

COMMUNITIES

journal of
cooperation

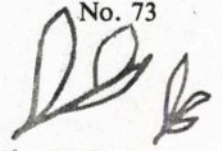
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No. 73



Helmshurg, Indiana
Chrysalis

Enterprise, Ontario, Can.
Pandelion



Cottage Grove, Oregon
Appletree



Swin Oaks
Louisa, Virginia

Rutledge, Missouri
Sandhill

Southern, Missouri
Eastwind



Ensenada, Baja California
Krutsio



Foundation for Feedback Learning
Staten Island, New York



Mettanokit
Greenfield, New Hampshire

Federation of
Egalitarian
Communities



10 Years
Together

BACK ISSUES COMMUNITIES Journal of Cooperative Living

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70. The Bay Area: The Berkeley Co-op, The Berkeley Free Clinic, The Cheeseboard Collective; Housing, Rainbow Collective, Processed Word, etc.

69. International communities: New Zealand, Belfast, England, France, South Africa, Holland, Brussels, and the Middle East.

68. Historic communities: the Shakers, Harmony, Zoar, Amana, the Mormons, Icarians, Fourierists and Llano.

67. Technology in community: Sunrise Ranch, Ponderosa Village, Windstar; High Wind and 100 Mile House.

66. The 1985/86 Directory of Intentional Communities; Builders of the Dawn; Stelle; Rainbow Gathering; Rainbow Farm and *Walden Two*-inspired communities.

65. Those amazing women at Greenham Air Force Base; The Farm; education for cooperation; justice in India; spiritual fraud; and Jubilee Partners.

64. Social notes on the Great Alternative Life Group in the Sky;

a story of old folks in a future world; Kerista on Kerista; the case against consensus; and kibbutz education.

63. Living in community: at Stelle, Twin Oaks, International Emissary Community; peace efforts in Nicaragua and the women's peace camp in Comiso Italy; and democratic management

62. Progressive economics and politics; co-op housing; new ideas for your community and kibbutz society.

61. Parenting, childcare and education; co-op housing; working for peace—Syracuse Cultural Workers Project; and planning in community.

60. Reviews of gatherings in '83; alternative economics; school co-ops.

57. Feminist Therapy; Women's Resources Distribution Company; designing your food coop; a report on the National Audubon Society's Expedition Institute; the cooperative vision in science fiction; and George Lakey's thoughts about abolishing war.

55. National Consumer Coop Bank, Workers' Trust, C.U.G.,

Coop America; Computers in the Coop; CCA Institute; and workplace democracy.

54. Interviews with Bright Morning Star and Meg Christian; peace work in Europe; a discussion with 5 social activists; community land trust; kibbutz society; and neighborhood development

53. Spiritual Communities— The Farm, Diomenon, The Planetary Network of Light, Sirius Community, The Abode of the Message, Ananda Lama Foundation, The Renaissance Community and Shambhala

52. The barter system; networking; Santa Cruz Women's Health Collective; International Commune Conference; worker ownership; East Wind Community; and leaving community.

51. Political paradigms for the eighties— Citizens party, Santa Monica, CA., Center for Community Change; feminist political strategies; coops in El Salvador; Dandelion Community

50. Death and Dying: George Lakey on cancer; Conn. Hospice; grieving, and a death at Twin Oaks

48. International— Cuba, China, India, El Salvador, England, Israel, Spain, and the U.S.A.

47. Stories— excerpts from a Twin Oaks story; Barwick; Bay Area Collective; Berkeley Collectives

43. Health and community business— tofu making; Heartland; Radical Psychiatry; neighborhood health clinic

41. Friendship, family and sexuality; Synergy, Renaissance Community and Kerista Village

40. Community development; women and money; trusteeship; and an interview with a woman builder

39. Women sharing; the Hutterites of 350 years ago; housewife to activist; Healing Waters gathering; and workplace democracy.

36. Community in British Columbia; kibbutz child rearing; Kerista Village; and a readers' survey.

35. The Consumer Cooperative Bank—the institute, the movement and the bank; income and resource sharing; new communities; Consumer and Cooperative Alliance; and the utopian heritage.

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Cooperation

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To Our Readers

This issue of *Communities* is a celebration of the tenth anniversary of the Federation of Egalitarian Communities. You may wonder, what is the Federation of Egalitarian Communities? I'll let the constitution speak for itself.

"We, the Federation, are a union of egalitarian communities which have joined together in our common struggle to create a lifestyle based on equality, cooperation, and harmony with the earth. We believe that this is a fundamentally different approach than that offered by most cultures throughout the world, and one that holds the promise of realizing the human potential lost through the unequal distribution of wealth, power, and opportunity. Our communities affirm the right of all people to equal access to knowledge, resources and decision-making.

It is the Federation's goal to reach the point where egalitarian communities are a well-known and accepted lifestyle, and readily available to all who seek it. The Federation intends to do this through forming, supporting, developing and promoting egalitarian communities to the greatest extent possible

The Federation also has seven basic principles that describe it well. Each of the Federation Communities:

1) holds its land, labor, and other resources in common;

2) assumes responsibility for the needs of its members, receiving the products of their labor and distributing these and all other goods equally, or according to need;

3) practices nonviolence;

4) uses a participatory form of government in which the members have either direct vote or the right of impeachment or overrule;

5) does not deny membership nor promote inequality among its members through discrimination on grounds of race, creed, class, age, sex, or sexual preference;

6) assumes responsibility for maintaining the availability of natural resources for present and future generations through ecologically-sound production and consumption;

7) has a strong commitment to group process and to developing and maintaining healthy interpersonal relations among its members."

I have to admit it sounds good to me. I live in a Federation community, as do all the authors represented in this issue.

We start off with a brief description of each of the communities, and then explore some of the issues in our lives.

Continued on page 59

Letters

After finishing the articles in this latest *Communities*, my first impulse was to start packing my bags. On sober reflection, I forced myself to remember that the theme of this inspiring issue is future intentional communities—no destination yet for me and the luggage. Yes, I know, there's Stelle, as well as many others listed in your directory. But the piece by Charles Mauch reflects perfectly the feelings of many of us who may not be ready to buy our tickets yet. I agree completely with his skillful summary of what is needed, and particularly would emphasize the *educational* aspects of such a community, with a real learning center, including research on better methods of teaching.

Let this be my letter of intent, then, as suggested by Ed Olson. The sticker on my trunk will say EPCOT OR BUST. (I've thought a lot about going to see Disney's "EPCOT," but the conclusion is always the same: what's the point? It's only an amusement park. What a shame its original promise was aborted.) Sincerely,

Glen Brennan, Ph.D.
Psychologist/Futurist

Continued on page 59

Appletree

Appletree is a small intentional community established in 1974 as a cooperative household in Colorado. In 1981 we moved to Oregon and began sharing income. The next year we joined the Federation of Egalitarian Communities. We now live on twenty-three acres of land near Cottage Grove, Oregon which we bought in December, 1984.

We are a home, a family, and a social change experiment. Our values concern, among other things, nonviolent behavior and ecology. Also, we are creating an alternative to the nuclear family that, we hope, will better meet the needs of individuals, and will serve as a building block of society.

We are improving our organic gardens and orchards, which we expect will eventually produce most of the vegetables, fruits, and nuts we consume. We intend to raise chickens for eggs and goats for milk. Half our land is in forest and will remain so. We expect to cut some timber in a way that maintains ecological balance and diversity.

We are members of the Agricultural and Community Trust and participate in the Oregon County Fair. We are becoming increasingly active in local politics and networking with the many collectives and like-minded people of the area.

Appletree currently does a variety of things to earn money. For some time our main income source has been a computer programming contract. However, the amount of work available on this contract has become

less. We are now shifting our emphasis to the development of specialized software. Although we would like computer programmers to join us we are equally open to people with other interests.

In addition to the computer work, we operate two small, craft industries; designing note cards and tie dying t-shirts. Two of us have part-time jobs outside the community. Another source is rental income from buildings on the property which are not now needed by the community.

We encourage members to find work they are interested in and avoid dull, repetitive jobs. Most community jobs are divided by preference, a few by rotation. We have a work credit system and give ourselves a small amount of spending money for each hour of work. We do not have a work quota.

When joining, members are not required to turn assets over to the community. Yet full members (a status achievable after living with us for a year) are expected to gradually donate their assets. Assets owned by individuals are frozen during membership, though returnable if membership is dropped.

We make major decisions by consensus and hold weekly meetings. When we reach a size of ten people we may incorporate planners and managers in our decision-making system.

We encourage open communication, nonaggressive expression of feelings, and mutual emotional support. We are free to pursue individual recreational, spiritual, and other interests, and may use our personal allowances for these. We eat organic food, mostly vegetarian, and live a simple lifestyle with no television.

We like to have visitors and want to increase our membership to between ten and twenty-five people. We want to raise more children at Appletree and are open to considering adults with children for new membership. Since we would like to be part of a cluster of communities, we may help the establishment of other communities in our area after we have grown to the maximum size we wish to be.

Communal living is full of the same challenges that all people face in their lives. Although not easier, we find it exciting, colorful, supportive, and satisfying.

Chrysalis

Chrysalis wishes to group gentle, cooperative, mature people together in an egalitarian community. We hope people living here will be willing to work hard and enjoy play, demonstrating a good sense of humor and joy in life and celebration.

Chrysalis exists on 20 acres of heavily wooded ridgeland in a beautiful, hilly part of southern Indiana. The edge of the property fronts a six-acre private lake. The land was originally a part of the 400-acre Kneadmore community, an association of homesteaders with whom Chrysalis continues to be affiliated. Though the setting is completely rural, we are located only 30 minutes from Bloomington, a city of 50,000, which includes the main campus of Indiana University.

Chrysalis has a geodesic dome and a one and one-half story house with kitchen facilities. We use wood and passive solar heating. We have built a

dairy-goat barn, have a chicken coop and rabbit shed. Several dormitory cabins and domes are planned with two presently in use.

Our government is fully participatory. Managers are assigned to each area of community responsibility and are subject to an override vote. Most decisions will be made by consensus.

We believe in living simply, paying attention to moderation and balance in our lives. All necessities are provided for full members. Small amounts of pocket change are available, plus a small vacation fund.

Though we value comfort and are open to using labor-saving technology, we are rural and backwoods, so it takes a certain pioneering spirit to live here happily.

We welcome children to our community. We expect the same traits that we do in adult members. It is especially important that children be flexible and able to adjust to community life. They should be self-directed and not easily bored. We believe that childcare is a community responsibility.

Membership is a process that begins with a minimum two-week

visitor period, continues with a six-month provisional membership period, and culminates in full membership. There is a clearness meeting with the whole community before entering each stage.

Provisional members are expected to loan their assets to the community and during the provisional or trial period people are expected to spend time studying and/or visiting another egalitarian community. An associate membership is possible for those unwilling or unable to consider full membership.

Dandelion

Dandelion is a community of people working together, sharing our resources, caring for each other, and working to create a cooperative, nonviolent, egalitarian and joyful way of life.

We want to create a culture that benefits all of its members, where we cooperate for the common good and where the happiness of one member is not incompatible with that of the others. We have found that emphasizing the things we like in our daily lives, rather than those we don't like, helps us to build an environment where we can work joyfully for ourselves and something in which we believe. We are committed to dealing with our problems openly and directly: to looking for constructive solutions rather than finding someone to blame.

We are a group of adults and children on a 50-acre farm in southeastern Ontario, about 30 miles from Kingston and just outside the village of Enterprise. We range in age from 16 to 65. Some of our members are French-speaking, and we are eager to increase our bilingualism.

Our land is rolling, on both sides of a quiet road, about half woods and half clear. There is a small stand of sugar maples, a cedar grove, and a stream with swampy banks. The soil is somewhat stony, but mostly tillable, and the gardens produce abundantly. The rest of the fields are sown to hay, pasture and grains.

We grow and raise a large percentage of our own food, including vegetables, grains, eggs and dairy products. We live in three buildings: a 14-room residence, a children's house with facilities for infants and toddlers, and an old frame farmhouse to which we have added a large office and porch. Our shop building houses our industries and woodworking, plus a small greenhouse. There are also dairy and storage barns, a chicken coop, various sheds and a swimming pool.

Our community came together at the 1974 Community Conference at Twin Oaks. Some of us had lived together in an urban cooperative in Ottawa, and were ready for a more long-term, intentional experiment in communal living. We spent the winter saving money, visiting established groups, planning our social and governmental structures, and writing our charter and by-laws. In February, 1975 we published the first issue of a bimonthly newsletter. That May we

incorporated as an Ontario cooperative, bought our farm and moved onto the land. For the first ten months the community was largely supported by "outside work," with some members working for wages in nearby towns.

We now support the community essentially through our own industries, primarily our handwoven rope hammocks and chairs, which we sell across Canada. Another large part of our labor goes into the farming operation which provides fresh, organically-produced food for our diet. We build our own buildings and heat them with wood from our own land. We handle our own accounting and management for the wholesale and retail hammock business. There are also possibilities for occasional outside work, and increasing interest in traditional crafts such as blacksmithing and woodworking.

Another important part of our life is working for social change, through peace and anti-nuclear groups, the women's movement, and our own network of communities and friends. We are available to speak to groups on various aspects of communal living, and occasionally hold conferences or workshops.

Sharing the work of the community, and doing work we enjoy

and find meaningful, are important sources of satisfaction for us. We try to employ the talents of all our members and give everyone opportunities to learn new skills. We have agreed to explain our work to any member who wants to learn it.

We share our work through a flexible labor credit system designed to distribute it as equally as possible and to maximize the enjoyable work of each member. The way we work does not reflect traditional gender work-roles. Our system encompasses everything from construction and childcare to housekeeping, hammock weaving and farm work. It helps us to organize our work and provides us with records that help in evaluating our efforts and planning for the future. Most of all, it lets us translate our belief in equality into practice, and leaves us secure in the knowledge that we are all doing our share.

Members who regularly work their quota, which ranges from 42 to 50 hours a week, earn about a month of vacation per year (more if they work over quota) plus a small weekly allowance.

We hold weekly community meetings to share ideas and feelings and to discuss community business. We usually reach decisions by consensus, with the full participation of all members. On those rare occasions when we cannot reach consensus, decisions are made by a majority of the full members.

Most day-to-day decisions are made by managers who have been given responsibility for various areas of community life such as health, garden, kitchen, hammocks, etc. Those of us who want to get involved can get as much of this kind of responsibility as we can handle; most members are managers of one or more areas.

Managers operate within money and labor budgets set by the community on a six-month basis. Managers receive no privileges for their work other than the satisfaction of doing the job and serving the

community. Any managerial decision may be appealed to the community by any member.

As we live and work closely with each other, how we get along affects both what we can accomplish and how much we can enjoy our lives together. Living in a communal group can be hard in the sense that people always have to be aware of the effect their behavior has on others.

These are some of the agreements we feel are important to the style and quality of life at Dandelion:

— We try to maintain a positive environment by talking about things we like and by positive behaviors like smiling, listening, and being affectionate. We try not to publicly grumble or gripe about things we don't like in the community, but instead take our complaints to the appropriate person.

— We try to clean up after ourselves and to return articles to their proper places.

— We try to be open and direct in our communication with each other and to be open to feedback.

— We try to avoid speaking negatively about other people in their absence or in the presence of a third party.

— We also try to be patient with the progress we are making, realizing that behaviors change in small steps and that we are creating an interpersonal environment we like—one step at a time.

We value our relationships with people outside the community, and cooperate extensively with our neighbors and with other communal groups. Our common values of equality, cooperation and nonviolence are basic to our beliefs and to our daily lives. We do not accept sexist or racist attitudes, prejudice against gays and lesbians or against people from other cultures, disrespect for animals, or abuse of the environment. Spiritual or religious practice is a personal matter so long as it does not conflict with the community's basic agreements.

Living and working together is recreation for us. We laugh, sing, dance, make music together and have special celebrations on the solstices and equinoxes. Our books, records and tapes entertain us, as well as the woods, fields and changing seasons. In summer we swim, hike and play volleyball; in winter we ski, snowshoe and skate on the pond. And we play basketball at the local school with



more hilarity than competition.

Dandelion survives happily without television. We feel its overall impact is detrimental to the development of a culture based on cooperation and equality. We listen to the radio, read aloud to each other and occasionally go to movies, concerts, plays, and benefits for social change groups in our area.

At Dandelion we raise our children communally, sharing the joys and responsibilities involved in their care and education.

The principle decision-makers and caretakers in our child program are the metas (from the Hebrew word "metapelet"), a group of committed childcare workers made up of both parents and non-parents.

Evenings are set aside for parents and other primary figures to spend time with individual children and maintain their close relationships, and there is ample room in the program for both parents and non-parents to interact with the children.

We are interested in expanding our children's program, but our ability to take in new children is limited by facilities and labor available. People with children who are considering living in community should contact us to find out what our current situation is.

There is more to the community than just creating a good life for ourselves. We want to see Dandelion and the communal movement grow, so that this life is available to all those who desire to live it. We want to have a diversity of friends, ideas and skills, and to be more effective by having more of us living and working together.

We are open to new members who are willing to abide by the agreements of the community. We welcome inquiries from anyone. Potential members must have visited for at least three weeks. Then they may be asked to join the community for a

provisional period. At this point we have a meeting to talk about our shared agreements, an individual's commitment and whether to accept them as members. If they are accepted, they sign an agreement with the community to abide by our bylaws, property code and other agreements.

Although there is no membership fee, the communal holding of property and income is essential to our belief in equality. All major property such as land, housing and vehicles is held in common, but small personal items kept in a person's room may remain private. When members join they may donate or lend their money or other assets to the community, or they may arrange to put them "in trust" where neither they nor the community have access to them. Most members choose to make their assets an "open loan" to the community, which is returned to the member if they leave.

During a member's provisional period, there is little distinction between full and provisional members, except that the latter have only a partial vote in community decisions, and may be asked to leave if the group feels their membership is detrimental. It is possible for a provisional member to become a full member after six months, providing that both the individual and the community are ready to make the fuller commitment to each other that such a change implies.

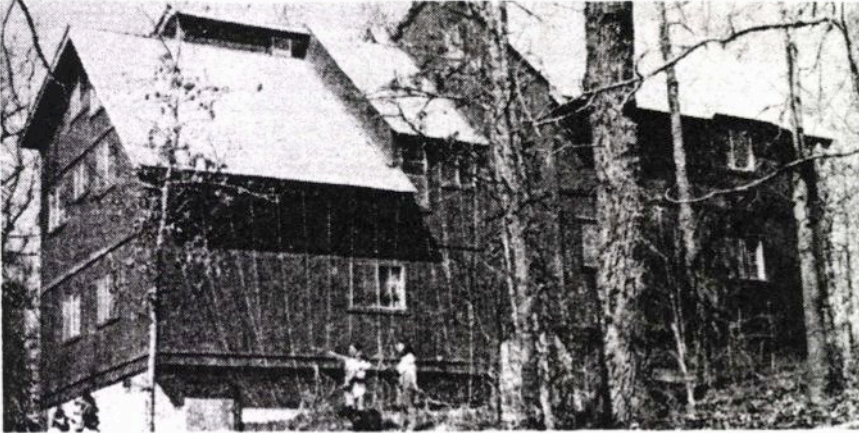
Associate membership is an option for someone who is not planning to live at the community full-time, but wishes to have an on-going involvement in and commitment to the community. Associate members are not obliged to loan or put in trust their assets, nor do they receive the material and economic benefits of provisional or full membership. To retain associate status, a person must be living at Dandelion for at least two months a year.

East Wind

Our community is located on 160 acres in the beautiful Ozark hills. We have about an acre and a half under cultivation for garden, as well as land for pastures and field crops. In addition, we lease 190 acres of government land. Bordered by Lick Creek, our land and the entire area around us is good for quiet walks and all manner of outdoor recreation: canoeing, caving, backpacking and swimming.

When we first moved to this land in May, 1974, all that greeted us was the original farmhouse, a drafty old barn, and a few outbuildings. We now use the house for food processing, laundry, medical rooms, and one of our living rooms. Since 1974, we have built a kitchen/dining building and four residences as well as industrial buildings. Other small structures provide space for such things as a T.V. room, music practice, community clothes storage, exercising, and a showerhouse. Our next building (now under construction) will be a children's house which will provide room for sixteen children.

We are presently about fifty-five people. Our oldest adult members are in their fifties, and we have eight children ranging in age from infant to eight years old. The care of our children is done by "metas" who choose child care as one of their main areas of work. There are usually three primary people (besides the metas) in the life of each child—the parents and one or two others chosen by the parents. In this way, similar to an extended family, we broaden the relationships available to the children and share the joys and burdens of parenting. We operate a small Montessori pre-school which children start at approximately two and a half



years of age. We also work with local families to run the Ozark Learning Center, a small self-paced alternative school for our older children.

Work is a very important part of our lives and one of our basic values is that everyone does a fair share. Members can choose work that's inside or out, done alone or with others, scheduled or not, mostly physical or mostly mental. Our labor quota is 48 hours a week and we guarantee ourselves three weeks vacation per year, with additional vacation available by working "over quota".

As a community, we do not dictate the religious, political, or social beliefs of our members as long as they don't violate the rights of others. Within that context, we are accepting of adults forming sexual and interpersonal relationships in any manner they choose.

Much of our recreation consists of simply being together and enjoying each other's company. We take walks, play music, and spend a lot of

time talking to one another. We have occasional coffeehouses where we share individual talents. We read and play cards, show videos and watch T.V., have parties and dances. We also take time off from work to celebrate Thanksgiving, "Land Day" (the anniversary of our moving to the land), and solstices and equinoxes.

Our foundation is our bylaws which set forth our purposes and ideals, and define the rights and obligations of membership. The bylaws allow for experimentation in our government, and after four years of having a Board of Planners, we switched to a form of democracy in which each full member has one vote. In its present form, the Board coordinates information, takes an active part in short and long-term planning, and makes emergency decisions. All members of the Board, business managers, most committee positions, and other miscellaneous managerships are elected through community balloting.

Mettanokit

Mettanokit Community is a group of people living together intentionally, creating a society which mirrors our true human nature as loving, cooperative, zestful, intelligent, creative human beings.

We live on fifteen acres of land in southern New Hampshire. While we have no organized religious creed or affiliation, we hold a strong vision of peace, and work towards ending oppression of human beings by human beings. Presently there are fourteen members. In addition, about as many former members create an "extended family" for us.

We support ourselves with various community owned businesses. All members are expected to work about fifty hours a week, with a flexible guideline of thirty hours on income producing projects and twenty hours of domestic work, including childcare, cooking, cleaning, and family meetings.

Our community businesses include:

— *Another Place Conference Center*. This is our educational arm. We use our facility to host our own conferences, and to rent to other organizations whose philosophies are similar to ours. A whole food catering service works to provide quality vegetarian for all conferences.

— *Fantasy Futons*. We manufacture and sell 100% cotton mattresses and also market related bedroom furniture.

— *Mettanokit Outreach*. This is a lecture, workshop and storytelling service which travels worldwide.

— *Story Stone*. Within the past year we began publishing a quarterly cassette magazine of children's stories.

— *Bell Studio*. This is a sophisticated recording studio

available to local musicians and storytellers.

— *New Edge*. This is a desktop publishing company which does typesetting, layout and design.

Major decisions are made by consensus. Regular family meetings happen weekly, and occasionally special meetings are called. Minor decisions are made by individuals, with responsibility for various aspects of community life delegated at family meetings. We are currently studying the use of consensus process among large groups and hope to continue to adapt our policy to fit our needs as we grow.

Parenting of our four children is shared by all community members. We work with local school authorities to homeschool our children, and consider carefully the quality of attention they get. We believe all "isms" in our culture (sexism, racism, classism) are built on ageism, and we work constantly to uplevel the quality of our time with our young people.

The children are welcome at all meetings and are included in decision-making processes when they wish. The resources that ten adults are able to provide our four young people ensure them a varied educational and cultural opportunity.

Although we are not in a hurry to grow, we welcome meeting new folks and are open to the possibility of new members. Interested persons are encouraged to schedule an initial visit of no more than a week to get a sense of the community. If they continue to be interested, a longer visit is planned when they are expected to participate fully in the work, meetings, and fun.

At the end of this visit they are assisted by a member of the community to call a meeting and propose the length of their next stay. Each person is treated in a unique way in keeping with their circumstances. The proposal is modified until it is satisfactory to everyone, or else it is refused. Community consensus is required.

The most important requirement is that a potential member understand and be in agreement with our covenant, especially around what we call "working things out". Conflicts, problems, and disagreements are expected to be turned to with good will for a "no-lose" solution that all

parties are willing to live with. This assumes a certain level of communication skill and self-empowerment. In addition, all members must agree to share cooking, childcare, house cleaning, and take responsibility for the ongoing welfare of the community.

Sandhill Farm

Our 63 rolling acres are located in the northeast corner of Missouri, about 35 miles east of Kirksville. Most of our land is woods, with about 25 cleared acres providing space for gardens, orchard, barnyard, cropland, hay ground, pasture and ponds.

We have three main buildings, all of which include both private living space and public space for work and recreation. One of the most appreciated features of our property

is a one-acre pond a short walk from the buildings. This secluded, spring-fed pond is great for cooling in the summer, a lively skate in the winter, or a quiet moment any time.

We spend most of our time and energy on the farm. No one has a regular off-farm job, though we occasionally work for neighbors. Most of our farm income is from selling sorghum syrup, honey, and a new herb business. We do not use a labor credit system, nor do we keep track of our labor. There is always work to be done and it is expected that everyone contribute, but it is up to the individual to select cos own work and set cos own pace.

We live closely with each other every day and what one person does often affects us all. We try to live in cooperation and with sensitivity. Major decisions are made by consensus, with others left to individual discretion. How we reach decisions is often as important as what we decide. With our small size we have no need for governing structures, except that some work areas have focalizers or managers to watch over them and see that things happen, or at least get worried about. Managers are selected by the group on the basis of interest and trust.

We spend a lot of time maintaining ourselves and enjoying the present. For example, we heat with wood which means both hard work and a warm cozy fire. We put a lot of energy into food, and communal



meals are often a high point of the day. We also enjoy studying, going to conferences and gatherings, traveling, and trying new things. We are experimenting in such areas as solar energy, earth-sheltered housing, organic soil building, blacksmithing, and self-healing techniques.

We often have high times together making sorghum syrup, ice skating, picking up hay, extracting honey, shelling peas, or taking a solstice walk. We all share in childcare, tending our animals, (cows, chickens, turkeys, ducks, and geese), cooking, laundry, and cleaning. Other things we do, such as construction, reading, cutting firewood, gardening, playing music, running a mail order book service, and networking, are based on a combination of individual interest and group need.

Children entered our lives in 1981.

Since our group is small, everyone has been involved. We are excited about Sandhill as a place for children to grow up, to be loved and nurtured, naturally stimulated and challenged. We school our children at home and try to include them in the flow of the adults' lives as much as we can.

We have recently put a lot of community effort into building a new residence that makes it possible for Sandhill to accept new members. We are particularly looking forward to having more children here.

We are unsure of how large we wish to grow, because we value the intimacy of family and expect to remain relatively small. Yet we are actively a part of the larger community movement, and are learning to share more of what we have and are with the local community.

is required to work 45-49 hours a week, which includes domestic as well as income-producing labor.

We operate on an honor based labor system in which all work is valued at one credit an hour. Its purpose is to organize work and share it equitably, giving each member as much flexibility and choice as possible. Work is not seen as just a means to an end. We try to make it an enjoyable part of our lives. The integration of work and play is a key to community life, and lines between the two are sometimes hard to discern. However, we don't define ourselves solely by the work we do.

Twin Oaks uses a planner-manager system of government adapted from the Utopian novel *Walden Two* by B.F. Skinner. We have three planners with 18-month staggered terms. They focus the community's attention on issues and their long range effects. Members normally make their will felt through personal conversations, polls, the community bulletin board, and open community meetings held every Friday afternoon. Although the planners have overall executive power, the input they receive through these means is essential to their decision making.

Our bylaws provide for the overrule of the planners' decisions by a simple majority of the member population, but this is an unusual occurrence.

Manager's are responsible for all areas of community life that need supervision. There are dozens of such positions covering large and small areas. Sometimes areas are managed by a team or crew.

The entire community is encouraged to participate in annual economic planning each fall. This process is coordinated by the planners. Planners and managers get no privileges through their positions, only the satisfaction of getting things done and effectively serving the community.

Similar to the Israeli kibbutz, childcare is provided by a group of

Twin Oaks

We are approximately 70 adults and 12 children ranging in age from newborn to sixty years. We are an eclectic group that follows a wide array of beliefs and behaviors, all functioning within a communal setting of cooperation and tolerance.

Our 400 acres of land borders the South Anna River and includes creeks, woods, hilly pastures and farm land. Over the years we have built five large residences, a children's building, a kitchen-dining complex, three industrial buildings and various other structures.

Twin Oaks is an economically self-sufficient community. We support ourselves primarily through the manufacture of handcrafted hammocks and chairs. We also have an indexing business, and a few other small industries. We hope to develop other businesses which will diversify our economic base, produce more basic goods and services, and provide

more professional work opportunities. We strive for self-sufficiency within our industries as well; we buy raw wood and dry and cut it for our chair industry. We buy fiber that we make into rope for our hammocks and chairs.

We produce much of our own food (vegetables, dairy products, meat, fruit, and some grains). Although our meals are often vegetarian, both meat eaters and vegetarians agree that our food is excellent. We also provide for ourselves such services as auto maintenance, construction, and sewage treatment. Most of our buildings are solar and/or wood heated.

All members can have several different jobs here. We particularly seek to break down the limitations of stereotypical gender roles, by opening work areas to men and women that are not easily accessible to them outside of community. Each member

caring and committed members called "metas" who are sometimes but not always parents. The younger children live together in their own residence.

We have found that communal childcare offers many advantages to our lives and the lives of our children. Parents who do not wish to work full time in childcare are free to pursue other work and thereby enable others to share the pleasures and responsibilities of raising children. Children in turn are surrounded by adults who find fulfillment in childcare, and their emotional and economic security has a broader base than just the relationship with two adults. Children start lessons around the age of three. Both Montessori and open classroom methods shape the existing curriculum. The integration of school and life is an important value and is reflected in the educational program. We also participate in and help run a parent co-op school a few miles away.

Twin Oaks members find many ways to amuse themselves, from weaving hammocks together to singing in the choir. Our holidays are social high points of the year. We

celebrate the change of season and the anniversary of the founding of the community. The South Anna River provides swimming, fishing, and boating possibilities. Our woods are beautiful and marked trails provide hours of enjoyment.

We often go to Washington D.C., Richmond, and other cities for cultural and political events, or just for fun. Sometimes we travel to the mountains or to the beach. Our darkrooms, pottery studio, and woodshop are available for individual use. We have a large collection of books, records, and tapes, and show videos and movies every week. We are connected to the world at large via radio, newspapers and magazines. We don't have a television because that would be too big a pipeline for just those values and products we are trying to avoid.

Although we are a community, we are aware of the necessity of occasional solitude and intimacy. Much of this is provided by our rural setting, but we also have a retreat cabin, a teepee, a sweat hut, and many living rooms available for individual use.

Krutsio

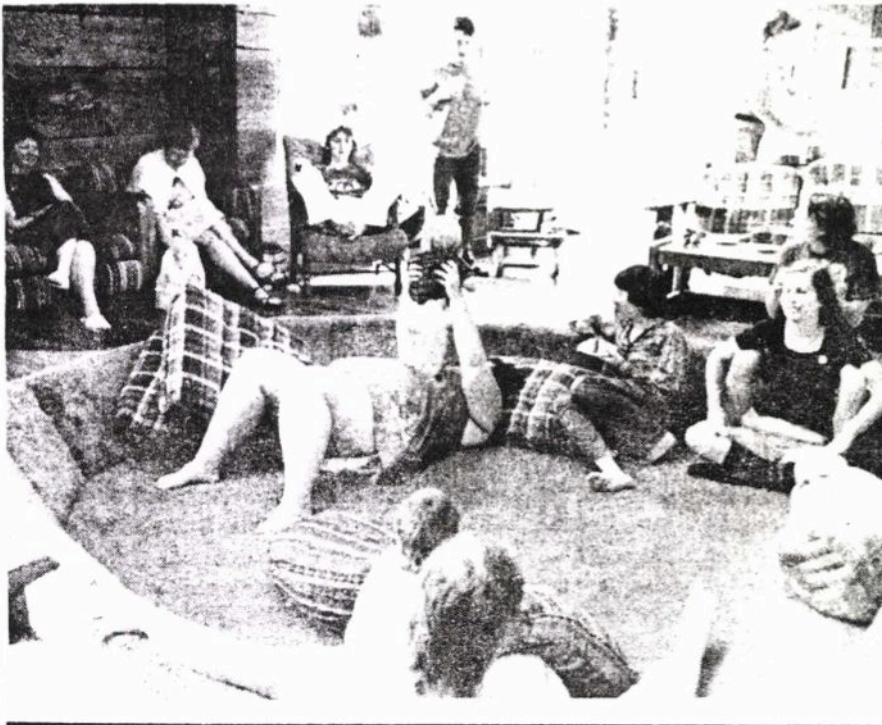
(Editor's note: The author is a founding member of Krutsio, an egalitarian community on the Pacific coast of Baja California, Mexico. Krutsio has been in existence since 1976, and is a community in dialogue with the Federation.

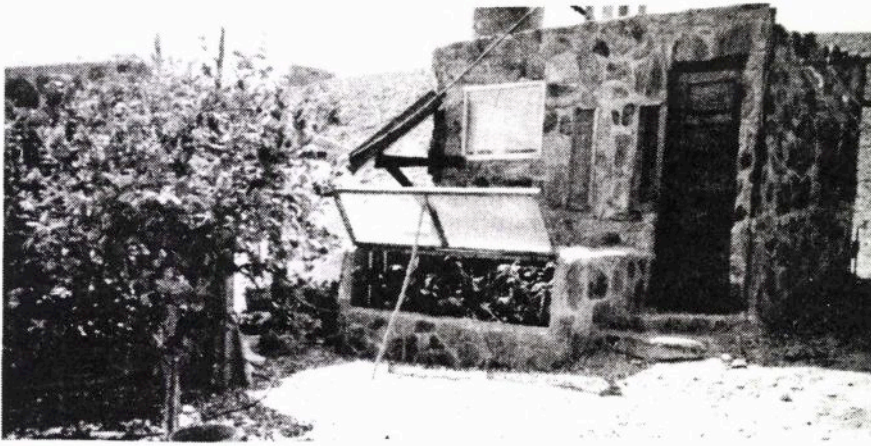
Although it is situated in a very isolated, rural area, Krutsio was founded on the dream of the community growing into a cellular village that could serve as a healthy, cooperative model for future development throughout the world. Networking with other communities is an important value, and all of the members speak Esperanto as a second language. The community also operates and daily monitors a ham radio.

The name Krutsio is Esperanto for "place of crossing" and it is the community's vision that it will be a place where the existing, dominant culture crosses into a new, healthier one. That is, a place where all aspects of modern culture are carefully studied, the beneficial ones being selected out and integrated into a new way of life. In turn, the community strives to disseminate information about this new way of life to all.

For several reasons, Krutsio represents an extreme within the Federation, both because of its remoteness and its size. At Krutsio we sometimes joke, saying that we are a family with a community complex.

Although the complex is very strong, our base adult population has never gone far beyond the couple of founders. The population pattern until now has been a succession of waves where new provisional members join, but then experience loneliness and leave before other people come. Our two children, a 4½





year old girl and a 2½ year old boy, have been the happy, unavoidable exception.

Krutsio is also an extreme because of its location. It is situated in the middle of a desert with a very low population density. Our closest neighbors, a family, are nine miles away.

In contrast to the other Federation

communities which are located in the U.S. and Canada, Krutsio is in Mexico, a third world country.

The isolation, the desert and the poverty of the country enforce a measure of frugality on the community that is also an extreme within the Federation.

Yet despite its smallness and geographical isolation, Krutsio

embraces a global commitment. We practice Esperanto as an international neutral language, and we try to develop a world-wide perspective on social and political issues.

Although Krutsio is in some ways an extreme within the Federation it is still part of the family. It shares the same blood of cooperation, equality, peacefulness, and respect for nature. Being part of a big family gives us a delicious feeling of strength and solidarity.

At the same time, I feel that Krutsio can be a stimulus for the other communities to develop a more international community movement. To us, the community movement is very important. We are concerned about the coming failure of modern industrial society, and are trying to prepare for the transition to a new way. I see the new communities of today as the cautious mammals just before the dinosaurs collapsed.

Foundation for Feedback Learning

About 30 of us live in three adjacent houses, and many of us work in two commercial buildings nearby, in a lower middle income integrated neighborhood in Staten Island, New York. Because of our commitment to open communication, our work with behavior feedback, and our proximity to Manhattan, we may be the only community of our kind.

We seem to offer new, stimulating, and sometimes extraordinary experiences to everyone that gets involved, although as far as we know, we break none of the commonly accepted moral, social or economic norms. Still, what we do and the way we do it really is uncommon. We talk to each other all the time about what's happening, and hold back as little as we can of either fact or emotion. Our commitment is to get as close as possible to full disclosure and

full response to everything disclosed. Getting as close as possible to each other has even higher priority.

So far we have succeeded in creating a very comfortable, attractive, stimulating, and yet secure setting for our experiment. Our five buildings, gardens, businesses, projects, and day to day living events, work very well despite inexperience, and lots of mistakes. Our businesses include a store that sells new and recycled everything, at as low a cost as possible. Things are marketed on consignment for over 100 people in the neighborhood. Plans are to produce clothing and to wholesale several items in the future. Furniture is produced, refinished and sold in another building. An adjacent lot is being used as a flea market. These enterprises generate about 1/3 of our income. They are expected to expand

to cover all of our needs eventually.

Three distinct populations live together in our community.

1. The core group consists of five men and five women with a wide range of ages, backgrounds and skills. We consider ourselves more a family than a community, love each other deeply, and plan to spend the rest of our lives together. All of our resources are pooled, and we have committed ourselves to doing whatever has to be done to achieve our purposes.

About half the core group works outside the community and supplies about 1/3 of our total income. Our dependence on this financial source has been decreasing and we expect that trend to continue. Our agreement is to try to support whatever career or non-income producing activity individuals choose to pursue.



At present our projects include developing new feedback methods for learning English as a second language; health education programs that are also based on feedback learning principles; and a neighborhood clean-up and beautification program, that has just won the 1986 Molly Parnis "Dress Up Your Neighborhood" contest. We have plans for the use of video-taping, computers, and bio-feedback, in innovative approaches to learning.

2. The second group consists of up to ten people who live and work with us. Besides the basics, they are entitled to whatever training they have interest in and any other help we are able to provide. Some of these people will eventually join the core group.

3. A third group of from eight to twelve people just live with us because they are interested in some form of training, or because they like it here. They each contribute about \$500.00 a month, to cover their costs. Another $\frac{1}{3}$ of our income is generated by these training fees.

This flow of non-core group residents keeps us in touch with the

world's realities. Living intimately with people who have a range of backgrounds, opinions, and prejudices has created a world in microcosm. We are succeeding in getting along well, in spite of our differences, while enriching our lives because of them. Residents are not required, or we hope pressured, to engage in any of our conversations or activities, but they are welcome to join them if they want to.

Our major occupation is learning what we can about the learning process itself. This follows from our conviction that learning is the machinery of behavior of change, and our interest in self-change as a lifestyle. We start with the belief that good receptivity for accurate, on-the-spot behavior feedback will unlock unused potential for better functioning. An indispensable first step in this process, is becoming able to talk to each other truthfully, without pain, particularly when plans or problems surface. There seems no other way that feedback can be made available, and ideas exchanged. Unfortunately, that can't happen until each of us becomes much more aware of our own thoughts and

feelings, so that it is possible to share them. Such awareness, however, is usually blocked by assumptions of vulnerability and threat. We put a lot of time and effort into learning how to let go of these feelings, because there seems no other way to really welcome new information. These are not easy tasks. When faced with criticism or opposition, however constructive, it is common to feel endangered. At such times it is difficult to move beyond the unintelligent, unloving, unfruitful, instantaneous "fight-or-flight" response that is so engrained in all of us.

Involving ourselves with these things to the extent that we do, has paid off in a slow but steady improvement in capacity to think, individually and collectively, to care, and to cooperate in the management of difficult situations. We are convinced that our species is capable of more love, pleasure, creativity, cooperative and yet autonomous problem-solving, than anyone has yet seen. Actualizing these qualities is not a luxury. It seems the only workable alternative to aggression; an alternative that all of us crave. World survival may depend on it. Our premise is that if each of us learns how to better think and love as individuals; it will become possible to cooperate as responsible, self-governing units. Based on these expectations, we are attempting to produce a small model of an economically viable, sane society, shaped by the people it shapes. Perhaps it will even be a happy one.

These are our goals, and we are nowhere near them yet. Each of us is still more caught up with the need for approval and the fear of disapproval, than with a search for truth, love, or even happiness. Our progress is impeded by motivation that is often based more on competitive urges, than on loving desire for a better quality of life. The fate of the world is rarely given high priority in anybody's consciousness.

Continued on page 63.

A Caring Society

*This was passed
as a resolution at
an East Wind
Community
meeting by a
majority vote.*

To be a caring society, we will develop and maintain an approach to life in which:

1. **We treat each other with respect.** Instead of classifying anyone on the basis of some "ism" (racism, sexism, ageism, classism, etc.) we look for the individual worth in each human being we interact with.
 2. **We're sensitive to each other's feelings.** We pay attention to where our fellow communitarians are at, take their needs into account, and give them supportive attention when they're down. We make a special effort to get to know new people and make them feel at home.
 3. **We give each other a good supply of "warm fuzzies".** We express appreciation and give plenty of positive feedback. We desexualize affection in our minds so we can freely hug, hold hands, and otherwise physically express warmth and caring.
 4. **We handle conflicts with respect and regard for each other.** When in conflict with someone, we try to work it through with that person (with the help of a mediator, if necessary) instead of letting it fester. We avoid both public yelling at our "adversary" and private downers on co. We give negative feedback gently and with respect; we receive it openly and with honest consideration.
 5. **We're thoughtful of each other.** We try to avoid doing things that would make extra work for someone, and instead to do our best to lighten the work load of others. We each take responsibility for our own possessions, and clean up our own messes.
 6. **We each take full responsibility for our share of the work load.** We're careful not to cop out on a responsibility and leave our fellow communitarians to suffer because it isn't done. We're willing to help without reward, because we know that helping each other makes it easier for all of us.
 7. **We're careful to conserve our common resources.** We're alert for ways we can save energy; we take good care of tools, we drive as if we had to pay for our own repairs. We guide our actions by the knowledge that wasting causes us all more work.
 8. **We take pride in our community and in what we do for it.** We strive for quality in our work and in our lives. We keep our agreements clear and strong. Instead of complaining about community's shortcomings we put our energy into actualizing it's best potential.
- We realize that the only way we can have a caring society such as this is for each of us, individually, to do our best to live up to these ideals. We know that none of us is perfect, but we believe a society of mutual caring is worth striving for in spite of our failings, and that we can forgive and help each other. □





Bean Sprout

BY ANN SHRADER

I have had most of my needs met in community the last seven years. As my feelings evolved about wanting to bear and raise a child, I realized that I needed the support of community in this process. I also grew to believe that community could be a very nurturing environment for a child. Sandhill Farm, a small, rural intentional community, has been that place and that promise for me. And this is where Ceilee "Bean" Sandhill began.

Most of us were in on the birth from conception. We celebrated with a popcorn party after Laird* and I made love one May evening during my fertile phase. It was fun to hope and speculate when I noticed little signs that a baby was indeed growing inside me. Even after it was officially confirmed that I was pregnant, some of us were amazed that it had happened so quickly and happily. There wasn't much to watch at first, but people were getting into sympathetic food cravings and afternoon naps. Claudia took pictures of my little bulge that was beginning to look big to us. Everyone made cos guess

before I went to the doctor to be weighed. One day I brought home a watermelon to celebrate hearing the fetal heartbeat.

None of us had previously been much involved with pregnancy. I felt good sharing the experience with my "family." What was new and exciting to me was just as new to them. Everyone took turns feeling the fetus (nicknamed "Beanus") kick. I didn't bore any one person too much because I had so many people to turn to. Eventually most everyone heard Beanus's heartbeat and felt cos position in my uterus. At times, though, I felt incredibly lonely. Even though my Sandhill family was supportive of my condition, I couldn't help but feel quite different from everyone I was living with. Only I had this baby growing inside me. Only I had made the kind of commitment I had made by becoming pregnant. I couldn't forget these things for more than a couple minutes. I was changing dramatically and fundamentally. How would my relationships with others change in

against us all the time.

Coldness to newcomers. It is the bigger communities that struggle with this one. Both community thinkers and prospective members should realize that this is a situation that nobody wants and nobody intends. It just happens, and it is devastating to community recruitment goals. It is a selector that works in two ways: It selects for those people who have the social skills to get past it and find their way into the hearts of the members. But it selects, also, for those who are accustomed to being ignored, who are accustomed to rejection, or who don't really like people. Such people only occasionally make happy members. The real problem is that coldness selects against really good people who would, if they found friendliness, be inclined to join, but who are appalled by what they consider bad manners, or hurt by what they interpret as rejection, and frequently leave within the first 24 hours without even looking any further.

The presence of people with emotional problems. This is a sticky one. The community accepts a person of borderline emotional stability, feeling that it can in many ways be a non-threatening therapeutic environment. Which of us would not, if we could, extend a hand to help those less fortunate than ourselves? If we are successful with one such shaky soul, we grow confident and accept another, and perhaps a third. Then prospective members come along and instead of seeing us as a community strong enough to be able to allow these folks to function happily, they see us as a place where, if they joined, they would have to "live with a bunch of crazy people". This problem is particularly acute if the visitor program is weak and the newcomers see more of the conspicuous emotionally troubled than they do of the stronger core members.

Long-term members are affected by selectors, too, but for them the selectors are more subtle. The long-term members look not at what the situation is right now, but at what they believe it is becoming. They look



at trends; they feed on hope. It is typically these members who favor child facilities, larger private spaces, better vacations, and other items of a high material standard. It is not that they are unwilling to pioneer; it is that they have already pioneered and have struggled in the hope for a better life. Unless they see some of the fruit of their labor, unless they see reasonable progress toward their dreams, they will become discouraged and leave.

Since the communities do not have unlimited resources, it is worthwhile for them to keep the idea of selectors in mind while they make choices with the resources they do have. What does the community need most this year? Is it in danger of losing several long-term people who could be kept happy if they saw clear progress in meaningful issues? Or is the population so dangerously low that it is urgent to take in promising new people as fast as they can be found? Or, if both conditions prevail at the same time, which is more important? The effectiveness of the decision the community makes at such crisis points may well be a matter of which selectors are most in evidence.

What the prospective member or visitor needs to remember about selectors is that some of the most striking features of a community may well be superficial, accidental, temporary, or even false. I heard of a visitor whose first meal in the

community consisted in its entirety of jello with Cheerios in it. Who knows what factors caused that dish to be served, but it probably wasn't a community decision, or even a norm. Bad food, crying children, loud music, lack of safety consciousness, dirty bathrooms, poorly maintained buildings, and the like are discouraging, but they probably do not represent community goals and beliefs, and they may not even be a fair basis on which to judge the quality of the members. Most likely they are caused by having too many tasks for too few members to cover. It is a good idea to talk to people who have been in the community for more than a year, especially to those who are deeply involved in the community's central directions. How do your ideas fit with theirs? How welcome would your energy be toward the correction of conditions you find offensive? These are likely to be better indicators of your chances of happiness than the superficial things that strike the eye the first day.

So the moral of all this is twofold. To the communities: we must watch our selectors. Are we putting out the message we mean? Are we selecting for the people we need, or accidentally selecting against them? and to the visitors: Look past the superficial. Communities are complex organisms, and simple messages are almost always wrong. □

EAST WIND'S CHILDREN'S

After some tough times, the East Wind Children's program is rolling again. It seems like we hit bottom in 1984 when we added 3 infants and 2 older children to our program, had inadequate space, and lost a number of metas (childcare workers). We have also struggled with defining roles of metas, parents and the Child Board (an advisory group).

Since then, we have changed the structure of the program to include a general manager. We've only had one short-term manager, so it hasn't had much impact yet, but another one is about to start. The idea is to have one person in charge of picking up all the loose ends left by group decision-making.

In the last year, we've also had a number of meetings with metas, helpers and parents to discuss the program. This is a positive step in acknowledging that we all share responsibility for the kids rather than have it be up to a few metas to make the program work. This larger group asked Taylor from Twin Oaks to come and do facilitation for us, and after that we created the meta-training process, a new family-orientation process, and started to work on redefining metas and other childcare workers.

The most exciting news, though, is that we're growing again. We have

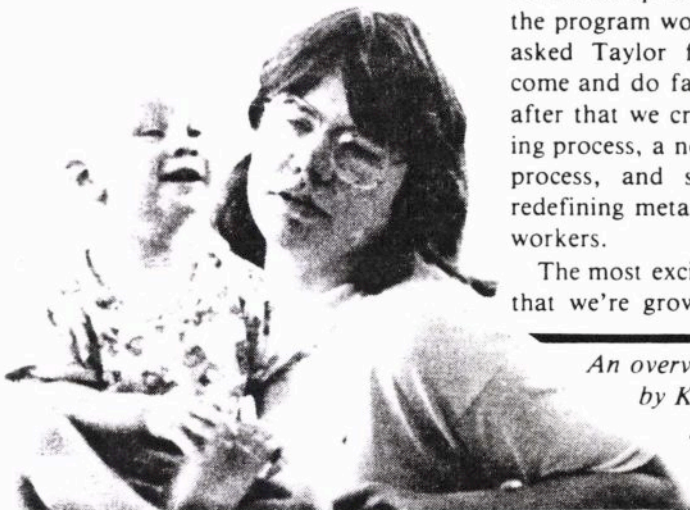
finally started clearing the site for our new 2800-square-foot Child House. It will provide space for about 16 kids and 2 nursing mother's rooms. It will have lots of fresh air, natural light and 40% solar heating. We've been dreaming about it for years!

We are also looking for 2 more children between ages 4 and 8. The Swanson-Christmans (Susan who will teach next year, Edgar who will work on the building, and Neil, Raina and Ben who will play) just joined and we've had several other families visit. Terry Carrol-Beyak made his appearance via an underwater birth in May, and Brenda Faye and Joshua will become parents when Sage is born in March.

In many ways, our Children's Program seems representative of many programs in community. We have a group of creative, committed people, and we have some personality clashes; we have people leave the program, but we have other join; we have some chaos, but we always have new ideas for improvements; we have a very imperfect system, but we keep working at it because we care about one another and the kids and we believe the communal way is a very desirable way to live and raise children. □

*An overview of East Wind's child program
by Kathy Bennett, the current program
general manager.*

BY KATHY BENNETT



the meantime? What would happen after the baby was born? My energy levels fluctuated. I couldn't always explain my emotional moods. I seemed to turn more inside myself. I lived with these other people, but so much of what I was concerned with was inside of me. No one here had ever had a baby so even if I explained things, I felt that no one quite understood.

My stomach grew and grew. One person would say that I looked beautiful and then I would glow. Another person called me "fatso" one day and I felt angry and ugly. Hugging was becoming more comical than soothing. In December people made plans to travel. I had mixed feelings: I was looking forward to quieter times and yet my support group was diminishing.

We regrouped several weeks before the birth. Anticipation heightened and preparation became more serious. Laird and I took La Maze classes together and one night we all went to see a birthing movie. Claudia began massaging to stretch and condition my perineum and vaginal opening to prevent tearing. Everyone read the birthing chapter in *Special Delivery* by Rahima Baldwin. We talked about what the labor might be like. Grady figured that if I could do it he ought to be able to watch.

Then one day I noticed a mucus discharge. With great excitement I told everyone including all the barnyard animals. The mood was expectant and high for we assumed that labor would start within 24 hours. Nothing happened. Three days and nothing happened. Life had returned to normal for everyone else, but I was feeling more and more uncomfortable. Then I awoke with some mild cramps. I was a little more hesitant to show my excitement this time. By mid-morning we knew that the contractions were real. Everyone stayed within earshot of the house. Most people continued their routine except Claudia and me. We took a walk around Sandhill after breakfast. When we returned, I began to time the contractions and busy myself with last-minute details. I couldn't begin a



It was a celebration of life and also a reaffirmation of the strength of our belief in community.

project that needed any sort of real concentration. Apparently Claudia was feeling the excitement and anticipation too, so she suggested that we shell pecans. We all ate supper together and then gathered for a reading of *The Hobbit*. As Laird read, Claudia and Stan tuned into my contractions which were getting increasingly stronger. They stroked my tummy as I started my deep breathing. Into the night we went. At least two people were with me throughout the labor. My "family" seemed to sense my needs and at the same time do what felt comfortable to them. Laird did the two internal examinations and kept in telephone contact with the midwife. Several people breathed through the contractions with me while doing gentle massage. Laird and Claudia checked the fetal

heartbeat. My pillows were rearranged and juice was offered. The mood for me seemed to be one of gentle care and strong togetherness.

For a couple of hours it was just Claudia, Sandy and me in the candlelit room. The mood was intense and magical as we seemed to be sharing our strength as women. We were doing more than coping: we were giving to the experience, and I was extremely aware of the power in and around us.

Laird came back in and seemed excited at the progress I was making. I had switched to shallow breathing for the more intense contractions. Finally around 4:30 a.m. the water bag broke. Laird, Sandy, Claudia and Stan were all in or around the bed with me when it happened. There was a mixture of relief and excitement. The energies accelerated. Occasionally I could step outside myself and realize that my family was breathing just as hard as I was. I did not feel alone as I had at other times in my pregnancy. Everyone was with me in their own way. Grady was in the background making preparations and anticipating physical needs. His sense of responsibility or "keeping things together" often matches mine. When the milk buckets clanged I knew it was he doing chores. With Stan I shared unspoken care and sensitivity. A new trust and appreciation developed in me for Sandy. When I got up to walk around the kitchen and push with the contractions I reached for Claudia. She had been giving me such incredible emotional support. I listened for Laird's verbal encouragement. Here we were again embarking on something new and unknown with our old positivism and faith. He was ready to begin by catching Ceilee and cutting the cord.

I went back to the bedroom with the morning light and my Sandhill family around me. We shared the physical experience, the awe and the joy as Ceilee was born in ways that we were born. It was a celebration of life and also a reaffirmation of the strength of our belief in community. A new being was born into our own caring environment. □

S ELECTORS:

Decisive Factors in Recruitment and Turnover

What makes people join a community, and what makes them stay? In this general form this question has a simple but useless answer: everything. People join for a wide variety of reasons, and their reasons for staying or leaving are equally varied. Just the same, somewhere in there is an urgent question, and as the communities face problems in attracting and holding members, they have to ask it in meaningful ways and search for productive answers. The question becomes: "What things about this community attract the attention of desirable potential members, and what things sustain or discourage the continued commitment of old members?" The answer is still "everything", but the word "desirable" narrows the field and gives a clue.

Everything we are and do, every person we live with operates as a selector for other members. One person may join because there are other young people in cos age group, and another may decide not to join because there are too many young people. A well-equipped electronics lab will attract one person, and another will find the same lab a deterrent. The presence of a garden will appeal to people who love fresh vegetables and discourage others who dislike agricultural labor. Does the kitchen serve sweet lemonade in summer? One person finds it a blessed refreshment, another a sign of impure food habits. Is there a cash-income industry? To some it represents security, to others a drift

away from self-sufficiency.

There are a lot of selectors to consider. Communities need to take a close look at their active selectors and observe whether they work for or against what the community thinks it wants. Potential members should take an equally close look and examine whether they are being led astray by trivial and accidental clues that do not really represent the community's goals. It is an unfortunate thing for someone to join a community in which co cannot be happy. It is even worse for someone to decide against a community in which co could have been happy but doesn't know it. Either of these things can happen by accident, because of our active selectors.

In these days of diet-consciousness, food is a major selector. A vegetarian community will not get meat-eating members, nor will vegetarians join a community that pays no attention to their preferences. Before lightly choosing either of these paths, a community should ask itself "Is food preference really a basis on which we want to exclude potential members?" If not, flexibility may be in order.

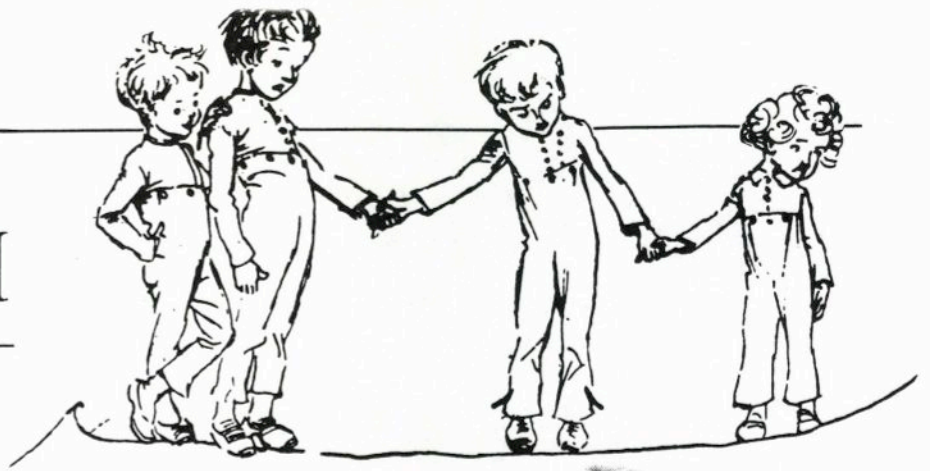
Community size is another major selector. A special problem is the group that starts small but wants to grow large. Its current size attracts members who like small communities. They, if they stick around long enough to influence the group's decision making, are likely to vote for policy that tends to keep the group small. This contradiction between

what the group is and what it means to be automatically creates internal conflict. The group must face this and take a look at its related selectors. If it has too many members who like it the size it is, it will not be able to keep on growing; if it gets too many future-trippers, it may lack hands-on workers who get joy out of the status quo.

Over the years I have lived in community, I have seen the following things act as serious detractors for people who might otherwise want to join:

Dirt and disorder. When members of a community allow their buildings to become messy, when tools get lost and are not replaced, when members leave their towels forgotten by the swimming hole and nobody picks them up, that community gives off an aura of general chaos that seems to make success unlikely. These conditions discourage long-term people. The problem compounds itself, because the presence of disorder not only selects against people who refuse to live with it; it also selects FOR those who don't notice it. Thus, over time the group has a larger and larger component of people who don't see dirt as a problem. Worse, the mess selects more against women than against men and contributes heavily to the perennial community problem of sex ratio imbalance. Is this seriously a basis on which we want to discriminate? Of course not. It is just a matter of carelessness, shortage of labor, other priorities. Just the same, the selector is out there working

N'S PROGRAM



The East Wind "Child Process"

Editor's note: Taylor is a long-term member of Twin Oaks. Over the years she has developed her facilitation skills, which she has mostly put to use at her home community. Because this is an important aspect of her life, Taylor is interested in opportunities to further develop her ability and conduct group processes outside of Twin Oaks.

Being aware of her situation and an interest at East Wind in getting help drawing together their child program, the Federation created an Outside Facilitation Subsidy program in 1986, which helped pay the costs of getting Taylor to East Wind. Following is a report by Taylor on what occurred while she was there.



BY TAYLOR FROME

When I was first asked to come to East Wind, it was to help work out direction for the children's program. When I got there, however, it seemed that many clear choices about direction had already been made. There was consensus within the child group on getting more children as soon as possible, getting more metas, and building a child building.

One important issue that was still unsettled was the degree of centralization, in particular, whether children should sleep with primaries or in a child building. After discussing the projected consequences of both directions, I chose to leave this unresolved for now, as basic program needs were the same for both (with the exception of sleeping space).

My first step was to talk with as many people as possible about what they thought needed to happen with the child program and what their personal needs were. These are the issues that East Wind members were most concerned about:

- being able to have more kids as soon as possible
- getting more metas as soon as possible
- developing more leadership in the program
- working out a program for older kids dealing with problems of:
 - trust of the metas and meta-helpers,
 - morale (personality conflicts, overwork),
 - program flexibility.

At our first group meeting we discussed these issues. Because the prior one-on-one conversations had all been lively, I was unprepared for the group's low morale, which came through as a lack of interest and constructive ideas. Still, after a long and tedious meeting, we were able to agree that: the meta role needed redefinition to allow more folks to get involved; meta training might be a solution to the trust problem and the struggle to recruit metas; it would be best to have more plans for orienting

and assimilating families to increase the child population; decision-making processes needed clarification; and it would be great to have a general manager. We were also able to get volunteers to write proposals on these topics.

Our second meeting had an entirely different feel. I believe the constructive action which resulted from the first meeting (in the form of proposal-writing) helped break through the feeling of hopelessness. Also, we started the meeting with an affirmation exercise.

For three minutes the group focused on each person in turn, sharing specific or general things it appreciates about that person—such as times co has been helpful or creative things co has done. This positive exercise worked very well as a unifying and spirit-lifting start for the meeting.

Then came the proposals. After considerable discussion, the group made substantial progress refining what it wanted.

Meta Role Definition

Here there was agreement to create a new definition for "Child Area Worker". This included teachers, primaries, folks who do activities with the kids, metas, or anyone who:

- does a minimum of 4 shifts per week or 16 hours in the program
- completes the meta training (Child Area Worker Training?)
- attends weekly "child developmental meetings" which are discussions of program issues. (These meetings are specifically *not* decision making; rather they are an opportunity to share information, raise concerns, and make recommendations for appropriate decision-making bodies to consider.)

— is accepted into the area (by whatever process is developed)

Rights of the Child Area Worker include getting credit for all work one is asked to do, and first priority in shift assignments.

Questions about how to improve area commitment, communication among everybody doing shifts, and vacation planning were left for discussion at future meetings.

Meta Training

There was consensus to make child area work more professional. To do this it was agreed to set up training workshops on the following topics:

- Child Development
- First Aid
- Meta Agreements (value of cleanliness & neatness, how things are done, what you do on a shift)
- Philosophy of the children's program
- Dyslexia and other individual differences
- Play & Activities (not just "how to entertain children" but developmental goals in activities)
- Behavior (what to do when . . . happens)

— Feedback and Communication (between adults involved in the program).

Attendance at these workshops would be open to any community member, and be required for all area workers.

Trainers will develop each specific workshop (some money would be provided for course development), and workshops will be tested out on the current child group, to fill in the gaps and refine them. Further, trainers will create follow-up activities when appropriate (for instance, the Play & Activities workshop might end with the assignment to do a math concepts development game and report back.)

After attending all the workshops, the trainee will be assigned one week of each shift with another meta (that is, morning, afternoons and evenings). After this level of program involvement, co starts a three-month apprenticeship or provisional period, which ends with an evaluation and decision about acceptance into the branch. During the provisional period, the trainee is expected to attend all "child developmental meetings" (or meta meetings, or whatever is set up). Throughout the workshops and apprenticeship, records will be kept on each worker, to assure completion of each step.

What the child area workers and I were able to accomplish during my brief time at East Wind is only a beginning. But, the above proposals could do a lot to clarify, unify, and professionalize the branch. This, in turn, should increase interest and satisfaction in child area work, and enhance the appeal of the community to outside families, and promote trust in area workers.

I hope the boost in morale (from my energy, the constructive directions we came up with, and the group's interactions) continues—there's a lot to be excited and hopeful about. □

BY THEA PAGE

One of the biggest challenges for me is being part of raising a new generation. It is tricky to help young people develop to their highest potential, to let them be themselves and at the same time teach them the norms of our society. Looking at the Federation children I feel we are doing a fine job. Our children are honest, self confident, independent, loving and caring. They develop their abilities to communicate very early because they have lots of childcare people around them.

Children at Twin Oaks have many trusting, intimate relationships. There are special adults in their lives besides their parents. 'Primaries' are adults who spend one-to-one time with them in the evenings. During the day they are taken care of by a group of people called 'metas'. Metas are people who are committed to sharing the responsibility of raising these children. Some of them are parents and some of them are just interested adults who love kids.

To keep up with the energy of the young people a meta shift lasts three to four hours. The responsibilities of a meta include everything from fixing meals and playing with the children to teaching them the basic values of the community. For example, if a child is violent with cos 'siblings' co gets physically separated ("time out"). After a while the meta discusses with the child why co hit the other child. The child is asked "How could you have gotten what you wanted without pinching (or biting, or whatever)? It helps the young person to find different ways of taking care of cos needs and wants.

In her book, *Living the Dream*, Ingrid Komar describes the ability of

Raising c



Thea and Shining Page

facilitation that our five year old children have. It amazes people who come to Twin Oaks to see young children communicate in such an open and clear way. I personally believe it is because we treat them with respect from birth on. They get the message that they are capable human beings. We spend the time to explain to them why we ask them to do things from very early on. They can see adults learning new skills all over the community. They see adults make mistakes and correct themselves. They also see adults play joyfully and creatively. For them a grownup is someone who has had more time to learn and they respect that. They most definitely question those who try to be an authority based solely on age. I doubt I've ever gotten away with saying "Please do this" without a reason. The same respect we give the children comes back from them. Because they question so much, I find myself reflecting on the motivation behind my requests

to them. And, like most children, they test the limits of the adults they're closest to as well as their own limits.

At the age of five they start going to a cooperative school close by and learn about other lifestyles. They meet children who haven't grown up communally and don't seem to have problems integrating into the larger society. Some of them are now teenagers, going to either public school or private school, depending on their needs and abilities. Even though they go through the same hormonal changes, they do not seem to need to be as outrageous as many of us grownups were during that time.

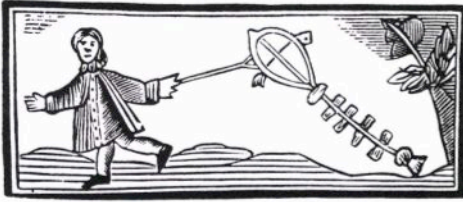
They developed their personal styles much younger than most of us did. Their sense of self is more defined because they are exposed to so many different adult personalities—from confident to confused, boisterous to shy, serious to silly, etc. They have seen adults struggle with their own feelings. They see that there

are different ways of responding to the issues in one's life. The variety of possibilities for dealing with one's own life here are great, even as we share the basic values of cooperation and nonviolence.

Our children see women and men changing from stereotypical sex roles, doing traditional and nontraditional work, using their intellectual, emotional, intuitive, and physical abilities in various ways. They see relationships changing; people falling in and out of love, friendships developing, members joining and leaving. All our children have seen birth and death, the two most intense experiences for most people.

Of course there are trade-offs in raising your child in community. Before I had a child I could not understand why parents seemed so attached to issues that seemed unimportant to me at the time. Having a daughter taught me that it is hard at times to have my child exposed to somewhat different values than my

children communally



A Visit to KRUTSIO

BY MCCUNE PORTER

own. For example, I have a difficult time seeing the children more babied than I feel is healthy. I'm learning to practice tolerance to other people's childrearing ideas, and have to watch them dealing with children as they see fit. Not an easy thing for me to do. Although parents here still exercise the most influence on their children they have to let go of 'control' and 'power' over them. I had to accept that our girls sometimes prefer pink frilly shirts over more practical flannel ones. Or that the children don't show signs of malnutrition if some people feed them white bread instead of healthy whole wheat. Imagine how it feels when 'my own' child chooses to be close to somebody that I royally dislike. At times it takes a lot of effort for me to stand back and appreciate our childrearing. It can be easy to get stuck on what I wanted to happen that didn't. The process of change at Twin Oaks can be quite lengthy, tiring and boring, but so far most parents who took on responsibility were able to change things when necessary. Besides children, Twin Oaks also raises pretty good parents who learn during the process of parenting.

By the time these young people reach adulthood they will have been exposed through daily life to such a variety of people, beliefs, and lifestyles that they probably will have a more complete picture of the world than most young adults. It will be interesting and exciting to see what they will choose for their own futures.

For me raising my child communally gives both of us all of those possibilities and still allows for the special bonding of mother and daughter.

As Kahlil Gibran wrote:

"Your children are not your children. They are the sons and the daughters of Life's longing for itself." □

(Editor's note: Molly, Halcyon, and the author are all long-term members of Twin Oaks community)

Molly, Halcyon and I spent a week visiting Krutsio last June. Molly and I had been there twice previously, and, as always, were warmly received.

Although Krutsio's membership has shrunk back to the core family of Adrian, Gabriela, and their two children, morale seemed good. They are expecting one or two others to join the community this year, and there is no shortage of hopes and plans for the future.

The kids, as they always do, are growing up. Both are becoming fully bilingual in Spanish and Esperanto.

Living in the desert, close to the Pacific Ocean, Krutsio has relied on solar water distillers for all of its drinking water. Since my last visit in 1984, the water distillers have been improved, and work has started on a large cistern, to make the most of the four-inch annual rainfall.

Growing food is a particular challenge in their locale (due to both climate and soil conditions) and so the community is experimenting with salt-tolerant agriculture and hydroponics.

One of Krutsio's sources of income is nori, a sea vegetable harvested from the Pacific tidal zone. They have improved their production over the years and were just beginning the harvest season during our visit.

The community's main income source is rural development work, funded by the Mexican government. As they need the income, Krutsio continues to do this work. However, they plan to phase this out in the future.

Krutsio is located in an extremely remote section of Baja California, and they are happy to report some progress on improving their accessibility. They have developed a regular radio contact on mainland Mexico, and the government has improved a section of the road leading up to their "driveway", a twisting, rocky, seven-mile stretch of dirt road that completes the trip to their buildings.

The economy of Mexico is very uncertain right now. Petroleum prices, upon which the government depends greatly for foreign exchange, are very low. Annual inflation is at 80%, and the value of the peso is going into free fall. It is difficult to predict how this economic crisis will sort itself out, but I expect Krutsio, with its emphasis on self-sufficiency, to weather this storm better than most.

Krutsio encourages visitors. Labor is most needed during the summer nori harvest, but is appreciated anytime. Each season has its appeal. The summer and autumn months promise moderate, sunny days and a warmer ocean. Mid-winter is good for whale watching. We were there in late spring, which is the best time to witness the desert greenery and flowers, following the winter rains. □



WOMEN IN COMMUNITY



We're all quite different; we come from cities, the country, working class, owning class, suburbia, all over the continent, the world... We come with a variety of relationship histories, with grown children, growing children, no children. We like punk music, classical, women's labels, folk music. Some of us consider ourselves feminist, some don't. We're lesbian, straight, bisexual. We're in our early twenties up through the ages of grandmothers. Many cultures and religious backgrounds are among us. What we share is the experience of being women in community which to many of us is a source of awareness, personal growth, support and nurturance.

What's it like? Following are some aspects of life in community for women:

ROLES

Women who join Federation communities are not presented with expectations of certain roles (domestic work, childcare, etc.). The opportunities are rich and varied, for some of us this is a new experience. "Women's work" in Federation communities includes construction and building design, auto repair, woodworking, business management, as well as domestic work in quantities that we choose, not that are imposed upon us.

People with children are provided with communal childraising so that they can pursue other interests as

BY LESLIE GREENWOOD

Twin Oaks?

To what extent can we overcome our years of conditioning from growing up in the dominant society? These are some of the issues that face us as we forge ahead.

DANDELION

by Helen

Dandelion's small size provides many advantages for women who want to learn new skills, take on managerial responsibilities and live in a close knit group with other women, men and children.

While there are seldom enough women members to be able to speak of ongoing "women's culture" within the community, there is a women's library, sometimes a women's tea, and opportunities for active involvement with feminist organizations in the area. Moreover, women at Dandelion have a great deal of control over their home environment in the sense that sexist attitudes or behaviors are immediately challenged and no woman is expected to tolerate sexist treatment in the name of diversity.

APPLETREE

by Wiggle

Right now there are two women and three men at Appletree. The gender balance has nearly always been about equal. We have not had the problems with it that larger communities have.

While both men and women have at times been frustrated at not finding a partner at Appletree, it has been more of a problem for men. Women at Appletree have seemed a little freer at finding relationships outside Appletree, or being satisfied more or less with not having one.

Not surprisingly, heterosexual couples have been the most common relationship form at Appletree, but homosexual couples and bisexual triads have also occurred. These variations meet with surprising acceptance at Appletree, even among new members unused to our lifestyle.

Of course, it is one of our values to accept such relationships, but values so different from what we grew up with can be difficult to live out. Because of our success here, there is a sense of freedom of choice in relationship styles for Appletree women.

Appletree women seem characteristically more assertive than Appletree men. Women have been more likely to be involved in conflicts. At the same time women have tended to be more conscious of underlying problems and so have done more to bring them to the surface. Also, women here have tended to be more in touch with their emotions and learn better how to handle strong feelings productively.

To a large extent Appletree members have shown a taste for gender role reversals. Perhaps because we succeed in creating an environment free of gender role expectations. Thus we are free to be the opposite of what we were always encouraged to be before.

People who are attracted to Appletree often prefer opposite gender roles. But this can result in our acting out the worst of the opposite gender stereotype, so the challenge still exists to liberate ourselves from our own inner conflicts that cause us to seek conflict with others. We do often achieve a degree of peace and harmony while exploring potentials that would be stifled in the outside world. And that is a major purpose of community for us.

EAST WIND

by Sarah

Living in community is something we have chosen to do for many different reasons. Consequently, we all derive different levels and kinds of satisfaction from the life we make for ourselves here. In terms of content and flavor, that life varies considerably, but there are many things (beside the beautiful Ozark land under our feet) that are benefits to all of us.

— We are able to work and walk at

any time secure in the knowledge that our home is a place where we can feel physically safe and grounded.

— Regardless of occupational background or interests, we live with few if any dictates to "dress the part". It's not necessary to put on a face or style of dress to indicate a desire or capacity for responsibility.

— If we are in a position where aggressiveness is natural or required, we can express it without feeling unattractive or "unfeminine". Our system offers us the opportunity to be managers with men and not feel strange about it.

— Our children's program offers women two different opportunities—to mothers, the chance to concentrate energy on other things along with child rearing; and to non-mothers, the chance to gain experience and develop close relationships with community children.

We meet as women occasionally, to welcome a new woman visitor to community, to dance and share music, to celebrate special events, or just to bake good things and eat together. It's common for women who used to live at East Wind and now live nearby to come visiting. They add to a group of new, old, and growing friends.

SANDHILL

by Ann

Women (as well as men) are immediately challenged physically at Sandhill Farm. For me, the rural commune has been just the place to grow stronger, more aware of my body, the food I eat, the resources I use, and the home that I help create. And over the years I'd say that the women of Sandhill have learned a great deal about self-reliance. It has not been without tears of frustration, aching backs, anger, and loneliness. But it has been in a cooperative, supportive, and learning environment. A common phrase here is "go for it", and it applies equally to men as well as women. Our group is small and our dreams are endless. □

Personal Thoughts on Sexual Discrimination

BY LAIRD SANDHILL

Among other things, Federation communities hold in common an agreement to not discriminate on the basis of sex. To most of us this is a very important agreement. Yet it turns out we don't mean it literally. In fact, our communities today discriminate sexually in several ways, with varying degrees of support from our members.

On a personal level, we accept without question that most of us have a decided sexual preference. Although there is interest in and considerable support for the choice of bisexuality, there is no movement to establish it as a norm.

Beyond a choice of lovers, there is broad agreement that it is desirable to maintain a certain balance of women and men in our communities. To that end we sometimes focus our recruitment efforts to attract more of whatever we have less of. If the situation is bad enough we will temporarily limit new membership to only those we are short on. It is a delicate matter deciding where the quality-of-life problems associated with imbalance take precedence over the uneasiness of limiting new membership. We struggle with it, but we do it.

Throughout our communities' existence there has been strong interest in examining issues of masculinity and femininity. (In fact, I feel our attention to these issues is one of the main ways we distinguish ourselves from other intentional communities, both historic and contemporary.)

Among us there is considerable support for the notion that important aspects of questions involving identity, sexuality, personal growth,

and human potential are uniquely explored through groups whose members are all the same sex. We acknowledge the desire for women's groups and men's groups, and support them by providing special space and other resources. We host men's and women's gatherings and advertise these activities in our literature.

To be sure, all of this has not happened without resistance. Some of us are disturbed by issues, groups, and events being labeled "women's" and "men's." Some feel excluded, and worry that their right to opportunity is being unfairly limited. Some believe we should interpret our value of non-discrimination more strictly.

After all, there is strong agreement that we are trying to create a culture where little attention would be paid to sex when considering someone for community membership, work assignments, friendship, and perhaps even some levels of intimacy. How then can one reconcile this long-term goal of gender-blindness with discriminatory support groups and activities? "Separate but equal" is out of favor as a policy in public education. Why should it be supported in pursuit of personal growth?

I have wrestled with this issue most of my adult life, and I have not reached any final conclusions. Perhaps I never will. But I have made some progress. While we are largely agreed to abandon the sexist, paternalistic pattern of mainstream society, there is uncertainty about how far sexual equality can or should be extended. We were all raised in a culture where sexism was thoroughly

imbedded, and it is not a simple matter to decide what is inherent and what is cultural.

I view sexism as a different thing than "sexual discrimination." For me there is an arbitrary and harmful quality about "sexism," which is the essence of what I oppose. Others make this distinction, too. For example, no one in our communities supports discrimination that limits access to work or information, but many, including myself, can accept discrimination that is shown to be a steppingstone for growth leading to greater awareness and opportunities for all. One is sexism and the other is not.

This approach has worked for me, and I know it has for others. In an environment of caring, sensitive men I have made singular progress on issues of homophobia and sexuality. I understand better the frustrations I feel over the strained relations between myself and my loving, yet emotionally blocked father. I am learning to respect and express my feelings while continuing to love myself as a man. I needed the empathy of other men to grow in these ways.

In considering support for some form of sexual discrimination I try to look ahead to the consequences. People who pour themselves exclusively into relationships with only one sex (whether their own or not) make me uncomfortable. This isn't building the kind of community I want. My impression though, is that men's and women's groups in our communities do not promote separation, and do build support that extends to all.

Our communities are willing to support some very specific kinds of sexual discrimination in the interest of promoting personal growth and healthier interpersonal relations. We are committed to growth and good relationships as well as to non-discriminatory behavior. But sometimes our goals get in each other's way and we have to choose among them. It's a consequence of being human; sometimes you have to swallow hard and make a choice. □

TWIN OAKS

as a “Men’s Space”



BY FOXFIRE ZOHAV

Twin Oaks is a non-violent society, and as such will never require me to sacrifice my life before my best thinking.

Recently a visitor to our community suggested that maybe Twin Oaks should have a men’s space. After all, womyn’s culture has flourished in the context of a womyn’s space, so why not the men, too? Not particularly taken by the idea, I began to examine the issue. It seems to me, my perceptions aided by that same visitor, that the benefits to womyn of a womyn’s space were that they could learn to relate to one another in new ways, free from the oppression experienced outside. If that were the case, was it possible that Twin Oaks was already functioning as a men’s space, and that men may not need a space in the same way womyn do?

It has occurred to me that one of the reasons men have been attracted to Twin Oaks more than women is the possibility that Twin Oaks has been a better place for men so far. I suggest that Twin Oaks is already a men’s space, with everything a man needs to be a happy, full functioning human being. All the elements that have scarred men, that have socialized them into being less than humans can be, are either absent or greatly ameliorated.

First of all, Twin Oaks is a non-violent society, and as such will never require me to sacrifice my life before my best thinking. There are no soldiers here, though I and a few others have been soldiers in the past. No man here will ever have to kill another, or agree to set himself up to be killed in the name of his “manhood”. Once he realizes this, a man can let down the defenses he has had to develop, and become the free, loving person he was born as.

This is not as odd a point as it may seem at first. One of the major

influences on a young man is physical, emotional, or verbal violence. Every man has witnessed what happens to a boy that cried too much, who wouldn’t compete, who hung out with his mother too much, who wanted to play with girls, or dolls, or who was born looking “too pretty”. By the time most boys have grown to manhood, we have learned to be casually violent, to be numb, or to be indifferent to violence committed in front of us. And, as men, we have learned all too well how to compete for the social goodies of prestige, status, and income—success in the war of life.

At Twin Oaks there are no rewards for violent behavior, or competition. There is no job that is better paid, has higher status than another. In “normal” society a man would lose status and income, be considered less successful, if he were to work at what is popularly considered “women’s work”. Here at Twin Oaks an hour’s labor at the children’s building is worth as much as an hour spent repairing cars or programming computers. Here men no longer have to trade off our nurturing abilities to the imperative of income, prestige, or status.

It has often been the case historically that men have had to risk their lives, their well-being, and health, to earn whatever income was available where they lived, or to earn as high an income as possible, in order to be the supporters of their dependants. Outside of community, if a person becomes ill, income suffers, but bills still need to be paid. And we, as men, will often “bite the bullet” and go to work anyway,

rather than wait to recover our health. This behavior, it has been shown, costs us an average of seven years of our lifetime, as well as years of ill health.

At Twin Oaks we don't have to get black lung, hypertension, or ulcers. When you are sick, your work is to get well and it appears on your labor sheet just the same as your work does. If you are very ill there is a health team to organize your meals, medicines, doctor appointments, and see that your job responsibilities are covered. Your income does not suffer, nor do your bills go unpaid, nor is your family neglected. All they may feel is the temporary loss of your loving company. Here you are a successful man if you get well, not if you work yourself into a heart attack.

Twin Oaks is a place for us to be the fathers we always wished our fathers had been. Because we can nurture here without social penalty, we can, for perhaps the first time, be fathers without guilt. We no longer have to teach society's lessons of stoicism and violence as our sons travel the road to manhood. We no longer have to watch our daughters experience the terrors of fear, rape, and disempowerment that are the portion of womyn everywhere. There is no longer cause or need for indifference, the numbness we have had to adopt in order to get by.

At Twin Oaks it is safe for our children to experience us as a part of their lives, not just as powerful strangers who appear at dinnertime, and may beat them if they aren't good. Here we can be models of strength, gentleness, loving, caring, and giving. Our male children will learn that it is good to be a man, something we can be proud of. Our female children can see that men need not be exploitative, violent, or threatening. Our children will never be hit to enforce irrational authority, and so, we hope, will not be tempted to pass that bit of insanity on to their children in turn.

Another difference here is that we

can touch each other, care for each other without fear. Outside Twin Oaks it is considered unmanly to physically touch each other aside from scrimmage on the football field. If men hug too closely, homophobia rears its ugly head. A man who is close to other men will likely be labeled a social deviant, or at least weird. He may be shunned and persecuted, for giving a hug. Real men don't want hugs?

Here at Twin Oaks a man can let down his guard against other men. There need be no fear of being "queer". He may hug, cuddle, or caress and no one will look at him cross-eyed, make a face, or otherwise single him out. In fact, usually the opposite is true. Most womyn are greatly relieved to see men nurturing each other, touching each other, a role that has been exclusively womyn's in this society, and of which many are royally sick. Here men can experience fearless, satisfying, and relaxing love for each other without having their manhood called into question. What a relief!

One of the nicest benefits of living at Twin Oaks is the profound relief of no longer participating in a sexist society. Men and womyn are not job-segregated. Men no longer have to reserve their loving behavior towards womyn until after work, when they're tired. We can interact with womyn, work or play, all day long. And we no longer participate in a system that treats womyn as second-class citizens, paying them fifty-nine cents for every dollar we make.

At Twin Oaks we live in a society where all womyn are our equals, no longer our "objects". It is a lot easier to make friends with someone who is on an equal footing with you. There need not be any more vague guilt, no need to compensate, somehow. It does take some getting used to for a new man, sometimes, but oh! What a relief when we realize the possibilities.

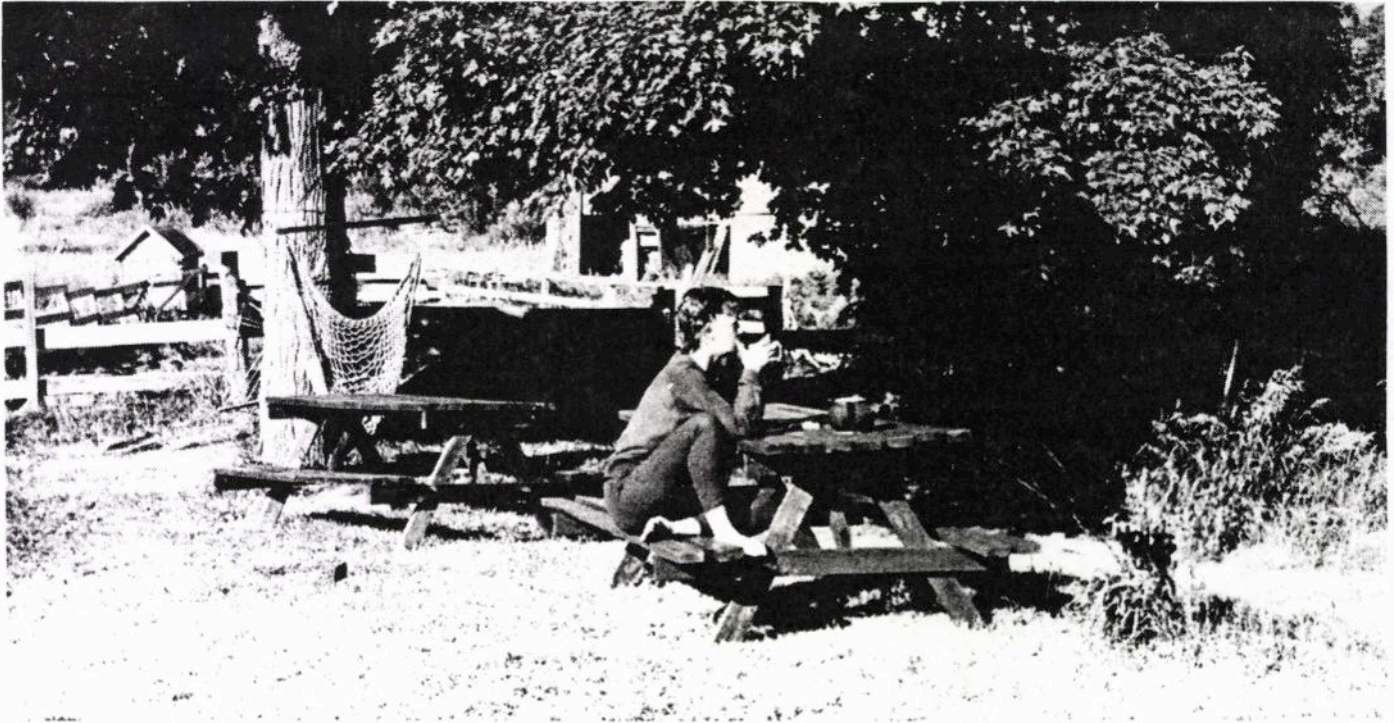
One last bastion of male oppression is still in the process of being stormed, one that will make all the other gains

complete. It is the systematic separation of men from their emotions. We are reclaiming our abilities to feel deeply, love profoundly as never before. After what has to be done to make them soldiers, men are mostly left with numbness, some anger, little joy. We have not yet completely reclaimed our zest for life. That we haven't is a reminder of what would have happened to us if we had felt, really felt, in the outside society. There, such men are still considered "sissies", cowards, crazy, insane, and out of control. It is impossible to forget that completely, even if we wanted to. We still read newspapers, see movies. The signs of our times are ever with us. The scars are all too evident.

Of course, the men who move here still carry a lot of the scars of past socialization. We aren't transformed the minute we walk in the door. Most men are still struggling to get beyond what they went through growing up as American males, this year's model. Change for us takes time. It requires constant, overt support by everyone, but especially by other men. The important thing is that here we can do it.

We have a new evolving men's culture here. We have a successful men's group. You should see the look on our faces as we stream out of our meetings. Our expressiveness, life, energy, and joy. We also have the resources of co-counseling available to us, which provides a way to create a small, safe place to feel our feelings deeply before taking them to the whole world. We are evolving new norms for male behavior. In a sense, it is really frontier days here.

Perhaps the feelings we go through now, when looked at from this perspective, are the cost of rebuilding society. Cheap, brother, isn't it? To reach the fully human, zestful being within. To create a just, truly egalitarian society, free from fear. I always wondered just what a non-violent society would look like. Twin Oaks provides me that view. □



“Practicing Nonviolence”

There are so few
models of
nonviolent,
egalitarian living to
look at, it is hard to
know where to
start...

BY HELEN FORSEY

The Federation of Egalitarian Communities is committed to practicing nonviolence. This commitment is part of what drew me to join community. I believe that nonviolence is fundamental to the changes that must be made in the world if this injured planet is to survive. Learning to put into practice the principles of nonviolence on a daily basis in our home communities can be an important, perhaps even a necessary, part of these broader changes.

To “practice nonviolence” does not mean simply avoiding overtly violent behavior (although that is one essential part). Nonviolence is active, a way of living that is a daily affirmation of each being’s worth, a constant challenge to the old, cynical, destructive patterns that modern patriarchal society has taught us so well. It is far from easy; it does not come naturally, even to committed communitarians. And because it is so difficult, and so important, we all need all the help we can get in making nonviolence truly a practice and not just a platitude.

Much of this help can come from feminist theorists and activists who see women’s particular experience of

violence and nonviolence as key to a true understanding of these issues. Women everywhere constantly have to deal with these questions, as we confront the threats of rape and battery, as we try to raise our children to be strong and gentle people, as we struggle against the pornographic, racist, sexist mentality that dominates the mass culture all round us. From these shared experiences, and the insights that come out of them, feminists have woven a deep understanding of the interconnections between feminism and nonviolence, and of their importance in the struggle for change.

Many women, like myself, come to community seeking an environment where these connections are understood and practiced. What we find is some recognition, some support, and a sense that in most ways we no longer have to swim upstream—that the current of stated values and aspirations is moving in the same general direction as our own. Yet it is undeniable that we still experience in community many of the same problems and challenges that dominate outside culture. Relationships still go

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sour, children still fight, jealousies and misunderstandings still arise. Books, jokes, popular music and movies rarely reflect our adopted values, and the media still hammer away at us with violent images and accounts of atrocities at home and abroad. There are so few models of nonviolent, egalitarian living to look at, it is hard to know where to start, and all too easy to slip into the habits, alienation and apathy we knew before.

But to accept such an answer is to do violence to ourselves and our vision of community. As we assess the reality of the situation, we must accept the obvious fact that all of us—women, men, and children—come to community from the “outside”—from a violent, oppressive, patriarchal society which has formed the framework of our ideas, our behavior, indeed our very perceptions. It is unrealistic and self-defeating to assume, or to pretend, that once we choose community and affirm our belief in equality, nonviolence and cooperation, the cultural baggage of years of conditioning is magically going to disappear. Nor is it useful to make the opposite mistake, and cynically conclude that community makes no difference in our interactions with each other and the world.

For indeed, it is this fact—that we hold a common vision and have chosen to explore it in practice—that makes the essential difference. We see community as a place where no person dominates, exploits, or abuses another, where all work and play together for the common good. This ideal is very close to what many of us have dreamed of as a nonviolent future for our planet. Yet it is important to realize that neither the dreams nor the reality implies an absence of conflict, of anger, of confrontation. What is different is the way we choose to deal with these issues. Our choice is nonviolence.

Barbara Deming, a feminist and nonviolent activist, has described nonviolence as a form of struggle in

which “we address ourselves always both to that which we refuse to accept from others, and that which we can respect in them, have in common with them.”

Living in community we have that opportunity—and the responsibility—to constantly and persistently challenge what we see as destructive patterns. The trick is to learn how to challenge nonviolently, recognizing and respecting the commonalities we share with the other person or people, while at the same time refusing to accept any vestigial habits of thought or behavior that tend to make us less than what we can be.

This, of course, can be extremely difficult. It is often hard even to really *see* the destructiveness in things we have taken for granted for so long—accounts or depictions of gratuitous violence in movies, cartoons, books or magazines, vindictive attitudes or remarks about people who have wronged us, the “soft” pornography that teaches us to see human beings, usually women or children, as objects for others’ pleasure. It is hard to see that so much of what is inside and around us actually represents a direct contradiction to the principles of nonviolence and equality that we espouse. The layers of our conditioning are thick and pliable, and provide us with many levels of resistance to what is really a very radical shift in our awareness. Even once a contradiction is made visible, we still have to struggle through a seemingly endless series of sophisticated rationalizations of the old behavior or attitude, and that struggle is apt to be confusing, threatening, and exhausting.

The pornography issue is an example that touches both men and women very deeply. I do not intend here to embark on yet another explanation of why more and more people are coming to see the use or tolerance of

porn as standing in absolute contradiction to our values of nonviolence and equality. Any library, bookstore, or women’s center can provide reams of documentation on the harm that pornography does to human beings. What concerns me here is not to argue the issue itself, but to examine how we may go about developing our awareness of such contradictions, and allowing that awareness and our commitment to nonviolence to shape our actions and our relations with each other.

I find it quite overwhelming even to write about this issue. It is so much easier to stick to generalizations and theory to avoid reopening a subject that has been heartbreakingly divisive during various periods of my time in community. Yet I believe that there are essential lessons to be learned from these painful struggles. If we do not have the courage and love to engage in them with each other, those lessons will remain unlearned. If we stay detached, then violence will retain its hold on us all. So I offer these pieces of my pain and of my learnings, notes from confrontations and connections with the people who form my communal family, wonderful people with whom I also share a vision of a better future for our world.

“Thank you to whoever put the ——— book in the kindling box. . . What was that kind of book doing here in the first place? How much more of that stuff is lying around? I feel betrayed. And I wonder if any of the men here will be able to understand. I mean really understand. Not just make allowances for an angry woman who is hypersensitive about such things. After all, some women do these things of their own free will, don’t they? So let’s respect the differences—different strokes for different folks. . .

No. That’s not good enough. It’s times like this that I wonder why I still ever sleep with men. What has that crap done to your brains, to your

If you are not taking an active stand *against* porn, then you are for it,

insides, over the years? I know what it has done to *us*. I know that I was thirty-two years old before I even realized that I might have such a thing as 'free will' where sex was concerned.

I am no purist. I have an open mind. I talk to men, I work with men, I even love some men. But now I'm afraid to go into my man's room for fear of what I might see there. Playboy? National Lampoon? The Happy Hooker? And that's just the tip of the iceberg. What about all those stag films that you can rerun in your brains? How can we trust you? DAMN."

"Each time something crops up about porn, I am forcibly reminded of the mind-boggling immensity of the gap that separates me (and some other members) from others here. And I find myself once again becoming a Pain in the Ass. When I see that stuff, I can feel the fight-or-flight adrenalin pumping through me. Anger mixed with fear—fear of the mentality that is capable of reading that garbage for entertainment, or of excusing those who do. Why it is so difficult for some of you to recognize that this is *exactly* the same mentality that is responsible for rape, for wife-beating, for 'queerbashing', for Soweto, and for building bigger and better bombs?

But when I react this way, I come up against all sorts of objections. I am told that I am implicitly threatening the "right" of individuals to read whatever they like in the privacy of their rooms. What you don't seem to realize is that *my* safety and well-being—and that of anyone who happens to be female, or black, or gay, or in any way seen as 'different'—is threatened constantly and explicitly by the pornographic mentality. But because this threat is invisible, it can be disregarded, and then a distorted concept of freedom of expression comes to be seen as more important than our basic right to safety and respect. Something is ass-backwards when that happens. And it happens *here*.

I just don't believe it is possible for men to fence-sit on this one. If you are not taking an active stand *against* porn, then you are for it, whatever that accusation may do to your image of yourself as a gentle, progressive man. Women have a hard enough time without always having to be the ones to raise the difficult questions about a problem we didn't create. It is men's problem, and every time you let pass a chance to do something about it, you are betraying us again.

'Is it worth a paper?' I'm asked. You bet it's worth a paper. This same issue has been coming up in different forms since long before I lived here. And although women have continued to try to use the male-approved forms for putting our points across—logical argument, gentle persuasion, peer pressure (or *are* we women really men's 'peers', after all?)—we still have no assurance whatsoever that the pornographic mentality doesn't still find a refuge in the privacy of our fellow members' rooms, or of their minds. And that represents a threat and an outrage.

Is it worth it? The only reason it wouldn't be is if there were absolutely no hope for change, even here."

"Some questions have been raised about why some of us have objected to having this sewage in book form lying around in public space. So I took some time to force myself to read more of that I had initially. . . The rest of the book, the parts that are not specifically and overtly woman-hating, are in any case supremely ugly, violent and macho—a glorification of the death culture that militarism and imperialism thrive on, cynically disguised as somehow defiantly 'progressive' because the author doesn't like the 'Establishment' either. How long do we have to go on *explaining* this stuff to our friends and lovers? Are we plowing the sea?"

"Perhaps this is why I fight so hard—because I want so much to be able to trust you, to love you, free of anger. Some women don't believe that you can change what your conditioning has done to you. I believe you can, and to see you not bother, or refuse to acknowledge those violent lies for what they are, devastates and enrages me."

"Could not all the tears, the pain of this struggle, amount to something, do some good? Why all this anguish of caring and anger if it does no good?"

This, then, is the struggle that Barbara Deming refers to when she speaks of the need to "confront our own most seemingly personal angers, in their raw state, and take upon ourselves the task of translating this raw anger into the disciplined anger of the search for change."

She urges us to wage our necessary battles in the nonviolent tradition, keeping in mind both contradiction and commonality, so that our struggle can remain consistent with both our love and our anger. This is nonviolent confrontation on an everyday basis, a kind of home-grown nonviolence that has a potential for healing that reaches far beyond our own communities.

Our communities are not isolated refuges from the "real world"—they are pragmatic attempts to shape a *different* reality on a scale that is manageable and replicable, within the inescapable context of a wounded planet that we share with our fellow creatures. What we do in our own communities is part of that whole, and can either continue the violent cycle that prevails in the world around us, or break it and replace it with more creative, truthful, and loving ways of living together. The Federation communities' commitment to nonviolence means that we have made the choice of accepting the challenge.

WHEN I WAS ASKED to write an article about political activism and community, my first reaction was that I have not lived in community long enough to have anything worthwhile to say. But then I realized that, as a new member of Twin Oaks, I have some useful insights in the way of "first impressions." As a person who recently made the decision to join this community, who is still "learning how to live at Twin Oaks," and for whom political action is an important aspect of life, I frequently ask myself how my life here accords with my beliefs and what changes I would like to see so that my life can be more consistent with those beliefs. As a new members, I can address my observations of the current level of political activity at Twin Oaks, possibilities for the future, and conflicts among values and priorities.

I was given a choice of topics to write about: "community as a political choice" or "political activism from a community base." That these two topics were suggested as a choice is a reflection of a common attitude at Twin Oaks—that there is a dichotomy between these two forums for political action, a conflict between what we are trying to accomplish here at Twin Oaks and how we relate to the outside world. I don't believe that there is a conflict between these two areas—they are both aspects of the same thing. How we relate to our community and how we and our community relate to the outside world are both reflections of our public and social ethics. Each is an extension of the other.

Many people here are active in what is traditionally considered political activity—writing letters to Congress, circulating petitions, participating in demonstrations, engaging in nonviolent civil disobedience, etc. There are other people, however, who disdain such forms of political action and some who may even feel that the community is threatened when resources (time and money) are devoted to activities that do not directly contribute to building the community. One frequently hears statements like, "Just by living at Twin Oaks I am making a political statement. This is my form of political activism." Some "politicos," in turn, tend to dismiss such statements as mere excuses for apathy.

I agree that living in community is in itself a significant and powerful political action, but I also believe that it is not enough. I also think that a total preoccupation with this community and disregard of politics in the larger world can be detrimental to the community itself by causing us to lose sight of some of the values upon which the community is based.

LIVING IN COMMUNITY AS A POLITICAL STATEMENT

It is a cliché to criticize communes as an "escape from the real world." But, as Kat Kinkade has answered, "far from running away from life and our social responsibilities, we are trying to make a new and better society. . . ." Kinkade, *A Walden Two Experiment*, p. 1. Our lifestyle is a political

No Community is an Island

By Vicki Metcalf

statement. The founders of Twin Oaks saw what they thought was wrong with society, decided what they thought would be better and set out to create it. This process continues today. It is a very direct and effective method of political change.

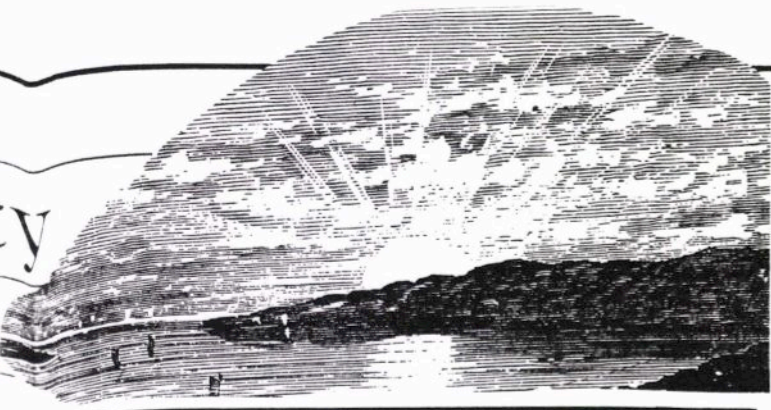
The creation of alternative institutions is recognized by political theorists as a form of political action, along with protest, noncooperation and resistance. Gene Sharp, the leading theorist of nonviolent strategies, classifies this method as a form of "intervention" and explains that:

methods of intervention operate both negatively and positively: they may disrupt, and even destroy, established behavior patterns, policies, relationships, or institutions which are seen as objectionable; or they may establish new behavior patterns, policies, relationships, or institutions which are preferred. Sharp, *The Politics of Nonviolent Action*, v. 2, p. 357.

The Solidarity movement in Poland is an example of this method:

They appear to have discovered nothing less than a new principle of action. It is simply *to be what you want to become*. Thus, if you want to have free elections, begin by freely electing someone; if you want to have free speech, speak freely; if you want to have a trade union, found a trade union. The Poles have discovered that if enough people act in this way, the very foundations of the unwanted government begin to dissolve, even while it retains a monopoly on the means of violence. Anonymous, *New Yorker*, editorial, quoted in Weschler, *The Passion of Poland*, p. 37.

We are doing the same type of thing at Twin Oaks. We believe in worker ownership and management, so we, as workers, own and manage our enterprises. We believe in sharing our income and property, and we do. We are opposed to materialism and consumerism, so we don't own TV sets or personal vehicles. We believe in equality, so we value all work equally and make non-traditional jobs available to women. Because we care about the environment, we use wood heat and solar energy, farm organically, and try to minimize vehicle usage. We believe that if more people lived this way, the world would be a better place.



The following summary of Twin Oaks' values appears in each issue of *The Leaves of Twin Oaks*:

Together our aim is to create and expand a community which values cooperation, sharing, and equality; which is not violent, racist, sexist, or competitive; which strives to treat people in a kind, caring, honest, and fair manner; and which provides for the basic physical and social needs of its members.

We do try to live up to these values. We try to treat one another in a kind, caring, honest and fair manner, to encourage cooperation and discourage competitiveness, and to act nonviolently toward one another, psychologically as well as physically. Perhaps most important of all, we try to raise our children with these values. Individual freedom is respected. People are appreciated for who they are—there is a refreshing degree of freedom from pressures to conform in beliefs, appearance, sexual preferences and personal styles. People take care of one another.

These achievements should not be minimized. Political activists often tend to discount interpersonal relationships and personal growth as elements of political change. I believe that political change occurs on all levels: personal and interpersonal, as well as national and international. Workplace democracy, sharing of resources, environmental responsibility, respect for individual liberty, and nonviolence and equality in interpersonal relationships are all political values to strive for both in this community and in the larger society. To really change the world, we must change the way we think about ourselves and the ways in which we relate to other people.

It has become a cliché to ask how we can expect the superpowers to disarm if we can't even resolve conflicts with one another in nonviolent ways. I have seen lots of political activists who do not relate the kinds of changes they seek at the governmental and societal levels to their own personal lives. People who say they are concerned about the environment but drive to work each day. Men who say they are opposed to sexism but continue to follow the same patterns of control and dominance in political organizations. People who want economic justice in the world and an end to militarism, but are unwilling to lower their own standard of living. People who believe in kindness and caring but do violence to themselves through self-hatred.

Needless to say, we don't always live up to our ideals. We say that we are concerned about the environment, but we drive more than we need to and we don't use solar energy as much as we could. Our main source of income, hammock making, relies on polypropylene rope, which is made from oil and is not biodegradable. We say that we are trying to avoid the materialism of American society, but we are considering building a swimming pool. We call ourselves an egalitarian community, yet we have our share of sexist, racist and ageist attitudes and behaviors. But I think that, compared to life on the "outside," we approximate our ideals reasonably well.

When we don't live up to our stated values, it is sometimes because we don't try hard enough and sometimes because of conflicts among values and goals and limitations of resources. For instance, one of the goals expressed in Twin Oaks' bylaws is, quite simply, "survival." This goal can be invoked to justify many compromises of other ideals. There is a long-standing conflict between a goal of simple living espoused by some and a desire to improve our standard of living, which is seen by others as a way to decrease turnover and attract new members. Some members consider a higher standard of living essential to our long-term survival. Others see simple living as a way to counter materialism, economic injustice and militarism, and therefore part of the reason for the community's existence in the first place.

Twin Oaks also values diversity and tolerance. There is no dogma to which one must subscribe in order to join. Even though the community as a whole espouses certain values (e.g., the values quoted above, and those expressed in the bylaws), there is no requirement that each member of the community endorses even those principles (See Kinkade, "A Commune that Works, So Far," *Whole Earth Review*, Summer 1986: 80-85.) Although most members do support the community's values, there are always some members who disagree with some or all of them. And, of course, there are always disputes about what those values mean.

Another area of conflict among values relates to the question of censorship. We value individual freedom and diversity of belief, but we also oppose violence and sexism. This leads to conflict when some members of the community object to the showing of violent and/or sexist videos which other members want to see. There is conflict over the whole question of censorship as well as disputes about what should be censored. (Who is to define the difference between pornography and art? The most recent controversy concerned the movie *A Clockwork Orange*.) Under current policy, 10% of the members may veto the showing of a video or film. Television is not permitted at all because of the values it promotes.

Living in community is not an escape; we are trying to create a better society, and in so doing we are working for political change. But I don't believe it is enough to say "I'm living on a commune. That's my political

statement." It is also important to examine how well the community lives up to its ideals. In what ways is it a better alternative to the outside society? I think it is also important to look at how we and our community relate to the outside world.

POLITICAL ACTION FROM A COMMUNITY BASE

There are several reasons why I believe that it is important for members of community to remain involved in political action outside the community. For one thing, we do continue to be involved with the outside world. At Twin Oaks, we have not chosen to be self-sufficient. As a community, we continue to have economic and social interactions with the rest of the world, and these interactions have political consequences. When we buy Ford vehicles, we are buying from one of the major manufacturers of nuclear weapons. When we pay our telephone taxes, we are giving money to a government that is paying for the slaughter of thousands of people in Central America.

Second, we can't avoid the consequences of political decisions made by our government even if we tried. At Twin Oaks, we live 15 miles from a nuclear power plant, with its attendant hazards. None of us is safe from the threat of nuclear war. There is also the danger that some of our members will be drafted to fight a war in Central America.

Third, I believe that consistency with our ideals requires us to be involved in outside politics. Nonviolence does not exist in a vacuum. We can sit back and congratulate ourselves for not hitting one another, but that does not make us a nonviolent community. No doubt many of the worst warmongers in the world would not consider striking members of their own families. Even Hitler was kind to dogs. The real test of nonviolence is not how we treat our "in group," but how we relate to the world at large and the individuals in it. I don't think that we can truthfully call ourselves a nonviolent community if we permit our government to engage in violence in our names without protest and resistance.

The final reason to be involved in outside politics is simple compassion. We have the power through political action to help alleviate suffering.

STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF COMMUNITY AS A POLITICAL BASE

There are some obvious strengths of political action in community. One is economic. As a community we have greater economic power than we have as individuals. The members of Twin Oaks are currently considering declaring the community a nuclear free zone and boycotting products made by the 50 largest nuclear weapons contractors. A decision by the community to do this would presumably have a greater impact than such a decision by a few individuals. We buy a lot of lightbulbs. By sharing our income and resources we are able to live comfortably on

less money, and have a large enough surplus to give away large amounts of money if we choose.

We also have numbers. Groups of people here can be organized relatively easily to participate in political activities. It is not uncommon for a vanload of Twin Oakers to travel to Washington for demonstrations. Our monthly "letter brigades" frequently generate 60 or more letters to Congress and other government officials. We can be a pivotal voting bloc in local elections.

There is also the power of our example. Twin Oaks is well known. The community has many former members, friends, friends of friends, and admirers. A community decision to take a political position (for instance, on the nuclear free zone question) can be influential.

The community can also provide the moral support and encouragement needed by its individual members who are engaged in political activity.

There are also limitations on political activity in community. Some of these stem from conflicts among values and goals. Diversity and tolerance are important values to the community. But this, of course, can prevent the community from coming together to act as a community on political issues. It is hard to get people to agree on political action, and I think, undesirable for the community to take an action that is strongly opposed by some of its members.

Different priorities as well as different fundamental beliefs may prevent community action from taking place. For instance, some of the discussion of the nuclear free zone issue has focused on the possibility that substitute products may cost the community significantly more. While most people have seemed sympathetic to the idea of boycotting nuclear weapons contractors, it is clear that there is a limit on how much people are willing to pay. The question of charitable giving is also a point of conflict. This year the community is giving away approximately \$3,200, about 1½% of its total budget. (Fundamentalist Christians are expected to tithe 10% of their income to their church!) Some members are opposed to giving away even this much, arguing that all of our income should be devoted to community growth.

In addition to concerns about additional economic costs of political activity, there are members of the community who are quite concerned about risks to the community from particular forms of political action. Here the goal of community survival limits political activity. For instance, there is concern that illegal forms of political action (for instance, declaring illegal sanctuary for Central American refugees) would threaten the community's tax exempt status. This concern has been raised even in discussions of legal political activities, with people expressing concern about possible IRS retaliation for engaging in politically unpopular activities. (Even if it were legally permissible

for the IRS to do this, one might wonder at that point whether the advantages of tax exempt status warrant the trade-offs.)

There is also much concern about "local relations." People opposed to political involvement by the community cite an incident that occurred in 1979 when Twin Oaks permitted anti-nuclear demonstrators to camp-out on its property prior to a demonstration at the North Anna Nuclear Power Plant. Although no Twin Oakers were arrested at the demonstration, the community's local image suffered as a result of civil disobedience that took place at the demonstration. (The consequences of this incident may or may not have included an adverse zoning ruling—we'll probably never know.) This incident is raised whenever a potentially controversial political issue comes up.

Being a member of a community also places some limits on one's autonomy to take political action as an individual. This can be a major problem for people, particularly when questions of conscience are concerned. As an individual I can choose the risks I am willing to take and the costs I am willing to pay as a result of my political and moral beliefs. But as a member of a community, there are some actions I cannot take alone. For instance, although it is against my conscience to pay taxes to the government, I am not in a position to refuse telephone taxes, because our telephone belongs to the community and the community pays the bill. (I can resist my individual income taxes, however.) I also do not have the power alone to prevent the community from buying particular products, even though it may violate my beliefs to have my income paid to certain corporations. There are also some risks that one might be willing to assume on one's own, but not when they could affect the community as a whole. For instance, one might be willing to use one's own vehicle and home to illegally transport and shelter refugees, but not when that vehicle and that home are owned by a community. We sacrifice some of our moral autonomy to live in community.

We are also limited by the amount of support the community chooses to give a political action. The community as a whole decides how much money it will give to charity and to political causes. Community decisions also limit the amount of time people have available for political activity by setting labor quotas and determining how much political work will be labor creditable (virtually none at present).

MY HOPES FOR THE FUTURE

Members of Twin Oaks are quite busy trying to build a good and decent community. Many members are also actively involved in outside politics. Without discounting these activities, I would like to see more political involvement here in the future. Specifically, I would like to

see the community move in the following directions:

1. I would like to see the community as a whole take political actions that are appropriate and feasible to take as a community. These would be actions that involve activities that occur at the community rather than individual level, such as economic decision-making. Since our economics are communal, economic strategies for political change must largely be adopted at the community level. I think one appropriate action to take as a community would be adoption of the nuclear free zone proposal. This step would further the community's commitment to nonviolence. I would also like to see the community commit more of its income to charitable giving and political action.

2. I would like to see the community give more support to political activity by individuals and groups within the community. Lack of time seems to be the greatest obstacle to political involvement by members of Twin Oaks. Lowering labor quota or providing more labor credit for political work would enable people to be more active politically. Creating conditions conducive to individual political action would also allow for more political involvement without sacrificing the ideological diversity and tolerance that are so important to us.

3. I hope that the community will decide to exercise restraint in raising our standard of living and will treat simple living as a desirable goal. I want the community to be able to recognize the difference between what is needed for its financial security and what is surplus. I hope that people here have not been so affected by the years of poverty and insecurity that they feel the need to continually accumulate and that we will never have enough. And I hope that the community will be able to discriminate between the kinds of investments in the community that help to make it a better alternative and the kinds of spending that would make us no different from mainstream American society. I would like to see us make conscious choices to keep our living standard relatively low, as a way to reduce our participation in economic systems that promote militarism and exploitation, as a way of limiting the amount of taxes paid by our members to an immoral government, and as a way of affirming that the way we live with each other is more important than the things we have.

CONCLUSION

Overall, I'm happy with my decision to live at Twin Oaks and hope to stay here for a long time. I can't think of anyplace else I'd rather be. I'm living with a group of people who care about one another, are committed to creating a better society, and who strive to live up to high ideals. Although I would like to see more of it, there is a good deal of political involvement here. I have opportunities here to work for political change both through community building and through outside political work □

POLITICAL ACTION at TWIN OAKS

My Version

I've been a member of Twin Oaks for 10 years. I have been involved in instituting and managing the area which "supports" political activity. We call it "Movement Support" for lack of a more interesting name. A few Movement Support meetings ago we thought perhaps we would change our name to "arm chair liberals" or "middle class white guilt" or some such thing, but we are a serious group after all, so we let these fantasies pass.

The movement support budget is primarily money. Money we allocate to other groups who are working on various issues that are of interest to us—groups such as Green Peace, International Defense Fund, Amnesty International, Klan Watch and many more. In writing this article about the history of political activity at Twin Oaks I draw primarily from my own experience. Be aware that this is a highly personal perspective.

Starting Twin Oaks was a commitment to political action. The creation of a society that would effectively deal with the problems of the modern world by offering positive systematic solutions was/is no small matter. The problem of sexism is approached by Twin Oaks in many ways but our most basic solution to this inequality is to give every type of work, including domestic work, equal value. Traditionally labeled "woman's work" is valued and what's more men do it. We also practice affirmative action. Twin Oaks can offer a role model of a value system that is acted out in many ways on many issues. We can be justifiably proud of this. The number of people

who pass through either as visitors or on Saturday tours is approximately 400 a year. Twin Oaks is a role model and a stronghold of idealism in a time where many of our ideals are no longer as fashionable as they once were.

The mere economic survival of Twin Oaks was our most important focus in our early years. We had little time to look further than our noses. I will not bore you with the stories of our poverty and early hardships but be assured they were there.

The early forms of outside political work were things like working with church groups giving out clothes to the poor. In a rural county in Virginia, church groups are an important social force. Working with these groups was, not coincidentally, good for our long term survival. We tried to establish a good rapport with the folks in the county. Our early members were very wise to take baby steps in local political involvement in a county where it takes years and years to gain acceptance. I don't ever expect total acceptance given that we are not your normal family on "Leave it to Beaver" lane, but we are thought well enough of at this juncture in our history. Recently we helped the local sheriff with his re-election campaign. The cultivation of good relations with our neighbors takes years and years of effort. It is no small matter to endanger this.

Several years ago we let a group of outside political activists camp on our land. They had come to the county to protest outside the local nuclear power plant. It was said that because of this action we lost much that we

had gained in terms of county support. This is hard to quantify, but I believe that it did injure us in some respects. There is a story that the Sheriff's wife had fixed bologna sandwiches for those activists in jail (they had trespassed on the power plant's property). The sandwiches were refused. I don't think political activists should have to eat bologna sandwiches in the line of duty, but my hope is that they were at least polite about refusing them. I'm not sure that they were.

Over the year Twin Oaks' businesses have thrived. We are no longer insecure about our longterm survival. The amount of money we spend locally has helped assure us reasonable local relations. We have the time to look beyond our noses.

Twin Oaks has always attracted liberals, people who are willing to act on their beliefs, to try to help this become a better world. Many of us are involved in political work in one way or another. Twin Oaks over the years has slowly increased its movement support budget to accommodate the needs of those who want to give. The rate of change of Twin Oaks as an institution to raise the movement support budget has frustrated some politicians. There is so much to do! But there are people at Twin Oaks who could care less about outside political action. Their need for meaningful work is satisfied in building community. They probably think we political types are tilting at windmills.

As frustrating as it is, it is important to move slowly within the institution of Twin Oaks to gain

TWIN OAKS

BY MOLLY OSMER

general support that will enable us to have greater involvement in the outside world. Twin Oaks is a democratic institution with many individuals who have different ideas about how to live out the collective vision. I believe this aspect of our experiment, this balancing act of trying to satisfy as many individuals as possible is critical to the model society we are trying to create. Some people will push for material goods instead of spending our monies on political causes. Personally I think that is fine. If we have a swimming pool for 70 people who each earn roughly \$6,000 per capita a year I think it demonstrates powerfully the advantages of a collective economy. Just as with trying to institute change on the outside, change within Twin Oaks takes patience and persistence on the part of those desirous of change.

As long as we can count among our members those who want Twin Oaks and its people to be involved in the outside world and its outside causes we will have support for political activity at Twin Oaks. It is ironic that it is an uphill battle both internally and externally.

It is also ironic that I feel something akin to how my parents must have felt about their accumulation of material wealth, which as a kid I didn't appreciate. I wish the new members appreciated how much it took to have what we have built at Twin Oaks—a place that among other things is a place which politically active individuals can call home. □

An Alternate Future

BY ROSURTHIAN

A definition of self-sufficient communities might be those that supply nearly 100% of their own needs. In that sense it is unlikely that any exist. Today's communes are better defined by degrees of self-reliance—balancing the need to earn money and the freedom to choose directions. But human society is not static and the troubles of the Europeanized nations are steadily accumulating toward a largely unpredictable but nonetheless apparent undoing. Standards of living are declining everywhere, even in the rich old USA, as money and technology are concentrated in fewer hands via mergers and defacto monopoly. Every year factories are automated or exported, small farms and businesses go deeper in debt, there are fewer small farms, fewer small businesses and fewer blue collar jobs. "Third World" nations are in the deepest trouble, continuing to pay out millions in interest on multibillions of debt that can never be paid off while they export their raw materials at virtually no gain. The influx of

foreign loans is actually ruining Third World economies, enriching the bureaucrats, but driving the people into worsening poverty and destroying their natural resources. As population and industries grow, life support systems are killed off and replaced by toxic wastes. The "modern world" is burning itself out in just about every way imaginable.

The timing and form of the great undoing cannot be foretold accurately, but its effect on self-reliant communities seems fairly clear. Twin Oaks, for example, has built much of its prosperity from the ongoing popularity of hammocks with the great American middle class. Were that class to suffer a decline in revenues, hammock sales, along with those of all other luxury products, would shrink significantly. Literal self-sufficiency could become a real necessity for the entire communal movement. We would either provide 95% of our own needs or disband—but in a devastated world economy where would members go and what would they do? Community might be their only viable option and, quite possibly, the only option for millions. Perhaps, then, each present-day intentional community might be wise to devote some thought toward contingency planning, at least on paper, to provide against a future of very doubtful proportions.

It is actually possible for a community to live off its own land, with the help of cold frames, hot beds and large greenhouses, creating a 52-week garden; and a farm can really function quite well without machinery (witness the Amish of Pennsylvania). Solar and wind generators are a fact and bio-gas is developing. Alternate technologies already exist for whoever decides to use them. Right now it may not be vitally important to retool for such a subsistence economy, but it could be, sooner or later. □

As population and industries grow, life support systems are killed off and replaced by toxic wastes.

International Communes Festival

BY THEA PAGE



The 1985 International Communes Festival was sponsored by a federation of French Communes. We met in a beautiful old youth hostel on top of a mountain in central France. The natural surroundings were beautiful, and the French communards had organized delicious food, drummers for dancing, and the set-up for a live band that was put together by members of different communes from all over Europe spontaneously. If one likes community people, nature, good food, and fun, it was the perfect place to spend a week and enjoy life in all of its possibilities.

Anarchistic as most of the French communes are, the workshops and domestic work was well taken care of. With about one hundred people there, it was amazing to see dishes washed and the place kept clean without formal organization. I assume this was because there was a large group of responsible people who knew how to pull their share of work without making a big deal out of it.

Some people came to the festival to find out about community; others had lived in community for a few months to many years. Communities of five to eight people were represented along with communities like

Damahur (70 adults, Italy), Twin Oaks (70 adults, U.S.A.), Lauriston Hall (20 people, Scotland), and Israeli kibbutzim with hundreds of members. You could find people who joined community out of political reasons or spiritual reasons or both, beliefs to change society in practicing something different and trying a pragmatic way or anarchistic way depending on the need people feel.

A major difference between North American and European communards is that most Europeans are aware of the political difference their way of living makes in their countries. They are also generally more politically active. This might be connected to the fact most people in Europe have had either first-hand or second-hand experience of war (WWII). The Europeans are also quite aware that most of their countries have U.S. missiles in them, which heightens the possibility of a new war. So, there is some pressure to change society to avoid that threat. These issues are on a more abstract level of North America.

We started out with a general meeting in which the four workgroup topics were presented: Power In and Around Community, Interpersonal

Relationships in Community, Economics in Community, and Creativity in Community. We were asked to stay in the same workgroups throughout the conference so that our productive potential would be greater. At about five in the evening, we would all meet to share what we had come up with in our groups. After that the different communities presented themselves. Later, if any energy was left, we could party and play.

Since each group included people who could speak only English or only French, every conversation was translated. In the beginning this made the flow of communication slow, but with time it proved to be an excellent communication tool. People could not interrupt each other and had to wait until the translator was finished before they could share their opinions. It gave people time to think about what they had to say, instead of just running their mouths, making the discussions very fruitful.

Some of the womyn wanted a workgroup with each other, so we got together to discuss what living communally means to us, being parents in community, how the womyn's movement has changed over the years, our expectations and hopes, and what changes need to happen to make it more attractive for womyn to live communally. Most of us spent time in other workshops as well as the womyn's workshop. The womyn's group was also a place for us to air feelings we had about other workshops, and to support each other.

Since most members of our Federation of Egalitarian Communities are functioning relatively well economically and have a clear internal power structure, and since creativity is more or less a personal option, I chose to spend four days in the workshop about interpersonal relationships. For my report on that and the Womyn's workshop see the accompanying boxes.

Interpersonal Relationships in

Communities - A Personal Impression

Curiosity made me go to this workshop. Do other communities know better than Twin Oaks how to deal with the conflicts that arise in community? Are the methods used at Twin Oaks to ease conflicts different or the same as in other communities? How can people in community keep up the positive headset that they had when they joined?

Living in community, we seem to have trouble facing the fact that different people feel and act differently in similar situations. Our desires to be cooperative, loving, caring, and tolerant often seem to be forgotten when conflicts arise. How do others deal with this?

I found the same issues that make life difficult in community were difficult in the workshop. We all came from different backgrounds. Some people were interested in community but had never lived in one, others lived in small, young communities, others in "old" communities, some in "organized" communities, and others in "anarchistic" communities. It was never clear to me what the group expected from the workshop. Some individuals talked about what they wanted, but the group as a whole did not discuss what we wanted from the workshop until the last day. It was too bad the last scheduled meeting did not happen because that morning we had finally started to talk about anger, frustration, and other emotions that make it difficult to live communally. Most of us agreed that it is difficult to find creative ways to deal with these feelings. Several people mentioned the value of having friends one can "blow up" at when needed. People who one can trust to say anything to, rational or not, seem to be needed in communities. Trust in each other makes a great difference in

how a community works. I felt the trust was growing slowly in the workgroup.

In the first few days we spent a lot of time discussing the structures of some of the communities. It seemed to be easier to talk about something abstract and to even attack a structure. For example, the very first morning we spent a lot of time trying to understand the living situation in Damahur (Italy). People asked a lot of questions about the structure of Damahur. I felt sometimes that they attacked the place just because it is a religious group. I missed the tolerance of people accepting that different communities serve different people. The aggressiveness seemed to make the members of Damahur defensive. The feeling in the group was quite different when Chris from Lifespan (Scotland) talked about conflict between old and new members in his community. Older members feel that they have put a lot of energy into the places and want to go with their ideals. Newer members want influence and sometimes changes in the community. So the community has to discuss the same things over and over; older members get tired of that and often leave. Sometimes the younger members feel unheard and leave. There was amazingly little interruption of the group while Chris talked. Is it because other community people know this problem themselves and struggle with it? Or because the discussion dealt with feelings rather than structure?

Very quickly tension developed at the conference around the issue of theft. Someone had stolen some money and bracelets. In the evening meeting it felt like we talked much more constructively about the issue: "What does it mean to get stuff stolen from you?" and "Why do

people steal?" than the way we discussed the same issue in the workshop. Differences of opinion clashed. Is there a need for private belongings? How should theft be handled? Should it be ignored? We spent a lot of time accusing each other of intolerance and very little time on constructive ways of dealing with the issue. The transfer of underlying tension to a community issue is an old experience for anybody who has lived in community. That was exactly what I felt happening that morning. Some people argued as if they knew all the answers, and the rest of the group talked about how such events feel to the kids and what we could do to get the bracelets returned and the money replaced.

The workgroup loosened up on the last day as we worked on how we deal with our own feelings living in a community. We have not been brought up to be trusting, caring, and so on with as many people as we often live with. Our group didn't come up with one way of dealing with living communally, but we did start to get into how one can deal constructively with frustration or anger.

What did I learn from this workshop? First, the problems in my community occur in other communities too. Turnover, old member/new member issues, how to establish trust between members, and how to be a powerful person without powertripping other people haven't been solved in other communities. There is no recipe found yet, and it doesn't look like that is what we need. What we need is to work on those issues and on tolerance towards others' opinions, structures, and beliefs. Second, even though it was not smooth all the time, I enjoyed meeting other people from different communities who share a basic world view and go on struggling to find a way to make it work.

And, I'm still touched by the enthusiasm that the workshop leader put into practicing interpersonal relations with the members of the workshop.

About the Womyn's Workshop

The womyn's workshop was very interesting, first of all I met a womyn who had come to Twin Oaks the year before to the Womyn's Gathering and it felt good to connect with somebody on a familiar level. It was interesting that mainly British, Danish and Canadian womyn came to the workshop. Very few French or Italian womyn attended. At the workshop we questioned why that was. One of the French womyn explained that one of the changes she has seen is that womyn of the movement go through a period of not wanting to work with men at all anymore, and then find out that they do not like the resulting isolation. "Now we work with them, if we are able, and ignore them if they bother us", she said. "We have given up trying to make them grow. They have to do it at their own speed and with their own energy". The support that the British and Danish womyn get is to take time to find out what they want. This support does not seem to exist in the more southern countries. But even in the north, things have changed. "A few years ago I needed to prove that I can do things as well as a man, like using the chainsaw. . . now I don't have to prove those things to myself. The underlying competition with a man seems to be gone." It is more important to me to find myself, my emotional balance, my needs, my own spirituality, than to argue with men." This seems to be the new theme of the movement. Men who let womyn do as they need can share the experience and those who want to stay where they were may stay there. Separatism is not an issue for most of the womyn anymore, mainly because they get enough support in their communities to have womynspace when they want it. The fact that there is discrimination toward single womyn with children seems to be international, even though there are

mostly single womyn with kids in community. Still lots of communities are not open to single womyn with kids because it is not efficient—whatever that means. The social governments in most European countries support single womyn more than the U.S. and there were lots of comparisons of what is available in which country. We all are aware that raising kids is costly in labor and money with or without government help, but how come communities consider it inefficient to raise a new generation with hopefully new values??? A question people have to find their own answers to. All the womyn who had chosen to reproduce have enjoyed that new challenge in their lives and we also spent a fair amount of time on sharing how confusing it can be at times to find the balance between being a mother and being a person. It was fun for me to see the changes that I personally experienced have happened to other people too. □



The recent history of the world is a history of deepening exploitation and depletion of natural resources. This has been accomplished with the use of massive amounts of energy in the form of fossil fuel. Industrialism has been a process of replacing easily produced and accessible commodities with ones that require more energy and complicated technology to produce. The reason for this is, of course, the depletion of easily produced commodities. It now requires, for example, several hundred calories of fossil fuel to produce one calorie of food in industrial society.

These resources industrialism is dependent on will not be exhausted in one dramatic moment. The pressure from growing scarcities has long been felt and will continue to grow. This still leaves time for the creation of new means of social organization that are more in tune with earth's ecosystem. Community could play a significant role in this. It is possible in community to have a high physical standard of living with far less actual consumption. Industrial society is presently consuming resources at a rate that cannot be sustained for long. For people who have been enculturated and have lived in such a society for all of their lives, one cannot expect a radical change in physical standards to go over very well. In community, materials are

Industrial society is presently consuming resources at a rate that cannot be sustained for long.

Community

as a Social Movement

used more intensively as opposed to the waste many societies accept, and even promote (you know. . . flick a bic?). The difference is quite noticeable. Seven thousand dollars per person is considered poverty in the U.S., while it affords a middle-class lifestyle in community.

The social strength of community is a non-economic form of wealth. It is a cross cultural human need to have the social support of others. In centralized societies this need is met somewhat by creating within people a feeling of close connection with symbols of power and society at large. In community, social needs are met by closer personal relationships and less by symbolic associations. This, I think, is more attuned to what people need, and a better way to live. This interpersonal connectedness of community is its strongest asset.

There are people who have wanted and still do want community to be a social movement that can answer the problems of industrial society. One of the prime characteristics of a social movement is a cultural disaffection among its members. There's already a lot of that. And it is, for better or worse, likely to grow with ecological stress. The flip side of this is that while societal stress makes some people look for alternatives, it makes others more submissive and inclined to find allegiance with symbols of

power—i.e. the symbols of industrial society.

Community in itself has the ability to do things that aren't fashionable, because communards aren't so dependent on fashion for social support. They have each other for that.

Many people see centralization (monopolies, big government) as strong factors working against "grass roots" social change. While I agree, I think there is a factor that is far more powerful as a deterrent to the growth of these movements. That is the monopoly on knowledge. I don't refer to the centralization of information, but the creation and continuation of the belief that only some people have the right to say what is. I hear talk of not allocating so much authority over knowledge to the established structure, but such is seldom the case. The monopoly over knowledge is the root of all forms of social control. The symptom I see is a lack of interest in researching. Perhaps the monopoly over knowledge creates this lackadaisical attitude towards research.

Where social movements have failed in the past is by either buying into the explanations the society gives for its problems or by denying the need to explain at all. Here again, community has the social support system needed to develop means of information exchange that are alter-

native to industrial culture.

Compared to other places and times, we now have a lot of freedoms that are useful in perpetuating a social movement. Such freedoms are useful in a society that has a lot of resources to exploit and that needs people to do this exploiting at their own initiative. I believe such freedoms are far less useful to a society whose resources have been exhausted. The implications are obvious enough.

As for the future of community, there will always be pressure to become more like the rest of society, partially because of insecurities people feel about being different, and also because it's simply easier to copy what's already been done than to find new ways that are more ecologically sound.

There is a need in the world at large and in communities themselves to pursue a socioeconomic and ecologically sustainable method of organization. Community has unique assets that make it a good place for cultural innovation. It is the pattern of history that people have waited until they are threatened by ecological stress to develop new modes of social organization, and then do so with little understanding of the changes at hand. Until adaptation precedes depletion, humankind is destined to live in societies controlled by shortsighted material interests. □

By Alexis Ziegler

preserving resources at a sustainable long.

A COMMUNE THAT WORKS, SO FAR

Kat Kinkade is one of the founding members (1967) of Twin Oaks Commune, in Louisa, Virginia. She spent nine years there, and another five at East Wind, Twin Oaks' sister commune in Missouri.

I SUPPOSE THAT ONE REALLY NEVER KNOWS if it's safe to go public with a statement that a commune "works." There will always be a cautious voice to say that it's too early to tell. After all, Oneida community lasted nearly 40 years before its demise. Twin Oaks, where I live, is merely 19 years old, so I may be premature in boasting that it works. But I'm going to take the risk. At worst, I will someday look back on this article with a wry face. At best, I can share some of what we've learned and provide some signposts at the crossroads of decision-making. We are probably not going to be the last people ever to try communal living.

I am inspired to this writing by the article that appeared in *Whole Earth Review* (#49, p. 56) about The Farm in Tennessee, written by a group of disillusioned ex-members of that organization. I read the account with acute and sympathetic interest. What shouts from those pages is a very simple lesson: "Poverty as a way of life will kill the commune." The article also had things to say about the unwisdom of following a guru and the ex-members' acquired realism about membership selection, financial management, ratio of dependents to workers, and the like. There wasn't much in that article that my own years of experience didn't back. I found myself nodding and saying, "Yes, that's right. That's the way it is."

But the failure of The Farm doesn't prove that success is impossible. Suppose there were a community that didn't depend on a guru, that was careful about whom it admitted, and that distributed work equally. Would it succeed? The available data is discouraging. Among the abandoned wreckage of communal dreams are more leaderless groups than guru-inspired ones, by a wide margin. Nor does prosperity insure success. Oneida was quite rich when it faded away. So was Amana. As to membership selection, I have seen three communal efforts collapse as a direct result of tight selection practices, because some core members left and were not replaced.

As Twin Oaks approaches its 19th birthday, we can

take a thoughtful look over the road we've come. Not all the evidence is in, but by most standards we're a modest success. Never in those 19 years has any member lacked food or medical care. Our housing and clothing standards don't satisfy us yet, but they're improving. We've grown from eight to 80 people; we have built ten major buildings, including a central kitchen and dining room. Our kids lack nothing and are in most cases better educated than they would have been in separate families. Our social security is total, cradle to grave. We take care of each other in the profoundest sense. Our lives are busy, active, and interesting. And we have managed all along to keep our door open to new members who meet minimal standards of compatibility and willingness to work, all this with a common treasury and no private capitalism to speak of. No guru, either. Our leaders, when we have had any, have been the ordinary political variety you could follow if you chose, and if not, you could oppose, depose, or ignore.

So maybe it isn't out of place to assume we're making it and to speculate on the reasons. I think there are maybe 20 big decisions every commune has to make, and if you get a right answer to about 12 of them, you win. You can afford to be wrong on the other eight, because there isn't any one right recipe, and even the definitions of success are pleasantly flexible.

Take, for example, the matter of getting the work done. Our watchword was "equality," and we went to enormous lengths to be sure that all our work was distributed as evenly as possible. We've had a lot of theoretical discussions over the years on such matters as whether the untrained have as much right as the skilled to a given task, and whether we should assume a 50/50 assignment of the sexes to various crews. I don't give this stuff much credit for our survival; it's just one of the fascinating aspects of our particular culture. What is vital is that work got done and that those who shouldered a lot of responsibility didn't feel so ripped off that they left with no one to take their places. I can imagine a dozen different systems that would accomplish that. I know other successful groups that have answered the work question in ways quite different from ours. What we share with those groups is that we make sure the work gets done and that we feel okay with its distribution.

Okay, that was number one. Getting the work done

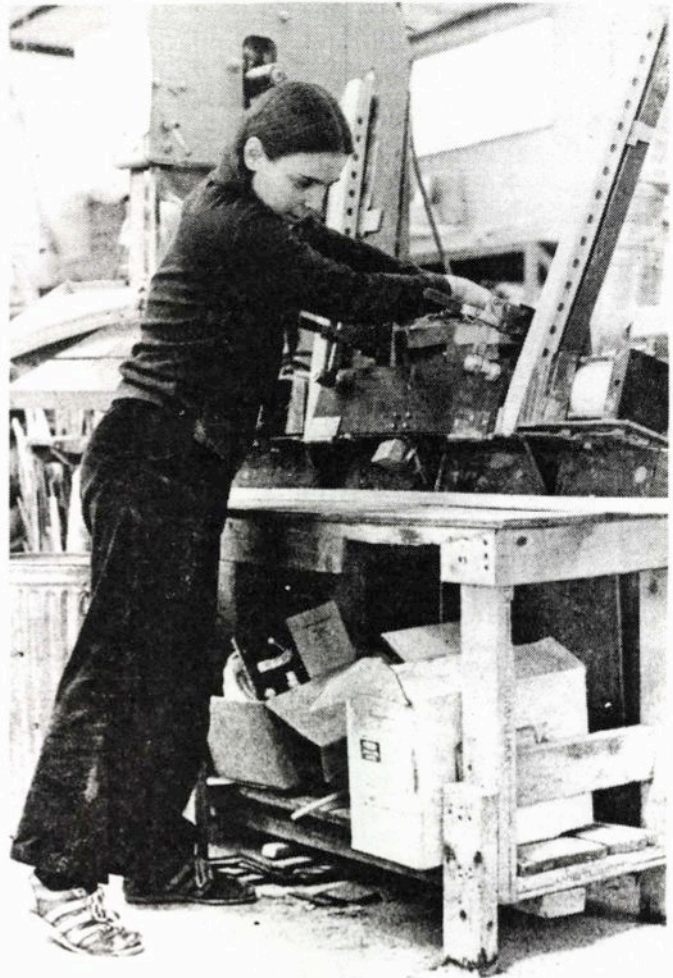
BY KAT KINKADE

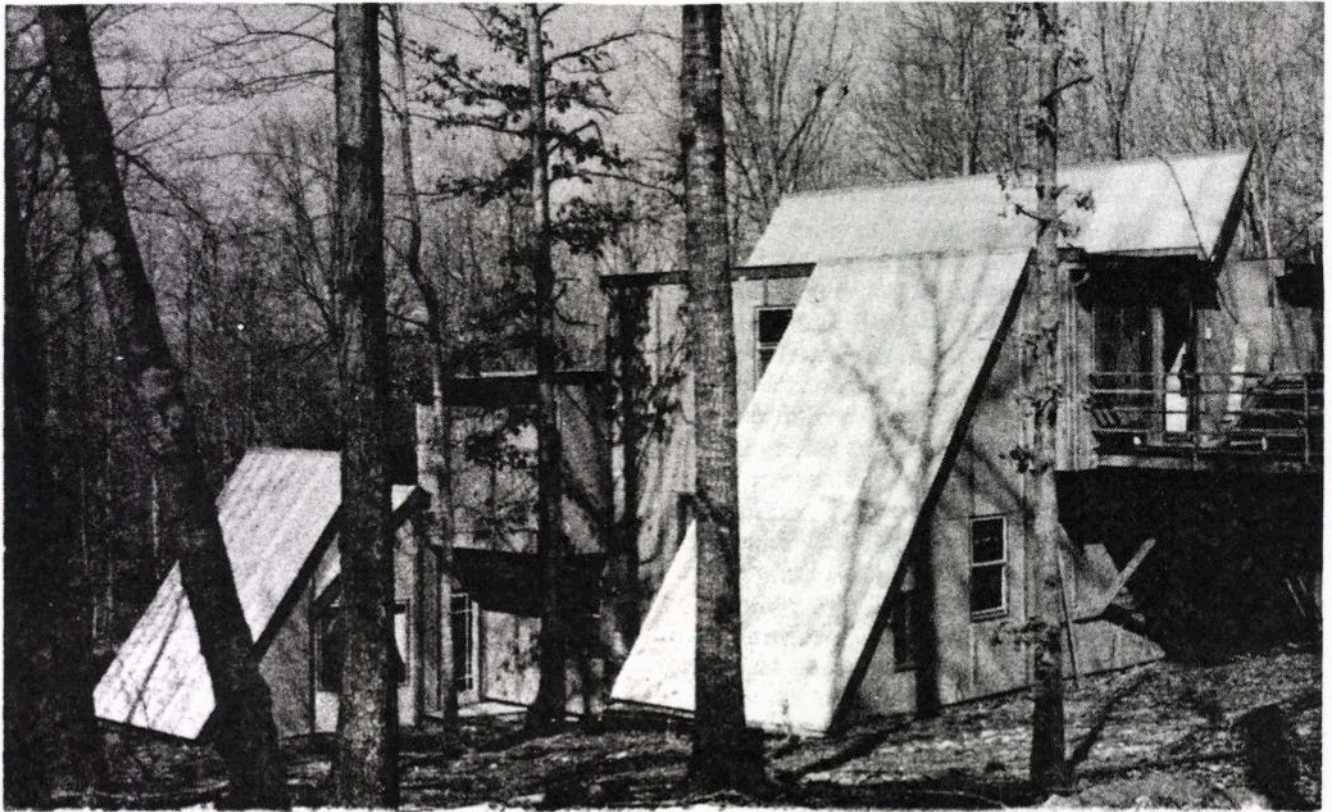
without feeling ripped off. There are a bunch of others. For instance, we keep enough money coming in. This is easier said than done if you're rural. We had, and still have, no business geniuses among us, and we're still not rich. What we have learned and practice is this: Find something that looks like it might work, go at it with diligence, take some risks, *put about half your total work force on it*, and you're likely to be able to make a living. That's a grim picture for two reasons. One is that the other half of the work force probably has babies to take care of, and the other is that it is sales, not production, that requires the initial efforts in most businesses, and selling ability isn't common among us.

Twin Oaks' day-to-day labor demands aren't too bad these days, because we have fewer than 20 children, so the people who aren't bringing in money can be doing the other necessary tasks. Besides, the sales efforts are behind us now. At this point, we can afford to keep only a third of our labor force in moneymaking activities. I don't by any means think Twin Oaks is a model to follow for income production. We did the best we could, and we are economically secure enough, but there are probably better ways for other groups. What we did right, though, was to resist the impulse to try to live off the land (penicillin doesn't grow on trees; neither does gasoline) and faced the necessity of making money in the nation's marketplace. Another feasible way is to work at jobs in cities (we did that for a few years as a stopgap, and we sure don't recommend it if there is any alternative).

One way or another, the group has to have enough cash to provide the kinds of things that its members consider essential.

We maintained a communal economy. The essence of the benefit of pooled resources is that once you have spent what you need to for the basic maintenance of the group, what you have left over is a big enough lump of money to do something significant with. If you divide up the money and distribute it to the workers, each worker's ambitions are limited by the small amount of the resources. In such an economy there are lots of tape players and bicycles. But in a communal economy, the "surplus" money pile is big enough for something that serves the whole community. Such a community has sidewalks and sewage treatment. Eventually it gets tape players and bicycles, too, but not until the group feels that it has luxury money. One might think it could work





just as well the other way—first buying the individual luxuries, then taxing for the big-ticket items. One reason it doesn't is that when members leave, they can take their small purchases with them, but the sidewalks stay put.

We held the line on consumption. Twin Oaks' early leaders were very stingy with consumer goodies. Most of the surplus cash, when we had any, went into buildings, tools, and business investment. That same conservatism, though loosening somewhat in recent years, is still basic to our financial thinking. We produce more than we consume, and we put large chunks of the surplus production into permanent improvements. If we didn't have a common purse, we wouldn't be able to do that, because there wouldn't be enough cash to do it with. The lack of basic facilities, like utilities and public buildings, would in turn discourage serious communards from choosing our way of life.

We keep the door open. The life-line of Twin Oaks Community is its visitor program. One major way that Twin Oaks has not succeeded is that we have not figured out a way to keep the same people here for their whole lives. Some stay only a few months; a third of us have five to ten communal years behind us; and the average is around four years. We console ourselves by saying that this is somewhat longer than the national average for

our age group. We feel saddened by this, nonetheless, and we keep trying to find ways to "cut turnover," as we put it. Until we do, it is vital to our survival to keep replacing the 15 to 18 people who leave each year with new members, all of whom must be tested for compatibility by living with us for a while. Thus, the visitor program is a given in our lives.

We don't accept badly screwed-up people. We have learned that we cannot cure emotionally disturbed people, and we send them away when they come through. This was a tough decision to make, but it was the right decision. Experience quickly showed us that forcing ourselves to live with people who made us uncomfortable cost us far, far more than any good we might have done for them. We no longer have any notion of ourselves as a therapeutic community. This certainly doesn't mean that a therapeutic community couldn't work—for people who choose to do just that. But we can't do that and everything else we've elected to do.

We leave people's minds alone. In spite of the standard liberal beliefs listed in our documents and implicit in our policies and customs, we really do not insist on intellectual or spiritual conformity. We are based on ideals of equality but have members in good standing who think equality is nonsense and say so.

What we do instead is base our policy-making on some reasonable but compromised version of the equality idea and try to get people to go along with it. We are, as a group, nonsexist, nonracist, nonageist, noncompetitive, and so on. As individuals we vary a whole lot on all of it. We also vary on the degree to which we think we ought to be striving toward our ideals. In fact, there is almost nothing we don't have a variety of opinions on. When this becomes clear to outsiders or new people, they ask with bewilderment, "But then how can you come to agreement?" The answer is that we don't. We manage pretty well without it. What we have instead is widely delegated control of some of the basics, a substantial body of useful tradition, a general habit of most of us going by most of the rules most of the time, and a lot of giving in to each other on small matters in order to make our whole community effort work.

What does this intellectual autonomy do for us? Its major benefit is that it allows us to attract members who could not tolerate living in a more dogmatic environment. These independent spirits come with a wealth of energy for the community that would not be available in a more conformist atmosphere.

Nevertheless, we offer many of the solaces of mutually held belief systems in small circles within the larger group. A women's group is very active among us these days, as well as a great deal of co-counseling activity. In other years, mutually supportive small groups have revolved around various spiritual themes or therapeutic ideas. Throughout our history a solid and vocal majority has faced us with issues related to equality, environmentalism, and other broad concepts. It is a rarity to have a member who votes Republican. But it's not an expellable offense.

We compromise on everything. I'm not sure why I think this is a survival technique, but I sense that it is. Maybe it's because members who can't compromise generally leave us for what they call ideological reasons. We tend to attract, select for, and create tolerant people. People with rigid standards seldom apply for membership, and if they do apply are usually advised not to join.

Compromise hasn't always been a Twin Oaks watchword. In the early years, we tried to stand true to various principles. But if we had been rigid about it, we would have lost too many members at once, and the community would have died young. In order to keep on living, we made hybrid policies based on whatever the current members would accept (including what our ideals could stomach), and the pattern hasn't changed much. Somewhere along the line we stopped being ashamed of it and started boasting about it.

The probability that every major decision will be a

compromise provides a feeling of safety. If somebody should propose that we double our population by having new people live in old schoolbuses until we can get housing built, community conservatives wouldn't get very worried about it. They might be irritated at the misplaced enthusiasm, but they would know that, once we've had meetings and position papers and budget reviews on the subject, the likelihood is that we might get at most one house trailer. Probably they won't like the house trailer, but it is along way from a fleet of schoolbuses. Or if someone proposes a community-wide bonus of \$500 each at the end of the year, the financial conservatives may be quite indignant, but the \$100 bonus that eventually is squeezed out the tube of community process will not severely threaten their feelings about the community. Nor will it likely disappoint the proponents of dispersed income, who didn't seriously expect much more than that. We are accustomed to compromise.

We have systems. Twin Oaks is unabashedly organized. There is an irony in this, because we may be some of the freest people on earth. There are enough byways and loopholes in our systems to make almost any activity possible within our structure.

(There are some exceptions, like making a personal fortune or tooling around in a big car, and there are things one has to wait for, but there is a lot to occupy us while we wait.)

True, we have to fill out and turn in a labor credit sheet that tells what work we did each week. But in exchange for that five-minute-a-day job, we have flexibility in our work schedules unmatched by any lifestyle I've ever heard of. True, also, that we have to deal with the nuisance of working out transportation with other members going in the same direction, or signing up for the big living room when we want to show some slides, or moving our personal belongings three times before we get the private room we've had our eye on. But in exchange for these nuisances, we are able to make multiple use of our vehicles and living spaces and get a lot of amenities on an income which technically registers at \$6,800 a year each.

We didn't set out to create such a complex organization. It was no part of our initial idealism to have a massive underbrush of committees, crews, teams, councils, managers, and whatnot to keep our communal lives in order. We just created them as we saw the need, and there they are.

Twin Oaks traditionally sees organization as an obvious problem-solving technique. If a member flips out one day and starts driving everybody nuts with his manic fantasies, it is the Health Team that meets and schedules round-the-clock sitters to keep him under control until he comes out of it. The impulse is

compassion for the members and concern for the community's normal functioning. The method is to organize volunteers and pay them with labor credits, like other work. If we didn't have a Health Team, maybe this would be done by his friends, but they would burn out in a few days and feel somewhat exploited by the group. As it is, the community underwrites thousands of compassionate impulses with its labor, which we all do without thinking about it. What keeps us from being inundated by such demands? That same Health Team draws the line when needed. Multiply this health care example by the thousands of cases of individual needs met by community effort, and you begin to understand the reason for all the organization.

Do I claim that this bureaucracy is a survival characteristic? In a sense I do. I claim that it is a safe alternative to strong leadership. What is wrong with strong leadership? For one thing, able leaders are not very common. But a bigger problem is the likelihood that their inspirations may be wrong.

The Twin Oaks political environment is one in which it is absolutely essential to listen to the opinions and warnings of every concerned member. The most our leaders can do with their inspirations and convictions is to learn to promote them through the established channels.

We are much too big to allow individual initiative to determine the placement of our buildings and roads, the rate at which to accept new members, the desirable expansion of a given business, and other long-range decisions. This is fairly obvious, so I won't go into detail, except to say that our cheerful acceptance of the necessity of organization allows us to be a big community.

Which leads to another survival characteristic: size. Small groups have to be very lucky to survive if they have any significant membership turnover. I have heard of small groups without turnover, but it's not the norm. Bigger is safer. Even The Farm in Tennessee, for all its conspicuous failures, still provides a remnant of community for those who survived its changes. Twin Oaks went from its original eight members up to our present 70-plus just as fast as conditions would allow. During several years of treading water while the national media lost interest in us, our sheer bulk kept us from going under. It would be hard to kill Twin Oaks; there's too much of it. We've got those bylaws that prevent anybody making a profit from dissolution, for one thing; and all those diehards who refuse to give in when things get discouraging; and then there are the people who come in fresh with enthusiasm. If Twin Oaks lost 30 people tomorrow morning, we would be very very upset, but we would not go under. If we got

hit with some kind of bill for half a million dollars, we would be very discouraged, but we would not cease to exist. We would adjust and keep on going. We have no guru to tell us when it's all over, and a very low probability of agreeing to dissolve. I suppose we might compromise, but the compromise would leave us a remnant, and that remnant would rebuild Twin Oaks.

We teach. There is so much to be done here, and no way to attract and keep true professionals in every field, even if that were desirable. Of necessity, we are constantly training people in a variety of interesting activities. We are always doing most of the following: auto maintenance, child care, construction, utilities maintenance, purchasing, cooking and baking, darkroom work, administration, forestry work, business management, gardening, publishing, home births, computer work, furniture and cabinet-making, driving, warehousing, health care, building maintenance, dairy work, indexing, choral singing, folk dancing, tai chi, dramatic productions—you name it, we do it. It would be difficult for even an incorrigible dilettante to go through everything Twin Oaks has to offer in less than six years. For anyone willing to become professional, there are several lifetime careers to pursue.

We change. We never allow Twin Oaks to stagnate for very long. If we have money, we frequently build a needed building; if we don't, we work on something else, like improvements in our culture or government or business or recruitment or interpersonal relationships. Usually we move ahead on both material and social fronts at the same time. Is this necessary for survival? Certainly it keeps some of us from being bored. It provides a feeling of being part of something vital, something to which each member can have input.

At this point the line grows fuzzy. How much else of what we are is necessary for our survival, and how much is just a loving description of Twin Oaks? We don't really know. There are probably people here who would leave if we started wearing bathing suits in the river, and there may well be people who would have joined if only we were closer to a big city. Everything we do selects, for or against us; we learned that long ago.

Will we make it? We don't know that either, but it looks like it to me. True, 19 years isn't long and we aren't very big or very important. Just the same. Twin Oaks really is fully communal, and it really does work. I'd give it another 50 years easy.

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MANY OF THE COMMUNITIES in the Federation of Egalitarian Communities are looking for new members. This puts us in the position of needing to "sell" our lifestyle to others in order to interest them in joining us.

There are compelling reasons to grow. Having more members offers more economic stability, more social continuity and more diversity of skills and interests. Growth of individual communities is also good for the community movement as a whole. Large communities may be seen as more viable examples of social organization and may ultimately spin off new communities. Larger communities may also have more resources to support networking and the Federation itself.

Growth is a tricky operation. We need to oversell to get enough people applying for membership that we can select for ideological identification and amiable personality. But we can't have so many applicants visiting that we don't have opportunities to get to know them, and we don't want to keep potential members waiting so long that they make other plans. It doesn't help that when we need a large number of "customers" that some members dislike all the connotations of marketing and selling; seeing it as part of the

"Selling" Community

by Kathy Bennett

consumer-oriented lifestyle they are moving away from.

We do still need to consider our recruitment efforts as marketing in that we need to analyze community to determine "selling points", the competition, and the market. All of these things are less definable with a lifestyle than with a new car! There is so much diversity in our current members that a profile of the ideal potential member leaves most of us out!

The advantages of selling well, though, are very personal. One has the opportunity to select new members by where ads are placed and how inquiries are handled. It's exciting to meet new people and see my community grow. And corresponding with interesting people is usually enjoyable even if they don't join us.

It's easy to recommend community life with a clear conscience. I believe deeply that it's a better lifestyle than the alternatives of suburbia, nuclear families, guru-type communes or solitary homesteading. And having an article published about one's own lifestyle is quite flattering. . .

And how does one sell a community? In the past, individual communities and the Federation have placed ads in a wide variety of magazines, had books and articles and TV programs done on them and have given workshops and conferences. Word-of-mouth from former members and visitors and friends has often been effective.

In 1986, however, East Wind needed more members than those sources provided and we went to an advertising firm for professional help. They reinforced the concept of market and product analysis. In addition, they compiled this "Lifestyle Quiz" as an ad idea.

In conclusion, selling our lifestyle to other people forces and helps us to look at ourselves in different ways. It requires us to analyze and improve and to reach out to others instead of insulating ourselves.

Marketing is fine, even "politically correct", as long as it is honest and respectful of the audience. We offer information, then individuals may choose to continue in their current endeavors or to join us and try our option. I don't regret my choice. □

"Lifestyle Quiz"

YES NO

- | | | |
|-------|-------|---|
| _____ | _____ | 1. I am responsible and hard working. |
| _____ | _____ | 2. I reject mainstream values of competition and materialism. |
| _____ | _____ | 3. I care about other people. |
| _____ | _____ | 4. I am non-violent. |
| _____ | _____ | 5. I am tolerant and flexible. |
| _____ | _____ | 6. I am not status or power oriented. |
| _____ | _____ | 7. I am cooperative and practical. |
| _____ | _____ | 8. I am interested in personal growth and development. |
| _____ | _____ | 9. I am healthy and concerned about the environment. |

If you answered "YES" to these questions, you may be the kind of person we're looking for at East Wind Community.



Foundations of Egalitarian Community

BY ALLEN BUTCHER

Over the years we spend living in our federated communities, many of us spend time thinking about just what is the nature of this lifestyle. Explaining ourselves to our visitors, our new members, and to our families is no simple task. Every one of us has a different story, and for many, that story is changing all the time.

One means to describe our egalitarian communities is through contrasting ourselves with other groups comprising the intentional communities movement. In this comparison three primary aspects of our theory and organization are most important, these are; secularity—no official religious focus, communal—all major property held in common, participation—individual involvement in decisions and functions which affect one's life. These aspects describe egalitarian community as a very distinct tradition within the larger communities movement.

Perhaps due in part to the third aspect mentioned, that of participation, our communities have tended to place a high value upon diversity. Our development over the years has involved our assimilation of many aspects of other movements and traditions which we found to be relevant to our needs and goals. We are indeed an eclectic society, both within our communities, and among the various communities in the federation.

Considering whence these influences have come to us, and how they have affected our development, is a good method by which to understand some of our history and of our organizational foundations. This list of major influences upon the Federation of Egalitarian Communities includes: behavioral science, liberal Christianity, feminism, radical politics and lifestyle, environmentalism, the Kibbutz movement, and the cooperative movement.

BEHAVIORAL SCIENCE

There is no question that behavioral psychology was our initial founding influence. Prior to our usage of the term egalitarian we referred to ourselves as "Walden Two" communities. The original structure for at least three Federation communities was adapted from the utopian novel *Walden Two*, by B.F. Skinner. The term "behaviorist community" did not appropriately refer to us very long, as we lost that part of our intention fairly early, but we still do utilize some aspects of *Walden Two* such as planner-manager government, a labor credit system, and a few other concepts.

The fields of psychology and sociology are very important focuses among us. We often reason in detail why we do the things we do, and how other Federation communities have done things differently. Such inquiry

makes for lively discussion, and is at times amusing as we watch various fads and traditions jump and transplant themselves from one community to another.

Many different group processes have their day such as group sharing, feedback and mutual criticism. There are also those processes that are introduced to us and which stay with us over the long term. Re-evaluation Counseling is a good example of a personal communication process which fit a very real need in our communities.

Small living groups within the community as a whole is perhaps the longest running evolutionary trend in our larger communities. The need for encouraging or providing for small groups as a median between the individual and the community is a major unresolved issue. We recognize and design for small groups in work and social functions, but as for small stable living groups, we have not yet found the best formats for us. At Twin Oaks a separate women's living groups is established, but we are just beginning to relate children and child care to the issue of small living groups. To this point child care has been a centralized community responsibility and function. Providing for small groups with children is, among other things, an architectural design and building program issue, which contributes to our slow movement on

this front. What we do with this will have major impact upon our future, and is one of the most important issues we have yet to work with.

A second important issue for us will likely be permitting members to pursue outside professions. In the past, at least among our rural communities, we have had outside work as a necessity, but never members who chose to pursue careers outside of the community while retaining their membership. The importance of this and other issues to us will be shown in the amount of group process which grows up around them. The meetings, the papers written, the members who join or leave as a result of the decisions or agreements that are made or not made, all of this is material for the study of our social psychology.

What the evidence of our experience suggests is that, rather than devotion to a spirituality or leader, it is the attention to the personal needs and concerns of the individual within the community which encourages the return of individual commitment. For many of us, the theory and ideal of cooperation as a lifestyle we choose is sufficient to maintain our commitment, but there are times when idealism is subordinated to other concerns. At these times the choice between staying and leaving is often dependent upon the level of shared concern and mutual aid which we experience. The question then is in developing a community design which is responsive to individual needs.

LIBERAL CHRISTIANITY

Although our communities do not express this influence in any outward manner, the affects of the prior lives of many of our members does contribute to the way our society is ordered. One of the most important aspects of liberal Christianity is its tolerance for other faiths and belief systems, and this is an important norm in our social organization. The community does not legislate in any

way that restricts one's freedom, but occasionally will make a special effort to support a reasonable expression of that freedom. Nonviolence and equality are two other aspects of liberal Christianity which are very important to our concept of intentional community.

The area in which we can point to a



substantial influence from contemporary liberal Christianity relates to the doctrine of the "Inner Light," a concept which encouraged the Protestant Reformation, the growth of democracy, and also in a sense the human potential movement today. This belief in the inherent value of the individual, or in one's potential for experiencing moral excellence through one's own intent, is a central aspect of the Unitarian Universalist and Quaker churches. It was from this Quaker belief that an organiza-

tion called Movement for a New Society (MNS) developed the theory of inherent value into specific points of process in groups, and this work became a valuable tool for us. *Walden Two* gave us the hierarchical planner-manager system, and MNS gave us the details which facilitated our system of authority in developing its concomitant aspect of responsibility.

In egalitarian communities the planners and managers hold authority, and the membership through group process assures governmental responsibility. The MNS contribution to this system was to show that for shared government to take place, the system must include processes which facilitate personal empowerment. Empowerment of the individual may be effected by being aware of what the component functions of leadership are, and sharing those functions. Effective leadership involves both task and morale functions. Task facilitation involves modes of communication which are generally well understood, such as through a managerial structure, but processes facilitating personal empowerment are not as well understood or widely practiced. Morale functions include systems which aid clarity and accuracy of communication, encouragement of participation, facilitation of constructive conflict resolution, relieving of tension, and the maintenance of trust and goal awareness.

Sharing these communication functions affecting morale, as task functions are shared, is a means of keeping the members in control of their community. Getting everyone's needs, concerns and ideas into the open and clarifying each individual's opportunities for maintaining or changing the group's direction, helps to maintain commitment to community. Because everyone performs some leadership functions at some time, this personal experience of power and responsibility builds appreciation and respect for the work of leadership.

It is generally true that a group is wiser, stronger, and more resourceful than the individual, but the keenest lesson of intentional community is the importance of individual involvement in decision-making and leadership functions, through processes which nurture the integrity of the individual.

FEMINISM

Equality is the term we cite as best representing our ideals, yet we may as correctly term ourselves feminist communities. There are many aspects of the women's movement, and most are represented within our communities. Verbal and physical nonviolence, personal empowerment, respect for life, nurturance of human potential; all of these characterize our lifestyle. We respect the right of women to separatist choices in lifestyle (free choice) while refusing any policy or norm of segregation (external coercion). We support collective domestic functions and agreements which free women as well as men to minimize their activities in the domestic work areas, in favor of work, recreation, education, social, political or other activities.

Political equality is practically a given in egalitarian community, but domestic and social equality require consistent, intentional affirmative action. Our feminist orientation shows itself most clearly in two aspects of our culture; our labor system and our architectural design. We encourage both men and women to be active in work roles which are generally considered to be specific to a single gender. We do this by keeping an emphasis upon training. Auto maintenance, child care, construction, cooking, health care, community government; all have turnover of personnel. When positions are open we emphasize training those who have interest in learning the work, often with the goal of maintaining a gender balance within crews and committees.

Architectural design in feminist community supports facilities which accommodate the sharing of domestic

labor. Collective domestic design enables those who enjoy domestic activities to freely develop and share their nurturing propensities and their joys on a community scale. A central food preparation and service facility, a laundry service, and a common children's space provide for a community spirit in domestic work activities, and a more efficient use of resources, providing luxuries that individual responsibility for domestic work could not afford. With the option of small living groups within the community, each participating in designing their own space, the resulting mix of primary and secondary social groupings creates *additional* nurturance structures to that of the nuclear family model.

RADICAL POLITICS and LIFESTYLE

Anyone having experienced the alternative or counter-culture in Western society has a good background for life in community. Many members come to us with prior experience in collective living, with awareness of diet and wholistic health practices, with tolerance for nudity and changing relationships, with an understanding of consensus or other group processes, or with an analysis of the problems of modern society. This is much of the reason for our survival. We perhaps select people with this kind of background at least as much as we introduce new people to these radical concepts.

One result of this radical influence is the view of our communities as a support system for persons who wish to be active in social change organizing. An example is Twin Oaks' ten year subsidization of *Communities* magazine by giving it office space and adding it into the community's labor plan. Our communities also support members who attend conferences and demonstrations for particular causes through what may be called "radical flex-time"; the ability to change one's work schedule on short notice.

A fair indication of the level of

influence which American radicalism has had upon us would be shown in a survey of the material we produce for publicity and outreach. We are not isolationist or separatist, but seek to be known for the values we live. This integration of our politics in our lifestyle is a means to realize some level of truth in the contemporary adage that the person is political.

ENVIRONMENTALISM

Environmental concern has been important to us in a number of ways, but the one most often cited is our conservation of material resources. By sharing vehicles, appliances, tools, buildings, etc., we manage to live a middle-class lifestyle on poverty level incomes. Our income level is growing, but we hopefully will maintain our frugality and concern about wastefulness.

We do a fair degree of land use planning in all our communities in order to preserve the natural resources we have, such as agricultural land, large trees or wooded lots, and wildlife habitats. We keep areas of our land undisturbed as preserves, and particularly watch for erosion. We especially focus upon keeping our environment litter free, something which we become more aware of any time we travel "outside".

Using solar energy and wood for water and space heating, to lessen our dependency upon electricity (often nuclear generated), is a prime focus for us, as is energy efficiency through higher than normal levels of building insulation. We at times criticize ourselves for the industry shared by three of our communities of making a petroleum based product, but we console ourselves with the idea that at least our hammocks encourage people to appreciate their trees!

Our environmentalism often includes interest in Native American spirituality and pagan or Earth religions. There is also a growing awareness of Green or Bioregional movements, although these influences

are likely to have impact upon us more in the future than has been experienced to date.

KIBBUTZ MOVEMENT

The Kibbutz movement of Israel has been a true inspiration to us as an impressive model for what we might achieve. The secure place of Kibbutz in Israeli society as one percent of the nation's population would be marvelous for us in the U.S.!

We have studied Kibbutz. Many of us have lived in Kibbutz or visited for several months. The original impetus for the founding of the Federation of Egalitarian Communities was largely as a result of our awareness of the Kibbutz movement experience.

We have especially studied the Kibbutz child care experience. We have noted their transformation from adults living in dormitories and children living in children's houses, to families living in apartments. We hope to avoid following this example by developing a more feminist approach to family and child care. At Twin Oaks the current direction is to take our small-living-group (SLG) design of residential buildings with private bedrooms and shared kitchens, baths and living rooms; and move children in. In this design collective domestic services may be maintained, such as cooking, cleaning and child care, while also fostering a close relationship between child and parent and other primary adults.

Our study of Kibbutz has encouraged other changes, the most notable being when East Wind Community patterned much of their governmental system after Kibbutz democratic process, and their division between resource and social committees. We particularly look at industrialization of the Kibbutzim at their architecture, and at different aspects of the functioning of Kibbutz federations. We are very fortunate to have such a model, and we hope to have more interaction through the future.

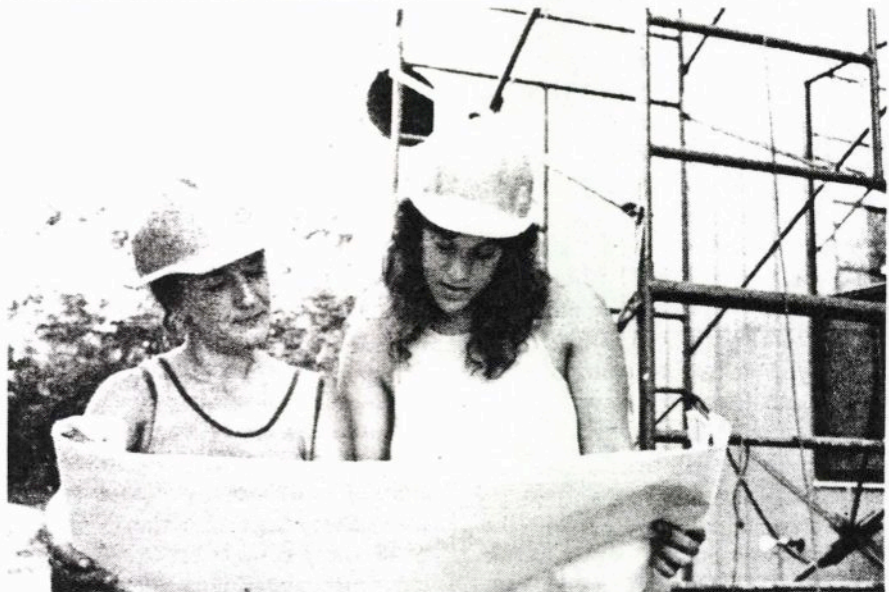
CO-OPERATIVE MOVEMENT

Many of our members have come with experience in housing, food, industrial and other cooperatives. Often we have come seeking to integrate cooperation into more of our lives than is possible anywhere else. Even co-operative communities in which people share land and perhaps some labor, but keep ownership of property separate, is really a different lifestyle.

Ever since Robert Owen's concept of "villages of cooperation" communal community has been seen as an extension of the cooperative movement. A means to express this extension is to contrast how the cooperative community or land trust movements, as opposed to communal community, relate to ownership of property. In the former, "trusterty" refers to those resources that exist separate from human energy; land, air, water, and other natural forms. These are entrusted to the individual by the society, both of which hold a responsibility to care for them as stewards. All human creations are free to be "owned" by the individual, including complexes of objects which arise as a result of an accumulation of much labor from many different individuals over time.

Communal community, in contrast to the cooperative-trust theory of right to ownership, uses the concept of "trusterty" to refer to both nature, which exists independent of human energy, and to all human creations. Distinction is not made between natural and human made material forms. Communal community negates virtually entirely the concept of "ownership" and replaces it with the responsibility of stewardship. In egalitarian communities, the individual has exclusive control only over the items in one's private room, most of which are provided by the community on the basis of an egalitarian sharing of wealth. Logically, this stewardship pattern could be extended to houses and cars, and to various work incentives, but never more wealth than the individual can use, and never without the overall good of society being the primary consideration.

The communal and cooperative movements being closely related, it is reasonable to expect that our communities would interact with local aspects of the cooperative movement, and such is the case. We especially maintain contact and friendships with people living in cooperative communities in our areas, and have worked



to support local networks of communities in our regions.

We have an extensive range of interactions with the consumer and service cooperatives in our areas. In addition to the usual patronage of rural electrical, telephone and agricultural supply cooperatives, some of our communities have sold agricultural or craft products to local cooperative stores, and most of our communities seek to maximize our patronage of our local consumer cooperatives.

Members from at least two of our communities have done "outside work" in cooperative food stores, others have held positions on the boards-of-directors of our regional food cooperative federations, and some members have participated in various co-op conferences. In other cases, former members are driving trucks and working on warehouse staffs. Certainly our most extensive interactions with cooperatives is through East Wind which sells close to a million dollars a year of nutbutters to co-op warehouses in many parts of the U.S., through a business built with substantial credit supplied by the Southern Cooperative Development Fund and the National Cooperative Bank.

So much outreach and industry focus in cooperatives has served to provide an outside reference point to better understand the significance of what sometimes appears to be our very feeble efforts in social change. Seeing other people working for some of the same goals which we struggle to promote is a real encouragement.

Social accounting, which includes looking at how our purchasing relates to the values we hold through the businesses we patronize, is an ideal we share with many cooperatives. The role of participatory planning processes in maintaining workplace democracy is as important to the communal movement as it is to the cooperative. These concepts will likely remain important focuses for us, and we may expect that our inter-

actions will be maintained and expanded through the future as both of our movements grow and develop.

BUILDING EGALITARIAN COMMUNITY

There can certainly be no denying that creating community requires much work. Most new communities have a very definite pioneering period. During this time idealism and



commitment are usually high, even though the living conditions may be adverse. With solid intention a community can devise a labor and property system that equitably share both the work load and the benefits derived. Over succeeding years of commitment and the experience of communal self-sacrifice, a group of people will establish a tradition of sharing. An organized labor system thus based can gradually raise a community's standard of living, and also provide much flexibility in

meeting individual needs. Stressful responsibilities and exhausting toil may be avoided through the use of a well designed and responsive labor system. And in the future, as individuals become enfeebled, the systems of sharing may be relied upon to provide relief from the mass of cares and dread of misfortune in old age. In a community built upon the values of caring and responsibility for one another, advancing age may be as secure and enjoyable as childhood.

Happiness in our lives is to a fair extent dependent upon the level of security we experience in our particular living situation. The more tightly woven the fabric of community, or the more intentional its design, the more likely the members of a community will be able to concentrate that particular essence that nurtures happiness. For most people, being centered emotionally requires an awareness of having found one's private, social and work space within one's community. In this is much of the challenge of community; maintaining a sense of collectivity and group spirit while at the same time providing for individual initiative and the pursuit of personal goals which are so important to individual happiness.

The effort devoted to social design, economic organization, and shared government in egalitarian community is a means to assure individual support and nurturance. Individual rights to resources and opportunities are best assured if the rights and responsibilities inherent in the terms "equality" and "democracy" are practiced at the primary level at which wealth is created in industry and utilized in domestics. The integration of these two activities in a nurturing social setting represents the state-of-the-art of communal design. If we place a specific intent upon the ideal of actively creating the best-of-all-feasible societies, we should be able to construct and proclaim a viable tradition of mutual caring and supportive community. □

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FEDERATION HISTORY

*Where we come from and
where we are going*



BY LAIRD SCHRAUB

IN NOVEMBER, the Federation of Egalitarian Communities was 10 years old. It is a good time to pause and look at what has been accomplished, how that compares with the expectations of a decade ago, and what the prospects are for the future.

Ten years can be a long time and it is easy to lose perspective on how the sense of the community movement has changed considerably in that time. In the middle 1970's the number of North American communities had been steadily expanding for at least 10 years. There was no particular reason to suspect that such growth would not continue.

The idea of federating for the common good of all was a natural expansion of ideals: a community of

communities; cooperation among the cooperators; strength in numbers; united we stand. It was appealing as a way to harness the considerable energy for change that was coalescing in the many communities that had sprouted up across the North American landscape, like so many mushrooms after a spring rain. (Unfortunately, also like mushrooms, many faded away nearly as quickly as they came.)

Cooperation among the egalitarian communities already existed. East Wind got a crucial economic leg up by taking on Twin Oaks' extra hammock sales, and sharing that business. Dandelion's early economy was based on the tinnery business, learned from Aloe. Occasionally labor was shared

among the communities.

Enthusiasm, however, was tempered by uncertainty about how to structure an effective organization that would offer substance beyond the ideology. The communities were relatively new and recognized the important, vital strength inherent in idealism, but they had been around long enough to know that good values didn't put food on the table or pay the light bill. The communities were still pioneering and could ill-afford putting precious resources into an organization that didn't promise solid returns.

Influence of Kibbutz Artzi

Whenever in our history we've cast about for models to guide us we've

naturally looked to the Israeli kibbutzim, as the only substantial, contemporary model for egalitarian, secular communities. (Over the years we've learned that some experiences translate better than others, but still we look.)

In early 1976 Kat Kinkade went to Israel and did some looking. She was a member of East Wind then, and returned home with excitement for how a federation could work and what it could do for the movement.

There were three or four kibbutz federations active in 1976, but Kat's exposure was focused on the experiences of the Kibbutz Artzi Federation. They had started in 1927 with only four kibbutzim, with a combined population of 270. Nearly 50 years later there were 77 member kibbutzim, with a total population of 36,000. More, turnover was down to 2% annually.

This model of strength, growth, and stability was (and is) very appealing. People with kibbutz federation experience were invited, and sat in on that first constitutional assembly. However, 1927 was not 1976, and Israel is not North America.

There is no North American analog of the Zionist-Socialist youth movement to channel young adults into our communities. No deep cultural and religious roots to unify and focus the pioneering energy. Our bonds are weaker, more diverse, and entirely secular. They are ideology and a shared history of disaffection with a consumptive, violent, and hierarchical society.

Israeli kibbutzim are all located within 300 miles of each other. In North America our Federation labors under the handicap of diffusion: one-tenth the number of communities and one-two hundredth the population, separated over 10 times the distance.

From an original five member communities in 1976, there are now

seven, with two additional communities affiliated as groups-in-dialogue. From an initial population of 160, the total now is 200, counting the groups-in-dialogue. These are very modest gains and nowhere near the totals projected for now 10 years ago.

But it's not fair to compare this history with that of Kibbutz Artzi and dismiss the Federation as a failure. In 1976 the bloom was off the rose of community growth. The surge of interest in alternative communities that was witnessed in the previous decade slowed to a trickle in the ensuing ten years.

In this context the Federation communities have fared as well as other North American communities, and better than most. To start with, most of the communities around in 1976 are now defunct. Only Aloe of the original Federation communities has failed to survive the decade.

In 1976 East Wind had 55 members, just two years after moving to its Missouri property. Today it has 50 members. Twin Oaks supported 72 in 1976, and about 82 today. By contrast, The Farm in Tennessee had about 1,000 members in 1976, but is only around 300 today, and with a much decentralized structure.

Let's go back and take a look at who has been involved with the Federation, what they hoped to do, and how much has actually been accomplished.

History of Federation Membership

During the summer and fall of 1976 there was a lot of correspondence about convening a constitutional assembly, to sit down and try to draft a Federation working agreement. East Wind headed up this effort, and was the site of that first assembly. Aloe (North Carolina), Dandelion (Ontario), East Wind (Missouri), North Mountain (Virginia), Society for Human Development (Michigan), and Twin Oaks (Virginia) sent representatives.

These communities were the original members, excepting the Society for Human Development, which was excluded because they did not practice total income sharing. This was a frustration to them and they argued for eliminating that requirement. But for the remaining five it was felt to be a strong bond and was upheld. It was a question of trust and what agreements would best promote its development. (To be considered for membership a community must adhere to seven basic principles, which are listed in the article introducing this *Communities* issue, "To Our readers" on page 2. Other than the seventh principle, which was added in 1985, these basic values have remained unchanged since they were first formulated.)

Membership has fluctuated over the 10 years. Los Horcones (Mexico) was the first new community to join, in 1978. But after a disagreement about philosophy, they separated from the Federation in early 1981. They wanted more emphasis on behaviorism. Where B.F. Skinner and *Walden Two* were an inspiration and point of departure for many of our communities, mostly we have chosen not to adhere to behaviorist doctrine. For Los Horcones, however, behaviorism is more central to its identity. For them, the rest of us didn't take it seriously enough, and they felt estranged.

In 1980 North Mountain resigned its membership. The person who had been active left the community and no one else had the energy to continue Federation involvement. At the same assembly where this resignation was accepted, Sandhill Farm (Missouri) joined. It was in the spring of that year that Aloe ceased functioning as a community.

In 1982 Appletree (Oregon) was admitted, followed by Chrysalis (Indiana) in 1983. Also in 1983, Krutsio (Baja California) was accepted as a group-in-dialogue. In 1986 Metta-

How Does the Federation Operate?

nokit (New Hampshire) became our newest member, and the Foundation for Feedback Learning (New York) was recognized as a group-in-dialogue.

One frustration in trying to promote Federation is that many groups don't see the immediate advantages of joining, especially if they aren't looking to expand. The advantages would be clearer and stronger if the Federation represented more communities and people. But because we are relatively small we are in the Catch-22 position of not being able to attract the people who might attract others.

Many communities do not have a vision that extends beyond their immediate situation, or lack the individuals with the time or inclination to regularly work or associate with other communities.

Over the years about two dozen other groups have been in correspondence with the Federation regarding membership, and some have sent representatives to assemblies.

Despite this show of interest over the years, the Federation has not fulfilled the dream of expansion modeled after the Kibbutz Artzi experience. What *has* been accomplished? Let's examine the record against the 1976 agenda. Aspirations at the outset fell into five major categories.

Original Federation Aims

1. **Recruitment.** Here we have accomplished a lot. All of our communities are generally looking for more members and it is in this area where Federation work is most visible and readily appreciated. The cornerstones of this are a \$2,000 annual print ad budget, and the publication and distribution of an introductory brochure, describing the Federation and the member communities. (For current information about each of the member communities, see page 3.)

The Federation's decision-making body is the Assembly. It is comprised of up to two delegates from each member community. The Assembly meets twice a year, with the role of host rotated among the membership.

In addition to matters of philosophy and policy, the Assembly has a budget to work with. Each member community contributes dues in the form of money and labor. The money is 1% of net revenues, plus a \$200 base each year. The labor has been eight hours per working member per year, plus the time needed for delegates to attend the assemblies. (At the most recent assembly the delegates approved an increase in the labor tax to ten hours per working member per year, and this decision is pending ratification by member communities to take effect.) Along with donations and other income, there is presently about \$18,000 and 2,000 hours in the annual budget.

The Assembly prefers to make decisions by consensus. In recent years our commitment to this

process has been strong enough that we have not needed to resort to voting for the past five assemblies. However, in the event that consensus is blocked and a decision is deemed necessary, we rely on a weighted voting formula to make decisions. This formula is a compromise between one-community-one-vote and one-member-one-vote. It gives the larger communities more clout while preserving a voice for the smaller communities.

For overseeing its work, the Assembly has created the positions of Secretary, Treasurer, Public Relations Coordinator, General Ads Manager, Friends of Community Coordinator, Financial Liaison, Outside Children Liaison, and Networking Coordinator. Currently only the Secretary is a paid staff position, with a budget sufficient to fund 250 hours annually.

For making Federation decisions between meetings the Assembly relies on a three-person Executive Board, whose two-year terms are staggered.

Excepting East Wind, where Federation work is supplemented substantially by its own ad budget, the Federation does the principal recruitment advertising for all the communities. Today, whenever a letter of inquiry is received by one community, information about all our communities goes out.

Also, we have created two Federation slide shows, both an introductory version and one specifically dealing with gender roles in our communities. These are used to accompany lectures, and where appropriate at conferences and gatherings. In the

past year we have begun work on producing an introductory Federation video.

We distribute literature for each other, and record data about correspondence and visitors in a central file for all, providing record-keeping and evaluation services.

We subsidize travel and participation costs to represent the Federation at conferences, gatherings, and other outside events.

With the information and knowledge readily available, we regularly refer visitors and prospective members to each other. And it is not

uncommon for members to leave one Federation community and join another.

Federation has been accomplishing its mission here so well that member communities essentially get full value back for their member dues in recruitment benefits alone. That is, it would cost at least as much as the dues to duplicate, on their own, what the Federation now does for them.

2. Financial assistance. It's difficult to tell how much impact Federation involvement has had here, since a lot was already happening prior to 1976. But there has been definite benefit and it continues today.

Since joining the Federation, Dandelion has switched its economic base away from tinnery to hammocks, which it learned from Twin Oaks and East Wind. Back in 1978, when Alpha Farm (Oregon) was seriously interested in Federation involvement, East Wind started it up in the sandal industry.

In the late 1970's Dandelion continued a community mail-order book-selling business started by Twin Oaks. Now Sandhill does it.

Today, East Wind and Sandhill are exploring the possibility of a joint marketing venture, selling honey, sorghum, and nut butters in a gift pack. Another spinoff of East Wind's considerable marketing contacts is Federation assistance in helping Krutsio sell the nori it harvests from the Pacific Ocean.

There is some joint purchasing (particularly in the shared hammocks industry), but mostly the logistics of time and space have worked against this; our communities are too spread out and our needs too diverse. The potential for unified buying is further undercut by the green tint of our politics. That is, we tend to favor regional systems and buying locally, and our communities are typically not local to each other.

There have been several intercom-

munity loans over the years, as one community helps another with cash flow problems, or even long-term debit. Bypassing the banks, it is usually possible for both the lending community to get a better return, and the borrowing community lower interest rates.

An exciting project just under way is an effort to pool funds against the possibility of future emergencies. In particular there is concern about our communities' ability to handle the financial burden of major medical disasters. We're hoping to take advantage of our combined numbers to spread out the risk and create a safety net big enough for everyone. Meanwhile, the money set aside will not be idle; we'll loan it to ourselves at favorable rates, or invest it in socially responsible ways.

We have largely passed beyond the era of hand-to-mouth economics, and are beginning to develop some sophisticated financial skills. The Federation is playing a role in helping to learn these skills and access them.

3. Promoting intercommunity contact. The Federation has certainly facilitated contact among member communities. Many for example have taken advantage of Federation travel subsidies to attend events at other communities.

In particular, Dandelion hosted, with Federation support, a general communities conference every summer up until 1983. Over the years Twin Oaks has sponsored a variety of conferences and gatherings, including both a women's and men's gathering in 1986.

Over the years there has been a great deal of labor exchange among the communities. Undoubtedly the greatest flow has been between Twin Oaks and East Wind, but all the communities have benefited.

Dandelion has made considerable use of labor assistance in both construction and income work. In

recent years Sandhill has attracted members of both East Wind and Twin Oaks to come out for the busy sorghum harvest in October.

Sometimes the help is more specialized. Twin Oaks has helped East Wind with building design several times, including work now being done for a new children's complex. Also, Twin Oaks, with help from a Federation budget, was able to send a facilitator to East Wind this past spring to help conduct community-wide visioning process. More of this skill-specific help is expected in the future.

Throughout its history the Federation has struggled with ways to assist more with transportation between member communities, to overcome the single greatest obstacle to more contact: the considerable distance between communities. We have yet to figure out a way to finance and maintain a vehicle that would make sense in light of our budget. So far it has always seemed that we'd be getting too little contact for too much money.

We benefit substantially from the delegates attending the semi-annual assemblies, the hosting of which is rotated among the member communities. In addition to the value of the meetings themselves, it is both a chance for the visiting delegates to get a personal feel for another community, and an opportunity for non-delegates to meet folks from these other places they've heard so much about.

Beyond physical contact, the Federation has fostered information exchange. In addition to distribution of minutes of the assemblies, it funds both a quarterly newsletter and a quarterly literary magazine.

4. Keeper of the flame. When the Federation was created it was hoped that it would be a vehicle for community movement support. That it would increase visibility for our

Where Does the Money Go?

Here is the 1987 Federation budget, as approved at the November, 1986 assembly:

General advertising (U.S.)	\$1,900
General advertising (Canada)	300
Brochure	3,600
Products catalog	100
Flyer (one-page introductory handout)	110
<i>Living the Dream</i> (subsidy to publish in paperback this book about Twin Oaks)	1,383
Video (purchasing cassettes and renting equipment to make an introductory video about the Federation)	550
Friends of Community	1,100
Newsletter	160
<i>Community Soundings</i> (quarterly literary magazine)	440
Outside event travel subsidy	600
Women's gathering travel subsidy	400
Men's gathering travel subsidy	400
Labor exchange travel subsidy	600
Assembly travel	3,400
Postage and office	2,500
Secretary labor	1,125
Secretary travel	250
Total	\$18,918

efforts, and represent our combined interests to others. It was also being looked to for delineation of philosophy and articulation of the vision.

In 10 years the Federation has made only modest progress in this area, but has at least kept the movement flag aloft among our communities.

At first, the Assembly relied on the enthusiasm and good will of the delegates to create and maintain movement consciousness. However, it gradually became apparent that this was not enough. A pattern emerged where there would be considerable enthusiasm for Federation and movement work generated during the assemblies, but which did not typically spread to non-delegates and tended to dissipate quickly after the meetings ended and delegates became reabsorbed with more immediate work at home.

In the late 1970's and early 1980's the bulk of Federation business was being handled by two or three people. In an effort to move away from this tendency and develop a broader base of support, the Assembly created in 1982 the administrative position of General Manager. The job was to monitor progress on tasks and projects, troubleshooting as needed. It was hoped this would result in better continuity and more work being done in time. Simultaneously, the Assembly encouraged project managers to involve non-delegates in Federation work to the extent possible.

Encouraged by the results, two years later the Assembly went a step further and expanded the General Manager role into the regular staff position of Secretary. This person is reimbursed for spending the average one day per week on Federation business. The idea was to have someone whose responsibility it was to regularly think in terms of being a Federation person; to see opportunities and needs from a Federation perspective.

At the time there was concern about too much responsibility being vested in one individual, and whether this would undermine efforts to broaden Federation involvement. But it was also recognized that there were projects languishing for lack of focus, and that having a staff person offered hope of finally moving forward on some of the more difficult and formidable tasks.

In the two years since we've had a Secretary, this person has introduced an effort to unify recruitment data collection for outreach evaluation, done some intercommunity matching of skills and needs, and organized the effort to create an intercommunity security fund.

The Secretary also has responsibility for correspondence other than

recruitment letters, and a modest travel budget to attend one or two outside events per year and visit member communities other than during assemblies. Through this position the Federation is now doing a better job of representing itself in the alternative movement.

Inspired in part by the considerable success of the kibbutz federations to raise money for their work through outside donations, the Assembly created the Friends of Community in the late 1970's. Seen both as a fund-raising effort and an opportunity for general outreach, Friends of Community offers a way to involve more people in our lives, especially those who are sympathetic with our efforts to create an alternative lifestyle but who are not able or willing to move to

community themselves. After a show of initial enthusiasm this effort became relatively inactive in the early 1980's. Now, however, it is being revitalized, and we are excited about this program's large potential. (For more information write: Marcos Canyon, Friends of Community, Tecumseh, MO 65760.)

5. Stability and growth. The Federation has decidedly helped stabilize some of the smaller communities, such as Dandelion, Sandhill, and Appletree. It has done this by providing crucial help with recruitment, by publicizing the need for labor assistance at times of shortage, and by supplying a feeling of connectedness when population and morale were low.

Beyond that, we have recently put together a package of written materials on structure and systems in anticipation of helping communities just in the process of forming. There has been only modest use of this so far, and it has produced no new member communities. At least so far.

Unlike the kibbutz federations, we have not sent people or money to help form new communities. Though many of us hope to offer this kind of support in the future, our help to date has been limited to written materials and some assistance with advertising and recruitment.

Our communities have largely failed to grow, despite a clear interest in doing so. Through its considerable recruitment work, the Federation has helped attract many new members. But those coming in are just equalling those leaving. Turnover remains high, at 20% annually or greater.

Although the number of members has remained about the same over the past decade, the quality of life has been steadily improving. One way we are trying to do a better job of retention is by continually enhancing the variety and quality of choices in our communities; by making it more

attractive to stay than to leave. It will be interesting to see how well this works.

Our communities have mostly advanced beyond the pioneering stage and into a phase of consolidation. Our industries and businesses are maturing and our economies are more secure. This prosperity is well-reflected in the Federation's annual budget, which is derived mostly from a percentage contribution of member communities' net revenues. Without significant change in the formula, the Federation budget has grown from \$2,000 in 1977 to over \$18,000 today.

The Federation's Place in the Community Movement

Taken as a whole, in its first 10 years the Federation has definitely achieved some of its original mission, though not all. Perhaps the biggest disappointment has been the small number of communities involved and the modest growth in total population represented.

Over the years some of our membership have looked at our relatively static size and argued for opening the organization up to more groups through a loosening of membership standards.

Yet it is important to realize that this is a two-edged sword. We are picky about who can join and this has kept the membership low, but this same pickiness has provided us with a broad base of common values upon which we've built the trust and organization necessary to achieve the results we have.

There are other community networks in North America which have been less exclusive in their membership, such as the Earth Communities Network (in the Pacific Northwest) and the New England Network of Light. Within the context of intentional communities they have based their membership policy more on geography than values. As a conse-

quence these networks enjoy a larger membership than the Federation and within each network all the communities are located within easy traveling distance of each other (a la the Israeli kibbutzim). Yet they lack the cohesion and level of trust we have been able to develop. Uniquely, Federation communities agree to tax themselves and are able to run coordinated programs for recruitment, outreach, and financial security.

Still, the regional model is very appealing and this analysis leads easily to: where do we go from here? What role can and should the Federation and other networks play in the future of the community movement?

One way the Federation is demonstrating its concern with this issue is by involvement with efforts to energize the Fellowship for Intentional Community (FIC), a network of networks and other organizations supportive of the alternative movement. The first major test of interest in this idea will be participation at the national FIC membership meeting, scheduled for May 23-25, 1987, at Stelle, Illinois.

What are the Federation directions today?

I see five categories:

1. **Strengthen the organization.** We are still tinkering with the best structure for doing Federation business. We have made a lot of progress improving meeting process and job descriptions, but areas of responsibility remain ambiguous. I expect us to move toward more staff positions, as we feel we can afford them and use them well.

2. **Clarify political values.** The Federation has largely ignored its original mandate to do this, but the need is still there. Our communities have strong ties with political forces which are potent in the mainstream culture, and we need to do a better job making

clear our links with feminism, ecology, pacifism, and the like. I expect us to develop position papers delineating our philosophy.

3. Expand our outreach role. We need to encourage more writing and more public speaking, to tell our story. Far too few know we are an existing, viable alternative. In particular, I believe we need to concentrate on developing better ties with the academic community. I expect us to greatly improve on the quality and variety of visual and written materials we make available.

4. Better coordination of efforts within the community movement. The main initiative now is involvement with the FIC and seeing where that leads. If it doesn't do all we want, we may need to develop other forms of intercommunity involvement.

5. Enhance services to members. For communities already members, we could do much more to facilitate labor exchange, cultural exchange, and information exchange. In particular, I expect the Federation to be active in the development and application of more sophisticated financial skills. For communities who might become members, I expect us to put together a team of people and resources to help them better understand and access the benefits of membership.

There is no shortage of work. Come back for another look in 1996 and see how we've done after another 10 years. □

Editor's note: the author has been a member of Sandhill Farm for more than 10 years, a Federation delegate for seven years, and Federation secretary since 1985.)

TO OUR READERS

continued from page 2

Befitting egalitarianism, we choose not to use the words "he", "him" or "his" when we actually mean to use a neuter gender pronoun. Instead you'll see "co" and "cos" rather than the assumed masculine. Some people also use unusual spellings of the word "women", such as "wimmin" and "womyn" to break the association of women being a subset of men.

We are a diverse group. The ideas here represent some of us, but one could easily find dissenting opinions within our communities for most issues. I think agreement is a little easier in the smaller communities where one might have as few as four others to contend with, while at the larger communities some could be dealing with as many as eighty people. To paraphrase an old saying, "seventy communards, a hundred opinions". Actually, our level of agreement and cooperation is rather high. Process is quite valued. Sometimes process itself becomes tedious or trying, but we are striving to achieve satisfaction for all involved; not an easy task, but a fulfilling one.

There are a few people who helped me considerably, and I'd like to take this chance to thank them. Sandy Suggit, for her beautiful artwork, and Twig for his. Higgins, Esme, Shelley, Virgil, and Sarah E.W. for their editing, proofreading, and typing efforts. And especially to Laird, for getting me into this "whole mess" in the first place.

If you'd like more information, our address is:

F.E.C.
Box CM10
Tecumseh, MO 65760

With that, I proudly introduce the Federation of Egalitarian Communities.

— Elke Lerman □

LETTERS

continued from page 2

Congratulations on the latest issue. It is super and a fine promo piece.

Loved the three color cover! It was also inspiration in terms of my issue. Somehow the model communities theme and the visionary nature of the whole presentation seemed to ring true with what I would want to do with the "Planetization" issue.

Gareth Branwyn
Arlington, VA

Editor's Note? Gareth Branwyn is Communities' regular Resources columnist and will soon be guest editing an issue of the magazine.

The magazine has gained a more professional tone to it. I know how much work is involved in getting it out and want you to know that it's new broader approach has expanded by knowledge of the whole communal movement.

I look forward to the new, updated directory.

Arnold Weinstein
Greenwich, CT

I was happy to receive this issue of *Communities* (71 & 72) magazine and read such quality articles. I thought intentional community enthusiasm was dead, now I read that it is at least alive intellectually. I like the purpose of the F.I.C., and the idea of a new city along the lines of the Renaissance Cities.

The founding of a new intentional community composed of many diverse communities and individuals has been on my mind since founding the Clairemont Project in October of 1985. I believe I have a plan that would make it not only economically feasible but also idealistically compatible incorporating all diverse elements.

Bob Brown
San Diego, CA

I was pleased to see that you "included an article on space colonization" in the Nos. 71 & 72 issue of *Communities*. The space movement and the communities movement could be easily united.

Skinner's *Walden Two* and O'Neill's *The High Frontier* could be joined together. I have attempted to describe such a fusion in the following draft prospectus.

Scott G. Beach
Fair Oaks, CA

DRAFT

Eutopia: A Prospectus

Eutopia, a community of approximately 1,000 people, will be established somewhere on Earth.

Eutopia's cosmology will rest on the assumption that its nonmaterial culture can be improved and ought to be improved, and that improvements can be made by applying the experimental method to the design of cultural practices. An "improvement" is a new, noncoercive cultural practice that increases the probability that members will behave the way they ought to behave. Such improvements decrease the extent to which members must be coerced to behave the way they ought to behave.

Who will decide how the members "ought to behave"? The members will decide. The members of the community will take part in the design and testing of new, noncoercive cultural practices. If, after experimental testing, a proposed practice appears to be an "improvement," the members may order that the improvement shall become a part of the community's culture.

Experimental, egalitarian, democratic, cooperative, conservative, self-sufficient. These adjectives can be used to describe Eutopia's

initial socio-cultural system. In this context, these terms have the following meanings.

Experimental: Eutopia will be an "experimental community" in that the experimental method will be applied to the improvement of the community's culture.

Egalitarian: The members of Eutopia will have approximately equal access to wealth, power and prestige. (Eutopia will not be a class society—a society composed of groups that have differing access to wealth, power and prestige.)

Democratic: All adult members of the community will have the right to participate in the formulation of the community's policies.

Cooperative: In Eutopia, cooperation will be encouraged and adversarial relationships will be discouraged.

Conservative: The members of Eutopia will not be encouraged to have "unlimited wants"—to consume ever increasing amounts of resources. Consumerism, the ethic of consuming ever increasing amounts of resources, has generated global, environmental degradation. To counter this degradation, Eutopia's members will be encouraged to live lightly upon the Earth.

Self-sufficient: Eutopia will endeavor to fashion its sociocultural system into a model that can be easily replicated at extraterrestrial locations. Initially, commerce between Earth and extraterrestrial communities will be difficult and expensive. To minimize the need for such commerce, extraterrestrial communities will have to be nearly self-sufficient. If Eutopia is able to become nearly self-sufficient, this will increase the probability that it will be used as a model for extraterrestrial communities.

Children in Community

A REQUEST FOR ARTICLES

I am compiling material on child care and education in community for a future *Communities* theme issue. I would like to encourage anyone who has available material on this subject, or who may be willing to write an article, to contact: *Allen Butcher, Twin Oaks Community, Louisa, VA 23093.*

Thus far material has been collected or is being sought from Hutterites/Bruderhoff, Kibbutz, Federation of Egalitarian Communities, and Stelle. Any other submissions of material would be appreciated, including experiences of urban collective households and of cooperative schools. Article submission deadline is not set, but please contact above address soon.

Explore the world of alternative, intentional communities by reading

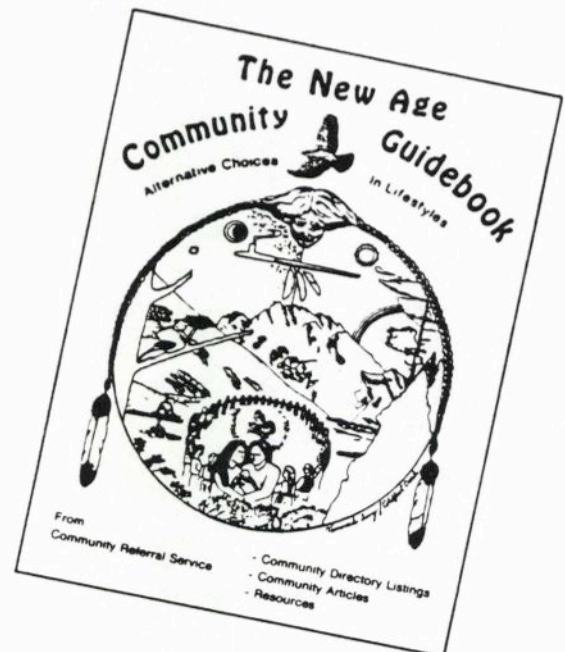
THE NEW AGE COMMUNITY GUIDEBOOK

This 120 page, comprehensive, fact-filled publication features:

- ★ Addresses & descriptions of over 200 New Age Communities
- ★ 28 Articles about communities, written by members
- ★ Resources and booklists
- ★ Newly updated — November, 1986

A **MUST** for anyone interested in joining a community.

Send \$8.00 (includes postage & handling — U.S. currency only, foreign orders please add \$1.00) to Community Referral Service, P. O. Box 2672-6, Eugene, OR 97402





REACH

Reach is a reader service intended to help people looking for communities and communities looking for people to find one another. Listings should be 50 to 150 words, preferably typewritten. We request payment of \$10 for listings for up to 100 words and \$15 for longer listings. These amounts are 60% lower than our special classified ad rates for communities and cooperative organizations. Please note that dated material requires a lead time of at least 6 weeks before the publication date for an issue.

Conferences

A Living/Learning Experience in Alternative Communities—Spring Semester 1987. April 4-June 19, 1987.

Sponsored by the Department of Cultural Foundations of Education of the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, and the Center for Urban Community Development, Division of Outreach and Continuing Education with The High Wind Association in Wisconsin, The Findhorn Community in Scotland, and The Ourres Community in France.

This course is offered for academic credit and non-credit. For information, contact:

Carol Fratrack, CUCD

University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee
29 North Sixth Street
Milwaukee, WI 53203

CESCI and FIC Annual Conference

The Community Educational Service Council, Inc. (CESCI) will hold its annual membership meeting during the weekend of May 24-26, 1987 in Stelle, IL. In addition to the regular CESCI meetings, weekend activities will include the first offering of the Fellowship for International Community (FIC). The program will include a film festival on several different communities including the Federation of Egalitarian Communities, the Society of Emissaries, and the Builders of

the Dawn slide show by Corinne McLaughlin and Gordon Davidson. For more information write to:

CESCI c/o Charles Betterton
105 Sun Street
Stelle, IL 60919

☆ The University of the Future:
Alternative Communities Today
and Tomorrow

—Credit course offered through the University of Massachusetts.

Held at the Sirius Community near Amherst, Massachusetts, this course will explore the benefits and challenges of community living, and the innovative ideas being pioneered by these "research and development centers" for both social and personal change. New community approaches to societal problems will be studied, including bio-dynamic agriculture, Mondragon cooperatives, land trusts, bio-shelters, solar energy, arcologies, social investment, group attunement, and "creative conflict" techniques. 30 new age communities around the U.S. and the world will be surveyed, including Findhorn, Twin Oaks, Stelle, Chinook and High Wind. Includes slideshows and field trips (with text *Builders of the Dawn* by instructors). Three credits; one additional credit for living-in experience may be obtained as independent study.

Dates: Tuesday, June 2 through Friday, June 12, 1:30-6:00 PM.

Instructors: Corinne McLaughlin and Gordon Davidson, authors of *Builders of the Dawn* and co-founders of Sirius Community.

Cost: \$178.00 (classes only); \$395.00 (classes, room and board); \$335.00 (non-credit classes, room and board).

to apply: Write (\$50.00 deposit required)

Sirius University Program

Baker Rd.
Shutesbury, MA 01072
(413) 259-1505.

People Looking

☆ This is directed to those communities which want new members but haven't listed themselves in the Communities Directory.

We are an Israeli-American couple with two children, born 3/83 and 6/85. We are looking for: mild winters, organic gardening or farming, simple lifestyle, sharing of resources, quiet rural setting, and ecologic responsibility. We want a peer group and social environment for our children which emphasizes discovery and self-esteem rather than TV and violence. We are serious about community and want to make a move in the near future. If your community sounds like what we have described above, please contact us.

Tirtza and Jack Leiss

Rt. 2, Box 456-8
Chapel Hill, NC 27514
(919) 933-9323

☆ "Making Contact" is a national network of homeschooling families interested in exploring possibilities for living near other such families. Each family writes one page describing what they are looking for: urban/rural, degree of co-operation preferred (anywhere from simply neighbors to intentional community), etc.. Beginning to get to know each other in this way, each family decides what they will do from there. Families run the network co-operatively. For more info, send SASE to:

Making Contact

804 Wellner
Naperville, IL 60540

☆ I am a 19-year-old college student who can no longer try to live purely and simply among waste, consumption, competition and cruelty. I am vegetarian, gentle, healthy, stable, no drugs, lonely, nature-worshipper, long-time believer in close to

earth, communal living (rural and without electricity). I'm seeking commitment with true work (washing clothes, farming, etc.). Ready to give my total energy to the group. Open to all back to land lifestyles. Hoping,

Blake Richard
121 17th St.
Manhattan Beach, CA 90266

☆ New Age Community—N/W Ark.

We are looking for others to help us establish a metaphysical community in this area. We are looking for responsible, sincere, optimistic people to join us.

Brownie Zachry
Rt. 8, Box 148
Rogers, AR 72756
A/C (501) 631-7077

Groups Looking

☆ Healing and survival community needs serious vegetarian individuals or families to caretake this land (fruit orchards, maintenance, future greenhouse, etc.) in exchange for residence, utilities and a special place to be. May be self-sufficient there, or use developed skills to generate additional support income. Children warmly welcome! Future goals: children's learning center, underground radio communications and storage facilities, complete self-sufficient and healing environment (some of which already exists). Location is central Arizona mountain country. Write to:

Christmas Star Valley
c/o Wind Spirit
2300 Dripping Springs Rd.
Windelmon, AZ 85292
(213) 474-0689

Land

☆ Land for Sale. Rural macrobiotic community, central Missouri. Open bottom land, hardwoods, pond, 1200 sq. ft. trailer with addition, barn, all utilities. Community of 35 involved with nature, self-reliance, family life and fun. 12 acres, near Columbia MO. Call or write

Tom or Jean Hurre
Stelle, IL 60919
(815) 256-2222

Late Arriving Entries

☆ Healing and survival oriented community, small and growing, wants to connect with serious future builders working for the Great Plan to provide ways to help others to treat the Earth as sacred, the animals as friends and helpers and other beings as precious.

The forty acres of Arizona mountain wilderness in a fertile valley has offered the ability to grow many varieties of fruit trees and has shown the many untapped cottage industry potentials. There are at present small domes, an old ranch house, outside spa and bathing area, tool and equipment facilities, and many other projects in the making. Residents help with new projects as they occur, caretake the land and share utilities. Children are warmly welcome as well as horses and other non-neurotic animals.

Future projects: various types of greenhouses, children's learning center, wind and solar power, underground life support systems, emergency storage and radio communications facilities, and continued healing environment landscaping.

There are occasional workshop and celebration gatherings which sometimes bring close friends like Viktoras Kulvinskis and Atlantis Circle of Light members who are directly connected to Christmas Stars function.

Write, or call anytime.

Christmas Star Valley
c/o Wind Spirit
2300 Dripping Springs, Rd.
Winkelman, AZ 85292
(213) 280-9992

☆ Peaceful, healthy, cooperative brother and sister seeking/opening to group marriage/land cooperative. Working knowledge of cooperative living and decision making. Values deep friendships, shared parenting, enhanced economics, evolutionary personal growth. Assets include 24 secluded mountainous acres, lake frontage, self-sufficient skills, cottage industry potentials, resources toward shared construction of alternatively enlightened three master suites communal home. Children welcomed.

Tumtum Heart Consociation
P.O. Box 57
Tumtum, WA 99034

☆ In *Phoenix* we're creating incredible intimacy, deep love and joy, and rapid and intense psychological and spiritual growth. We also have successful professional careers and a great urban upscale lifestyle. We'll welcome three more people to our totally intimate and very heart-level three-adult group marriage. You may also be interested in our visionary project: creating radically improved biofeedback systems for reaching high states of consciousness. If you might fit well with Phoenix, call us in Beverly Hills, California at (213) 275-3730.

Phoenix
257 No. Wetherly Dr.
Beverly Hills, CA 90211

1987/1988 Directory of Intentional Communities

We are presently compiling articles and listing data for an expanded directory and guide to intentional communities which will be published in June of 1987. The directory will provide general information about the many accomplishments of these communities toward personal, social, and global transformation, as well as listings of individual communities. If you are a community or community-oriented group of 5 or more people and you would like to be listed in the directory, please send us a 50 to 150 word description (subject to editing) before April 15, 1985. Please include the following information; the name of your group or community, your

goals, purpose, hopes, dreams, number of members, years together, physical location and environment, governmental structure, visiting policy, interest in new members, etc. We would also like black and white photographs and color slides of each community for several multi media presentations we are developing. We are particularly interested in photos that demonstrate the services communities and other light centers provide. We invite every intentional community and cooperative group to take advantage of this opportunity to help spread the spirit of community. Please send us your listing as soon as possible before April 15.

FOUNDATION FOR FEEDBACK LEARNING,

Continued from page 12.

For these reasons, we spend more time on the development of individual capability, and effective interaction than on legislating group or individual behavior, or on creating better rule and enforcement structures. Our interest is in learning how to talk to each other caringly and clearly enough to decide wisely; and to become strong enough to handle whatever goes wrong. It seems pointless to invest a lot of hope in systems for good decision-making, rotating leadership, and equality of opportunity if most people choose to refuse the gift most of the time. Well-designed participatory management isn't worth much to people who opt not to participate knowledgeably, or even at all. The best information distribution procedures don't do much for people who don't want the information, don't think about it, and rarely use it. Opportunities for intimacy are not helpful to people afraid to love, and made anxious by contact. It doesn't matter what one wants to do if it

seems to them impossible even to try. When effective interaction is out of the question, and communication doesn't work, cooperation is unlikely. Self-image formed by approval doesn't permit autonomy, no matter what the group values. Experience indicates that until some significant changes happen within and between individuals, carefully designed support systems are simply not likely to make much difference. It seems clear that changing the environment has not been enough to promote the necessary growth in people. We're betting that changes in people will enable them to create whatever environment they want. Hopefully, sane people will create a sane world.

We are firm in our resolve that developing the process of behavioral learning is the most important contribution we can make to the pressing socio-economic, political issues of our era. It also seems the best route available to a good life for each of us.

Attention Writers

WE NEED YOUR HELP!

The Men's Magazine is a new quarterly magazine which explores the male experience and addresses issues common to men of all ages. It adheres to positive attitudes toward psychology, health, and the arts. Its goal is to encourage all men and women to lead socially responsible, physically healthy, and emotionally vibrant lives.

The Men's Magazine encourages experts and lay people to contribute feature essays that lend insights into the ongoing male struggle; short stories illustrating contemporary male issues; interviews emphasizing specific personal details; psychological analyses of man's present day behavior; discussions on diseases, exercise and health; editorials that offer insights into the

lives of men; poems; personal accounts; humor and cartoons; book reviews; art and entertainment; articles pertinent to men in any and all facets of their lives.

The Men's Magazine is dedicated to printing the contributions of people of all ages, of all ethnic, social, and economic backgrounds. Its editors are eager to help unseasoned authors edit and revise material where necessary. Contributions should reflect humanistic attitudes and generally be supportive of men. All contributions must be signed and include a phone number and address. Materials without SASEs (Self Addressed Stamped Envelopes) will not be returned.

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COMMUNITIES

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Tom & Jean Hurrell
Stelle, IL 60919
(815) 256-2222

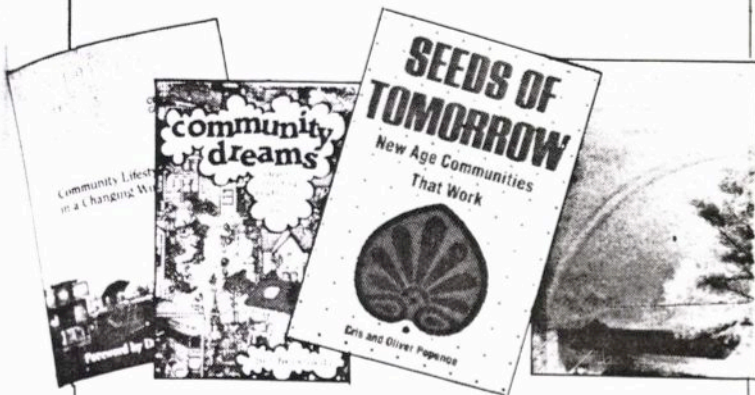
CIRCLE OF THE EARTH

A poetic, spiritual fellowship dedicated to the Earth and Her rituals and directed toward planetwide transformation. Rural community anticipated. Send \$2.00 for introductory talk by Victor Greentree.

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OTHER PUBLICATIONS

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COMMUNITIES PUBLICATIONS COOPERATIVE



1985/1986 DIRECTORY OF INTENTIONAL COMMUNITIES: (Still available and current until the new directory is published in the summer of 1987.) **\$5.00.**

1987/1988 DIRECTORY OF INTENTIONAL COMMUNITIES: Available Summer 1987. New and expanded Directory issue featuring listings of communities with information on size, purpose, government, relationships, religious/spiritual practices, diet, visiting policy, etc. Special Resource section with book reviews and listings of publications, networks, and organizations whose services are related to community and/or cooperation. **\$8.00.**

BUILDERS OF THE DAWN, Corinne McLaughlin & Gordon Davidson: The co-founders of the Sirius Community in Massachusetts describe over a hundred intentional communities as map-makers for humanity's journey into the future, creating companionship and support systems, reducing living expenses, while offering opportunities for spiritual and psychological growth, personal and group empowerment, research and development for society, and education for the future. **\$14.00.**

(Note: All book prices are postpaid.)

SEEDS OF TOMORROW, NEW AGE COMMUNITIES THAT WORK, Oliver and Chris Popenoe: Surveys a wide range of intentional communities, analyzing each carefully, examining its origins, the principles and beliefs that motivate it, administrative structures, business and financial resources, obstacles faced and methods for overcoming them—distilling the general principles that apply to those communities that have proven most successful. **\$12.00.**

THE BEST INVESTMENT, LAND IN A LOVING COMMUNITY, David W. Felder: Information on paying for land, getting construction help, self-sufficiency in food production, and moving into your new home. Also a section on the dynamics of building a peaceful and co-operative community. **\$10.00.**

THE COMMUNITY LAND-TRUST HANDBOOK, Institute for Community Economics: Community land trusts make it possible for people to own their own homes, and enable communities to protect forests and farmlands or redevelop urban areas. Included are comprehensive guides to the organizational, financial, and legal steps with nine case studies. **\$9.00.**

COMMUNITY DREAMS, IDEAS FOR ENRICHING NEIGHBORHOOD AND COMMUNITY LIFE, Bill Berkowitz: A ground-breaking book of "practical utopia." Ideas here are fresh and offbeat, small in scale and low in cost. Powerful and wide-ranging, it is sure to stimulate and motivate anyone who cares about making communities better. **\$10.00.**

THE SMALL COMMUNITY, Arthur Morgan: "Of all major factors which enter into the determination of our national life, few if any are receiving so inadequate attention as is the welfare of the community or primary group . . . The preservation and perfecting of the small community is one of the greatest issues facing our times . . . This book is a survey of the field, and a guide to work within the small community." **\$11.00.**

THE ULTIMATE FRONTIER, Eklal Kueshana: Presents the inspiring philosophy and world view of Scientist-Philosophers dedicated to improving and preserving the best of civilization, offering fresh insights into today's complex problems, and providing a moving and practical message of hope. This book inspired the founding of two intentional communities: Stelle, Illinois and Adelphi, Texas. **\$8.00.**



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