the existential mystery of their own unsummoned shapes. [It] will include: the oceans and the beginnings of life; the genetic code and embryology; sexuality and the nature of man and woman; and then the entire realm of unconscious thought, especially symbols, the origin of language, and dreams." If Grossinger can work the same magic in his next book that he summons in *The Night Sky* what we may have here is the beginnings of a cosmic dialog — an emerging stellar vision that can unify and heal . . . at least for those of us who still have ears to hear and enough hope left to dream.

-Gareth

Design

VISUAL AWARENESS AND DESIGN: An Introductory Program in Perceptual Sensitivity, Conceptual Awareness, and Basic Design Skills

Philip Thiel
1981, 228 pages.
\$19.50 from University of Washington
Press
Seattle, Washington 98105

This is an academic design manual with plenty of heart. Thiel, professor of architecture at the University of Washington, presents a wholistic (without pretensions of such) program in developing what he calls visual literacy. Although *Visual Awareness and Design* applies mostly to two dimensional design, the acquired skills and awareness can be applied to any field where a working knowledge of design is appropriate. Sprinkled throughout the text is a sizeable body of quotes and excerpts from other scientists, philosophers and designers. And as every good little design book should be, it's filled with lots of nifty photos, diagrams, charts and drawings.

-Gareth

Music

EAR MAGAZINE EAST

Peter Wetzler, Editor
\$12/year (6 issues)
from New Wilderness Foundation, Inc.
325 Spring St. Rm. 208
New York, New York 10013

New Music, ambient music, soundscapes, experimental, and minimalist are all buzz words for the current trends in aural expression that traverse the regions between conventional music and noise, art and masturbation. *Ear* covers the spectrum of the unorthodox with periodic forays into more widely accepted musical forms. Older school musical wierdos like Philip Glass and John Cage appear in

articles and interviews along with the newer kids on the music-for-art's-sake block such as Laurie Anderson, Brian Eno, and Glenn Branda. Frequent, lengthy articles explore the social and spiritual impact of these artists and their work, and its relevance to other art media. Theme issues have covered music and media, women and music, and music and dance. The magazine is designed in late period punk/new wave with medium-to-high readability.

Looking to expand (or dissolve) your musical boundaries? Are you already an edge city listener? If so then *Ear* is (discordantly) playing your tune.

-Gareth

Health/Wellness

PHOENIX RISING

On Our Own
Box 7251, Station A
Toronto, Ontario M5W 1X9
Canada

Published by a collective of ex-psychiatric patients, *Phoenix Rising* is a superb — and inspiring! — example of what people can do when they band together. The magazine is an organ of On Our Own, a Toronto-based self help group, consisting of persons who have a psychiatric history, whether it be in an institution or as an out-patient.

Some readers, especially those in the mental health "helping" profession, might see On Our Own and, consequently, *Phoenix Rising*, as being too radical, too polemic, for their own good. In other words, the ex-patients who publish this quarterly are not afraid to take a stand, much less step on (professionals') toes.

Typically, the magazine has a wealth of exposes, most of which, while sensationally colored, are well documented by surveys, government reports, mental health workers, and ex-mental patients.

In the issue I examined (Vol. 2, No. 2), one ex-patient reports on the time she was transferred, without notice or explanation, from one institution to another: "So I was given 10 milligrams of liquid valium (this was on top of six other medications I had been put on) and off I went . . . The head nurse brought along two more 10 milligram tablets of valium which I was given on the way . . . As soon as I was

admitted . . . I was locked in a small, bare, cold room which they called the 'quiet' room. I say cold because the window was kept open from the outside and in November it starts getting quite cold" (page 5). The woman goes on to say that she was not allowed any clothing for a week, and that one morning she received a bloody nose from a male staff. Her crime? She did not make her bed.

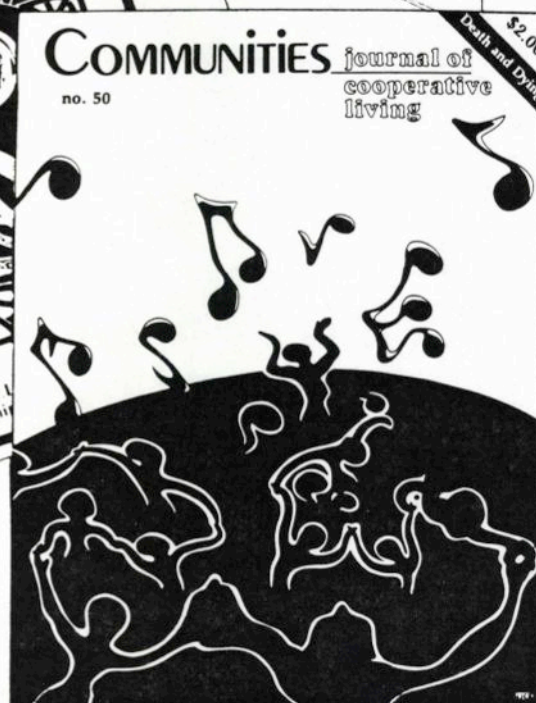
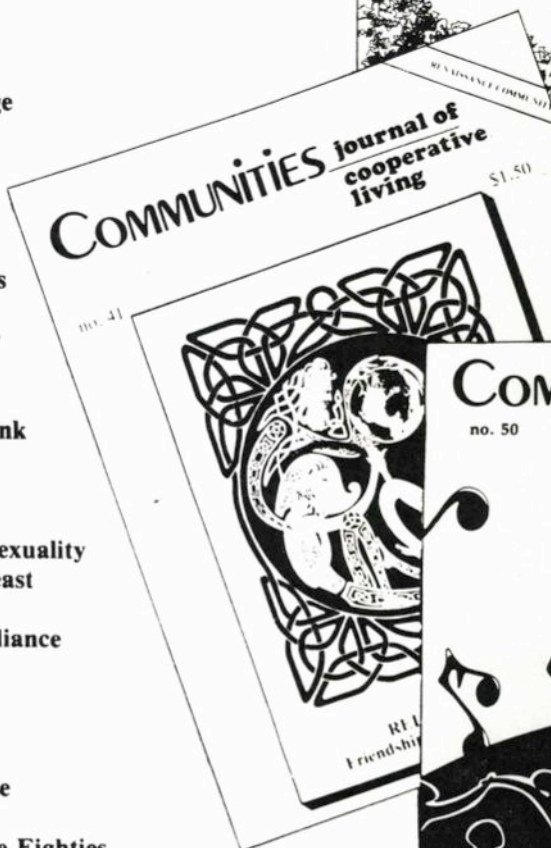
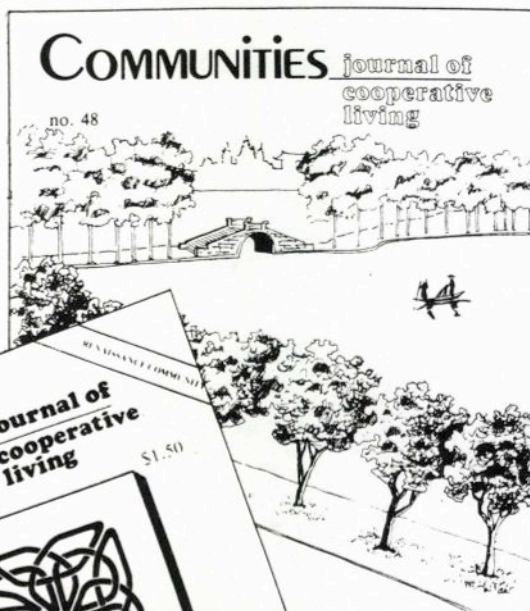
The magazine, however, proffers much more than personal experience stories. In addition to standard features (i.e., book reviews, profiles of groups and individuals, a column on prescribed drugs, and others), this issue contains a special 24 page insert on the treatment of problem children. Forced druggings and shock treatments, lack of facilities and qualified personnel, physical and psychological abuse, and various legal questions, are among the myriad issues discussed in this report. It is not pleasant, but for anyone concerned about the treatment of our children, it is necessary reading.

Although it may seem so at times, *Phoenix Rising* is not out to destroy the system; instead, its purpose is to point out how the psychiatric system often perpetuates, if not causes, mental illness. By educating the public through its exposes, the publishers hope to play a part in bringing about more effective and humanitarian treatment of those of us who suffer from mental illness.

Subscriptions are \$5.00/year (\$10.00 for institutions); prisoners and psychiatric inmates can receive the magazine free while confined.

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