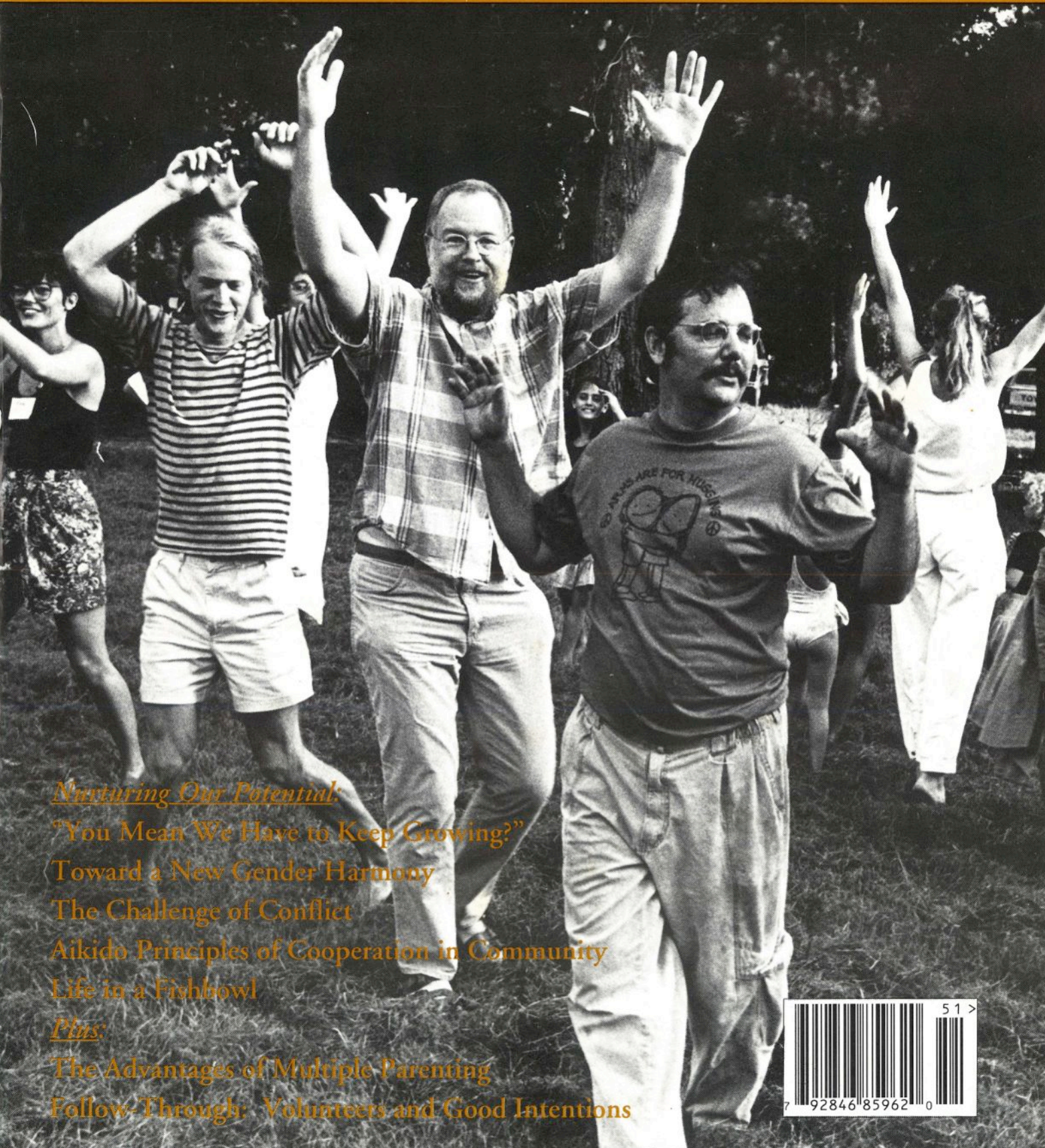


Special Feature: Nurturing Our Potential

COMMUNITIES

Journal of Cooperative Living

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Spring 1995 (#86)



Nurturing Our Potential:

"You Mean We Have to Keep Growing?"

Toward a New Gender Harmony

The Challenge of Conflict

Aikido Principles of Cooperation in Community

Life in a Fishbowl

Plus:

The Advantages of Multiple Parenting

Follow-Through: Volunteers and Good Intentions



Now Incorporating *Growing Community* Newsletter

Communities Directory

The 1995 Edition

The long-awaited 1995 edition of the *Communities Directory* is now available! (See ad on facing page.) Featuring numerous articles about community living and more than 500 community listings, the *Directory* is an indispensable tool for networkers, community-seekers, and anyone interested in the communities movement. See page 75 for information about placing an order.

Directory Update

To keep listings current, *Communities* magazine usually includes a Directory Update that features new listings and address changes for intentional communities. (This was left out of this issue due to the simultaneous publication of the new *Directory*.) If you have new leads for future updates and directories, please fill out and return the form on page 75.

Celebration of Community

This extraordinary event in August 1993 brought together a great deal of community wisdom, most of which was captured on tape. Write to the FIC office (address below) for a summary of the audio tapes available from the event.



T-Shirts

FIC logo shirts are available for \$12; Celebration T-shirts (originally \$12) NOW ON SALE for \$9. All shirts are 100% Cotton; sizes M, L, XL. Colors: cream, white, purple, forest green. Add \$2 shipping & handling for the first shirt, \$.50 for each additional. Send order to FIC T-Shirts, P.O. Box 814, Langley, WA 98260, and specify design, size, and color for each shirt.

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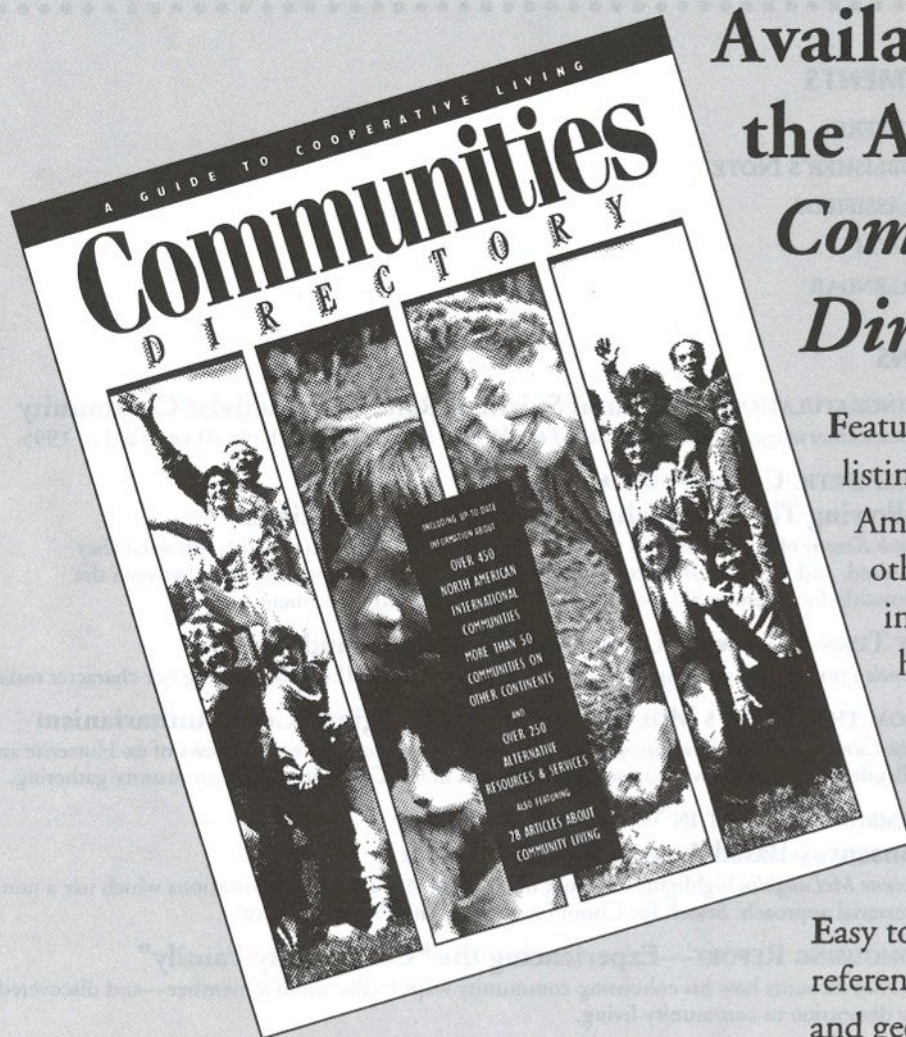
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SUPPORT FIC & ITS PROJECTS

- The Fellowship for Intentional Community was reorganized in the mid-80s, and its first major project was to research, publish, and distribute the 1990/91 *Directory of Intentional Communities*, which was released as a special issue of *Communities* magazine.
- The Directory proved to be incredibly popular ...the third printing has nearly sold out — all 18,000 copies. Based on the success of that project, FIC assumed the publisher's role for *Communities* magazine in the summer of 1992.
- In August 1993, FIC hosted the first-ever International Celebration of Community which drew nearly one thousand participants to the campus of The Evergreen State College near Olympia, Washington. There was an amazing amount of information and inspiration shared at the Celebration, and Issue #83 of *Communities* magazine featured transcripts and reports from the event.
- FIC makes a lot of community referrals — both for people seeking communities and for communities with openings. We help people clarify their goals, identify the skills they need to develop, connect with resource and support organizations, and find like-minded others for pursuing their grand aspirations. (See our Reach section beginning on page 71.)
- We also hold open meetings twice a year, rotating among host communities to encourage participation from all regions. These meetings are where we conduct our general business, organize projects, monitor progress, catch up on our socializing, and get a major infusion of networking. Contact our Langley office for more information, or to offer your community as a host site.
- The Fellowship handles quite a few media inquiries, coming from both alternative groups and the mainstream press. We do what we can to debunk the myths that "communities are all the same," and that "the 'communities movement' started in the '60s and died in the '80s." The reality is that intentional communities are very much involved in the exploration of contemporary issues, and often serve as pioneers in the development of innovative solutions to social and technological challenges.



Available Now . . . the All-New *Communities Directory*

Features 540 completely updated listings for communities in North America, and 70 communities on other continents. The new *Directory* includes many communities that have formed since our first edition in 1990.

Every listing includes contact information and a full description of each group.

Easy to use, it includes maps, cross-reference charts (sorted alphabetically and geographically), and an extensive index for finding communities by areas of interest.

Thirty-one feature articles cover various aspects and issues of cooperative living.

An alternative resources and services section has over 250 listings.

Published by the Fellowship for Intentional Community, a network of communitarians promoting communication and understanding about and among intentional communities.

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To order, please see page 75.

COMMUNITIES

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Living

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Photo by Kurt Vallé.

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A group of friends at a regular gathering of the Friends and Lovers Community.
Photo by Terry Mollner.

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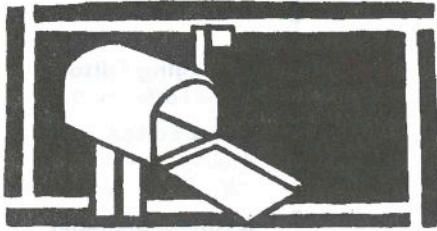
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LETTERS



Send letters to *Communities* magazine, 1118 Round Butte Dr., Fort Collins, CO 80524. Your letter may be lightly edited or shortened. Thank you!

Kudos, Critiques for the "Passages" Issue

Dear *Communities*,

The Winter 1994 issue arrived yesterday. WOW! Looking better and better each issue, I must say. This publication is destined to be a winner in the months/years ahead. Kudos to all the behind-the-scenes folks who have toiled faithfully to make it so. Thank you.

TCS

Dear *Communities*,

I enjoyed the last issue, "Passages: What Have We Learned?" (#85, Winter '94) Many of the varied viewpoints provoked me to consider what to look for in my own (future) community.

I have a suggestion as to how to make future issues more powerful. Even in an issue where the central theme is inherently philosophical or cerebral, I'd like to see some features that speak to the heart—a poignant story (or two or three of these!) which complements the pieces that speak to the rational mind. A line from a Theodore Roethke poem says, "We think by feeling. What is there to know?"

Mind and heart are one. The most powerful communications speak to both. I just renewed our subscription to *Communities* for two years, so I look forward to much more—appealing to both sides of the brain.

Mike Mariner
Boulder, CO

We want more personal stories, too! Other readers commented that they missed the "riveting real-life experiences" they got in issue #84, "Growing Up in Community." Our intention is to balance more personal topics with more general ones in the Feature Focus section of the magazine. Our guest editor for the last

issue, for example, specifically requested that guest authors recount what a whole community had learned, rather than what one individual might have learned.

However we have very personal topics lined up for the rest of the year. Our Summer issue is on "Love and Sex in Community," and our Winter issue is on "Growing Old in Community." If any of our readers would like to submit personal accounts on these topics, we'd love it!

Dear *Communities*,

In the Horse's Mouth column in the last issue, "Living in Community: Original Visions and Actual Experience" (#85), the question was raised whether a significant factor in becoming or remaining a communitarian is the need to escape one's responsibilities or problems in mainstream society.

I think that before communitarians blame others for "shirking their responsibilities as citizens in the larger society," they should take a long, hard look at the "larger society." My guess is that many people actively seek a much different way of life in community because the find life in the "larger society" to be alienating, dull, repressive, resistant to change, and largely dissatisfying (myself very much included!). I find it difficult to believe that some people consider "escaping" the larger society to be something negative.

Does escaping necessarily mean that one is in denial about problems, or is it just that some communitarians become annoyed when they see visitors who wish to seek a more honest, open, loving, nurturing, non-violent, non-coercive, cooperative, and supportive environment? I find it quite understandable that people would escape the "larger society." Why not?

I would say to those who assume that all potential communitarians are fleeing from reality to do some research so they may find out the *real* reason why they *do* escape. In addition, I would ask them to look deeper within themselves and ask themselves why *they* became communitarians.

Ben Steinke
Belleville, Illinois

Thank you for your comments. Our columnists were checking whether or not the popular "escapist communitarian" stereotype was substantiated by data, rather than actually espousing that stereotype. Also, it seems that the people to whom you are addressing your comments—those who believe this "escapist" stereotype—are not themselves communitarians, but rather mainstream people who are misinformed. (Our columnist researchers are not communitarians, but political scientists.)

Occasionally community members do become annoyed, as you point out, when visitors indicate they're seeking the nurturing environment you describe. Several contributors to this issue, however, believe that communities are ideal places in which to foster more honest, nurturing, and cooperative lifestyles. Please see "Mirror, Mirror on the Wall" (p. 6), "Life in a Fishbowl" (p. 30), "The Challenge of Conflict" (p. 57), and "More Confident, Less Idealistic" (p. 32).

Diversity in communities

Dear *Communities*,

I very much liked Bill Paiss' column on diversity in cohousing and appreciate his bringing up this issue. (#85, p. 16) I would add another reason that cultural diversity efforts fail: If you are not already someone who lives in a culturally diverse community and who actively seeks out and enjoys the company of people from other backgrounds, recruiting "those" people for your new intentional community might be too little, too late. It also, to be blunt, might be interpreted as tokenism by your target audience.

Why haven't you chosen those kinds of relationships in your life right now? If you now already had a community of diversity, you would not, as Bill mentions in the article, seek out a "short one-on-one-conversation with a sympathetic person of color," but rather would be having lots of ongoing conversations with Fred and Alice and Victor and Marie and all of your other friends, who may refer to themselves as Black or Mexican or Indian or lesbian or Hmong or physically challenged or simply American, depending on their points of view and political ideas. I personally would be put off if someone approached me and said, "Oh, by the way, Pat, we have to fill our 3 percent quota of female heterosexual Jewish Liberation organic gardeners for our new community; can we have a short, one-on-one conversation on the needs of people like you?"

Pat Wagner
Pattern Research
Denver, Colorado

"Cults," and the anti-diversity police

Dear *Communities*,

Thanks for the marvelous issue that arrived recently—I have just spent two evenings devouring it thoroughly. It's loaded with helpful information. I think the magazine is really on a roll, much more solid than it's been in years.

I was interested in the material on "cults," of course, (#85, p. 29) since that's

my academic specialty, and I appreciated your call for response. I've had a long-running dialogue with various Fellowship for Intentional Community members on the whole matter. The considerable time I have devoted to examining "cult" issues has led me to some very different conclusions than most people seem to have.

I'll try not to go on at great length here, but the two list-of-dangers-to-watch-out-for articles both fell short in their attempt to find accurate generalizations about a subject so diverse that meaningful generalizations are really impossible. The single movement that would run up the highest "cult" score on either list, applying the criteria strictly, is the Roman Catholic Church, and especially the intentional community wing of the church, the religious orders. In fact most religions would come in pretty high—they want your money, they have strong leaders, they want to tell you how to live your life, and so on. Better than any list of characteristics is the approach Geoph Kozeny takes in his "Peripatetic Communitarian" column in the same issue—simply asking, "Does this ring true?" (p. 10)

(Geoph's three "principles of life" in column one are an excellent starting point for this analysis: "1. There is always more information available than what we presently have to work with. 2. We all occasionally make mistakes. 3. Having a lot of people agree on something [even if everyone in your community agrees] does not assure that it is true ... or not true.")

It was also ironic to read those pages in light of what was in much of the rest of the magazine, both in the articles and in the listings. The anti-cult people keep files on the Farm, the Emissaries, anything new age (such as Sirius), and many others, regarding them all as "dangerous cults." Read the third full paragraph on p. 53 again and see if that doesn't put the Love Israel community squarely into "cult" status! But the Love Israel people I've met in fact seem quite normal (I hope that's not pejorative!) and not at all dangerous to their members or anyone else.

I salute Steven Fuson's effort to rehabilitate the word "cult" as neutral, but I'm skeptical that it can be done. In general usage it's hopelessly pejorative. I try to use the word as little as possible.

One last comment: the American Family Foundation, the Cult Awareness Network, and other such groups are not the impartial sources of information they claim to be; they are advocacy groups and should be labeled as such. Their agendas are to eradicate groups they don't like. In my mind, these groups are today's leading anti-diversity po-

lice, and they're fully aware that calling a group a cult is like calling a person a child molester—even if the person is proved totally innocent, the stigma lingers. So a lot of good people suffer from their narrow-minded crusades. I therefore think that the Communities Movement, which clearly and proudly deviates from mainstream culture, should be very careful about giving a boost to people who would love nothing better than to destroy that beautiful movement.

For diversity,
Tim Miller
Lawrence, Kansas

Tim Miller teaches in the Department of Religious Studies at the University of Kansas. He will be the guest editor of our fall '95 issue on "Intentional Communities and 'Cults.'" (See box below.)

Dance New England

Dear *Communities*,

I read your publication for the first time and I am entranced. The concepts you present are appealing and exciting, and I appreciate your commitment to alternative forms of living.

I was especially interested in a column by Paul Freundlich on "Community Dance." (Issue #83, p. 22). I would like to know more about the annual dance camp and when it is. Thank you very much!

Molly Maloy
San Diego, California

Dance New England's annual dance camp in Poland Springs, Maine is tentatively scheduled for August 18–September 2, 1995. For more information write Carolyn Fuller, 12 Douglass St., Cambridge, MA 02139.

Making a living in community

Dear *Communities*,

Have you ever considered doing an issue on income-producing opportunities or cottage industries in communities? It seems that most communities can only offer a prospective member a place if he or she already has an established career and can afford to buy a house in the community and re-establish a profession there. It also seems to me that this ideal situation is not the case for most community seekers.

Dean Durant
Millington, Tennessee

Your point is a good one, and we have considered this topic and will offer it as an issue theme in the future. Some large, well-established communities do offer work opportunities in community businesses for members and do not require a land purchase or initial membership fee. East Wind in Missouri and Twin Oaks in Virginia are two of these.

If any of our readers are especially interested in the issue of how to make a living in community and would like to be the Guest Editor for this topic, please contact us.

Would you like to submit an article, b&w artwork, or photos for our Fall issue, "Intentional Communities and 'Cults'?"

We invite submissions to *Communities* magazine from our readers and from friends in community. Currently we welcome articles for our Fall '95 issue, which explores how far we can embrace diversity before embracing pathology. What distasteful, even abusive, experiences have occurred? How has the stigma "cult" damaged the innocent? How do communities correct neighbors' misperceptions?

If you are interested in submitting something, please contact guest editor Tim Miller for further information and a set of writers' guidelines. He can be contacted c/o the Department of Religion, Dartmouth College, 6036 Thornton, Hanover, NH 03755. The deadline for articles is April 21. (We ask that you do not send manuscripts to *Communities* magazine, but write directly to Tim. Thank you!)

Our Winter 1995 issue will focus on "Growing Old in Community." Our guest editor is Deborah Altus (who also guest-edited our Spring '94 issue [#82] "Women in Community"). If you would like to contribute to this issue, please contact Deborah Altus at 533 Ohio St., Lawrence, KS 66045. The deadline for articles for the Winter issue is May 1.

Mirror, Mirror on the Wall ...

WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT THE FULL DIMENSIONS of being human?

This is a longstanding inquiry, about which there are many ideas and little consensus. Still, there are some powerful observations to make about community as a setting in which to plumb for answers.

Some approaches are reflective and the result of solitary study. While some people arrange their lives to allow for this work, often the need and inspiration arise spontaneously, and it can be a tricky matter of finding the time and space for reflection. In light of this, the flexibility of community to offer short-notice relief from daily routine is noteworthy. If you need the time to look inward, it's often easier in community to rearrange the details of one's life to accommodate.

Time is one of the important resources that community living offers the chance to conserve. By coordinating life in concert with others, we can focus time in potent ways, including freeing people from normal responsibilities to think, feel, and absorb. Communities generally embrace the value of personal growth for their members, so it tends to be easily understood and supported when someone requests special time for personal work. Excepting moments of major transition, like births and deaths, the wider culture does not tend to be so understanding.

Other approaches to developing one's potential involve work in a group setting. Again, community has a lot to offer. Instead of specially crafted weekend retreats, community, at its best, offers the exhilarating prospect of caring, challenging engagements day in and day out. This is the chance to interweave the insightful depth of workshops into everyday life.

Some of the pieces in this issue, such as the articles about People House in Denver and Ganas in New York City, put substance to this vision. Community is the chance, as Keenan says in "The Growth Benefits of Community Living" (p. 32) to live with mirrors; to live an examined life; to explore one's potential (with a little help from your friends). And, as Christine Price notes in "Gestalt Practice" (p. 60), 15 reflections are better than one or two. The potential *of the group* has the power to elicit and help realize the potential *of the individual*.

Just as people see different things in mirrors, there is considerable variety among communities in their preferred styles of reflection and in their dedication to looking. While most communities aspire to support their members' interests in personal growth, this issue of *Communities* illustrates some of the many paths by which groups propose to foster this effort.

In fact, contemporary communities offer an amazing array of choices in the search for enhanced awareness and fuller living. This strength of diversity within community can be carried to the next level ... to the strength of diversity within the Communities Movement. If you can believe that focusing the hearts and minds of 15 people on an issue produces richer results, it follows that 15 approaches to higher-quality awareness and en-

gagement will strengthen the movement, and by accretion, all of humanity. It's a thought.

Another point to make about all this is that communities are places where the attempt is being made to explore human potential by thinking *and* doing. Communities have always been engaged in defining and demonstrating the potential of cooperation and non-hierarchical relationships; they are proving grounds for the practiced limits of cooperative living. We don't just cook up the ideas here; we cook up the meals, too.

If you find this prospect nourishing, think of the Communities Movement as offering a smorgasbord of choices on how to know ourselves and each other better. And think of this issue as a sampler of what's on the menu.

Bon appétit!

Laird Sandhill

COMING IN FUTURE ISSUES ...

The Summer 1995 will focus on "Love and Sex in Community." We will explore how issues of love, relationships, romance, and sexuality affected various communities (and possibly how not dealing with such issues has affected communities); and how various communities' particular philosophies or lifestyle choices about love and sex—monogamy, responsible non-monogamy, celibacy, polyfidelity, gay & lesbian relationships, etc.—may have affected community members over time. Our guest editor is Loren Schein.

In the Fall 1995 issue our topic will be "Intentional Communities and 'Cults.'" Our guest editor is Tim Miller. Our Winter 1995 issue will focus on "Growing Old in Community." Our guest editor is Deborah Altus (who also guest-edited our Spring '94 issue [#82] "Women in Community.")

ABOUT OUR COLUMNS ...

At *Communities* magazine we endeavor to bring you ideas, inspiration, observations, and good advice from a variety of community veterans and researchers. Our columns are written by volunteers and we're grateful to them. Although we don't publish every column in every issue—in this issue, for example, you won't find our usual "Notes in Passing" or "Federation Update" columns—nevertheless we intend to offer as wide a variety of relevant topics as possible over our quarterly issues. If you would like to contribute to a future "My Turn," "Christian Communities," or "Children in Community" column, please let us know: *Communities*, 1118 Round Butte Dr., Ft. Collins, CO 80524. We'd love to hear from you!



CONGRATULATIONS!
.....

Celebrating Long-Lived Communities:

*A rural spiritual retreat;
an activist community*

Here we honor communities which have reached a decade milestone. We congratulate the following communities, which turned 20 years old in 1994.

Abode of the Message

New Labanon, New York

THE ABODE OF THE MESSAGE IS A SUFI community, founded in 1974 by Pir Vilayat Inayat Khan on 430 acres in the Berkshire Hills of New England. We have beautiful mountain and farm lands, original Shaker buildings (this was formerly a Shaker com-

munity), an organic farm and herb garden, a pond, a mountaintop campsite, and trails leading through magnificent scenery.

Our purpose is to accommodate our Universal Worship Service, spread the Sufi teachings, and harmonize with the forces of nature. Our community was formed to answer the need felt by many for a place which would foster their spiritual journey and en-

courage them to bring their spiritual ideals into daily life. Because Sufism is a broad-based mystical tradition, there is room for a wide variety of interpretations of its "Message," based on individual experience. At the same time a common ideal joins community members.

Currently we are 45 adults and 15 children, ranging in age from newborns to teenagers. Our private, fully accredited school, from preschool to sixth grade, serves the children of the community and the surrounding area. We maintain ourselves financially by resident members who pay a monthly board and lodging fee; our annual budget is based on this income. Most residents work in the surrounding area, although a small number are paid employees of the community.

Most members of the community are initiates in the Sufi Order and have their own individually prescribed meditation practices. We have silent prayers three times a day in the Medita-

tion Hall, preceding meals. The Universal Worship Service on Sunday mornings follows an introduction to meditation class. On Wednesday evenings we have a healing class and service; on Thursday evenings we have a class in the basic tenets of Sufism, and a *zikr*, the Sufi practice of remembering the Source and the Goal of all.

The Abode of the Message has been the spiritual home to a great many people over the years. However it may change over the next 20 years, it will remain a community where one can learn, be restored, and discover our potentials and resources. —Hayrah Prall

Teramanto

Renton, Washington

FOUNDED IN 1974, TERAMANTO continues to work towards its original goals—to assist the personal growth of each of its members; engender a more equitable, humane, free, and non-violent society; and preserve the natural environment. We are an autonomous member of the May Valley Co-op (MVC), a homeowner's association which was formerly an intentional community.

Although our ethics are secular and have no affiliation with any religion, we attempt to follow the tenet, "Love God ... and love thy neighbor as thyself," which we interpret to mean giving, both materially and in our attitudes. We helped form the Northwest Preservation Trust to provide low-income housing, and are now building our fourth house on one of two large home sites in MVC. The Trust also gives low-interest loans to other intentional communities in this region which hope to conserve adjacent natural open space. We have induced the MVC to join us in putting its adjoining open acreage into a low-tax, open-space classification, some of which is available to us, the MVC, and its neighbors for organic pea cultivation. We also work closely with Habitat for Humanity in Seattle. —John Affolter

Ω

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Following Through: Volunteers and Good Intentions

I recently had the privilege of attending the first annual National CoHousing Conference, in Boulder, Colorado in October, 1994. Below are excerpts of my article for CoHousing, the quarterly cohousing journal, about my conference experiences and observations. Although written specifically for cohousers, the ideas may be helpful to communitarians in general.

ILL BET FOLKS WERE BUZZING FOR weeks after the amazing National Cohousing Conference. Little did I realize when I agreed to facilitate the meeting of the "Burning Souls" (the passionately committed organizers in cohousing core groups) and speak on the panel, "Learning from Other Communities," that I would be in the presence of so many excited and exciting people.

From my work as a networker among intentional communities, I knew that I could offer plenty of experience directly applicable to living in a cohousing community. What I hadn't realized was just how hungry folks would be for that information.

On Friday, the day before the "official" cohousing conference commenced, 85 burning souls covered a lot of ground in a marathon day-long meeting of networking, sharing, visioning, and organizing. Yet it was repeatedly acknowledged that this was the "easy" part of the job; that the success or failure of this amorphous continental cohousing network would be determined by what happened *after* the conference.

Encouraging Team Volunteers

At the Burning Souls meeting numerous tasks were brainstormed and volunteers identified, and now, a couple of months later, we will see how well the collective follow-through matches up with the stated good intentions. My experience with many communities is that, on a good day, perhaps 20 percent of the assigned tasks will actually get

done the first time around. I've found, however, that there are four simple steps which, if implemented, can greatly increase those completion percentages:

1) Make a list of all the tasks assigned, including the names of each volunteer and a description of each task. Mail a copy to everyone on the list.

2) Assign a person to follow up with everyone named on the list—to periodically check in about how things are going, to ask if any assistance or resources are needed, to provide moral support. This can be more than one person, as in a buddy system, or just one person who volunteers to globally cover this job assignment.

If during one of these check-ins it becomes clear that the volunteer isn't going to be able to complete an assigned task, the buddy is responsible for reporting back to the group, or notifying the back-up person or team (if one exists). The worst-case scenario is that the buddy would inform the task follow-up coordinator that this dangling task should be added to the "re-evaluate and possibly reassign" list.

3) Make sure that the group does an accountability review at its next gathering. Over time this will help the group understand how ambitious it can/should be in taking on new projects in the future, and also get a sense of which members regularly fail to complete assignments. (This is so these members can be gracefully discouraged from volunteering next time.) Psychologically it is incredibly empowering if the group undertakes a somewhat curtailed agenda—and gets most all of it completed. In contrast, it is incredibly *discouraging* to commit to grandiose visions, then come back next time with only small pieces accomplished.

4) Acknowledge and appreciate indi-

vidual accomplishments, and create exercises and ceremonies that strengthen the sense of trust and teamwork among the members of the group. Often activists are so focused on the "big picture" and their part in it, that they're off starting the next task fifteen minutes before today's project is done. And consider this synergistic effect: when volunteers sense that others are aware of their progress and are cheering them on, they tend to have more energy and enthusiasm for completing tasks. Celebrating a job well done is a good way to contribute to that synergy.

Supporting the Support Team

Have you noticed how much of the network support work gets done by volunteers? And perhaps you've also noticed that those volunteers—especially those most involved and therefore most critical to the ongoing growth and health of the organization—tend to be overextended and subject to burnout? There are so many worthwhile (even critical) causes and details vying for our attention that it's certainly easy to get caught up in too many commitments—especially when

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.....

"paying the bills" hangs out near the top of our priority lists.

In contrast, the "right livelihood" concept advocates that individuals figure out exactly what they want to do in life, and then find a way to make their living doing that work. These days it's typical that activists will have some other career to support the social change work that they truly love. But wouldn't it be great if cohousing network organizers—and community organizers in general—could work half or full time to promote the cause? What might it be like if everyone in the cohousing movement decided to contribute a little cash to support the networkers?

Actually, the nine-member Federation of Egalitarian Communities (FEC) offers a good model for the kind of economic base that can be cooperatively created through a

peripatetic (per'i-peh-tet'ik), itinerant; one who travels from place to place.

.....
Geoph Kozeny has lived in communities of one kind or another for 20 years. He has been on the road for seven years visiting communities of all stripes—getting involved in the daily routine of each group, asking about visions and realities, taking photos and slides, and giving slide shows about the diversity and vitality of the communities movement.

decentralized network. Member communities align with seven basic egalitarian principles, tax themselves \$200 per year plus 1% of net revenues, and create a pool of labor by agreeing to commit 10 hours annually for each working member, plus the time it takes delegates to attend the twice-yearly assemblies. In exchange for these resources, the communities receive a number of benefits: collaborative recruitment, a joint security fund for protection against the strain of large medical bills, years of experience in collective living (drawn together in a collection of written materials called the Systems and Structures Packet), a labor exchange program, considerable travel expenses for delegates and for inter-community visits, and a part-time staff person to facilitate communication and understanding among members communities." [Excerpted from the *Communities Directory*, first edition.]

Obviously, the Federation has a much more closely aligned common base than would an alliance of diverse cohousing communities, yet the FEC's example is inspiring. What if each cohousing community, either established or forming, pledged \$25 a year per adult member (roughly \$2 a month), to support the work of the alliance? I'm not current on my statistics, but my impression is that there are perhaps 500 residents already living in cohousing communities, and probably twice that many in groups which are either building their projects or looking for the right piece of land. \$30,000 a year would be enough to hire two half-time staff people and fund some serious office expenses—a small investment compared to the collective benefits that would likely be reaped. Ω

Mutually Supportive Networks

When I and three other participants of the National Cohousing Conference reported on it two weeks later at the November Board meeting of the Fellowship of Intentional Communities (FIC), we each shared enthusiastic accounts of what transpired in Boulder. (See "*Fellowship News*," p. 22) It was clear to us that the Fellowship's experience and connections could be of great benefit to cohousing groups—and equally clear that the FIC could benefit by tapping into the experiences and skills of cohousing professionals and participants. Fortunately, several collaborations are already underway:

- We've got an ongoing Cohousing column here in *Communities* magazine (see p. 15), and we're running quite a few community-seeking-new-members ads from various cohousing groups. (See "*REACH*" ads, p. 71) We also encourage individuals from cohousing groups to submit articles describing their experiences and insights, especially if related to our upcoming themes.

- The 1995 edition of the *Communities Directory* includes a feature article about cohousing, descriptive listings from 10 existing and 20 forming cohousing communities in North America, and entries from five cohousing resource groups.

- The FIC was well represented at the recent CoHousing Conference, and similarly, numerous cohousers attended the FIC's international Celebration of Community in August 1993.

- The FIC will be creating a "home page" on the Internet, and is planning to include a "button" there for people wanting to access information about cohousing. Likewise, the systems operator creating the cohousing home page will also include a button referring electronic explorers to the FIC for information about intentional communities in general.

Certainly an impressive start, and we in the FIC are interested in expanding the ways we relate to individuals, communities, and professionals in the cohousing movement. Let us know if you have needs or suggestions. One idea: the FIC could host an ongoing column for the *CoHousing* journal on the theme of the conference panel, "Lessons from Other Communities." Perhaps by focusing on what other kinds of communities have done right (or wrong) in the past, we can save the folks in the cohousing network many unnecessary headaches and heartbreaks. Let's share our resources of experience!

—G.K.

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MY TURN

 by Orenda Lyons

Growing Up in the Miccosukee Land Co-op

In the "My Turn" column we invite readers to share ideas, opinions, proposals, critiques, visions, and dreams about any aspect of community.

I WAS RAISED IN AN ALTERNATIVE community where cooperation, acceptance, and support were the codes of life. The Miccosukee Land Co-op (the "MLC"), near Tallahassee, Florida, was started in the early '70s. My parents were among the first to buy land in the co-op and I was born 11 days after they moved into a yet-to-be-completed house. Nestled deep in the pine and cypress wetlands, miles outside the city limits, the roads, property, community center and the entire co-op was—and is—my playground.

Growing up, I had many families: my co-op playmates were my siblings and their parents were also my parents. As children we had preschool in each other's homes and roamed the community freely. I remember once my best friend Kristin's yard flooded and about six of us carried a canoe a half

mile to her house; we then canoed through her yard and up a path to another friend's house. We believed that the co-op belonged to us, but as we grew we found that in actuality, it possessed us.

The memories of the past 17 years lie everywhere, from the creek beds we would tromp through to the room in our house where my sister was born. I have seen changes in the land and in the people. I've learned from disagreements among the children and among the adults of the community. I have found a home in the forests, swamps, and families, and hopefully, helped make a home here for others.

As people moved to the co-op and new acres were developed, everyone helped with the building of the houses and the settling in of the new households. On the common land, the pool, community center, and

boardwalks were all constructed by everyone giving up a weekend or two for the benefit of the neighborhood. We had a way of making something spring out of almost nothing.

As with any close group, the co-op family has experienced tragedy. In 1988 a founding member of the community died of AIDS, and another, my uncle, died in 1988, just months before a teenage girl was killed in a car accident. Besides this, two houses have burned and two older men have passed on. Through all of it, everyone has always been there for each other. I remember going to see my friend and neighbor Gerry the day he died. We stopped by on the way home from school and arrived about 30 minutes after he passed away. He had been suffering from AIDS for quite a while and we (and many others) had prepared meals for him and helped him out for months. My mother was at his side when he died, and minutes later friends and relatives gathered to mourn his death, comfort each other, and celebrate

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I would never dream of changing one aspect of growing up here.

his life. Such was also the case with Chip, who died on my 13th birthday. I went to see him, but walking out to his house I met up with my parents, who gave me the news. I still regret not being there at the end.

It is priceless what we can learn from disaster. But what is incredible, what really amazes me, is the way it brings people closer. People stick together so selflessly in times of need. One person's lack of strength is balanced out by 10 strong hearts. One family's sorrow is felt by all. Fundraisers to help them, or friends to console them, are just the beginning.

There are other things which I have gained by living here. The vast diversity of the households encourages acceptance of



KURT VALLÉ

.....
 Orenda Lyons, now 19, wrote this essay originally as part of a college scholarship application. She got the scholarship, and is now a sophomore at Stetson University in Deland, Florida.

Your Turn?

Please send your ideas, opinions, proposals, critiques, and visions (hard copy plus disk, or neatly typed) to: "My Turn," Communities magazine, 1118 Round Butte Dr., Fort Collins, CO 80524.

every kind of living arrangement, culture, and belief. These are taught from parent to child, from child to child, and taken out into the world around us. Happiness abounds in our community through the birth of chil-

dren, the marriages, the parties, and the celebrations of life and Earth—truly these are the heart of community. Looking back, I would never dream of changing one aspect of growing up here. When I think of the

ideal place to raise a family, I think of the co-op. When I think of the most stable and largest family anywhere, I think of the co-op. When I think of myself, I think of the co-op. It has made me who I am. Ω

Last November the members of Miccosukee Land Co-op hosted the Board meeting of this magazine's publishers, the FIC. The MLC's wonderful hospitality included free use of their community building and swimming pool, lodging in their homes, tours of the land, a pizza dinner, a gourmet breakfast by the nearby Sunrise community, and a dance party with two MLC live bands. Many of us were especially moved by this ballad celebrating their community.

The MLC Song

© Rob Lombardo, 1992

They came from mid-America,
they came from far and wide
From cities and the countryside,
the '60s were their lives,
War and strife surrounded them,
protesters they would be,
They wanted to settle on the land,
and founded what is now the MLC.

They cherished independence,
and to some, their anarchy,
The roads were built by hand back then,
with no electricity.
And some first lived in campsites,
and the dogs and kids ran free,
Till the domes were built,
and the families came to settle
what is now the MLC.

Life is cooperation,
many hands were raised as one.
Homes were built together
with good food and friends and fun,
And more folks came to live here
and to build community,
And the land gave back its beauty,
and they founded what is now the MLC.

Chorus:

*They came to build their houses
and to raise their families,
But the land was always sacred
and the rest just came to be,
And the years they worked together
were to be their legacy,
They came together in harmony
and founded what is now the MLC.*

Fire! Fire! Could be their end,
of this they were appraised,
Miles from the nearest town,
and no tools to fight a blaze,
So they schemed and planned and organized;
the VFD would be,
And a firehouse built by hand
stands guard over the land of the MLC.

Barn dancing was a favorite kind
of group activity,
The floor would bounce and the rafters sway,
the dancing wild and free,
But the barn gave way in '82
and a dream would come to be,
A community center rose on the land,
a sign of strength and new prosperity.

The land was soon expanded,
and Sunrise came to be,
Voices raised for governance,
and a pool in '83,
And new ones kept arriving
with new hands and energy,
To hold this land in sacred trust,
and built on what is now the MLC.

Chorus

And the years brought finished houses,
and larger families,
Though they lost some of their loved ones,
and learned from tragedy,
First they lost dear Gerry,
a friend and leader he,
Then Chip and Rosemerry were lost,
and grief descended on the MLC.

And the future will be carved by hand,
and left out there to see,
Cooperation will help it work
for all collectively,
They'll steer a course together,
and in one their strength will be
And the land will be a sacred trust,
passed to on to those who'll build the MLC.

Chorus





FROM THE HORSE'S MOUTH

by Mike Cummings & Harv Bishop

A Look at Religious Communitarianism

MORE THAN ONE PERSON HAS reminded us that our questionnaire data from the 1993 Celebration of Communities gathering in Olympia, Washington, should not be generalized to all communitarians. We are thankful to our co-researcher, Ruth Lambach, for dramatically broadening our sample to include several hundred former residents of Bruderhof and Hutterite communities.

We were excited to learn how many, if any, of our results from the gathering would apply to members and former members of these far more traditional and more religious Anabaptist groups. What follows are preliminary results from the first three dozen respondents who formerly lived in either a Hutterite or a Bruderhof community. Like our gathering sample, these respondents are evenly split between men and women. Though not a complete surprise, the findings are striking.

Hutterite and Bruderhof Communities

The several hundred Hutterite colonies now existing in the north-central United States and south-central Canada date back to the 16th-century Protestant Reformation in Central Europe, and more specifically to their martyred founder, Jacob Huter. The Swiss- and German-based Anabaptists, including Hutterites, Mennonites, and Amish, rejected the Christian sacrament of infant baptism, believing that only adults could meaningfully choose to join the church. Hutterite Anabaptism interpreted passages in the Bible, especially in the Book of Acts, to imply that Jesus and his disciples lived together and held all goods in common, and that true Christians should do likewise.

Over the next four centuries, persecution forced the Hutterites to migrate from central Europe to Russia and eventually to North America. During World War I, the anti-German and pro-war sentiment drove these pacifist, German-speaking agriculturalists from South Dakota and Montana to Alberta, Manitoba, and Saskatchewan. In the 1930s, however, many of the Hutterites returned to the United States. They have been expanding steadily ever since; they now number around 40,000 members living in over 350 colonies.

In the 1920s, Eberhard Arnold founded the Bruderhof, a German-speaking, pacifist, communistic sect similar to the Hutterites in many respects. Persecution forced the Bruderhof to migrate from central Europe to England, then to South America, and in the last 40 years to the northeastern United States, where a half-dozen sizeable communities now practice small crafts and industry.

When Eberhard Arnold discovered the similarities between his own community and those of the Hutterites, he sought affiliation with the much older and larger Hutterite movement. Bruderhof communities, compared to old-line Hutterites, are less ascetic, more artistic, more favorably disposed toward higher education, and less isolated from the outside world. But the two groups share a commitment to religious practice, nonviolence, German as a first language, male political leadership, collective ownership, and tight-knit communal living that protects members from outside "worldly" influence.

Mike Cummings has a B.A. from Princeton and an M.A. and Ph.D. from Stanford in political science. He has been involved in electoral campaigns and community organizing, and has published his research on communal and utopian studies. He chairs the Political Science Department at the University of Colorado, Denver, and enjoys playing ball with his one-year-old, Anthony.

Harv Bishop's academic background is in journalism and political science. He has worked as a newspaper writer-reporter and recently completed an M.A. in political science at the University of Colorado, Denver, with an emphasis on Green politics and communal studies. He currently is teaching courses in environmental politics at UCD.

Preliminary Findings

Just as data about new age and secular communities cannot be generalized to more traditional, religious ones, ex-members of communities—secular or religious—are likely to differ from current members. We plan to expand our sample to include current Bruderhof residents in the near future. Meanwhile, please keep in mind that the present findings reflect answers given by those who, for various reasons, decided to leave their Hutterite or Bruderhof communities.

Leaving community. Why did our religious community ex-member respondents (henceforth called "ex-members") leave their communities? Several said they were asked to leave, while others most often noted a change in themselves or dissatisfaction with the community. The last two reasons, but not expulsion, were cited most often among our past communitarians from the gathering. What features of religious community life are most heavily criticized by those who chose to



Positive aspects of community life most often mentioned by ex-members of religious communities were financial and physical security, the companionship of friends, and daycare for children.



leave? Three factors stand out, with many respondents citing all three: arbitrary or authoritarian leaders, pressures to conform, and a lack of opportunity to fulfill one's goals or potential. Positive aspects of community life most often mentioned by these ex-members were financial and physical security, the companionship of friends, and a variety of community-support mechanisms, including education and daycare for children.

Our gathering respondents reported similar positive features, but did not report dis-

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liked leaders or conformity as serious problems. They expressed the most concern about interpersonal conflicts, individuals who try to exercise inappropriate control, and the time and energy consumed by consensus decision making (which, however, they valued).

We found it noteworthy that despite the fact that the ex-members had all chosen to leave their communities and very few have sought an alternative community, nonetheless they more often rate their overall community experience positively than negatively. About half the ex-members rate their community experience as "very positive" or

.....

The religious ex-members are skeptical of communal ownership, which they had experienced in Hutterite or Bruderhof communities.

.....

"more positive than negative." The remainder are about evenly split in describing their community experience as "evenly mixed" or "more negative than positive" and "very negative." A few respondents reported that they found absolutely no redeeming features in community life.

Religion and spirituality. Almost none of the ex-members wanted to give communal life another try. Has their experience living in religious communities soured them on religion, as well? Apparently not, at least for the two-thirds of the ex-members now practice a traditional religion, and are Catholics, Jews, Southern Baptists, and Mennonites. Only a third of the ex-members expressed no religious preference or a non-traditional spirituality.

Indeed, religion and spirituality find broad support among the ex-member sample. Almost three-quarters agreed with the statement, "life without spirituality is empty." Only 18% agreed with the statement, "belief in God is a comforting illusion," while 41% disagreed and 41% were neutral. Regarding the statement, "religion is the opiate of the masses," 35% of the ex-members rejected it while 27% agreed and 39% were neutral.

Politics and economics. Beliefs about politics and economics clearly distinguish the ex-members from our earlier gathering sample. Survey research generally shows that people who are more religious are more conservative than others, and our two sample groups bear out this expectation—the ex-members are decidedly more conservative than the

gathering sample. Not a single respondent from the gathering was a Republican, while 31% of the ex-members are Republicans, 25% Democrats, and 38% independent. Whereas a sixth of the gathering respondents were Greens, only one of the ex-members was affiliated with a Green Party. While 70% of the gathering respondents preferred Green parties as "the wave of the future," the ex-members split in thirds on this item, with one third agreeing, one third disagreeing, and one third unsure.

The relative conservatism of the ex-members held up on a number of more specific political measures. For instance, 97% of the ex-members agreed that, "people need to learn to provide for themselves, and not be dependent on the government"; 61% agreed that "it's natural for people to want to live among member of their own race"; and 85% of ex-members agreed with the statement that "all in all, the U.S is a good place to live." Gathering respondents scored lower on all of these items; i.e., they were less conservative.

On the issue of whether society should guarantee the basic necessities of life for citizens, a majority of both communitarian groups agreed, but the ex-members less decisively. Likewise, on the survey statement, "despite democratic elections, the U.S. is actually run by small groups of powerful cliques," a majority of both groups agreed: 75% of ex-members and 92% of gathering respondents. Half of ex-members, and three-fifths of gathering respondents agreed with the statement, "the major U.S. institutions are ineffective or corrupt." Half of the ex-members agreed with the statement, "Democrats and Republicans are birds of a feather," compared with three-quarters from the gathering.

These critical perspectives on mainstream politics do *not* imply a political drop-out syndrome: 58% of the ex-members, and 79% of the gathering respondents rejected the statement, "political activity is useless"; 86% of the ex-members and 77% from the gathering said that they "regularly vote in Federal, state, and local elections."

Community governance and economics. Consensus was the overwhelming decision-making preference of gathering respondents, while it was chosen by only 20% of the ex-members. The ex-members do not clearly favor any one method over another, although only two chose "powerful, inspiring leaders." Most preferred "majority rule," "accountable leaders," or "a flexible combination of processes with an emphasis on accountability."

The ex-members are skeptical of communal ownership, which they had experienced in Hutterite or Bruderhof communities. When asked about the best form of ownership, only one person chose "by the community," while almost half chose "by private individuals." The remainder chose combinations of individual, family, and cooperative forms. By comparison, half of our current communitarians from the gathering favored communal ownership, while our past communitarians from the gathering tended to prefer a mix of individual, small-group, and communal ownership.

On the issue of childbirth, communitarians in general are much more likely to practice home birth than the general public. A majority of gathering respondents favored it over hospital birth. By comparison, only 36% of ex-members preferred home birth (still much higher than the general public), a third disagreed, and 26% were unsure.

The Future of Communitarian Living. Most gathering respondents were optimistic about the future of the Communities Movement generally. They did express concern about the relationship of the Movement to the larger society, including the danger of co-optation of community ideals as they become more popular. In contrast, the ex-Bruderhof and ex-Hutterite members split into four roughly equal groups on this question. One group saw the future as positive, another as negative, a third as complexly dependent on many factors, and a fourth as uncertain.

We look forward to receiving more questionnaires from current and past communitarians, to delving further into our results from the gathering, and to reporting our findings to readers. More next time! Ω

Most Common Reasons for Leaving Community

	Expulsion	Change in self	Change in community	Authoritarian leadership	Pressures to conform	Limited opportunities
Among gathering communitarians (N=121)		X	X			X
Among ex-Anabaptist communitarians (N=30)	X	X	X	X	X	



Consensus-Based Approaches to Conflict

This is the third column in a series on the emergence of a new cooperative political paradigm.

DESPITE ALL THE RECENT, IN my opinion, bad news from Washington, D.C., I continue to find good news as I've explored the many effective, non-adversarial solutions to problems seldom reported in the mainstream press. Consensus-based, win/win solutions that reflect what I see as the essence of a new transformational politics are not only being pioneered in the intentional communities, but also in many new political groups. For the past four years my husband Gordon and I have hosted a series of salons in Washington, D.C., with the leaders of these groups to explore this new transformational approach for our recent book, *Spiritual Politics: Changing the World from the Inside Out*. I'd like to highlight their effective approaches to conflict.

position. Each side learns from the other by restating the other's position to their satisfaction, to make sure they really hear each other, rather than just preparing their own defense.

For example, in the emotionally devastating abortion debate, Search for Common Ground brought together pro-life and pro-choice advocates, and instead of debating exactly when life begins, they explored where there might be common ground. Both sides found they wanted to prevent unwanted pregnancies and promote conscious conception. Both sides wanted to make adoption more easily available, reduce infant mortality rates, and promote women's and children's rights and male responsibility.

Search for Common Ground brought together pro-life and pro-choice advocates, and instead of debating exactly when life begins, they explored where there might be common ground.

Search for Common Ground, started by John Marks, has brought together adversaries on both sides of many difficult issues to dialogue and listen deeply to each other in order to find the positive intent and the grain of truth in their opponents

Search for Common Ground has also worked behind the scenes to lay the groundwork for cooperation between the U.S. and Russia on the divisive issue of terrorism. They've worked in Macedonia to reduce ethnic conflict, and the Middle East to develop terms for an Israeli-Syrian settlement.

Project Victory, founded by Craig Schindler and Theo Brown, with offices in Washington, D.C., and Palo Alto, California, brought together over 350 peace activists and nuclear weapons designers—the entire political spectrum from Left to Right—in a process of deep dialogue, reciprocity, and mutual re-

spect. Each side discovered new insights, and creative options emerged through a broader understanding. Participants were taught to identify with their own center, the "observing self" within, instead of with their opinions and positions, so that when someone disagreed with them, they need not get defensive.

Instead of adversaries facing each other across the table, Project Victory arranges their seats to sit together facing the problem, which is put on the other side of the table. Corporate representatives and environmentalists were brought together by Project Victory on the issue of reducing toxic waste while maintaining a strong economy in the Silicon Valley. Over 35 findings and creative solutions resulted from the meetings, helping to break the deadlock.

Project Victory has been recently holding a series of dialogues on chemical demilitarization with Army officials and community environmentalists in Maryland, to explore the best way to dispose of

Instead of adversaries facing each other across the table, Project Victory arranges their seats to sit together facing the problem, which is put on the other side of the table.

chemical weapons. The approach used by them and many other groups involved in conflict resolution is to avoid focusing on past history and rigid positions, but instead to focus on real human needs, future concerns, and shared interests, and then brainstorm mutually beneficial options. As Roger Fisher and Bill Ury recommend in *Getting to Yes* (Penguin Books, 1981), the key is to separate the people from the problem, and see both parties working side by side, attacking the problem, not each other.

Other groups successfully using this type of dialogue approach to domestic and international conflicts include The Institute for Multi-Track Diplomacy, Alternatives to Violence, Moral Re-Armament, Foundation for Global Community, the Baha'is, Pax Christi, Fellowship of Reconciliation, Shalom Ashshav, The Harvard Negotiation Project, and many others. Together they represent the seeds of a new transformational approach to politics. Ω

Corinne McLaughlin is a co-author of Spiritual Politics and Builders of the Dawn, co-founder of Sirius Community in Massachusetts, and a former member of The Findhorn Community in Scotland. (Addresses for the above groups are listed in Spiritual Politics, which can be ordered for \$14.95 postpaid from Sirius Educational Resources, P.O. Box 1101, Greenbelt, MD 20768. Corinne can be reached at (301) 441-3809.)



Experiencing the "Community Family"

IN MID-DECEMBER I ARRIVED HOME from a three-day trip to find a handwritten note on the door of the Common House at the Nyland CoHousing: My housemate was in the local hospital, recovering nicely from an emergency appendectomy! It also said anyone interested in helping him upon his return should contact the author of the note.

I called my housemate and learned that in the 24 hours after his surgery he had been inundated with friendly phone calls and visitors from our cohousing community. One neighbor had brought a travel bag full of his clothes, magazines, and other essentials gathered from our unlocked home. Two cohousers had brought a variety of home-cooked dishes (which unfortunately he was unable to eat); two others had dropped off a year's worth of books and a stuffed animal they'd found in his mailbox from a "secret friend." A six-year-old community member had given him a "magic marble" filled with three special wishes.

All in all, my friend had six different visitors and numerous phone calls (every time he put down the phone it would ring again). Four cohousing members had offered to drive him home.

I was the fortunate one to actually retrieve him from the hospital. Once home we found a bag full of food and the answering machine jammed with messages from neighbors, friends, and family. He was overwhelmed by all this attention and support, and remarked how lucky he felt living in a community where this kind of outpouring of love seemed to flow so naturally.

The following morning at seven another neighbor stopped over with an enormous pot of homemade chicken noodle soup, with homemade *noodles*. (If that's not love, I don't

know what is.) Over the following few days offers of help continued to pour in; another Nyland member did all my housemate's dirty laundry.

By the end of the week he began to spend a few hours back at work. One community member drove him to work; another one drove him home.

How many people who are not living in a large family full of siblings can site anywhere near this kind of support during times of crisis? Cohousing communities, as I am discovering, are truly evolving into large extended families (however,

It isn't realistic to believe that a family unit of just two parents and a few kids is large enough and resourceful enough to adequately deal with the strains of modern life.

minus most of the emotional baggage we often bring from our families of origin). For those of us living in cohousing communities and the numerous other models of intentional community, our experience of place is significantly different from that of people in the mainstream. It is the subtle differences which are so powerful—the increased opportunities for connection and support when it is needed or asked for, the built-in safety of knowing the people who live near you, and the spontaneous quality of life which these situations foster. Taken together, these experiences can enrich our lives and challenge our beliefs and expectations about what it means to live in North America in the late 20th-century.

Recently a TV reporter from a major

New York network asked me how the cohousing concept addresses the pervasive reality of the crumbling nuclear family. I replied that the people dismayed by the disintegration of the nuclear family who also espouse "family values" and disapprove of living situations with unrelated adults have a very shortsighted view of what constitutes a "family." Most people don't realize that the tiny nuclear family is an incredibly recent, mostly post-1900 phenomenon, which became commonplace in the U.S. only after World War II. Before then most people lived in extended multi-generational families, villages, and tribes. In my opinion, it isn't realistic to believe that a family unit of just two parents and a few kids is large enough and resourceful enough to adequately deal with the strains of modern life.

I believe the solution is to return to a larger social structure where the responsibilities of child raising, maintaining a home, and getting and giving support during times of crisis are shared by a much broader range of people ... a concept I think we in the communities movement should be shouting from our balconies, gardens, and rooftops! Ω

Bill Paiss is a resident of the Nyland CoHousing Community in Lafayette, Colorado; the Editor-in-Chief of CoHousing, the national journal of the CoHousing Network; and a consultant to cohousing groups around the country.

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Trading Dreams: From Senegal to New York State and Back

THE FISHING VILLAGE OF YOFF, Senegal perches on the "nose" of Africa, the continent's westernmost point. Nine miles from the capital city of Dakar, Yoff is striving to preserve its unique 500 year-old traditional lifestyle in spite of the global culture of modernization.

"We are special," says Serigne Mbaye Diene, a native of Yoff currently studying at Cornell University in Ithaca, New York. "We have kept our traditional features despite our proximity to Dakar."

Five hundred years ago, the *Debou* people of Yoff developed their own government based on consensus decision making and the ideal that all should participate. Legislative, executive and judiciary branches were created with a system of checks and balances.

This unique form of governance continues today. One sign of its success: Although the 30,000 people of Yoff live in one square mile, there are no police nor need for them.

The traditional lifestyle is environmentally sustainable. The people of Yoff had no concept of waste until recent times. Old baskets are fed to goats; homes are built from a mixture of sand and earth; and boats are hewn from harvested trees. Extended families live in "compounds" divided into living quarters for family groups.

"Everybody takes care of everybody," says Diene. "The survival of the group is more important than individual needs." The people of Yoff literally provide a safety net for those in need. Each neighborhood drops a fishing net into the ocean on an assigned day, and anyone can take fish out of his or her neighborhood's net when private supplies are low.

But maintaining a self-reliant community beside a modern city is a difficult balance. Dakar is invading Yoff.

In the 1970s the leadership of Yoff unintentionally signed away Yoff's agricultural land to the newly independent Senegalese government. Now highways, an airport and a convention center occupy land once farmed by the Yoff.

Yoff has preserved its portion of the popular resort-lined coast for fishing, now its only staple for food and trade.

The most serious challenge, says Diene, is values. Consumer-oriented western values infiltrate the village through neighboring Dakar. When electricity came to Yoff a few years ago, so did western television. "Since then the young people all want to act like characters on Dallas and Dynasty," says Diene. "The culture is being threatened by the western model on television."

Thousands of miles north and west, Joan Bokaer and a group of people in Ithaca, New York are struggling to found an ecovillage with many of the same principles as Yoff. Reacting to the isolation of American urban living, the consumption-based lifestyle and the dependence on the car, the ecovillagers are planning an American model for a friendlier, greener and more economically self-reliant village.

A group of 20 households with land, a plan and a town approval process ahead of them hope to start building the ecovillage next fall. They intend to grow food; use environmental technologies for water, waste

disposal and energy; and design compact housing and walkable streets, based on a cohousing model imported from Denmark. The ecovillagers will balance their local economy with the city of Ithaca where many will work and trade.

But the ecovillage isn't just about money and mortar. These Americans have struggled to create their plan through consensus decision-making. They believe, like the Yoff villagers, this form of local governance is the building block of a real community that values and cares for every person.

In 1992, the two communities came together. Diene, struggling to preserve Yoff, and Bokaer, striving to create a sustainable community, met at a New Year's Eve party in Ithaca.

Diene became excited when Bokaer told him about her involvement in founding the ecovillage. "But that's how we [in Yoff] have always lived. Yoff is an ecovillage," said Diene.

Diene and Bokaer expressed remarkably common visions. He invited her to visit Yoff.



Yoff had the community, the self-reliance and the environmental traditions that the Ithaca EcoVillage envisioned.



"You can help people there understand that they have something valuable to keep," he told her.

In June of 1992, Bokaer and five others went to Yoff. "I saw what is possible on the social side [for the newly forming "EcoVillage in Ithaca]," she says.

She was awed by the skill with which the Yoff villagers ensured participation in their consensus government. "They really know how to give everyone a way to be heard."

Definition of an Ecovillage

"An Ecovillage is a human-scale, full-featured settlement in which human activities are harmlessly integrated into the natural world in a way that is supportive of healthy human development and can be successfully continued into the indefinite future."

—Robert Gilman, Context Institute

Anne Zorc is the Managing Editor of Co-op America Quarterly. This article appeared in the Fall 1994 issue of Co-op America Quarterly and is reprinted with permission. For information on Co-op America and its quarterly, call (202) 872-5307.

This column is compiled by Lois Arkin of the Los Angeles Eco-Village, (213) 738-1254. For a basic ecovillage information brochure, please send a self-addressed stamped envelope to Ecovillage Training Center, Albert Bates, The Farm, Summertown, TN 38483.

Yoff had the community, the self-reliance and the environmental traditions that the Ithaca EcoVillage envisioned. "There's a tremendous sense of security, because they take care of each other," reflects Bokaer. "They had what we wanted, but they were losing it."

For Diene, Bokaer was an inspiration to his villagers. "We need a strong example of how people are changing their minds in America so we don't make the same mistakes," he says.

But Diene also realized that Yoff had to adapt to modern realities and that the West had many answers for the pressing problems it faced. Yoff lacked a sewage system and roads; foreign fishing boats were depleting its local stock. Desertification threatened the countryside. Without a plan, Diene could see a future for his people as servants in coastal resorts. "There is lots to learn from western culture," says Diene. "The bottom line is how can we maintain the good features of our culture while getting input from the West."

With Bokaer's help, Diene convinced the people of Yoff to develop—instead of western suburban style homes—an African model for an ecovillage to showcase state-of-the-art technologies on land that Yoff had recently won back from the Senegalese government.

The EcoVillage in Ithaca sent an architect to help Yoff make a development plan to promote its traditional lifestyle while incorporating new technologies to address the many environmental problems from modernization. Some roads would be designed. Environmentally sound sewage and water treatment would be built. Allotting much of the land to urban agriculture projects would revive the farming culture, provide jobs, increase self-sufficiency, and create a second economic base. Yoff has asked the United Nations to fund its ecovillage project, which is in an experimental stage.

Through the EcoVillage in Ithaca, the people of Yoff joined a "larger network" of global peoples working toward alternative models for modern living. The Canadian Healthy City Network conference named Yoff as a model. The collaboration between Yoff and the EcoVillage of Ithaca is a model of how globalization can work for people and the planet. Global networks can be used to trade peoples' positive visions for building a globe of villages based on local empowerment, community, environmental sustainability and security. "We need a global movement towards sustainable communities because forces working against us are also global," says Bokaer. Ω

Third International Eco-Cities Conference, Yoff, Senegal, January 3-10, 1996

Yoff will be the site for the Third International Eco-City Conference January 3-10, 1996, with the President of Senegal as the honorary chair. The Mayor of Dakar, who is also the President of the World Conference of Mayors, will also be playing a prominent role. Noel Brown of the United Nations Environmental Programme is enthusiastically assisting the conference and the UNEP is a co-sponsor along with planning cosponsors EcoVillage at Ithaca and Ecocity Builders of Berkeley. The First International Eco-Cities Conference was convened by Richard Register in Berkeley in 1990. In 1992, Paul Downton and Cherie Hoyle of Urban Ecology Australia convened the Second Conference in Adelaide.

Conference fee is \$600, students \$350. These high U.S. fees will be helping folks from Eastern Europe, Latin America, and Africa to attend. It is hoped that American communities will form co-ops to send representatives to this important gathering. Write for conference brochure to Rakey Cole, Third International Eco-Cities Conference, Anabel Taylor Hall, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY 14853.

Getting to a Sustainable Society

The following is excerpted with permission from the book Beyond the Limits by Donella H. Meadows, Dennis L. Meadows and Jørgen Randers, (1992, Chelsea Green Publishers, White River Junction, VT):

A sustainable society is one that can persist over generations, one that is far-seeing enough, flexible enough, and wise enough not to undermine either its physical or its social systems of support... In order to be socially sustainable the combination of population, capital, and technology in the society would have to be configured so that the material living standard is adequate and secure for everyone. In order to be physically sustainable the society's material and energy throughputs would have to meet economist Herman Daly's three conditions:

- Its [society's] rates of use of renewable resources do not exceed their rates of regeneration.
- Its rates of use of nonrenewable resources do not exceed the rate at which sustainable renewable substitutes are developed.
- Its rate of pollution emission does not exceed the assimilative capacity of the environment.

Bill Leland added the following as part of a working definition of "sustainability" for the Global Action and Information Network. GAIN can be reached at 740 Front St, Suite 355, Santa Cruz, CA 95060, email: bleland@gain.org.

We maintain that for a society to meet these conditions the following essential qualities must be present in vital local communities which constitute the sustainable society:

- All people:
- live in dignity having their basic needs met for water, food, shelter, clothing, health care, and education;
 - have the time and ability for clear reflection and analysis to make free and informed choices in all aspects—social, economic, political, physical—of their lives;
 - are supported physically, socially, and economically through their involvement in environmentally, socially, and economically vital local communities;
 - seek a just balance between maximum empowerment in their individual lives and maximum contribution to the common good;
 - make decisions and policies cooperatively and justly based on respect for all living beings and things;
 - resolve conflicts nonviolently;
 - are connected to one another and to the natural world in a healthful environment;
 - have the opportunity to learn by trial and error in ways that result in no or minimal harm to other beings and the physical environment;
 - experience an abundance of joy and compassion. Ω



Creating the Vision Statement

“YOUR COMMUNITY VISION IS not the same thing as its *vision statement*.”

So said Stephan Brown, founder and former director of Shenoa Retreat and Learning Center, during his workshop, “Founding a Retreat Center or Community,” last November in Colorado. He focused mostly on Shenoa’s experience—from its Findhorn-inspired vision 10 years ago, through gatherings of like-minded people, land searches, land purchase, retreat center operation, decision-making methods for investors and staff, to its innovative financial, legal, and land-use strategies—until it became a nationally known conference center now worth two and a half million dollars. The workshop was co-sponsored by the L.I.F.E. Council of Colorado Springs and the former *Growing Community* newsletter.

Perhaps 40 percent of the community founders I have heard from over the last two years hoped to create a retreat and conference center as their primary income source, or, their goal was to build such a center, and they assumed its live-in staff would become a small community. Stephan offers an excellent workshop for people with these intentions—or anyone who could benefit from his whole-systems approach to real estate, land-use planning, and investor and financing strategies. (See “Resources” below.)

Last December Communities magazine incorporated Growing Community newsletter, a publication which offered practical information on starting new communities now. This new column will feature how-to advice on finance and land development; legal options for land tenure; conflict resolution; decision making; meeting facilitation; getting “off the grid”; permaculture and community-supported agriculture; and affordable, non-toxic housing. It is compiled by Diana Leafe Christian, former publisher of Growing Community newsletter and managing editor of this magazine.

The vision

Because a community’s vision is vital to its success, identifying the vision is the *first* thing community founders should do. The following advice comes from Stephan’s workshop and other founders of successful communities.

Your community’s vision, he says, is a quality of energy, rather than a set of words. It is a feeling—one which grabs you and won’t let go. You become almost obsessed with it; you think about it day and night. And although it’s your vision, it’s not necessarily *visual*. It is this sense of energy, this compelling force, which is required to get any project off the ground.

This vision is a kind of “call out to the universe, and to other people.” It draws like-minded, like-hearted comrades to you. It’s what Corinne McLaughlin and Gordon Davidson in *Builders of the Dawn* call “sounding a clear note” on inner levels.

The vision statement

A vision statement, on the other hand, is a written statement which establishes the core of what your group really wants to achieve. It establishes “who we are,” “what we’re trying to do,” and “why we’re trying to do it.” (You will decide the strategy later on.) Your vision statement should be stated in positive terms, not only in the words, but in its essence. Shenoa’s vision statement reads:

We have joined together to create a center for renewal, education, and service dedicated to the positive transformation of our world.

A vision statement accomplishes the following:

- It expresses a quality of energy, rather than a physical layout.
- It focuses the group’s energy, like a lens.
- It serves to communicate the core purpose of the community to others quickly.
- It allows the group to be specific about what the community is, and is not.

- When there is confusion or disagreement, it gives the group a reference point to return to.

Developing your vision statement

The authors of *Eco-Villages and Sustainable Communities*, a report by the Context Institute, recommend developing a vision statement in a way which expresses not only the members’ ideas, but their feelings and intuitions as well. They suggest brainstorming words and short phrases which are written on large sheets of paper and hung up around the room so everyone can see what is accumulating. Once the members feel they have a large enough list, they can attempt to simplify by grouping their words and phrases under various headings. The *Eco-Villages* authors note that while vision statements can be crafted by the whole group, often it is better to give a small committee the word groups and let them go off and



Because a community’s vision is vital to its success, identifying the vision is the *first* thing community founders should do.



create a first draft version for the group. The process of modifying and refining the vision statement may take place over many meetings. It took the Shenoa group a year and a half to finish theirs.

A vision statement can become too large, too all-encompassing, and too vague. For example, “We are joining together for our highest good, to affirm our oneness with Spirit and each other, to help each of us realize our highest potential, and help the world become a better place.” This does not work well. The more narrow and specific the vision statement, the more power it has, and the more likely you can achieve it. This one is better: *We are creating a self-reliant community to raise and educate children about our spiritual connection with nature, especially with the plant kingdom.*

There is a strong tendency to confuse the vision with the strategy, and especially to confuse the vision with the kind of buildings the community may have. Community architecture and strategies (the “how,” “when,” and “where” of creating it) are important, but not at this stage.

The following vision statement confuses strategy and buildings with the vision: “We want to live in harmony with nature and each other, and demonstrate and teach a lifestyle which is organic, self-reliant, off-the-grid, by creating an ecovillage community of passive

Leaders, Developers, and Visionaries

Stephan Brown asked participants of his "Founding a Retreat Center or Community" workshop to write three words across the top of a page—*Visionary*, *Leader*, and *Developer*. He asked us to list every word or phrase, both pro and con, that might come to mind for each.

Under *Visionary*, participants' responses included: inspiring, focalizer of action, far-sighted, focused on the "big picture," necessary to create anything, powerful, gifted, primarily right-brained, vague, dreamy, unrealistic, ineffective, in denial, and charismatic. Many contrasting images!

Under *Leader*, responses included: powerful, inspiring, visionary, empowering of others, good facilitator, good people skills, sensitive, confident, left-brained, successful, aggressive, insensitive, authoritarian, egotistical, and disempowering. Again, many contrasting images.

Under *Developer*, more images were negative than positive: good manager, financial & legal expertise, greedy, insensitive, ecologically blind, "plunders the land," money-hungry, "after a fast buck," etc.

Our group discussed these terms further: We agreed a leader must have vision and be good with people. A visionary may simply have great ideas

but have no leadership or ability with people. A leader must be pragmatic, a visionary is not necessarily pragmatic. A developer can be poor in all these qualities but must be good at making land deals. A developer is knowledgeable; a leader is not necessarily knowledgeable, but attracts and organizes people who are.

Stephan then defined a "developer" as anyone who changes the landscape, from widening a road or remodeling a shed, to creating a site plan and constructing new buildings.

So, what kind of person do you need to be to create a community? A leader? A visionary? A developer?

"You must be all three at once," he told us emphatically. You certainly must have vision—without it nothing will happen. And you have to be a leader, to inspire and organize others to support that vision. And you have to get physical and make it happen. To get a community or retreat center off the ground, he said, you either need to hire a developer or do it yourself—grow the "developer" aspect of yourself. As a "practical visionary," a developer turns vision into physical reality. If you're not willing to do that, he said, don't start the project! "If you want to build a community, you've got to get physical." —D.L.C. ☛

solar domes and octagons, with strawbale, straw-clay walls, and/or log-cabin construction; growing our own food on a permaculture site with a greenhouse; and operating a CSA farm and desktop publishing business as our

primary income sources." Here's the same vision, short and focused: *We are building a model ecovillage in order to demonstrate and teach others about living in harmony with nature through organic, sustainable means.*

Creating community is not about creating buildings, Stephan said, but about creating relationships and connection. The vision should be about the energy of the community (not about its physical structure); small enough to accomplish (not so ambitious that it would discourage people or delay the rewards of accomplishment); and not too cosmic.

More than one vision?

The vision statement should not only be simple and clear, but also authentic. If someone in your group doesn't think it "feels" right as stated, he or she should say so. The group should continue to work on revising the wording until it feels right to everyone.

However, differences may arise which are so strong that the vision statement cannot be modified to everyone's satisfaction. One or more people may not agree with the others. Good! Now you know—and it's better to find this now than later on. "It is important to avoid the expectation that every initial member of the group should continue with the group," write the *Eco-Village* authors, since that could mean either suppressing some group member's visions or attempting to force a vision on others which they don't truly share. "Honor each person's contribution and don't be afraid to sort out who will and who won't continue with the group," they conclude. You may end up generating two vision statements, wishing each other well, and creating two communities.

Stephan advises that your vision statement must be in place first, *before* trying to acquire land. Also, while your vision statement may be well written and it may move people—it must also embody the same

(continued on page 21)

Legal Options for Communities: Part VI When You Cannot Subdivide: The 501(c)(7) Nonprofit

Previous issues of Growing Community newsletter have explored various legal options communities might use for all or a part of their legal and business structure, including the nonprofit corporation. Once an organization has registered as a nonprofit at the state level, it may apply for one of several tax-exempt statuses from the IRS. In previous issues we have discussed the "Educational, Charitable, or Religious" tax status [501(c)(3)]; the "Holding Company" status [501(c)(2)]; the "Religious or Apostolic" status [501(d)], and others.

MUTUAL BENEFIT CORPORATIONS are organizations which neither make a profit nor serve others, but which help their own members. In most states they are organized as nonprofits. Mutual benefit corporations can use the IRS tax exemption 501(c)(7), which was created for private recreational or other nonprofit organizations, such as country clubs, hunting lodges, etc., where none of the net earnings goes to any member.

The 501(c)(7) exemption can be useful for

a community: 1) that wants to be able to choose its members, 2) whose land cannot legally be subdivided, yet whose members are required to put money into the community in order to live there, and 3) whose members wish to recoup their equity if they leave. Members of a community organized as a 501(c)(7) "buy" a membership in the mutual benefit corporation (just as people buy memberships in country clubs). The members can later sell their membership (at a profit if they wish) to an incoming member.

One example is the Shenoa Retreat and Learning Center in Mendocino County, California. Shenoa uses a 501(c)(3) nonprofit for its retreat center operation, and a 501(c)(7) for its Land Steward association—Shenóa's community of financial supporters and colleagues who have the right to use vacation cabins located on the land.

Advantages

The advantages to organizing as a 501(c)(7) are that, *if organized properly*, the community would not be subject to state and local subdivision requirements—because members would not own specific plots of land or specific houses. Rather, in a strictly legal sense, they would simply have *use rights* to any plots or dwellings (although the members' internal arrangements could

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If organized properly, a 501(c)(7) community would not be subject to state and local subdivision requirements.

.....

specify which plots or dwellings each would have preferred rights to use). Suppose, for example, 35 member/investors each put up \$10,000 to buy, as a nonprofit "Social and Recreational Club," a \$350,000 rustic lodge with 35 rooms. The whole group owns the whole lodge, and each member has equal rights to use of any of the rooms. No member owns any one room. However, Joe could have primary use-rights for room two, and Susan for room three, and so on—a private arrangement the 35 members worked out among themselves.

Another advantage to a 501(c)(7): members can pay for their memberships with a down payment and installments rather than in one lump sum. This is one of the few kinds of ownership-share arrangements in which you can invest on a time-payment plan, with so much down and so much a month. In a for-profit corporation, for example, you must pay the entire investment up front.

A third advantage: members of a 501(c)(7) would be afforded some liability protection for the actions of the mutual benefit corporation.

And lastly, members would have the right to choose whoever joined the community, which can be an advantage over other real estate options such as P.U.D. or condominium subdivisions, wherein the landowners would be subject to federal anti-discrimination regulations if they attempted to choose who could or could not enter their community.

Disadvantages

The disadvantages are, first, a 501(c)(7) may have no more than 35 investor/members, so this option might only be suitable for communities that wanted to remain relatively small. Also, no donations to such a community are tax-deductible.

The most serious disadvantage, however, is that 501(c)(7) nonprofits are regulated by an appropriate state or federal securities agency (a state agency if the investment will be offered intrastate; the federal SEC if interstate) and so can be quite complicated to set up and may require a securities lawyer. And, because they are regulated by a securities agency, a 501(c)(7) *cannot advertise or solicit publicly* for new members, who, legally, are "investors." (They could not advertise for new members in our REACH ads, for example.) Rather, existing members or staff may only approach people *whom they already know* to "invest" with them. Individual members may however, legally respond to anyone who asks *them* a question about joining the community.

In Stephan Brown's "Founding a Retreat Center or Community" workshop (*see p. 18*) one participant asked if it would work to attract potential new members *before* creating this legal option, perhaps by word-of-mouth among friends and colleagues, advertising in publications, and/or hosting public gatherings (workshops, picnics, parties) to introduce new people to the community vision. A forming community could then tell anyone who showed an interest that the community was still determining the legal arrangements, she said, and the 501(c)(7) was one option being considered. Then, if the community decided to use the 501(c)(7), once all legal documents were signed, members might legitimately approach those people who showed an interest before, because the community had already met them. "What do you think?" asked the workshop participant.

She also had another question: Could the members of the community's first legal organization, a 501(c)(3) for example, which *wasn't* subject to securities regulations—ap-

proach new people to "invest" in the community's *second* legal entity, a 501(c)(7) mutual benefit corporation? The response to both questions was unequivocal—because securities regulations are strict and the fines severe, she should check out these ideas with a lawyer!!

(One method which 501(c)(7) organizations [though not communities] have used successfully in the past however, is to hire a licensed securities brokerage to represent them. If the brokerage approaches people it already knows, the securities regulations are met.)

Subdivision requirements, revisited

Let's examine the subdivision issue more closely. First, although a 501(c)(7) community would not be subject to subdivision requirements (regarding county permits and fees, road, sewer, power line regulation, etc.), it would nevertheless be subject to county land-use requirements and density regulations. If the county said no more than three houses were permitted on any 40-acre parcel, that rule would stand.

Second, the community would need to make sure the county commissioners didn't think the community was simply trying to fool them. In order to demonstrate good faith, the community must take precautionary measures which thoroughly separate the individual member/investor from any *particular* plot of ground or dwelling. Hopefully this would be documented in advance.

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However, 501(c)(7) nonprofits are regulated by the appropriate state or federal securities agency.

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Stephan Brown, founder and former director of Shenoa Retreat and Learning Center, tells this story. His lawyer was concerned that the original 501(c)(7) offering statement for Shenóa's Land Steward Program could be misinterpreted as a subdivision, and Shenóa could be fined for not complying with state and county subdivision regulations. So the lawyer sent a letter to California's Department of Real Estate asking them to look at Shenóa's offering statement and give an opinion, in writing. The Department of Real Estate looked it over, and responded, in writing, saying, "Your proposed Land Steward program is clearly not a subdivision, however we ask you to file this with the state Securities Commission," which of course Shenóa had already done. Three years later an enthusiastic article about Shenóa appeared in the real estate section of a Bay

Back Issues of Growing Community newsletter are available for \$5 each. For a complete description of back issues, write Growing Community, 1118 Round Butte Dr., Ft. Collins, CO 80524. (303) 490-1550.

Area newspaper. This caught the attention of a Mendocino county planning commissioner, who called Stephan and asked, "Do you have a subdivision there? If so, why haven't you checked with us?" Stephan respectfully replied that he'd gotten an opinion from California's Department of Real Estate saying Shenoa's Land Steward program was not a subdivision, and would the commissioner like to see the letter? The commissioner did; he was satisfied; and he even congratulated Stephan on his innovative new way of holding property.

A last resort

Stephan, by the way, recommends a 501(c)(7) only as a last resort! He says a 501(c)(3) nonprofit is *much* easier in many ways: you can get tax-deductible donations; you can advertise for members/donors publicly (no securities regulations); and you don't need a securities lawyer to set it up. He also believes cooperative corporations or housing cooperatives are much easier legal options for a retreat center or community.

In any case, going through the land subdivision process is easier than getting a 501(c)(7), he says. (I have my own doubts about this, as I've watched cohousing groups go through the county subdivision process, and it is an arduous and expensive undertaking.)

However, a 501(c)(7) is viable, Stephan says, in cases where your community for some reason cannot subdivide the property, yet you need a way for investors and/or members to put money in and get it out again. —D.L.C. ☺

Vision Statement

(continued from page 19)

intense quality of energy as the original vision if it to have the power to sustain the community over time. —D.L.C.

Resources: For information on upcoming dates and locations of Stephan Brown's workshop, "Founding a Retreat Center or Community," contact him at 303 Hardister Dr., Cloverdale, CA 95425. (707) 894-9466. Stephan Brown is also available as a consultant.

100-page booklet, *Founding a Community or Retreat Center: The Journey from Vision to Reality*, by Stephan Brown. Available for \$14 postpaid from him at 303 Hardister Dr., Cloverdale, CA 95425. (707) 894-9466.

Eco-Villages and Sustainable Communities, a report for Gaia Trust by Context Institute. Bound report, 1991, 213 pgs. \$15 postpaid. Context Institute, P.O. Box 11470, Bainbridge Island, WA 98110. (206) 842-0216. ☺

SILICON IS THE MOST ABUNDANT element on earth. Solar photovoltaic (PV) cells are made mostly of silicon. Why, then, are PV panels so expensive? Can they be made more cheaply? Should we wait for prices to drop before investing in our energy independence?

Let's see.

First of all, most PV panels are composed of individual silicon cells bonded to the back of a glass base, or "substrate." Each individual cell is itself the outcome of an expensive, high-tech process that involves growing large crystals of

Compared to conventional PV panels, the output of thin-film panels doesn't decline as extremely on cloudy days.

ultra-pure silicon, modifying or "doping" that silicon with precise amounts of other substances, slicing the crystals into wafers, applying thin metallic grids for electrical contact, adding nonreflective coatings to assure maximum light absorption, mounting and wiring each wafer, encapsulating the entire surface in a durable plastic, framing the finished panel and, finally, attaching the weatherproof junction box that contains the output terminals. Whew.

Isn't there a simpler way?

There is. It's called "thin-film" PV technology and you'll find it in many small solar-powered devices such as watches, calculators, self-powered walkway lights, and those small PV panels you can toss onto your car's dashboard and plug into the cigarette lighter to keep the battery fully charged at all times.

Thin-film panels are produced by applying a continuous thin film (what else?) of amorphous (non-crystalline) doped silicon onto the substrate. The process is simpler, faster, and less labor intensive, and theoretically less expensive on a per-square-foot basis.

Thin-film panels have a number of advantages over their conventional crystalline counterparts. For one thing, their output doesn't decline as extremely on cloudy days. Throw even a small shadow

on a corner of a conventional panel and its output will drop radically; not so with many thin-film panels. Thin-film panels are also significantly lighter, and can be produced on a flexible plastic substrate. One type can even be "wallpapered" onto the wings of ultralight, experimental aircraft and the topside surfaces of solar-electric racecars. One popular type of thin-film panel is embedded in a tough plastic mat that can be casually strewn across the deck of a sailboat and, if necessary, walked on. If it slips overboard it will float!

Thin-film is a designer's dream. It can be made semi-transparent, so windows, automobile sunroofs, skylights and so forth can do double duty as micro-powerplants. The Japanese have been experimentally powering whole buildings with colorful, decoratively designed

thin-film roofing tiles—a very logical approach.

Why aren't all PV panels made this way? Until recently they were a lot less efficient than conventional crystalline cells, which offset their lower cost per square foot. But in early 1994, UniSolar, the largest U.S. manufacturer of thin-film photovoltaics, announced that it had practically doubled the efficiency of thin-film technology. As a result, the price of new PV panels may soon drop significantly—from around six dollars per peak watt to as low as three!

So check your local Alternative Energy dealer, and *Home Power* magazine, for the latest scoop on thin-film photovoltaics before you take the plunge into PV power. —Dan Drasin

Resources: *Home Power Magazine*, \$15/year (6 issues). P.O. Box 520, Ashland, OR 97520. (916) 475-3179. ☺

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Is the Communities Movement "Regionally Challenged?"

The Fellowship for Intentional Community (FIC) is organized to promote inter-community communications and support. The FIC publishes this magazine and the Communities Directory (coming out in March '95).

AS FAR AS ANYONE KNOWS, THE Communities Movement (as we perceive it in the Fellowship for Intentional Community) does not come with instructions. There are no stone tablets, and there is no single articulator of the vision for cooperative living. Rather—and this is its strength as well as its challenge—it's a movement of many independent and differently-inspired groups who have created a cornucopia of three-dimensional alternatives to traditional lifestyles, at more or less the same time. It's the coincidence of this activity which we call the "movement."

Having noticed this coincidence, a collection of veteran communityarians—all with extensive regional network experience—got together in the late 1980s and organized the Fellowship, to see if there was merit in coordinating this cooperative energy. Nearly a decade into the experiment, we've established that people like having access to centralized information about communities and the chance to get together at community events to enjoy one another and discuss mutual interests.

The Fellowship might have arisen as a join effort among regional networks ... but it didn't. The fact is, there have never been many regional community organizations, and those that did spring up tended to lose their vitality after a brief blooming. The FIC is trying to figure out why there aren't more regional networks, and why they don't tend to last. We can use help on this.

While it may be a good thing we didn't wait for a congress of regional organizations

to launch the Fellowship, we are nonetheless suffering the lack of regional services. To be sure, there are unique roles for a continental network—such as hosting North American gatherings; building and maintaining a continental data base on communities and specialized skills within them; publishing community news and views; coordinating resource exchanges—yet many Fellowship functions could be handled as well or better on the regional level, if there were only some regional organizations to fill that niche. One of the FIC's key challenges these days is figuring out how to foster viable regional networks.

As organizers, we know one way *not* to do it is "top down." The Fellowship can expect no success trying to organize a region from outside it. We can help, but the essential spark and sustaining energy must come from within the region. We're rather like midwives who barnstorm the continent, hopeful of birthing healthy regional networks wherever the idea has been conceived.

One way we do this is by rotating the location of the Fellowship's semi-annual Board meetings from region to region: in 16 Board meetings we've met in 15 different states. We make it a practice to invite to our meetings anyone on our mailing list within a five-hour drive of the meeting site, and hope something good will come from getting everyone into the same room.

In the Florida panhandle last November, we set aside one evening for the express purpose of hearing from all the area participants about their community interests and aspi-

rations, creating the space for people to match up their interests with those of their neighbors. We then sweetened the pot by offering to share contact information about community-minded people in the Southeast, and promising to lend advice and possibly people to produce regional community events. This session was well-attended and inspirational, but we don't know yet if it will produce a going regional concern.

In short, we're attempting to lead folks to water, and wondering who will drink. We figure local folks have to recognize a network thirst or the grassroots will not be nourished by the water. Are we being too pushy? Too tentative? (Too metaphorical?) It's a delicate position, and a different one, for example, than is being taken by the Green Party, for example, which does nothing on the national level until and unless Green activity arises from a local and regional consensus.

By concentrating first on the continental scale, the FIC has been able to fully leverage the efforts of a few dedicated individuals. That small core senses interest in network services, but did not wait

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The Fellowship might have arisen as a join effort among regional networks ... but it didn't.

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for the confirmation before taking action. Rather, we produced things first—the *Communities Directory*, the '93 Celebration of Community gathering, this magazine—figuring the response would tell us if we had a mandate.

Well, the initial response has been strong. So strong that our problems hasn't been keeping the mandate so much as keeping *up* with the mandate. We've scrambled to broaden our base of involvement and expand the number of people who hold the vision. In the past five years we've worked hard to open up Fellowship projects for new blood, and we've more than doubled the size of the organizational core. While encouraging, this growth hasn't kept pace with the surge in workload, and we face today the challenge of delegation.

Up to this point, the Fellowship Board has been highly involved in the project implementation, but we are at the limits of how far we can go with this model. Increasingly, we must separate the decision-making role of the Board from the implementation role of the staff. This reality adds urgency to our interest in developing regional networks,

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Laird Sandhill is a member of Sandhill Farm in Rutledge, Missouri; Secretary of the Fellowship for Intentional Community; former Managing Editor of Communities magazine; and an active member of the Federation of Egalitarian Communities.

both so that they can shoulder some of the work and that their representatives can step forward and give direction to the Fellowship, establishing mission and priorities on firmer democratic footing.

This is an important stage in the Movement's development. We recognize

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We're rather like midwives who barnstorm the continent, hopeful of birthing healthy regional networks.

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that concentrating trust and authority in a handful of people, however dedicated and credentialed, has historically been a formula for corruption and distraction, and it's time to move beyond it. While we attempt this work, we have set for ourselves a near-impossible standard for openness and accessibility, yet we cannot tell if we are doing enough. This is tricky business, and we can use everyone's help to keep from falling off the wagon. If you have thoughts about this, please let us hear from you! Ω

Activities of the Fellowship for Intentional Community

Here is what the Fellowship does:

- Publishes *Communities* magazine and the best-selling *Communities Directory*.
- Provides an information and referral service about communities to seekers, community members, academics, and journalists.
- Provides products and services about communities.
- Administers a Community Business Loan Fund offering small, short-term loans to community businesses.
- In 1993, produced the hugely successful Celebration of Community gathering.
- Future projects include an annual tour of existing communities, and a manual on creating new communities.

When you join the Fellowship, your membership benefits include:

- Discounts on *Communities* magazine, the *Communities Directory*, and audiotapes of workshops, panels, and plenaries from the 1993 Celebration of Communities gathering.
- Discounts on display ads in *Communities* magazine.
- An invitation to Board meetings and all other Fellowship activities.
- A quarterly Fellowship newsletter.

Annual dues are \$15 for individuals, \$20 to \$50 for communities, and \$25 for organizations. (See inside front cover) To join, please send a check to Fellowship for Intentional Community, P.O. Box 814, Langley, WA 98260. (360) 221-3064.

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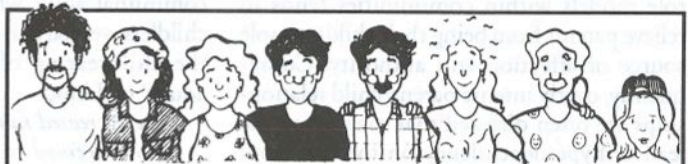
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IS IT *Utopia* YET?

An Insider's View of Twin Oaks Community In Its 26th Year

by Kat Kinkade

Is it Utopia Yet? is a lively, first-hand account of the unique struggles and triumphs of the first 25 years of Twin Oaks Community, one of America's most prominent and successful communes. This thoughtful and entertaining insight into alternative living, from the author of *A Walden Two Experiment*, is illustrated with 16 photographs and 60 cartoons.

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Multiple Parenting in Community: The Advantages

IN THE VAST MAJORITY OF INTENTIONAL communities, biological parents assume primary responsibility for their children and other adults are closely involved in their development. In this issue, I will explore some of the advantages of multiple parenting: how it can diffuse some of the burdens of parenting, provide flexibility between family and career, and support single or divorcing parents. In the June issue I will flip the coin and examine some of the common conflicts that occur when "too many cooks decide to stir the broth."

Diffusion of Burdens

The presence of multiple caregivers and role models within communities tends to relieve parents from being their children's sole source of affection and authority. Consequently, overly intense parent/child relationships are often diffused that may otherwise lead to hyperdependency on the one hand or to rebellion or even child abuse on the other.

For example, in one community that provided 24-hour-a-day childcare a mother expressed how she was not emotionally prepared for parenthood and began using this service almost exclusively from the time her child was three-months-old. During the next two years, she felt she had grown into motherhood and began working in the community's childcare center and spending more time with her child. It is unclear how this parent would have dealt with her child if she had not been living in this community. It is possible that forced exposure to her child would have elicited a rapid maturing of her parenting skills. It is more likely, however, that the community acted as a buffer in what would have otherwise been a

stressful and deleterious situation for both mother and child.

In addition to the "strength in numbers" aspect of communal childrearing, the combined parental experience of multiple caregivers often facilitates more relaxed attitudes towards childhood conflicts. As one family researcher describes it, there is "nothing so helpful as a liberal dose of judicious neglect" (Bossard & Stoker Boll, 1979, pp. 1920). In such an environment, traditional developmental issues remain, but generally with lessened severity. This dynamic was described by one communal adult who was childless, yet participated in the childrearing of other adults' children.

The increased number of adults seemed to significantly diffuse some of the traditional battles. Toilet training was a long process, but not a particularly tense one. Justy's periods of "no" to every suggestion were shared by a number of people, and thus were easier for all of us to put up with (Gross, 1974).

A wealth of wisdom, opinions and parenting styles is available in most communities. Parents or childcare workers can receive helpful advice on everything from diaper rash to adolescent rebellion. As one mother stated:

I started having them fairly young and I felt extremely isolated and felt like I didn't know what I was doing or how to take care of them . . . and I didn't have a lot of people I could talk to about it. I really like sharing responsibility and decisions about the children in community.

I can go and say to any number of people here, "I seem to be having this problem with the children and I don't know what to do. Have you tried anything?" And they often say, "Oh yeah, I've had that problem too and I've tried this and it's worked. This hasn't worked." So just being able to share the experiences of raising children together is really exciting.

Often, new styles of interacting with children are absorbed simply by observing other parents or adults. For example,

One woman was really into watching her child eat and telling her what to eat. The result was that the child was nervous at meals and ate hardly anything. From watching other adults and children, she realized that other people were not doing this to their children and they were eating more sensibly than her own child. Although she still was anxious about what her child ate, she was able to stop hounding her about it and let her eat (or not eat) in peace.

With a variety of adults sharing child care responsibilities, parents can choose to interact with children more often when they want to rather than when they have to.

In large communities, pregnancies seem almost contagious and several mothers may deliver babies within a few months of each other. Cohorts of parents are then able to provide support to each other and share the joys and burdens of parenting as their children progress through similar developmental stages. One community member recollected the following:

One of my favorite times with children was when we first moved here and [my daughter] was about a year old or a bit older and there were five other children within three months of her age. All of the mothers were really close and most of them were breast feeding. I was still breast feeding and we used to hang out as a group a lot and had group childcare and we shared breastfeeding and that was really neat. I could go away for 10 hours and know that if [my daughter] really wanted breast milk that someone else was there to nurse her.

In a sense, multiple parenting replaces the obligatory exchange of resources from parent to child, to more of a marketplace. With a variety of adults sharing child care respon-

Daniel Greenberg received his Ph.D. in Child Psychology from the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis. He collected material for his dissertation on children and education in communities by visiting and corresponding with over 200 intentional communities in the U.S. He later spent a year working with children and families at the Findhorn Foundation in northern Scotland.

sibilities, parents can choose to interact with children more often when they *want* to rather than when they *have* to, thus reducing burnout and enhancing the overall quality of parent-child relationships.

Flexibility

Most communities allow parents a great deal of flexibility in balancing families and a careers. Given the economy of scale that exists within most communities, luxuries are occasionally available such as subsidizing parents during the first few months after their children's birth. Furthermore, families benefit from sharing hand-me-downs and other resources. This is quite convenient for most parents.

We exchange clothes among ourselves ... especially at the change of the seasons. At the washhouse, we have one section of a table that is called the "giveaway"... I needed new pants for my child and some Calamine lotion. I put a note up and within 10 minutes, I had six pairs of pants, a bottle of cough syrup, and a brand new bottle of Calamine.

Communities that share childcare, and related tasks such as cooking, laundry, shopping, and cleaning, allow parents (most notably mothers) freedom to pursue activities other than parenting and to be more fully involved in work and social activities both in and out of the community. Intentional communities with cottage industries or communal economic ventures generally have flexible work schedules making it is easy for parents to take breaks to visit their children. Furthermore, as most communities are on one contiguous piece of land and are generally designed as pedestrian communities, parents are never very far from their children. This situation is especially advantageous for fathers living in communities who can spend more time with their biological families than they might be able to "on the outside."

Community life offers another benefit to parents who are frequently on the go. When parents travel outside of the community either for work or vacation, their children can stay home and experience continuity in their primary care and routines. This continuity is often a source of great comfort to parents. As one community member noted,

When I was raising children outside of the community, if I sent them to daycare, I was sending them to be taken care of by a bunch of people who I didn't really know. I didn't really know their values. Here, at least I know the people who take care of her and we have at least some similar values as far as non-violence and cooperation are concerned.

In a similar vein, another member emphatically stated, "I know who is taking care of my children. I know they are not home alone. They are not latchkey kids. There's always somebody home ... always."

Single Parents and Divorce

Intentional communities also benefit single parents who do not have to struggle alone to provide basic necessities for their children and for themselves. In particular, children of single mothers have frequent opportunities to relate to male adults. Male role models seem harder to find in U.S. society where the percentage of households without a male figure has increased from 7% in 1960 to 19% in 1988 (Fuchs & Reklis, 1992). As one member stated, "There's single fathers here and there's mothers here with their children and you don't have to feel like, 'Well I better go hurry up and find a man and get married so my kid can have a dad. They have a dad here.'"

Divorce, although never pleasant, tends to be a much smoother and less jarring process for both parents and children within communities. For parents, the social support structures and elbow-room available within most communities generally diffuse intense conflicts between couples and relieves the pressure to quickly deal with the separation.

Frequently, separated partners remain within an community and continue their relationship with the group. This aspect of divorce in communities is generally quite beneficial for children who are able to maintain close relationships with both parents and often get to see them slowly become friends again as members of the community. Also, given the extended family-like relationships within most com-

munities, children do not have to be right in the middle of the fighting and the chaos sometimes associated with separations.

So far so good. Through sharing tasks, resources, and personal support, parents within communities are buffered from some of the stresses common to parenting and have various options available when balancing family and career and in cases of divorce. Before you reach a final opinion, however, please wait to read the June issue's "Children in Community" column which will address the down side of multiple parenting. Ω

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LIVING IN SINCERITY



JONATHAN ROTH



FOR OUR CHILDREN

by Arun Toké

Baba Amte's Communities of Heart in India

This column is excerpted from Skipping Stones: A Multicultural Children's Magazine. Arun Narayan Toké, a native of India, edits the magazine and wrote this article for his young readers.

I JUST RETURNED FROM A MONTH in India. Among the places I visited were three central Indian communities—Anandwan, Hemalkasa, and Somnath—started by Baba Amte. They have thrived now for over 20 years; Anandwan for over 40 years!

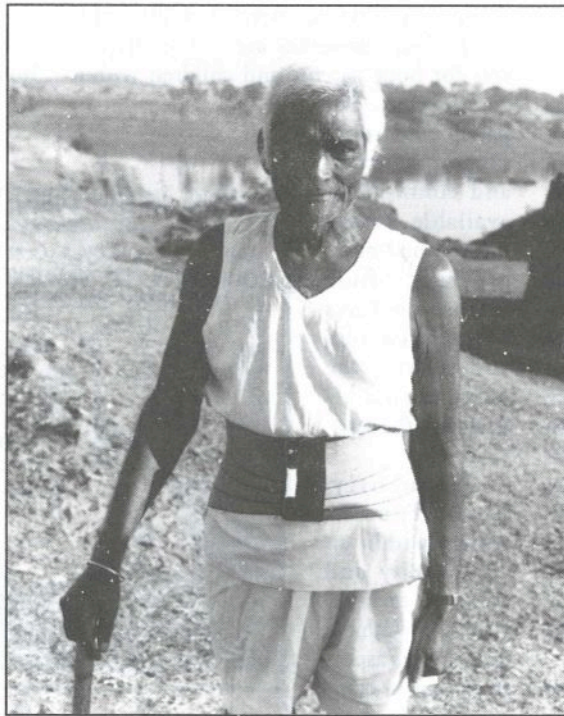
I went to talk to Baba Amte, a man who has been honored with many national and international awards for his contribution to society. I think he is one of the most important communitarians that we have ever seen.

For the last 45 years he has kept the torch of hope burning for the socially outcast people whose only "crime" was that they contracted a disease called leprosy. Afraid of the ugly deformations that advanced leprosy caused in the patients, Indian society tried to isolate them. Baba recognized that it was most important to erase this ill-founded fear. Leprosy is not as seriously contagious as the people thought.

Baba dreamt of a self-sufficient community where children, single people, families, and senior citizens would all live and work together ... a community not founded on charity but on the members' self-esteem. At Anandwan (which means "the joyful forest"), most of the daily chores—gardening, milking, office work, cooking, cleaning—are attended to by the leprosy-afflicted patients there. This community has been a home to over 5,000 leprosy-afflicted people over the years.

"Don't worry about what you *don't* have; but see how you can use what you still have," says Sadashiv Tange, 40, the

director of "Sandhi Niketan" (which means "the house of opportunity") at Anandwan. Unable to walk due to childhood polio, Sadashiv gets around on a hand-cranked tricycle. He is helping



Baba Amte dreamt of a self-sufficient community, founded on the members' self-esteem.

hundred of leprosy patients as well as "differently abled" young men and women by training them in employable skills.

Many parents in Indian villages used to neglect the children who they did not consider "physically fit." To help such children, Baba opened two residential schools for blind, deaf, and physically challenged children.

The Hemalkasa community, man-

aged by Dr. Prakash Amte, Baba's son, helps India's indigenous tribal Madiya Gond people, who live in the tropical forests of southeastern Maharashtra state. Dr. Prakash's clinic may see some 150 patients a day. The weekend before I reached Hemalkasa, 18 visiting doctors had performed 110 operations—from removing cataracts to appendectomies. When I arrived the staff was providing post-operative care to those patients. I also visited the residential school at Hemalkasa, which prepares 450 tribal youth for their future in a rapidly changing India.

Dr. Prakash Amte also loves animals. He is bridging the gap between our society and the wild animals that we displace. His animal orphanage cares for any baby animals brought to him—tigers, lions, bears, snakes, deer, and coyotes—and offers an educational opportunity for visitors to the hospital.

Several times we went swimming in the river with an entourage of two dogs, a bear, and a panther. The animals played together in this unspoiled natural place. (I must confess, I swam a bit away from the bear and panther paws!)

Often I was tickled at the animal orphanage to see a baby monkey getting a piggy-back ride on a pomeranian dog. And I was simply amazed when I saw two dogs, a cat, and a baby monkey eat out of the same dish. No sign of conflict or competition in this animal community!

At 80, Baba does not consider himself old. He is full of life. He gets up at four am, and everyday takes morning and evening walks. He lives on the bank of the Narmada River. His current mission is to save the Narmada River Valley from ecological disaster from the superdams under construction upriver. He is like a sentinel guarding the pristine Narmada river for the children of future generations. Ω

Subscriptions to Skipping Stones are \$18 (\$25 for institutions, 50% off, low income). For submissions and subscriptions, contact: PO Box 3939, Eugene, OR 97403. (503) 342-4956.



of a scrip. The latter includes many LETS systems in Canada, England, and western Australia.

A healthy local economy helps create and concentrate wealth in a community: individuals have more spending power; more goods and services circulate locally; spending power stays within the community; people support local businesses and services (and so meet more of their neighbors); business transactions become more personal, flexible, and negotiable; and the economic vigor—and interpersonal goodwill—can improve markedly. *Mother Earth News* recently did a cover story on the economic revitalization of Ithaca, New York, due largely to Ithacans' enthusiastic use of home-grown "Ithaca HOURS" notes.

Greco gives us the nuts and bolts of how to organize a local economy, including creating a governing board, persuading people to use and support the alternative system, regulating the amount of exchange media, preventing stagnation or inflation, and the issues of backing and redeemability. He describes many past and present systems, and tells us pitfalls to avoid and strategies which have worked elsewhere. He also proposes a model composite local exchange system—the best of what he's found so far.

He also takes on popular misconceptions.

- *Money is issued by governments. If not, it isn't "real" or legal.* (In a healthy system, he argues, currency is not issued by a central authority but generated by the people of the region. In any case, local currencies are entirely legal in the U.S. and Canada.)

- *"U.S. currency" is issued by the U.S. government.* (No longer. Americans now use Federal Reserve Notes, a privately owned currency, issued and controlled by the Federal Reserve Bank, a private banking cartel.)

- *Commercial banks give loans based on money which actually exists—stored in their vaults or stored elsewhere.* (Not true. Commercial banks create money "out of nothing," Greco explains, whenever they make a loan.)

He also illuminates what money actually *is*—the medium of exchange by which a group of people in local area keep track of who owes who what, in terms of value exchanged for goods or services rendered. The medium of exchange can be thought of as a series of IOUs. If a group of tradespeople all decided to make each others' IOUs mutually redeemable, they'd have "money." Possessing such local money would give the holder claim against the community of traders to buy things or to discharge debts. It

would be evidence either that he or she had delivered value to someone in the community, and therefore had the right to receive like value in return, or that he or she received the local money from someone else who had delivered value.

Wealth is created, says Greco, when someone performs a service or provides a commodity. Wealth circulates through the community and comes full circle when the original creator receives like value. *Money* is not wealth, but only the physical trail of its passing. Wealth is the skills, expertise, willingness to trade, and good faith of people in the community. Thus, he says, creating a local economy brings back the small-scale, decentralized, *natural* economy. It's the humane, sustainable way to interact with each other economically.

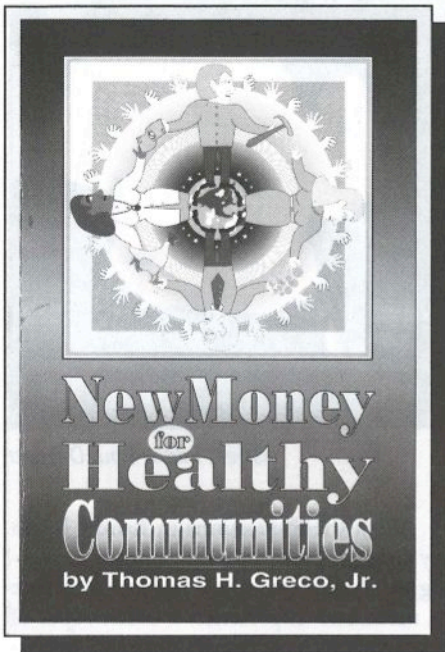
He also explains how our home-grown wealth has, through time, ended up as centrally issued, governmentally politicized, paper currency. Our centralized economic systems are diseased, he says; the symptoms include inflation, unemployment, bankruptcies, and increasing poverty.

Greco also argues that our politicized, centralized system is set up to *create* these very problems. He describes how it misallocates money, rewards the powerful, and inevitably pumps wealth from the working poor to the rich. And worse, how the Federal Reserve Bank system has deliberately created a scarcity of money. Although commercial banks "create" new money when they issue loans, the money to pay the interest has not yet been created. Thus, he says, all the people who get loans, taken together, are in an impossible situation—they owe more money than actually exists. They must compete with one another for the available money in order to not default on their loans and lose their houses, farms, or businesses, however a certain number of foreclosures are inevitable. Our current economic system is based on scarcity, and on the need for some of us to lose our shirts.

With accessible language and clear examples (and good graphics and charts), *New Money for Healthy Communities* argues convincingly that although we now live in an unhealthy system, we can begin to reclaim our economic power, and sovereignty, through alternative economies—and, we can do it right where we live. Ω

Diana Leafe Christian is managing editor of Communities magazine.

Thomas H. Greco, Jr. is a community economist and director of Community Information Resource Center, which helps groups involved in community improvement, social justice, and sustainability.



New Money for Healthy Communities

By Thomas H. Greco, Jr.

1994, Paperback, 201 pgs., \$15.95
Available from the author, \$18.95 postpaid. Box 42663, Tucson, AZ 85733.

Reviewed by Diana Leafe Christian

"The way that a national economy preys on its internal colonies is by the destruction of community."—Wendell Berry

IN *New Money for Healthy Communities* Tom Greco tells us why we need local, alternative economies and how they work.

Local economies, which are organized in a town, city, or bioregion, do not replace the larger economy, but function parallel to it. One type uses a local, alternative currency or scrip, such as in the Berkshire, Massachusetts experiments and in various HOURS systems in the U.S. Another type, the mutual credit system (also known as a "reciprocal trade" system, and often miscalled a "barter" system) uses entries on a ledger rather than the exchange

Nurturing Our Potential

FROM THE GUEST EDITOR

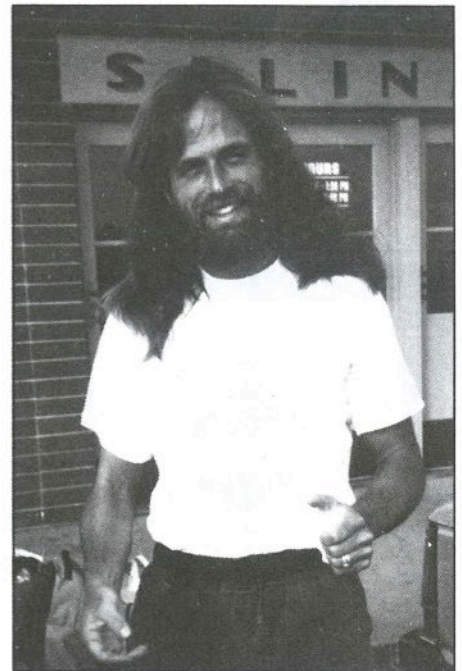
.....
Paul DeLapa

SO WE FIND OURSELVES LIVING IN COMMUNITY, OR LONGING to return, having tasted or imagined a field of loving kindness and unwavering reflection. What do we find when we get there? Inevitably, what we bring, mixed with a healthy dose of what our fellow communitarians brought along, too. Together in community our journeys continue. We rub each other's shoulders, and bash our stubborn heads. We soothe each other's old wounds, and uncover and manifest new ones. It's a thank-you, no-thank-you blessing relentlessly unfolding, with little escape. And yet for many of us, there is no other choice—community is our life's work.

All the while our surging spirit drives us onward—an inner pulse, that seemingly unreachable potential knocking at our door. For some quietly. For others, like myself, more restlessly, seeking spaciousness and, like a plant, reaching to the light for nourishment. There is no stopping it—ready or not, the soul seems to manifest.

And yet we struggle, perhaps as it was meant to be. With each other. With ourselves. With the organizational bodies we create together. There must be some way, some tools, to manage all this life/spirit constantly emerging. And what is my commitment to my own authenticity? What is my commitment to supporting yours? In a culture committed to avoiding the truth of experience, how do I stand up against that enormous force opposed to change and addicted to diversion? In a field conditioned to reacting and responding rather than listening, how do I listen and speak in order to be an effective instrument for growth?

.....
Guest Editor Paul DeLapa was a four-year resident landscaper and student at Esalen Institute. He is a communications designer (graphics and packaging) by trade, a group process and consensus facilitator out of love, a lifelong passionate spiritual seeker, and an artist at heart.



Guest Editor Paul DeLapa

With these questions in hand I began my strange and wonderful journey of waking up. Along the way, I've been fortunate to meet and experience a cornucopia of people, practices, techniques, and experiments to support my own unfolding, the growth of friends around me, and the health of our collective body. My goal in editing this Spring 1995 issue of *Communities* is to share a few of these morsels, and make some new discoveries in the process. Early on, my vision for this collection took on a life of its own, as visions have a tendency to do. What you hold in your hands is that creation.

Hopefully, in these 13 articles and four poems, you'll find at least one slice to nourish, inspire, or promote your own growth, and as a consequence, the development of your community, group, or organization. Dedicated to the ideas of Human Potential and Human Spirit, this banquet presents hearty helpings of ideas, experiences, and techniques, as taught, researched, and practiced by their creators and followers.

I have endeavored to bring together a diverse mix, both topically and in form and style: theory, fiction, poetry, and biographical tales of communities founded on growth practices, and individuals committed to their own paths to wholeness, consciousness, and aliveness. You'll find specific tools to experiment with, and plenty of guideposts to aid you in developing your own.

Countless effective and valuable practices and processes are *not* represented here for one reason or other (generally attributed to either space limitations, "life happening," or lack of awareness or connections on my

part), including: consensus decision making—which I have found extremely useful in fostering personal and group potential; Dialogue, and also Counsel—both of great benefit in harnessing group energy and taming the wanting ego; and bodywork—the giving and receiving of healing contact, to name just a few.

What is here is a rich sampling and lively foray into the discoveries of human unfoldment both inside and outside of intentional community—a baker's dozen assortment of experience aimed at supporting the manifestation of an individual's and group's highest aspirations and entitlements.

A pair of Twin Oakers offer appetizing beginnings with Leslie Greenwood's delight-

ful, "this-is-how-it-is" testament to living in close quarters with others, followed by Keenan's informal yet observant survey sighting some of the growth benefits of living in community. Ed Groody lays out a foundation for building and sustaining a healthy "experience of community" as developed by Dr. M. Scott Peck. Wayne Tittes of People House provides a snapshot of his urban workshop/growth center community's ideas for supporting personal growth. And inspired by *A Course in Miracles* are Dr. Gerald Jampolsky's techniques of "Attitudinal Healing." Christine Lehman shares the essentials of this more spiritually based group work from her experience of working with Attitudinal Healing in community.

What would it look like raising children to have full access to their inner impulses and resources? Janet Lederman spent much of her life examining these issues and created the Gazebo School Park to test out her ideas. Jaelitza, a teacher at Gazebo, offers her observations on the benefits of Janet's innovations, for children as well as for Gazebo's host community. A lively interview with Richard Strozzi Heckler echoes Gazebo's value of learning *in the body*, but from the Eastern, martial arts' perspective. In our discussion, Richard, a fourth-degree Black Belt, describes how the principles of Aikido and body-learning can benefit groups and intentional communities.

Just for spice, you'll find poems written from a contemplative state by Lomi School founder and meditator Robert K. Hall. And, so we don't take our aspirations too seriously, cartoons by Jonathan of Twin Oaks. Both add to the sweet and sour taste of our Human Potential smorgasbord.

Environmental scientist and psychotherapist Will Keepin introduces Gender Healing Workshops, now offered in the new men's and women's relational movement. Next we dip into the adolescent stages of the Human Potential Movement in an excerpt from John Heider's irreverent novel, *Living in Paradox: A Utopian Soap Opera* (which gives us the opportunity to consider the pertinence of Human Potential Theory for our lives today).

Mildred Gordon's overview of the Feedback Learning experiment as practiced at Ganas community gives us another look at a community grounded in a personal growth modality. Another form of feedback is Gestalt Practice, a method developed in community as an evolution of existential therapies, with an inspiration from Buddhism. Christine Price shares her experiences with this egalitarian practice as she lived it in her 20 years at Esalen Institute.

Julie Mazo of Shannon Farm describes the conundrum of teaching conflict resolution *and* practicing it at home, and offers helpful tools for resolving conflicts. And from Scotland comes a dessert served warmly by Kajedo, summarizing, among other things, one of the common threads running through most offerings in this issue—that basically what we have to offer each other, as a healing, as a gift, and as a teaching, is our own experience. "I'll show you mine, if you show me yours." It's like kids stuff, really. To be human is to be vulnerable. To be vulnerable is to be able to touch and be touched, and consequently to heal and to grow. Enjoy! Ω

Living On Dreams

*We could all hang out together.
Someone reading in the bedroom,
another doing yoga in the room with carpets
and there's always the one who likes to cook,
preparing nourishment in the kitchen.*

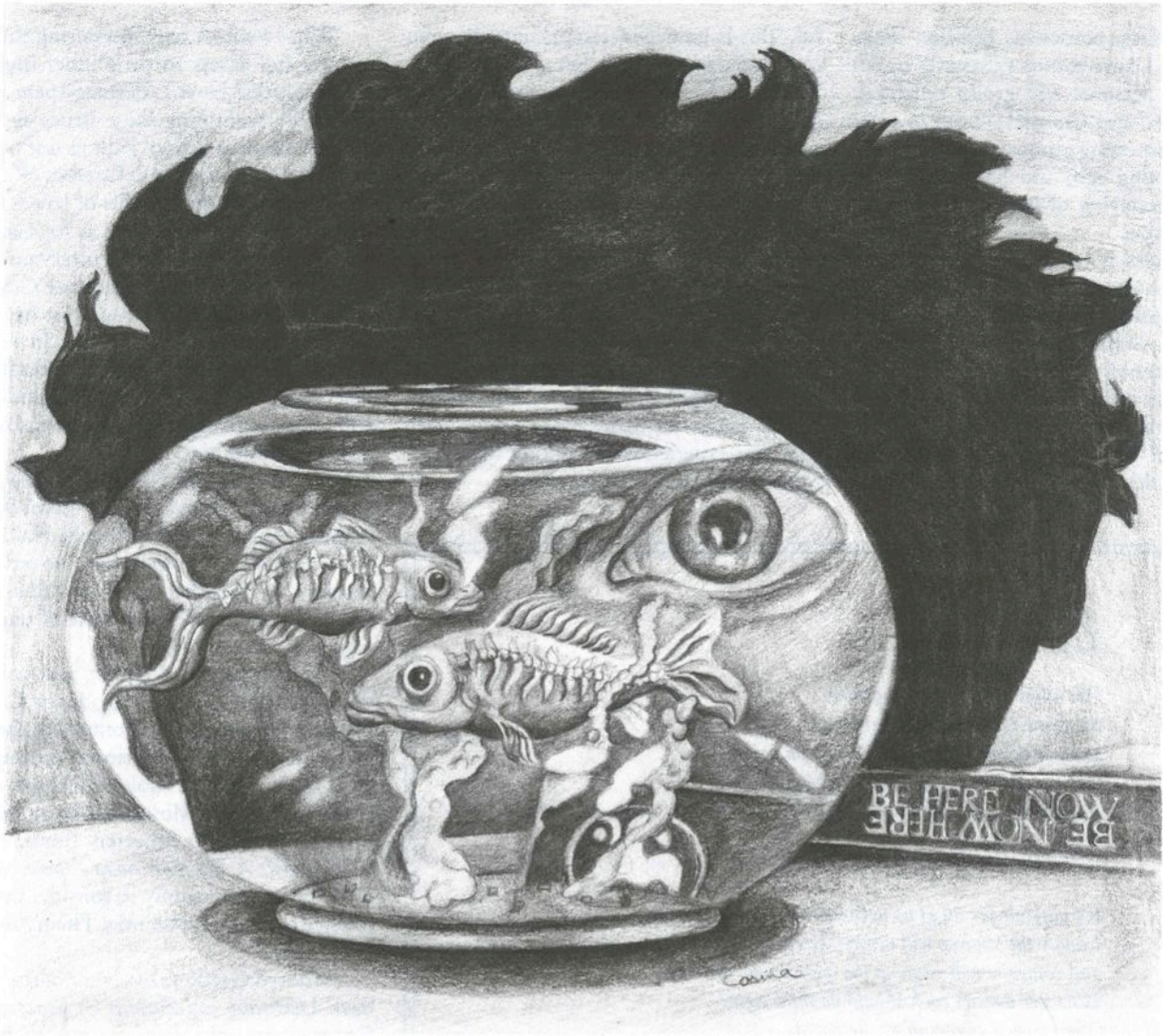
It could work, you know.

*It's possible for all of us to breathe in the same space.
I know the shower will always be clean
and someone will wipe up the mess on the counters.
Whoever doesn't cook should do that, right?
Then there's sweeping off the porch.
It should be done about once a week, don't you think?
Now who sleeps with whom might get to be a problem.
How are those things to be decided?
If we leave it up to attraction alone, there are bound
to be giant errors in judgment.
You know how sex is. We don't want to be fools
just because we share the planet. There are enough
of that kind. Perhaps we could draw numbers out of the
old mixing bowl: a real mixing bowl, in the true sense
of the word. Then in the morning we will all meditate together,
and feel the holy spirit and realize how lucky we are
to be breathing the clean air and sleeping on clean sheets
and pulling fresh carrots out of the garden.*

*We could do it! We could all live together and have a good
time here. Do you think we could agree on that fantasy?
I know the reality of it is far away, but I've always
lived on dreams, haven't you?*

—Robert K. Hall

Robert Hall is a pioneer in body-oriented psychology and the integration of psychotherapy with spiritual practice, and is on the teaching staff of Spirit Rock Meditation Center, in Northern California.



COSIMA

Life in a Fishbowl

by Leslie Greenwood

I'VE ALWAYS BEEN INTRIGUED BY A particular kind of aquarium fish, the one where each thin bone is revealed through its transparent scales. It's remarkable to peer through the clear glass, right into the fish's very insides, to observe it from every angle. Even if I turn my head away, the critter remains fully exposed among its fellows.

That's kind of what it's like living in community.

I subscribe to the theory that we re-create aspects of our family life with any group of people we're around. The longer the contact, the more complex the imitation. In community, there is plenty of "family stuff" floating around in here with us, and this fishbowl can churn like a stormy sea. We act nasty, compete, scorn, judge, accuse, flame

out, isolate ourselves, beg for attention, go on guilt trips, power trips, and ego trips—the whole bit. To go beyond that would require vulnerability. (No, not that!!)

One quality about vulnerability is that of being quite certain that you are totally alone without protection, and therefore you feel alone in the experience of feeling exposed, even if everyone around feels exactly the same way. It's not easy to make the choice to be exposed, but the closer you live to each other, the harder it is to hide!

People often talk about reaching a point where they have to get out of here, to get a break from the intensity, the raw nose-to-nose interactions that occur only in elevator breakdowns or lifeboats adrift with stranded passengers.

But how can life in Utopia be compared to a goldfish bowl or a stuck elevator?

We affect each other, we remind each other, we observe each other. We experience the joys of true intimacy, the replays of former excruciating or interminable life experiences, and the awareness that all of our blemishes are completely visible at one time or another. People don't just know you, they *know* you.

So, is it good or bad? The answer to both is, "Yes." It's very, very good to know that you're living with people who basically accept and care about you, even though they get plenty of ganders at what there is not to like. But that's not all there is ...

Feeling accepted and being treated with a certain degree of respect are elements that

make a fertile environment for personal growth. True, some people don't feel compelled to change if they're accepted as is. But I think those people are the exceptions. The only block to growth and change is some big old mass of emotional garbage. If the path is clear in the environment, most people will seize the chance to move ahead in their personal and emotional growth.

What's hard about being a skeletal fish in a somewhat crowded fishbowl is knowing that even if they're not saying anything about it, our fellow transparents are noticing those social gaffes, emotional outbursts, bouts of incompetence or flakiness, and other blunderous moments. In the meantime, we're also getting hooked on each other's "stuff," getting our "buttons pushed" and wondering if maybe the best thing would be a little cabin in the woods or an apartment in a large city where we could finally be alone, free, anonymous.

Could be. And many who spend years in community leave and do just that. The life isn't for everyone. One member often speaks

.....

**People don't just know you,
they know you.**

.....

about "surviving the dream." You know, the dream that we're here to live in peace and harmony with our other fellow related species. It ain't a peaches and cream dream ...

But, if community is a duplication of our family lives, aren't we merely stagnating in the mire of our murky pasts? Wouldn't the real growth be in stepping out into the "real world" and risking a little true isolation in order to fully find ourselves, and reach our potential?

Could be. I happen to think that if a body is ready to grow, it shall. In any environment.

So why join the fishbowl?

Living closely with a bunch of different people, for all its frustration and anguish, produces a powerful sense of cohesion, belonging and intimacy, whether we're socialites or hermits. We are part of the community, even when we're feeling isolated or alienated. We're part of one another's lives. We're noticed by each other. We affect each other in profound ways that we may never even realize.

But is it worth it?

Well, yeah, to me, anyway. At Twin Oaks there's even a subgroup within the community who get together twice a week for a couple hours to go a little deeper, seize the

opportunity (I love that phrase) to learn more about ourselves by asking our fellow skeletal fish to tell us what they see. There's more to it than that, of course, as the goal is personal growth and community, and the feedback we get and give comes with that in mind. Remember the '60s phrase, "Coming from a loving place!" (usually said in sarcasm or jest after a big smile and well-placed and good-natured put-down)? Well, the '60s are not dead in my community. Even if the jargon becomes jest, what remains is a basic intention toward "getting real" and acting decently toward one another.

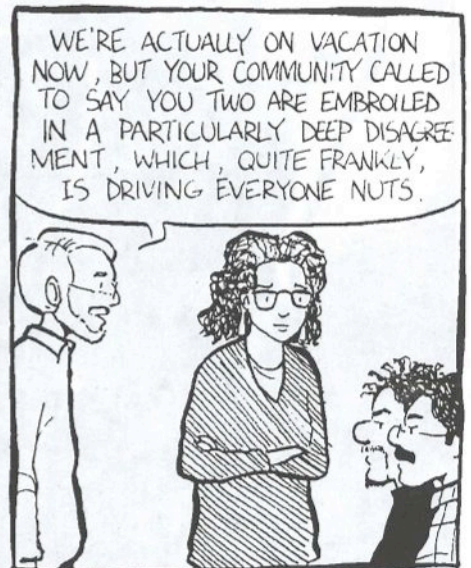
Many groan at the oft-used phrase "personal growth." To me, personal growth includes freeing up humor, curiosity, spunk,

creativity, and acceptance. A person in the goldfish bowl of community would be hard-pressed not to run into it sometime or other.

It's just one way to grow, not as simple as it appears. Community is a lifestyle rich with potential for personal transformation. It provides the environment of a clear glass bowl where we may interact with each other, view and be viewed, and make changes in our own lives in the context of sharing our lives together. Ω

Leslie Greenwood has lived 15 years in intentional communities; at Twin Oaks for the last 11. Her activities there include being part of the Process team and the Facilitation committee.

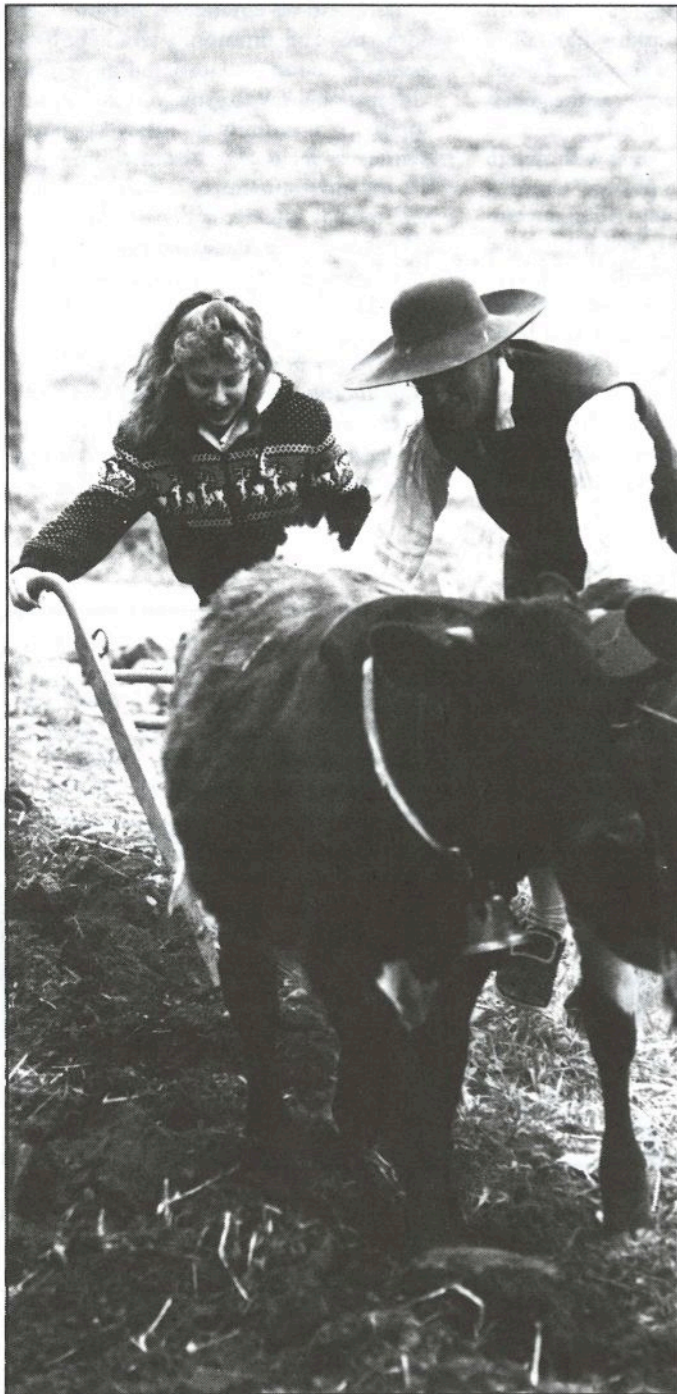
LIVING IN SINCERITY



BUT ONE PREMISE OF OURS IS THAT THINGS ARE NEVER AS BAD AS THEY SEEM. SO LET'S BEGIN BY HAVING YOU BOTH TELL US EXACTLY WHAT THE PROBLEM IS.



©94 JONATHAN ROTH



CHRISTIANBRUNN KLOSTER/TIM LEEDY

Community living tends to foster broader skills and more useful knowledge.

.....
Living in community tends to make people less idealistic rather than more idealistic.
.....

More Confident, Less Idealistic (How We Grow in Community)

by Keenan

A QUESTION WHICH COMES UP FOR MOST PEOPLE CONSIDERING moving to an intentional community is, "Will my life be better living in a community than it is now?"

The answer, of course, depends on the individual—what that person wants to get out of community, and whatever he or she contributes to community. However, looking at people who live in communities in general, certain patterns do emerge.

In my 11 years at Twin Oaks I've been passionate about understanding what community is and how it affects people, so I've talked with hundreds of members (and particularly ex-members) of other communities who have come through here. I've also visited over 20 other communities, attended many communities conferences, and have been a delegate to the Federation of Egalitarian Communities. So, based on this extensive, broad-based, and yet informal research, here are some tentative conclusions.

People appear to experience personal growth and at times profound transformation from living in community, even in communities which are not focused on personal growth *per se*. Community members report common results, regardless of the size, focus, location, or governance structure of their communities. Here, in no particular order, are what current and ex-community members most often report as the changes they've experienced:

- Increased self-confidence
- Better communication skills
- Broader perspective
- Clearer thinking
- Less idealism
- Increased responsibility
- Broader set of skills
- Broader general (useful) knowledge
- Increased awareness of personal limitations

While certain results, such as better communication skills, seem predictable, others surprised me, for example, less idealism or clearer thinking.

A few omissions may also come as a surprise. Although many community members reported finding an ideal intimate relationship in community, an equal number lamented the absence of one. Some communitarians said they had developed close friendships; others didn't. It seems that living together does not mean that one's social needs automatically will be met. It seems that some of the qualities people find absent in their lives in mainstream society, such as a sense of belonging, close friendships, or an intimate relationship, continue to remain elusive within community.

What are the commonalities among communities which may

foster these similar patterns of personal change? First, communities are small social entities so the social relationships among members are intimate and intense. And because community groups are self-selecting, inevitably more homogeneity is present than in the culture at large. And most communities are, to some degree, socially self-reliant.

Two other less obvious but profound differences between mainstream society and communal living have far-reaching effects on the emotional well-being of members. One is a sense of physical safety; the other is generally feeling accepted. (Feeling accepted, it seems, is different from feeling a sense of belonging.)

There are almost no reports of attacks or physical violence at all in any of the com-



Community is a brutally accurate mirror.



munities I have visited or have knowledge of. Except for survivalist communities, the members of every community I'm familiar with appear to be open and trusting. Compare this to the often constant caution and awareness of potential danger present in mainstream culture. Fear limits our thinking and behavior in subtle and insidious ways; the removal of fear releases much physical and mental energy.

Another byproduct of living in mainstream culture is the sense of being cut off from contact with other people—variously called alienation, isolation, or anomie. While members of communities may not always find the intimacy they desire, communitarians at least seem to accept each other and encourage personal challenge and exploration. In community, without fearing of harsh judgments or negative consequences, it's much easier to take personal risks. Many community members find this profoundly liberating.

All of these factors taken together seem sufficient to explain why community members may become more confident, are better able to communicate, develop a broader perspective, and become more responsible. But why should living in community make them more aware of personal limitations?

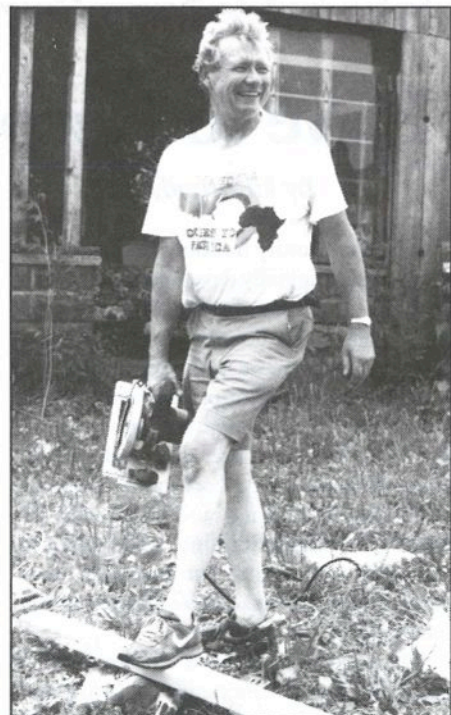
I suspect it's this: community living provides a brutally accurate mirror. We see each other, and we see our selves in more detail than most people were accustomed to before coming to community. Some members can't handle this incidental and unavoidable openness, and leave, seeking more privacy.

But for most of us, observing that even wonderful people around us also have glaring imperfections is a release from our own expectations of perfection, and from self-punishment for our failings.

The community mirror reveals our capabilities and keeps us from effectively hiding our shortcomings. We tend to blossom with previously unknown strengths, and accept and shrug off the revelation of any shortcomings, rather than being devastated by them.

What about the quirky bit of information that community living tends to make people less idealistic rather than more idealistic? In talking to visitors or members new to community, I have come to identify two kinds of idealism—idealism about community living, and idealism about political action, or more grandly, a desire to change the world for the better.

It seems that people who come to community with visions of utopia have a very difficult time adjusting to the often petty and aggravating realities of daily community life. I suspect that many come to community expecting to find only fully self-actualized, profoundly spiritual people who will, by example, provide virtuous examples to help them achieve a fulfilled, moral life. Instead they find people with some of the same insecurities and negative behaviors the new member had to deal with on the outside. This can lead to feelings of betrayal, and certainly, to a diminishing of one's fantasies.



COMMON PLACE LAND TRUST/CAROL SIMONS

Another boon: increased self-confidence.

Even in very homogeneous communities there are differences in philosophical outlooks. It is difficult to discover that my closest friends may not share my deepest convictions. It is also difficult to realize that even in community, idealistic change often comes about through political machinations. Members with dogmatic ideologies often become frustrated and burn out. More pragmatic idealists tend to narrow their scope from "changing the world" to "cleaning up the neighborhood." The process of living in community tends to dampen one's idealistic vision of profound global transformation. "If I can't change my community, how can I hope to change the world?"

Now, what is it about community living that promotes clearer thinking? I have found it to be a joy to talk to almost any seasoned communitarian since they can typically speak and think coherently about any number of topics (not just issues involved in communal living). I suspect this is due to the necessary realistic thinking and immediate feedback inherent in living with a group of people. Community members are, almost daily, called to voice their opinions, and to defend them. Few blatantly nonsensical opinions are allowed to pass unchallenged. In community we are neither engulfed in nor protected by bureaucracies, so complex issues come up which need decisions. The consequences of past decisions in a community are readily apparent and help guide thinking about future decisions. Communicating daily and making important decisions tends to hone the mind.

Ex-community-members invariably tell me that living in community was a life-altering experience and they are better people for having done it. Yet there are certainly exceptions—ex-members who feel that they were treated unfairly, or their time in community was a setback, or valuable time in their life was lost when they could have been building a career.

It is true that not everyone is cut out for community, and I doubt that any one communitarian will experience growth and change in his or her life exactly as I have outlined. (This is certainly no rigorous empirical study.) In any case, I would be delighted to hear people's responses to these observations, and whether or not their own experiences are consistent with these. Ω

Keenan has been a resident of Twin Oaks community in Virginia for 11 years, and has visited over 20 communities in four countries. His primary work is in childcare. He can be reached c/o Rt. 4, Box 169, Louisa, VA 23093.



SHENOA RETREAT & LEARNING CENTER/RICK GERHARTER

The experience of community has been described as "belonging," "renewing," and "a rich silence."

"You Mean We Have to Keep on Growing?"

by Ed Groody

MY FAVORITE DEFINITION OF community comes from the wise Quaker author, Parker Palmer, who said, "Community is the place you go to, to get away from people you don't like, to find people who you don't like even more." Although this is not what I believed in my youth, years later it has a ring of truth to it. That's because community—whether a large intentional community or a small group of friends or family—provides the mirror and crucible for our own personal growth and transformation. When we commit to and do the work of community building, then the experience of healing, belonging, caring, support, and connection which we typically associate with "community" can be present.

The community building process and its four stages, originally developed by M. Scott Peck, M.D., author of *A Different Drum* and cofounder of The Foundation for Community Encouragement, provides a road map which can assist groups to communicate more authentically, function more effectively, and experience a more alive and genuine sense of community. Facilitators from the FCE have been using and improving Dr. Peck's community building model and process with intentional communities, non-profit organizations, and businesses around the world.

Dr. Peck uses the word "community" to mean the actual experience of connectedness—a certain way of communicating and being together which requires a depth of

individual and group awareness, commitment, and authentic communication. People have described this experience of community variously as: "belonging," "healing," "transforming," "renewing," "a rich silence," "a safe place," and even, "a mystical experience." Perhaps it is the conscious or unconscious yearning and longing for the "experience of community" which brings many people to intentional communities. The important point here, however, is that awareness, commitment, and certain skills are needed in order to build and rebuild this "experience of community."

Despite their best intentions, some community groups rarely, if ever, experience this kind of "community." Doing workshops across the country, I have visited intentional

communities which hold common goals, share values, live together on the land, and share economic resources, yet which never experience a sense of genuine community.

Of course, the experience of community may not be for everybody and cannot be forced upon them. Some people may seek out intentional community simply to get away from people and/or mainstream culture. For those who *do* wish to experience community however, many excellent individual and group communication process tools and techniques are available. Dr. Peck's community building process is one which provides a clear and practical way to understand groups and deepen one's experience of authentic community.

The Four Stages of Community Building

Dr. Peck found that groups classically move through four stages, which he terms Pseudo-community, Chaos, Emptiness, and Community. By being able to identify which stage they are in and by understanding the characteristics and appropriate tasks associated with each stage, groups can communicate and work together more authentically and effectively.

The four stages can overlap, and groups move back and forth through each of them. For example, in a group of 50 people, 45 of them might be experiencing the Community stage while two or three are still in Emptiness and one or two in Chaos or Pseudo-community.

It is helpful to view each stage as having constructive and destructive aspects. The destructive aspect occurs when a group remains in a particular stage longer than is necessary. Groups with little history tend to start and remain for some time in Pseudo-community. Over time, depending upon maturity and skill level, groups may move effectively through all four stages.

We might say that a healthy and highly functioning community is one which is able to move through the stages consciously and according to what is called for at any given time. The group is able to identify what stage it is in, and has the awareness, discipline, and skill to see and do what is required to move forward. Likewise, each individual in the group has the individual responsibility to monitor his or her own relationship to the group.

Unfortunately, many groups today, from intentional communities to businesses, often remain stuck in Chaos or vacillate back and forth between Chaos and Pseudo-community. This may cause undue frustration

and conflict and eventually lead to the collapse of the group. Other groups may struggle with the unrealistic expectation that they "should" be to able to remain in the stage of Community most, if not all the time. If we just "tried hard enough," or were "smart enough," or if "Joe would just leave!," we would be happy and get along swell all the time. On the contrary, in a healthy community it is understood that each stage of the process is unavoidable and important, and serves a vital purpose. In fact, without Chaos and Emptiness there can be no experience of community. This is an important concept and one foreign to a western culture still re-

The Four Stages of Community Building Process



liant upon outdated concepts of Newtonian physics which values control, predictability, stability, and equilibrium above all else. By avoiding and trying to control or organize our way out of Chaos, deeper levels of authenticity, order, and evolution are bypassed or delayed. To put it more simply, no matter how highly skillful, mature, or trained a group might be, they will always experience all four of the stages.

People often feel relieved when they learn that Chaos is a natural part of the process. We are often instructed in our culture that we are supposed to be happy and in control most of the time, and that things should be relatively easy. When we learn that all groups experience Chaos, and that community building requires a great deal of skill and effort, we see that our group is not so different from others. We also see that if our group is stuck it is usually less about one person causing the Chaos, and more to do with the entire group's process.

Each stage in the process has identifiable characteristics, and group members operate

under certain fundamental premises. As I describe each stage below, please reflect upon your own experience in your community. How does Pseudo-community play out in your group? How do you respond to Chaos? What are the personal obstacles you typically need to empty to be present with your fellow community members?

Pseudo-community

The fundamental premise of Pseudo-community is that we are all the same. In its constructive aspect, members of the group focus on what they have in common: common goals, work tasks, shared beliefs and values. Communication is not particularly deep or process-oriented. Individuals in the group often use the word "we" and speak in generalities and platitudes. Conversation is typically focused on issues outside or external to the group itself, and only rarely on personal sharing. This stage is often task-oriented and productive. It is a good time to get work done. "We have something to do, we all are the same, let's do it." There is a uniformity of agenda and purpose. Pseudo-community is necessary for getting the everyday tasks of life accomplished. The deep and personal sharing which requires much time and energy is not always appropriate. If it were, nothing would ever get done! In the constructive aspect of Pseudo-community, communication is not authentic, but merely polite.

With time, however, the uniformity of this stage becomes *conformity*. Rather than asking, "How are we the same, what are our common goals?" we ask, "What do I have to do to belong here?" "Will I rock the boat if I say that?" "What do have to do so I can remain a part of the group and avoid being excluded?" People often describe this destructive aspect of Pseudo-community as the



The fundamental premise of Pseudo-community is that we are all the same.



"cocktail party stage," "superficial," or "phony." A helpful metaphor is that of an iceberg. The tip of the iceberg is what we actually share in common: beliefs, knowledge, goals, etc. But underneath the surface are our hidden differences, opinions, issues, etc. A fellow community member makes a remark that offends me and hurts my feelings, which I never resolve. Or perhaps I have

a creative solution to a problem but am afraid to speak up. Perhaps I am troubled by a personal emotional issue. All of this vital information which we withhold during Pseudo-community is under the waterline. If the group is still performing its tasks and is communicating effectively, this hidden portion of the iceberg may not be a problem for a time. But eventually, think of how this hidden portion affects communication and problem solving. How can creativity be nurtured or the best solutions be generated when important information is excluded from the process? How can we experience connectedness with unresolved issues and resentments lingering between individuals? The group literally bumps into the iceberg. Or spends great amounts of energy trying to maneuver around it without anyone acknowledging it is there.

We have all had the experience of sitting in a meeting where everyone there knows there are "elephants in the room." Everyone knows what they are, but no one acknowledges their presence. However after the meeting, when people are in their particular cliques, they say what they really feel and believe. For many individuals, this denial and avoidance of difficult issues results in frustration, aggravation, and boredom. Lack of trust and superficial communication are key characteristics of Pseudo-community in its destructive aspect.

Chaos

While the focus in Pseudo-community is on preserving similarities and the status quo, in the Chaos stage of community the focus is surfacing differences. Chaos is when we learn that there is a problem, that something isn't working. Needed information

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The depth of closeness and community that a group feels is proportional to the depth of "emptiness" it is willing to experience.
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becomes available, and we can identify what the problems and issues are. In its constructive aspect, then, Chaos is the seedbed of creativity.

While it is a positive sign that differences start to emerge, the only problem with Chaos is that few people bother to listen to or recognize the differences. Chaos is often mistakenly viewed as conflict. Conflict may occur in Chaos. However, the primary characteristic of Chaos is not conflict but a cha-



SPRINGTREE COMMUNITY

Community requires that we "take off our masks"—letting other know who we are and what is going on beneath the surface.

otic rhythm. The discussion jumps from topic to topic, with people talking back and forth, all around—with no real listening; where each person launches into his or her own agenda without any room to hear or take in other perspectives. During Chaos, when someone speaks to me, rather than making room inside myself to listen, I am planning my response, even before the person finishes speaking.

While Pseudo-community is sometimes called the "we" stage, emphasizing similarities, Chaos is the "you" stage: "You need to do it my way." Chaos is a time when we struggle with expectations and control. We make demands on others, our environment, and on ourselves: "I know the way you should be, I should be, and this world should be." Preaching and finger-pointing are common during this stage.

Intensity and control are often confused with genuine passion during Chaos. The frenetic pace of this stage may also be misinterpreted as productivity or effectiveness. I have heard people describe Chaos as a kind of force field that tries to pull them in, away from their own sense of centeredness. Others experience it as "a time of frustration," "anxiety," "confusion," "despair," "anger," or "attachment."

Fixing is another characteristic of Chaos and a common way that groups avoid the

next stage, Emptiness. Rather than let a problem surface, rather than let someone experience his or her pain or problem fully, I want to fix it—because if I don't, it will make me feel uncomfortable. During Chaos, "us/them" conflicts may arise and divide the group: new members vs. old timers, insiders vs. outsiders, people who support x vs. people who oppose x. Both sides of a topic or issue may hold merit, and the group, unable to see that they are in the Chaos stage, either becomes paralyzed or accedes to the direction of a more aggressive or persuasive person. When a group gets stuck this way, it means a deeper, unresolved issue under the surface is blocking progress.

Planning and problem-solving are rarely effective when operating out of the Chaos stage. Recurring issues and "putting out fires" are another signal that a group is attempting to solve problems while in Chaos. Oftentimes, when a group is stuck here, it is focusing only on the content of a problem or decision, rather than the process or way the group is making the decision. In community building, *how* we make decisions is as important as what is decided.

There are two ways to get out of Chaos. One, called "organizing," will get a group temporarily out of this stage but will not lead to Community. Rather than face Chaos and the next stage, Emptiness, groups try to "organize" their way out. This may take the form of group activities: "Let's all go around the room and say what we each think," or

"Let's form a task force." Or it may show up as stricter rules and policies: "Let's add three more pages to the personnel handbook" (and thus avoid dealing with the chaos in this issue). Organizing only delays Chaos temporarily. The only way to get out of the Chaos stage and experience Community is go "into and through" the Emptiness stage.

Learning how to be in Chaos and not "control it," and also having the personal maturity, skills, and willingness to "let go" and become empty, are major challenges facing all community groups.

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The greatest gift we can give to our community is the gift of our own vulnerability.

.....

Emptiness

Where Pseudo-community is the "we" stage, and Chaos is the "you" stage, Emptiness is the "I" stage. Unlike Chaos, where the focus is on others, during emptiness the focus is internal. I take time to reflect on my personal obstacles and barriers to trust and authenticity. Usually, one or two individuals recognize the group chaos and choose to "give up" or to "try another way." Group members during emptiness can realize: "I have obstacles and barriers that are preventing me from being present with the group and from seeing this situation clearly." The pace slows and the "agendas and voices" inside my head begin to quiet down. I recognize my own ego/need to control or manipulate. By removing these and other obstacles to being present, I am able to better accept people and things as they actually are. A shift can occur that changes how I perceive situations and perceive others. The polarities of Chaos may now be experienced as paradox—the unreconciled truth of contradictory ideas.

Each person experiences emptiness in his or her own way. Some individuals need to share vocally with the group, others do not. One person may need to let go of the need to control, while another may need to empty the need to be passive and learn to speak up. Over time members learn what recurring personal obstacles they carry from their personal histories. Recent issues may also need to be aired.

Emptiness is the time when the iceberg beneath the surface, the "elephants in the room," are addressed. Resentments, expecta-

tations, hurts, fears, and unexpressed needs are let go, creating room for deeper listening. Ninety-nine percent of the time, the process of emptying requires taking a risk. It is a simple truth that *the greatest gift we can give to our community is the gift of our own vulnerability.*

Individuals and groups are often unaccustomed to this type of risking. During workshops, when we lead groups into the emptying process, they often want to find another way, and may try to organize or flee back to Pseudo-community. Yet, this is what community calls us to—to take off our masks and let others know who we are and what is going on with us "under the surface." Speaking the truth, confronting a difficult issue, sharing our brokenness, not knowing how others will respond, admitting our shortcomings, or sharing a personal success or joy—this "emptying" is what moves a group toward community.

People describe emptiness variously as, "a time of surrender," "self-reflection and discovery," "discarding," "risking," "painful," "going deeper," "draining," "learning," and even "dying" (when old or no-longer-useful aspects of ourselves seem to die). This process requires personal and group skills, discipline, self-awareness, and group awareness. Emptying also takes time. Groups may need to schedule ritual time for reflection and contemplation. It also requires commitment, ensuring that community building time does

not get pushed aside due to Chaos or avoidance of difficult issues.

A word of caution: individuals and groups may at times mistake emptying with "dumping," which is merely a more sophisticated type of Chaos. While it is important to bring to the surface hidden issues and at times confront others, emptying is not saying whatever I want, however I want, whenever I want. Honesty *and* respect must go together.

During our trainings we spend a great deal of time teaching and stressing the importance of "I" statements in healthy community. Adherence to the use of "I" statements is often a critical requirement for groups to move forward. "We" statements tend to generalize, avoid responsibility and risk, and cloak deeper levels of truth. "You" statements usually blame, injure, confuse, or put people on the defensive. "I" statements, on the other hand, own and personalize what we say, and make it easier for others to hear us. When I make "I" statements it requires me to take responsibility for my thoughts and feelings, to be more revealing and provide more information about my individual process and the group as a whole.

Emptying may include giving feedback to others—and to not do so would be another form of Pseudo-community. However, there is a big difference between healthy feedback, given honestly and respectfully from a place of emptiness, and criticism, given from

Guidelines for Community Building Time

1. Use "I" statements to own and personalize what you say, rather than "we" statements, which generalize and presume others share your point of view.
2. Speak when moved to speak. Do not speak when not moved to speak.
3. Include others and yourself. Notice your obstacles to including yourself and others. Don't check out.
4. Commit to hang in there and to not leave until the session is over.
5. Voice displeasure and comments to the entire group, not in side conversations.
6. Confidentiality is required.
7. Participation may be verbal or non-verbal; speaking is not required.
8. Be honest and respectful.
9. Speak from your head and your heart.
10. Each person is equally responsible for the success of the group in reaching the goal of experiencing community.
11. Notice and practice the value of silence.

a place of self-righteousness or other motivation. We know the difference when we hear it. Many groups use ground rules for communication during community building time. In any case, community building requires discipline, vigilance, and an ongoing commitment to community principles.

Community

The healing experience of Community is a gift and a mystery. Deep listening and connection only occur when we are empty. By emptying ourselves of our expectations, obstacles and agendas, we create space for true listening, healing, and connection. It is within this container of emptiness that a spiritual or mystical experience of community is possible. In fact, the depth of closeness and community that a group feels is proportional to the depth of emptiness it is willing to experience. By getting ourselves out of the way we make space for the "spirit of community" to be present. People describe this experience in many ways: "connected," "healing," "powerful," "grace," "renewing," "rich silence," "generative," "closeness," and "transforming."

Differences are not squelched, as in the Chaos stage, but instead are recognized and celebrated. There is room in discussion for all viewpoints and perspectives. Group members who are typically quiet often come forward. Likewise, typically talkative group members become more quiet and attentive. All voices are heard; it becomes a group of leaders. Conflict is a natural part of communication and still occurs, but is now healthy and graceful. Trust and safety are high. Group members are able to give and receive feedback more effectively. The Com-



SPRINGTREE COMMUNITY

"The healing experience of community is a gift and a mystery."

munity stage is an excellent time for problem-solving and decision making. Group members have a knowing about when to speak and when to listen, and are able to tap into group creativity and wisdom. Instead of focusing on polarities, members are able to self-reflect and see the obstacles and problems beneath the surface. Because everyone is involved, commitment and alignment with decisions are high. During the Community stage, the group is a highly effective decision-making body. Again, for those with a spiritual or religious perspective, community is a time where the group is "open to the spirit" or a "higher power," and can make decisions based on this type of knowing.

It is important to note that while this stage provides opportunities for healing and connection, it does not require friendship. We need not "like" someone to be in Community with them. However, we do need to fully include all individuals—exclusivity is the greatest enemy of Community. Similarly, the Community stage does not guarantee "warm fuzzies," hugs, or that things will be easier. In fact, groups that have existed for some time, but are new to community building, may find that buried sources of conflict are finally able to emerge in this stage. Community is however, always honest, respectful, real, and rewarding.

Because the experience of the Community stage is so rare, many individuals have never intentionally engaged in building community. In our fragmented culture, individuals often only experience community accidentally, perhaps during times of crisis. Imagine being with a group of people who are not particularly close or do not work well

together. Then someone gets injured or there is a natural disaster such as a flood or snowstorm. Have you ever noticed the sense of connection and the effectiveness of people working together in these situations? People "empty" their agendas in order to deal with the crisis, and the result is an experience of community. During workshops, war veterans have shared their mixed feelings about being in battle. On one hand, war was their most negative life experience. On the other, because of the constant crisis and sense of community with fellow soldiers, it was also their most powerful, connecting, and memorable experience.

Sustainable Community

Community Building Workshop participants will occasionally ask, "So once a group has reached the stage of Community, does it stay there?" Oh, if only that were true!

The experience of Community may last hours or minutes or days. Some say that on a deeper level a sense of renewal and connection with other group members may remain forever. But in our ordinary understanding and experience, the stage of Community, with time, moves back to the status quo, back to Pseudo-community or Chaos.

The good news, then, is thanks to the work of many in the Communities Movement, we have rediscovered and developed technologies to assist groups intentionally build and rebuild community. The bad news is: this process never stops; we must build and rebuild. An accountant from a company utilizing the community building process to build trust summarized this point well. Upon hearing me explain that their management

Principles of Community

Developed by The Foundation for Community Encouragement

- Communicate with authenticity
- Deal with difficult issues
- Bridge differences with integrity
- Relate with love and respect
- Welcome and affirm diversity
- Tolerate ambiguity
- Become aware of the tension between holding on and letting go
- Become inclusive
- Be open to Spirit
- Listen attentively

team would need to reflect together and empty regularly in order to maintain trust and rebuild community, a look of excitement, insight, and anguish flashed across his face and he blurted out, "You mean we have to keep on growing!?"

With time, groups acquire greater levels of maturity and skill. They create an "emotional bank account" to fall back on during difficult times. However, ongoing learning and education in conflict resolution, group

**This process never stops;
we must build and rebuild.**

process, diversity, self-esteem, and personal awareness are keys to group health and functioning.

I also cannot stress enough the need for outside facilitators to work with groups on a periodic basis. No matter how high-functioning your group might be, our personal histories always create dysfunctional patterns that groups simply become blind to. Having a fresh and objective eye to offer observations, guidance, and training is invaluable. However, be careful to bring in only experienced and trained facilitators. Due to the delicate nature of community-building work, a poor facilitator can cause great harm to individuals and the group as a whole.

In order to sustain an ongoing intentional community or any organization, many elements must be in place. These include a shared vision and mission, shared values and principles, and effective economic structures, organizational systems, and decision-making processes which match the values of the community. Time in ritual, play, and celebration are also essential components. Community building provides a highly effective way to learn skills and build the foundation of authentic communication and trust needed to maintain these many components of sustainable community over time.

I work with intentional communities whenever possible. I believe they are doing the work of social change and taking an essential stance in a fragmented and sometimes hollow culture. The experience of community is often personally healing, supportive, and renewing. It is tempting to linger in its glow. However, after a true experience of community, we are always brought back to what work we can do for others in the world. What return we can make to the community of Earth? The great Sufi mystic of the 13th century, Jelaluddin Rumi, said it well:

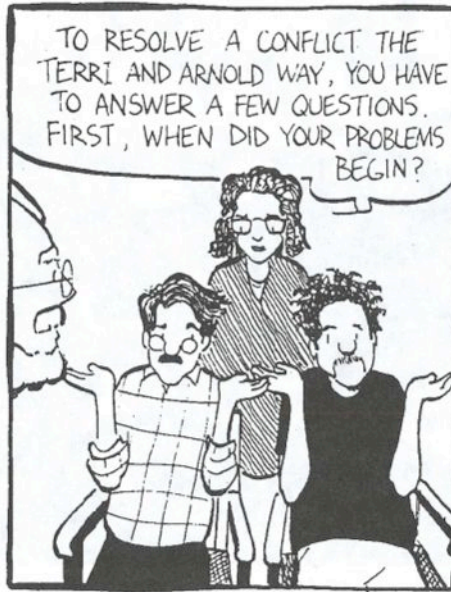
A night full of talking that hurts.
My worst held back secrets.
Everything has to do with loving and not loving.
This night will pass.
Then, we have work to do.
—Jelaluddin Rumi,
translated by Coleman Barks
(reprinted w/permission) Ω

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tator with The Foundation for Community Encouragement and was trained in community building facilitation by M. Scott Peck, M.D. He is also principal of Groody, Hoewing and Associates, an organizational consulting company. He and Ann Hoewing offer low-cost community building workshops to intentional communities and nonprofit organizations. Ed Groody, The Leadership Group, 8550 Kingston Pike, Knoxville, TN 37919. (615) 694-5970.

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LIVING IN SINCERITY



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JONATHAN ROTH

A "People House" of Change

by Wayne H. Tittes, Sr.

People House, in Denver, Colorado, is an urban center with a small live-in community, and a larger commuter community. Since its inception, People House has brought people together through workshops and groups, and taught the growth modality known as "group process." Currently six residents live at the center; many others are affiliated as facilitators, counselors, workshop participants, interns, and friends.

CHANGING WITH THE TIMES has been the secret of our community's success. For over 20 years we have attempted to meet the changing needs of our members and provide a safe haven for self-exploration.

Our goal has been to raise consciousness and self-awareness. While our roots are in the consciousness and Human Potential movements, we have focused on a psycho-spiritual approach to our groups and workshops. As various "fads" in the growth movement have come and gone, we've attempted to take the best from a wide range of modalities and spiritual teachers.

We use John Heider's book, *The Tao of Leadership*, as a text in teaching his style of group process. Our annual Facilitator Training program is the backbone of People House. In this nine-month-long program we teach the fine art of group facilitation to 17 participants and interns, mostly businesspeople or helping professionals. Our staff gently guides the participants in an awareness of how group process happens, how to observe what is happening in each moment, and how to facilitate whatever process is emerging at any given time. Leaders are taught when to lead and when to follow, and students are given hands-on practice. The participants work directly with confrontation, hidden agendas, and issues of inclusion or exclusion, which creates a rich environment where the edges of self-knowledge can be tested. They learn the value of telling the truth without blame, and how to make choices and take responsibility for the consequences of those choices. Many of the graduates of our program continue to live, work, or somehow remain connected to People House. Through this tradition we

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**As we glimpse our potential,
we need to risk living those
possibilities now!**
.....



The new vegetable garden—a huge success.

have created our own culture for effective problem-solving and connection.

A sign in our main group room reads: "No one can do it for you and you can't do it alone." We believe that if we create a safe, loving environment for people, over time the best in them will emerge naturally. This is not always pretty. However, the intimacy created as people grow together in this manner creates a natural setting for further communion. As we grow we need a place to experiment, to shed skins and to see how the authentic self we're uncovering will play with other people, and then in the larger world. Part of what we create at People House is a rich, vibrant *aliveness*. And part of what gets uncovered is the each person's "shadow"—the parts of ourselves that have been suppressed. People can't integrate without bringing forth and exploring the energy and

creativity that has been buried there. So, community where authentic self is honored, is community where we share our whole true self as best we can, with love.

In 1990 we changed from a nonprofit educational organization to a spiritually based, though not religiously based, church. We honor the truth in all spiritual traditions, and more importantly, we trust the inner wisdom of each individual. In our work we view life as a "soul journey." We see problems as opportunities to discover aspects of our inner truths and to learn to see reality clearly. We see people in a holistic way: mind, body, emotions, and spirit. We teach and recommend meditation as a way to synchronize ourselves and grow in conscious awareness. Every weeknight we hold meetings to explore dreams, relationships, meditation, and other topics. On Sundays we hold Fellowship, where the designated host shares his or her perspective on a topic, with time for group sharing, usually accompanied by live music, readings, or performances. Our motto is, "Not a house of religion, but a home for the spirit."

Over the years People House has operated in various locations. We now own a beautiful century-old former Catholic convent near downtown Denver. When we became a church, 12

People House associates had been using the facility for group rooms and offices for private practice. After much soul searching, many of our associates decided to relocate their offices to other facilities. While we maintain a rich connection with most of those people, the move changed the nature of our organization. In part because of the abundance of newly empty rooms, we decided to test a "live-in" community—an idea whose time had come.

For the last two years, six People House associates have lived in our building. We have always created year-round activities, but with the new "core" of live-in residents we slowly increased the number of group outings. Volunteers now help daily where paid staff once handled the various office and maintenance tasks. In the last year we remodeled 2,000 square feet of our building, and purchased three adjoining lots needed for parking. For

the first time we raised a garden—a huge success. Excitement is growing among our associates for the idea of buying land in the mountains near Denver for a combination retreat center and living space.

Our members are asking, “What is our new vision for community? How can we live a simple, sustainable, sane lifestyle?” On a global level, social systems are unraveling. Polarized views stuck in old categories that no longer work give rise to divisiveness. Unless we change, how can we bridge the tremendous rifts in our global society? Are we going to continue building walls, or learn to find the common ground where we rediscover our universal human spirituality, our common aliveness? Can we *live* a paradigm shift, where spiritual transformation is community-based and community-supported? How do we create a new global support system where everyone has a seat at the community table?

Our world needs people who are modeling and experimenting with what that new

live in such a community. At People House we’re all teachers and all students. We’re not perfect. We have our flaws and hard times. Our community is filled with wonderful, imperfect beings who sometimes struggle. The lessons, learned in the laboratory of our small groups, are invaluable in our experiment as an intentional community. From my perspective, it’s this same individual growth,

moving out into ever-increasing circles of our culture, which holds the hope for a thriving society. Ω

Wayne Tittes is Executive Director of People House. Using techniques from Eastern and Western spiritual traditions, and traditional and non-traditional paths, he facilitates awareness and growth in individuals, couples, and groups.

We Are the People

We are the people, you and I, who don't know where we came from.

We are the people who don't know where we're going.

*Our circumstances are reduced to listening.
We sit silently on a borrowed Earth,
try to catch living messages,
reach out to bring them close in when we can.*

*We are the people who don't know what else to do.
We received instructions, but so long ago,
no one believes them anymore.
We are left with our reaching and our listening.*

*There is always the possibility of a sign.
In the silence, there is sometimes a voice.
While other people pray, we listen.
Our answer is in the listening.*

*There is a celebration in not knowing.
There is a steady joy in preparing to receive.
We have no guidance but our lives,
and we never need to just believe.*

*We sit inside the senses,
we have no roots and nowhere else to go.
We are the people with no answers.
We have no issues left to sow.*

*We are the people who don't know where we came from, don't know where we're going.
We are blooming in this endless ocean,
growing stronger from this awful rowing.*

*Let's sing some songs while we work here.
Celebrate this mystery.
Shout into the winds of emptiness,
knowing that we're free, crying that we're free.*

—Robert K. Hall

**Can we live a paradigm shift,
where spiritual transformation
is community-based and
community-supported?**

vision might be. As we glimpse our potential, we need to risk living those possibilities now!

So at People House we are beginning to reweave our ideas of right relationship, and to discover a balance where our individuality is not compromised, while maintaining a view that’s broad enough to include what’s best for all. We confront shortsighted views based on over-consumption and its inevitable dissatisfaction. We strive to develop alternative economics based on the wise use of community resources. Together we seek decisions for the common good.

Our task now is to have the courage to open our hearts to ourselves and to heal from the multi-generational wounds most of us carry. It’s time to wake up to the tremendous power each of us possesses, and bring forward our talents and creativity to resolve individual and common challenges. It’s time to see past our fears, and take our ability to cooperate to a new level.

I was moved upon reading that Margaret Mead said what the world needed was “teaching-learning communities,” because I

Attitudinal Healing

by Christine Evans Lehman

“CAN ANY OF YOU TELL ME HOW to die?” asked the young boy as a team of visiting physicians turned to leave his room.

Among the team stood Gerald Jampolsky, a psychiatrist whose life would be dedicated to exploring that question. Jampolsky began his inquiry with a support group for a small number of terminally ill children. Unclear of how he might help these children face their deaths, he created a safe place where the children could share their experience. It appeared that as the children opened to sharing their pain, fears, and feelings of loss, an atmosphere of healing was created.

This experience of community did translate into physical healing for some of the group's members, but unfortunately not for all. And yet the pain of separation was lifted as the children shared their stories, somehow magically increasing their capacity to

endure the challenges of their illnesses. Their *attitudes* shifted and they found moments of peace in the midst of their pain.

Contemplating the tremendous power of community and personal sharing to shift the consciousness of terminally ill children, I find myself longing for that experience in my own life. I longed for the community created when people gather together to face far greater challenges than I may ever know. I believe we all long for that sense of community. By sharing the truth of our personal experiences and opening to hearing those of others, we have the capacity to create that cauldron of healing in our everyday lives, enhancing our ability to be more fully alive in each moment.

My participation at the Center for Atti-



Living in community to continue the healing process—Christine Evans Lehman and daughter Katelyn.

Guidelines for Attitudinal Healing Groups

Groups exist to be safe places where people can learn to use Attitudinal Healing. The following guidelines for groups have been developed to assure that a safe space is provided.

1. The goal of the group is to use the principles of Attitudinal Healing as tools for learning forgiveness and choosing inner peace.
2. In the groups, we recognize that love is listening, and we agree to listen with an open heart, to give mutual support, and to practice non-judgmental listening and sharing.
3. We are here to heal ourselves. We are not here to give advice or to change anyone's beliefs or behavior. Being accepted as we are makes it easier for us to accept others.
4. We share from our own experience. By risking and exposing our own emotional state, we find common experience that allows for joining.
5. We respect ourselves and each other as unique; we recognize that each person's process is important, not our judgment of it.
6. We support each other's inner guidance and assist one another in finding our own best answers.
7. The roles of student and teacher are interchangeable. They fluctuate from one to the other regardless of age or experience.
8. We practice being present with others, seeing only the light and not the lampshade.
9. We agree to keep in mind that we always have a choice between peace and conflict, between love and fear.
10. We recognize the confidentiality of what we share in group, recognizing that confidentiality is important for maintaining the group as a place of safety and trust. Ω

tudinal Healing, which Jampolsky started in the late 1970s, has inspired me to seek and develop in my everyday life, relationships similar to those I have experienced at the center. These relationships are filled with a willingness to share all of life's pain and joy. A commitment to developing open and trusting relationships is what I believe forms the basis of healthy and healing communities.

Based upon his study of the work, *A Course in Miracles*, Jampolsky offers 12 principles to group members which are shared as each meeting begins. Clearly provided as inspiration, these are not shared as dogma or religious doctrine. Instead each member is invited to explore the relevance of these principles in their personal lives and experience. As I share them here, I invite you to do the same.

With this invitation, I also encourage you to witness the ways in which you may feel somehow unable to live up to such "high" ideals. In my own life I consciously set aside one or another of the principles when I notice I may be using it against myself or another. Instead I endeavor to understand, trust, and accept the truth of my own very personal experience as well as the truly unique experiences of others. This practice of compassion brings alive the gifts these concepts have to offer. With peace as my only goal, I offer you these. . .

(continued on page 56)



Often outdoors, Gazebo children are exposed to "the natural, the wondrous, and the mysterious."

STEVE BECK

Protecting the Wonder of Childhood

by Jaelitza

GAZEBO SCHOOL PARK IS A PRE-school situated on a gentle slope of land and bordered on three sides by eucalyptus trees and dense shrubbery, and on the fourth by a one-lane cul-de-sac. Broad grassy entry steps lead up to a border of straw bales, over which you must step to enter the school.

Gazebo School Park is a part of Esalen Institute retreat and conference center on the magnificent Big Sur coast of California. Gazebo was opened in 1977 by Janet Lederman, a former elementary school teacher and one-time director of Esalen. Janet felt the need to create a place for children, focusing on their developmental needs rather than the needs of the institute: a place where childhood would be served and protected. Esalen's

work force includes long-term residents with children, so although originally created to serve its residents, the school has grown to include local Big Sur children, and those of workshop participants.

The straw bales are a good place to begin a discussion of some ways that this pre-school within a community serves the children who attend, and the community which contains it. As you encounter the straw bales to enter Gazebo, you experience a soft boundary. You can either step up and over, or, if you're little (or simply playful), you can climb over. The very tactile straw bale has much to say about Gazebo and Janet's ideas for the schooling of young children. A straw bale has a presence about it: you must engage with your body to surmount it; it's golden in color; it's

interesting and even beautiful in and of itself; its protruding stalks allow you to experience its texture. It may become a seat if you're not ready to enter all the way into Gazebo. This line of bales serves as a low wall to walk along, or a place to jump off onto soft, deep *kakuya* grass. All the while it is a genuine boundary.

Janet was interested in creating a school environment which would serve children *in their bodies*: a place where scale, diversity, and challenge were built in, with straw bales, tree stumps, climbing trees, and grassy hillsides. She believed children unfolding in such an environment would naturally develop the physical resources and grounded intelligence to address their social and intellectual needs.

"When experience precedes cognitive learning, resourcefulness develops," Janet said. "Gazebo School Park is designed to maximize the full use of the child's growing body and unfolding intelligence." At Gazebo, *everything* is curriculum for the child: picking oneself up after falling; learning to ride big wheels and pay attention to traffic rules on the bike track; taking responsibility for one's clothes and back pack; caring for the pony and the goats; dealing with one's own and others' aggressiveness; developing relationships; reading books; making lunch; and cleaning up at the end of the day.

My primary work as a teacher/caregiver at Gazebo is to make sure the children are safe. I respect them as developing beings and trust that they can and will reach out to learn what they need to know given the space, time, and opportunities to do so. How many times will a toddler spray himself at the drinking fountain before he learns to manipulate it efficiently (which may, of course, include getting soaked)? How long will it take a two-year old to remove or put on shoes and socks? And how much quiet support can I provide? While one child will learn quickly that "biting is not okay," another may need many interventions, or strategies.

Janet's philosophy emphasized respect, first-hand experience, and self-responsibility. Our low child-to-teacher ratio allows me to be very present for individual children and to support them in their uniqueness. The child who wants, just now, to paint or look for bugs can be accommodated. Time and energy is

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When experience precedes cognitive learning, resourcefulness develops.
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available for choice and particularity.

Gazebo is a child's place, a setting apart from the larger Esalen business where some of the children's growing-up work also takes place. Besides parents and teachers, adults are not welcomed here. Because Esalen has such a thriving and transient workshop population, this boundary is an important one. Here the children are most important and their needs come first. An invited adult guest to Gazebo will first become a "tree"—a background part of the children's environment—for a child to initiate contact with, or not.

Moving outside Gazebo across the straw bales, we are connected to the many resources of a well-established, and richly diverse community. Turning north we find paths to the farm to see the ducks, or to check



JOYCE LYKE

Janet Lederman (left) emphasized respect, first-hand experience, and self-responsibility for children.

out the compost terrace and the ever-changing families of hens, baby chicks, and roosters. Along the way there are apples to pick, and depending upon the season, strawberries, strawberry guavas, or oranges, too. Or perhaps we head south to Esalen's laundry, to the garden, or the lodge. Sometimes we have errands to do: picking up supplies at the laundry, checking the maintenance shop for wood scraps to build things with, harvesting carrots for lunch, or mailing a letter at the office. All along the way we meet people who know us and who stop to share information, such as which garden bed to harvest carrots from, or where to find great wood scraps.

Our walks around Esalen are often the source of great excitement, not to mention learning. One day we came upon Antonio trimming some Monterey pines. We stood back and watched him cut-up the limbs he had trimmed. When he had put down his chain saw, four-year-old Levi stepped forward, followed by several other children, and spontaneously began to help Antonio stack the wood. Here life had offered us an incident that could draw upon many levels of understanding: that wood needs to be stacked; the knowledge that I know how to do it; the strength and competence to do it; the socially mature notion that helping is a good thing; the desire to do productive work; and the understanding that Antonio will accept help. Incidents in which physical, social, and cognitive learning are interwoven occur regularly for children at Gazebo.

Living in an intimate, personalized environment allows the children to reach out to what is around them, and to soak up the information which is there. Because I have few time restraints, I am able to allow these events to run their course. Time gives us all the opportunity to assimilate experience. I often notice the children reflecting on what they are doing or seeing; sometimes assessing it in relation to their own interests or needs, and as in the case above, joining in.

From the community, Gazebo children receive a great deal: contact with other systems, like different business departments; exposure to diverse people; acknowledgement from people who know them and take pleasure in seeing them grow; the chance to practice fitting into other systems; novelty; and just plain fun and adventure.

In return, the children give back that are fully who they are; they give their authenticity and brightness. They are in the moment and you must come into the moment to receive their gifts. One parent spoke of feeling her own love, and her love for all children as she passed Gazebo or when she saw the children engaged somewhere on the Esalen grounds. Another spoke of the ways the children spread joy. Adults who stop to make time for the children are, in effect, taking time to affirm in themselves, the goodness, and the rightness of childhood and children.

We receive much materially from the business aspects of Esalen—Gazebo teachers do not have to fundraise or give time to public relations events—so we are quite lit-

erally within the bosom of our parent structure, and experiencing all the security which accrues from this position. The food we cook for lunches comes from Esalen's kitchen, farm, and garden. When we need plumbing repairs, we can call the maintenance shop. The laundry supplies us with towels and the office with pencils. Although Gazebo does have its own budget, and charges tuition, we enjoy a very real sense of feeling and being sheltered.

One parent spoke of the community as an "ambient resource," because everywhere there are people: someone baking who invites us into help in the bakers' station; someone who drums extending a short lesson; another passing through who makes simple bamboo flutes and offers to come by and make them with the children. There may be someone moving dirt or rocks on a small tractor, and another trimming the hundred year-old cypress trees near the Big House. Or maybe it's a day to dance on the new dance platform or to track down the monarch butterflies that have chosen a new nesting site this year.

So we have the community as a resource of caring adults, financial and material support, and cultural opportunities. Another important dimension is the community's understanding and acceptance of self-expression. While clear boundaries and social norms certainly exist at Esalen, at the same time it is a place for the expression of feelings. One parent said how he appreciated

that his son could allow himself vulnerability rather than defensiveness. I was grateful for his son's ability to be present for other peoples' feelings as well as his own. At Gazebo, passions are close to the surface and respected as the underpinnings of a robust, well-rounded self. Within the larger community context, this self-expression is acknowledged and respected.

For parents living and working in the community, and with homes nearby, raising children becomes to a certain extent diffused and spread out. One parent speaks of *a priori* good will; another of her feelings of trust, safety, and the benefit of a large "family" all around. Mothers express feelings of ease about returning to work because their children are at Gazebo. Being close to work, and able to drop-in or separate gradually enables parents to feel more comfortable in their working world.

For parents with newborns to older children there exists a camaraderie, a sharing of information and experience. Several parents speak of the great value of their children being known by a wide range of adults; people who take an interest in them and from whom they feel affirmation and love, and the social advantages of young people mixing with a diverse population. It is not unusual to see young and old interacting; for example, an 11- or 12-year-old former Gazebo child carrying on a dinner conversation with a stranger.

Parents at Esalen separate and divorce no

less than in society as a whole. One father recounted his experience of feeling accepted throughout his divorce process, and of his child being sheltered then and now. The Gazebo community is able to embrace both partners as well as the children. I often feel myself riding the waves of these turbulences with the children, and yet I can be very supportive because we are small and well-staffed and know all parties in and out of school. I regularly see Gazebo students and parents at dinner, at the hot tubs, or at the Big Sur Post Office or deli. Our connections are reinforced by these out-of-school contacts, adding to an already potent amalgam of friendship and respect.

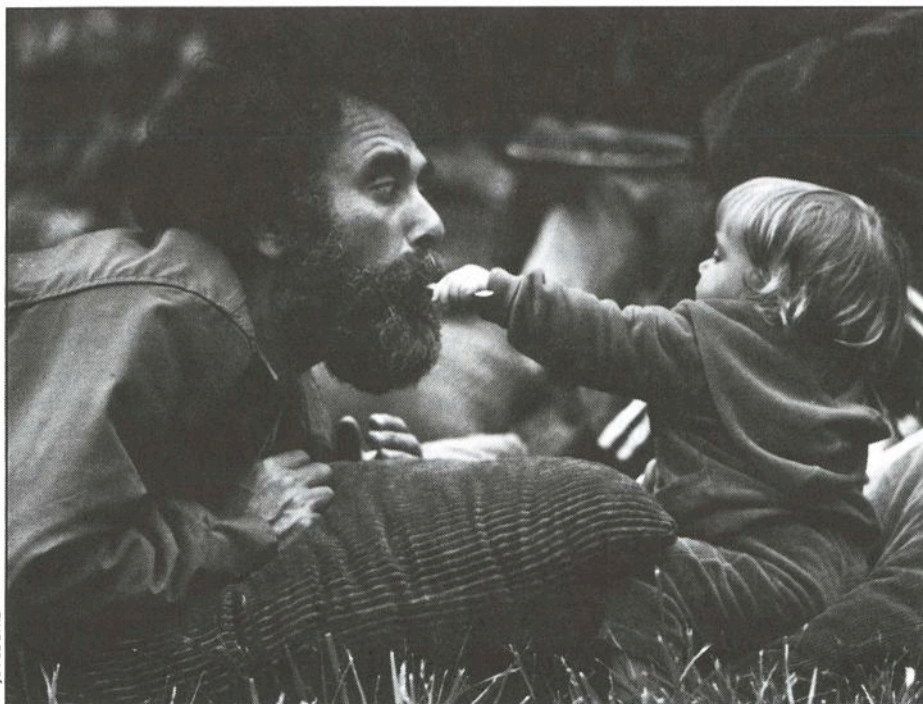
Recently a young woman, Rosy, who had attended Gazebo and gone on to live at Esalen until she was 10, returned at 19 to enroll in a two-month massage training course. For her, the years spent in community still color her life. Here she felt support to follow herself, with space for her feelings, and a validation of life's process rather than simply attaining goals. She carries with her memories of freedom and the ways in which nature, art, and relationship are interwoven.

Rosy attests that it has not been easy to integrate what she learned at Gazebo or find the degree of safety and trust she remembers here out in the world. I am reminded of the African proverb, "It takes a community to raise a child." Perhaps it is this matter of wholeness, of a community's ability to weave together the strands of life to counteract fragmentation, which provides the soil which can nourish vivid, grounded, well-being.

Gazebo School Park, in the embrace of Esalen community, enjoys the splendor of Big Sur's grand realism. As an outdoor school, we live our lives immersed in nature. In a sense, the children measure themselves not against the quantifiable, the linear, or the manmade. Here they are experiencing their potential against the natural, the wondrous, and the mysterious. The children's "sense of wonder" is what we endeavor to protect. Ω

Jaelitza has been a staff member/resident of Esalen since 1978, and a teacher at Gazebo for eight years. She was formerly a high school teacher for 10 years, the co-founder of an alternative school in the Santa Cruz Mountains, and the founder of a preschool in the Big Sur back country.

A special thanks to the following people who were interviewed for this article: Steve Beck, Sydney Ocean, Laurence Jenkins, Rosy MacLean, Elizabeth Matej, Arthur Munyer, David Nelson, Margaret Stevens, and Laurie Schutz.



"The children give back who they really are; they give their authenticity and brightness."

JOYCE LYKE

Aikido: Moving Toward a Cooperative Future

Richard Strozzi Heckler interviewed by Paul DeLapa

On a clear fall day in the rolling hills of Sonoma County, California, we sit by a crackling fire in Richard's office. Across the way is his barn turned Aikido dojo.

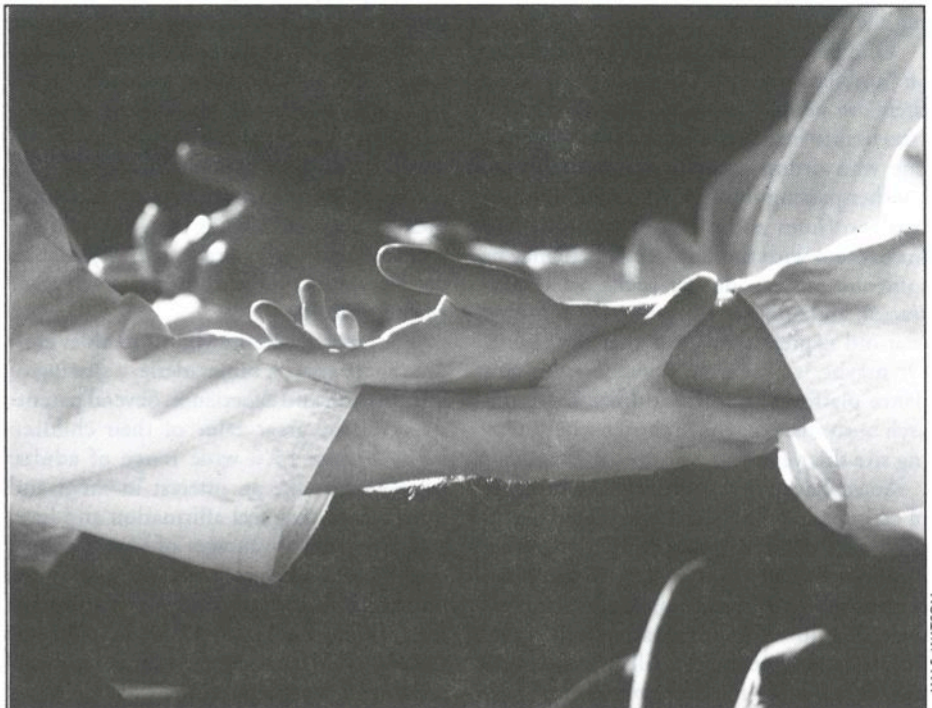
PAUL DELAPA: *Can you describe Aikido in general terms?*

Richard Heckler: Relating requires an allowing, and at the same time, that you are positive, that your *ki*—*ki* being the Japanese word for energy—is flowing out to meet your partner. Aikido is a training system that develops a body that is both strong and *ki*-full, that is positive without being stiff. It's where my body becomes receptive and allowing without being slack. Developing this ability changes a person's body and psyche in a way that is unique in terms of martial discourse.

As background it's important to remember Aikido is grounded in the martial arts—it's a self-defense art. Yet, it posits something very different than the traditionally Japanese *budo*, which means martial way. The founder of Aikido, Morihei Uyeshiba (O'Sensei) said that *budo* is love. That's like saying the art of war or the warrior is love, which is as radical as Mother Teresa or Gandhi.

Paul: *What does Aikido look like in practice?*

Richard: Aikido is often referred to as a meditation in action. One of the very first moves that you learn is how to blend with somebody. The Japanese word is *musubi*—it's the notion that you tie into your partner's energy, and by doing so, you can see the best way to coordinate your communion. When a confrontation comes in, where in traditional discourse you would block and then strike. In Aikido you try to take that energy in, to blend with it. As you blend you're thinking, how can I coordinate with this person so that I'm not hurt while at the same time, I neutralize his aggression somewhat so that he's not hurt either? If you think metaphorically, you may need to make a strong positive assertion about something, but first you tie into that person's energy; you listen.



In Aikido, we're being asked to fully contact and engage.

In most disciplines, people are talking about being very strong, or they're talking about something very receptive. In Aikido, each time you're faced with a new partner or a new technique or a new attack, you're being asked to fully contact and engage. What begins to happen is the body learns how to produce mutually committed futures with other people. Instead of trying to stop the future by knocking someone out or maiming them, the notion of connecting is that you're asking, "How can we work together so that we have a future together, and how can we produce that mutually?"

Paul: *So in Aikido you're looking to create a cooperative, sustainable relationship even in the face of disagreement or misunderstanding—working with and converting conflict into something else?*

Richard: Yes, I like that. It makes me think of another thing O'Sensei said, "When you're one with Aikido, you're one with the uni-

verse." What he's implying is that we're not a lot of different cells. Really, we're looking at a cooperative way of seeing how human beings live together as animals on this planet with other animals and the natural world.

Paul: *What makes Aikido practice valuable for groups and communities?*

Richard: First of all, as human beings, we learn in groups—when we come together a learning process begins. This is especially true in Aikido, which is practiced as a learning community. In Aikido practice what you'll have is a number of different partners: some older, some younger, some inexperienced or very experienced, both sexes, people with physical limitations, or with a lot of athletic ability. This diversity has a tremendous power to modify the nervous system which is being asked to respond to all these different types of behavior.

In Aikido you learn how to learn. It offers practices and distinctions of moving to

create a more flexible self—a self that can modify. When I say flexible, I don't mean that you're wishy-washy or you just go with the wind—Aikido definitely teaches a certain kind of stance or position about life—but it also means that I'm able to shift and change. I'm able to move with people in new ways, and to join with somebody from a different culture or background and see things from their point of view.

Paul: *Where does this work when you're asked to come into a community or organization?*

Richard: What I do is take the principles of Aikido out of the martial discourse so

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People who learn a martial art become more confident. They feel less like victim ... more like they have a right to be on the planet, to be in community, to be with others.

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that we don't necessarily do Aikido like you would see in a *dojo* (which literally means "place of awakening," traditionally the place where Aikido or other martial arts are practiced). We talk about the principles, and develop the practices of being centered, grounded, extending *ki*, and timing our energy with a partner's.

We live in the interpretation of a Newtonian or Cartesian body, like the body is this mule or cart that carries around the mind, and then when we have something important to do, the body releases the mind to do it. That interpretation has never been true in Asia where they've never really had a mind/body split. Recent studies have shown us in the West that there is a single unified nervous system. I see the body as a field of information.

In Aikido we're experiencing the possibility of listening with our whole body, allowing our body to feel what other bodies are saying, and to know why they're saying it, from their historical, race, and gender backgrounds. We can feel in our body the point of view someone else is speaking from because human beings speak out of concern. Theirs may not be our concerns, but we're training ourselves to listen to those concerns with our souls. It's possible to listen through the bottoms of our feet, or from our lower backs, from our guts, from the backs of our eyes. That's not linear, and it's not rational, but it's full-bodied.

Paul: *What comes after this blending?*

Richard: Another powerful movement, *irimi*, is an entry movement. When someone is delivering incoming energy or pressure at you, you're training your body to move towards it. In some ways that initially feels counter-intuitive because we're programmed so that if we move towards the attack we're to fight or collide with it. *Irimi* teaches the body to move forward with a sense of engagement—to tie into the energy and then move with it. Over time, this movement embodies the whole capacity for courage, like full-heartedness.

Most of us have issues around fear and courage. Aikido holds an interpretation of courage that isn't reckless or isn't necessarily adventuresome or risk-taking. It simply means we're willing to stand up and face the problems that we have in our community, with our intellect, our heart and emotions, and with power and an instinctive center.

Paul: *Angeles Arrien refers to this as "showing up."*

Richard: Showing up, exactly. We have a stance called *hanmi*, where you stand in relationship to confrontation, and it's about showing up in a way that's not too forward or too far back. You're really as much as possible interfacing with life.

Paul: *What are some of the benefits of Aikido to groups and individuals?*

Richard: If people want to live cooperatively together, that's an inspiring idea, but what kind of practices do we need, what things can we do every day to make that happen? Well, there can be speaking practices, listening practices, and moving practices. Part of my idea up here at the ranch is developing a community in which contemplative practice is something which can either be a moving practice, whether that's Aikido or some other martial art, or healing practices, or touch and breath. And the possibility of practices in the domain of language—all of these express unity.

My experience has been that when we really allow ourselves to deeply feel, as biological entities, as incarnate beings, that we are in a body and our body is intimately linked with our thinking, feeling, emotions,

and actions, what emerges is a deeper compassion for others. We realize this is the basic ground in which all human beings come out of. And although we have different interpretations about that ground, the structure is really the same for everybody. Over time this develops compassion, and compassion in humanity is crucial.

Another value is confidence, which sounds like a cliché, but I believe it's true. I see that people who learn a martial art become more confident in themselves. They feel less like victims and more like they have a certain right to be on the planet, to be in community, and to be with others.

Paul: *Can you describe the balancing of gender or other roles which Aikido tends to bring out?*

Richard: This art doesn't rely on physical strength, it relies on balance and sensitivity. Often in the beginning, women pick it up more quickly. Since many women don't have a background in martial arts or necessarily the physical strength to muscle somebody around, they really have to develop these principles. You'll find jocks who get thrown off in Aikido and try to just muscle people around. Aikido becomes a kind of a balancer. It's quite common to see somebody small, a man or a woman, who'll be able to throw a big, young guy around, with power and care at the same time. Then to have that big guy be able to move them around in the same way makes for a very egalitarian conversation. That equally allows people to be both active speakers and active listeners receiving training in both.

Paul: *What about the person who's not body-oriented, or physically able?*

Richard: I think these people have the most to gain. They might come from an intellectual background, or hold an assessment that the body isn't needed. With Aikido they're able to participate in a practice where they can fill in a whole different side of themselves. I'll see somebody who'll come like that and take it on and make tremendous growth—they're embracing possibilities for taking new actions in the world. This kind of person may also see how it applies in the other areas of their life.

Metaphorically, when you're dealing *physically* with conflict, that's the same thing you do with all conflict. When somebody's yelling at you, and you start to become more in your body, you're able to feel a larger range or theme of life hiding in your body. And,



JAN E. WATSON

We create a cooperative, sustainable relationship even in the face of disagreement—converting conflict into something else.

you know, everybody comes in with this fear of, "I'm not going to learn," or "I'm going to look stupid," and all that. That's integrated in the whole practice because we talk about what it is to be a learner. If some people say they don't know how to do that, basically what they're saying is that they're beginners, learners. That's a fantastic place to be in because there's a whole future of learning in front them.

I've worked with people who don't have arms, or use wheelchairs, who are blind, or are two weeks away from dying, or are four years old. To me, some of the most grounded people I know don't have legs. Some of the people who have the most ability to reach out don't have arms; or those with the greatest vision don't have eyes. So what we're really working with is not these physical body parts but the capacity of the human spirit.

Paul: *Can you say more about language and metaphor in conjunction with the body?*

Richard: The body is the sum total of all of our conditioning, so when we're put under pressure in a new situation, most of us will return to that conditioned tendency, to our history. There, our range of

possibilities and choices is limited. When you're on the Aikido mat and somebody's coming to grab your throat or to deliver a strike, you get thrown into that history. But here we bring that forward into the present and we see that when we're in our history, we are off center, and we explore practices about returning to center. It becomes very clear that when somebody comes to grab your throat, that's the same as somebody emotionally trying to manipulate you. Or if you get caught in traffic and you're upset with somebody honking. Or even if you have a mind attack against yourself.

Another thing Aikido does is begin to produce a language in the community which people can communicate with *off* the mat. When I say language, I don't necessarily mean words, but the distinction that the words provide so that we can take new actions. When somebody has to go meet with the boss, and feels nervous, a friend might ask, "Are you centered?" That represents a certain kind of move the friend can make so that the person can be more balanced and more effective and open to more of life's choices at that moment.

Traditionally we receive assessments from teachers. Being a learner on the Aikido mat opens you to receiving assessments from other learners. When that attitude gets transferred outside the *dojo*, somebody can come in and say, "You look like you're very anxious this morning, are you thrown off by something, or do you want to talk?" That partner is actually trying to join with me so that we can continue to coordinate our movements in such a way to move towards, as you said, a cooperative, sustainable future.

So people start to see each other as partners all the time. Sometimes you're the partner who is delivering the attack or the assessment, the incoming energy. Or you're the partner who is moving with that, and you're open to that, and you say, "Let me see how I can move with you." So another benefit is that Aikido develops a way of speaking and listening cooperatively.

Paul: *Isn't blending, as a language concept, quite foreign in our culture?*

Richard: Not only is it culturally absent, but biologically our responses to pressure or stress are either to fight or to flee. Here we're learning to build a new interpretation. So when somebody has an incoming energy, instead of becoming defensive and fighting, or becoming a victim and shrinking or fleeing, we try to see it from their point of view, which is a linguistic move. When somebody gives you an assessment or an opinion of yourself, one of the first things you can say to yourself and embody is, "I can see why she might say that; I can see where she's coming from," so you begin to move with that person right away.

Paul: *How do you work with resistance or the*



What we're really working with is not these physical body parts but the capacity of the human spirit.



person who's just not interested in any kind of martial art?

Richard: It's really contraindicated to force somebody to do something. However I work with some communities, such as the U.S. military, where people have to do as they're ordered, and from everybody's point of view that's very difficult. Although, what I see is that if the soldiers take on the practices, they

begin to shift over time. In other organizations, I feel it's really important that people are allowed to have a choice about it.

To many groups, it's important to explain that it's not about becoming a martial artist or learning self-defense. We're learning how to be in our bodies in a way that opens new actions and possibilities. The narrative would not be that we're even training in a martial art; rather, that we're learning principles which are useful and common to all human beings: being centered and grounded, and how to use energy sensitively.

Often I'll ask the people who don't want

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There's a different kind of rigor when we're moving together for a cooperative, sustainable future.

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to participate to please stay in the room and observe. It's fine to sit to the side and observe, and often those people bring very powerful insights and comments to what they see. I've often had observers stand up and say, "You know, you ought to try it this way," because they can see something, and next thing you know the observers are practicing with the group. In communities it's fine if people don't have to do all the practices. If you're in the same room you are earning, and that brings about a coherency.

Paul: *Is interest in Aikido growing among organizations and communities?*

Richard: There's definitely a growing interest which basically hinges on the fact that the world is moving at such a pace that there's a tremendous breakdown of old methods and traditions. People are realizing they can't just start to learn a new technique and then apply it. I work with people in organizations who get trained, then three months later their job is no longer there. They begin to see is that they have to become learners—they have to learn how to learn. When you learn something new, you have a new action, a new self is produced there.

Fifteen years ago the idea of a gym in a hotel was ridiculous. Now when people make reservations in hotels, they ask, "Where is your health facility? What kind of equipment do you have?" The next step would be



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Aikido doesn't rely on physical strength, but on balance and sensitivity.

that we could actually have *dojos* in the hotel or corporation: a room that'll have mats on the floor and people can do meditation, or they can do yoga or Aikido. The *dojo* could be interpreted generally as a place to train to wake up—it doesn't necessarily have to be Aikido which is practiced there.

Paul: *How can Aikido benefit a group which is together in an ongoing way, such as an intentional community?*

Richard: I was working with an economic department in a Caribbean government which was having tremendous problems in human relations. Almost immediately after they began doing moving practices together, people started saying to their partners or to their groups, "Oh I understand why you're feeling this way now. I understand why I have such a conflict with you." When we eliminate our normal practice of speaking, and just move together, we start to see what some of the underlying conflicts are based upon. Moving together you can actually feel if someone is defensive, or they're not taking a stand, or if they're rigid and inflexible.

Paul: *How could an intentional community specifically use Aikido?*

Richard: The best way would be to contact an Aikido teacher, somebody in your area

who would come, and perhaps join the community for a certain period of time to introduce the practices that would be suitable for it. Some communities practice in *gis* (Aikido clothing), they bow, and their Aikido practice is a formal part of their community. Others just take aspects of Aikido or certain of its practices, and work with them.

When people in groups move together it's very powerful—when movement is part of a standard practice, like speaking and listening—and being involved in certain tasks together. I believe we have a new opportunity to produce practices in which people move together, and I don't mean let's jog or walk, which are fine in themselves. I mean there's a different kind of rigor when we're moving together for a cooperative, sustainable future. Ω

Richard Strozzi Heckler holds a doctorate in psychology from Saybrook Institute, and a fourth-degree black belt in Aikido. He's a founding member of two Aikido dojos in northern California, as well as the Lomi School, which has researched and taught somatic-psychology practices since 1970. Richard is the author of The Anatomy of Change and In Search of the Warrior Spirit, and editor of Aikido and the New Warrior (North Atlantic Books: 1993, 1990, and 1985.)

To learn more about using the principles of Aikido in community, call (707) 765-9237.

Toward a New Gender Harmony

by Will Keepin

RELATIONS BETWEEN MEN AND women in our culture are in a period of deep crisis and transition. Vital changes, inspired by the feminist and gay rights movements over the past 30 years, and the men's movement in the past decade, call for a new relational movement which includes both genders and all lifestyle preferences—one which promotes deep gender healing and reconciliation as an integral component of building an ecologically sustainable culture.

Community life offers a powerful context for fostering new forms of harmony and partnership between men and women. Living in close proximity with others—psychically, as well as physically—poses special challenges. While couples are less isolated than they would be in a conventional living situation, they also have less psychological privacy. People in community tend to form a variety of significant bonds with other members, and everyone is, to varying degrees, aware of the ebb and flow of the relationships in one another's lives. If tension develops between two people living under the same roof, it will ripple out into the larger community. The conflicting parties are in some sense accountable to their community peers.

Relationships in communities tend by nature to be more complex, less private, and they don't always fit easily into traditional categories. Interactions between families in community may be considerably more intense or intimate than those between good neighbors, and this can also create challeng-



Community life can help foster new forms of harmony and partnership between men and women.

ing deep issues relating to the participants' lives as men or women. ecology and grassroots environmental movements, originating with John Seed, Heart Phoenix, Syndee Brinkman, myself, and several others. Although this work is still in the developmental stages, my colleagues and I have facilitated several prototype Gender and Ecology workshops, with exciting results.

The purpose of these five-day workshops is to create a safe forum in which men and women can begin to heal the separation, abuse, and injustice that often prevents them from working closely in harmonious, loving partnerships. While admittedly a tall order, we have found that given the proper context and intentions, ordinary human beings call forth extraordinary powers of healing and transformation, with dramatic and lasting results.

The basic elements of Gender Healing workshops include the sharing circle, breathwork, and same-sex groups. The sharing circle is a simple and powerful form of gathering used widely in communities and healing groups. One person speaks at a time, while the others listen attentively without judgment, feedback, or discussion. The speaker has full permission to talk about whatever she or he is moved to share. Sharing circles provide a safe forum for unearth-

ing deep issues relating to the participants' lives as men or women.

Focusing on gender issues in a sharing circle often brings up strong emotional, psychological, and spiritual issues—and this requires an experiential processing modality. Gender Healing facilitators utilize different forms of "breathwork" for this purpose, including Holotropic Breathwork, developed by Christina and Stanislav Grof, and BRETH, developed by Kamala Hope-Campbell.

Breathwork gives participants an opportunity to access their own inner wisdom and explore an extensive range of internal territory in a protected environment. The process is done in pairs: one person breathes vigorously while the "sitter" gives his or her undivided attention and support to the breather. In a subsequent session, the sitter and breather switch roles. The vigorous breathing coupled with evocative music helps the breather to activate deeper realms of his or her psyche. Participants' experiences in breathwork cover a wide range, including the arising to conscious awareness of unresolved personal issues, emotional and energetic releases, encounters with "archetypal" figures, encounters with images of birth and



**I think of men now as my allies,
my brothers—not my enemies.**



ing dynamics between and within families. Add to this the power of gender issues and male/female dynamics, and community life can become a real cauldron of intensive interpersonal dynamics!

How can we work with these energies and dynamics to foster deep communication and maintain harmony in a community setting? One promising approach is a new form of gender-healing work emerging from the deep



Through gender-healing experiences, men and women can learn to work as partners and friends.

first time that he had raped his wife and his girlfriend. Until that time he had always regarded these events as manly sex acts with "his" women. The intensity of grief, anguish, and shame this man experienced was extreme, and was made all the more poignant by the heart-wrenching stories of rape recounted by some of the women. In another case a participant went into deep terror and wanted to leave the workshop, convinced that she couldn't endure the intensity of the work. After being helped to directly face

and experience her fear, she remained, and had a powerful heart opening.

Sometimes very special moments occur which defy description because they are so intensely moving and beautiful. Everything seems to change and each person present is witness to something so remarkable that they are somehow forever changed by it. In one case a participant had been acutely aware throughout the workshop of the long-standing violence that men had historically perpetrated against women. She took care not to project her rage and sorrow about this onto the individual men in the workshop, and she did not hold them personally responsible. Nevertheless this awareness was very present for her throughout the workshop, and she spoke to it from time to time. She was relatively silent and soft-spoken during much of the workshop, and on the last day, one of the male participants gently drew her out by asking if there was anything he could do or say to establish a connection with her. She began to speak softly, first responding to the questioner and then slowly opening up to share her sorrow and grief with the entire group. Her message was poignant and she spoke with a deep clarity and authority that had not been present in her earlier sharings. Several participants honored her for her honesty and courage. Then one of the men took the talking stick and said to her, "I don't just want to honor you, I want to pay homage." At which point he folded his body forward in a deep bow, his forehead resting on the ground before her. He made this gesture with

utmost sincerity and integrity. The woman was stunned, speechless. Her heart broke open, as she vacillated between doubting what was happening and seeing it take place before her very eyes. The man maintained the bow for two or three minutes, during which the woman's eyes softened and opened, in a cycle of disbelief and gratitude.

This led to a yet deeper sharing from the same woman, who made a passing reference to her rape—the first mention of it during the workshop. Hearing this, another woman began to cry, and her cries soon developed into wails, and then further deepened into wrenching screams of grief. Others began to weep, and then to bellow and scream, and within minutes the entire group was immersed in a deep collective grieving process, many sobbing uncontrollably in one another's arms. This continued for quite a long time as people touched into very deep grief and rage, mutually supporting one another in going through the dark caverns of personal and archetypal pain. Eventually the powerful energies began to exhaust themselves, and one by one the people emerged from their inner realms, tender and delicate, all huddled close together in loving support and surrender. The experience left everyone moved beyond words, far beyond what can be conveyed in print.

At such moments, there is an uncanny



Ultimately, gender work is not actually about gender differences at all, but rather about our ultimate identity as human beings.



sense that a higher intelligence is orchestrating the entire process, because each person's internal issues are triggered in a manner that precisely suits his or her particular character. Such a synergistic, multi-layered experience—in which several people simultaneously receive precisely what they need for their own unique healing process—could not possibly be planned or organized. Something deeper is going on.

A man in his late twenties described a key moment in one workshop:

One by one, each man proclaimed, with quiet assurance, our commitment to end the cycle of violence against other men, women, children, and the Earth. "This cycle," we each declared, "ends with me." The women in the workshop—all of

death, and a variety of other transpersonal or mystical experiences. After breathwork sessions people often report a sense of expanded awareness, refreshed psychological or physical energy, and a renewed sense of interconnectedness and open-heartedness.

At some point in the workshop, usually on the second or third day, the men and women separate into same-sex groups for about a day and a half. Here participants have a chance to delve deeply into psychological issues with members of their own gender. A heightened sense of safety and familiarity often emerges in these groups, which can enable the men or women to go deeply into issues that may seem too charged or threatening to address in the full group. The participants can feel free to become vulnerable and open; some of the most powerful breathwork sessions take place here.

To facilitate gender work requires a solid authenticity and a delicate balance of openness, flexibility, and knowing when to act. The facilitator's job is primarily to protect the integrity of the process and help it unfold in its own natural manner, so as to best serve the participants. This means the agenda is not pre-determined, and the facilitation is largely "hands off," except during breathwork sessions and periods of crisis. The participants play a major role in determining the agenda; the resulting process is co-created by the participants and facilitators.

Challenging dynamics can arise when a participant confronts the dissolution of long-standing defense mechanisms or repressed and denied psychic structures. For example, in one of our workshops a participant realized for the

them victims of men's violence or rage— began to weep with the sweet promise of our declaration. One by one, the women joined us in a loving, sobbing pile, our hearts stretched to breaking, but stretched with a fullness, a gladness of an Earth that is healing. Soon the sobbing turned to laughter as we felt the newness of the world, and we whooped and sang in celebration.

A woman in her mid-forties who had a particularly powerful experience, reported: *The workshop was the most sacred and profound experience—or series of experiences—I've ever had.... During all the years of trying to liberate myself, I tried to denigrate and minimize what is male because in almost every aspect I felt it as dominating, or patronizing. What began to dawn on me at the workshop was how vital male energy is—and I think of men now as my allies, my brothers—not my enemies, in terms of searching for solutions.*

I believe gender healing work is an effective way to revitalize the spirit of community life, where day-to-day living can demand tremendous energy and persistence. Challenging psychosocial dynamics among community members can grow almost imperceptibly, creeping into the community fabric over time. I'm convinced that deep regenerative processes such as gender work can do wonders for healing and restoring community members' camaraderie, commitment, and vision.

Since 1991 my colleagues and I have held two or three gender workshops each year, primarily at Earthlands community in Massachusetts. Most members have attended at least one of these events annually, and they report they have formed and maintained powerful bonds with the help of gender work. They tell us the workshops have been vital for restoring the magic in the community and helping people reconnect with their vision and their hearts.

Facilitators of this process have found that men and women can work effectively together in confronting and moving through deeply charged psychological, emotional, and spiritual issues about relationships, sex, and gender. It requires a safe space, sufficient time, sincere aspiration, and a willingness to surrender to the organic unfolding of the transformational process.

The beauty of this work is that the focus on gender issues provides a vehicle for people to go far inside themselves and tap the deep well of compassion and love that resides within every human being. It is the partici-

pants' reconnection with their own inner source of unconditional love that makes this work so powerful.

Ultimately, gender work is not actually about gender differences at all, but rather about our ultimate identity as human beings. Grappling with gender issues moves people beyond their usual self-conceptions and identification with their bodies to deep questions of existence as human beings and our place in the cosmos. In the end, gender issues cannot be fully resolved in gender terms, because they force us to realize that our true nature is beyond gender altogether. Ω

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Will wishes to acknowledge Liz Bragg, Syndee Brinkman, Davis Chapman, Sharyn Faro, Rafael Tillman Fox, Kay Grindland, Johanna Johnson, Harriet Rose Meiss, Heart Phoenix, Ben Robin, John Seed, RG Steinman, and Jeffrey Weisberg for their invaluable help.

The Yoke

The Mexican man, Francisco, came to the door this morning, wanting work. He and his friend Camilo have no money to send back to their hungry family. They begged for work.

So we started the old lawn mower to cut the weeds, and fired up the hedge cutter to open a little light for the kitchen windows.

I wonder why we have to work so hard here. Isn't there enough to go around? Does love stop at the automatic teller machine? Who decides whether it's to be a dirt floored hut or Tiffany Towers? How does it all get managed?

*There is no thinking about it!
We are beasts with karmic yokes.
Lucky is the one who knows to feel the burning of the rope as she circles around one more time to pull the water bucket up and out of the indifferent ground.*

That one who learns to value the miracle of pain and the blessing ordeal, who can remember to listen closely to the whispers of the wind and hold carefully her aching feet, alive with the mystery of having feet and hands and movements of the head, that one will know the yoke is just an arch over the doorway to better times.

—Robert K. Hall

Living in Paradox: A Utopian Soap Opera

by John Frederick Heider



WHOLE HEALTH FOUNDATION

At Flint College, the curriculum was designed to increase awareness.

Out of John Heider's depth of experience studying, living, and teaching Human Potential Theory comes his raucous fictional tale, Living in Paradox: A Utopian Soap Opera. As we jump into chapter seven of this unpublished novel, we find ourselves at Flint Hills College, a newly created human potential college community in rural Paradox, Kansas. The newly assembled college staff is about to begin their first session in a week-long encounter group. The following excerpts were selected primarily to illustrate the theories and ideas embraced in Human Potential Theory.

JUNE, 1967. AT LAST THE MOMENT had arrived! In the meeting room across the corridor from The Command Post in Old College Hall the atmosphere was electric. Every single person present, even including Bill Schutz, was charged with fear and excitement. Every stomach had its butterflies.

This natural anticipation was enhanced by Bill Schutz's reputation as a group leader

who could take people farther, who could delve deeper than perhaps any other guide in the country. But what does "far" mean? Or deep? What if I explore my depths and do not like the self I discover? What if I expose myself, and you turn away? As much as I yearn for the truth, I fear the unknown.

Fourteen chairs were placed in a circle in the meeting room. Fourteen people—the partners, the faculty, the advisors of this utopian community, and the guest group leader—sat in these chairs, and the encounter began.

After a brief introduction, they plunged right into the waters of experiencing one another. First they did some warm-up exercises which Bill called "microlabs." Bill explained that these microlab exercises were designed to teach people the fundamentals of encounter very quickly and to help them to become more open and more available to themselves and to one another.

No single exercise lasted more than a few minutes before Bill moved rapidly on to the

next. First, he asked them to stand up, move the chairs back out of the way, and mill about the room making contact with one another. They could touch or shake hands or make noises, just so long as they used no words. He said, "You've all been to cocktail parties, you've seen how much we hide behind our superficial chatter."

Awkwardly, self-consciously people began to walk around the room, uncertain how to make contact without speaking. Barry shook hands, Gustavo hugged, Greg Compton collided with people and bounced off as if he were a billiard ball. Bally Whitman began making animal noises and imitating a monkey, while Max Schaeffer, true to his Zen Buddhist training, regarded each person with a deep, silent reverence. Jean Baker and her daughter Claire began to waltz in sweeping circles around the room, letting one another go, then finding new partners. Amby and Luz did a complex pantomime, bowing to one another, and speaking with their hands and bodies. Harry and Astrid stood off to one side, uncertain, until Astrid took Harry by the hand and led him from person to person.

Bill asked the group to notice when they were comfortable, when they were uncomfortable, whom they liked making contact

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What if I explore my depths and do not like the self I discover?

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with, and whom they were shy or afraid of. Then he said, "Now begin to walk faster and faster, still making contact with the people you pass." Gradually the tempo in the room increased and with it the noise level, until at last, the frantic, rushing group collapsed on the floor in a helpless tangle of arms and legs.

Allowing only a minute for the members to recover their balance, Bill asked each person to pick a partner. He asked Jean to join him, and he stood facing her. Relieved by the simple instructions, people rapidly paired off. Then he said, "Still no talking! Get to know your partner, any way you like. Use your imagination. You can touch. You can move together. You can play act your feelings. You can make noises, you can smell one another. *Anything* ... except words."

Soon the room was frantic again. People were touching one another, pushing one another, sculpting their partners into frozen, catatonic positions. People were making wild animal noises, pantomiming their wishes and feelings, and laughing raucously.

In this way, Bill led the group from one exercise to another. Not all the microlabs were fun. Some were scary. He had them do one, "High School Dance," in which all the men stood along one wall and all the women along another wall. He still refused to let them talk. "Now when I give the signal, anyone, man or woman, can cross the floor and ask a person to dance. Take risks. Pick the person you really want! But remember, they can accept or reject you. If the person you chose will have you, then go together and stand by the side. Remember, no words!"

At the very instant Bill gave the signal to begin, Gustavo and Barry moved away from the men's wall, nearly colliding with one another. Barry yielded, and Gustavo went to Jean and held out his hand. Jean curtsied

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**There will be no orthodoxy at
Flint Hills College!**

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and accepted Gustavo's invitation. Barry recovered himself and went to Lucille, who gratefully accepted his invitation. The two couples left the floor and stood along the sidelines.

Then Claire Baker crossed the floor and motioned to Bally to join her. But Bally shook his head, and a red-faced Claire returned to the women's wall. An instant later, she tried again. She crossed the floor to Richard and held out her hand. Richard hesitated, then accepted her invitation, and they too left the floor.

High School Dance reminded nearly everyone of teenage traumas, of high hopes and downcast despair. The silence in the room was thick and awkward. Bally went next. He walked up to Luz and with a dramatic swoop lay on the floor, beseeching her with raised arms and piteous cries. Luz laughed and fell into Bally's arms, and they rolled over and over until they came to the group of couples who had finished the game.

Amby, feeling her age and fearful of rejection, forthrightly crossed the floor and invited Max to be her partner. Max smiled in appreciation and went off with her hand-in-hand. Finally Astrid approached Greg. Greg shrugged, as if to say the game meant

nothing to him. Mother and son left the floor, and poor Harry Compton stood alone.

Bill applauded their effort and said, "Harry, you can join the others now." Gratefully, Harry escaped his dramatic isolation. Bill did not approach Harry right away. He waited to see if he would speak. But after a few moments, he walked up to Harry and asked, "Look inside, Harry. Was there someone you wanted but were unwilling to ask? Was there a risk you didn't take?"

At that moment, the meaning of Encounter came clear to Harry, and he said, "Yes, there was. I wouldn't let myself go for what I wanted. I'm not like that in business, but in personal matters, I do that a lot. I stand back, I cut myself off, I accept losing."

Bill gave the group a few minutes to discuss the exercises they had done. The room hummed with excited chatter. Although the group members had only been deprived of words for a half an hour, they seemed hun-

THE PARADOX COVENANT

We join together to found a Utopian College, devoted to nurturing the Human Potential.

We understand "The Human Potential" to mean that every human being has the ability to grow increasingly conscious.

We believe that each person has a self-actualizing instinct, a higher Self, eager to grow.

We endorse the following: individual freedom and self-regulation; responsibility for our behavior; openness and honesty; individual uniqueness and creativity; tolerance of different ways of life.

We disavow the following: telling others who they are, what they should do or become; lying or withholding the truth; proselytizing; orthodoxy; imposing our values, beliefs, or morals on others.

We agree to distinguish between freedom and license; to make an honest effort toward personal growth; to keep our own houses clean.

We undertake to become our own first students. We will study and teach healing, growth, and self-transcendence.

We acknowledge that all existence is paradoxical. May we be granted the courage and the faith to Live in Paradox.

Witnessed & Signed This Day: July 4, 1967



At Paradox, County Seat of Robinson County, Kansas

gry for speech. Next, Bill divided them into two small groups and asked each of these subgroups to sit in a circle on the floor. Then he gave a new instruction. "Each of you, taking turns, go around your circle and tell every other person your first impression of them. Be brief. Be frank. Tell the truth! You have only a few minutes. Whoever wants can start. Go ahead."

Bally Whitman took the lead in his group. He spoke rapidly and to the point. "Jean, I see you as inexperienced, naive. Max, I'm a little afraid of you, you really practice what you preach. Richard, you look naked without your note pad. Lucille, I would come to you if I were hurt; you'd be a good friend, and, I'll bet, a good lover. Astrid, you smother me, I want to move away."

Then it was Jean's turn, and it took her a minute to collect her wits and begin. She did not like being called "inexperienced and naive"; not one bit. She did her best to prove Bally wrong. "Max, I find you very attractive. Richard, Oh dear! What can I say without giving myself away? I do like going to bed with you, but I tense up and forget everything I've learned about surrender!" The subgroup gasped at Jean's revelation. She took a moment to experience the mixture of pride and shame at having made the most personal possible admission, then went on.

"Lucille, I had a dream in which we were lovers! Astrid, I know what Bally means, but my first impression of you here in group is that I trust you completely, your good sense, your good intentions."

Each person took a turn, and the exercise continued. People became accustomed to being candid and to the point. After five minutes had passed, Bill said, "Stop. This time tell the people in your subgroup what kind of animals they remind you of." Thinking of animals let people become free and childlike, and the tension in the room dissipated. After another five minutes had passed, Bill stopped them again. "Now tell each person: if you were a song, what song would you be?" Soon the room was filled with fragments of tune and lyric.

The last morning of the group, Amby, Jean, and Richard presented their draft of the Paradox Covenant. Bill asked for comments and feedback adding, "You have learned the danger of withholding your truth. These three have done a good job. But remember this is Encounter: if there is something you don't like, say so now. Do not carry resentments with you when you leave this room."

After some minor revisions, consensus was reached and the Paradox Covenant was

accepted. Newly elected college president Barry Baker commented, "A covenant need not be set in stone. It can be ever-changing, ever emerging as our knowledge and experience grows."

That night, Amby took out the drawing pens she used for botanical illustrations and neatly lettered the Paradox covenant on an 11" x 17" sheet of archive paper. "Who knows," she mused, "how long this experiment will last. And even if our Covenant evolves, we will always want to recall our beginnings." She left room at the bottom of the sheet for the signatures of all the people of Flint Hills College.



October 1967. The meeting that day did not last long. Faculty, staff and students of the college met in the student meeting room. Amby read the Paradox Covenant. Richard quoted Charles Robinson:

"Humans have been left free by their Creator to roam through the world at will, as in no other way can character be formed. We can investigate all things, use all things, and make all things as we please, so we do not trespass on the equal rights of others to do likewise."

Then Barry made a brief statement: "Doubtless you have heard of the meeting of the college held yesterday. In that meeting, it became clear to all of us that we do not share a single, specific vision of what or how you should be taught. People are different! We will teach as we are able and trust you to grow as you find best. We are and will remain an open forum. Let me reaffirm: there will be no orthodoxy at Flint Hills College! Best wishes!"

Then Bally went to the blackboard and drew a big triangle. "This is the curriculum we have prepared for you this year. We will be teaching consciousness or awareness in three major areas: psychological awareness, somatic awareness—that's bodywork—and spiritual awareness." At each point of the triangle Bally wrote one of the key words: *Mind, Body, then Spirit.*

Bally turned back to face the assembled group. "Everything we do is designed to increase consciousness or awareness. Body work will consist of massage, psychic healing, yoga, and your week in the wilderness with the prairie schooners. You'll notice that in massage and healing, you are learning to surrender, let go of your control and be *yin*: to receive, to be. But out on the prairie, you will be learning to be *yang*: to act with awareness and courage."

"The psychological work," he went on, "includes Gestalt and Encounter. In Gestalt, you are learning to be aware of your own inner process: that's intra-psychic awareness training. But in Encounter, you are learning to be aware of what is happening when two or more people meet. That is the meaning of the word encounter: to meet. Encounter is inter-psychic awareness training."

All this time, Bally was adding words to the triangle on the blackboard.

"Our spiritual disciplines will include meditation, which you began Monday, and chanting, sacred sounding. Again, notice that while meditation asks that you do as little as possible and be as much as possible, when we chant, we are doing; we are creating."

Jody Farr raised her hand, "But, Bally, I don't understand. I mean, yoga is a spiritual discipline. Why do you have it with massage, under bodywork?"

Then one of the students spoke up. "I think that good Gestalt work includes the body, too."

Bally laughed, and turned to the group. "Yes, of course, you're right. All these divisions are artificial. Body, mind, and spirit are three aspects of the same process of life. Except on paper, they really can't be separated. The reason I put yoga under bodywork is because with yoga we are approaching growth through the body. Beginners will experience yoga in the body most. But in the end, they will realize that



At each point of the triangle

Bally wrote one of the key

words: *Mind, Body, then Spirit.*



yoga was training their minds and spirits also."

"And meditation, as Max will tell you, begins with silence, learning to be open and listening to God. But as you will soon see, as you sit, your body will feel it and you will begin to encounter your feelings and unfinished business. Meditation quickly becomes Gestalt. In the same way, Gestalt work begins with psychology, with feelings and thoughts, but very soon, you will see that your higher intuition is being trained and your body is being opened, re-owned, made conscious and alive."

He turned back to write on the board once more. "You see, there are many roads up the mountain. Here at Paradox, we will offer a general education. Later you may

specialize. You may pick one or more areas of intensive study. But in the end, you will find that no matter what you study, you are, first and foremost, developing your awareness or consciousness." Ω

John Heider, Ph.D., is a clinical psychologist living and working in Lawrence, Kansas, and Key Largo, Florida. Author of The Tao of Leadership (Bantam/Doubleday/Dell, 1986), he is a group leader and teacher of group leaders.

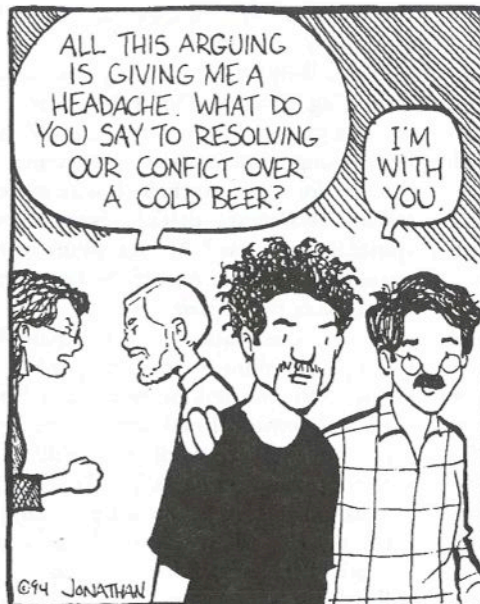
Attitudinal Healing

(continued from page 42)

1. The essence of our being is love.
2. Health is inner peace. Healing is letting go of fear.
3. Giving and receiving are the same.
4. We can let go of the past and of the future.
5. Now is the only time there is, and each instant is for giving.
6. We can learn to love ourselves and others by forgiving rather than judging.

7. We can become love finders rather than fault finders.
8. We can choose and direct ourselves to be peaceful inside regardless of what is happening outside.
9. We are students and teachers to each other.
10. We can focus on the whole of life rather than on the fragments.
11. Since love is eternal, death need not be viewed as fearful.
12. We can always perceive ourselves and others as either extending love or giving a call for help (love).

LIVING IN SINCERITY



My own life is filled with miracles, fostered by the guidance and vision of these principles. During the last year I have transitioned into life as a single parent. Being the recipient of the healing capacity of my home community at La Loma House is one of those miracles.

Our decision to separate set into action about the most painful experience my husband, my children, or I had ever endured. And yet we remain committed to finding alternative ways to love one another. During the most stressful and sorrow-filled moments, we manage to stop long enough to share with and listen to one another. Our open communication continues to heal our pain.

My choice to live in community was motivated by my desire to continue that healing process. The gifts each member of our home offers my children and I, through his or her own commitment to truth-telling and openness, can be described as nothing less than miraculous. Many of the principles noted above are manifest in our life together. For them and the healing capacity of community, I am deeply grateful. Ω

Christine Evans Lehman is a mother, Ph.D. student of transpersonal psychology, and facilitator of Attitudinal Healing groups. She lives at La Loma House in Los Altos Hills, California.

The Center for Attitudinal healing is located in Tiburon, California with affiliated organizations worldwide. The center hosts groups for people facing a wide variety of life challenges. Attendance is free of charge and the groups are run primarily by volunteers. They can be reached at 19 Main St., Tiburon, CA 94920. (415) 331-6161.

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JONATHAN ROTH

Ganas: The Feedback Learning Experiment

by Mildred Gordon

GANAS IS AN INTENTIONAL COMMUNITY within an intentional community. Nearly 80 people are involved in one way or another. Some of us work in the community's businesses and/or live in one of the group's houses. Beyond that, we have the option of participating (or not) in the real business of the community, which is called Feedback Learning.

The organization and economics of the community are interesting in themselves, but they are not at the heart of Ganas. Ganas is principally concerned with learning to make informed decisions as a group with everyone in on it. This is not practiced simply by throwing people together and letting them work it out. It is done by engaging in the very specific Feedback Learning experiment. Understanding the Ganas community means understanding Feedback Learning.

Feedback Learning explores the possibility that self-chosen behavior changes are possible through an appropriate use of criticism, or "performance feedback." This kind of feedback is really a form of information exchange, and it is virtually unavailable in the ordinary social environment.

Generally speaking, it isn't considered courteous to go around offering people unexpected or undesired feedback. So we carry on our social and political lives in a virtual vacuum of this vital information. We don't know if or how we're being understood or



JUBILEE PARTNERS COMMUNITY

Learning to accept feedback with the excitement of discovery.

changes lacks this indispensable day-to-day guiding experience.

We all have the ability to learn through feedback. It is part of the equipment we were born with. The natural environment has taught us, through physical feedback, how to adapt to the physical world. We learn, for example, that floors are good for walking on, stairs require a different technique, and water isn't a walking surface at all. Physical feedback is the necessary self-regulating system employed in all physical functioning. We couldn't live without it for more than a few minutes.

Pain is necessary to continued life. It calls attention to physical, emotional, or relationship malfunction, and provides some of the information needed to correct the trouble which the pain signals. Pleasure tells us we're doing okay—to go ahead and keep moving. It also tells us it's probably good to come back to that activity or place of pleasure for more of the same. Perhaps the experience can even be expected to get better with practice. This is how many of our best skills develop.

The Feedback Learning theory starts by assuming that performance feedback, both negative and positive, is just as vital to healthy thinking and social interaction as body feedback is to physical survival and can be accomplished in much the same way. When we learned to walk, the process was fairly efficient, almost painless, and certainly exciting enough to make us keep trying, in spite of a few tumbles. Social feedback can be the same. What is needed is a way to receive pieces of new data with enough pleasure to make us willing to hear it all. This kind of receptivity may well be the key that will unlock our ability to give up old destructive behaviors and learn better ways of doing what we want to do. Considerable evidence exists which suggests this is possible.

Our emotional responses to events are often related to things that happened a long time ago in some other circumstances, and have little to do with the current reality that performance feedback provides. Yet it is these old feelings which shape our personalities, undermine our relationships, and ultimately prevent our getting the information we need,

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Our work at Ganas is to try to learn to accept negative information with the excitement of discovery.

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whether we are being effective in what we're trying to get across, because as a society we practice a hands-off, live-and-let-live social norm. People who do have a habit of criticizing others to their faces seldom know what they're doing, probably have dubious motives, and rarely accomplish anything good. As a result of this information vacuum, an individual who wants to make behavioral

because, in the moment, it "feels bad." In order to avoid the painful feelings, we regularly cut off or at least distort the feedback which our daily social lives present to us. In so doing, we sacrifice a long-term benefit (learning to govern ourselves wisely) for the short-term benefit of avoiding painful information.

Avoiding this pain can feel like a survival issue in the moment. Such feelings are quite real, regardless of the accuracy of the perceived threat and anticipated pain involved. In fact, the bad feelings can be so strong that one is reluctant even to check their relationship to actual events. These isolated, often irrational feeling responses, repeated over and over, combine over time into predict-

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**Truth (or what you can find of
it) is almost always a gift and
almost never an insult.**
.....

able but non-useful behavior patterns. On the other hand, feedback in the context of current reality can bring us into the present where adjustments and changes are possible. Being receptive to feedback of this kind may be a necessary condition for the self-regulated ongoing behavioral learning we want.

After working with these concepts every day for years, at Ganas we have observed that most people just don't want to hear negative or critical information about their behavior at all, and they especially don't want to hear it in a tone which conveys strong emotion. Even more, they don't want to know *how* the others feel about it.

In the presence of feedback, almost everyone's first impulse is to resist hearing it at all and/or to deny that it could possibly be true. Then as we overcome initial resistance and begin to accept feedback, the next thing that happens is lowered energy and general bad feelings about the whole thing. Whatever the information, if we accept that it is true and conclude that it's our own fault, we will tend to be angry with ourselves—and self-punishment can be rough. If we conclude that the feedback is untrue, we feel angry at the messenger—whose imagined punishment can be terrible. Either way, the whole event is usually unpleasant and unrewarding. It is easy to conclude that we would all be better off avoiding the feedback in the first place.

Since knowing feels bad, most people's impulse is to avoid hearing. However, through not hearing and not knowing, our

decisions are poor and our influence minimal. We feel insecure about making decisions and even more insecure about being able to act on them. We are prey to the many forces inviting us to feel this way or that, at the behest of our history and habits. We don't usually do much about this, mostly because we don't really understand that it is happening. In a very direct way, then, we are all prey to random influences precisely *because* we avoid the direct feedback that we feared would influence us.

In the larger world most people have little control of the social structures that determine what is approved or disapproved, and therefore what we will probably feel good or bad about. Yet these factors, through our feelings, determine our behaviors, evolve our personalities, and largely set our values, preferences, and decisions. This random shaping process keeps happening every day, without our input or consent, and often without our knowledge.

Of course it is possible to resist the social pressures that create us as we are, but with great difficulty. Even those who somehow learn to put public opinion in proper perspective are rarely wise enough to withstand the opinions of those close to them, or emotionally strong enough to stand up against their judgments and demands. In the end, most of us take our direction from people who are themselves responding to the dictates of society, just as we are.

Our work at Ganas is to try to reverse this whole process by learning to accept negative information with the excitement of discovery. We practice this in the context of frequent group meetings in which daily personal interactions, especially those happening then and there in the group setting, are examined closely and related to the behavioral goals of the people involved.

Once motivated to accept the possible value of all information and the special importance of personal, particularly critical, feedback, the next step is learning to focus undistracted attention on whatever is happening. Ganas is having good success with this. Group energy is often high, and attention is usually quite good for most of the people a lot of the time. However, most of us wisely accept the fact that the skill of clearing our minds of noise in order to be ready to receive what is happening in the present is a long-term endeavor.

When people get better at focusing well enough to hear what is being said, non-verbally as well as verbally, they are ready to concentrate on learning how to respond.

The stumbling block here is that very

often, once people start responding, they find that others are not necessarily interested in their responses. It is discouraging to discover that people commonly speak for a number of reasons that have nothing to do with what is supposedly being discussed, and they often don't need (or want) an answer. Too often the primary motivations for speaking are wanting to look good, avoiding disapproval, getting approval by winning competitively over the others, controlling the agenda, and determining the outcome, sometimes in opposition to the needs of the rest of the group. Covert status struggles lead directly to power plays, and the information exchange is stopped dead. These things have little relationship to making our lives and our world work well.

At the present time, the Ganas group communication work focuses on learning to postpone disagreement, argument, or defense of one's position until we fully understand what others have said, and to assign as much positive value to it as possible. Everybody has agreed to try to give up opposing new ideas they have not yet heard or understood.

We think that being open to new information and effectively processing it in a group is the missing, indispensable, workable ingredient for good problem solving and direct democracy. Perhaps these are also necessary prerequisites for loving relationships.

This whole process at Ganas is extremely interesting, and it is natural for people who hear about it to want to observe it first-hand and perhaps experience it themselves. Because physical space is limited, however, we need to explain what Ganas offers and does not offer at this time.

Ganas is not a therapeutic community. Feedback process at this time requires considerable emotional strength. Sometimes people come to us with serious personal difficulties that derive from emotional conflicts we may not be either qualified or willing to work with. Clearly we are involved with developing new behavior-change methods. Also, we tend to confront rather than to avoid conflicts. For these reasons, Ganas groups are often mistakenly thought of as available to everybody for personal therapy. In fact, we rarely offer the kind of "support" which many people seem to expect or want.

Discussions about personal issues come up spontaneously and sometimes quite publicly, but only with consent. People have to be willing and evaluated as able to engage successfully in these feedback exchanges before they happen. Those not familiar with direct interactions of this kind often view them as invasive, unkind, and sometimes

cold. The facilitation we consider necessary to our work is frequently regarded as overcontrolling or even cruel. New people tend to think of our interactions as therapy groups. We consider them simply ongoing open dialogue. If they are also therapeutic, that's fine, too.

At Ganas we are committed to some unpopular ideas: "What you don't know hurts you very much." "Ignorance is dangerous."

"Truth (or what you can find of it) is almost always a gift and almost never an insult." "It is possible to find something to love (or at least like) in almost anyone."

People who fear or dislike exposure of anger or strong feelings are not comfortable here. People with serious emotional problems seeking help will probably not find it here. Those who want to learn to think, love, and bring expressions of reason and emo-

tion together will probably enjoy Ganas very much. People who want to understand and contribute to the pleasure and involvement of others will find a treasure house of value for themselves here. Ω

Mildred Gordon has an extensive background in group facilitation and training of group leaders. She founded the Foundation for Feedback Learning in 1974, and Ganas Community in 1980.

The Mansion

*This mansion where we live has many rooms.
For most, the favorite hangout is
the drama room! sometimes called
the place of stories.
Yesterday's conversations are retold there.
The wounds of childhood sleep deeply,
sit up wide-eyed from nightmares,
walk into the day and suffer from the replay,
prisoners of the past.*

*The drama room is fine for laughter, too.
Neurosis pulling at your sleeve,
and doing floppy-hat routines,
falling on the knees,
tap-dancing across your screens
in search of applause or sympathy.
Everybody out to get even with somebody,
or waiting to fall in love.
There are seven basic plots that get redone
with endless variations for more fun.*

*The next room is where feelings happen,
behind the story
and just below the mind.
All the drama finds its way into the body,
pulls it this way; constricts it that.
Every meaningful glance,
every jealous moment sends its current
through the nerves, transforms itself
to impulse, contracts the muscles and pulls
upon the bones.
In the feeling room, we pay attention
to the pressure of contraction,
the connective tissue,
making its demand.*

*That leads us to the sensation room.
Life happens in the raw.
Opinions belong to drama and plans are not allowed.
Sensations are acknowledged
simply as they are.
Some are tingling, some are pain,
vibration travels through in waves,
touch recorded like falling rain.*

*No need to make them into something,
no story here to tell.
Each stands alone and disappears,
replaced by what comes next,
maybe heat, perhaps cold, tightness, hardness,
maybe the sense of presence,
familiar and so old.*

*Sensation without drama,
presence without history,
no story to be told.
Sensations move like blinking stars
the body has no form.
No familiar shoulders, no arms to make us warm.
Only life emerging now.
Insistant, demanding and ecstatic,
full of movement, abound with power,
running behind the eyes and darting out the finger tips,
dissolving all identity, becoming is-ness,
arriving Buddha nature,
the same as birds and song.
Making toast in the morning, head upon the pillow
in the night. Walking to the kitchen,
turning to the right,
whispering to a lover,
the act of looking and the sight.*

*The mansion is the Great One.
We who live here are mirage.
Only the One Who Lives is here.
Smiling when the tea is hot,
spreading on the jam, bringing down the laundry
wiping out the cooking pot.*

*How wonderful is this body.
How tender is the love.
We imagine we are separate,
but the truth is all around us,
below us and above.*

—Robert K. Hall



STEVE BECK

In Gestalt Practice, the "Reflector" (left) offers awareness, good will, and interest to the emotional process of the "Initiator."

Gestalt Practice: Awareness Moment to Moment

Christine Stewart Price
interviewed by Paul DeLapa

In the 1960s, psychotherapist Fritz Perls popularized a therapeutic model, Gestalt Therapy. In Perls' Gestalt, the therapist facilitates a patient, often in the context of a group, in an exploration aimed at improving the quality of the individual's life. Dick Price, Christine's husband and co-founder of Esalen Institute, was a student of Perls', and developed Gestalt Practice during the 1970s at Esalen.

PAUL DELAPA: *How does Gestalt Practice differ from Gestalt Therapy?*

Christine Price: Dick Price evolved Gestalt Practice out of Fritz Perls' version of Gestalt Therapy, but he was strongly influenced by his interest in Buddhist meditation and Wilhelm Reich's work. Also, because of some negative experiences in Dick's life involving the medically oriented therapeutic community, he shifted the practice away from the doctor/patient model where the therapist can assume a powerful role as the expert. In contrast, the Gestalt Practice model was developed as *education*, where what we do

Obviously, you affect me—we all affect each other—and I can let you know how you affect me. But I have to be very clear that my response to you is on my side of the line. You don't affect everybody in this manner. My awareness and willingness to own my response in our interaction gives me a lot of responsibility, and, for this model to work, I can't surrender responsibility for my awareness to you the guru, the teacher, or the therapist. We all come in on an equal plane.

Paul: *Many people speak of the benefits of having a practice in their lives. And more and more I'm hearing that it's also valuable for communities to regularly explore together in some way—even if it's not a specific practice.*

Christine: At Esalen, Gestalt Practice wasn't the practice of the whole community: everyone there had a choice whether or not to participate. The elimination of a central practice

was a weakness as well as a strength in this particular community. There was struggle because some people were living there a long time without any practice that helped them continue to get to know themselves and learn communication skills. I think that the community suffered because of that. It wasn't a question of everyone using Gestalt Practice, but some people didn't seem to be involved in any approach that led

to clearing, integration, and development.

For community to work, I believe that we all need a growth practice in our life that continues to help clean up unfinished business and supports us in continuing to unfold and face the challenges of daily life. Without this, it seems that things get particularly messy.

A growth practice may not look uniform. Some artists may follow their muse by daily attending to their art. Others may work in intensive periods and then not touch a brush for months. Whatever the form, we're looking for a practice that calls the person to keep growing. Form is not the issue. It's more an energetic question. Do I have that sense of continuing to grow?

I don't know what it looks like for anybody else but I believe, for a community to stay healthy and whole, that each individual has to be doing something which creates a sense of opening and development.

Paul: *What is the goal of Gestalt Practice?*

Christine: To increase our awareness is the primary goal. It isn't specifically about feeling good or getting happy. We consider it a success if there is greater ability to be in awareness now, or if we have increased what we are aware of.

Paul: *So there's an underlying belief that increasing our awareness somehow enhances our experience?*

.....

I believe, for a community to stay healthy and whole, that each individual has to be doing something which creates a sense of opening and development.

.....

together can include a sense of sport, or art. In this form we can all practice together, and in that sense, it is more community-based. In a therapeutic model our roles are clearly defined and not interchangeable; however, Gestalt Practice allows us to trade roles as we do self-exploration, and is therefore a lot more like real life. This is one of the things I think is valuable about Gestalt Practice model in community situations. In community, we are living in relationship, often with lots of different roles. For starters we are each other's extended family. If we are a task community, we work together, so we may be each other's employer or employee. At Esalen, we had a teaching situation, so we were also each other's students or teachers at times.

So what can we do to deal with the problems that arise when we are living in these mixed roles? Is there some practice which, instead of trying to eliminate mixed roles (which is what the therapeutic model does) instead *acknowledges* and actually tries to work with this mix? What can we do when we hit difficulty? The Gestalt Practice model suggests, "Let's each take responsibility for our own experience in this process together. No one is more of an expert on my inner experience than myself, and that leaves me responsible to notice my experience, own it, and not be too quick to make you responsible."



"Contact is the appreciation of differences and the recognition of similarities."

Christine: There is definitely an assumption that being present in awareness makes a difference. But Gestalt Practice is an experiential approach. You're the expert on your experience. It says: "Sit down and try this and see what you discover."

Paul: *Can you describe the basic roles in Gestalt Practice?*

Christine: If someone wants to explore, he or she is called the "Initiator." We use this term to emphasize that the power or juice stays with the one who's choosing to work. The person who is sitting in the supportive role is called the "Reflector," which is a more *yin*, or passive role. When Dick Price was developing Gestalt Practice he intended to take it out of the patient/therapist context. The traditional term for this process was "hot-seat" work, which gives the impression that someone is up there to get fried or somehow be put on the spot. Dick changed the term to "open seat," to indicate that the practice is an opportunity to sit in awareness and notice anything that arises. It's not about performing or accomplishing. It's not about problem-solving, although that could be the result. The intention is to have a specific time set aside to be supported in awareness.

Paul: *So as Initiator, what does one gain by having you as Reflector?*

Christine: Two awarenesses are better than one. And doing open seat work in a group means the Initiator has an entire group supporting the process of awareness by witnessing—15 awarenesses are even better than two. The job of Reflector is to lend you awareness, to offer you good will, curiosity, and interest in your process. The reflector's job is *not* to try to get you somewhere. Reflectors need to stay out of their own agenda, and support the Initiator's emerging process.

An experienced Reflector can also do some coaching. If you have a sport that you're practicing, it's very nice to go to someone who has practiced it even longer, whose skill level is beyond yours. As Reflector I can offer you experiments because I have a hunch they might be useful, but I keep in mind that I don't really know about your experience or what's true for you. I don't turn into the expert on your experience. This is about self-discovery, and as the Reflector, I'm not going to discover you; *you're* going to discover you.

The low-key role of Reflector makes this usable as a community practice. As your Reflector, I don't have to be an expert; I do

have to know the basic structure of the practice. I do need to stay in awareness of myself, so I know the difference between you and me. And I need to be willing, from that place of sensing my self and being present, to continue to explore with you, the Initiator, the primary questions: "What are you sensing right now? What are you doing right now? Would you like to enter that and give that expression?" Once I learn the basics, I can play both in the Initiator and Reflector roles. Eventually it becomes quite a high art form and can be very nourishing and deep. And it all starts with a willingness to play in awareness.

Paul: *How is the group affected by an individual's sitting in awareness, and how does the group interact or support that self-discovery?*

Christine: Part of the understanding of Gestalt Practice is that we are not isolated—we are part of a larger field. Whatever is going on effects me, and whatever I do effects the field. The group can make this more explicit. As the Initiator, the presence of the group can give me opportunities that I wouldn't have otherwise. It's like a slice of the world that I can experiment with, except this piece of the world has made some

explicit agreements. We agree that there will be no violence and no sexual acting out in the group situation. We also agree that no one from the circle will interfere with the Initiator's process. As a group participant, I don't interrupt a session by asking for information or giving my viewpoint. Other group forms are more interactive but in Gestalt Practice we give the Initiator as much space and support to follow his or her own process as possible. The Initiator does not have to react or interact with anyone else's process during his or her time on the open seat. The Initiator can choose to invite interaction. All of this is to create a space where the Initiator can feel safe enough to experiment in ways which he or she might not in the world at large.

Paul: *As other participants witness the Initiator's process ...*

Christine: Yes. As a group member I am free to go along internally with the session in whatever way interests me. If the person on the open seat is exploring a relationship to his or her father as a young child, I could be doing the same thing by visualizing my father when I was young, and noticing what was true for me and what statements I might want to make to him.

Gestalt Practice Basics

The basic practice is: "How now?"
"What am I experiencing now?"
"What am I doing now?"

Gestalt Practice explores "how now" through the processes of:

Contacting: The place of the witness; bare awareness.

Entering: The place of becoming and owning; "it" becomes "I."

Expressing: Through the forms of breath, movement, sound, and words.

Realms of Awareness (areas to notice)

Inner Awareness: Breath, physical sensation, and feeling/emotion/states of being.

Awareness of the Mind (place of thought): Thinking, judging, fantasizing, rehearsing, remembering, and visualizing.

Outer-World Awareness: What I perceive of the world through my five senses. (Not what I think about my perceptions.)

Communication Guides (suggestions for deepening contact, and entering)

Name "it." Usually replaced by "I" or "you."

No gossiping (talking about).

Speak to or become the other and speak as.

Helpful Qualities (for both Initiator and Reflector)

Patience, tolerance, and a sense of humor.

"The situation is hopeless but not serious."

couragement to trust this process. If we do this, we'll be a lot better off in the long run, however much discomfort we have to face in the moment. Gestalt Practice also offers some teaching about what works in communicating, what creates clarity, what creates contact.

Dealing with resentment in community is an ongoing challenge and there is a process in gestalt practice to help structure that. The first step is for me to notice what I'm resenting, and to say that clearly. "You know, I'm in resentment. This is what I'm in resentment about." Then I take the next step of self-responsibility and tell you what I would like instead, particularly in terms of how you relate to me. The third step is saying: "Even if you can't do that with me, this is what I can do for myself to create what I need." And the final step is to acknowledge what I appreciate about our relationship and about this situation, just as it is—this is what I'm learning through this conflict with you. In Gestalt Practice, the definition of contact is the appreciation of differences and the recognition of similarities.

Learning how to stay in contact is difficult, but we can create the space to trust this process; we can be having difficulty and still recognize our appreciation of each other; we can be different and learn how that may enrich our community. It isn't necessarily about feeling all loving—often I'd settle for tolerance. I mean, if you feel loving, great, and if you have a spiritual practice, you're probably moving in that direction. But there's no use pretending that most of us in community feel loving toward each other all the time. Yet, even in the midst of having a hard time trusting each other, I can trust the process of our being in relationship and invest in the process of working this out.

Paul: *Trusting the process is a real cornerstone. How do we develop that trust?*

Christine: I learn to trust process first by sensing myself moment to moment and noticing my own process. Then I can experiment with choosing to say yes to my experience and entering fully whatever feeling my organism is presenting. I learn to make friends with those inner experiences that I usually avoid. There is a bottom-line belief in Gestalt Practice that each organism, at its core is wanting to move toward growth and well-being. And that organic self-regulation, that pulse from the deepest self, is attempting to take us to the place of most aliveness and most integration. We look at everything that arises as coming from that

original wholeness, however twisted it may have become as it emerged. Then the process is to respect the impulse toward growth and aliveness while becoming aware of the way that I interrupt and interfere with that intrinsic self-regulation. Practicing this bit by bit, I can gradually learn self-trust and develop self-tolerance.

When I trust myself, I need less from you to find you trustworthy. I don't need you to promise never to be mean or angry, because I have enough sense of self over here that if you are mean or angry, I won't dissolve. The more I have substance on my side of the line, the more tolerant I can be of whoever you are.

Another thing about trust is: the more I am willing to see what is in front of me, rather than what I wish would be in front of me, the more able I am to trust. When I am really in touch with what is, really willing to see who you are—our limitations, your strengths, your history, your body language as well as what you're saying to me—then I can trust you to be who you are. And I can



When I trust myself, I need less from you to find you trustworthy.



relate to you accordingly.

For example, I know that if I'm in front of an injured wild animal that it's not the time to go up and try to put my hand in it's mouth. It's not that the animal isn't trustworthy. I recognize it's state and I relate to it accordingly. It is my responsibility to notice how I can trust you at this moment, given who we both are now. Often in community dynamics, people use the words, "I don't trust you" to mean, "you're not being the way I want you to be." I can always trust somebody to be who they are. I have to learn to be able to see that person clearly and that will take some time.

Paul: *Can you describe any other effects Gestalt Practice had on the community?*

Christine: The primary carry-over has to be increased awareness. Every drop of awareness makes a difference. Every drop of responsibility, of respect, every bit of trust I can bring will make a difference to the whole field. Let's say that I'm interacting with someone who doesn't give a darn about awareness and doesn't want to take responsibility

for anything in life, including his or her behavior in our relationship right now. I don't have to have this person in the practice to use it myself. I can stand here in awareness and with a sense of self, and see the other person over there in his or her experience, and know that I don't have to do something to change that person nor do I have to make his or her point of view my own. The practice supports me with or without that person's participation.

There's also a synergistic effect. By being present with each other we raise each other's ability to be present and this enriches our quality of life.

At Esalen emotion and feeling were valued and supported. It was a cultural subtext and one of the most powerful healing aspects of that community for me. In dealing with births and deaths, the miracle of being alive was able to be shared fully, in all its intensity. To own the newborn as a child of the tribe, to wail together as we grieved the death of a loved one, to have emotional expression valued in community, to have it respected and integrated as part of daily life—this created a sense of direct contact with each other in our most authentic selves. For me, this valuing of the feeling aspects of life was clearly connected to the teaching and use of Gestalt Practice in that community.

Before we came to Esalen, most of us had not experienced support or respect for this level of feeling and expression. In the Gestalt Practice groups we were invited to move into awareness and allow whatever emerged. Frequently what came up was crisis from the past which often included expression of intense feeling. As we dealt with our feelings, within this context of a supportive circle, witnessing and sharing what had never been tolerated or supported before, understanding and empathy developed in us and between us.

So as well as building compassion, awareness, and communication skills, Gestalt Practice in a community can help establish and normalize expression of emotion. (Though this is not encouraged as another rule of how to be, as in: "Thou shalt be emotional.") Rather, our awareness can lead us to explore the ability to contain emotion, or go beyond it sometimes. The point is to have the choice and ability to contact and express our feelings and to be in a situation where the people around us also value that process. Ω

Christine Stewart Price is a teacher and ongoing student of Gestalt Practice and other approaches to developing awareness. She was a 20-year resident of Esalen Institute.



SHENOA RETREAT & LEARNING CENTER/RICK GERHARTER

The goal of conflict resolution is not to eliminate differences, but to arrive at a resolution that is acceptable to everyone.

The Challenge of Conflict

by Julie Mazo

ANIMAL RIGHTS ACTIVIST HERB IS outraged by Allan's provocatively stated preference for an omnivore diet. Lou worried that the influx of new members will destroy the community as an extended family, and Betsy fears the community becoming an exclusive and exclusionary enclave. John is a vocal advocate of borrowing money to purchase additional land for the community, while Susan values the community being free of debt.

The experience of interpersonal conflict is almost universal, unless we choose to live in isolation. All interactions hold the potential for expression of our very human differences, and therefore provide fertile ground for conflict. It may be that intentional communities generate even more conflict than

impersonal, mainstream environments. It's not that communitarians are more contentious, but rather that the enmeshing of our lives makes our differences more readily apparent, and joint decision making highlights them. When people live together, work together, play together, and determine together the use of common resources, interpersonal disputes and opposing positions about community actions are to be expected.

This being so, communities have a special need for conflict-resolution and problem-solving skills. As a mediator and facilitator by training and profession, I've spent decades helping people to deal effectively with conflict, and have trained countless others in the valuable skills of the field. This background should come in very

handy, right? Well ... not necessarily. The longer I live in community, and the more history I develop with other members, and the more invested I become in group issues, the more challenging it becomes to exercise my skills. Sometimes it seems that life as a communitarian would hold fewer frustrations if I knew less about conflict resolution. In case this raises any eyebrows, let me explain.

In the world outside of my community, I automatically shift into "mediator mode" whenever I deal with conflict. The attitudes and approaches of mediation fit like old, comfortable shoes, so well have they been integrated over the many years. It's second nature for me to empathize, yet remain neutral; to hear contradictory stories without

judgment. I clarify communication, redress power imbalances, ensure that positions are heard and understood, and engage all the many other skills of mediation. In short, my detachment from the content (the "what") of the dispute enables me to effectively facilitate a process (the "how") for its resolution.

At home, it's different. Even with no personal axe to grind when mediating a dispute between two members, my relationships with them carry the potential to compromise my neutrality—and therefore my effectiveness. Sympathy or antipa-

all can do to encourage movement in that direction.

Raising consciousness

Do you ever walk away from a meeting saying to yourself, "Yuck, that was awful!" or "Wow! Why can't it be like that all the time?" Whether the process is satisfying, frustrating, or somewhere in the middle, there's much to be learned by taking time to reflect as a group on what we've just experienced. For example, when during the meeting did we feel positive or negative, and why? Which comments left us feeling more open and flexible or more rigid and defensive?

Can we identify the nature of the statements that influenced us one way or the other? Did we feel that the group heard and truly understood our position? If not, what was missing for us? Was there enough space to say what was on our minds? Did it feel safe to put forth our views? If not, what would have helped us to participate?

These kinds of questions can stimulate a useful evaluation. Answers will deepen both individual and group awareness, provide timely feedback, and generate insight that can improve future meetings. Since we are all experts about our own experience, expertise about group dynamics is irrelevant for an evaluation process to be worthwhile. Everyone's input is valuable. Over time, as consciousness grows about the kinds of participation that influence the group in positive or negative ways, the potential for constructive participation expands. And that's what we're after.

Developing and spreading skills

Take a course in mediation or in group dynamics to enhance your knowledge base. Your community probably includes others who don't like the way conflict affects the group. Bring in a trainer, or organize a study group for you and other interested members to learn what you can on your own. The more people are exposed to the skills of managing conflict, the greater understanding and support there will be for your efforts, and the quicker the community's style of handling differences will become more satisfying and comfortable. Also, as communitarians well know, it's fun to work towards a common goal with others.

Observing the process

If you identify with my struggle to disengage from the content in order to be more effective with process, give yourself permis-

sion to observe and take notes on what's happening during a heated discussion. Good observation requires the use of eyes and ears, not mouth. The paper and pencil in your hands for note taking can do wonders as a reminder to reserve your content opinions for another occasion.

Pay careful attention to both verbal and nonverbal language and write down enough detail to help you remember particular moments. Thoughtful observation can increase your personal sensitivity to the nuances of what escalates or reduces hostility, exacerbates or soothes hard feelings.

Observations can also be offered to the group when appropriate. For example, during a discussion you might interject, "I thought Ann was talking about A-B-C, and Joe's comment seemed to be about X-Y-Z. I'm confused about what we're trying to accomplish." You get the idea. As you think it would be helpful, you present your observations to achieve clarification, facilitate understanding, etc.

Another useful occasion for presenting observations is during evaluation or debriefing after a meeting. You might share with the group the tension you began to feel at a certain point, or express that, "It seemed to me we lost our focus when..."

Eliminating differences is not the goal ... their absence would deprive the community of the richness that diversity brings.

Did anyone else experience it that way?" You're not criticizing, blaming, or judging, but simply offering your perception. Including a question with your observation opens a door for others to reflect on what was going on with them during the meeting.

Many good models for process observation are available. Visit your local library to research "group dynamics," or write to me for references. As other community members become intrigued by what you're doing, they can become observers, too. This would not only multiply the insights, but would also allow you to trade off. That is, you observe for 15 minutes, then Joe takes over while you become free to contribute your thoughts about the issues in dispute.

The enmeshing of our lives makes our differences more readily apparent, and joint decision making highlights them.

thy, whether conscious or unconscious, can affect the balance which a mediator needs to contribute to the process. It's not enough for me to exercise caution that I don't express or demonstrate bias or judgment. I must also guard against the tendency to over-compensate; that is, to swing too far in the opposite direction when my personal feelings are engaged.

Disputed community issues are even more problematic. It's rare that I don't have my own view about "right" and "wrong," since community decisions influence my life. Naturally enough, I have a personal stake in what the community chooses to do. When the community is polarized by a contentious issue, I can walk into a meeting telling myself, "OK, this time you're going to stay cool." Hah. It doesn't take much for me to find myself drawn into heated partisanship. This tends to compromise my ability to listen and respond to opposing views with openness and sensitivity. Advocacy and objectivity don't combine well. More often than I like to remember, post-meeting reflection has left me regretfully aware of missed opportunities to put into practice my large repertoire of peacemaking skills.

My goals (and perhaps yours) are to be a responsible, effective agent for resolving differences in my community, and to strengthen community support and community skills for dealing with differences constructively. Are these goals achievable? Yes, I think so. It will take more discipline than I manage to practice consistently, but a more harmonious community is surely worth that effort. And there are things we

Partnering for support

In preparation for an upcoming meeting, tell someone else who will be present about your intention to remain detached from the content in order to focus on the process and ask her/him to keep an eye on you. If it becomes necessary, your partner can send a nonverbal message (like pulling an ear) from across the room to serve as a signal that what you just said sounded to your partner like advocacy.

An interesting outcome of partnering: just knowing that our partner will be giving careful attention to our behavior helps us stay in the role we have chosen for ourself. The partner can also provide feedback afterwards, and help us fine-tune our efforts for the future.

Using outside facilitators

However much you know about resolving conflict, and however well you use your knowledge, it may be that an especially difficult issue calls for an external person with appropriate skills. An outside consultant comes with a good measure of authority and credibility simply by virtue of having been invited, and communities are often more willing to accept process guidance from an outsider than from one of its own members.

When I am invited to another community in the role of outside consultant, I walk in "clean" of direct experience with the issues or investment in any particular outcome. The group's assumption of my neutrality gets us off to an easier start. To be effective, I then have to demonstrate that I have what it takes to help the group accomplish its purposes.

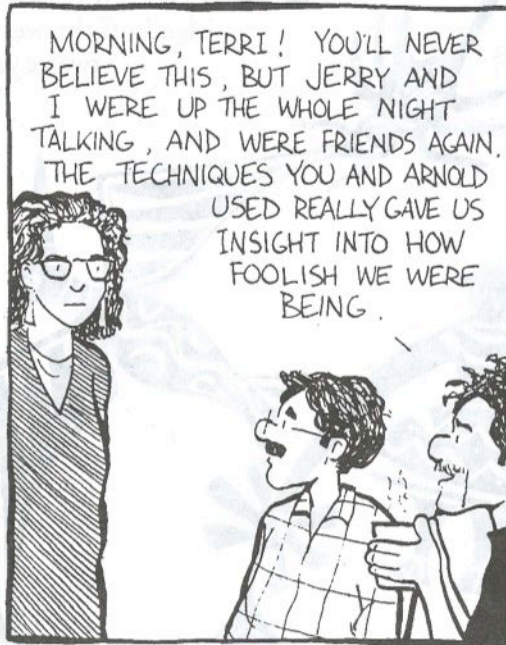
Eliminating differences is not the goal. Even if that were possible, their absence would deprive the community of the richness that diversity brings. The challenge is to work with the whole spectrum of opinions and views to arrive at a resolution that respects all positions and

can be accepted by those concerned. To meet that challenge requires skills to help both sides walk in the shoes of the opposing parties and thereby gain a greater appreciation of the other's experience. It requires nurturing the perception that mutual satisfaction is more desirable than having winners and losers. It requires stretching ourselves, reaching beyond our

habitual patterns, learning new skills, and using them mindfully. It can be done. Let's do it! Ω

Julie Mazo has lived at Shannon Farm since 1989, and has been working with conflict resolution as a mediator and facilitator since 1967. She can be reached at Shannon Farm, Rt. 2, Box 343, Afton, VA 22920.

LIVING IN SINCERITY



JONATHAN ROTH

Ice Sculptures, Pocketknives, and Shoelaces

by Kajedo

I SIT TUCKED AWAY ON A WIND-AND-RAIN-SWEPT island off the west coast of Scotland, digesting twelve years in intentional community.

Wind rattling at the window, dog curled up next to me, and coffee steaming in the cup.

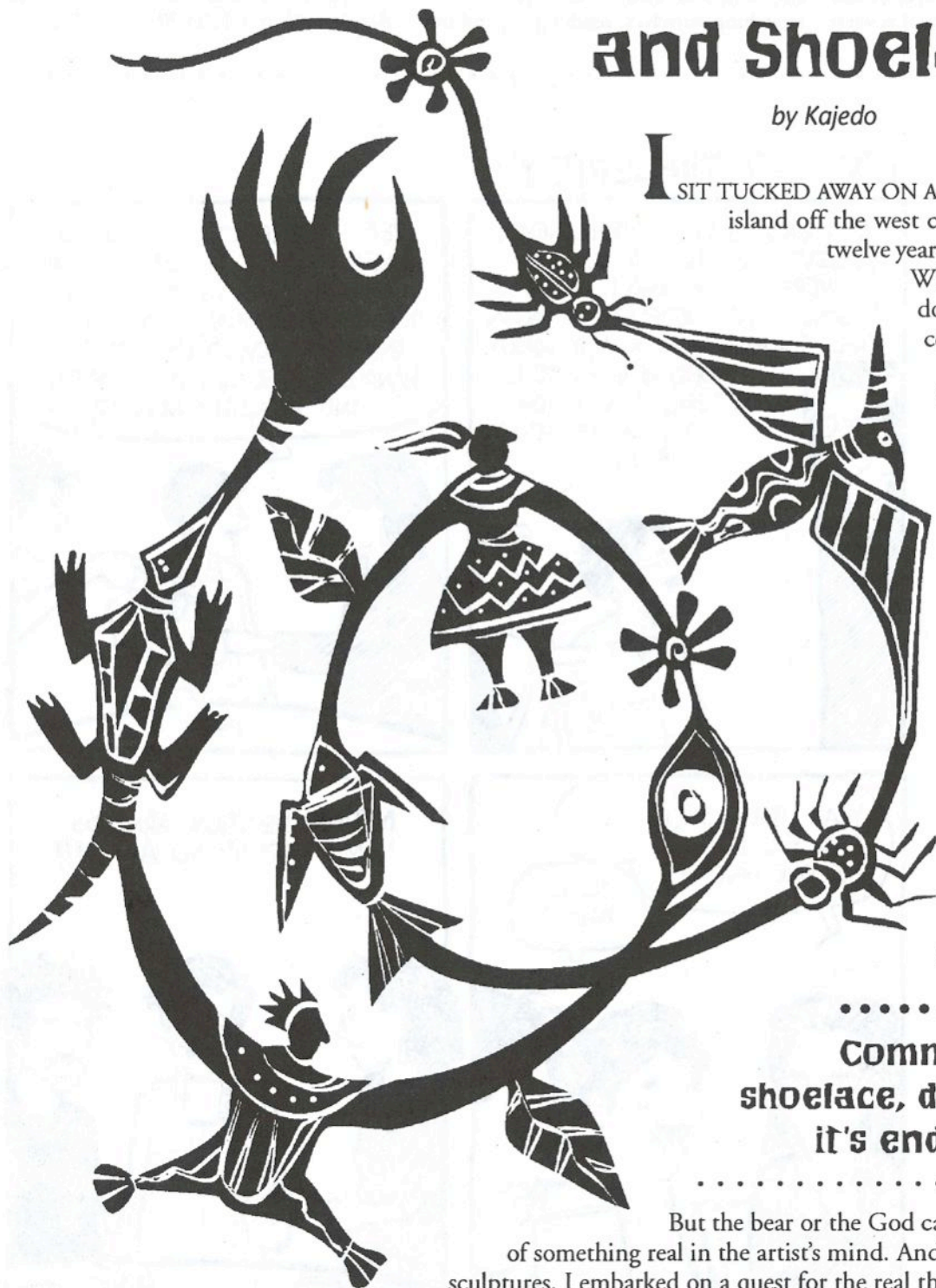
Once upon a time ... in the spring of my teenage years the dream of community was born from puddles of melting ice sculptures of a make-believe childhood world. A glittering, fantastic world in which a harmonious family and a benevolent God in an ordered universe had stood as shining beacons of worship.

I wandered in puddles of this disintegrated world for a long time: wet, cold, and miserable, as angry and lost as many others, sneezing and coughing a lot.

.....
Community is ... one shoelace, destined to have its ends tied together.
.....

But the bear or the God carved in ice is an expression of something real in the artist's mind. And having lost my faith in ice sculptures, I embarked on a quest for the real thing.

Following the compass of my passionate need for truth, love, and beauty, I arrived (almost accidentally it seems) at the gates of "Community." Com-



RUTH RICHARDS

mon-unity, oneness, love, God, peace, inter-connectedness, family—but not of ice. Looking for ways to heal myself and my world from ice sculpture-related disease, I began to engage consciously in “community”—in helping to bring together the disintegrated parts of my life as well as the fragmented and disconnected elements of the world around me.

Shared flats followed, as well as shared attempts to “help” those around us (we ran a halfway house for junkies). I spent three years on a pilgrimage. Externally, from monastery to monastery, and through a colorful kaleidoscope of ashrams, temples, and communes in Europe and Asia. And internally, a pilgrimage which connected some of the many “me’s.”

I slowed down enough eventually to become a resident member of the Findhorn Foundation Community in Scotland where folks were attempting to live in community with the plant kingdom, and the world of devas and nature spirits. I slowed down enough so I could describe the inner landscapes I was passing through, and share descriptions of techniques for the safe crossing of those inner mountains and streams.

I know, I know, I’m supposed to write smartly about my work in community, team-building, etc., and not just contemplate the dust on my shoes. But then again, remember how we’ve learned to tie those damned two ends of that one shoelace together—long ago, like?!

Yup, that’s it. Ever heard of someone writing a manual for tying shoelaces? It’s like that with community. Community is ... one shoe lace, destined to have it’s ends tied together.

Not that we’re good at it—neither as an inter-species community sharing the planet, nor as a human community, nor even as individual unit(y)s.

Well, now that you’ve listened more or less patiently it’s time to introduce you to my “Swiss army knife”: the universal pocket-sized toolbox which I have found incredibly useful in the context of inner and outer community.

Try to balance Trust and Responsibility, water it with puddles from your ice sculptures, and watch it grow.

I could write philosophical volumes on “Trust” and there is much to say about “Responsibility” and what happens when we bring the two together in balance. If the sense of

urgency is strong enough, the vision or dream clear enough—be it of a global community, an intentional community, an effective team on the job or “just” the sense of our own inner and outer wholeness—if we’ve got that spark of inspiration and our pocketknife, then we’re well on the way to coming home to “community.” And yes, there are lots of useful things to be found along the road.

Actually most of what I found turned out to be useful: my experience of disintegration, my years as a forester, various forms of psychotherapy, and simple exercises aimed at being therapeutic for body, mind and soul. Various forms of meditation and devotional practices. T’ai Chi, yoga, walking in the woods, the mountains and, more recently, the sea. Friends and lovers have been helpful—enemies, too—and contact with others who’ve tried the same thing a little longer than we have.

Manuals on how to tie shoelaces have never worked for me, except maybe a long time ago, before the puddles. But I would have read manuals on how pour milk on cornflakes then, so it doesn’t mean a lot I guess.

As I am writing this as much for myself as for you (remember, I am digesting 12 years of intense

community experience!), permit me a few closing comments:

I admit to being tempted to write another version of these thoughts on community: a passionate plea for us to join hands and hearts, to sit in circles and to listen to each other, to seriously awaken to the need for cooperation. Cooperation of the community of species on “our” planet. Cooperation of the human family, and maybe most all, the desperate need for communion of human souls isolated in a world of ice sculptures, and rubbish dumps.

And I would love to write on consensus decision making, the importance of communication skills, on the organism of community, on exercises for team building. I’d like to write a chapter on the reason why no genuine attempt to create community is a failure, but rather a useful teaching to the rest of us ol’ community builders.

But, I am no good at writing manuals. My personal best is my own little story.

So is yours. Ω

Kajedo was a 12-year resident of Findhorn Foundation and NewBold House, and leads team building groups for communities and organizations.

.....

If the sense of urgency is strong enough, the vision or dream clear enough ... if we’ve got that spark of inspiration and our pocketknife, then we’re well on the way to coming home to “community.”

.....

CLASSIFIEDS



Classifieds are for anything by, for, or related to communities and community living. Information on how to place an ad is on page 76.

PROPERTY FOR SALE

IDEAL FOR COMMUNITY. 800-acre ranch. Beautiful canyon bottom land on creek with water rights, small cabin, good road. *Jim Fulton, Box 404, Cortez, Colorado 81321. (303) 565-4555.*

FOR SALE: "OFF-THE-GRID" MINI-RANCH nestled in Jemez National Forest, near Abiquiu, NM. 10 acres. Wilderness, privacy, views! Two-story solar powered house. Cisterns, large workshop, greenhouse, stable, cellar, airplane hangar. Ideal retreat for artists/community. 4-wheels. \$89,000. Call (303) 626-4371. Write P.O. Box 282, Ridgway, CO 81342.

INCOME OPPORTUNITIES

HEALTH AND WEALTH! Perfect Super Food and financial opportunity for communities. Proven, organic product with proven, visionary company. Users report increased energy, mental clarity, heightened self-healing and immune response. 60-day money-back guarantee. Free video, no obligation. (VM) 1-800-798-5387.

EARN INCOME ORGANICALLY and enhance your health by distributing a high quality wildcrafted whole food. 1-800-296-0755.

BOOKS & PUBLICATIONS

LAND IN A LOVING COMMUNITY by David Felder, member, MLC. A book on Land Cooperatives. "This practical guide is everyone's dream—a mortgage-free home in a caring community."—Hazel Henderson. Only \$8.50. Call 1-800-231-1638.

ENJOY RENT-FREE LIVING in desirable locations worldwide. *The Caretaker Gazette* is a unique newsletter containing job openings, advice and information for property caretakers, house-sitters, and landowners. Published since 1983, the *Gazette* includes letters, caretakers' profiles, and classifieds. Free advertising for landowners. Each issue contains over 50 job opportunities worldwide. Bimonthly publication for only \$24/year

(6 issues); \$15/half year (3 issues). HC 76, Box 4022-1, Garden Valley, ID 83622. Phone/Fax (208) 462-3993.

GREENER PASTURES NEWSLETTER. Alternative house building, off-grid living, rural land-buying strategies, small town options, cottage industries. \$24/yr, \$5 sample. 1-800-688-6352.

WE RUN OUR HOME AND BUSINESS ON RENEWABLE ENERGY. You can too! *Home Power Magazine* tells you how. Since 1987 we've provided how-to information on solar, wind, and hydroelectric systems, electric vehicles, solar hot water and architecture, hydrogen and methane production, solar cooking, home-brew projects, project reviews and more. Bi-monthly, 100+ pages for only \$15/yr. *Home Power* puts you in touch with manufacturers, dealers, and folks living your dream around the world. Sample \$4.50. *Home Power, P.O. Box 520-C, Ashland, OR 97520. (916) 475-0830.*

COMMUNITY PROPERTY FOR SALE

UPCOUNTRY MAUI, HAWAII. Two acres, two homes. One: two-story, three-year-old custom-designed, 3,200 sq. ft., five bedrooms, large living room for yoga, seminars, hot tub. Second house: 1,700 sq. ft., commercial kitchen. Organic gardens, organic fruit trees, private sunning area. \$765,000. (808) 572-1560.

FOR SALE

LIVING SHELTER CRAFTS TIPIS & YURTS. Custom-made tipis and yurts and workshops on community living at Planetary Headquarters in Sedona, AZ. Circle Living Workshops offer hands-on experience with pitching and living in lodges as well as a rejuvenating experience on beautiful Oak Creek. Be on the lookout for our book, *Tipis and Yurts: Authentic Designs for Circular Structures*, coming out in fall, 1995. For brochure call 1-800-899-1924, or write P.O. Box 4969, W. Sedona, AZ 86340.

LIVING NATURE CREATIONS by Aquarian Concepts Community. Custom-made buffalo moc-casins. Treat your feet to beauty and comfort with a very personalized gift. (602) 204-1575. *Tarenta, P.O. Box 3158, Sedona, AZ 86340.*

NETWORKING, OPPORTUNITIES

ATTENTION CO-OPS: AWARDS AND NATIONAL RECOGNITION AVAILABLE! Does your co-op do anything to meet the needs of members or staff with disabilities? Please send information and nominations for awards by 6/30/95 to: *Co-op Access project, c/o Deborah Altus, 4089 Dole, University of Kansas, Lawrence, KS 66045, (913) 842-3746.*

ARE YOU A PERSON WITH A DISABILITY? Do you belong to a co-op? If so, we would like to hear about your experiences, both good and bad, with co-ops. Please call or send information by 6/30/95 to: *Co-op Access project, c/o Deborah Altus, 4089 Dole, University of Kansas, Lawrence, KS 66045, (913) 842-3746.*

WORK OPPORTUNITIES

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR. For Quaker House, Chicago. Responsible for meal planning, meal preparation, and guest business. Further information: write *Program Directors, Quaker House, 5615 Woodlawn, Chicago, IL 60637. (312) 288-3066.*

EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

ECOPSYCHOLOGY: HEALING PROFESSIONS & THE ECOLOGICAL CRISIS. Two residential trainings held in Colorado (September 1-9) or Santa Fe, New Mexico (fall 1995). Experiential and didactic training in Holotropic Breathwork, new paradigms in science-psychology-ecology, wilderness solos, Earth-based ritual, and sustainable communities. *Will Keepin, Ph.D./Johanna Johnson, M.A., 505-281-6880, Box 901, Cedarcrest, NM 87008.*

CoHousing

The Journal of the CoHousing Movement

The only publication covering the creation of and life within CoHousing communities throughout North America!
Send \$5 for a sample issue.

Please mail to: The CoHousing Network,
#C-3, Box 2584, Berkeley, CA 94702
(510) 526-6124

Santa Fe CoHousing Community

House for Sale

Diana Hine (505) 471-5130

REACH



Reach is a regular feature intended to help match people looking for communities with communities looking for people. As the most up-to-date clearinghouse available to you, Reach reaches those who are seriously interested in community. One community told us: "I would like you to know how much we here at Aquarian Concepts appreciate your fruitful efforts. The response to our Reach ad has begun to 'pay-off.' We are receiving regular inquiries. We have a new family moving here this month from the East Coast, and we have interviews and orientations booked through March. They are all a direct result of our Reach ad."

Please use the form on page 74 to place an ad. A word to listers: readers want to know the specifics—i.e., how many people, how much land, what part of California you're in, as well as your philosophical bent. A word to responders: always include a SASE, and caveat emptor.

The Reach rate is \$.25 per word up to 100 words (\$.50 per word thereafter) so why not use this opportunity to network with others interested in community? Deadline for the Summer 1995 issue (out in June) will be April 15. Please make check or money order out to Communities, and send it, plus your ad to: Patricia Greene, 400B Main Rd., Gill, MA 01376. Feel free to call me with any questions about Reach at (413) 863-8714. Listings for workshops, land, books, etc. go in the classified column, so please contact Diana Christian.

COMMUNITIES WITH OPENINGS

ACORN, Mineral, Virginia. An exciting, young community valuing equality, self-sufficiency, ecology, cultural diversity and non-violence. Started in 1993, now 17 members and growing rapidly to at least 30. Income sharing with cottage industries, commuting career people, subscription gardening, and work in nearby Twin Oaks Community. Located in rolling country 30 minutes from Charlottesville, Virginia and two hours from Washington, D.C. 72 acres of forest and farm land with a large organic garden, big herb garden, chickens, wildflower meadow, pond, river frontage, old farm house, new 5,000 sq. ft. residence/community center, new workshop building, barns, etc. At Acorn we work and play together, sing songs, hang out, and support individuals' varied choices in personal growth and spirituality. We value open communication and use consensus decision-making and a structured, but flexible labor system. Members range from 9 months to 60+ years and come from all over the U.S. Visitors and prospective members are welcome! Call or write for more information. Acorn, CM3, Rt. 3 Box 486A, Mineral, VA 23117. (703) 894-0582.

AQUARIAN CONCEPTS COMMUNITY, Sedona, Arizona. God-centered community based on teachings of the Urantia Book, continuing Fifth Epochal Revelation—The Cosmic Family Volumes as transmitted through Gabriel of Sedona. Clean air, pure water, organic gardens and farms now developing. Starseed schools (all ages), medical clinic, and healing center. Founded in 1986. Currently 100 members full-time. International flavor. Growth potential unlimited. Acquiring new land as needed. Some living on land, others nearby. Income from community businesses, work available nearby in town. Self-sufficiency short term goal. Serious

spiritual and personal commitment required. Aquarian Concepts Community, P.O. Box 3946, W. Sedona, AZ 86340; (602) 204-1206.

BREAD AND ROSES, Olympia, Washington. We are a consensus-based Catholic Worker community of eight persons. We are envisioning the expansion of our ethnic and cultural diversity. We operate a shelter for single women and families, a community soup kitchen, and a day drop-in center for people affected by poverty and homelessness. Apply if you know how to take care of your health, and if you have extra energy to give. Bread and Roses, 1320 8th Ave., SE, Olympia, WA 98501, (360) 754-4085.

DU-MA COMMUNITY, Eugene, Oregon. We are a small, stable community who share vegetarian meals. We have created a calm, supportive environment for community building, interpersonal communication and personal growth at our spacious 3-story home. Our interests include: gardening, music, art, feminism, progressive politics, serious and humorous discussions, and more. We seek new members who are compatible, have time and energy to contribute, and are looking for a well-established community to live and grow with. Contact: Membership Coordinator, Du-ma, 2244 Alder, Eugene, OR 97405 (503) 343-5023.

GREEN PROGRESSIVE LIVING ACTION NETWORK, Berkeley, California. GreenPLAN is forming in South Berkeley. We have openings for residents and guests, bus parking, open access to farmland and mountains. Will soon have construction jobs. GPLAN, 3090 Kind St., Berkeley, CA 94703. (510) 845-5416.

KIBBUTZ KERISTA COMMUNITY, San Francisco, California. We seek connectivity with additional practical idealists who wish to collaborate in the design of a scientific utopian tribal lifestyle. We promote the idea that grace is the goal of education. Our desire is to create a sex-positive society which will be a light unto the

Looking for Community in Santa Fe?

Want to live in a low-toxic house?

Established cohousing community, Commons on the Alameda, only minutes to downtown Santa Fe. Village setting with 28 unique homes. Old World charm, but new environmentally conscious, low-toxic, pumice-crete home that looks and feels like adobe. Construction was carefully supervised by chemically-sensitive owner. The 14" thick walls "breathe," so you can breathe. 2,500 s.f. of flexible space for only \$279,000.

2300 W. Alameda, A-1, Santa Fe, NM 87501
(505) 474-5336

Intentional Community Home

Beautiful two-year old energy-efficient home on 3/4-acre wooded lot (Ozark Foothills) in established Sparrow Hawk Village community. \$128,500.

404 Summit Ridge Dr., Tahlequah, Oklahoma 74464
(918) 456-4389 or (918) 456-3421

world. Free brochure. Contact: *Kibbutz Kerista Community, P.O. Box 410068, San Francisco, CA 94141; (415) 558-9330.*

PEACEFUL GARDEN, Sandpoint, Idaho. A human and wildlife sanctuary. We are gathering spiritual-minded folks who are ready for a serious commitment to peace, love and growth. Our community is our teacher, our medicine, our mirror and our stage. We are learning to walk our talk, to be non-judgemental and cooperative. We make our decisions by consensus and employ permaculture and organic sustainability through our understanding of the Gaia principle. We are networking with China Bend Family, The Love Israel Family, Blue Mountain Farm, Brother Harry and the Sunny Pine Farm, Trout Lake Farm, Dapala Farm and welcome any others that are interested in bio-regional independence. Inquiries by phone or mail. *Peaceful Garden, 425 Colburn-Culver Rd., Sandpoint, ID 83864, (208) 265-2713.*

PONDEROSA VILLAGE, Goldendale, Washington. We are an intentional community, but not a commune. Community spirit combined with individual ownership of land and homes, privacy or togetherness, makes this a satisfying place to live. 75 people, including 16 children, live here now, more coming. A few five-acre parcels still available. Located in stable rural area with clean air, pure water, low crime, little traffic. Neighbors, both in PV and surroundings, friendly and congenial. Voluntary community

gatherings: social, cultural, educational, environmental, spiritual, projects. Possibilities for outdoor recreation abound. Great place for kids—and you! *Ponderosa Village, 203C Golden Pine, Goldendale, WA 98620; (509) 773-3902.*

S.E.A.D.S. OF TRUTH, Harrington, Maine. Solar Awareness And Demonstration Seminars. Rural Maine. Since 1979, on-going sun, wind, water power workshops. Hands-on participation, build photovoltaic panels, hot water systems, electric vehicles. Cooperative business and educational opportunities! Permaculture, aquaculture and hydroponic growing systems, modular home and greenhouse kits. Off grid homesites for full-time or time-share. A land trust forming and backpackers international hostel with peace activist history and "no victims" code of ethics. Visit for 3 days; apply for 30 day-3 month internship. Join creative, self-sufficient, cooperative community network! Contact: *Charles Ewing, S.E.A.D.S., Box 192, Harrington, ME 04643; (207) 483-9763.*

SPARROW HAWK COMMUNITY, Tahlequah, Oklahoma. We are an active, intentional spiritual community with an eclectic approach. We have a foundation of 14 years. We're 76 adults, 14 children. Cottage industry and creative employment encouraged. There are no earthquakes predicted for this area. Our homes are attractive, modern, on the grid, while located in a beautiful rural Ozark setting. Cultural events and university nearby. Homes and properties are pri-

vately owned, some available. Contact: *Ananur Spencer, Sparrow Hawk Community, 328 Bailey Blvd., Tahlequah, OK 74464, (918) 456-0036.*

SUSAN B. ANTHONY MEMORIAL UNREST HOME, Athens, Ohio. We are a land trust and growing feminist and lesbian community on 151 acres in hilly southeast Ohio. We welcome mail or phone inquiries. Near Ohio University and Hocking College. SASE to: *SBAMUH, P.O. Box 5853, Athens, OH 45701, (614) 448-2509.*

WESTWOOD COHOUSING COMMUNITY, Asheville, North Carolina. 24 clustered, privately owned, energy-efficient dwellings, central common house for optional shared meals and other activities, and several work studios planned on 4+ acres with woods and creek within the city limits of Asheville in the Blue Ridge Mountains. \$60,000-\$120,000 price range, depending on dwelling size. Using Permaculture principles. Site plan is finished; early members will collaborate with architect this spring to help design buildings. We're aiming for construction to begin end of 1995. Welcome: any age children and adults, any family type. *P.O. Box 16116, Asheville, NC 28816. (704) 252-2118.*

COMMUNITIES FORMING

ABUNDANT LAND TRUST, Whitleyville, Ten-

National Creating Community Conference

in the Colorado Rockies!

October 19-22, 1995
Winter Park, Colorado

- Nationally known community founders & leaders
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- Meeting facilitation, conflict resolution
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Winter Park YMCA, 2 hrs from Denver, offers many indoor & outdoor sports and activities. Families and children welcome!

For brochure and pre-registration discounts:
Creating Community Conference,
P.O. Box 824, Palmer Lake, CO 80133. 719-488-9776

Founding a Retreat Center or Community



Stephan Brown

Founder,
Shenoa Retreat
& Learning Center

A Workshop and Manual
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Practical Realities
of Achieving Your Dream

June 2-4, 1995

Shenoa, Philo, CA (2.5 hours North of San Francisco)
\$ 235 in cabin \$ 185 camping
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"Stephan's workshop and manual should be a prerequisite for anyone even remotely interested in founding a retreat center or community. It is not only crammed with advice and wisdom that comes from years of experience, but it is funny as well."

Peter Mellen, Co-Founder, Ramana Center, NM

To reserve space, to schedule a workshop or consulting session,
or order manuals @ \$14: (707) 894-9466
303 Hardister Dr., Cloverdale, CA 95425

nessee. Hill country 80 miles northeast of Nashville. We seek motivated people: activists, lefties, green, appropriate techies. Woodworking shop (main income—also light construction), orchard, spring, large house, green connections throughout Tennessee. We also seek good neighbors. *Abundant Land Trust, 292 Haydenburg Ridge Rd., Whitleyville, TN 38588; (615) 621-3474.*

CLEARVIEW CENTER FOR THE CELEBRATION OF LIFE, Hubbardton, Vermont. Join us in co-creating a community/conference center based on accepting joy, abundance and well-being as our natural state of existence, and on the understanding that we create experiences by how we think, feel and flow energy. Seeking to acquire large, spectacular estate/farm in Vermont with ponds, waterfalls, small ski-slope, mountain views, wilderness. Planning experimental, clustered ecovillage with solar, hydro and wind power. Individual living units, shared common living/meditation space. Members cooperate to run conference/wellness/environmental center, publishing and other green businesses. Consensus, co-creation with non-physical energies, intuitive guidance, harmony with nature, organic gardening/permaculture, play, ceremony. Seeking emotionally mature and financially secure, hardworking eco-spiritual visionaries ready to live their dreams! Send \$2 for 10-pg. vision statement. *Patricia Greene, 400B Main Rd., Gill, MA 01376; (413) 863-8714.*

COMMUNITIES TRAINING CENTER, Berea, Kentucky. Need volunteers to replicate, network anywhere, "hands-on skill training. Develop large family. Four crews: 1. Grow plenty of organic food, no price. 2. Big common hall, small private solar homes. 3. Home health care "womb-to-tomb." 4. Can's-care-for can't's, guardian for infirm. We pool land, labor, money, skills. No rent, no interest, retired lend savings at 0% interest in lieu of labor. Workers furnish labor in lieu of loans. Production is for use, not profit. Worker incomes below IRS, no war tax.

Policy by consensus. *James Wyker, 306 Estill, Berea KY 40403; (606) 986-8000.*

EDEN RANCH, Aurora, Colorado. Seeking self-supporting members desiring rural, extended family environment, working together in organic farming, CSA and community projects; where consensus results from mutual respect and trust. Your own innovative business will thrive here, small surrounding towns. Searching for irrigated land in Western Colorado for spiritually-based community using sustainable/organic methods. Planning dome and indigenous dwellings, community building, retreat center and community businesses. Moving to area in April to establish base. Come visit! Mail inquiries will be forwarded, new address in next issue. *Jim Wetzel, Nancy Wood, 3106 S. Olathe Way, Aurora, CO 80013. (303) 693-8364.*

ESTABLISHED ARTISAN (11 years) committed to local self-reliance and voluntary poverty, limiting use of resources to basics necessary for a wholesome life. Local woodenware peddler. No power machinery, electricity, telephone. Have 100 acres to share with idealists, keen on hand work, in spiritually oriented community (after Gandhian model, principles basic to all religions) to promote "Villageism" by practicing what we can ourselves. *Paul Lauzier, RR 1, Lubec, Maine 04652.*

MOUNT SHASTA, California. Learning, manifesting, celebrating: fire, earth, air, water and the Integrating Spirit at the foot of Mt. Shasta in Northern California. Self-responsible adults creating consensus. Rural or small town extended family style community. Emphasis on providing an optimal environment for children and adults alike to grow and discover our true potential for assisting the positive evolution of all life. Atom/molecule/cell/person/family/community/humanity/planet. Details to be decided by the family after we have come together. If these words are meaningful to you, call or write:

David Coe, 901 Morris Sp. 23, Mt. Shasta, CA 96067, (916) 926-4310.

NATURALLY NAMASTE GREEN, Barnstead, New Hampshire. Forming intentional pod poly-love families. Permaculture education center, hopefully eco-village. No greed, violence, ego power. Only trust, truthfulness, intimacy, synergy. Send SASE to: *Naturally Namaste Green, R-2, Box 576, Barnstead, NH 03225.*

PRAGMATIC, SOLVENT VISIONARIES wanted to participate with Colorado MD in small, farm-based retirement village. Scenic, secluded, high-quality property in southern Colorado. Permaculture development planned; rest of community vision evolving. Potential cash return on equity from elder care facility on site. Pension Plans, P.C.'s, Individuals eligible to join LLC; four or five more members needed—\$200K minimum. Skilled professional consultant team in place. Qualified parties please call *Dr. Mead, (303) 331-2866* to discuss options.

REJENNERATION, Jenner, California. Co-op household(s) forming on five hilltop acres overlooking the ocean, 1 hour from Santa Rosa, 80 miles from San Francisco. Long range goals are shared ownership, building a second, larger house, expanding the garden, and frequent shared vegetarian dinners. Values include simple living, honoring diversity, enjoying and sharing the natural beauty of the area. Must be fiscally stable and commute or tele-commute to work. Send SASE and self-description to: *Rejeneration, Box 42, Jenner, CA 95450 (707) 632-5458 (after 7 pm).*

COHOUSING

HOUSTON, TEXAS. Would like to form a cohousing group in the NASA-Clear Lake area. Contact *Nancy Chadwick, 713-992-4611. 2242 W. Bay Area Blvd., Friendswood, TX 77546.*

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September 9-23, 1995

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Corinne McLaughlin & Gordon Davidson

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YURTS: *Ancient, round, portable or permanent living structures.*

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PEOPLE LOOKING

STABLE FEMINIST COUPLE seek inexpensive private living space in rural (Berkshire) Massachusetts, Connecticut or Vermont, on shared land for raising food. Nina, 43, is a bodymind psychotherapist, artist/musician, PhD candidate, channeler, and author of articles on feminism, sexuality, political theory and metaphysics. Paul, 39, handy, is a professional massage therapist/healer with a passion for constitutional law and social change. We are bi/gay friendly, interested in holistic health, have two small, well-behaved dogs and are eager to contribute to a community of similar-minded, growing people. All communications welcome. *Nina Silver, P.O. Box 293, New York, NY 10025 (212) 749-5423.*

HAVE BUS WILL TRAVEL! Family of 3 1/2, mom/poet (33), dad/counselor (35), baby, Zen (2), cat, Sufi (4)—seeks community (going or forming) of other families/individuals on a spiritual/heart-oriented path. We are primarily vegetarian and see an organic garden as one focus of community. We want lots of trees, good water, wetter rather than dryer climate, Northwest or western states preferred. Desire off grid, appreciate electricity in meantime. We believe creative play, song, dance, storytelling and circles of light and laughter are essential aspects of community work. We value individual freedom and conscious sensitivity toward all life forms. A commitment to honest communica-

tion is vital! Open but not into dogma, dependencies and big fears. If you feel moved to connect with us, or connected to move with us, we'd like to hear from you! *Rochelle, c/o 5582 Thunderbird Lane, La Jolla, CA 92037. (619) 459-2267.*

COUPLE READY TO TALK/WORK with people who want to start an egalitarian community in New England soon. *Bob Carlson, Franny Huberman, Gould Farm, Monterey, MA 01245, (413)528-5414.*

SINGLE, UNATTACHED HE with monogamous bond to offer invites she to join in seeking well-established family-oriented community with environmental focus, or response from any such community member open to a bond. Prefer private dwelling on acreage, maritime or near water, with mild year-round climate. Me: 40's, contemplative, totally nature oriented. Interests: Art, design, cartooning, butterflies, insects, rainforests, astronomy. Skills can offer (alone or in collaboration): freelance curricular writing, children's books, desktop publishing, design. You: wholesome, creative, gentle, affectionate, sentimental, like children and animals, must share devotion to nature. No nicotine or drugs. Drop a line from anywhere, and let's explore. *Mike Axtman, P.O. Box 1609, Redlands, CA 92373. (909) 798-0250.*

COMING SOCIETAL/EARTH CHANGES/ TRANSFORMATIONS. Couple networking toward transforming/surviving the fears of the future changes in planet/societies. Looking to

join/form community (ies) involving: earth-sheltered housing designs; solar hydro, wind power; air/water/food purification/preservation/storage. Fifth grade teacher and social worker enjoying multicultural attunements, children, stress management and sufism. Developing model for jobsharing roles in organizations/communities using 2-person teams and balanced female/male decision-making. 6 years experience in 3 different US/European communities. Non-smoking/drinking/drugs. Enjoy independence, recognize interdependence. Stable, solvent, ready. *Barbara Tichy, Jim Cumming, 4001 Oakridge, Houston, TX 77009-5230, (713)863-0433.*

RESOURCES

COMMUNITY SEEKERS' NETWORK OF NEW ENGLAND. For joining, starting, and learning about communities. *Don Bricknell, P.O. Box 2743, Cambridge, MA. 02238; 617 784-4297.*

INTERESTED IN JOINING A BRUDERHOF COMMUNITY? We'll put you in touch with former members of the Hutterian Brethren/Bruderhof. *Peregrine Foundation, P.O.Box 460141, San Francisco, CA 94146, (415) 821-2090.*



COMMUNITIES Reach Advertising Order Form

Please specify which section you wish your ad to appear under: ___Communities With Openings ___Communities Forming ___Cohousing ___People Looking ___Internships ___Resources
 Cost: \$.25/wd. to 100 words, \$50/wd. thereafter. FIC members: 5% discount. Please include payment with ad submission. Include address & phone. Abbrev. & phone # = 1 wd., PO Box = 2, Zip Code free.

COPY _____

_____ Word Count at \$.25/wd. = \$ _____ **Payment Enclosed**
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Make check out to *Communities Magazine.*

NAME _____
ADDRESS _____
TOWN _____ **STATE** _____
ZIP _____ **PHONE** _____

Mail this form with payment to: *Patricia Greene, 400B Main Rd., Gill, MA 01376; (413) 863-8714*



TIME TO RENEW?

Please take a moment to check the address label on your copy of this issue. At the end of the first line, after your name, there should be a number that corresponds with the final issue you are scheduled to receive.

- This is issue number 86. If that's your expiration number, you have no more issues due on your subscription, and it's time to renew if you wish to continue receiving *Communities*.
- If your number is 87 or higher, you still have issues coming. Yet you may wish to renew early to take advantage of our new Directory offer (details at right).
- If you feel there is an error in your expiration number, please let us know what you believe to be correct. Although we work hard to maintain accurate records, there may be occasional mistakes. We apologize for any inconveniences.

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Yes! Please enter my subscription to *Communities* as indicated below:

[Please check one]

- \$18 (\$22 outside the U.S.) 4 Issues, Individual
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- \$33 (\$38 outside the U.S.) 8 Issues, Individual
- \$45 (\$54 outside the U.S.) 8 Issues, Institution

Check here if this is a renewal.

Please start my subscription with the following issue (issue number or month/year) _____

SUBSCRIPTION
TOTAL

COMMUNITIES DIRECTORY ORDERS

NOTE: In February, the price for individuals of the 1995 Directory was raised to \$20 (\$30 for institutions). The original \$16 price assumed a book the same size as was printed in 1992; however, the new Directory is more than 100 pages bigger, with more comprehensive listings. We're holding shipping & handling charges steady at \$3/copy, even though there's been a postal rate hike, and a heavier book will be costlier to mail. To ease the transition, we're offering copies of the new Directory for the postpaid price of \$20 through the end of April. Payment must accompany your order. Orders postmarked after April 30 will pay the regular postpaid price of \$23. Previous orders will be honored at the price in effect at the time of payment.

- Please send me _____ copies of the *Directory* at the postpaid price of \$20 each (\$24 outside the U.S.); after April 30, \$23 each (\$27 outside the U.S.):

DIRECTORY TOTAL

CORRECTIONS

- I believe your record of my subscription is incorrect. My records indicate that I have paid through issue # _____.
- My name and/or address is listed incorrectly; the correct information is listed below.

TOTAL ENCLOSED

MAILING LIST

- Check here if you do *not* want us to share your address with other movement groups.

Please make all payments in U.S. funds, payable to:
Communities magazine

Name: _____

Address: _____ Telephone: (_____) _____

City/Town: _____ State/Prov: _____ Zip/Postal Code: _____ Date: _____

Please photocopy & return to: Communities • Route 4, Box 169-M • Louisa, VA 23093

DIRECTORY UPDATE FORM

TELL US ABOUT COMMUNITIES!

If you represent or know of a community which is not listed in the current edition of our *Communities Directory*, please let us know! We want everyone to have a chance to be included, and we are *always* interested in new leads for our frequent updates. Please use this form to send us your referrals, or just give us a call at (816) 883-5545.

Return to: Directory • Rt. 1, Box 155-M • Rutledge, MO 63563

NAME OF COMMUNITY _____

CONTACT PERSON _____

STREET ADDRESS _____

CITY/TOWN _____ STATE/PROV _____ ZIP/POSTAL CODE _____

PHONE _____

YOUR NAME _____

YOUR PHONE _____ DATE _____

ADVERTISING ORDER FORM

DISPLAY ADS — Mechanical Requirements for Camera-Ready Copy

		Horizontal	Vertical	Covers:
<input type="checkbox"/> Full Page	\$250	7-1/4"w x 9-3/4"h		
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<input type="checkbox"/> 1/2 Page	145	7-1/4"w x 4-3/4"h	3-1/2"w x 9-3/4"h	<input type="checkbox"/> Inside Front \$400
<input type="checkbox"/> 1/3 Page	102	7-1/4"w x 3-1/8"h	2-1/4"w x 9-3/4"h	<input type="checkbox"/> Inside Back \$350
<input type="checkbox"/> 1/4 Page	78	7-1/4"w x 2-1/4"h	3-1/2"w x 4-3/4"h	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1/6 Page	58	3-1/2"w x 3-1/8"h	2-1/4"w x 4-3/4"h	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1/12 Page	30	2-1/4"w x 2-1/4"h		

Can we help you create your ad? \$20 per hour for typesetting, design, layout, photography and camera work.

CLASSIFIED ADS:

Announcements, Books/Magazines/Videos, Support Organizations, Services, Products, Personals. 50¢ a word, minimum \$10.

All ads must include address and phone #.
Abbreviations count as one word.
Phone numbers count as one word.
Post Office boxes count as two words.
Zip code is free.

REACH ADS:

Communities seeking members, people seeking communities to join, people seeking community co-founders. (Personals are classified ads, above.) To place a Reach ad, please fill out form on page 74.

Body Copy: (Please print clearly) _____

Word Count: Classified ad _____ at 50¢/Word = \$ _____

DISCOUNTS:

Ad agency discounts: 15% when accompanied by prepayment.
FIC members: 5% discount (prepayment required—see inside front cover for membership info).
Call or write for discounts for multiple insertions (placing ad in consecutive issues).

TERMS: Established agencies NET 30 DAYS. All others, payment must accompany the advertisement. Make check or money order payable in U.S. funds to *Communities* magazine. Please direct all inquiries to the address listed below.

Name: _____
Address: _____
City/Town: _____ State/Prov: _____ Zip/Postal Code: _____
Date: _____ Telephone: (_____) _____

PAYMENT ENCLOSED

Display Ad: _____
Classified: _____
Discount: _____
TOTAL: _____

COMMUNITIES accepts advertising only for goods and services that we feel will be of value to our readers. We reserve the right to refuse or cancel any advertising for any reason at any time. All advertising claims are solely the responsibility of the advertiser.

Ads being repeated will be rerun from the latest inserted advertisement unless otherwise specified. Ad copy will not be returned to advertiser unless prior arrangements are made at advertiser's expense. Ad rates are subject to change without notice, except when previously contracted. Advertisers will be presumed to have read this information sheet and agreed to its conditions.

Photocopy this form and mail with payment to:

COMMUNITIES • 1118 Round Butte Dr. • Fort Collins, CO 80524 • (303) 224-9080 • Fax (303) 490-1469

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Monthly • Community Living Experience

On the third weekend of each month, at Sirius Community. By reservation. *Baker Road, Shutesbury, MA 01072. (413) 259-1251.*

April 21-23 • Life Enrichment Expo

Holistic health, natural medicine, environmentally safe products. *P.O. Box 604, Arden, NC 28704. (704) 687-7838.*

May 19-20 • The TLC Experiment (See also Aug 18-22, Dec 1-3)

San Diego State University. *FREE* community-building weekend, facilitated by William Polowniak, author of *On Creating a Community*. *1760 Lake Dr., Cardiff, CA 92007. (619) 633-1061.*

May 30-June 2 • Communalism: Contribution and Survival

International Communal Studies Association, 5th international conference, *Yad Tabenkin, Israel. Prof. Yaacov Oved, ICSA, Yad Tabenkin, Ramat Efal 52960, Israel. (3) 534-3311; fax (3) 534-6376.*

June 2-4 • Pandanaram Communities Conference (See also Oct 20-22)

Pandanaram Settlement, Williams, Indiana. Open forum discussions. All interested in living cooperatively welcome, especially those from other communities. *(812) 388-5599.*

June 16-18 • Fellowship for Intentional Community (FIC) Spring Board Meeting

Sunrise Ranch Community, Loveland, Colorado. All are invited to attend and participate in this biannual working Board meeting and, if desired, get involved in upcoming Fellowship activities. Publishers of the *Communities Directory & Communities* magazine and managers of the Community Business Loan Fund, the Fellowship is considering additional informational and clearinghouse functions (perhaps including regional or national gatherings, a how-to community building manual, a pamphlet series, and/or an annual communities tour). \$16/day incl. 3 meals & campground facilities; \$41/day inc. 3 meals & double-occupancy room. *FIC, P.O. Box 814, Langley WA 98260. (360) 221-3064. (See p. 22, "Fellowship News," and inside front cover for more about the FIC.)*

Aug 18-22 • The TLC Experiment (See also May 19-21, Dec 1-3)

San Diego State University. *FREE* community-building weekend, facilitated by William Polowniak, author of *On Creating a Community*. *1760 Lake Dr., Cardiff, CA 92007. (619) 633-1061.*

Sep 9-23 • Tour of Sustainable Communities

Findhorn (Scotland), *Arcosanti*, *Sirius*, & *Kripalu* communities. Led by Gordon Davidson & Corinne McLaughlin, co-authors, *Builders of the Dawn*. Sponsored by Institute of Noetic Sciences. Transportation, accommodations, meals & lectures, \$3,400. *(800) 353-2276.*

This is a calendar of:

- 1) events organized or hosted by community groups;
- 2) events specifically focusing on community living;
- 3) major events with significant participation by members of the "movement."

Most of these events occur with some regularity, so this calendar is a fairly accurate template for what to expect next year. Events listed as "hosted" are generally scheduled at a new site for each meeting.

Please send us suggestions about what we might include in future calendars (use form below). Also note that the Fellowship publishes a quarterly newsletter (free to FIC members) that includes announcements of and reports about similar events. Information about joining the FIC can be found on the inside front cover.

Oct 7-13 • International Eco-Village Conference at Findhorn

Presentations and demonstrations by ecovillage pioneers—architects, engineers, building professionals, permaculture experts, alternative technology specialists, "green" activists and entrepreneurs, and more. Approximately \$650, incl. meals & accommodations. *Accommodations Secretary, Findhorn Foundation, Cluny Hill College, Forres, IV36 0RD, Scotland. (44) 0309-673655. Fax: (44) 0309-673113.*

Oct 20-22 • Pandanaram Communities Conference (See also June 2-4)

Pandanaram Settlement, Williams, Indiana. Open forum discussions. All interested in living cooperatively welcome, especially those from other communities. *(812) 388-5599.*

Dec 1-3 • The TLC Experiment (See also May 19-21, Aug 18-22)

San Diego State University. *FREE* community-building weekend, facilitated by William Polowniak, author of *On Creating a Community*. *1760 Lake Dr., Cardiff, CA 92007. (619) 633-1061.*

Jan 3-10, 1996 • Third International Eco-Cities Conference

Yoff, Senegal. (6 hrs. from JFK airport). Co-sponsored by EcoVillage at Ithaca and APECSY, the conference will focus on Eco-City theory and practice worldwide. Conference, meals & housing: \$600/adults & \$350/students; \$125/Third World residents; \$50/Africans. *Rakey Cole, Eco-Cities Conference, Anabel Taylor Hall, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY 14853.*

TELL US ABOUT YOUR COMMUNITY EVENTS!

NAME OF EVENT

NAME OF SPONSOR OR HOST

CONTACT PERSON

PHONE

DATE THIS FORM COMPLETED

STREET ADDRESS

CITY/TOWN

STATE/PROV

ZIP/POSTAL CODE

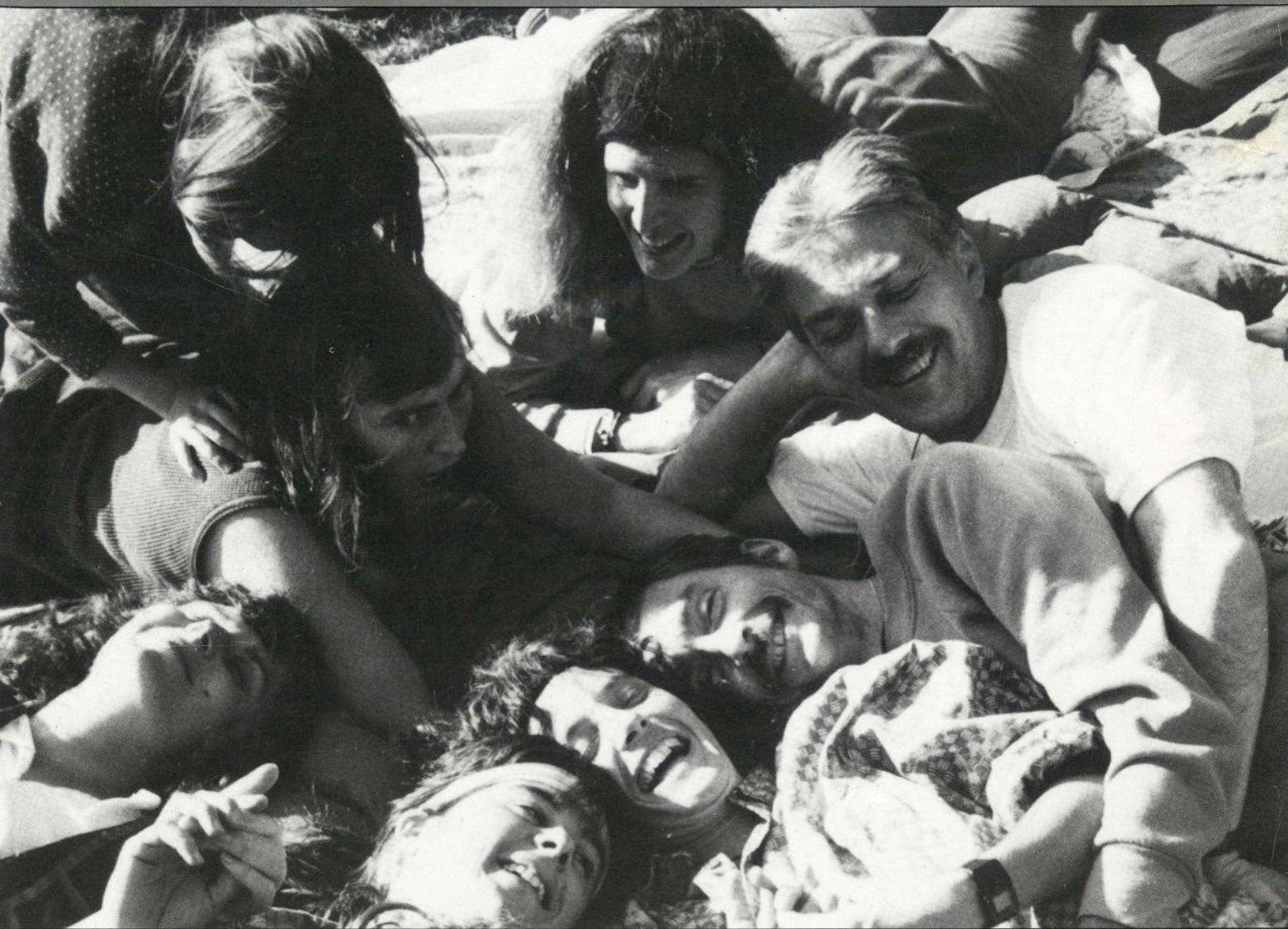
PROPOSED DATES OF EVENT

- Check here if dates are firm.
- Check here if dates are tentative, and give alternative dates being considered.
- Check here if you would like information from us on other events scheduled for the dates you have listed.

Deadline: 4-6 months before event. Please enclose information describing the event(s) that you wish to have listed.

Please mail completed form to: **FIC Events Calendar, Route 1, Box 155-M, Rutledge, MO 63563; (816) 883-5545**

“It is possible that the next Buddha will not take the form of an individual.
The next Buddha may take the form of a community, a community practicing understanding
and lovingkindness, a community practicing mindful living.”
—Thich Nhat Hahn



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