

Special Feature: "No It's Not A Cult"

COMMUNITIES

Journal of Cooperative Living

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Fall 1997 (Issue #96)

BREAKING BREAD

Food Fight!

Tastes of Short Mountain

Kashrut & Compromise

Dining in Cohousing



A GUIDE TO COOPERATIVE LIVING

Communities Directory

Now in a revised second printing.

Over 10,000 sold!

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.

Listings includes contact information and a full description of each group.

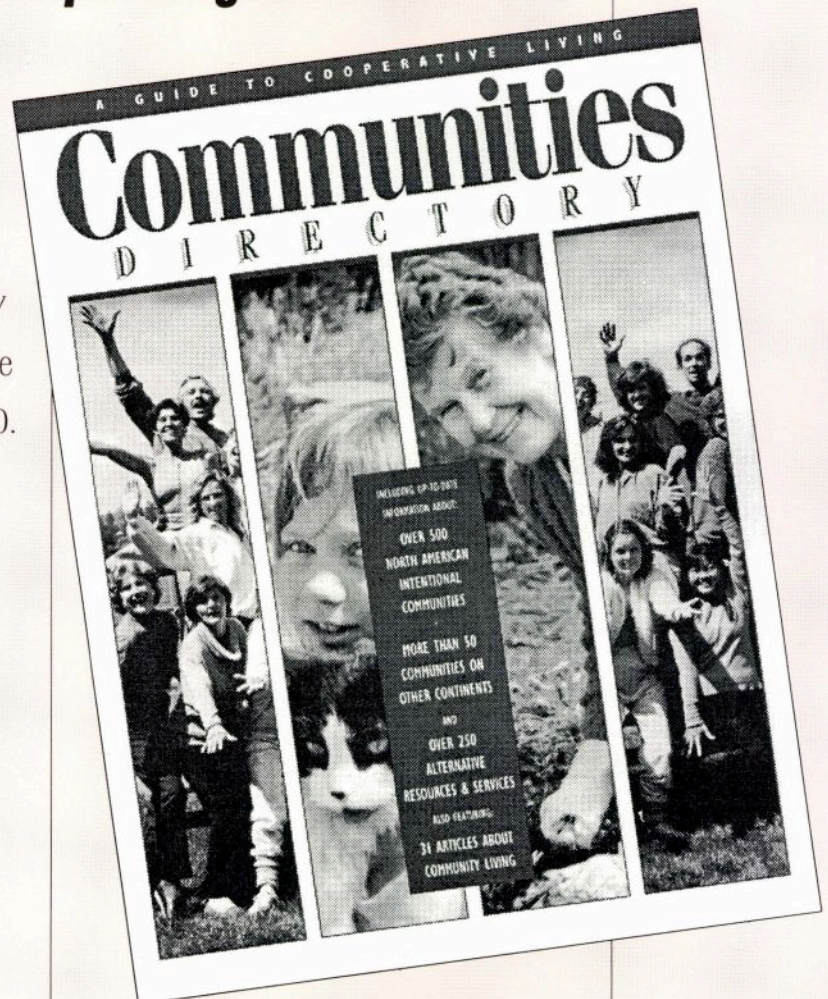
Easy to use, it includes maps, cross-reference charts (sorted alphabetically and geographically), and an extensive index for finding communities by areas of interest.

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.

See order form on page 74.



***"The most comprehensive
and accurate reference book
ever published on
community living!"***

—Kirkpatrick Sale,

Author and Bioregionalist

GANAS

an eighteen year old, New York City intentional community

HAS EXPANDED INTO THE COUNTRY . . .

THE NEW PROJECT CALLED

includes a well-furnished,
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G.R.O.W. II
GROUP REALITIES OPEN WORKSHOPS

workshop facilities, a conference center, an outdoor concert area,
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**WE HOPE TO DEVELOP A NEW COUNTRY COMMUNITY AT G.R.O.W. II
to join with the existing Ganas Community in New York City.
It will be necessary to grow from 80 adults to over 100 in the process.**

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functioning individuals, while maintaining focus on our community vision
of caring relationships, good daily dialogue, on-the-spot problem solving,
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ABOUT GANAS: an intentional community located in Staten Island, 1/2-hour
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three-story residences, connected by lovely gardens & picturesque walkways,
house about 40 members and about 35 residents, visitors and guests.
Retail recycling businesses in five large, nearby commercial buildings
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EVERYONE AT GANAS is invited to participate in G.R.O.W. II. We expect
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involved with the Ganas community in New York City in some way.



ABOUT G.R.O.W. II: Attractive rooms & private baths are available for 150
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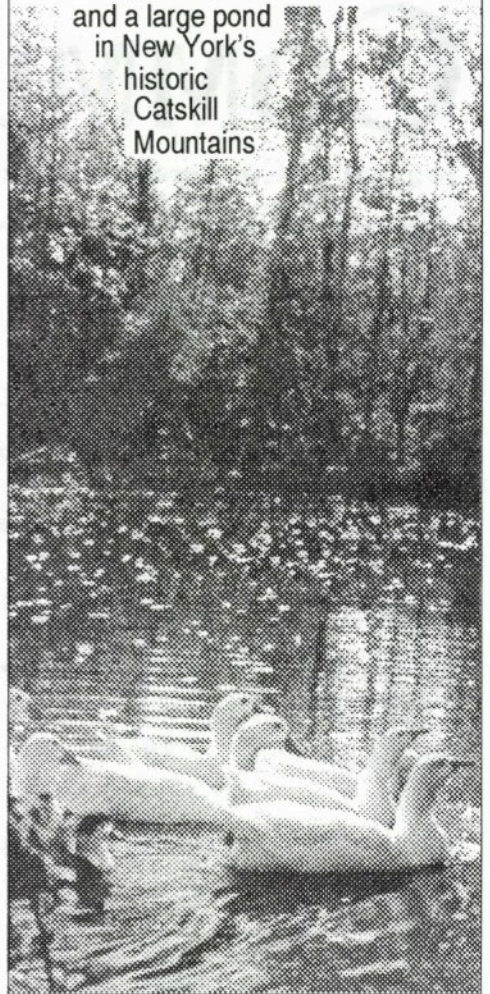
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If you believe that recycling is a pretty good way to earn a living; and if you really enjoy working productively (or learning how to);
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and a large pond
in New York's
historic
Catskill
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COMMUNITIES

Journal of Cooperative Living

FRONT COVER

"Molly" Chris Osmer in the old Llano kitchen at Twin Oaks community, Louisa, Virginia, early 1980s.

Photo by Bill Tiernan.

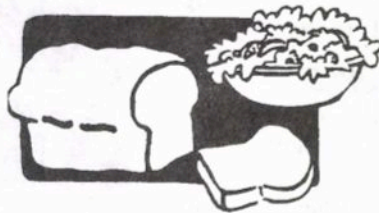
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A quiet moment before a meal. Twin Oaks community, Louisa, Virginia.

Photo, Twin Oaks.

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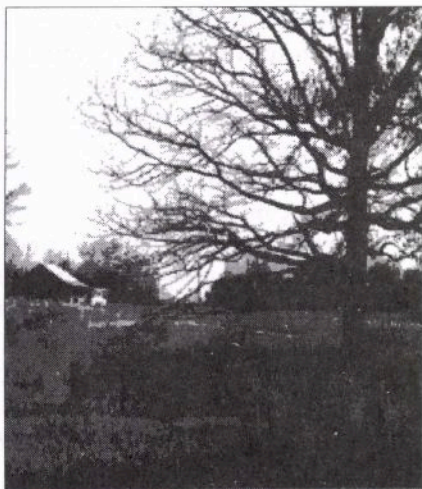
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COMMUNITIES

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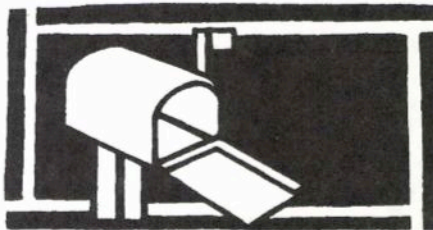
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LETTERS



Send letters to *Communities magazine*, PO Box 169, Masonville, CO 80541. Your letter may be edited or shortened. Thank you!

Keep Up the Good Work

Dear *Communities*:

In our community we read your magazine cover to cover. The issues you have written about are the same issues we have deliberated over, worried over, fumed over, laughed over, and cried over. It's so nice to see what's important to communitarians reflected back to us in your pages. Keep up the good work.

Trishuwa

Gaian Contemplative Community
Tum Tum, Washington

Dear *Communities*:

You folks publish one of the best magazines out there. It provides an outlet for people who see the world in a different light, and is tastefully done. Thank you!

John Paul Caragata

Ft. St. John, British Columbia

Dear *Communities*:

A few weeks ago a mysterious parcel arrived at the international community of Auroville. It was full of back issues of *Communities* magazines, since 1993! How this parcel came to be sent to us we do not know, but are *very grateful*.

It has been a feast to read so many intelligent, insightful, helpful reflections—a whole body of collective knowledge, articulated and clear—by others involved in intentional community.

We think that the information and especially the *sense* of community that comes through very strongly in the magazine will be a valuable resource here, where our "diversity quotient" is extremely high and our ideas of community quite varied. (Our

members are Europeans and Americans, subdivided into Latinos and Anglos, and Asians, including Indians, subdivided into city Indians and villagers.) It's not our ideas but our aspiration for a higher consciousness which holds Auroville together, and so it is very helpful to find that certain key *ideas* do seem to prevail in community living, wherever it is practiced. For this insight I am grateful to your magazine, and its inclusivity. To my surprise, I found articles about historic communities and the Christian communities issue to be extremely helpful in creating this sense of a common knowledge base.

Thank you, whoever sent this precious parcel!

Bhavana

Auroville Community
Tamil Nadu, India

We're delighted that you've enjoyed the back issues.

Learning From Historic Communities

Dear *Communities*:

Your magazine is excellent!

I have long had an interest in the utopian/spiritual/intentional communities of the 19th century. Your magazine provides a fascinating current perspective on living in and creating communities. One suggestion: a column on the history of early US communities, which could provide a rich resource that the current communities movement could draw from. Also, do you know of any publications that offer ongoing research about these early communities?

Thank you very much.

Camellia El-Anably

We agree! Please see p. 58 for our new Historic Communities column, "The Amana Colonies: Mysticism and Common Sense." Writer/researcher Steve Bjerklie began with "Becoming Someplace: Kaweah's Big Dream" in our Spring '97 issue and "Fountain Grove: And every priest a Cupid be" in our Summer '97 issue.

The Journal of the Communal Studies Association often carries articles on historic communities. You can join the Communal Studies Association and receive their journal (and attend their annual convention, "Communal Frontiers," October 9-12 in

Tacoma, Washington), by contacting CSA, PO Box 122, Amana, IA 52203; 319-622-6446; csa@netins.net.

How to Transition to Community Life?

Dear *Communities*:

Although I live in the suburbs of Minneapolis and work in mainstream corporate America, I read every one of your issues from cover to cover. I consider your messages of cooperation, sustainability, and utilization of local resources vital to the changes our culture and the planet are undergoing.

I was sorry to read Business Manager Laird Sandhill's assessment of the present financial status of the magazine. Under separate cover I am sending in a check for a gift subscription. I'd like to do more, but am not sure what that might be.

I do have a suggestion, though, for a theme for a future issue of *Communities*. I'd be interested in reading more about making the transition from mainstream to community life. I think there are a lot of people like me that you could reach. We have jobs; we have children; we have mortgages, credit card debt, 401Ks, dishwashers—and a deep sense of isolation.

I support the values inherent in sustainable community projects; I just don't quite see how to get there from here. I don't know how to step off the money-go-round onto *terra firma* without losing my balance. And this is not just a financial dilemma. There are emotional, spiritual, and cultural aspects as well. That's why I believe the subject of transition could be a worthwhile focus for an article, or an issue of *Communities*.

Wishing you abundant success!

Trisha McKenney
Minneapolis, Minnesota

Thank you for your thoughtful letter, and your gift subscription, which will definitely help. Your suggestion is excellent, and we believe we could address this topic in every issue, perhaps in a regular column, with readers describing how they made their transitions to community living.

Two possibilities you may want to consider are cohousing communities or housing cooperatives in the Minneapolis area, which could be a good transitional communities for

people with mortgages and corporate jobs. Also, please see our description of "The Art of Community," our regional networking gathering in November, described below.

Would any of our readers like to send us a "how-I-transitioned-to-community" story? We'd love to hear from you.

Communities Networking Gathering

Dear *Communities*:

Just read "Directory Dilemma" in the Summer '97 issue. You mentioned that one idea to increase the FIC's resources might be to host conferences to introduce people to community. As someone who lives in mainstream society, I'd be interested in this, and I suspect there are a lot of folks like me.

Even with a tool like the *Communities Directory*, it's a pretty daunting task for most people to learn about various community lifestyles and investigate many different communities. Anything the FIC could do to somehow package this into an educational experience would be a help.

A few years ago I attended a fair in San Francisco, mainly because one of the speakers presented a slide show of 20 or so communities around North America that he'd visited. His presentation gave me a thumbnail sketch of "what's out there." His slide show was the sort of event, in expanded format, that would fill a need.

It's this sort of process—doing "out-reach" so to speak—that would eventually result in a larger number of people knowing more about the Fellowship for Intentional Community and creating more support for your work.

Kirk Evans
Los Angeles, California

Good idea! We're hosting "The Art of Community," a weekend of workshops and networking at Sunrise Ranch community in Loveland, Colorado, November 21–23. Workshops will include decision making, finding your community, children in community, legal options, fundraising, diversity in community, a Community Bazaar, a dance, and ... Geoph Kozeny's famous communities slide show. For registration and information contact Sunrise Events at 970-679-4306.

Did the "Cults" Issue Attack the Catholic Church?

Dear *Communities*:

I recently read the Fall 1995 issue of *Communities*, "Intentional Communities and 'Cults.'" I was disturbed by Tim Miller's article, "Identifying Cults" (p. 45), and his portrayal of the Catholic Church. Although he would appear to have some knowledge of Catholicism his statements reveal numerous half-truths and misrepresentations. His article repeatedly targets the Catholic Church as embracing cult-like characteristics, giving an overall tone of prejudice and attack.

It's ironic that we find this article in the magazine, when your "Cults" issue makes the point that much abuse of intentional communities is brought on by people outside the group, as Laird Sandhill describes in the Publisher's Note (p. 5). In this case, Tim Miller is the outsider abusing the Catholic Church.

Scott Whittemore
Winfield, British Columbia

On the contrary, Tim Miller's point was that the so-called "characteristics of cults" promoted by anti-cult activists are meaningless, because those characteristics apply to many mainstream religions—which are obviously not "cults"—such as Catholic and Eastern Orthodox churches and many Protestant denominations. No one would call Catholic convents and monasteries "cults." He used convents and monasteries as examples because they're so widely known.

The point of Tim's article—and the whole issue—was that calling a group a "cult" usually means one doesn't agree with or understand their beliefs. And that despite the relatively rare incidents publicized by the media, most groups called "cults" are not harmful or dangerous to their members at all—they are just strange, from an outsider's point of view. His point was that calling these groups "cults" simply slurs and slanders them without actually helping anyone.

Come join in the community dialogue!

Have an opinion or comment about something you've read? Send us a letter! See above for address.

Communities Editorial Policy

Communities is a forum for exploring intentional communities, cooperative living, and ways our readers can bring a sense of community into their daily lives. Contributors include people who live or have lived in community, and anyone with insights relevant to cooperative living.

Through fact, fiction, and opinion we offer fresh ideas about how to live cooperatively, how to solve problems peacefully, and how individual lives can be enhanced by living purposefully with others. We seek contributions that profile community living and why people choose it, descriptions of what's difficult and what works well, news about existing and forming communities, or articles that illuminate community experiences—past and present—offering insights into mainstream cultural issues.

We do not intend to promote one kind of community over another, and take no official position on a community's economic structure, political agenda, spiritual beliefs, environmental issues, or decision-making style. As long as submitted articles are related to the theme of community living, we will consider them for publication. However, we do not publish articles that 1) advocate violent practices, or 2) advocate that a community interferes with its members' right to leave.

Our aim is to be as balanced in our reporting as possible, and whenever we print an article critical of a particular community, we invite that community to respond with its own perspective.

Submissions Policy

To submit an article, please first request *Writer's Guidelines*: PO Box 169, Masonville CO 80541; 970-593-5615; communities@ic.org.

Advertising Policy

We accept paid advertising in *Communities* because our mission is to provide our readers with helpful and inspiring information—and because advertising revenues help pay the bills.

We hand-pick our advertisers, selecting only those whose products and services we believe will be helpful to people interested in community living, cooperation, and sustainability. We hope you find this service useful, and we encourage your feedback.

Communities Advertising, PO Box 169, Masonville CO 80541; 970-593-5615; e-mail: communities@ic.org

What is an "Intentional Community"?

An "intentional community" is a group of people who have chosen to live or work together in pursuit of a common ideal or vision. Most, though not all, share land or housing. Intentional communities come in all shapes and sizes, and display amazing diversity in their common values, which may be social, economic, spiritual, political, and/or ecological. Some are rural; some urban. Some live all in a single residence; some in separate households. Some raise children; some don't. Some are secular, some are spiritually based, and others are both. For all their variety though, the communities featured in our magazine hold a common commitment to living cooperatively, to solving problems nonviolently, and to sharing their experiences with others.

PUBLISHER'S NOTE



Food for Thought

More than Just Desserts

YEARS AGO, I visited a community that had sought my help with their interpersonal dynamics. They had struggled for a number of years and many there were eager for help. It was my first visit there, and after a tour of the gardens, they invited me for lunch.

The seating for that meal graphically displayed the issue in the group. Everyone was crowded around one table for an animated discussion, except one person—the strong-willed leader who sat alone, making occasional critical comments out of the side of his mouth. What was the difficulty in the group? No one found it easy to live with the strong-willed leader!

Of course, it didn't take a masters degree in group psychology to figure out what was going on, and I'm not suggesting that success in group dynamics is little more than being clever at seating arrangements. But it does illuminate why we're making food and meal sharing the focus of this issue of *Communities*. Making and breaking bread together are great opportunities for making and breaking community.

Now, whenever I travel to a new community, I like my first contact to be over a meal—*especially* if I'm going to be helping the group with their dynamics. There is no faster way to measure the health and vitality of a group:

- Does everyone eat together?
- Do people eat and run, or sit and savor the moment?
- Is there a taboo about talking "business" at meals?
- Is there laughter?
- Who participates in meal prep and clean-up?

The pattern of eye contact will invariably reveal who is shy and who has tension. The topics discussed will indicate the depth of engagement among members.

As useful as mealtimes are for diagnosing a community's health and vitality, they are also opportunities to make a difference. Most groups that have developed a strong sense of cohesion understand how eating together contributes to that cohesion. Meals offer a respite from separate toils, the chance for some members to nurture the others, and to share the triumphs and trials of everyday life. While not a substitute for effective meetings and a clear sense of vision and purpose, good food and enjoyable mealtimes are a demonstrable aspect of the glue that holds communities together.

Regularly preparing and enjoying a stew together can be surprisingly effective at preventing getting *in* the stew together.

To be sure, both community and cooking are art forms. There are recipes for both, but—as any good cook will tell you—these are more guidelines than scripture. You have to develop a feel for it, and be willing to get into the inexact science of mixing (whether people or vegetables) to create a pleasing effect. Communities come together for a wide variety of reasons, and sometimes dietary preferences are a part of a group's defining values. Where this is so, the preferences are both a cause for celebration and a limitation.

At my community, for example, we joke that members can eat whatever they want so long as it includes onions and garlic. We're only half kidding. Everybody loves the mushroom-garlic sauce we serve with homemade pasta during morel season. If, however, we had a member who couldn't stand garlic or had an allergy to wheat, that meal wouldn't be as much fun, either to prepare or consume. If someone couldn't eat the meal, the joining would have been transformed into a separation—the exact opposite of what we had in mind.

My community doesn't reject potential members for dietary preferences, yet we know it can be a strain when there are common foods enjoyed by most which others find unpleasant or unacceptable. In this way, meals are a specific of what the challenge of community living is about generally—figuring out the best way to get along with people who are not exactly like you.

We hope you enjoy tasting and digesting what we've served up this issue. While you won't find that killer recipe on preparing sculpted lime jello for 50, we can promise some insights into the depths of answers possible to that age-old question, "What's cooking?" The implications run deeper than the menu. *Bon appétit!*

Laird Sandhill

COMING IN FUTURE ISSUES

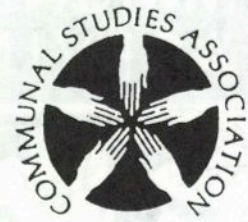
If you would like to write for *Communities* magazine, please contact the Guest Editors directly. Thank you!

"The Best of Communities: Our 25th Anniversary Issue," Winter '97. Where *Communities* magazine & the communities movement have been, how we've fared, what we've learned from the journey. Guest Editors Laird Sandhill & Alex McGee. Sandhill Farm, Rt 1, Box 155, Rutledge, MO 63563; 816-883-5545; laird@ic.org.

"Our Relationship to Money," Spring '98. Communities' ongoing financial needs; attitudes in community about creating, having, & spending money; fundraising; security & retirement; socially conscious investing. Guest Editor Jeff Grossberg. 834 Franklin Ave., Santa Monica, CA 90403; 310-288-3522; jeff@ic.org.

"Summer Sustainability Issue," Summer '98. Sustainable buildings and design, permaculture, ecovillages. Guest Editor sought. Contact *Communities* magazine, PO Box 169, Masonville, CO 80541; 970-593-5615; communities@ic.org.

"Political Activism in Community," Fall '98. How political and social activism informs, bonds, or disrupts community life; communities organized around activism; activists who find themselves creating community. Guest Editor, Vicki Metcalf. Twin Oaks, 138 Twin Oaks Rd., Louisa, VA 23093; 540-894-5126.



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the Communal Studies
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COMMUNITY GRAPEVINE



Members of **Lost Valley Educational Center** in Dexter, Oregon, who offer courses in permaculture and other sustainable living skills, have experienced a positive transformation in terms of community well-being, according to *Larry Kaplowitz*. Three years ago over half the members left, many new members arrived, and conflict paralyzed the community. People avoided each other, and stopped having meetings.

"At times tension was so thick you could cut it with a knife," Larry recalls. But recently the whole community took the three-day *Naka-Ima* course (Japanese for "here now"), conducted by *Deborah Riverbend* of Nelson, British Columbia. Larry describes *Naka-Ima* as providing an awareness "that being free, clear, and connected is a choice that people can make at any time, regardless of circumstances."

"Basically, we have all fallen in love with each other," he says. Hugs, once rare, now break out spontaneously and often. Members are working cooperatively again. "During our last conference members couldn't stay out of the kitchen. Everyone kept coming in to help with the cooking or dishes just because it was so much fun to be together."

"We trust each other a lot more now," he says, "and we're willing to take risks and make mistakes, which has made our decision-making process a lot quicker and a whole lot more fun."

Of course the community still has its challenges. "But they don't weigh us down or pull us apart anymore. We use conflicts as opportunities to get closer."

Members of **Du-Ma** community in Eugene, Oregon, also took the *Naka-Ima* course, and according to member *Allen Hancock*, Du-Ma has been undergoing a similar transformation. Taking the course

inspired the seven-member household to think more positively and take greater risks, Allen says, for example, borrowing money to repaint and reroof their house and install skylights.

Lost Valley now sponsors *Naka-Ima* courses for other communities. For information, contact Larry at 81868 *Lost Valley Lane, Dexter, OR 97431; 541-937-3351; lvec@aol.com*.



Communication and decision-making skills were also enhanced at **Cardiff Place CoHousing** in Victoria, British Columbia, according to member *Brad Jarvis*, after the whole community took *Caroline Estes'* two-day workshop on consensus and facilitation. Cardiff Place (17 families living in a converted mansion and a new building on a half-acre lot in town) has been using consensus since their first meeting in 1992, but has added some new elements brought by Caroline, a veteran consensus facilitator and teacher, and member of 25-year old **Alpha Farm** near Deadwood, Oregon.

Edenvale, a small Emissary community which operates a newly created conference and retreat center near Aldergrove, BC, was the site of the May '97 organizational meeting of the Fellowship for Intentional Community (FIC) (see *"Fellowship News," p. 56*). The new retreat business is doing well, according to manager *Laura Fisher*, growing from 90 customer days in 1996 to over 200 customer days this year.

"We attribute the positive response to the comfortable home-like atmosphere here," says Laura, "which comes from 22 years of living in community and focus-

ing on the vision of assisting others in their spiritual growth." The small community (seven adults and two children on 118 acres) is also home to *Horses and More*, a therapeutic riding program for mentally and physically challenged adults. It's also doing quite well.

For information on Edenvale's facilities, contact Laura at 4330 *Bradner Road, Matsqui, BC V4X 1S8, Canada; 250-856-3298*.

Many attendees of the Edenvale FIC meeting enjoyed informal tours and visits with members of Community Alternative Society's 11-household apartment building in Vancouver and 10-acre farm near Aldergrove, BC, thanks to host and CAS cofounder *Jan Bulman*. The FIC group also visited **Windsong CoHousing** in Langley, BC, the first cohousing community in North America designed with a glass roof covering its central pedestrian "street."



Community networking is also on the rise farther south. **Commonnest** is a newly formed coalition of 35 collective households in urban San Francisco. The organization distinguishes between "collective households," which create community by participatory decision making, shared resources, common meals, etc. and "group houses," in which residents share rent and some responsibilities, but aren't necessarily interested in creating community *per se*.

According to *Elizabeth Sullivan*, Commonnest socializes in monthly Soup Nights (she's a member of its "Stirring Committee") with different activities, such as speakers or slide shows. They also plan projects, such as an upcoming bicycle tour

Heard it through the grapevine ...

Send us news of your community's joys and sorrows, celebrations, marriages, births, deaths, events and conferences, members' travel adventures, new land acquisitions, new community buildings, new businesses, losses, breakthroughs or challenges with neighbors/local governments, local ecological difficulties or triumphs. We want to hear from you!

Community Grapevine, PO Box 169, CO 80541; phone/fax: 970-593-5615; communities@ic.org.

of collective households in San Francisco. Future projects may include helping educate local banks about lending opportunities for collective houses, helping member households get funding to buy their own houses, or offering inexpensive trainings and networking gatherings. For information, contact Elizabeth at 415-974-4384.

Commonnest member *Hank Obermayer*, of the four-person **Mulch House** in San Francisco, is now Project Manager of **Northern California Mutual Housing Association**. This recently reorganized nonprofit will now serve intentional communities in the region, focusing particularly on affordable, resident-controlled housing such as housing co-ops and collective households, rather than on market-rate communities.

NCMHA has contracts from HUD and a grant from the National Cooperative Bank to help developers and residents create new housing co-ops and collective households in the area (by building from scratch or rehabilitating existing buildings), and to help renters become resident-owners of their own buildings

The organization will help groups organize their legal structures and learn how and where to get development funds; advocate with local officials on behalf of co-op and group housing; and offer inexpensive trainings in property management, visioning, consensus or other forms of participatory decision making, and how to negotiate with financial institutions, housing developers, and local officials. Because many low-income housing co-ops focus more on "housing" than "community," NCMHA will help co-op members learn better communication and decision-making skills and how to create more community spirit.

One current project is to provide any assistance needed to a spinoff of **Santa Rosa Creek Commons** in Santa Rosa, California, a 27-unit Quaker-originated co-op that hopes to develop other, similar communities in the area, but with an emphasis on low-income and very-low-income residents.

"Another project, which is both exciting and intimidating," says Hank, "is to bring together members of urban collective houses with low-income housing cooperatives. What can they learn from each other? How can they help and inspire each

other? Since they have many of the same needs, and we offer the same services to both groups, it makes sense to foster a mutual support network among them."

For more information, contact Hank Obermayer at *NCMHA, 2619 Broadway, Suite 305, Oakland, CA 94612; 510-628-3620; ncmha@igc.apc.org.*



Members of **Circle Op Springs**, a 124-acre rural community outside of Moab, Utah, completed the first phase of their new community building this spring. Construction began with a timberframing workshop by *Robert Laporte* in March and a strawbale workshop with *David Eisenberg* in April. The building combines timberframing, strawbale and clay-straw walls, and an earthen floor. Community members are working closely with county building officials on these sustainable alternatives, according to member *Nicholas Brown*. When complete, the new building will have a kitchen, dining room/meeting room, small living room, office, children's room, storage rooms, showers, composting toilets and a greywater system—making life easier for Circle Op's 10 members, some of whom live in town and some on the land in temporary structures.



Twenty-seven year old **Zendik Farm** is moving—again! Located a half-mile south of Austin, Texas, for the last six years (they first lived in southern California), this longtime community of artists and activists are seeking to relocate to North Carolina or Virginia. One reason is to help the community leader and founder, *Wolf Zendik*, who is now 77 and hasn't been well lately, feel more comfortable in a different climate.

The community is also feeling pulled to do less farming and to respond more to the needs of young people—the community's primary constituency—through additional outreach and workshops. *Zendik* has traditionally supported itself by offering apprenticeship programs to youth, especially youth at risk, to whom they teach skills from auto maintenance to music and graphic arts. The community also sells its music tapes and arts magazine. "This move is a natural

evolution for us," says member *Shey Pinsof*.

Meanwhile, *Zendik's* 310-acre certified-organic land is for sale—and they want to sell to another intentional community. They've successfully grown wheat, other grains, and hay on their land, which sits in a bend in the Lower Colorado River by a grove of native Texas pecan trees. The land has two good wells, a six-acre vegetable garden, hay and goat barns, woodshops and other outbuildings for crafts, and enough houses (including a dome and a treehouse) to accommodate up to 70 people.

For more information, contact *Shey Pinsof, Zendik Farm, Star Rt. 16C-3, Bastrop, TX, 78602; 512-303-4620 or 512-303-1637; zendik@eden.com.*



The four households of **Woodbine Community** in north central Florida are excited about finding their new land and the addition of a fifth household, according to member *Ellie Sommer*. In June, after months of negotiations with the seller and neighbors (whose permission they needed for access right-of-way), they purchased 125 acres of rural land just outside Gainesville.

Woodbine's purpose is simple: members wish to enjoy each other's company and share and preserve the land—which is teeming with wildlife and includes virgin Florida cypress swamps, sandhills, and stands of old-growth oak and pine. Local zoning and building code regulations require them to subdivide their land into nine five-acre parcels ("The county just doesn't get it about community!" says *Ellie*); however, the community can preserve the remaining 80 acres as common land.

With openings for four more households, Woodbine can be reached c/o *Susan Marynowski, Rt. 3 Box 24H, Hawthorne, FL 32640 (sumar@gnv.ifas.ufl.edu)*, or *Ellie Sommer, 5200 NW 43rd St., Gainesville, FL 32606 (eksommer@afn.org).*



The 60-year-old **Celo Community** in Burnsville, North Carolina is considering a plan to assist member families at a time of death, and "avoid the ostentation and

extravagance which tend to characterize American funerals,” according to Celo’s Corresponding Secretary *Ernest Morgan*. The plan would help with alternatives such as community burial or cremation, Living Wills, Health Care Powers of Attorney, and so on.

Ernest Morgan, who recently celebrated his 92nd birthday, is author of *Dealing Creatively With Death: A Manual of Death Education and Simple Burial*. It has sold 300,000 copies, and is still going strong.



Earthaven, a 325-acre forming “neo-tribal village” outside of Asheville, North Carolina, took *C.T. Butler’s* two-day workshop on Formal Consensus in June. The following day C.T. facilitated their meeting according to the principles they’d just learned.

“He continually brought our focus back to the stage of discussion where we were at, as well as to the actual content of the discussion,” reports *Adeha Fuestel*. “Many of us noticed feeling a lot lighter than usual after a meeting.” She expects a proposal to adopt the Formal Consensus method for a six-month trial period.



Selected photos of *Communities* magazine cartoonist **Jonathan Roth**, formerly of **Twin Oaks** in Virginia, were featured in a show in August at a New York city gallery of fine photography. Congratulations, Jonathan!



Maat Dompim is seeking new land, as their ideal parcel in Virginia was taken off the market. Cofounders *Blanche Jackson* and *Amoja Three Rivers* are seeking 60 to 70 acres of wooded or partially wooded mountain land with some county road frontage, anywhere in the United States, under \$700 an acre. Their ideal location would be in a rural area free of toxic waste dumps and environmentally unhealthy industries, where people aren’t hostile to alternative lifestyles and people of color, and within two hours of a city with substantial multiracial and progressive women’s populations.

If you know of a location or land parcel to suggest, contact Blanche and Amoja at *Maat Dompim, Womyn of Color Land Project, Auto Rd., Auto, WV 24917; 540-992-0248*.



Rural **Birdsfoot Farm**, located on 78 acres near Canton, New York, threw a giant party in August to celebrate its 25th anniversary as a community. People came from down the road and from out of state; guests included dozens of former residents and interns, according to member *Rob Carr*. Rob is now in his second year of physical therapy school. Member *Steve Molnar*, a teacher, just launched Birdsfoot Learning Center, offering tutoring, special programs for local home schoolers, and a mobile classroom in an old school bus. *Dulli Tengeler* is in the first year of her new business selling cotton row covers to organic growers. The 17-year old market garden business, owned by several Birdsfoot members, sells organic produce to local retail and wholesale markets. The business has grown and is doing well, grossing \$28,000 last year, according to gardener *Doug Jones*. Birdsfoot Farm is open to prospective members. *CR25, Box 138, Canton, NY 13617*.



Some good news for *Isaac Dawson*, member of the **Messianic Community in Winnipeg**, who can now see his son Michael, 14, for several days at a time, thanks to the kind intervention of a policeman. Our Fall ’95 “cults” issue described how anti-cult activists had harassed the group of 20 Christian Messianic Communities, because, members believed, of their millenarian beliefs and communal lifestyle.

Isaac’s son Michael had repeatedly been seized by Canadian authorities from the group’s **Community at Myrtle Tree Farm** in Nova Scotia since 1986 to protect him from alleged child abuse—and repeatedly returned with all charges dropped. In 1994 authorities seized Michael again and placed him in the custody of his mother, who did not live in the community. Isaac was again acquitted of all charges; however, the Ca-

nadian provincial government requested and got a retrial (legal in Canada) and upheld Michael’s mother’s demand that Isaac not see his son. When a policeman saw that the boy in fact did want to see his father, he arranged for police-approved visits between the two. The retrial is scheduled for November 1997.



The third floor of a non-profit condominium on the site of a former distillery in Toronto has been reserved for the **Womyn’s Intentional Community Association** as an all-women cohousing community. Up to 19 women will purchase individual apartments and share common space. The common space and a larger community center on the site will be available for women’s gatherings. The project is founded on feminist philosophy and support for Earth-based spirituality. Ownership is open to all women; male partners are welcome as co-owners. For more information, *416-630-0660*.



Good news for the households of **Village Cohousing** in Madison, Wisconsin. After searching three years for a central urban site, they found the ideal spot—five turn-of-the-century houses on two-thirds of an acre within a mile of downtown. To retrofit the property to accommodate an eventual 15–18 households, they plan to turn four of the houses into duplexes, tear down the garages, and in the common backyards build townhomes and a common house with underground parking and two more units on the second floor.

Paradoxically, remodeling and rehabilitating old houses is “very costly” compared to tearing all the homes down and building from scratch, according to *Art Lloyd*. He says the group is willing to spend the money to retain the houses’ handsome interiors and because retrofitting is more environmentally sound than new construction. Partly because of this Village Cohousing has received an unusually positive response from property owners in the neighborhood, as well as from planning officials and city staff.

To try to make the project more affordable, the two members who originally bought the land may donate it to a land trust so that others pay only for individual units and a ground lease. Community spirit is alive and well in Madison!



Acorn Community member *Tree Bressen* attended last November's annual meeting of the Society for Utopian Studies. This international academic association has been bringing together college professors and others to study utopian visions in all their forms for over 20 years. Tree discovered a down-to-earth group exploring theoretical possibilities of worlds different from our own—through sources ranging from utopian and dystopian novels, to historic communes and sci-fi books and movies—literally, from Orwell's *1984* to *Star Trek: The Next Generation*.

"I found that while attendees were in touch with visions of a better world," she

reports, "many despaired of ever achieving them. These folks knew enough to be upset by the realities of mainstream society, but apparently didn't know much about people now creating genuine alternatives. When I told them about communitarians who are doing things more ecologically, more humanely, or more sustainably, faces lit up all around! And I became even more convinced that those of us choosing a community lifestyle can learn from scholars who devote significant energy to thinking about new ways of life."

These scholars can take heart by learning about communities from us! The next Society for Utopian Studies conference will be held October 13–16, 1997 in Memphis, Tennessee. Contact *Prof. Wagner, Dept. of English, University of Memphis, Memphis, TN 38152; 901-678-4329; jawagner@cc.memphis.edu.*



The **North American Cohousing Conference** will take place September

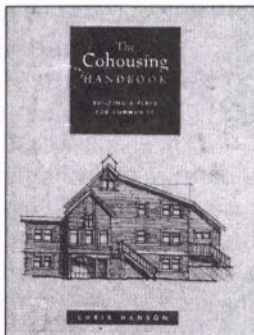
18–21 in Seattle. *Marci, Puget Ridge CoHousing, 206-763-2623.*

"**Communal Frontiers**," the annual conference of the Communal Studies Association, is slated for October 9–12 this year in Tacoma, Washington. *CSA, PO Box 122, Amana, IA 52203; 319-622-6446; csa@netins.net; www.well.com/user/cmty/csa/.*



"**The Art of Community**," a low-cost regional networking gathering featuring workshops about community living, and a Community Fair (communities seeking members, people seeking communities) is scheduled for November 21–23, 1997 at **Sunrise Ranch** in Loveland, Colorado. It's sponsored by the **Fellowship for Intentional Community**, which will also hold its organizational meeting (public welcome) at Sunrise Ranch on November 18–21. Contact the FIC at *816-883-5545* or *fic@ic.org* for more information about either event. Ω

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'Admissions Standards' for Communities

In "My Turn" readers share ideas, opinions, proposals, critiques, and dreams about community living. The opinions expressed here are not necessarily those of the publisher, staff, or advertisers of Communities magazine.

SHOULD COMMUNITIES NOT turn anyone down? Shouldn't we be open to anybody who needs us? Shouldn't we offer a more accepting, inclusive culture than mainstream society?

In my experience, if a community doesn't establish criteria for new members—"admissions standards"—the Walking Wounded arrive.

They seek out communities to heal childhood wounds. They come seeking the loving family they never had.

Fine. If your community has a therapeutic mission. If your community has a group of experienced, healthy members available for mentoring needy, emotionally immature people.

Allow an older psychotherapist (me) to offer caveats about the realities of changing wounded people. While everybody can grow and change, for badly wounded folks, it can take years. Not days, or months. If you've been in therapy, you know what I mean.

Now for a caveat about how people

change and heal: We don't know. We don't know what individual circumstances or events create change. We don't know the timing. We know that change can happen cumulatively, as a catharsis, or after many separate corrective experiences.

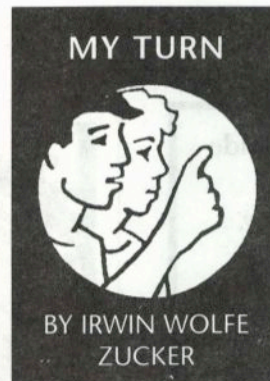
We do know that no therapist or therapeutic group has ever claimed success in "curing" all the people with whom they've worked after one year or even five years of treatment. (If so, waiting lines to their office would stretch to Tibet.)

I believe that communities that want to attract new members—and to grow and maintain a healthy, positive balance—must have admission standards and screening procedures.

While it's true that *some* loose cannons who've

shown up on your doorstep have been saints, if too many community members don't hold their own, or "act-out," your group can suffocate. You'll have to work hard healing conflicts, reassuring people, and spending long hours just keeping the community in balance. It can be time-consuming and exhausting.

Here are admissions criteria from two communities that may help you think through your own needs in this area. First, an Arizona community seeking interns:



Irwin Wolfe Zucker is a psychiatric Social Worker, former Findhorn member and Findhorn Resource Person for Connecticut, and Associate Member of Sirius Community in Shutesbury, Massachusetts.

We're looking for people who feel confident and good about themselves, who have achieved a degree of emotional maturity, and who can get along with others in a group situation.

We're interested in people who don't feel that they've been harmed or taken advantage of by others. Who don't frequently feel angry with or blame others for hurting them. People who don't get feedback that they are moody, or touchy. People who are willing to say what they want and need, what they don't like, and what, ideally, they'd like changed.

In our experience, what works well in a community are people who feel good, ask for what they want, and don't often feel victimized by others.

The 31-year-old Findhorn Foundation in Scotland uses statements in its brochure and ongoing personal interviews to screen new people. Here's an excerpt from its brochure for its Foundation Year:

Our aim is to embody, demonstrate, and teach aspects of personal and world service. The demands and challenges of living in this community require emotional maturity and spiritual awareness.

We are looking for those who have moved beyond a sole concern for their own growth and are ready to live, act and work in a collective environment, making a difference in the world. Before you commit for one year ... we require that you participate in the Experience week and ... complete three months in the Living in Community Programme.

You will either leave at the end of the year with a toolbox for personal and spiritual growth and deep understanding of service, or agree to stay for another year and join our staff training. It is necessary that all concerned feel a mutual sense of rightness.

Findhorn's brochure also states, "Participation is not guaranteed in advance."

In screening for potentially compatible new community members, look for a good history of love and work. How can you tell? By asking questions.

Past behavior is the best predictor, according to psychological studies, of future behavior. Let's say your community has published "admissions standards" like the first example above. Community members

might ask the new person: How have you supported yourself financially until now? Can you describe some of your long-term relationships? What was your experience in high school or college? How much schooling did you complete? If you chose to leave, why was that? Have you pursued alternative educational or career paths such as internships, apprenticeships, or on-the-job-trainings? Where, and for how long? Did you complete them?

Asking such questions benefits new people as well as the community. It can help potential members look at and plan their lives. And it sets a tone for the community. By directly stating what you want, you help manifest it.

Manifestation requires first visualizing what you want in a rough form, and

then spelling it out in detail, often out loud or in writing. Asking for strengths, whether real or potential, *articulates* that your community has individual and community goals.

To put it another way, if your community front door is difficult to enter, healthy people will strive to get in. If it's wide open, you'll tend to attract unhealthy people, well versed in resentful silences, subterfuge, manipulation, and guilt trips. Once these people are in your community, the energy of the group may be directed to getting them out again. In the process, both the bouncers and bounced can get hurt.

Consider this. A new member who is later rejected and asked to leave may be deeply scarred. However, if the person wasn't accepted for membership in the first place, he or she is just disappointed. A big difference.

Another process from the Findhorn Foundation that's worth passing along: If a potential new member doesn't make it during the trial period, he or she is gently told, "Not now. Work on your issues that you've identified here and come back later."

Fair? Yes. Loving? Yes.

An ideal solution in a perfect world? No.

In my opinion such a world doesn't exist—in or out of community.

But our goal as communitarians, and that of our prospective members, is to try. Ω

**If your
community front
door is difficult
to enter, healthy
people will strive
to get in.**

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Another Kind of Sustainability

Instead of going to college, David Cooper and his partner Margaret Kamp are attending "the school of community," serving as interns in various intentional communities.

After living at Abundant Dawn in rural Virginia, they moved to Ganas, an urban community that emphasizes communication and interpersonal relationships. David Cooper and Margaret spent eight months with Ganas at the community's Staten Island and upstate New York sites.

GANAS IS IN MANY ways diametrically opposite from Abundant Dawn. (See "Waking Up at Abundant Dawn," Winter '96.) Yet as the second community on our tour it was a natural next step. Abundant Dawn is rural while Ganas is located in the heart and smokers' lungs of urbanity. Abundant Dawn had seven people; Ganas numbers about 70. Abundant Dawn focuses on sustainability through environmentally friendly agricultural practices. Ganas' focus is on sustainability through better communication.

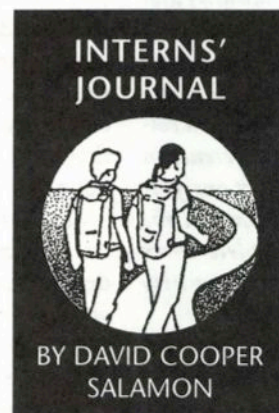
Abundant Dawn used a group process called "Trapeze" to strengthen interpersonal skills; Trapeze is a version of Ganas' own Feedback Learning process.

It was during our time at Abundant Dawn that Margaret and I realized how much we needed to improve our communication skills. We decided

Ganas could offer the next lesson, and found it to be a community truly about the mind and emotions—about personal sustainability. Its members have created a safe environment where physical needs are taken care of, allowing them to deal with some of the subtler aspects of life, such as questioning the assumptions of our culture. Why indulge in jealousy or dominance?

Why choose to react negatively to a situation when we can learn to respond positively? Our education at Ganas was extensive, offering clear insights into physical, economic, and emotional aspects of sustainability.

Ganas' seven group houses sit atop a hill so steep the sidewalks are made of



David Cooper and Margaret Kamp are now working with Solar Survival Architecture in Taos, New Mexico, learning to build Earthships and strawbale homes.

stairs. You first enter 135 Corson Avenue, which houses the main dining room. Walking in is like entering a history book that is constantly being written and referenced. A strong, long-lived community, Ganas is a large, tight family. Like a family, it's full of jokes, relationships, and patterns.

The community can be an overwhelming place to jump into, especially for a person like me who had not been accustomed to speaking in large groups. Not only that, I tend to clam up in the face of disapproval, disappointment, conflict, or frustration. However, at Ganas these issues are discussed constantly, in order to verbally yank out these weeds of life by the roots.

In the dining room seating is arranged around the edges of the room and everyone takes part in one large conversation. Even in the middle of a dinner out at Wendy's you could find 20 or 30 of us clustered at four or five tables discussing any topic at hand—from the affordability of new tires to xenophobic individuals in the community. The trick was being able to listen. I can't think of any subject that was taboo. In this way Ganas was like a conversational marathon, and ultimately, an unexpectedly refreshing place to live.

It took the first three months of our eight-month stay to grow accustomed to the people, their language, and their way of life. During that time my emotions and impressions of my new home ran from attraction to repulsion—stirred, not shaken, with confusion.

Eventually though I worked through most of my typical visitor's concerns. Was founder Mildred Gordon the community's leader? Was the Feedback Learning process constructive or destructive? Just what was Feedback Learning anyhow? I knew that I liked the people, and felt tremendous warmth from everyone there. While their method of communication often made me uncomfortable, I concluded that a certain level of discomfort was all right; it's a signal that something needs to change. I had an opportunity to take the pebbles out

of my shoes or continue trying to walk on ever softer ground.

About three months after we arrived, David Kunin joined Ganas' small core group. Its members have committed to each other to share resources, pool incomes, and draw minimally for their own needs—a step seen as the equivalent of marriage. At David's "wedding" I began to get the sense of the community's strong commitment. I was duly blown away when everyone burst into "L'Chaim!"—to life!—a rousing song from the musical *Fiddler on the Roof*. Until then I had been seeing the more turbulent side of Ganas, and David's wedding put it into sustainable context. As he read a list of his wedding vows people gave comments and criticisms. By the end of the night both lists and perceptions

were different. Living at Ganas taught me that conflict and disagreement, while often unpleasant, can also give birth to fertile new ideas.

The community is successful financially. Most people work for one of its recycled clothing or furniture stores, and a few hold outside jobs. My carpentry work kept me mostly around the houses. Sometimes, hearing Patricio practicing his viola, I would linger on the sidewalk for a few moments of enchantment before I returned to my own creative din of saw and hammer. At Abundant Dawn I was barely equipped with carpentry tools. At Ganas I had a complete, beautiful woodshop at my disposal. Quite a joy, when I let it be.

I had before me two aspects of an education in sustainability—the physical skill of carpentry and my own mental and emotional sustainability. Sometimes it was funny how these converged. I had an insight about myself on a job I'd had two years earlier, as a laborer on a construction site. I'd thought the problems on the job would be better if I was a carpenter. Now I *was* a carpenter. Can you guess the punchline? Yep, same problems. Incredible! So simple and elusive. After awhile I began participating at the

**My experience
with Ganas
makes me realize
the infinite
possibilities of
community.**



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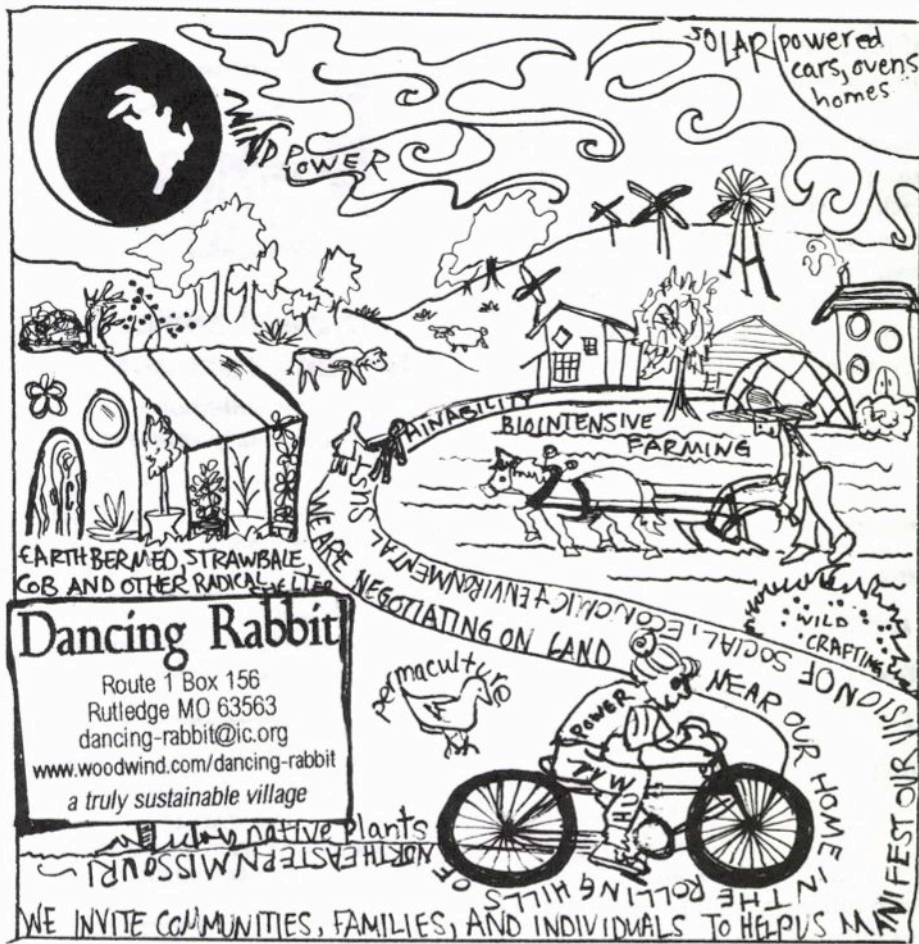


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community's mealtime conversations, and a few times I was the focus of the conversation myself.

It was never easy to work on my own issues. Even people who've lived at Ganas for years can have wavering motivation to look at themselves, which, in a sense, is a compelling quality of the group. The next time I live with Ganas I will definitely be more active in the Feedback Learning process.

Ganas members are accepting of everyone and their foibles and frailties—you really need to work hard to be rejected there. When Dave Greenon joined the core group, he stated in his wedding vows, with love and sincerity, that he wasn't marrying the other members only for their illustrious qualities, but also their faults and frailties.

The whole of my experience with Ganas makes me realize the infinite possibilities of community. On or off the grid, sustainability in any of its myriad forms starts with the interpersonal. And it's also nice to know that, without asking, I always have a home with Ganas. Ω

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After the Fire

The Lama Foundation's Kitchen & Dining Center

ON SUNDAY, MAY 5, 1996, A trash fire in the peaceful village of San Cristobal, New Mexico, was fanned by high winds toward the nearby old growth ponderosa forest. In a matter of hours, the conflagration consumed 7,500 acres and numerous structures. The Lama Foundation, our spiritual community and retreat center, was directly in its path.

The Lama Foundation is located on 110 acres at an elevation of 8600 ft. in the Sangre de Cristo mountains. For nearly 30 years the community has served as a center for the awakening of consciousness, offering spiritual and life skills retreats.

That Sunday, when we went to fight the fire, we were not allowed to go back home due to the ferocious and rapidly advancing flames. When we did return, it was to a terrible sight. The fire had roared across our land, destroying all resident and retreat housing, and reducing our office and cottage industries to ash. Seventeen of 23 buildings, and 105 of 110 acres were consumed by the flames, leaving us homeless and altering miles of beautiful pine and piñon forest into a blackened moonscape.

What did remain amazed everyone. At the center of the inferno, surrounded by ash and silent blackened trees, was the undamaged core of our community's retreat facility: the Dome complex, where spiritual teachers such as Ram Dass and Brother David Steindl-Rast have spoken and prayed for 29 years; the old kitchen; and our pride and joy—our partially constructed new kitchen and dining center.

We had begun planning this project in 1992. We wanted sustainable features such as solar heating and electricity as well as a harmonious relationship with the Dome complex and other existing structures. We also wanted new public spaces, including a living room, children's space, and room for indoor and outdoor dining. It was clear that this would be not just a kitchen but a whole new community center.

In 1994 we projected a budget of \$250,000 and began raising money to build the structure in three phases: the kitchen and pantry, the living and dining quarters, and the outdoor dining area.

In the shock and grief of losing our homes and most of our retreat facilities,



Scott Shuker has lived in various communities for nearly seven years, and at Lama for almost two years. He coordinates the building team for several small projects there.

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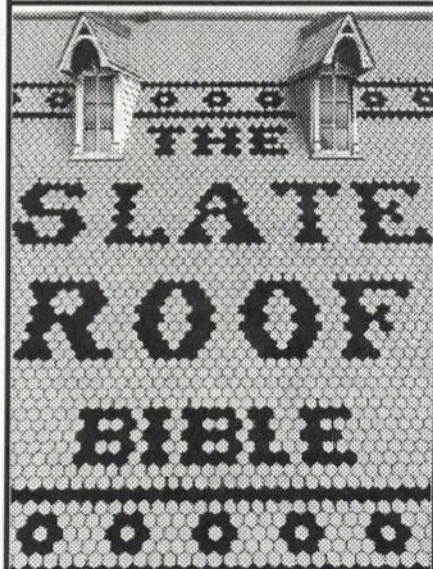


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Lama faces a several-million-dollar rebuilding effort and needs donations of skilled and unskilled labor, building supplies, tools, professional cooking equipment, Macintosh computers, and auction items. To donate items or services, call 505-751-7866. Tax-deductible contributions can be sent to Lama Foundation Fire Relief Fund, Box 240, San Cristobal, NM 87564.

we rolled up our sleeves and began again. Last summer, not long after the fire, we hosted several retreats, including a Permaculture Intensive. We began a massive land reclamation and erosion control effort. And we resumed construction on our kitchen/dining room project.

Instead of this building being the completion of our retreat facilities, it became a new beginning—it would serve as a major community space both for retreatants and staff.

Our long-time friend Vishu Magee had designed the passive solar building to facilitate an organic and integrated flow of food, supplies, and human energy. A greenhouse on the south side of the dining room to provide solar gain and a space to grow food. A south-facing "solar attic" to heat water in summer, and through its convective loop, to pump water through the system. On-demand heaters to heat water in winter. The solar attic to serve as the kitchen's heat source in winter, backed up by conventional baseboard heating.

Water to be collected from the roof, and the septic leach field to irrigate landscaping in an area just outside the kitchen. The underground larder, with its constant below-ground temperature of 50-55° F, and a water

cooling system that will cool it another 10 degrees in the summer, to serve as a naturally refrigerated space. Electricity for the whole community to be generated by photovoltaics, housed in a separate shed nearby.

We attempted to avoid as many toxic building materials as possible. The walls of the first story are constructed of adobe bricks lined with rigid polystyrene, which together provide high thermal mass and insulation, helping the building stay warm in winters and cool in summers. One blessing to emerge from the fire was our abundant source of raw timber; we harvested and milled about 50 percent of our lumber from fire-damaged trees.

We expect to complete our new kitchen and dining center by the fall of 1997 or spring of 1998.

Lama has received many donations and helpful support from communities across the country, which continues to make a huge difference. Our goal is that our kitchen and dining center will serve as an enlivening year-round facility, a user-friendly building for retreat participants, a model for other communities, and, regardless of the fire—or perhaps because it stirred us to new resolve—a source of strength for Lama and its future. Ω

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"No, It's Not a Cult"

Relating to Your Family When You Live in Community

BY MARIANA CAPLAN



Given the grossly distorted cultural stereotypes about intentional communities, is it any wonder families worry? But aside from ominously identical footwear, these communitarians appear to offer little cause for worry. Left to right: Tony Sirna (Dancing Rabbit), Michael McIntyre (Sunward Cohousing of Ann Arbor), Alex McGee (Twin Oaks), Jillian Downey and Elph Morgan (Hei Wa House).

THE COMMUNITY PHONE rings and on the other end is my elder brother, a computer programmer: "Is it true that you're living in some weird cult these days?"

At a family reunion, my mother's best friend turns to me with a sweet smile on her face and a voice to match: "Is your group like those Waco people in Texas?"

"How long do you think you'll last on that hippie commune?" asks my 92-year-old grandmother, referring to the community I have lived in for the past several years.

And it gets much worse. ... When it comes to the question of family, relatives, and friends from the past, community members frequently find themselves in situations that are uncomfortable or subtly aggressive at best, and outright abusive at worst.

On the other hand, imagine what it feels like from their side. Stories of group suicides and murders at Heaven's Gate, Jonestown, and Waco flood the media, and the first thing your family thinks of when they read them is *you*, tucked away in your little community, wondering if your fate will end up in the hands of some imaginary space aliens. They read the signs to watch out for in "cult" members. They correlate these warnings with the fact that maybe you live in a household with two other families, or that you perhaps no longer seem interested in your family's religion, or with their sense that your worldview has changed since you joined the community ... and they worry. Given the grossly distorted stereotypes in our society about cults and communities, it is understandable that they are concerned.

Many of us who are deeply involved in community life find it difficult to sustain respectful and loving relationships with family members and those from our past. In fact, it is sometimes hard to maintain relationships with them at all, as we start to feel like we're orbiting in a

different universe from the one they're in. Nonetheless, whenever possible it is preferable to maintain a respectful and ongoing relationship with those who love you. It's not that you should feel obliged to talk to them every week, or visit them every holiday, but you can keep the lines of communication open and your love for them alive.

It isn't always easy. I remember chomping on a 16-oz. sirloin steak at a nearby restaurant with my parents during one of their visits to my community. When a sizable chunk of steak was left over on my plate at the end of the meal, and I said that I'd prefer to leave it, my father wanted to know why. I explained that in the community we eat a vegetarian diet, and that it wouldn't be appropriate to stick a steak in the refrigerator.

"What if you *wanted* to take it home, could you?" he asked, upset. "What would happen if you did eat steak there—would they kick you out?" "Who made up the rules?" and so forth. At the time, to my own detriment, I defended my community and its values vehemently. Nowadays I would take a softer approach. I would simply say, "Dad, I know you're concerned about me, but I'm doing fine," and leave it at that.

As each situation and relationship is unique, there is no foolproof set of rules as to how to approach your family and those from your past in a way that will neither alienate them, nor demand that you forfeit your personal integrity. There is, however, an underlying perspective—a context—from which you can approach them that will help to keep balance and sanity in your relationships.

This perspective is the recognition that in spite of the lifestyle choice you have made, your family is still your family, your former friends remain old friends, and they each love you in the only way they know how to. You acknowledge the cultural paranoia and misunderstanding

that surrounds the issue of community in general, and therein realize that their fears and concerns are not about you, but instead about their own conditioning. Although it sounds like common sense, it can be difficult to approach your family from a new context. Even if you haven't seen them for years, you are already steeped in a family dynamic that *will* resist any changes you attempt to make.

When I initially approached my family about my community, the context I was coming from was: "Your values are from the dark ages, my new values are superior, and I



Many communitarians believe that community living really IS better than life in mainstream culture. Outdoor concert, Twin Oaks Communities Conference.

will prove it to you at all costs." I would send them books to enlighten them, show up for family visits in outrageous community fashions, and "converse" with them as though I was some kind of community ambassador. Years later, when the rebellion had passed, my context changed entirely. Now when we're together I ask them about themselves and their lives. When they ask about my community I answer simply and bear in mind what they are able to hear and what will be over their heads. If they serve meat when we're together, I eat meat. If they want to go to the movies, I go to the movies. If they want to talk about the virtues of Republican politics ... well, I keep quiet!

As a community member, the

responsibility for maintaining healthy relationships with your family and those from your past rests entirely on *your* shoulders.

"What?!" you may ask. "*They* should be more understanding. *They* should be less judgmental, more open-minded, less prejudiced, more compassionate, less unaccepting, and so forth."

However, people will not change unless they want to change, and sitting around waiting for them to be different is a losing proposition. If you want things to be different in your relationship with your family and those from your past, *you* be different. Then, if they eventually do come around, consider it a bonus.

It is helpful to be aware of some of the common obstacles that community members come across when attempting to have healthy, adult relationships with their families.

Over-Zealousness

Over-zealousness is a common trap for community members, especially

when they initially become involved in community life. When individuals are in an "overly zealous" phase, they feel that they have found the answer to life, and they want *everybody* to know about it, especially their poor and ignorant families. Many people come to community as a rebellion from the way they were raised. Whether their reaction is to their individual family or to the society from which they came, their "yes" to community is simultaneously a "no" to their upbringing—and it comes across loud and clear in their interactions.

A clue to watch out for in yourself as an indication of over-zealousness is when you notice that you talk about little else besides your community ...

Ten Tips for Maintaining Sane Family Relationships

1. Break it to them gently. Whether you're new to community, or whether you're finally telling your folks what you've been up to after years of community life, be wary of the tendency to want to shock them, and be sensitive to how difficult your choice of lifestyle may be for them.

2. Don't preach. There's nothing more boring than a righteous monologue about how you think they're supposed to live their lives.

3. Be considerate. Your lifestyle may be hard for them, especially in terms of relating to their own friends and family members. Compromise does not equal selling out. It means you are considering their needs and feelings as well.

4. Answer only what is asked. Whereas it is unnecessary to lie about your community involvement, a "tell-all" response to a simple question about your life is often more than your family is prepared to hear.

5. Listen! If you don't immediately react to them, and instead listen for what is behind any criticisms or worries they may have, you will probably discover that they are genuinely concerned about you and just want to know that you are safe and happy.

6. Don't take their responses to your lifestyle personally. Cultural stereotypes and biases about communities, "cults," and communes abound. Their judgments and fears are most likely a response to that, and not to you. If you keep this in mind, you are less likely to be offended by any reactions they might have to you.

7. Let them know that you appreciate them. It will help you to remember as well! A simple card, or calling up your mom and telling her that you love her, will go a long way.

8. Let go of guilt. You are not to blame for having chosen community involvement over becoming a lawyer, or inheriting the family business, or whatever those from your past "expected" you to become.

9. Keep a sense of humor. Seen from the outside, it can be funny for your parents to adjust to calling you Shining Eagle instead of Joe, or for your sister to show up to your community peace dance in a mini-skirt and heels.

10. Draw boundaries when necessary. You don't owe them an annual Christmas visit, or a weekly phone call, or an explanation of your daily activities. On the other hand, if there are small compromises you can make for the sake of their happiness, consider doing so. Ω

and that those listening to you aren't half as interested in what you are saying as you are! You will probably feel a sense of urgency and importance that they understand you. In reality, it is really not that important that your family and old friends understand you, much less agree with you, but when you're over-zealous, you (secretly) think that if they don't get what you are trying to communicate, that they will miss the boat as you go sailing off into the sunset.

With enough years living in community, and enough consideration of others, over-zealousness will mature into the recognition that each individual must find his or her own way, in his or her own time, and that it is not for you to tell any other person, much less your family, what to think, feel, or do.

Guilt

Many community members feel guilty for having not lived up to their families' expectations of who they were to become. Whether their guilt feelings are conscious or unconscious, they feel that they have betrayed their families—depriving them of a child or sibling whom they could be proud of, and/or denying their parents the dreams they had for their children.

Guilt can show up in many forms: a constant need to try to prove yourself to your family; lying about what you're doing in community; feeling fearful of being disowned or rejected by them; or trying to make your situation appear "better" (in their opinion) than it really is.

Yet there comes a point in your maturation as an adult when you understand that the fact of being born to a particular set of parents does not oblige you to become a mirror image of their expectations for you. Psychologists call this process *individuation*, which simply means "to take responsibility for becoming your own person." You make an adult decision about your

lifestyle, and go on about your life while remaining sensitive and considerate to your family.

Feelings of Superiority and Righteousness

Yes, I know. All communitarians are supposedly cooperative, resourceful, and compassionate. But it is much easier to be generous in our opinions and humble in our views with those who are like-minded, than with those who are capitalizing on the material world at the expense of the environment and the last remaining strains of our humanness. Let's face it, if cornered into ruthless self-honesty, many of us would have to admit that we feel that what we are doing in community really *is* superior to our family's values. We wouldn't be doing it if we didn't believe it. Beyond that, those of us who live in community have made, and are continually making, sacrifices in terms of comfort and resources that much of the world wouldn't even consider making. We do it because we believe in it and we know it is right, not necessarily because it is always the most comfortable or easiest option.

But self-righteousness and a superior attitude is a turnoff. To feel righteous and superior is not necessarily problematic; but to act on the basis of these feelings is. In fact, if you can admit to yourself that you believe your lifestyle is superior to theirs, you're much less likely to express it in inelegant and unconscious ways—such as sighing and rolling your eyes when a roast pig is served at Christmas dinner if you're a vegetarian, or making your brother feel like a capitalist ogre for working on Wall Street.

I learned about righteousness the hard way. I had returned to complete my last semester at the University of Michigan after having lived in an indigenous community in Costa Rica for the previous year. I knew I wasn't easy to live with—insisting on a “meditative,” “conscious,” and “in-

tentional” household even though I was the one moving into my housemates' already-established home. From the subject of organic food for all, to recycling, to house meetings that were more like support groups, it was either “go along with it my way” or suffer my subtle psychic disdain. My housemates were more than generous in the face of my arrogance, and only upon our parting did my roommate leave me a note that read, “Remember: I'm O.K., you're O.K.” It hit me like a brick—nine months of inconsiderate and insensitive living was suddenly exposed in the light of her simple reminder.

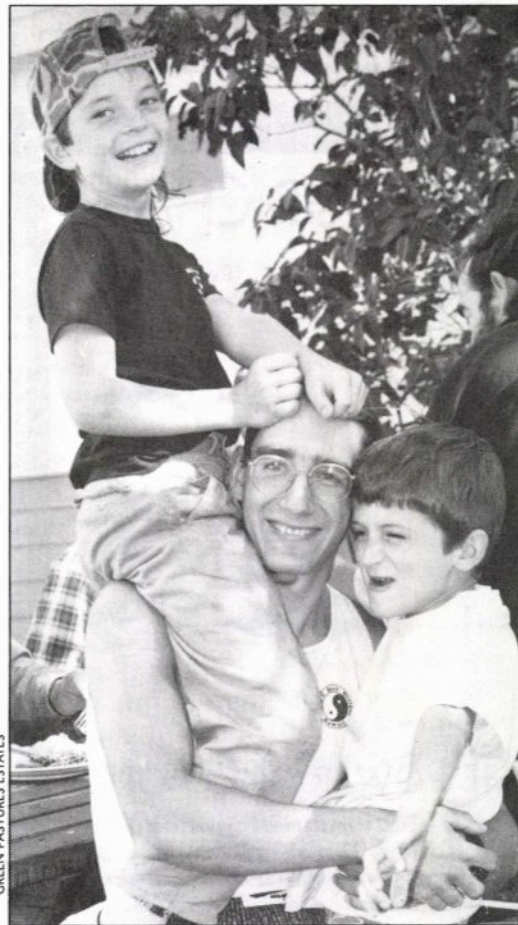
A subset of righteousness is the desire to “save” our families—to convert them to the “better life” we have found. Wishing to bestow a little bit of our own enlightenment

onto those we left behind, we go about dropping our subtle or not-so-subtle hints about their “unconscious” lifestyle, hoping that we might wear off on them a bit. However, trying to save our families implies to them that we think they need to be saved. Again, whereas what we see may be salvation, what they see is righteous superiority. If they are going to be influenced by us, let them be influenced because of who we are as people, not as a result of the values we impose on them.

Having said all this, there is a time to draw boundaries and a time to let sleeping dogs lie. There was a period in my early involvement with community (actually, I was only attending an alternative graduate school with a community slant to it) when my parents thought that I was in a dangerous cult. Instead of addressing

this directly with me, their approach was to go through the Cult Awareness Network, hire detectives, and so forth. For a long period of time, not a month would go by when I didn't receive a flyer, a book, or a cassette tape from them that was designed to inform me as to what a dangerous situation I was in. Again, this was only a graduate school! Finally, I decided that I had had enough, and cut off contact with them for some time. After a year of no contact with my parents, I decided to give it a try again, and it's been much different since that time. There is a fine distinction between being compassionate and understanding toward our families, and allowing ourselves to remain in codependent and abusive relationships. The point is to draw a boundary, not to punish our families for the differences between us.

Instead of preaching to your family, or discounting them entirely, be a living example of



Behind most families' criticisms and worries is usually genuine concern; they just want to know we're happy and safe.



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your values. Share and express what you are doing in your community life through who you are as a result of your lifestyle. When you are no longer trying to prove anything to anyone, and are living your chosen lifestyle because it feels like the most mature choice you can make at this point in your life, other people see this and admire you for it, irrespective of whether they agree with what you are doing.

It was obvious to both myself and my family when I was no longer reacting to them. The tone of needing to get their approval disappeared from our conversations, and I was no longer provoked by their criticisms. I was sad that they had difficulty accepting my lifestyle, but I no longer felt guilty or responsible for their pain. From that point onward, our relationship slowly began to change. Recently I received a letter from my mother after she returned from a visit to my community. "I thought of you when I read what happened at Heaven's Gate...", the letter began, and I felt my stomach sink, "... and realized how lucky you are to be in such a lively community surrounded by such good people!"

I knew then that change was not only possible, but that it had transpired in my own life. Ω

Mariana Caplan is an author, lecturer, and counselor. She is author of When Sons and Daughters Choose Alternative Lifestyles (Hohm Press, 1996); When Holidays are Hell ...! (Hohm Press, 1997), and the forthcoming Untouched: On the Need for Affection in an Increasingly Clinical World (Hohm Press, 1998).

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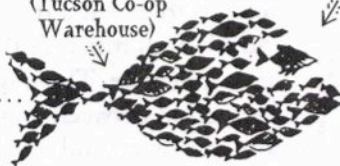


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HALLOWEEN AT THE FARM

Honoring Our Dead at the Burial Ground

BY MICHAEL TRAUGOT

All Hallows Eve 8:30 p.m. tonight at the Burial Ground! Bring snack, candles, drums, rattles, blankets, stories.

WHEN I ARRIVED AT THE CEMETERY IT was dark. Thick clouds obscured the stars, and a slight drizzle fell. The warm light of many candle lanterns were visible through the trees, shimmering and glowing, winking slightly whenever a drop of rain fell directly on a flame. These were simply candles placed in paper bags with a scoop of sand in the bottom. They lined both sides of the entrance to our burial ground, and one lantern marked each grave. The lanterns seemed to hover above the ground, not rising,

but staying suspended, a steady hovering ring of light around the circumference of the clearing, illuminating the bottom surfaces of the branches of trees.

Inside the enclosure, in a small half-acre clearing in the midst of the woods, Joan and Ariel were finding the last of the graves with flashlights, setting a lantern on each.

"I didn't know if we were gonna meet in the rain," I said, "but I'm glad we are."

"Wouldn't miss it," said Joan.

Soon people began to arrive, eventually about 40, a mixed group of original Farm settlers, some of our youth and young adults, and some of their friends visiting at

the Ecovillage Training Center. Covered dishes of food were laid out on tarps under two trees near the center of the clearing, dimly lit by candle lanterns. People stood around and talked softly in small groups.

Then, as if by some subtle signal, we all gathered in a circle. We were silent for a minute, and then Ina May started talking about how we had started the tradition of spending one evening every year with our dead, who are still with us. They are part of us, she said, and we think of them all, at least this one night, and we remember to be grateful to have had them with us in this life, and to be grateful to be alive ourselves. And how grateful we are to have preserved our sovereignty so that we can bury our own dead, in our own graveyard, on our own land, in our own way, and commune with them like this.

Then we told stories of the people who are buried there. First Uncle Bill, who was rescued from a nursing home where the attendants were beating him, by his great niece, who lived with us. After a while with us, he “ran away” from the house he was living in, at age 83, wearing shorts and carrying his suitcase, saying that his niece was sweet, but didn’t know how to cook. Ina May arranged for him to live in a different household, with one of our excellent cooks, and he loved it. It turned out Uncle Bill had been a restaurateur and chef, a man who really knew how to cook. He helped us learn how to cook vegetarian Jewish food: the first bagels made on The Farm, pickled eggplant “lox,” and other treats. Whenever there was a birthing in his household he would stay up all night and cook for the midwives and the birthing family.

Melina, a young woman of 22, born and raised on The Farm, talked about Patty, a blind woman who lived with us for a number of years. Melina had lived in a household with Patty for a while, and remembered how, when she was about six, she had asked Patty what it was like to be blind. They were feeling objects together, Melina keeping her eyes closed and focusing on her sense of touch.

“Being blind must be like keeping your eyes closed all the time,” Melina said.

“No,” said Patty, “It’s more like keeping your eyes open all the time but looking at the back of your head.” This really made her think, Melina said, and got her inside Patty’s consciousness.

Ina May pointed out how brave Patty had been to come out here and live with large households in unfinished homes with rough yards and outhouses. Blind people usually try to live in a controlled and familiar environment without too many other people. Patty had had to educate large households about how to be with a

blind person, how they couldn’t set things down in the normal paths of movement around the house and yard. Patty got caught in the changeover of The Farm, when our economy changed from communal to private and many people left, and there wasn’t enough energy going around to keep a loving blanket of protection around her. She became depressed, and on one sad day took her own life.

At her funeral her mother said Patty had been depressed before coming to The Farm, and that living with us had probably extended her life by several years.

Then there was Dr. Dawn, one of the initial settlers of The Farm, who came in with the Caravan. She was a diminutive woman, less than five feet tall. She had been born with a deformity, I think *spina bifida*, which left her with a curved back and very little lung capacity, though normal from the waist down. She wasn’t expected to live past the age of three,

then six, and then past her teenage years, yet she defied all odds and became one of the early movers and shakers of The Farm. She wound up living 44 years.

Dawn had two specialties: horses and medicine. Early on in The Farm’s history, she established the horse and pony crew, both for working with the Belgian horses and for the children’s work with the ponies. The pony crew included up to 50 kids and 25 ponies and horses. Dawn ran a tight ship, with high standards for safety and for helping out. If you weren’t willing to shovel horse manure when your turn came up, you couldn’t have access to the ponies. During a period of 12 to 15 years, most of the girls and some of the boys who grew up on The Farm cycled through the pony crew. Many of them learned at least rudimentary horse medicine. The most advanced knew how to give injections, and a few even gave the horses enemas when the situation demanded it. Many of the kids trimmed their own ponies’ hooves.

Perhaps the most spectacular event of the pony crew’s history was the riding trip from The Farm to the Smoky Mountains and back. This involved some 50 kids, half of whom rode on the way up, the other half on the way back. Several adults went along: some riding and others in two vehicles. The riders carried portable CB radios to stay in touch with the vehicles.

After Dawn had run the pony crew for many years, and had been our animal doctor on the side, she decided that The Farm needed a doctor for people. Several of our members had gone off to medical school, but none had wound up living permanently on The Farm. Dawn wanted to be our doctor. She had to start with an undergraduate pre-med program, taking science courses and all, before going to medical school. The path she undertook would have been rigorous even for a completely

Our dead are, in some ways, still with us, and not to be feared.



able-bodied person, but Dawn hung tough. The science books were too heavy for her to carry around, so she used a razor blade and carefully cut out sections as she needed them, reassembling the complete books in folders by the end of her courses. Dawn was admitted to Meharry Medical College. Meharry usually didn't accept white people, but made an exception for Dawn because of her physical handicap and because she planned to work with poor people.

After graduating and doing her internship in several hospitals, Dr. Dawn moved back to The Farm and started her practice. Her health was always fragile, and for the last few years of her life she trundled an oxygen bottle around with her on a small wheeled cart, taking breaths from it whenever she needed. She was especially vulnerable to colds and flus. In her last battle, she was coughing up blood and went in for some tests. The tests went haywire, her blood pressure dropped, and Dawn went into cardiac arrest and died. Her loss was a blow to the entire community, but her spirit is part of the early pioneering history of the community, and she is a glowing example of overcoming adversity through faith and positive intent.

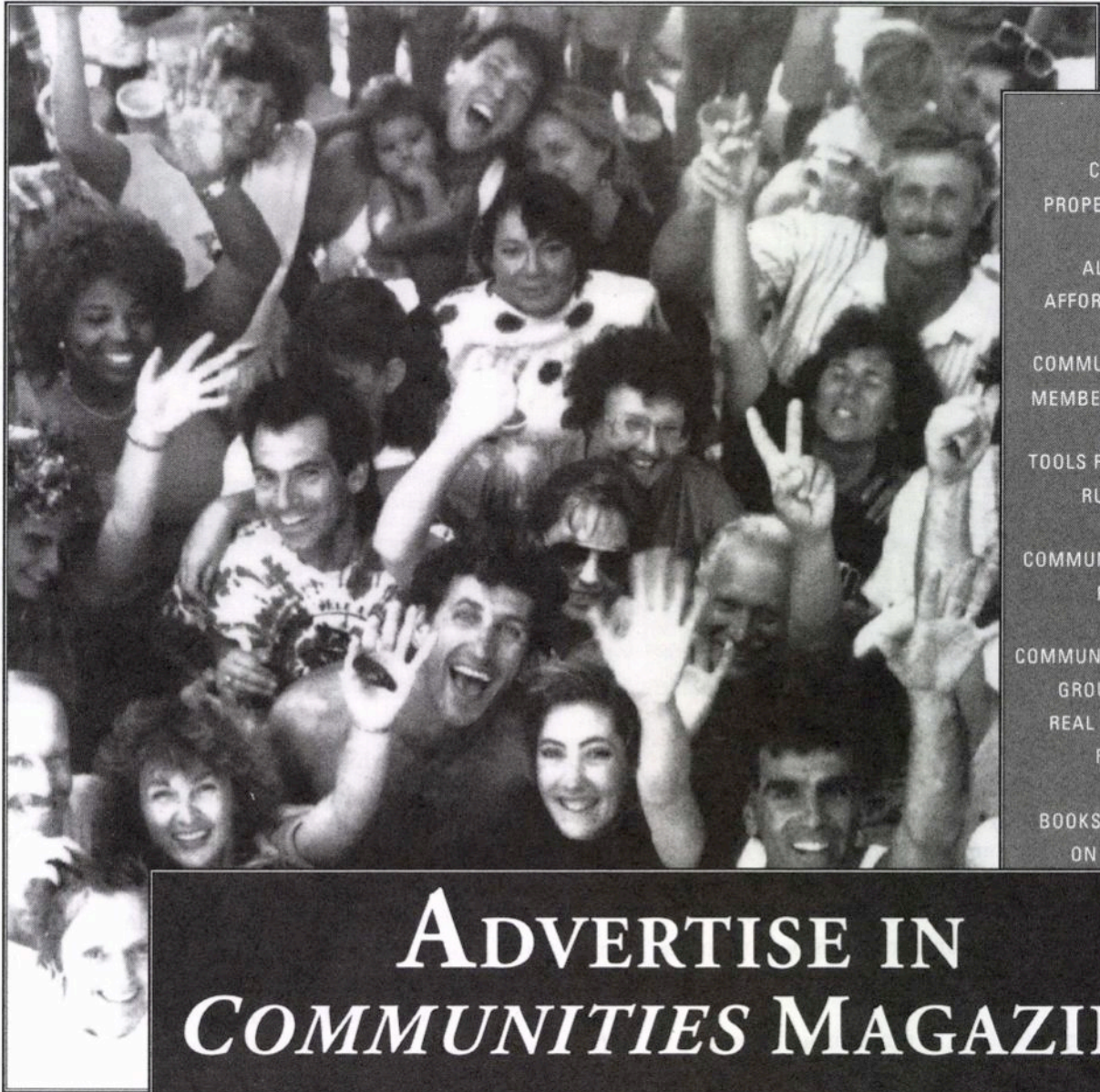
We shared other stories, mostly shorter than Dawn's. Altogether there are more than 50 graves in The Farm cemetery. They range from those of stillborn babies to people well up in their eighties. Some of them are parents of current Farm residents, who never lived here themselves. Several are people who moved to the community for their last years. One of those was Joe Silvers, who first saw The Farm on the Phil Donahue show in the mid-

'70s. He came here with his wife, Helen, and put his whole heart into the community. He also put in his savings, which went into fixing up our roads and buildings, and the graveyard itself. We named the road to the graveyard Silvers Lane.

After more than an hour of storytelling, during which most of the people in the burial ground were mentioned, the group formed a larger circle, danced several dances and sang some songs, mostly about the cycles of nature, life and death, and moving on to the next world. Then we shared the food that people had brought. A fine rain fell the entire time, but it was warm enough that no one suffered. Hardly anyone left before it was over.

We also celebrate the "trick-or-treat" part of American Halloween on The Farm, with many of the kids and a few of the parents dressing up. But the meeting at the cemetery, starting a little later so as not to interfere with the trick-or-treaters, covers much ground that Halloween doesn't consciously address. As a way of dealing with death, our version of Halloween more closely resembles the Mexican *El Dia de los Muertes*, in which people decorate with plastic skeletons and eat skull-shaped cakes. Our Halloween ritual at The Farm is an acknowledgment that our dead are, in some ways, still with us, and not to be feared. Ω

Michael Traugot, a founding member of The Farm and a father of five, has worked as a farmer, teacher, artist, group facilitator, and shiitake mushroom grower. He is completing his M.A. in Sociology at Fisk University.



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BREAKING BREAD IN COMMUNITY



FROM THE GUEST EDITOR • RANEE ZAPORSKI

RESIDENTS OF OFEK SHALOM, OUR COOPERATIVE house in Madison, Wisconsin, consider ourselves a Jewish, vegetarian, co-op activist household. However, when two members became interested in structuring our communal kitchen to adhere to strict Orthodox Jewish dietary laws, all kinds of questions were raised. What did adhering to this diet mean to people? Were these dietary laws relevant? Should we follow them in order to insure that our meals would be inclusive to all Jews, regardless of their level of religious observance?

Many of the conflicts in the house over the level of adherence to Orthodox tradition have paralleled other conflicts between branches of Jewry:

What does it mean to be a Jew? How should the quality of Jewishness be expressed? We learned something that many communities learn sooner or later—that what seemed at first like a surface issue over how to run our collective kitchen turned into a major spiritual and philosophical debate.

These issues were still on my mind when I embarked on a tour of intentional communities in September 1996. My stay at each community reminded me how challenging and

wonderful collective cooking and shared meals can be. How shared meals can form the “glue” of a community. How a hard day can be transformed by a good meal.

So it was a pleasure to put together this issue of *Communities* with these insights in mind. Some of the articles deal with food conflicts in community—kosher vs. non-kosher, inexpensive and commercial vs. organic and pricey, meat-eating vs. vegetarian, not to mention even subtler distinctions, about food combining, eating locally, eating in season, or boycotting foods for political reasons.

Other articles describe how food can bring people together—whether in growing it, preparing it, sharing meals (“great community meals I’ve known!”), starting a Community Sup-

ported Agriculture farm, or harvesting edible wild greens in an urban backyard. Still other articles offer practical advice, such as how to make sauerkraut from scratch.

Good reading, and happy eating! Ω

Ranee Zaporski, who loves to cook, lives at Ofek Shalom, a cooperative house in Madison, Wisconsin. She is co-president of Madison Community Cooperative.



TWIN OAKS

THE NIGHT OF THE MOST famous meal at Live Oak House started out sedately enough.

The six of us were preparing chicken *fajitas* for dinner. Francesca, our buxom gourmet cook, began the rice at the stove and cleaned the lettuce. Grant, her slender sweetheart, started the grill just outside; the fragrant scent of mesquite drifted in through the screened patio doors.

Golden late afternoon light filled the kitchen. We heard sounds from our northern California suburban neighborhood—children splashing in a backyard pool, someone mowing a lawn down the street—syncopated by the rhythms of four of us chopping on plastic cutting boards at the table.

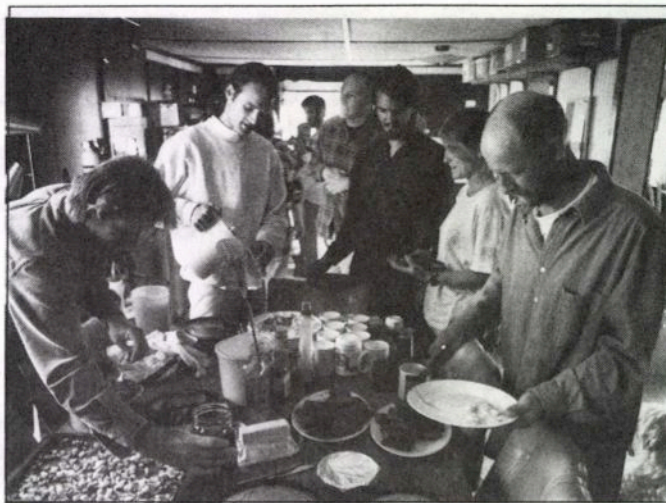
Frederick and I prepared garlic for the guacamole. A tall, bespectacled professor of psychology and statistics at the local college, Frederick peeled neatly and chopped precisely. In contrast, I, an artist whom my housemates considered more flamboyant, chopped haphazardly, little flakes of garlic skin flying around the chopping block.

Spark and Marie were in charge of the salsa. Marie, a lively curly-haired writer, younger than the rest of us at 35, diced the *jalapeños*. Her partner, Spark, a canny political activist, sliced his onions intently.

Outside the patio doors lay Grant's tidy organic garden. Rolling golden hills dotted with spreading oaks rose above the backyard fence. We'd been together at Live Oak for 12 years.



“TO YOU IT'S A DISH OF ICE cream. To me it's a dish of ice cream,” Frederick declared. “But to someone else, it may be a dish of profound emotional significance.”



BOB MCEOWEN, RURAL MISSOURI MAGAZINE

FOOD FIGHT!

FICTION BY
DIANA LEAFE CHRISTIAN

“Oh ... ?” we replied, chopping away. The sharp scent of garlic filled the air.

“Food doesn't just nourish body and soul, it evokes deep meaning,” he said, using the edge of his knife to slide chopped garlic into a bowl of mashed avocado.

“This guacamole may mean nothing to you, other than it tastes delicious. But to, say, someone who grew up in a Mexican family, it could connote warmth, or a mother's love, or the pride of heritage.”

This is not usually conscious, Frederick observed. These uncon-

scious food associations could be family closeness and belonging, or loneliness, anxiety, health, “correctness,” or “wrongness.”

“We don't just eat calories and carbohydrates,” he said, punctuating the air with his knife. “We eat our own personal history, culture, political beliefs. We eat ... our self-identity.”

“I'm quite sure my own comfort food is hot-buttered popcorn,” he added after a moment.

“Mine's chocolate. Definitely,” said Spark.

“Ice cream!” exclaimed

Francesca.

“Casaba melons,” said Grant, laughing.

“What's yours, Susanah?”

“Mashed Vanilla Wafers soaked in a glass of warm milk,” I replied without hesitation. I wished I had some right then.

“You see,” Frederick observed. “Warm milk and sugar. Nurturance and sweetness. The infant is safe and well fed.”

Marie said that whenever she felt stuck in an article she'd jump up and make warm, buttered raisin bread toast, restlessly scarfing down slice after slice.

“Anxiety food,” Frederick proclaimed. “Toast to quell anxiety.”



WE WERE OFF AND RUNNING, and the subject was the emotional meanings, the social meanings, of food. As we impaled strips of red pepper, half-moons of onion, marinated chunks of chicken, and narrow strips of *napolitos* cactus onto wooden skewers, we remembered Adelle Davis, nutrition guru of the '60s, and how people who drank carrot juice and took vitamins were “health nuts.” We recalled the food doctrines and dogmas from the '70s, the life-and-

death food choices of shared households: Buy organic or commercial. Eat “normally” or go vegetarian. Pig out on ice cream or adhere to the “mucousless diet.” Sweeten with honey or “poison white sugar.” Eat any way you like or eat macrobiotically or eat according to Arnold Ehret’s rules of food combining.

“Remember fructarians?” asked Francesca, making a face.

“And breatharians?” Marie giggled. “Those *really thin* people who just sucked on air?”

“And the Food Police,” said Frederick. “My grad school housemates and I had these *strict* rules about food combining, to which we all adhered scrupulously. And heaven help the guy who fell off the wagon and ate a tuna sandwich.”

“No protein with carbohydrates,” Marie declared.

“No fruit with vegetables,” someone else recalled.

“No fruit with the wrong *kind* of other fruits!”

“Melons alone! Grant, you gotta eat your casabas alone!”



OUR GUESTS ARRIVED. OUR former housemate Sally was a red-haired powerhouse who’d moved to the Valley three years ago to help Dan run a CSA garden and small livestock farm. He was a deeply tanned, amiable fellow who always seemed to wear plaid shirts. Francesca’s grown son Zack, mischievous and irreverent as ever, greeted her with a kiss and, “Hi, Ma. Still sleeping with the skinny fellow?” He winked at Grant.

If we’d known how the evening would turn out, we might’ve thought twice about our guest list.

At length the rice was cooked, the refried beans heated, the salad finished. The smell of mesquite-grilled chicken wafted in from the patio. We cleared and set the table with our best tablecloth and candles.

“I once lived with a group of

macrobiotic eaters,” recalled Spark, chuckling as he laid out plates. “And I’ll never forget the day we found a recipe for cookies.” Eager and naive, his household had waited expectantly for the cookies to come out of the oven, then dove in gleefully before they’d even taken a bite.



BOB MCEOWEN, RURAL MISSOURI MAGAZINE

“WE DON’T JUST EAT CALORIES AND CARBOHYDRATES,” HE SAID. “WE EAT OUR OWN PERSONAL HISTORY, CULTURE, AND POLITICAL BELIEFS.”

“We should have withheld judgment for another few seconds,” he said. “The cookies were awful! But since their degree of dreadfulness was an even match with our degree of zeal, no one could say anything.” They had mouthed the dry, saliva-curdling morsels silently.

“Our two sensibilities fought with each other,” he laughed. “‘The macrobiotic diet is fantastic; everybody’s doing it,’ vs. ‘This tastes like ... sawdust!’”

Finally one housemate had said quietly, “They’re called ‘Sand Cookies.’”

“That broke us up,” Spark said, “and we fell over, gasping with laughter. Especially when she got out the cookbook and showed us the recipe. It was only whole wheat flour and

water and a touch of salt.”

“There’s no dry like macrobiotic dry,” opined our gourmet cook.

“Why were those people always so serious?” Sally asked. “They never smiled.”

“You wouldn’t smile either,” answered Marie with a twinkle, “if your mouth was full of umeboshi plums. Makes you go like *this*.” She screwed up her face and crossed her eyes.

“Thank God those days of food weirdness are over,” someone muttered.



“OKAY, HERE’S WHAT WE HAVE,” Francesca declared as we gathered around the buffet table. “*Fajitas* with chicken here, and a small dish of tofu *fajitas* for you, Zack. Warmed tortillas in this basket. They’re wheat, Sally, but there’s rice. Here’s goat cheese in this dish, and soya cheese over here. Susanah, this guacamole has onions and garlic, and here’s yours without. There’s plenty of Dos Equis. Here’s alcohol-free beer, Frederick.”

It was a wonderful meal. The sun sent its last rays slanting through the windows; the swish of a neighbor’s sprinkler came softly through the open screen doors. The warm-wood taste of mesquite filled our senses. Amidst smacks of satisfaction and murmurs of “Mmmmm, great, Francesca,” we reminisced about Live Oak’s early food struggles—buying commercial or organically grown, while taking into account everybody’s different diet preferences or food allergies.

“We’d agreed to share costs for basic food items,” Frederick told Dan, “but we couldn’t agree on what ‘basic’ meant. *Finally* we agreed to buy organic as a group, and each person had to buy ‘specialties’ on their own.”

“I thought you guys were going to kill each other in the Great Food Fights,” said Zack, who’d been 11 at the time. “You all went nuts!”

"We did," agreed Frederick. "Pulled this way and that by unconscious issues. 'Doing the right thing' by the environment."

"And by Third World countries."

"And spiritual values."

"We didn't know how hot the topic was," I interjected. "But we found out!"

"Trouble with the subconscious," said Marie, taking a bite of *fajita*, "is that it's so damn 'sub'!"



"ONCE I GOT IT THAT WE COULD buy grains in bulk," Spark declared sometime later, "it was like an *epiphany*. This was in the '70s. I saw how our food system is so tightly connected with the political and social and economic systems. It changed the whole way I ate!"

"We vote with our dollars," he continued. "What we do or don't do at the supermarket is a lot more significant than what we do at the ballot box. We all eat, so everyone has a 'vote.' Our actions count!"

We were off on the politics of food choices. As we worked our way through the last of the *fajitas*, the guacamole, the refried beans and rice and salsa, Sally told us why we should buy locally.

"First, you help the farmer stay in business. Your money goes to him or her, not out of state. You're not supporting food wholesalers and agribusiness corporations. That just drives up the cost of food and reduces the amount of money a farmer can make. When you put money in the farmers' pockets directly they'll have more to spend in the local economy. So the farmer benefits, and everybody benefits."

"That's why Community Supported Agriculture such a good idea," said Dan. "It helps keep local growers in business. Since the shareholders buy directly from the grower they share in his ups and downs, so he's not financially ruined by a crop loss."

"Or 'she's' not ruined," reminded Sally.

"Right. 'She,'" said Dan with a grin.

They said that buying locally supports the quality of life in the area, because when land can remain farmland, everyone benefits from the open space. You support the environment



DAN BROWN, LAUGHING BEAR PHOTOGRAPHY

**"MASHED VANILLA
WAFERS SOAKED IN A
GLASS OF WARM MILK,"
I REPLIED WITHOUT
HESITATION.**

because you're not supporting diesel fuel to truck in food or electric power to keep it refrigerated. Or the infrastructure that maintains highways and trucks. You've got a reliable source of food, because it can't be disrupted by a truck strike or blizzard in another state. And you've got a *safe* source of food, because when you've got a personal relationship with the farmer you can know how your food is grown. Farmers make decisions based on other considerations than profit, such as the long-term health of their soil and long-term relationships with their customers.

"But when you buy from a supermarket you're supporting agribiz corporations, and they care only about quarterly profits—no matter the cost to the quality of the soil or the environment or the nutritional quality of your food."

"So what you're saying is," interjected Spark, "that when you buy lo-

cally you're not supporting agribiz, you're supporting *people*."

"Exactly!" said our farmers.



THE SUN WAS ALMOST GONE, THE western sky shone pink and gold through the curtains. Stuffed and content, we couldn't leave the table.

"Did I ever tell you about visiting The Farm in Tennessee back in the community's early days?" asked Grant, sipping his beer. "They were serious vegans even then. They ate 'poison white sugar' instead of honey because they didn't want to hurt bees. All they fed us was soybeans and Dr. Pepper, three times a day! At night the visitor's dorm was so smelly and gassy, little explosions bursting out all over ... you wouldn't dare light a match!"

"At least they grew their own soybeans!" exclaimed Sally.

"At least they fed you and put you up for free," said Zack.

"At least they had their own home-grown power source," drawled Marie.

"Speaking of soybeans," growled Dan with disgust. "Did you know genetically engineered food can be certified organic? Just if it's *grown* organically? There's a new tomato out with spliced-in fish genes. And a new potato with built-in resistance to the Colorado potato beetle."

"What's wrong with that?" I asked.

It wasn't resistance to beetles that was the problem, he said. It was the unknown effects of eating genetically altered food. Would eating such altered food over time hurt us? He told us there'd recently been near-riots in Europe over genetically engineered corn and soybeans from the US. And a new soybean species, "Roundup Ready," was made by the same company that made "Roundup," a powerful herbicide.

"Don't you see how sick that is?" exclaimed Spark, his voice rising. "They're making these beetle-resistant products to get us used to the idea,

but what they *really* want is to sell farmers more of their own herbicides and pesticides.”

“I really don’t see how ...” I began.

“It’s to enlarge their markets. Don’t you get it?!”

Spark and Dan speculated that if you can sell farmers an herbicidal poison to kill everything except their food crops—which are resistant—you can sell farmers more patented (and expensive!) seeds for that particular crop *and* sell them more herbicide.

“Well, let’s not *eat* any!” I said, indignant.

We can’t know if we’re getting it, Dan said. We never know when genetically engineered soybeans will end up in a batch at a warehouse that eventually gets into products like cooking oil, chocolate bars, or ice cream.

“Not *ice* cream!” scowled Francesca.

Dan explained that we can’t tell by the label. That’s because giant chemical multinationals want to protect the millions they’ve sunk into research and development. So they’ve lobbied Congress so they don’t have to label their products “genetically engineered.”

“But the most insidious thing of all,” added Spark soberly, “is that they’ve limited the rights of farmers who don’t grow genetically engineered crops. No farmers of nature’s own can label their products ‘not genetically engineered.’ There’s no way any of us can tell.”

“Unless we buy local, from farmers we know,” Sally said after a pause.



WE HEARD A KNOCK. JIM, OUR neighbor behind us, stuck his head around the kitchen door.

“Hi. Brought your Rototiller back.”

Jim ran Circle of Life Ranch, a small nonprofit that rescued abused farm animals. He and the other activists in their small community gave the animals food, shelter, and veterinary care. Jim had sunk his life savings into the place, and worked dawn to dusk seven days a week. Last time

I’d seen him he was on the evening news, unveiling a videotaped exposé of horrible conditions at a local factory farm. He was a complete and total vegan. He didn’t eat honey. He didn’t wear leather.

“Come and sit down!” said Marie. “This is Dan and Sally.”



**“IT’S GOOD, FRESH,
WHOLESOME CREAM
FROM OUR ORGANIC
DAIRY HERD, AND
HONEY FROM OUR
OWN HIVES.”**

“Have some dessert,” Francesca said warmly, setting out small plates. “We have plenty.” She brought Sally’s carrot cake to the table. “You can eat this, can’t you?”

“Ah, looks nice. But ... does it have eggs? And is that a cream frosting?”

“Yes, organically grown fertilized eggs, from our free-range Rhode Island Reds,” offered Sally, smiling. “The cream’s organic, too, from our small dairy herd of Jersey-South Devon crossbreeds. This is good, wholesome, fresh cream cheese. The cake is sweetened with honey from our own hives.”

It got real quiet. Some of us shifted uncomfortably.

“We also raise cattle, pigs, sheep, goats, chickens, turkeys—you name it, we’ve got it!”

“Uh ... Sally,” said Zack, our vegetarian.

“Our shareholders,” she sped on, “or anyone, really, can buy a share in the dairy herd. They buy an actual part of a cow. They pay a monthly boarding fee, which just happens to equal the cost of buying quart of fresh milk every week—”

“Sally, let’s not—” Frederick interjected.

“—That’s how we run our dairy coop without having to be certified by the California Health Department. Of course our herd is really healthy and clean.”

Dan, vaguely aware of the discomfort in the room but unaware of its cause, plunged down the same path.

“You see, Jim—it’s Jim, isn’t it? A Jersey-South Devon cross is an ideal breed for both meat and milk. So some of our shareholders also buy beef from us. They can also get chicken, turkey, pork, lamb—”

“—Dan. Uh, Dan ...” Zack tried again.

“We aren’t regulated by the USDA either—don’t want to be—so in the case of our Jersey-South Devons, our customers buy the animal live, or part of it. You can buy a whole beef, or a half, or a quarter beef—”

“—Excuse me,” Francesca broke in. “I think it’s time for dessert. We have tea, Jim, and ... fruit. Please, won’t you have some tea and ... a banana?”

Jim looked a bit glazed; the rest of us, quite uncomfortable. Francesca bustled around handing out plates of carrot cake, setting out dessert forks, tea cups. “Peppermint? Chamomile? Marie, your usual? Spark, what’ll you have?”

“So, buddy ...” Grant turned to Jim and asked, man-to-man, “How’d the rototilling go? Clutch act up again?”

We broke into separate animated conversations: Marie and I on our creative projects; Frederick and Spark on the latest Giants game. Francesca leaned over to murmur a quick explanation to our baffled guests.

“Ah, listen, everyone,” said Zack, who had sometimes been our household’s Demander of Truth and

other times its agent provocateur. "What do you say we apologize to Jim? And ask him to tell us why he's vegan?"

Murmurs and embarrassed smiles all around.

"It's OK, really."

"Please do tell us your reasons. Perhaps we could learn some new data," offered Frederick graciously.

Ahh! I thought. He's just unleashed the Vegan Encyclopedia Britannica!



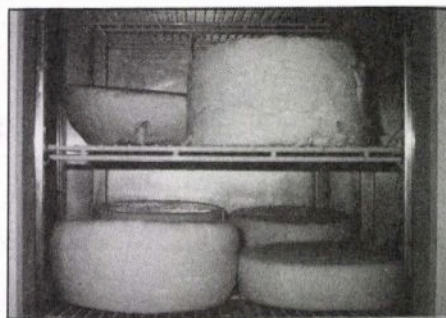
"WELL, FIRST," SAID JIM, PLEASED at his chance to educate, "there's the Hunger Argument. Did you know that 20 million people will die this year of malnutrition? But 100 million people would be well fed if Americans just ate 10 percent less meat. This is significant because somewhere in the world a child dies from malnutrition every 2.3 seconds. Another thing, 20 percent of the corn grown in the US is eaten by people, but 80 percent is eaten by livestock."

"In fact, 90 percent of the protein grown in the U.S. is wasted, because it's cycled through livestock. I say 'wasted' because an acre of farmland can grow 40,000 lbs. of potatoes, but only 250 lbs. of beef. Did you know 56 percent of US farmland is used to raise beef? Just think, the same land could be growing grains, beans, or potatoes. And it takes 16 lbs. of grain and soybeans to produce just one pound of edible flesh from feedlot beef."

"Then there's the Environmental Argument." Jim sipped his peppermint tea. "The cause of global warming is thought to be the greenhouse effect. And the main cause of that is carbon dioxide emissions from fossil fuels. It takes three times more fossil fuels to produce a meat-centered diet than a meat-free diet. And growing beef affects children in another way, too. Seventy-five percent of children in Central America under the age of five are malnourished. But farmers

in Central America export 300 million pounds of beef annually just to feed us."

"Then there's tropical rainforests. It takes 55 square feet of cleared rainforest to feed each quarter-pound of a beef cow grazing there. So every time we order a quarter-pounder we've



EAST WIND COMMUNITY

HE WAS A COMPLETE AND TOTAL VEGAN. HE DIDN'T EAT HONEY. HE DIDN'T WEAR LEATHER.

wiped out another 55 feet of rainforest. Right now a thousand plant and animal species every year go extinct because we're destroying tropical rainforests just to eat hamburgers."

"Then there's the Cancer Argument." Jim spent about 20 minutes altogether giving us reasons for not eating meat. He chronicled the Cholesterol Argument, narrated the Natural Resources Argument, added the Antibiotic Argument. He presented the Pesticide Argument, edified with the Ethical Argument, and wound up with the Worldclass Healthy Athlete Argument. "The only Ironman Triathlon winner who won more than once was a vegetarian, Dave Scott. He won six times."

Jim set down his cup, and grinned. "Well, thanks very much for the tea, and thanks for the 'tiller," he nodded at Grant. Still grinning, he left.

We sat quietly for a moment.

"So why *do* you raise animals and kill them?" asked Zack, turning to Dan.



DAN TOOK A DEEP BREATH AND shook his head. He said that he was following a time-honored tradition of animal husbandry. People had been raising animals for meat and milk and hides worldwide for millennia. In our diets, as well as in our bioregions, diversity was important. He believed there should be a diversity of food choices and diet options for people, and eggs and meat and milk were part of those options.

Dan agreed that most livestock operations devastate the environment. But *sustainable* livestock management is good for the environment. For example, most crops can't be farmed on sloping ground without causing serious erosion damage, he told us. But certain ruminants thrive on a sloped pasture, so we get protein from otherwise marginal land. And manure from these animals helps maintain the fertility of crop fields.

Dan cherished his animal charges, he said, and had intuitive relationships with each of them. He'd wake up in the middle of the night and know when a dairy cow had milk fever, and would get up and treat her. He knew when the ewes were about to lamb. His animals ate organically grown fodder and ranged free in yards and pastures with their herd-mates. They had names, not numbers. That year, a "C" year, their new calves were "Columbine," "Carlotta," and "Corky."

"Our connection with the beasts of the field is so important," Dan said earnestly. "We need to live with them and commune with them. We're enriched spiritually by knowing them. What would we do without their deep and enduring presence in our lives?"

"Sally and I are providing a service to people, where they can get healthy,

wholesome, organic eggs and meat and milk. Our animals live happy lives on a farm that's been organic for 50 years. We harvest them there on the farm; we don't send them to inhumane USDA slaughterhouses—"

"Harvest? *Harvest?*" exclaimed Zack. "Dave, for God's sake, why don't you just say 'kill'? You kill them, don't you?"

"Zack!" Francesca said sharply.

"You kill the animal friends you love so much!" Zack cried. "Corky, your cuddly darling when he was first born, is soon going to end up in a meat grinder, isn't he? Little Corky is just walking *hamburger*, isn't he?!"

"Zack! Enough!" Francesca hissed.

Silence. It was cool now, and dark outside, the twinkling candles our only light.



AFTER A TIME OUR PROFESSOR cleared his throat. "Well, now, friends. As you can see, food issues are deeply emotional."

"And political," Spark added quietly. "Every time we eat a quarter pounder we're taking political action."

"Yeah but farmers are nature's creatures, too. They've got a right to their livelihood," Marie said.

"And, Zack," she continued. "Why come down so hard on Dan? He may raise and kill animals for meat, but all of us here *eat* it. Except for you, everyone here's been eating chicken all night!"

"Do you realize," Grant said slowly, leaning back against Francesca, "that because we live together we've got a little more impact than if we were just six people buying food separately? I mean, as a community, we can choose how we 'vote' our food dollars."

The tension in the room was palpable. Around the candlelit table no one looked happy. Marie stared out the window. Sally toyed with her fork; Dan looked down at his hands.

Zack looked around at each of us, one eyebrow raised. The kitchen clock ticked loudly.

After a moment Zack held a forkful of carrot cake upright, slowly pulled back the tines—and flung it across the table at Frederick! It hit him *Splat!* in the face.

Zack grabbed up another forkful and flung it at Grant, splattering his shoulder.



TWIN OAKS COMMUNITY

**"WE ALL EAT, SO
EVERYONE HAS A
'VOTE.' OUR ACTIONS
COUNT!"**

Splat! Zack hit Marie in the chest. *Blap!* Dan in the forehead.

"Zack! Stop it this instant!" Francesca gasped, rising half out of her chair. *Splat!* She was hit in the mouth with a sweet gooey wad of comfort food.

I ducked under the table. Howls of anger. Screeches of chair legs on wood. Thumps and bumps and yells. I popped my head up. Glops of leftovers flew across the table. Spark grabbed Zack around the neck with one hand and fistful of guacamole with the other and, grinning wickedly, slowly ground the green mash into the young man's face. Zack, laughing, struggled to get free.

Marie scooped up ball of refried beans and flung it at Spark, hitting him in the eye.

"Yeow, it's your turn!" he shouted, leaping across me to grab Marie and stuff a handful of salsa in her ringlets. "Not my hair! Not my hair!" she screeched.

Francesca threw glops of her best gourmet efforts at Grant. Dan threw handfuls of guacamole Frederick. I flung stray *napolitos* willy nilly. We howled and squealed with glee and adrenalin.

Blap! Something thick and wet hit me on the side of the head. I scrambled around the table, throwing fistfuls of food at anybody, everybody. I got hit in the neck, then in the ear. Sally flung leftover tortillas like frisbees. Frederick and Dan wrestled under one side of the table, laughing and yelling, trying to push each other's face into a mound of beans that had landed on the floor. Zack hopped from chair to chair, stuffing any handy food down people's shirts, sparing no one.



AT LENGTH, BREATHLESS AND laughing, splattered and slimed, we lay sprawled around the table. Everyone's hair dripped. *Napolitos* and bell peppers hung precariously off Francesca's bosom. Marie, in Spark's lap, tickled him and licked frosting off his face.

"C'mere my sweet little comfort food," she teased.

We fell silent. A wave of giggles caught us up again, and some managed a few more desultory flings. But our rally was short-lived, because, in fact, we'd used up all our ammunition. Or rather, it was all over the room, sliding down the front of the stove, smearing the clock face, clotted on the curtains, and dripping off the ragged and torn, decades-old Food Combining Chart still hanging on the fridge by two ancient tattered yellowed strips of tape.

It was our finest meal ever. Ω

Diana Leafe Christian is editor of Communities magazine. While this is a fiction tale, many of the issues its characters face often arise in real communities.

DINNERS AT THE SHARINGWOOD CAFE

BY ROB SANDELIN

I ENJOY MEALS AT A SPECIAL restaurant built into my neighborhood. Kid-friendly, with good food and good conversation, it's a great place to just hang out. I especially enjoy how the late afternoon sun filters through the windows into a warm-toned room with rustic beams; a room full of convivial, engaged people. But then, I *should* enjoy it: I helped design and build this place, and I also work here. It's the commonhouse at Sharingwood Cohousing, where we create community around shared meals and camaraderie four or five nights a week.

Community dinners are the central contact point for our community; in fact, they're the primary social life for some of our members. You can experience a palpable feeling of aliveness as people talk, get food, and move from table to table, and their kids play and tussle. Community dinner nights are much like large Thanksgiving family feasts.

On the surface everything seems so spontaneous and easygoing that it's difficult to imagine the work and coordination that goes into creating dinner for 30 people. Meal preparation is done by a team, with a cook and a helper planning the meal, buying the supplies, and coordinating the menu. We rotate this task, with members signing up to cook or help once a month. Our commonhouse kitchen has features designed for team cooking; for example, team members can converse as they chop veggies around the central island. We store pots, pans, and cooking implements visibly on countertops or in open shelving, so there's no need to hunt for a saucepan or a wooden spoon—important in a kitchen used by 20 or so people. A small pantry adjacent to the kitchen stores bulk rice, pasta, and beans. The kitchen is open to the rest of the commonhouse and close to the flow of traffic in and out. Neighbors who stop by on their way home from work to check their mail often help taste test the soup, swap stories with the cooks,



100 MILE HOUSE

or chop a few vegetables. We added a small chopping table, lower than the height of the counters, which is easier for our elders and children alike.

Dinner prep takes from between two to three hours, depending on the menu. This can be stressful for folks with nine-to-five jobs outside the community. Usually cooks with such schedules prepare their meals the night before and arrive at 5 p.m. to warm up the main courses and make the salad.

Our dining area consists of seven narrow tables illuminated by dropped light fixtures. Meals are served buffet-style on a long wooden table oriented to the entrance so that people arriving can flow right into the food line. We had the foresight to put an electric plug in the floor—handy when someone uses a warming tray, fondue pot, or other electrical device for keeping food warm. Some cohousing groups prefer serving dinners family-style, with containers of food on each table, but at Sharingwood we'd rather wait in a food line than do more dishes.



ALBERT BATES

The commonhouse children's room is well used. We built it seven feet below the main floor level so that as we eat we can hear the cries but not the giggles. The kids tend to gobble their food pretty quickly, then run off and play with their chums. Sometimes they eat very little, then

just as their parents are leaving they come running back and wail, "But I'm hungry!" Getting kids to sit and eat a good meal is often a major challenge. A few parents occasionally take dinner home from the commonhouse in order to get some quality time around the dinner table.

Mealtime conversations often extend well beyond the dinner hour, and it's not uncommon for the cleanup crew to sweep around one last table of hangers on, still talking well into the evening. This is the reward for our design and building work—the amount of hours that people like to use the commonhouse. Watching my neighbors linger late over tea tells me our neighborhood community center and restaurant is working well, just as we hoped it would. Ω

Rob Sandelin, a frequent contributor to CoHousing and Communities magazines and author of Cohousing Resource Guide, helped found NICA (Northwest Intentional Communities Association).

WHEN IT'S YOUR TURN TO COOK ...

Jean Pfleiderer of Nyland CoHousing Community in Lafayette, Colorado, notes that few people with nine-to-five jobs can get away in mid-afternoon to cook a meal. If she has to cook during the week she tries to sign up with at least one other person who can start the meal before she gets home from work. To equalize the hours, Jean often does the shopping and as much prep work as she can on the previous day.

CHOP ALL THOSE VEGGIES BETWEEN eight and midnight and leave them in plastic containers in the fridge; prepare all the dry ingredients for the muffins and set them aside in a lidded container; make the soup and leave it simmering till the next night. Some dishes can slow-cook all day, so start them in the morning before you leave.

The first few times I cooked, we spent easily an hour

figuring out the menu, someone spent another hour shopping, and then we spent at least three hours cooking together and another three cleaning up.

I now figure 10 minutes to discuss what to fix; another 10 checking on what's in stock, etc.; maybe half an hour to shop; a total of two hours prep time (including the previous night, if we began food prep then); and about an hour to clean up.

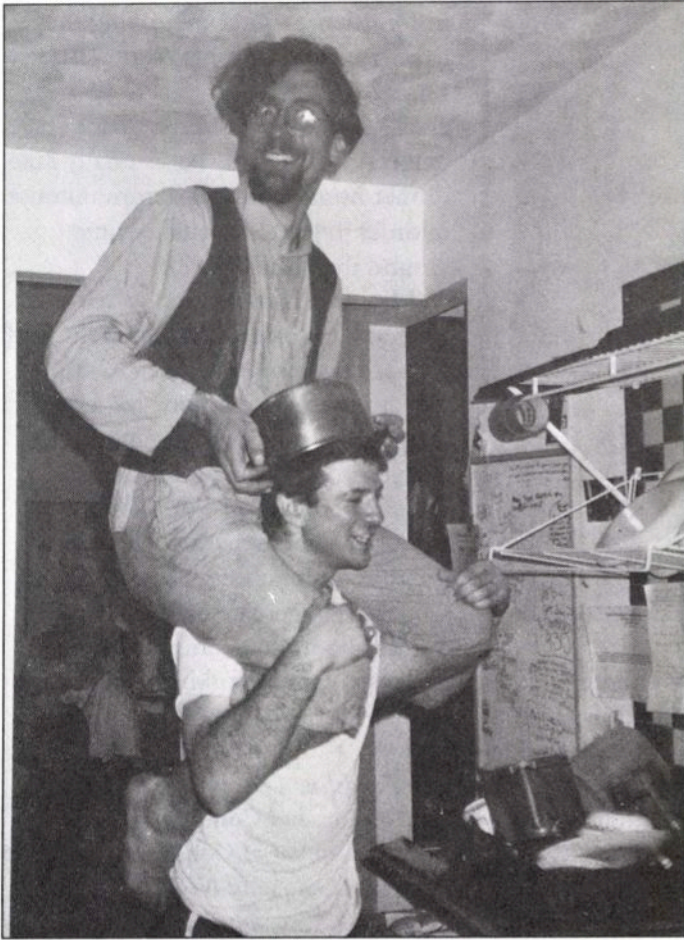
So we're talking about four, maybe five hours altogether, most of it spent enjoying camaraderie and a beer with a couple of friends in the kitchen. There are definitely

worse ways to spend an evening. Ω

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SHARINGWOOD



Can ancient laws of religious observance apply to a housing co-op's kitchen? H.R. and Nelson, deciding what to have for dinner.

Kashrut and Compromise at Ofek Shalom

BY LAURIE ZIMMERMAN
AND RANEE ZAPORSKI

Sundown, Friday night at Ofek Shalom. Everyone has gathered in the living room with freshly washed hands; a small table stands in the center with candles, a glass of wine, and two loaves of challah (egg bread). Someone recites a long blessing in Hebrew and lights the candles. Another holds the wine glass high and recites another blessing; toward the end everyone joins in. We all place our hands on the challah, say a short prayer in unison, and all break off a piece of challah. Then we all troop off to the dining room to have our abundant, but not too gourmet, vegetarian Shabbat meal.

FOUNDED IN 1986, OFEK SHALOM IS A 13-person housing co-op dedicated to fostering a progressive Jewish space for students and workers in Madison, Wisconsin. We are also part of Madison Community Co-op, a federation of 10 housing cooperatives run on democratic principles. Ofek's dual focus as a Jewish house and as a democratic cooperative attracts a wide range of individuals, from Jews who know little about co-ops to non-Jews with group living experience who know very little about Judaism.

Judaism is much more than a religion. Ofek members (known as "Ofekniks") have ranged from the seriously religious to those who have found inspiration through the culture, ethnicity, peoplehood, or the state of Israel. We have had members who spoke Yiddish or Hebrew, identified as left-wing Zionists, or advocated various forms of secular Judaism. The range of knowledge and opinions about Judaism among the members of Ofek is fairly varied. Usually Ofekniks are tolerant of other ways of living and forms of Jewish expression, or learn how to be that way after living here for awhile. For many Jews who feel like they live on the periphery of a non-Jewish world, Ofek is important, as it provides a progressive space to express Judaism and not feel uncomfortable as a minority.

Among those who identify with the religion of Judaism, a wide spectrum of observance exists, as well as a wide range of ideology and theology. In 1995 our house was extremely diverse, ranging from those who were mildly interested in the religion to those who made it central to their lives. Two members, Gene and Yoni, were modern Orthodox, meaning they followed Jewish tradition as precisely as possible while also interacting with the larger society. Others were also observant, but felt that it was necessary to diverge from *halacha*, or Jewish law, in various ways.

Our first major food issue arose in early 1996, when Gene and Yoni proposed that we "keep kosher"—following the rather stringent Orthodox Jewish dietary laws. We had all been friends for years, since our student days, and both men were integral members of the household.

Kashrut, the process of maintaining a kosher kitchen, includes but is not limited to not eating meat and dairy

KASHRUT AS A WAY OF LIFE

You are what you eat. You are also what you cook, how you shop, where you dine, how you crack an egg, what you burn up, how long you wait between meals, and the way you slaughter a calf. *Kashrut* is not simply a set of rules about permitted and forbidden foods; *kashrut* is a way of life.

—Blu Greenberg, *How to Run a Traditional Jewish Household*

products together in one meal, not eating any sort of seafood or pork, and not using dishes that have ever held non-kosher products.

Fortunately our community was vegetarian, which would make such a process easier. However, many changes would have to be made if we decided to follow Orthodox *kashrut*. We would have to buy new sets of dishes. Our oven would have to be scorched with a blowtorch to burn out even the tiniest crumb of non-kosher food. Every item of processed food we bought would be required to have a *heksher* on the label, a packaging symbol denoting that the food had been produced under Orthodox supervision.

In our community's modified consensus process we can choose in favor of, oppose, abstain from, or object to a proposal. It needs a simple majority of "in favor" versus "oppose" to pass, yet if anyone objects, the proposal automatically dies. Gene and Yoni did a great deal of research into the specifics of ordering special foods and the procedure for making our dishes and appliances kosher. After many formal and informal discussions, the "in favors" won, and in February we passed the "keep kosher" proposal by a comfortable margin.

As anticipated, it was quite a project to transform our kitchen. Not even the tiniest particle of non-kosher food should remain, according to Orthodox tradition, lest it contaminate the incoming food, rendering the latter unkosher. So, we bought a whole new set of dishes. We boiled and thoroughly scrubbed all the pots. We sanded off a layer or two of the wooden butcher blocks. We couldn't afford to replace all the counter tops, so we fitted plastic counter chopping boards over two of the counters. A *meshgiach*, an Orthodox kosher supervisor, came in and blow-torched our oven. Then he certified our kitchen as ready to go.

We ate all the same vegetarian meals as before, except that certain foods were now *heksher*-certified. Whenever we made bread, Gene or Yoni would break off a piece of the dough, put it in the freezer, then later burn it and say a prayer.

Initially, many of us were thrilled with our ability to accommodate so many different worldviews and ideolo-

gies under one roof. In the larger Jewish community, this is not always possible, so we felt proud to bridge religious and cultural differences for the sake of community.

"For better or for worse," one Ofeknik observed, "choosing an Orthodox kitchen should go down in the annals of cooperative living. Through a democratic process, we chose to adhere to traditional Judaism."

However, some members argued that our process was not as democratic as it seemed. In a community as small as ours, we found it impossible to be impartial and not let personal relationships

interfere with decision making. For example, Gene declared that, as observing Orthodox Jews, he and Yoni would have to move out if the kitchen was not kept Orthodox kosher. No one wanted them to leave; they were dedicated and influential members of the community and close friends with many of us. However, one or two Ofekniks felt that Gene's declaration was emotional blackmail.

Living in a diverse community was exceedingly difficult for Gene and Yoni as well. They felt compelled to practice their religious beliefs, yet they were acutely aware of the implications for the rest of us. They did try to compromise as much as possible, and sometimes felt that few people gave them credit for their efforts. The limits of compromise made their lives at Ofek, with its members largely Reform or secular, quite challenging.

"If a food is not kosher, then it's not kosher," Yoni explained. "There can't be any discussion about it. We can't just decide it's kosher and put a *heksher* on the label ourselves."

Because Gene and Yoni knew more about Jewish law than everyone else, the house often viewed them as authorities, even though they didn't want that power. Yet the two were often deferred to because other Ofekniks



Laurie Zimmerman, left, and Rane Zaporski.

either weren't much interested in Jewish food laws themselves, or they didn't have time to learn more about them.

The contradiction between Ofek as a progressive force in the Madison area Jewish community and Ofek as an Orthodox *kashrut* co-op began to show itself in house interactions, for example, during holidays. Passover was especially challenging, as the dietary rules for Passover are stricter than for ordinary times. Because our shelves weren't kosher enough for Passover, we covered them all in foil. We bought yet another set of dishes, kosher enough for Passover. (This became expensive!) Orthodox custom required that we sell all bread products in the house to non-Jews. We symbolically sold them to friends (who paid a nickel and gave them back).

The first night of Passover we had our traditionally laid back short *seder*, sitting on the floor, and taking turns reading excerpts from the *Hagadah*. The second night was a long, formal, Orthodox *seder*. Gene and Yoni read the whole *Hagadah*, in Hebrew.

"I govern my own religious observances by what is personally meaningful to me," one member said. "But where I may say, 'I like doing this' or, 'I prefer celebrating a holiday this way,' our Orthodox members would say, 'I have to do this' or, 'I can't do that.' Because many of our practices as a house conflict with their strict observance, we frequently had to bow to their needs."

In spite of the conflicts and divisions that developed, the house maintained its Orthodox kosher kitchen until September of '96, when Gene moved to Israel, and Yoni got married and moved to Florida. Once again we had to negotiate about food.

Things had changed. We recognized that a community is continually evolving, and its identity is no more than the people who participate in it at the time. With Gene and Yoni gone, while there was some support for maintaining an Orthodox kosher kitchen, no one was willing to fight for it. The majority of the house wanted to keep kosher to some degree, yet we also wanted some control over our decisions.

What emerged was a form of consensus-inspired *kashrut*, molded to fit the ideologies of the then-current members. We also got input from members of the larger Jewish community which functions as our extended fam-

ily, and with whom we celebrate holidays. Borrowing from the term "Community Supported Agriculture," we called our new policy "community-certified *kashrut*."

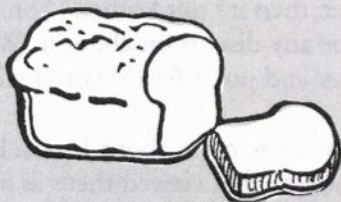
Community-certified *kashrut* was based largely on the philosophy of "Eco-Kashrut," a trend in progressive Jewish circles to make dietary practices environmentally and socially responsible. For example, our food choice necessitated political choices: we could either buy food products from a local vegetarian cooperative that were not produced under the supervision of an Orthodox authority, or from a large corporation which hired an Orthodox authority to supervise the process. In essence, we agreed to maintain our vegetarian kitchen, adding some other components of *kashrut*, while making every effort to support local cooperatives and egalitarian institutions. Many members were very excited by this new policy and felt that it fulfilled both of the co-op's missions—to be a Jewish house *and* a democratic cooperative.

However, this progressive policy only lasted for several months. While no significant problems emerged, enthusiasm dwindled and we fell back into eating the way we had originally—vegetarian, but not particularly kosher. Theoretically, our new policy was a creative solution to our issues surrounding food and community, and with a different group of people it might have been more successful. One reason that Ofekniks began to care less about it was because the degree of Jewish culture in the house had diminished. The current members are not as interested in Judaism or in creating a Jewish atmosphere.

While living with an Orthodox presence in our community was sometimes difficult, it did produce engaging debates, fascinating challenges, and new understandings of one another. Gene and Yoni forced us to confront our own beliefs and helped us redefine what it means to be a Jewish cooperative.

As one member observes: "Diversity is sometimes unpleasant. It's not smooth. But it forced us to talk to people different from ourselves and learn from them!" Ω

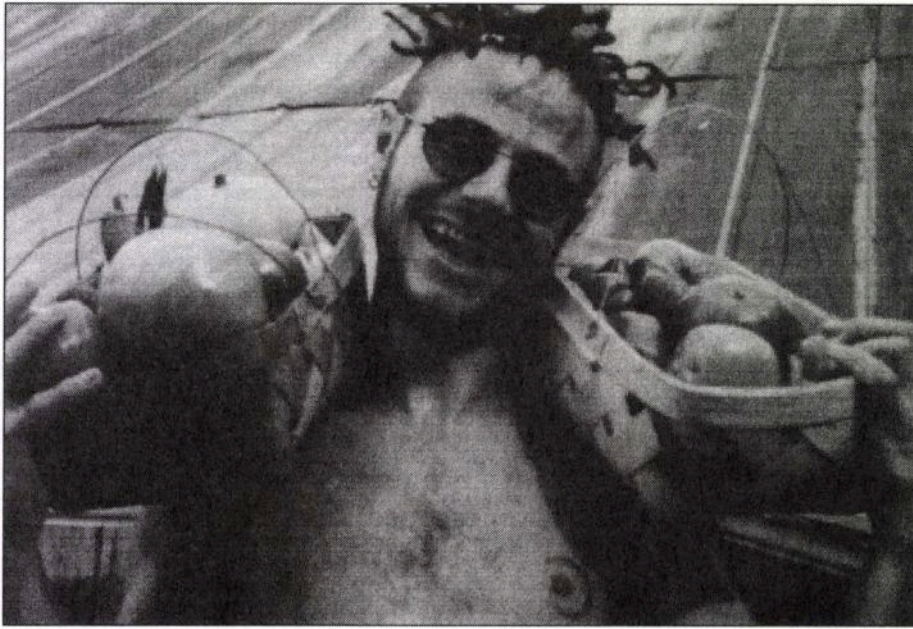
Ranee Zaporski is co-president of Madison Community Cooperative, the organization that financed Ofek Shalom co-op. Laurie Zimmerman lives in Philadelphia and attends Rabbinical school. She hopes to start a cooperative house there in the near future.



Gathered together, we give thanks for wonders
Received: good food
And good friends, that bind our
Community with love in which we see the reflected
Eloquence of our Creator.

—Elizabeth Barrette

Elizabeth Barrette is a professional writer living in rural Illinois.



At Short Mountain, much of the sharing, celebration, ritual, nurturing, and conflict revolves around food. Delilah Deville with a garden harvest.

TASTES OF SHORT MOUNTAIN

*The Culinary Rewards of
Community Living*

BY SANDORFAG

ONE DAY THIS PAST WINTER, DURING A PERIOD of sun deprivation, collective depression, and intense interpersonal conflict in our community, one of our members, Ross, had a craving for ravioli. He had never made it before. None of us had. But in the spirit of creative discovery that guides us through trying all sorts of things we've never done before, Ross consulted that most essential kitchen reference book, *The Joy of Cooking*, or "Joy" as we

affectionately call her in our kitchen.

As Ross made the dough, other members, seeking the simple healing of a creative group experience, joined the project. We defrosted and ground up meat from our goats for a meat filling; we added garlic and herbs to fresh goat cheese for a cheese filling; we made a vegan sweet potato filling and two different sauces. When the dough was rolled out and the raviolis assembled, a whole team of us was laughing, joking, and stuffing raviolis. It was fun creating a special treat for our community. By the time we consumed our magnificent ravioli feast, the food itself was the least significant nourishment we received from the meal. Just preparing the food together was a ritual of healing.

In our community, much of our sharing, celebration, ritual, work, nurturing, experimentation, and even conflict revolves around food. Like most aspects of our life here at Short Moun-

tain, food is lush and abundant, varied and chaotic, nourishing and expressive. Food provides a terrain where every member of the resident community, as well as the hundreds of visitors who pass through each year, can share talents, creativity, and love. And share they do.

Sometimes it's literally about food. Though we live in a remote rural area without easy access to cultural amenities such as ethnic foods, we regularly enjoy cuisine from all over the world. Often we share the foods of our own heritage, for example when Brian makes his mother's hearty Polish peroshki dumplings, or the mismatched combinations of Jewish foods Delilah, MaxZine, and I cook to celebrate confused traditional holidays, such as Matzo Ball Soup for the Fourth of July on Beltane.

We also like to explore new ethnic food territory. A homemade honey wine in three different flavors (banana,

ginger, and coffee) inspired an Ethiopian feast Charlie and I served up last week at IDA, a neighboring community in our evolving local "community of communities" in queer* middle Tennessee. However, the theme meal I can taste still was garlic night for 200 people at our gathering last fall. We had a team peeling garlic nearly around the clock for two days. We served roasted whole garlic cloves, garlic mashed potatoes, garlic bread, garlic sauerkraut, garlic this and garlic that, and to top it off, garlic chocolate cheesecakes. Incongruous combinations often turn out great. Pinky is our patron saint of new bold spice-combining frontiers—daring to go where no chef has gone before.

Other times food and coming together at mealtimes serves as a vehicle

* The members of this community consciously use "queer" to reclaim it as a positive term.



THE HEALTHY BREAKFAST CLUB

OUR FOOD AT SHORT MOUNTAIN SANCTUARY RUNS THE gamut between the nutritional and the excessive. We enjoy eating healthy whole grains and organic produce ... and we love extravagant feasts of sugar and chocolate. In some ways both are just as nourishing—to the body and the soul. A lot of care, love, and attention goes into everything we cook or bake, be it a veggie-tofu stir-fry or a double-chocolate cheesecake. Both extremes (as well as all of the culinary possibilities in between) are reflections of our coming together as a family. Our kitchen is a temple of celebration, ritual, and some very crazy parties. And the food that we cook and eat is an offering to the Goddesses and Gods of community.

The Healthy Breakfast Club is an example of such an offering. About a third to a half of our 18 members participate in it. The idea is simple: the Club breakfast (which previously everyone made for themselves) is prepared collectively with great attention to purely healthy ingredients. We start by cooking some whole grain (oats, millet, quinoa, or leftover brown rice from last night's

dinner); and add steamed greens (kale, spinach, or collard from the greenhouse or the garden); pepita and sunflower seeds (some like to roast them, others don't); and pressed garlic. Then come the optional extras: miso (usually homemade), tahini, grated ginger, nutritional yeast, flax seed oil, steamed carrots, seaweed, home grown shiitake mushrooms (in season), and/or finely-chopped fresh parsley.

Each Healthy Breakfast Club participant has a unique combination—his own ideal healthy breakfast. But the result is always the same: the fun of mixing ingredients, sharing the chopping/peeling/slicing, and the chaotic collective dance of maneuvering around the limited number of stove tops and counter space.

Then, after we've each had our very healthy breakfast, there is nothing like some dessert—usually a crispy homemade waffle drenched in maple syrup and melted butter. Yum! —*Delilah DeVille*

Short Mountain Sanctuary member Delilah DeVille starts her days off right with a nutritious and tasty breakfast.

for theatre. At another gathering the IDA community served up "The International House of Psycho-drama." I've long since forgotten the food I ate that night, but I don't think I could ever forget the wailing, screaming, psychotic release of the event. Some folks complained that they like to eat in peace, which I do, too, but rules are made to be broken, and good theatre is about commanding an audience's attention, and what better place to command a crowd's undivided attention than while they're waiting for food?

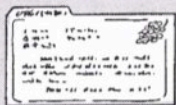
Folks in our community also create more traditionally sacred food rituals. Last Halloween Keer decorated the kitchen in paper lanterns and prepared an elaborate harvest festival, with processions, ritual, and lots of scrumptious autumn foods. We have also created ritualized eating experiences, such as the meal where we fed each other, rather than ourselves, each mouthful.

OUR KITCHEN IS A TEMPLE OF CELEBRATION, RITUAL, AND SOME VERY CRAZY PARTIES.

Our community's relationship with food does not begin in the kitchen. One value that brings all us post-urban queers together deep in the woods is our desire to live close to the land. Early in the year, as the plants sprout up and the trees bud and spring is burstin' out all over, the foragers among us gather wild edible greens and flowers. We eat intoxicating wild salads with toothwort and phacelia and trout lilies and violet flowers and chickweed and cleavers and red buds. I say "intoxicating" because wild foods zing with more life force than any plants

we could ever cultivate. In spring we enjoy comfrey leaf tempura, a gourmet approach to a common medicinal herb and garden weed. In summer, wild blackberries are abundant, and those who brave the thorns are abundantly rewarded. In fall, plump juicy persimmons fall from the trees.

We also have gardens and orchards, where we grow vegetables, herbs, flowers, and fruits. Our gardens are magical, eclectic, and oh so colorful. For some gardening is a central focus, and greater food self-sufficiency a goal we work toward. Our big plantings are major group efforts, and the foods we harvest from them are varied and abundant. I think of Stv's artful salads, accented always by colorful flowers. I think of Leppard digging up forgotten root vegetables in the middle of winter and warming us all with a down-to-earth stew. We raise chickens and goats, which provide us with an abundance of fresh eggs, milk,



MAKING SAUERKRAUT

IF I HAD TO SELECT A SINGLE FOOD TO EAT FOR THE REST OF my life, it would be sauerkraut. Fermented foods feel so alive and nourishing to me. Every so often I make up a five-gallon crock of sauerkraut, and people gobble it up in days. All you need is:

- Clean ceramic 5-gallon crock (or smaller);
- Cabbage, approximately 10 heads;
- Salt;
- A potato masher or other tool for tamping down the cabbage;
- A plate;
- A gallon jug filled with water, or a clean rock, to use as a weight.

Chop up the cabbage, rough or fine, with or without the heart. Place it in a bowl, sprinkling each layer lightly with salt. The salt makes the cabbage sweat, and the salty sweat is what creates the brine in which the cabbage can ferment without rotting. As the bowl fills up, empty it into the crock. You can add other ingredients as well. I've added crushed caraway seeds, garlic, seaweed, whole

heads of cabbage, Brussels sprouts. As you add salted cabbage to the crock, tamp it down so it is packed tightly. This also helps force water out and creates the brine. When you get near the top of the crock, and all the cabbage is tightly packed, place a plate which fits snugly inside the crock over the cabbage, and place the weight on it. Then cover the whole thing to protect it from dust, flies, etc. By the next day, there should be liquid covering the plate, and you should leave it for a week to two weeks, depending on how strong you like your kraut and how patient you are.

When you take kraut out, repack the crock the same way, with the weight, so the process can continue. If any cabbage is exposed to air (meaning not under the protection of the brine), there can be some scum at the top of the crock. If this happens to you, just scrape away the scum and enjoy the kraut anyway.

Kraut can also be made in smaller containers like mason jars. Just pack it tight enough so brine covers all the cabbage, put a top on, and store in a dark place until you are ready to use it.—Sandorfag

and occasionally, meat. We also have a collective passion for learning the basic processes of food transformation. From our goat milk we make cheeses and yogurt and ice cream. We also make miso, beer, wine, soymilk, sauerkraut, sprouts, wheatgrass juice, pickles and our latest food craze, seitan. And we always have fresh homemade bread, baked in an ever-evolving variety of styles.

Food in our community is not exclusively a realm of sharing, joy, and celebration. As with any other area of community life, food is rich terrain for conflict and working to find common ground. "The kitchen is a mess" or "I can't believe I live with such slob" are periodic refrains. "Kitchen tips" as an agenda item in our weekly meetings always leads to just one more request: Could people please put the knives away this way? Store leftovers that way?



James Creagh, with two of the six milking goats.

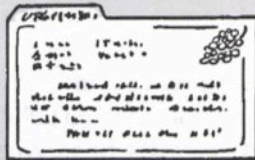
Clean cast iron some other way?

Special dietary needs can also be a source of conflict. Some folks don't do dairy, others avoid black pepper and other heating spices. One doesn't like seaweed; one thinks "the spicier the better," others can tolerate only mild hotness. We generally try to respect these needs, but it is impossible to please everyone all the time. It's the same with food buying. One person loves almonds, even at \$4.50 a pound,

and would gladly forego coffee or sugar or whatever to have almonds around. Another can't imagine starting the day without coffee and sugar. Some people would prefer that we keep it as cheap as possible and stick to the basics, but "the basics" turn out to be different for everyone.

In a community committed to the celebration of individual expression and diversity, food helps us learn to be tolerant. Our meals are probably not what any one of us would eat on our own, but collectively we have evolved a rich culinary tradition which reflects our values and differences. One thing is certain, our meals contain a vital ingredient considerably more nourishing than vitamins, minerals, or fiber content—love. Ω

Sandorfag is a writer, herbalist, gardener, food-fermenter, and hell-raiser, who has lived at Short Mountain Sanctuary for four years.



YOGURT CREAM CHEESE

WE HAVE SIX MILKING GOATS HERE AT SHORT MOUNTAIN SANCTUARY. By about mid-June we have an abundance of milk, which we use to make yogurt and several types of cheeses. This experimental recipe was a success—it tastes like cream cheese with a rich, yogurty taste.

Ingredients are: one gallon yogurt, one gallon milk, and vegetable rennet.

- Mix yogurt and milk in a pan and warm to about 95–100° F.
- At this temperature add a good squirt of vegetable rennet and let sit for about six to eight hours at room temperature.
- Pour into a cheese cloth, and drain overnight.

The cheese is ready to eat.

—James Creagh



LET this food bless us,
heal us, balance us,
energize us,
and put us in harmony
with everything good in
the universe.

—Theo Levine & Sonya Heller

Excerpted with permission from *100 Graces: Mealtime Blessings*, by Marcia & Jack Kelly. Harmony Books, 1992. Pp. 111 pp. \$8.



NEIGHBORFOOD



Dry-season cries of "Elote!"**
pitch white corn on the cob from shopping carts.
If you smell teriyaki it is noontime;
stripmall doughnuts and fried chicken reach us on the evening onshore breeze.
Bachelor apartments' pots and pans clang out
under desolate three-story rubber trees in the Rayfield's courtyard.
Maria carves front-yard furrows of maize,
testing Dona Berta's method-honed farming in Honduras.
The sesame seedlings Mr. Young Kim sprang
on Marisa's first graders' vegetable plot
take root, welcoming longer days.
(These kids I take to the garden
found sudden love for *lettuce*.)



The Filipino fish market burned down this New Year's—
the one time I have seen hawks brave the depths of Los Angeles.

How little I know about nourishment.
I remember the rudiments of lemon blossoms,
nomads peeling trash barrels open,
hefty slices of Joe's bread
at a potluck in the Bimini Arms apartments.
(We bought that building! My part was saying "We.")



In a place made of neighborliness,
in work shaped by ideas,
love and hope sputter.



In a few months I will leave
what has been my bowl, guest, table, meal—
Lois' hearty just-gathered salads,
the thrill of winnowing not much more than a pound of amaranth,
house finches loosening lambsquarter seeds,
George on the brick bench at the intersection
munching endless radish-hot nasturtium flowers,
little Amber's legendary eighty-four-dollar loquat harvest.

May each bite on these streets
feed friendship, nourish.

—Mary Maverick



* *Elote* is corn on the cob, sold by pedestrian vendors in the Latino neighborhoods of Los Angeles.

Mary Maverick lives in Los Angeles Eco-Village, a multicultural urban neighborhood that practices organic gardening, edible landscaping, and citizen empowerment, where she studies sustainable community and agriculture.



"Hey, we cooks can only do so much!"

OUR FIRST FOOD WAR HAD TO do with meat. Twin Oaks was founded as a meat-eating community in 1967 before vegetarianism was common. All the lunches in the first month of our communal existence consisted of bread and baloney and Kool-aid. All the suppers contained hamburger. Our first vegetarian (in 1969) had to fend for herself. Some time in the early seventies we started serving some meatless dishes at every meal, and it became standard practice to make sure there was vegetarian fare at all times. Cooking two separate meals, one for meaties and the other for veggies, nearly doubles the work of the cooks, and partly for this reason meat-eating tapered off at Twin Oaks in the late seventies. There were a few years when Twin Oaks served meat only three times a week.

The initial impetus for our Tuesday group, in 1982, was a hunger for meat. We started this supper club with the

FOOD WARS

BY KAT KINKADE

promise that there would be chicken every Tuesday night. We pooled allowances and bought the chicken ourselves for a few months. Then one year the Food Manager got a bigger budget, and the whole community had chicken. Since then, the amount of meat served has varied, depending on the supply of home-grown beef, the size of the food budget, and the energy of the cooks.

All that is okay, but every once in awhile somebody upsets the balance. We'll go through a month when a major meat cook gets sick or goes on vacation, and suddenly, from a meatie point of view, no matter how hard the

cooks try, meal after meal is tasteless. Meaties start taking steaks and wieners and bacon from the freezer and frying up their own entrees. Hardworking veggie cooks find their efforts spurned and overhear unkind remarks at the steam table, such as: "There's nothing to eat here: shall we go out for pizza?"

One memorable evening when there was a vegan meal (the latest in a series of vegan meals), a few meat-eaters raided the freezer for steaks and got together to broil them. The smell drew a crowd, and the crowd became a party, with 20 happy greasy diners. They weren't as happy the next day when they learned that the cook who had prepared the rejected meal had been heard crying.

That's from a meatie standpoint. I'm trying to stretch myself to feel this from the other side. It seems to me likely that during weeks when the meaties are happy with the food, the veggies may find the steam table drab. They are always fed, but if the major cook is concentrating on the meat dish, the veggie dishes may not be skillfully prepared. So maybe the veggies, too, meet in little groups and grumble. Maybe from time to time they get together and pig out on rice and vegetables and tofu cheesecake. Maybe they even go out for pizza.

Only a few people don't care what they eat. The rest of us come to the steam table with an expectation of finding something good, and if we are disappointed several days in a row, it hurts morale and breeds rebellion.

Recently this problem has been complicated by a third major subdivision of eating preferences. Vegan vegetarians don't eat animal products at all, which means no milk, cheese, yogurt, or eggs (and therefore no mayonnaise, no cakes or hot breads except the special vegan varieties, no soufflés or quiches). The number of vegans appears to be growing lately. A vegetarian cook is increasingly likely to be a vegan cook, and the old-fashioned lacto-ovo-vegetarians are the latest group to feel at times not taken care of.

Giving in to one another and taking turns is not a Food War. Food Wars come when any one of these sectors dominates the diet, or controls the budget, or makes discrimi-

natory food policy, and the steam-table offerings become the subject of grumpy conversation or even public controversy. For example, we once had a Food Manager who decided that he "didn't have enough money" to buy white sugar. People got upset, but he ignored them. So individuals began to buy their own one-pound or five-pound containers of sugar out of their own allowances, and a whole shelf had to be given over to the private sweet stashes.

We came close to a mini-Food War one day when a member was cooking and got into a mischievous mood. She decided she would serve a supper consisting entirely of deserts. Hungry communitarians came to the steam table and met chocolate pie, peach pie, chocolate chip cookies, and spice cake. No salad, vegetables, or rice. Most of us were disappointed but took it with the humor intended. I

believe I filled up on cookies.

But some didn't think it was funny. They marched into the kitchen and took out the leftovers from lunch. (Since lunch is usually made up of leftovers in the first place, this was a pretty desperate act.) They heated them up and brought them to the dining tables with clenched mouths and wrathful eyes. It was this incident that impressed mostly strongly on me the fundamental thing about supper. It is the high point of the day, and not to be trifled with. Ω

Excerpted with permission from Is It Utopia Yet? by Kat Kinkade, © 1994, Twin Oaks Community. Available for \$13 ppd. from Twin Oaks, 138 Twin Oaks Rd., Louisa VA 23093; 540-894-5126.

Kat Kinkade co-founded Twin Oaks and East Wind communities and helped start Acorn community. She is author of A Walden Two Experiment (William Morrow, 1972) and Is It Utopia Yet? (Twin Oaks, 1994).

All the lunches in the first month of our communal existence consisted of bread and baloney and Kool-aid.

LIVING IN SINCERITY

1



JONATHAN ROTH



JILLIAN DOWNEY

Gaia Kile heads for the yard when it's time to make dinner.

Wildcrafting in Our Yard

BY GAIA KILE

I HAVE A DREAM OF AN URBAN garden for our collective household, Hei Wa House.

In my dream our roof, covered with buckets of compost-rich soil, grows cucumbers, tomatoes, perhaps even a zucchini or two. Compost buckets dripping with cucumbers are hung along the south wall of the house as well, their dangling vines shading the roof of the greenhouse in the summer. Everything is watered by drip irrigation, and a drainage-collection system saves nutrient-rich runoff for other plants. The greenhouse, an extension of the south wall, is built of plastic stretched over PVC pipe, or scavenged windows—the kind often found in urban areas. Most of the backyard is a garden, with a patch or two set aside for lawn chairs. The front yard is dedicated to dwarf fruit trees and the edge of the property is lined with blackberry and raspberry bushes.

Alas, it is but a dream. We rent our house in Ann Arbor, and don't know how long we'll be able to live here. So building a greenhouse and planting trees are out of the question. Although we hauled in manure a few years back and we use our compost, working to build up our sandy soil doesn't seem reasonable. Not to mention the fast pace of urban life—the largest impediment to such a dream garden.

We do a little gardening in a 10x10-foot plot, but by midsummer the weeds are often as tall as the vegetables, and our watering schedule tends to become irregular.

Fortunately, we don't consider the victory of the "weeds" a total loss. Hei Wa House has a tradition of eating the wild plants that grow in our yard. For example, lamb's quarters is bountiful and delicious, with a spinach-like taste. I usually know spring is here when I find dandelion or dame's rocket leaves to nibble on. Violet-leaf pesto is a favorite recipe.

Midsummer I'll occasionally put up a vinegar with dozens of herbs from our yard. And burdock root dug up in the fall and stir-fried with carrots and chickpeas is a tasty dish. Often I enhance a salad with a mix of wild greens, though there's never enough chickweed. Sometimes wildcrafted plants are a noticeable element in our meals two to three times a week. Our love for the spontaneous wildcrafted salad once earned us the neighborhood title: "The co-op that eats their lawn."

What we don't garden we tend to let go. Our community is rooted in an environmental ethic that trusts nature—we're suspicious of lawn mowers. Unfortunately, neighborhood pressures, usually in the form of a notice from the city, results in our annual or biannual lawn mowing. (It is important to mow promptly when asked; we know of at least one local herbalist who returned from vacation to find that the city had mowed her herb garden.) The trick is to leave as much as possible unmowed, so we have ever-widening borders around the edge of our yard. The violet patches along the front walk have created their own undulating border around the grass. Our lawn mower respects this edge. Sometimes I mow with precision, avoid-

ing a single plant that is a new or special species on our lot.

Taoists talk of achieving through "not doing," and I guess that's our approach. While most of our neighbors strive for lawns with the fewest

While the local food co-op is our community's quickest route to good eating, backyard wildcrafting also offers many blessings. Wild plants are extremely rich in vitamins and minerals; they add diversity to our

EACH NEW PLANT SPECIES THAT EMERGES IN OUR WILD SANCTUARY IS GREETED WITH CELEBRATION.

non-grass species, we greet each new plant species that emerges in our wild sanctuary with celebration. Almost every year I stumble across a plant we didn't have the year before. On last count I found 66 species I recognized.

Harvesting edible wild plants can take some time—often leaves are small, or patches of a particular plant are scattered across the yard. I take care not to overgraze, and try not to pick too much of one plant from any one place. Harvesting can also be a chance to weed the real weeds: I try to pull up some grass each time so it won't overrun the wild edibles.

diet; and they're free. Wildcrafting puts us in touch with the Earth and the seasons. Although my vision of an urban permaculture homestead is still out of reach, wildcrafting is a good first step.

Why not invite the wild into your community meals? It's as close as your own backyard. Ω

Gaia Kile co-founded Hei Wa house in 1984. In addition to wild plants, his passions include health care (he is a nurse, presently in graduate school), co-counseling, Tai Chi, communal living, and radical politics.

LIVING IN SINCERITY

2



JONATHAN ROTH



Growing Your Own & Selling It, Too

BY TREE BRESSEN & KEN JOLLOFSKY

IMAGINE RUNNING A BUSINESS in which you raise your own food, build good relations with neighbors, raise consciousness about sustainable growing—and help people move away from dependence on agribusiness and supermarket chains. Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) farms allow people to support local farmers in producing healthy food, in season, for local consumption. In a CSA, a small number of shareholders (from 10 or so to 100 or more) pay a flat fee at the beginning of the growing season, then receive a share of garden produce each week.

Acorn community, 20 people who share income and housing on 72 acres in rural Virginia, has been considering a CSA business since our founding in 1993. Although we've produced abundant food in our garden each year, including enough to can, dry, and freeze for the winter, we never felt ready to launch a CSA as a business. That is, not until the spring of 1996 when Cricket joined. With eight years of gardening and experience running his own small hammock shop, Cricket possessed the skills needed to make CSA a reality. Moreover, starting a CSA in an intentional community had been his fervent dream for six years! After several months of meetings, schemes,

and plans, we decided to go for it, moving an Acorn CSA program from wistful concept to tangled reality.

We took advantage of living near 30-year-old Twin Oaks community, and used their local network of former members to find our first subscribers. Former communitarians naturally tend to have positive attitudes toward us and don't need much convincing of the benefits of avoiding pesticides and buying directly from local growers. We also posted flyers at natural food stores, garden suppliers, supermarkets, and other locations.

However, plenty of thorny issues had to be resolved. One was finances. Growers aren't known for getting rich, and as a young community we need money for land payments, buildings, tools, and many other expenses. Hammock-making has always been the backbone of Acorn's economy, with an average income of about \$8 per hour. While we have a fairly successful business in tinnery (a craft item made from recycled cans), the other craft businesses we've tried haven't panned out. At times we've had computer programmers living with us who telecommuted for \$30/hour, but our last programmer departed over a year ago.

However, we are committed to diversifying our income sources,

including bringing them more into alignment with our ecological values. In spite of losing Cricket's hours from the hammock to the CSA business (he's our fastest hammock weaver), we declared our willingness to subsidize the CSA operation for the first few years if necessary. In addition, we were lucky to receive a \$2000 grant from a supportive donor, enabling us to rebuild our greenhouse and replace our ailing rototiller just in time for our first season.

Our plan was to sell 10 full shares at \$550, or their equivalent in half shares at \$300 each. Full shares are expected to weigh a minimum of five to seven pounds each week; half shares, two to four pounds. We planned to offer mostly vegetables, plus occasional herbs, throughout a 30-week growing period from April to November. Our shareholder prospectus includes a schedule of what vegetables to expect when, but we warned everyone that this schedule would depend on cooperative weather, no unexpected bugs, and other factors. Joining a CSA as a shareholder means accepting the shortfalls as well as the bumper crops along with the growers.

Another challenge was the amount of contact we wanted to have with local folks. Increasing contact with

people—demonstrating sustainable agriculture and helping people experience the connection from grower to table—is often a major aspect of running a CSA. But how much contact did we really want, given that our gardeners, including women, often prefer to work shirtless on hot days? Yet one of our goals was to

member who has re-settled nearby, with whom there are not the same cultural barriers. Meanwhile, in spite of the absence of turnout for shareholder events, random phone surveys plus letters from shareholders revealed that they were tremendously pleased. In the best evidence yet of customer satisfaction, after the first

equivalent of nine full shares. Now that we're in full season, both the community and the shareholders are awash in wonderfully fresh veggies! If we run low on produce this fall, we might give shareholders canned goods such as tomatoes and pickles to help fill out the orders. There's talk of eventually adding cut flowers as well.

One sacrifice we won't consider is using chemical fertilizers or pesticides to increase crop yield. Instead, we rely on raised beds; naturally pest-resistant seed varieties; occasional applications of botanicals; hard work; and tons of mulch—hay, sawdust, or even cardboard placed around plants to prevent weeds. We are not certified organic, and we're concerned about run-off from neighboring farmers who use commercial fertilizers and pesticides. But we're proud to tell our shareholders that we use only natural growing methods.

Our weekly newsletter for shareholders covers everything from favorite recipes to the politics of seed-saving. Because gardening is so weather-dependent, Cricket often doesn't know which vegetables will be harvested for the baskets until the day before delivery. There's always a last-minute rush to get that information into the newsletter.

BOTH THE COMMUNITY AND THE SHAREHOLDERS ARE AWASH IN WONDERFULLY FRESH VEGGIES.

make naturally-grown food accessible to local people, and we imagined some of our less-than-affluent shareholders might want to work off part of their share price, as is the case with most CSAs. We discussed this issue at length, finally agreeing to invite shareholders to open houses several times during the season.

However, our first open house was rained out. Nobody showed up to the second. It seemed that an announcement in our weekly CSA newsletter, *A Cornucopia*, wasn't enough to get people to show up. But the shirtless garden crew hasn't complained, and we have a work exchange agreement with a former

week of produce deliveries we received about a dozen calls from friends of shareholders who also wanted to join. Since we were already full for 1997, they're on the waiting list for 1998.

The first month we produced barely enough to fill the shareholder baskets. If the winter hadn't been so mild and we hadn't overwintered carrots, kale, and turnips in the ground, we might have been in big trouble! As it was, the community itself received precious little of the early harvest, so that we could fulfill our delivery commitment to shareholders. So we stopped accepting new shareholders when we got to the

LIVING IN SINCERITY

3



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JONATHAN ROTH

On Fridays we deliver shares to Louisa, a small town nearby, and Tuesdays we deliver to Charlottesville, a larger college town about an hour away. In both cases, we drop off full baskets and pick up last week's empties at designated drop-off points.

Because CSAs do not receive the government subsidies allotted to mainstream growers and agribiz corporations, our cost per pound of food is significantly higher than its commercially grown equivalent in supermarkets. However, by eliminating middle people and selling direct, our shareholders pay less for our food than they would for its *organically grown* equivalent. In addition, our shareholders have the satisfaction of knowing they're helping a young community thrive. Now that our CSA is finally underway, we look forward to attracting additional enthusiastic gardeners and expanding our food business substantially in coming years. Ω

Tree Bressen and Ken Jollofsky share a desire to welcome to Acorn new members who find working hard fun and filling.



MAY

God bless our meal and grant us a compassionate and understanding heart toward one another.

— Mt. St. Mary's Abbey, Wrentham, Massachusetts


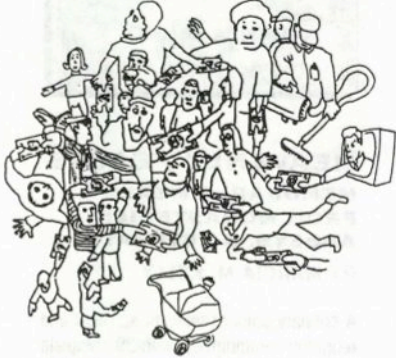
Excerpted with permission from *100 Graces: Mealtime Blessings*, by Marcia & Jack Kelly. Harmony Books, 1992. Pb. 111 pp. \$8.

SCHOOL FOR DESIGNING A SOCIETY 1997-98

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Rather than scramble for a comfy spot in the current system, spend some time working with others to imagine and design a system you would prefer, with concepts from composition, activism, performance, feminism, critical theory, cybernetics, attention to language . . .

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Intentional Communities Web Site

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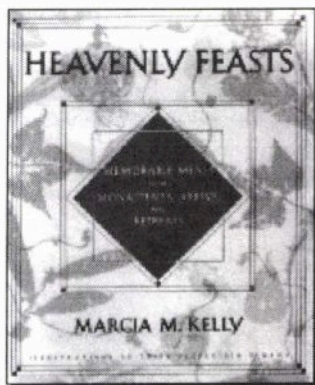


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HEAVENLY FEASTS
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 BY MARCIA M. KELLY

A culinary sojourn through spiritual and religious communities, with 39 complete meal plans and 146 recipes, ranging from a New Orleans Zen Temple's simple Genmai breakfast to the hearty Baked Italian Vegetable Casserole with Polenta, served by the Quakers of Pendle Hill. Vivid, heartwarming descriptions of communities and communitarians—nourishment for both body and soul.

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A 'Big Sister' Community to Help

The Federation of Egalitarian Communities (FEC) is a mutual-support organization for a dozen communities in North America that share values such as income sharing, nonviolence, participatory decision making, and ecological practices.

WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO GET a new community off the ground? Qualities such as patience, hard work, and good communication skills may come to mind. However, some young groups have found that having a supportive "big sister" community nearby has been one of the most important factors for a successful start-up.

When I was growing up, my older sister taught me how to make cookies and what clothes were in style, and introduced me to new friends. Growing communities can similarly benefit from a big sister community. Many FEC communities are thriving on such relationships.

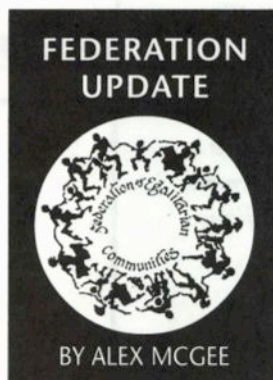
In 1993, Acorn Community began in Louisa County, Virginia, seven miles from (then) 26-year-old Twin Oaks. Tekiah helped Abundant Dawn form on its land. In 1996, the first subcommunity, Skyhouse, of the forming Dancing Rabbit ecovillage chose to locate near 23-year-old Sandhill Farm in Rutledge, Missouri. Last year some members at East Wind in Tecumseh, Missouri, considered forming a new community on adjacent East Wind land, although these dreams

are currently on hold due to tight finances. None of these groups are colonies or extensions of the larger, older groups. Although they hold common values and exchange goods and labor, they are distinct. These new communities benefited and continue to benefit from the established groups in at least five ways.

First, the positive local reputation of the established communities have allowed the forming groups to find jobs, land, and community businesses more quickly, as well as diminish cultural barriers with potential neighbors. For example, in rural Scotland County, Missouri, most oldtimers know each other and may

be skeptical of anyone who hasn't lived there several decades. So, when Tony Sirna of Skyhouse made calls about buying land and mentioned he was a friend of Sandhill, landowners were much more open. Another plus was that Sandhill members discovered they were held in higher esteem locally than they had realized. Sandhill members have built good local relations through 23 years of business with neighbors and membership in local civic groups. Now Skyhouse will have a head start in these areas.

Second, some of the older communities gave loans to the new groups. Unrelated people aspiring to become an income-sharing community are not generally considered a good loan prospect by a bank. Twin Oaks, with 26 years of fi-



financial success, had the savings to offer Acorn a loan allowing the new community to buy their 72-acre property and build their first major building. No land payments were required during the first three years, because Twin Oaks had had a similar Sugar Daddy when it began. Not only did this allow Acorn to come into existence, but Twin Oaks enjoyed seeing its savings actively invested in a project close to its heart.

Third, members of new communities have been employed in the businesses of their established sister communities. The latter offer familiar environments with similar values, and thus attractive job options. At East Wind, a new community could reasonably expect to work in East Wind's hammock shop on a contract basis. The senior community receives advantages, too. For example, when Twin Oaks needed extra milkers in their dairy, Acorn members were willing to help out, and in exchange Acorn got cheese and milk.

One of the biggest challenges to a forming community is where to get all the prospective members together in one place. These people, who often live in different states, need a place to meet to form their ideas and perhaps even begin living together. Members of Skyhouse lived at Sandhill Farm for three months while looking for a place to rent. When these established communities offered their land as a temporary staging ground, they not only helped the new group, they also enjoyed fresh enthusiasm and idealism in their midst.

Finally, the policies and systems used at the older communities can provide an easily transferable model for new groups. After discussing their goals, members of Skyhouse used the by-laws of Sandhill Farm as a template and revised them to suit their own needs—a much faster process than the laborious hours of word-smithing Sandhill folks did back in '74!

The senior communities enjoyed the fresh enthusiasm and idealism in their midst.

These examples show that not only the new communities profit in these relationships. The big sister communities enjoy new social contacts. Through labor exchange programs, they get access to an expanded pool of shared skills. More hands are available for barnraising-style

work parties. All these communities offered new local markets for each others' products. And buying in bulk becomes even cheaper when shared by two or more groups.

Although the examples above are income-sharing, egalitarian, residential communities, the model of mutual help can apply to other groups. I hope that forming communities everywhere will seek out nearby communities for help, and established communities will openly help them, whether to receive the many gains, or simply to expand the options for community living. Ω

Alex McGee previously lived in a Jesuit Volunteer Community. At Twin Oaks, she teaches yoga, cooks, weaves hammocks, helps operate the sewage treatment plant, and advocates community as an alternative lifestyle.



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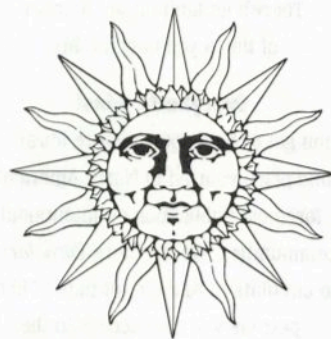
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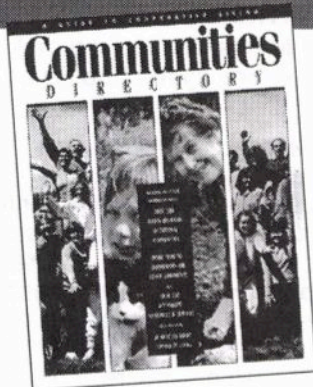
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Bringing Our Vision Back Into Focus

The Fellowship for Intentional Community (FIC) is a nonprofit community network organization that publishes this magazine and the Communities Directory.

WHEN YOU ENVISION AN ideal world what do you see? Is community

part of that vision? If you're part of a community, does your group have a clear vision? Does it fit with your personal vision? How can you help bring the world closer to that vision?

These questions lie at the heart of the visioning process that the FIC began in earnest at our Organizational Meeting, held in mid-May at Edensvale community near Abbotsford, British Columbia. Discussions were animated and exciting as we tried to bring together our personal visions with the FIC's work to create a clear vision for the organization.

Why did we spend so much meeting time on this? After a decade of building the organization, we've realized that it's time to re-visit our vision—what was clear and inspiring 10 years ago, is now a bit fuzzy and confusing.

With a well-focused vision a group can be more effective, more cohesive, and work more efficiently. A strong vision statement can serve to inspire the group and attract new members who want to help make that vision a reality. Without a clear vision a group can spend a lot of time asking what it is supposed to be

doing and why it exists at all. Looking around, it seems to me that it's not just organizations that suffer from blurred vision; many communities have not created a vision statement, and the visioning process we've been going through might be useful for them as well.

A clear vision statement is also crucial to attracting supporters—people willing to contribute their time and money to help the Fellowship do its work. We want to do more to bring others into awareness of our work and our dreams, and provide ways for them to be a part of what we're building.

Our five-member vision committee asked the board to look at three different aspects of the visioning process.

First, the "vision statement" articulates clearly what a group sees as a better world. For example, an organization that operated a soup kitchen to feed the homeless might have the vision statement, "We envision a world where everyone is well fed and healthy and no one goes hungry." This group's vision statement would guide and inspire all their activities.

A group's "mission" or "purpose" would articulate how it would help create the world of its vision statement, through current or future projects, the progress toward which is measurable. The above group's mission statement might be, "Providing nourishing meals for 300 homeless people a day in downtown Chicago." The FIC



has had a clear mission statement for several years. (See box below.)

"Goals" are even more specific, defining reasonable milestones and tasks to be accomplished, sometimes short-term. One FIC goal, for example, is: "Increase *Communities* magazine subscriptions enough to make the magazine financially self-supporting."

At Edenvale we wrestled with many questions. Does the FIC envision all or most people living in intentional communities in the future? (Probably not.) Do we envision community as an everyday part of the wider culture? (Yes!)

What do we mean by "community"? What are the values of community that we wish to promote?

Where should the FIC focus its work? Primarily on residential intentional communities, all intentional communities, neighborhood communities, or on all areas where the values of community are found?

What do we do with our individual values—sustainability, nonviolence, justice, spirituality, personal growth—but which may not be shared by all communities we hope to serve? How do these more individual values fit into the FIC's vision?

After much deliberation on these questions, we came up with the following draft vision:

We envision a world where community is available, understood, appreciated, and supported for all people who desire it, and where the skills, structures, and wisdom of community are recognized as basic building blocks of sustainable culture and just society.

Community is the recognition of the fundamental interconnectedness of all beings, which when acknowledged and embraced naturally gives rise to joyful, nourishing, healing relationships.

While there was general support for this draft as a good beginning, many participants felt that it was incomplete, and not sufficiently inspiring. The vision committee is continuing to develop the vision statement, leading up to our next Organizational Meeting in November. If you have any ideas or suggestions about this work, please send them to FIC, Rt 1, Box 155, Rutledge, MO 63563; fic@ic.org.

Tony Sirna is a newly selected FIC board member, and part of the Dancing Rabbit Project, a forming ecovillage in northeast Missouri.

FIC's Mission Statement

- Provide information about intentional communities to people seeking cooperative lifestyles.
- Facilitate communication and cooperation among intentional communities.
- Raise public awareness of communities and their products and services.
- Provide support services to both existing and forming communities.



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The Amana Colonies *Mysticism and Common Sense*

HIS QUALIFICATIONS CERTAINLY looked good. He was a carpenter whose followers believed he spoke directly from God. Numbering in the hundreds, they endured religious and political persecution and the hardship of the wilderness. His closest associates came from the lower classes. And "Christian" was his given name.

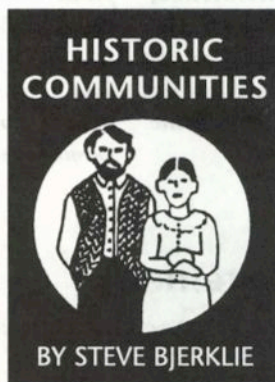
Christian Metz was also a gifted administrator. Chiefly under his leadership, a band of religious outcasts from Germany crossed the Atlantic in the 1840s, made their way to upstate New York, and moved again to the Iowa frontier. The web of communities he founded there in the 1850s and '60s—Amana, East Amana, West Amana, Middle Amana, South Amana, and Amana near the Hill—still thrive as towns.

Rooted deeply in the 300-year-old theology of German Pietism, the Amana communities in Iowa have not only survived but prospered financially. They have even become a brand name: Amana home appliances, consistently rated in the highest categories by consumer journals, were first developed by a member of the Amana Colonies (the appliance company is now owned by Raytheon). Today the Amana Society operates the largest corporate farm in Iowa, a furniture factory and woolen mill, construction and utility companies, a food-products marketing firm, and tourism-oriented shops and motels.

The Society is the present form of the True Inspirationists, a religious sect of Lutherans growing from the German Pietist movement of the 17th century. Pietists held that faith in God was more

important than religious doctrine. The Inspirationists also believed that from time to time the will of God could be heard directly via human "instruments." The more doctrinaire Lutherans thought differently, however, and persecuted the Inspirationists for two centuries.

Metz was considered an instrument of God, as were the tailor Michael Krausert, the stocking-weaver Philip Morschel, and the illiterate serving maid Barbara Heinemann. In a time of relative peace with the Lutherans they founded communities in Germany near a manufacturing center, guaranteeing employment and income to community members. In fact, the Inspirationists might never have left home if they hadn't been required to take oaths of allegiance to the German government and enter military service. They refused, and fled to North America.



By this time Metz had emerged as leader of the faith. He and three companions ventured to New York in 1842, bought 5,000 acres of potential farmland near Buffalo from the Seneca nation, and reorganized as the Eben-Ezer Society. Within three years, four communities—Lower, Middle, Upper, and New Eben-Ezer—accommodated 800 immigrant faithful. Thirteen years later, when the city of Buffalo expanded too close to their communities, Metz began moving them to rural Iowa, town by town. As each new community was created in Iowa, one of the New York Eben-Ezer colonies was abandoned. The process of transporting whole communities took seven years, but was made, rather remarkably, without the loss of either finances or membership. By the

time the move to Iowa was complete, the Amana Church Society, also known as the Amana Colonies, owned 20,000 acres and was a robust commune of 1,200 members.

A "commune"—an income-sharing community with a common purse—is in fact what the True Inspirationists became in the new land. The immigrants soon discovered that a communal economy was the only way to provide industrial employment and compensation to members who were artisans as well as to the society's farmers. Colonists, who regarded Metz's directives as the equal of Scripture, accepted the new economy without quarrel. The Society "could not have got on or kept together on any other plan," one member told Charles Nordhoff, chronicler of American religious communalism in the mid-1800s. Communal dining and worshiping together 11 times a week reinforced the new lifestyle.

Metz died in 1867, and Barbara Heinemann in 1883. However, their inspired words, as well as those of preceding instruments, are still read aloud as part of worship in the Amana Colonies.

Observers have often attributed Amana's success to the "stolid" and practical character of the Amana Society's German and German-descended members. To be sure, over the history of the Society and its predecessors problems seem to have been met with pragmatic solutions. The Society also benefited from having several wealthy members; one of the New York faithful contributed \$50,000 to the Ebenezer enterprise, a tremendous sum 150 years ago. Money was used practically, to buy more land and expand crafts manufacturing.

By the 1920s, younger members of the Amana communities yearned for experience with the exciting, roaring outside world, and Amana's prosperity encouraged material desires. Strict church teachings hemmed them in, however. Cars were not allowed, nor were visits to the new movie theaters, and teens and children, in the age of Babe Ruth, were not allowed to play baseball, as it was "too worldly" (secret baseball games were played anyway). Facing declining membership, an economy ravaged by the Depression, and a radical redefinition of "communism," church elders in 1932 engineered The Great Change. All the community's business activities were transferred to the Amana Society, a profit-shar-

ing corporation, from which each adult community member received 100 shares of Class A stock. The separate Amana communities became towns. Communal dining was replaced by smaller meals among nuclear families. And church services were scaled back to once a week.

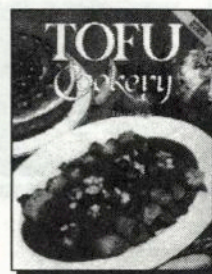
The Amana Colonies had been blessed by the leadership of Christian Metz, who had the authority of a religious mystic but who did not allow mysticism to overwhelm his common sense. He was not hounded by financial or sexual scandals, wasn't rigid when it came to alcohol (indeed, every Amana Colony has a German tavern), and seems to have been altogether satisfied in his religious quest.

Yet the Amana Colonies were not ideal for everyone. Education and moral supervision were as strict as that practiced by the Shakers. Women, with the exception of Barbara Heinemann, had no authority. New members were accepted on the basis of character alone—a system at once practical, subjective, and highly prejudicial. Celebration of communion, which in most Christian denominations is frequent and joyful, at Amana was a solemn and rare occurrence. And the colonies were divided by a religious caste system, with men of the Higher Order at the top, and morally problematic adults and children on the bottom.

In terms of finances and longevity, the Amana Colonies are one of North America's most successful communities. However, as a present-day church member remarked recently, "All things communal were void after The Great Change"—with an edge to the word "void." Communal dining and other forms of community life disappeared from Amana with the change. The community spirit may live on in the shared beliefs and church fellowship of present-day Inspirationists, but Amana as a vivid social experiment and alternative to the larger society exists only in the preserved buildings and faded photos of the past—the inspired communal vision of Christian Metz is no more. Ω

Steve Bjerklie writes for The Economist, the Metro chain of alternative weeklies, and many other publications. His extended feature article about the history of intentional communities in Sonoma County, California, was published last year by Metro.

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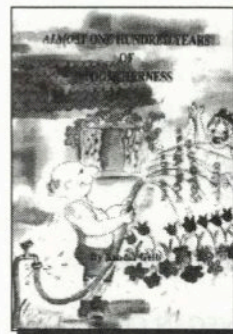
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Almost 100 Years of Togetherness

by Saadia Gelb

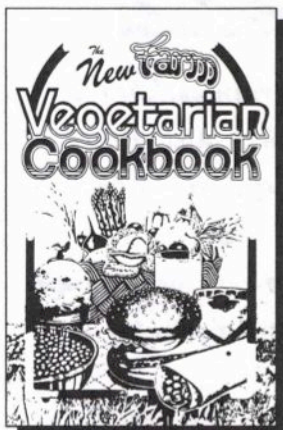
A humorous look at Kibbutz Kfar Blum over 50 years, from exhilarating pioneer days in the '40s to thriving farms and businesses today. With charming illustrations on every page, it illustrates income-sharing communal life everywhere—arduous labor, hilarious episodes, cultural clashes, difficult members, optimistic cheer in the face of challenges.

Pb. 160 pp, Shmuel Press.

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REVIEWS



The New Farm Vegetarian Cookbook

Dorothy R. Bates & Louise Hagler,
Editors

The Book Publishing Co., 1988 (1975)
Pb., 224 pp. \$8.95

Available from:

The Mail Order Catalog
PO Box 99
Summertown, TN 38483
800-695-2241

Reviewed by Raneë Zaporski

I FOUND THIS VEGAN COOKBOOK ON my kitchen shelf while planning a trip to

rural intentional communities. "Hmmm ... which community should I visit first?" I wondered, as I added pepper to a bubbling pot of Roberta's Good Soup (p. 71).

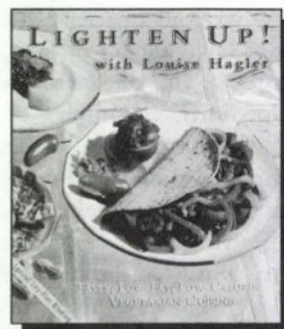
"*The New Farm Vegetarian Cookbook* ... The Farm. Hey, I wonder if *this* place is still around?"

Thankfully for anyone who cares about community, sustainability, and good vegetarian cooking, The Farm is definitely around after 26 years, and I did visit it. *The New Farm Vegetarian Cookbook* has most of the great recipes and soybean preparation advice from the original edition of the early '70s, supplemented with sound nutritional advice from the '90s. It has become my favorite cookbook.

These recipes were originally published in 1975, and include the first glimpses many mainstream North Americans ever had of tempeh or tofu, which The Farm helped popularize. Tofu desserts (which in 1975 was an oxymoron) are plentiful and creative. Lemon pies and chocolate pudding can both be made successfully without dairy products, and *New Farm* shows you how. Gluten is also prominently featured, including recipes for gluten steaks and gluten ribs with vegan barbecue sauce. Recipes are generally for 10 to 12 people, and can easily be halved or doubled.

Perhaps the most unique section, emerging from The Farm's strong traditions of vegan diet and midwifery, covers "baby vegetarian/nutrition," answering questions and giving sound advice for people who want to raise their children as vegetarians. "Should my newborn eat honey?" (No, because spores in the honey could be harmful to a baby.) "How can I get my child to eat more?" (Seat your child next to other children with heartier appetites.)

The food photos in *The New Farm Vegetarian Cookbook*—which members of my housing co-op call "the Good Book"—make you feel like you're paging through a warm and juicy food photo album instead of a cooking instruction manual. My favorite is the picture of a woman spoon feeding her baby on a school bus, one of the buses that made the now-historic cross-country caravan journey in 1971. Chances are slim that you'd find such a homey, history-laden image in *The Joy of Cooking!*



Lighten Up!: Tasty, Low-Fat, Low-Calorie Cuisine

By Louise Hagler

The Book Publishing Co., 1995
Pb., 159 pp. \$11.95

Available from:

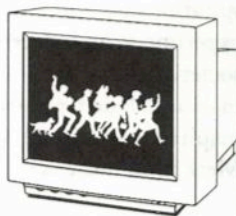
The Mail Order Catalog
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Reviewed by Raneë Zaporski

BEING A VEGETARIAN DOES NOT necessarily mean being a healthy eater.

The CoHousing Video *Neighborhoods for People*

This 22 minute professionally produced video clearly explains the CoHousing concept, its Danish roots, and why it is appealing to those who live there. Full of interviews with CoHousing residents and images of daily life in many US communities. It is the perfect introduction for orientations, giving to friends, parents, government officials, and lending institutions. It should be part of every community's library. **\$40.00** (plus \$4.00 s&h)



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Vegetarian foods include sour cream, ice cream, fudge . . . the list goes on. Even tofu, that beloved, often belittled vegetarian staple, is fairly high in fat. So what's a vegetarian who loves good-tasting food to do?

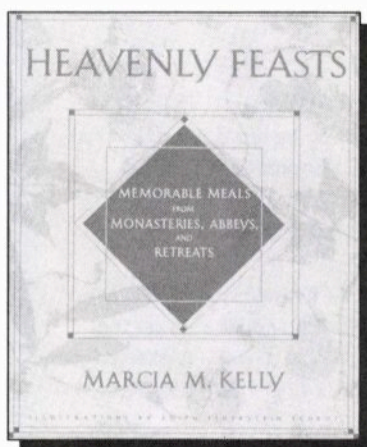
One answer is the kind of recipes that The Farm's Louise Hagler provides in *Lighten Up! Tasty, Low-Fat, Low-Calorie Cuisine*. These innovative and low-fat recipes are not communal in serving size (each recipe usually serves four to six), but most could be made larger by experienced community cooks. However, this cookbook is probably more appropriate for a smaller dinner party than a giant feeding frenzy.

Hagler is the author of several vegetarian cookbooks and has over two decades of vegetarian cooking experience. Her recipes demonstrate how such experience can lead to creative recipes that are both gourmet and vegan. "Ginger Braised Tofu," for example, is a wonderful recipe for ginger lovers. "Orzo Shiitake Pilaf" is another, with onions, sweet red bell pepper, fresh shiitake mushrooms, and parsley. Gourmet mushrooms are awfully expensive if you don't have your own growing logs, as they do at The Farm. However, if you have access to quality shiitake mushrooms, I highly recommend this tasty dish.

When creating a gourmet low-fat vegan meal, Hagler sticks to two basic cooking principles: fresh greens, and high-quality, nutritious ingredients.

Lighten Up! includes a list of fresh greens for those seeking inventive salads. The modified dishes (i.e., not as hot as the original) inspired by Mexican cooking are some of the best in the cookbook. Hagler knows that if people don't want lots of fat or sugar in their diets, they need just a little spice to preserve flavor.

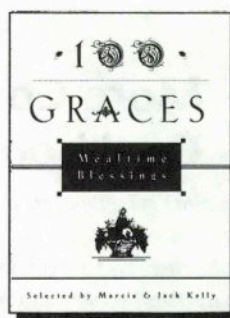
The one problem I had with *Lighten Up!* was not with the recipes or nutritional advice, but with the current state of my pocketbook. It seems that some of these ingredients are probably too expensive for me or the food buyer of a struggling community. Eating lots of basic starches is cheaper and often easier to prepare for a crowd. However, starches are not as nutritious or good-tasting as the kinds of recipes featured in *Lighten Up!* Maybe the message here is not to eat poorly from the supermarket, but instead join a Community Supported Agriculture farm and start to inoculate your own shiitake logs in the backyard!



**Heavenly Feasts:
Memorable Meals from
Monasteries, Abbeys,
and Retreats**

By Marcia Kelly

Harmony Books (Crown Publishers), 1997
Pb., 192 pp. \$16



**100 Graces:
Mealtimes Blessings**

By Marcia and Jack Kelly

Harmony Books (Crown Publishers), 1992
Pb., 111 pp. \$8

Reviewed by Raneé Zaporski

Food: God's love made edible. May we be swept into your presence.

—Brother Thomas, Nada Hermitage

HOW A GROUP BEGINS TO EAT CAN set the whole tone of the meal, whether they commence with prayer, a moment of silence, or a time of contemplation. "Saying grace" is a tradition found in every culture. The authors have compiled two guides to spiritually and gastronomically satisfying meals—a collection of blessings along with a collection of meals make these two books so appealing.

Marcia and Jack Kelly collected hundreds of recipes and before-dinner blessings during visits to over 250 monasteries and religious retreats in the United States. It's as if they kept a journal to share the most nourishing aspects of these visits.

Heavenly Feasts offers favorite recipes of religious communities. Unlike many

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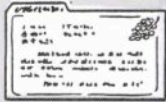
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More Community Cookbooks

Intentional communities sometimes go public with favorite recipes.

The New Laurel's Kitchen, by Laurel Robertson, Carol L. Flinders, and Brian Ruppenthal. This updated version of one of the earliest all-vegetarian cookbooks to become widely popular, *The New Laurel's Kitchen* (formerly, *Laurel's Kitchen*) has almost as much information on nutrition as it does wonderful recipes. The authors drew from the favorite recipes of their small spiritual community near Petaluma, California, which originally published the book. *Ten Speed Press, 1986. Pb., 320 pp. \$29.95.*

The Tassajara Recipe Book by Edward Espe Brown. More community offerings, from the head cook at Tassajara Zen Center near Big Sur, California. The Tassajara monks' devotion to Za-Zen doesn't prevent their enjoying delicious, wholesome meals. *Shambhala, 1985. Pb., 160 pp. \$17.*

The Cookbook for People Who Love Animals, by Gentle World, Inc. This vegan cookbook (no honey, no sugar) is written and published by members of a rural community that teaches vegan eating through their nonprofit educational organization in Hawaii. *Gentle World, Inc., 1992 (1981). Pb., 172 pp. \$9.95. Available from Gentle World, Inc., PO Box 110, Paia, Maui 96779.*

Tofu Cookery, by Louise Hagler. Written and published by members of The Farm community in Tennessee, it's one of the most popular tofu cookbooks on the market. *The Book Publishing Co., 1991 (1980). Pb., 160 pp. \$15.95. Available from The Mail Order Catalog, PO Box 99, Summertown, TN 38483; 1-800-695-2241.*

The TVP Cookbook, by Dorothy R. Bates. This popular cookbook, also from The Farm, focuses on cooking with textured vegetable protein. *The Book Publishing Co., 1991. Pb., 96 pp. \$7.95. The Mail Order Catalog (address above).*

The Un-Cheese Cookbook, by Joanne Stepaniak. How to make delicious vegetarian cheese substitutes. From The Farm. *The Book Publishing Co., 1994. Pb., 192 pp. \$11.95. Available from The Mail Order Catalog (address above).*

The Almost No Fat Cookbook, by Bryanna Clark Grogan. Vegan recipes that are easy on the waistline, written by a frequent contributor to *Vegetarian Times*. From The Farm. *The Book Publishing Co., 1994. Pb., 192 pp. \$12.95. Available from The Mail Order Catalog (address above).*

Cooking with Gluten and Seitan, by Colby Wingate and Dorothy R. Bates. Making gluten products without arduous washing and pounding, by using dried gluten powder—"instant gluten flour." From The Farm. *The Book Publishing Co., 1993. Pb., 128 pp. \$7.95. Available from The Mail Order Catalog (address above).*

The Findhorn Cookbook: An Approach to Cooking With Consciousness, by Barbara Friedlander. This classic cookbook from the Findhorn community in Scotland offers vegetarian recipes for feeding large groups, excellent instructions on how to make foods such as tofu from scratch, and eco-spiritual advice on cooking and serving with love. "Break bread together in love," the author writes, "or do not break it at all." *Grosset & Dunlap, 1976. Pb., 264 pp. Out of print, available in libraries.*

other cookbooks drawn from communities, these aren't solely vegetarian dishes, but include a wide variety of recipes—feasts for meat-eaters and vegetarians alike. *Heavenly Feasts* is aesthetically pleasing—it's lovely to look at and would make a great gift—and its recipes are perfect for holidays and special occasions. An inspiring choice for anyone who dreams of visiting contemplative communities, or for just planning the perfect large dinner party.

100 Graces is ideal for people seeking new insights or ways of giving thanks from a wide variety of traditions—Buddhist, Christian, Jewish, Hindu, Islamic, and Native American. Many of the blessings read like short poems or great literature, with excerpts from the Bible and the *Bhagavad Gita* found alongside quotes from Ram Dass and Ralph Waldo Emerson.

The blessings focus on simple themes: gratitude for food and the Creator of food, gratitude for friends and family. "Thank Heaven for this food and for this company," reads a traditional Greek blessing. "May it be good for us."

Heavenly Feasts and *100 Graces* document how spiritually and materially fulfilling staying in religious communities can be. Both are the result of inspired research, and heartfelt expressions of gratitude and culinary skill.



Spice and Spirit

Esther Blau, Editor

Lubavitch Women's Cookbook Publications, 1989
Hb., 575 pp. \$33 (to come)

Available from:
Kehot Publication Society
291 Kingston Ave.
Brooklyn, NY 11213
718-778-0226

Reviewed by Raneé Zaporski

SPICE AND SPIRIT DOESN'T EMERGE from an intentional community in the usual

sense, but from a group of women in the Hasidic Jewish Lubavitcher community in Brooklyn, New York. Reprinted five times since its first printing in 1989, there are good reasons for its popularity. At 575 pages, with an average of three recipes per page, *Spice and Spirit* is one of the most comprehensive cookbooks you'll ever find. Like *Heavenly Feasts*, above, it's not vegetarian.

Spice and Spirit offers an incredible wealth of information on Jewish traditional foods. For those who celebrate Jewish holidays, there's a history of each holiday, the foods traditionally served, and detailed recipes so that a novice or expert can prepare them. There's even a step-by-step guide for folding *Hamentaschen*, a traditional three-cornered cookie served on Purim, a festival holiday held in the spring. Attention to detail is obviously not lacking in this Lubavitcher community of cooks and cookbook creators.

Indeed, nothing in *Spice and Spirit* is halfway. The "cookies" section contains separate sub-sections devoted to drop cookies, molded cookies, and rolled cookies. An entire chapter is dedicated to *challah* (braided egg bread), with 11 different *challah* recipes and four pages of diagrams demonstrating five different ways to braid it. You get the idea.

More recent editions of *Spice and Spirit* include tasty low-fat options alongside the more fat-laden traditional recipes. In the Jewish cooking world, largely dominated by Eastern European dishes with lots of butter and sour cream, such recipes are a necessary concession. However, some of the low-fat recipes just aren't as appealing. How could any bread lover choose water *challah* (one egg, "for the dieter") over honey and whole-wheat *challah* (five eggs, lots of honey)?

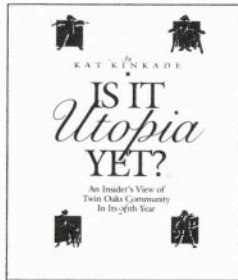
Don't let your lack of information about or background in Jewish culture keep you from enjoying this cookbook, which is truly an educational experience. Armed with the knowledge that a plate of *varnishkes* are quite different from a pan of *kugel*, people of any ethnic or religious background can confidently order at any major city deli.

(Just don't show off your new-found knowledge at the deli by describing the difference between a bagel and a *bialy*. Nobody likes a show-off.)

Ranee Zaporski is Guest Editor of this issue.

Community Bookshelf

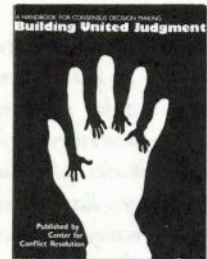
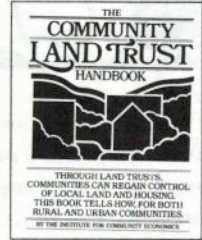
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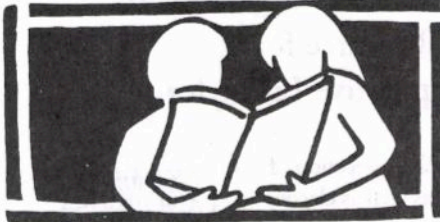


<http://www.well.com/user/eastwind/bookshlf.html>



*A Special Invitation
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Saturday, September 6, 1997, 2:30 pm
Come celebrate with us! Tour the site and toast to the future. A few units remain-perhaps a home awaits you in CoHousing! Please RSVP by Sept. 4.
(805) 546-6708

COMMUNITIES DIRECTORY FALL '97 UPDATE



One of the Fellowship for Intentional Community's primary objectives is to provide the most up-to-date contact information for intentional communities that we can find, and our Communities Directory is the centerpiece of that work.

While we do all we can to make the Directory as current and comprehensive as possible, it takes us more than two years to complete—and every week we receive new leads for communities, plus numerous address and phone changes. Rather than trying to create an updated directory every few months, we regularly publish the late-breaking information here in *Communities* magazine.

All of the information contained in this update was received after the 1995 Directory was released, and the index codes tell you which section of this update to look in:

- [n] *New Listings*—these groups were not listed in the Directory.
- [u] *Updates*—changes in contact info, purpose, size, or structure for groups previously listed here and in the Directory.
- [d] *Disbanded or no forwarding address.*

The information here is condensed and abbreviated, and will be more thoroughly presented in future Directories. For example, the book format includes a cross-reference chart of many features including population statistics, number of acres, leadership and decision-making structures, diet, schooling, spiritual practices, and so on—plus maps showing approximate location. If you would like to examine a copy of the current edition, please contact us at the telephone number listed below and we can direct you to nearby libraries that have copies.

You can help us, too! Please let us know if you discover any leads about new communities, or find that we have incorrect information in current listings. Please send to *Directory Update*, Rt. 1, Box, 155-M, Rutledge, MO 63563, or give us a call at 816-883-5545. Thank you!

INDEX OF LISTINGS

NORTH AMERICAN COMMUNITIES

ARIZONA

[u] Reevs Mountain School of Self-Reliance

BRITISH COLUMBIA

[u] Community Alternatives Co-op
[n] Pink Whiskers Intentional Village

MICHIGAN

[n] Frogtree Outdoor Living School
[n] Sunward Cohousing of Ann Arbor

CALIFORNIA

[n] Old Oakland Cohousing at Swan's Market

COLORADO

[u] Nyland Cohousing Community

GEORGIA

[u] Gaia Permaculture Community

LOUISIANA

[n] Nahziryah Monastic Community

NEW YORK

[u] Adirondack Herbs
[d] ORCOM / Orgone Committee

OHIO

[u] Locust Grove Community, Inc.

OREGON

[u] Lost Valley Educational Center

PENNSYLVANIA

[u] Camphill Special Schools

VIRGINIA

[u] Yogaville

WASHINGTON

[n] Beacon Hill House Intentional Community

WEST VIRGINIA

[u] New Vrndaban

NORTH AMERICAN NEW LISTINGS

BEACON HILL HOUSE INTENTIONAL COMMUNITY

(Forming)
1309 13th Avenue South
Seattle, WA 98144
206-324-6822

Formed during the summer of 1996, we are an urban community inhabiting and renovating a large house in the heart of Seattle. We strive to live simply, practice nonviolence, promote peace and foster community. We share our income and make decisions by consensus. Currently we are six adults and one child and we have room to grow to 12. We share vegetarian dinners, and work a mixture of outside jobs and household tasks. Visitors welcome (please write or call in advance). 6/97



FROGTREE OUTDOOR LIVING SCHOOL (FORMING)

PO Box 550
East Jordan, MI 49727

Our community is based on the Earth wisdom of our ancestors, who supported each other and were caretakers of our precious Earth home. We are doing our best to recreate this lifestyle on our community property, surrounded by wild National Forest and bordered by a beautiful river. From these woods, we try to gather the materials and medicines we need. Our homes are tipis warmed and lighted by open wood fires. We try to hunt and gather much of our food. We teach skills and crafts to interested students, and give occasional demonstrations in the surrounding area. 5/97

NAHZIRYAH MONASTIC COMMUNITY

PO Box 70863
New Orleans, LA 70172
870-449-4381
504-945-1432

Many paths—one goal. Many names—one Divine Creator. Our Order is the Nazir Order of the Purple Veil. We strive to transcend all limitation. We offer you a glimpse of this truth. We are all from the same place, we are all from the same source. In our quest for spiritual attainment, we harmonize the physical, mental, and spiritual aspects of our being. We work hard, study, meditate, and our diet is vegetarian/vegan. To support the community, we make and sell art crafts, as well as new age literature, recordings, and mediation supplies. [cc] 7/97

OLD OAKLAND COHOUSING AT SWAN'S MARKET

(Forming)
PO Box 3175
Oakland, CA 94609
510-655-7399; 649-7559
jeanned@crl.com; jeblank@hooked.net
http://www.cohousing.org/specific/old_oakland/

We are an urban cohousing group developing in downtown Oakland and building our community in a historical warehouse. Our projected completion date for renovation is winter of 1999. Our community will have a total of 21 households with self-sufficient amenities (i.e. full kitchens) and a common house. There are plans developing for a large garden, kids play areas, laundry, workshop, bike storage, hot tub and more. We are an eclectic group including four children and we welcome more families with children. There is a shared desire for living in a supportive congenial community. Decisions are made by consensus. 5/97

PINK WHISKERS INTENTIONAL VILLAGE

(Forming)
PO Box 387
Madeira Park, BC V0N 2H0
CANADA
604-883-2637

A small group of dedicated, committed people have come together to form an intentional village and work towards community, sustainability, environmental stewardship, and alternative lifestyle. We encourage people of all ages backgrounds to join us, including children and the elderly. As our 42-acre property is boat access only (no road access) it is important that people would be willing to live and work here. If you are interested in visiting, please call for more information and to confirm that we will be available to pick you up. 7/97

SUNWARD COHOUSING OF ANN ARBOR

2886 Renfrew
Ann Arbor, MI 48105
313-930-6425
sunward-info@umich.edu
<http://www.ic.org/sunward/>

Help create a neighborhood! We are a group of people dedicated to creating a place where resources are shared, lives are simplified, diversity is welcomed, and living in community with neighbors comes naturally. Our community combines home ownership with shared land, gardens, a large common house, and many other amenities. Our 20 acres of land includes forest, wetland, and ponds. We expect to be living on-site in Summer '98 and are seeking more friendly members to fill our 40 households. Especially welcomed are families with children. Decisions made by consensus. 7/97

NORTH AMERICAN UPDATES (PREVIOUS LISTINGS)

ADIRONDACK HERBS

882 State Highway 10
Caroga Lake, NY 12032
518-835-3211; 883-3453
herb@klink.net

New address, e-mail, and phone. 6/97

CAMPBILL SPECIAL SCHOOLS

Beaver Run
Route 1, Box 240
Glenmoore, PA 19343
610-469-9236

New address and fax number. 7/97

COMMUNITY ALTERNATIVES CO-OP

Vancouver, BC CANADA
604-733-2667 fax

New fax number. 7/97

GAIA PERMACULTURE COMMUNITY (RE-FORMING)

Route 1, Box 74-A
Mauk, GA 31058
706-561-0020 (messages)

Gaia Permaculture is regrouping. We also have become a sister community with Namaste Permaculture in Barnstead, NH. At this stage our "eco-hostel" is offering semi-off-grid rustic accommodations (compost toilet, guest house, camper, bus, tent, and other unique spaces) to ecologically minded travelers venturing through Georgia. We are seeking those with building skills, or interest in establishing a wholistic livelihood (farming, crafts, animal husbandry). Prearranged visits only. 7/97

LOCUST GROVE COMMUNITY

(Forming)
26328 Locust Grove Road
Creola, OH 45622

New address. 6/97

LOST VALLEY EDUCATIONAL CENTER

Dexter, OR
lvec@aol.com
<http://www.efn.org/~lvec/>

New e-mail and WWW address. 7/97

NEW VRNDABAN

Moundsville, WV
bpi@ovnet.com
<http://www.newvrindavan.com/>

New e-mail and WWW address. 6/97

NYLAND COHOUSING COMMUNITY

Lafayette, CO
NlndChshg@aol.com
<http://members.aol.com/NlndChshg/>

Added e-mail and WWW address. 6/97

REEVIS MOUNTAIN SCHOOL OF SELF-RELIANCE

Roosevelt, AZ
520-467-2675 (messages)

New phone. 7/97

YOGAVILLE

Satchidananda Ashram
Buckingham, VA
ashram@luna.moonstar.com
<http://www.moonstar.com/~yoga/>

Added e-mail and WWW address. 7/97

DISBANDED & BAD ADDRESSES

ORCOM / ORGONE COMMITTEE

Brooklyn, NY

Disbanded in early 1996. 4/97

Northwest Intentional Communities Association



NW Communities networking
Newsletter and gatherings
For sample newsletter
send \$1 to:
NICA
22020 East Lost Lake Rd.
Snohomish, WA 98296

Help us keep our Directory Update up-to-date!

If you represent or know of a community that 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.

NAME OF COMMUNITY

CONTACT PERSON

STREET ADDRESS

CITY/TOWN

STATE/PROVINCE ZIP/POSTAL CODE

PHONE

YOUR NAME

YOUR PHONE

DATE

Please return to: Directory Update, Rt 1,
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The World Wide Web is the dynamic and rapidly growing information exchange system of the Internet global computing network. Web browsers can easily access our Marketplace advertising page from multiple places in our intentional communities web site (and beyond).

email ficweb@ic.org ♦ 970-593-5615

PO Box 160, Masonville CO 80541

<http://www.ic.org>

CLASSIFIEDS



Classifieds are for anything by, for, or related to communities and community living. Send for info on how to place an ad. Communities, PO Box 169, Masonville, CO 80541; phone/fax: 970-593-5615.

COMMUNITY PROPERTY FOR SALE

MEADOW CREEK CONSERVATION COALITION, Monterey, Tennessee. Independent households will form total community of 2,600 acres with development restrictions emphasizing conservation. Twenty miles of trails currently completed. 800 acres still available at \$650-\$1,200/acre with a 25-acre minimum. Contact *Bob Lee*, 250 McGee Lane, Cookeville, TN 38501; 615-451-2874 (nursery); 615-268-2439 (home).

PROPERTY IN EXISTING COMMUNITIES

LIVE IN HEALTHY, ESTABLISHED COMMUNITY with great people! Prime lot available in Union Acres community, in mountains of western North Carolina. 5-1/2 wooded acres, rushing stream, north- and south-facing slopes, solar homesite, garden area, privacy. *Susan Larsen*, 387 Fred Sutton Rd., Whittier, NC 28789; 704-586-8156.

EARTHLIGHT, A BEAUTIFUL 100-ACRE private planned community nestled in the Smoky Mountains, 45 minutes from Asheville, NC, bordering national forest. Two houses for sale and several lots. Ideal for those seeking a conscious, nurturing environment. Call 704-649-9628 or www.cheta.net/earthlight.

"TURN-KEY" COMMUNITY PROPERTY

FOR SALE: 100-ACRE ORGANIC FARM 25 miles east of Austin, Texas on Lower Colorado River. Ideal for community—housing for 50 people; many shops, studios, barns. \$395,000. Optional 209 adjacent acres fertile farmland. *Star Route 16C-3, Bastrop,*

TX 78602. Call *Shey* at 512-303-4620 or 512-303-1637.

PRIVATE TWO-ACRE ESTATE in lovely upcountry Maui, Hawaii. Custom designed, octagonal 3,200 sq. ft. home—6 bedrooms, hot tub, views. Second 3-bedroom home. 1,500 sq. ft. vegetable gardens, wheat grass business, fruit trees. \$559,000. 808-572-1560.

COMMUNITY EMPLOYMENT

TWO FULL-TIME MAINTENANCE POSITIONS available at Sunrise Ranch, a spiritually based intentional community of 100 residents in the foothills of the Rocky Mountains. We are seeking 1) a Handyman (carpenter, light electrical, mechanical repair, painting)—minimum 1-year commitment; and 2) a person with experience and demonstrated capacity in commercial and residential HVAC—minimum 6-month commitment. Room, board, and salary. *Personnel, Sunrise Ranch, 5569 NCR 29, Loveland CO 80538; 970-679-4226.*

CONSULTANTS: SUSTAINABILITY, COMMUNITY

ECOLOGICAL COMMUNITY DESIGN IS NO ACCIDENT. It's no easy task either! From facilitated Visioning to participatory Site Analysis and Master Planning to ecological wastewater systems and Site Design, Native Harvest Design can help make the challenge of community design more fun, less hassle, and much more achievable! *Dave Jacke, Native Harvest Designs, PO Box 148, Leverett, MA 01054; 413-548-8899. DJackeNHD@aol.com.*

SUSTAINABLE PRODUCTS, APPROPRIATE TECHNOLOGY

REVOLUTIONARY PORTABLE SAWMILLS make environmentally sensitive timber harvesting feasible. True take-to-the-tree portability. 30" diameter capacity, unlimited length capacity. Easily sharpened, fast, accurate. Complete mill package, \$4,500. Call or write for brochure. *Timber Technologies, Inc., 3774 Bleak House Rd., Earlysville, VA 22936; 888-688-8769.*

NATURAL MENSTRUATION: Many Moons (TM) washable menstrual pads; The Keeper (TM) reusable menstrual cup; dioxin-free disposable pads/tampons. Healthier choices for your body and the environment. Satisfaction guaranteed or money refunded. Free brochure: 800-916-4444.

"SUNNY JOHN" COMPOSTING TOILET. Unique solar-moldering composting toilet in small outbuilding works by heat convection, thermal mass, and good design—not expensive moving parts. (And smells fine.) Build for several hundred bucks, use no water, reap compost for generations. Plans, \$20 postpaid. *John Cruickshank, Going Concerns, 5569 NCR 29, Loveland, CO 80541. hobbitthouse@compuserve.com.*

BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES, REQUESTS

WANTED: USED YURT. Prefer 30 foot. Growing intentional community needs a building. Contact *David, 919-542-0140.*

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CLASSES, WORKSHOPS

SWEAT LODGE TRAINING. This week-long event will emphasize working with the sacred dimensions of the lodge and its ceremony, specifics of construction, sacred relationship with fire and stone, varieties of sweat lodge ceremonies, healing with the lodge, and more. October 13-19, Vision Mountain, Washington. February, 1998, Tucson, Arizona. *The Gaian Contemplative Community, PO Box 1147, Tum Tum, WA, 99034; 509-258-9148; fax: 509-258-9149.*

BOOKS, VIDEOS, AUDIOTAPES ON COMMUNITY

VIDEO ON INTENTIONAL COMMUNITIES. "Follow the Dirt Road" shows what's happening in today's North American communities—socially, politically, economically—and more! 53 minutes. \$28. *Monique Gauthier, FTDR, 207 Evergreen Ct., Landenberg, PA 19350.*

"LOOKING FOR IT" is a two-hour video diary/documentary on communities and the communities movement. Patch Adams says, "I was glued for two hours. You've done a great service for the communities movement."

I think your goal of wanting people to come away from their wanting wanting more, has more than been met. This videotape deserves a wide viewership." © 1995, Sally Mendzela. Two-hour VHS. To order, send check or money order for \$24.95 to *Sally Mendzela, 36 North Center St., Bellingham, MA 02019; 508-966-5822 (w); e-mail: nosmoke@otw.com.*

THE COB BUILDERS HANDBOOK: You Can Hand-sculpt Your Own Home, by Becky Bee. A friendly step-by-step guide to designing and constructing your own home, sweet, cob home. Send \$19.95 plus \$4 handling to *Groundworks, PO Box 381, Murphy, OR 97533.*

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PERMACULTURE DRYLANDS JOURNAL. Ideas, issues, information on sustainable living through natural systems. Postpaid sample issue \$5. Subscription (3/year) included with \$25 annual support of *Permaculture Drylands Institute. Dept. C, PO Box 156, Santa Fe, NM 87504; 505-938-0663.*

COMMUNITY PERSONALS

STRONG, PASSIONATE, OPEN-MINDED woman wanted for primary relationship within community. I am 50, non-religious Jew, living in a ZEGG-inspired intentional community. Interests include global change, deep emotional processing, healing intimacy within primary partnership, green technologies, free-form music and dance, art appreciation. Healthy kids OK. Those who are offended by off-the-wall humor and puns need not apply. *Bill Cerf, POB 44110, Tucson, AZ 85733-4110; e-mail: bilcerf@azstarnet.com.*

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Home Power is hands-on, technical information for anyone interested in using renewable energy—solar, wind, water, hydrogen, and methane. *Home Power* gives you the information you need to power your "dream-home in the country" economically from renewable resources. Our technical information is readable by anyone who can drive a screw. We cover photovoltaics, wind generators, microhydro turbines, electric vehicles, solar heating & cooking, batteries, inverters, and more. Our product testing and reviews range from solar pumps to the world's most efficient refrigerator. Every bi-monthly issue is packed with color photos and fun-to-read articles—\$22.50 per year. Check us out!



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COMMUNITY CALENDAR



This is a calendar of:

- 1) events organized or hosted by intentional communities;
- 2) events specifically focusing on community living;
- 3) major events with significant participation by members of the communities "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 on this page). 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 p. 74.

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: 3-6 months before event. Please enclose information describing the event(s) that you wish to have listed.

Please mail to: Community Calendar
PO Box 169, Masonville, CO 80541

Sep 19-21 • National CoHousing Gathering

Seattle, Washington. National conference for cohousing enthusiasts, with speakers, panels, workshops on building and living in cohousing communities. Meeting for cohousing "burning souls" Sep 18. Marci, Puget Ridge CoHousing, 206-763-2623.

Sep 20-21 • Basic Permaculture Design Course

Tucson, Arizona. (And wknds Oct 4-5, 11-12, 24-26.) Permaculture Drylands Institute Permaculture Drylands Institute. 72 hours in 4 weekends. \$495; 1 wknd, \$125. PDI, PO Box 156, Santa Fe, NM 87504; 505-983-0663.

Sep 27 • Solar Houses, Sustainable Energy Practices

Plymouth, Wisconsin. High Wind community builders & designers on cutting-edge technologies for energy-efficient construction. \$45; \$40, students; \$80, couples. Plymouth Institute, W7136 County Rd. U, Plymouth, WI 53073; 414-964-1268.

Sep 26-28 • Divine New Order Community Seminar

Sedona, Arizona. Structure and foundation of successful community, based on Fifth and Continuing Fifth Epochal Revelation. Gabriel of Sedona/Aquarian Concepts Community, PO Box 3946, Sedona, AZ 86340; 520-204-1206; acc@sedona.net; http://www.sedona.net/sd/aquarian/.

Oct 9-12 • "Communal Frontiers," Communal Studies Association Annual Conference

Tacoma, Washington. Sessions, papers on the political, social, and economic ways that communities provide innovative models for life, and the growth of community in the North American West. Social gatherings, tours of western Washington communal sites. Ramada Inn, other lodging, camping. CSA, PO Box 122, Amana, IA 52203; 319-622-6446; csa@netins.net; www.well.com/user/cmy/csa/.

Oct 11-13 • A Community Building Workshop for Men

San Francisco. Sponsored by Foundation for Community Encouragement. Learn the principles and stages of community building as participants work to build their own community. Co-create a safe place for authentic communication, risk-taking, vulnerability, and shared leadership. \$335. Lisa Anderson, FCE office, Seattle: 206-784-9000, or Frank Nuessle, Oakland: 510-652-4009.

Oct. 13-18 • Photovoltaic Design & Installation

Asheville, North Carolina. Solar Energy International. Hands-on installation, typical applications, case-study examples, tours of PV residences. SEI, PO Box 715, Carbondale CO 81623; 970-963-8855; fax 970-963-8866; sci@solarenergy.org.

Oct 15-17 • CoHousing Developer Seminar

Lafayette (nr. Boulder), Colorado. For project managers, builders and developers interested in creating cohousing communities. Speakers: Kathryn McCamant, Chuck Durrett, Chris Hanson, Jim Leach, Zev Paiss. Support Financial Services, 3577 Nyland Way, Lafayette, CO 80026; 303-499-8189; zpaiss@aol.com.

Oct 16-19 • Society for Utopian Studies Annual Meeting

Memphis, Tennessee. Papers, panels, and intellectual interchange on utopianism, especially literary and experimental utopias, in a cooperative; convivial environment. Prof. Jennifer Wagner, Dept. of English, University of Memphis, Memphis, TN 38152; 901-678-4329; jawagner@cc.memphis.edu.

Oct 17-19 • Committed for a Sustainable Community

Yellow Springs, Ohio. Community Service, Inc.'s annual conference. Speakers: Joe Jenkins, Tova Green, Robin Frees. Community Service, PO Box 243, Yellow Springs, OH 45387; 937-767-2161.

Oct 17-19 • Pandanaram Communities Convention

Williams, Indiana. Open forum discussions on community-related topics, slide shows, videotapes. All are welcome. 812-388-5599.

Oct. 20-25 • Photovoltaic Design & Installation

Seattle, Washington. Solar Energy International. Hands-on installation, typical applications, case-study examples, tours of PV residences. SEI, PO Box 715, Carbondale CO 81623; 970-963-8855; fax 970-963-8866; sci@solarenergy.org.

Oct 21-26 • Natl. Association of Housing Cooperatives Annual Conference

Montreal, Quebec. Speakers, workshops on all aspects of housing cooperatives, for members and residents, board members, developers, and other professionals who work with housing co-ops. NAHC, 1614 King St., Alexandria, VA 22314; 703-549-5201.

Oct 24-26 • Community Building with Gary Zukov

Seattle, Washington. Foundation for Community Encouragement. See Oct. 11-13. Lisa Anderson, FCE office, Seattle: 206-784-9000.

Nov 7-9 • National Association of Student Cooperatives, Annual Conference

Ann Arbor, Michigan. 313-663-0889; nasco@umich.edu; Web: www.umich.edu/~nasco.

Nov 14-16 • Community Skill-Building Workshop

Seattle, Washington. Foundation for Community Encouragement. See Oct. 11-13. Lisa Anderson, FCE office, Seattle: 206-784-9000.

Nov 18-21 • Fellowship for Intentional Community (FIC) Organizational Meeting

Sunrise Ranch, Loveland, Colorado. Biannual working organizational meeting, open to public. (See FIC Networking Gathering, below.) Alex McGee, Twin Oaks, 138 Twin Oaks Rd., Louisa, VA 23093; 540-894-5126; alex@ic.org.

Nov 21-23 • The Art of Community

Sunrise Ranch, Loveland, Colorado. Fellowship for Intentional Community (FIC). Regional networking gathering for people seeking communities to join and communities seeking people. Facilitated networking sessions, workshops, small groups, much more. (See FIC Organizational Meeting, above.) Alex McGee, Twin Oaks, 138 Twin Oaks Rd., Louisa, VA 23093; 540-894-5126; fic@ic.org.

Nov 28-30 • Divine New Order Community Seminar

Sedona, Arizona. See Sep 26-28.

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 and widely read clearinghouse available to you, Reach reaches those who are seriously interested in community.

Please use the form on the last page of REACH to place an ad. Note: **THE REACH DEADLINE FOR THE WINTER 1997 ISSUE (OUT IN DECEMBER) IS OCTOBER 10!**

The Reach rate is only \$.25 per word (up to 100 words, \$.50 per word thereafter) so why not use this opportunity to network with others interested in community? We offer discounts for multiple insertions as well: \$.23 per word for two times and \$.20 per word for four times (and you can even make changes!) Please make check or money order out to Communities, and send it, plus your ad to: **Patricia Greene, 31 School St, Shelburne Falls, MA 01370; phone and fax: 413-625-0077.**

May I suggest that the best way to get a larger response is to put address and phone/fax (and e-mail if you have it.) Listings for workshops, land, books, personals, etc. belong in the Classified Dept., so please contact Editor Diana Christian.

COMMUNITIES WITH OPENINGS

ACORN, Mineral, Virginia. We've been living and working together on 72 acres since 1993; now 20 members and growing to at least 30. Values include nonviolence, equality, ecology, cultural diversity and self-sufficiency. We share income and make our decisions by consensus. Visitors and prospective members welcome! Write or call for more information. *Acorn, 1259-CM7, Indian Creek Rd., Mineral, VA 23117; 540-894-0595.*

AQUARIAN CONCEPTS COMMUNITY, Sedona, Arizona. Planetary Divine Administration. 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. Gabriel of Sedona and the Bright and Morning Star Band and Future Studios art and film productions. Serious spiritual and personal commitment required. *Aquarian Concepts Community, PO Box 3946, W. Sedona, AZ 86340; 520-204-1206.*

COHOUSING COMMUNITY, Bend, Oregon. Lots for sale in active intentional cohousing community of environmentally sensitive homes. Includes common house, pond and grounds. High desert climate, near ski and wilderness areas. Request info from: *Dietland Johnson, 2575 NE Community Lane, Bend, OR 97701; or call: 541-388-0689 or 541-389-1514.*

EAST WIND, Tecumseh, Missouri. A 50-member Federation of Egalitarian (FEC) community, est. 1973. Located on 1045 acres of land in the Ozark foothills of sothern Missouri. The topography is heavily forested and scenic. Like other FEC communities, East Wind members value ecological awareness, equality, cooperation, and nonviolence. Personal freedom is important to us. We enjoy flexible work schedules, incorporating choices from our successful businesses and domestic labors. Write or call *East Wind Community, Box CM-R, Tecumseh, MO 65760; 417-679-4682 or fax 417-679-4684.*

ECOVILLAGE COHOUSING, Ithaca, New York. Environmentally oriented cohousing community near culturally diverse university town on the Finger Lakes. The first neighborhood of 30 passive solar homes and a beautiful Common House is almost complete. 176 acres include fields, organic gardens, ponds and gorgeous views. **COME JOIN AND PLAN** the second neighborhood. All ages welcome. Call or write: *Liz Walker, 109 Rachel Carson Way, Ithaca, NY 14850; 607-272-5149.*

GANAS, Staten Island, New York, G.R.O.W. II (Group Realities Open Workshops), Parksville, New York. Ganas, a NYC intentional community, is now creating G.R.O.W. II, which consists of a small hotel, campgrounds and diverse workshop programs on 72 acres in NY state's beautiful Catskill Mountains. This new country project will add physical fitness, emotional growth and many cultural activities to our lives. G.R.O.W. II programs will begin in 1997. Renovation, landscaping and other preparations are happening now. We're also expanding our NYC retail businesses and need new people for both projects. Ganas started in 1980, grew from six (all still here) to about 75 adults of all ages, philosophies and ethnicity. We meet daily to learn how to communicate with love, truth, intelligence and pleasure, and to make decisions together. Visitors welcome. Ganas welcomes visitors. Write: *135 Corson Ave., Staten Island, NY 10301; 718-720-5378; fax: 718-448-6842.*

GOOD SAMARITAN COMMUNITY, Elk, Washington. All-things-common Christian community based on Acts 2:4 and 2:44 with a

mission to care for handicapped children and provide a retirement home for the elderly that is both Christ-centered and Christ-led. Open to potential members who make a lifetime commitment and to workers who come for a season to care for the children and the elderly. For a prospectus contact: *Don Murphy, Fan Lake Brethren, 2762 Allen Road, Elk, WA 99009; 509-292-0502.*

L.A. ECO-VILLAGE, Los Angeles, California. In process, near downtown. We seek friendly, outgoing eco-co-op knowledgeable neighbors. Auto-less folks preferred who want to demonstrate and share low-consumption, high-quality lifestyles in an interesting, multi-cultural, high-visibility community. Spanish or Korean speaking helpful. Lots of potential for right livelihood, but must be initially financially self-reliant. Call or write: *Lois Arkin, 3551 White House Place, Los Angeles, CA 90024; 213-738-1254; e-mail: crsp@igc.apc.org.*

RACHANA RETREAT, Redmond, Washington. New members wanted! Intentional Community based on win/win paradigm. Redmond/Seattle area, country setting, ozonated pool and hot tub. *425-868-4159.*

SANDHILL FARM, Rutledge, Missouri. Family-style community looking for new members to help build a caring, sustainable lifestyle, respectful of the earth and each other. We support ourselves growing and selling organic food (sorghum, honey, mustard, tempeh, garlic, horseradish) helping build the communities movement (we do administrative work for FIC) and having fun! We operate by consensus and hold group meetings twice weekly. We're active in local affairs, and are looking for people who want to raise children and awareness through joyful engaged living. We are six adult members, one teenager, two infants, and have recently joined energies with Dancing Rabbit—a forming community two miles away—aiming to build a sustainable ecovillage. Come be part of the excitement! *Sandhill Farm, Rt. 1, Box 155-C, Rutledge, MO 63563; 816-883-5543; sandhill@ic.org.*

TERRA NOVA, Columbia, Missouri. Earth-friendly lifestyle in university town. Large garden, close-in location (easy to walk, bike or bus,) recycling, sharing resources. Consensus decision making, conflict resolution, developing deeper relationships. Kids OK. Feminist perspective, welcome diversity in sexual orientation, race, cultural background, age. No smoking, no drugs. *1404 Gary, Columbia, MO 65203; 573-443-5253; e-mail: terranovac@aol.com*

WIMMIN'S RURAL CO-OP, Athens, Ohio. Seeking more residents. We are a land trust on 151 acres with many scenic homesites available. Only 20 minutes from Ohio University, Hocking College and other intentional communities. SASE: *Susan B. Anthony Memorial UnRet Home, PO Box 5853, Athens, OH 45701; 614-448-7242; ad965@seorf.ohiou.edu.*

COMMUNITIES FORMING

CENTRAL NEW YORK STATE. Syracuse-Ithaca area. We are a couple with a three-year-old who are talking with others about a small cluster of 4-6 families living on 50-100 acres of rural land. We will be as diverse as possible and share a commitment to supporting each other well as friends as well as people working independently in the wider world for social justice. *Joe Pullman, 6635 Morgan Hill Rd., Truxton, NY 13158; 607-842-6751.*

CHICAGO/ELGIN, Illinois. Vintage hippie-anarchists ISO visionary philosopher-daredevils for intimate egalitarian relationships in a communal setting. We seek creative, free-spirited experimenters independent personalities, co-creators, to plunge forward into whatever areas of human interconnectedness we imagine together. We share a magnificent level of connection. We hold our circle open to others capable and desirable of joining our beautiful, experimental dance. 847-622-3693.

CIRCLE UP SPRINGS, Moab, Utah. Live with friends as neighbors in a rural, off-grid, cohousing community on 124 acres with perennial creeks and springs, arable land at 5,900 feet. Located at base of mountains adjacent to public land. Area characterized by pinyon-juniper forest, cottonwoods, quiet. Mixture of private and community control of land, con-

sensus decisions, balance between group and private life, developing sustainable lifestyles, deepening ties with nature, commitment to honest communication. We envision community activities to include gardening, construction, seasonal celebrations and sharing meals. Construction beginning April 1997. Include SASE to *Community, Box 1171, Moab, UT 84532.*

COHOUSING OF ANN ARBOR, Ann Arbor, Michigan. We are building an intentional community of 40 homes, 1-3 bedrooms. Construction began in May 1997 on our 20-acre parcel of land just outside of Ann Arbor, but within the city school system. Land includes ponds, 10 acres of woods, southward facing slope for building. Four homes still available. We do not profess a dogma, but plan a community kind to the environment and caring of each other. We seek diversity of ethnicity, age, sexual orientation. Especially welcome families with children. Will have gardening, cooking and upkeep responsibilities. Decisions made by consensus. 313-930-6425; *aacoho-info@umich.edu; www.ic.org/sunward.*

DANCING RABBIT, Rutledge, Missouri. We are a group of highly motivated, community minded and experienced adults who are looking for individuals and groups to join us in creating the ideal rural ecovillage. Our goal is to build a small town that is truly sustainable and socially responsible. We would like to make DR

a large community with many different sub-communities that interact socially and economically. Dancing Rabbit has moved to northeast Missouri and is working closely with Sandhill Farm, a 22-year-old FEC community. We plan to buy land within 1 or 2 miles of Sandhill soon. We're especially interesting in existing community groups joining us. We've got the energy, the ideas and the money, all we need is you! Contact us now to arrange a visit and see our new baby! *RR 1, Box 156, Rutledge, MO 63563; dancing-rabbit@ic.org.*

EARTHAVEN, Black Mountain, North Carolina. Intentional community is blossoming on 325 forested acres in the Blue Ridge Mountains near Asheville, NC. Seeking highly motivated, eco-spirited families and individuals—and especially children—of all sizes, shapes and colors. Wanted: builders, gardeners, meditators, musicians and other key professionals and ordinary folk. Consensus decision making, on-site educational programs, lots to be done and to celebrate. Work exchange program. Send \$15 for "infopak" and newsletters to: *Earthaven, PO Box 1107, Black Mountain, NC 28711; 704-254-5613.*

EDEN RANCH, Paonia, Colorado. Seeking core members desiring rural, spiritual environment, sharing labor and resources on biodynamic, permaculture 65-acre farm. Your own home business or work in nearby towns. Ecovillage concepts leading toward ultimate

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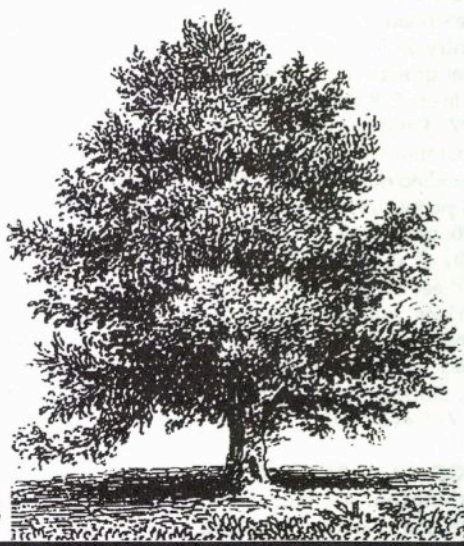
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self-sustainability. Diversity in thought and age, consensus decision-making results from mutual respect and trust. Several community businesses possible, help plan your future! Maximum 15 families. Approximately \$20,000 land share, plus cost of building your earth-friendly home. Local housing available while building. Located on Western Colorado mesa, wondrous 360 degree views. \$2 for Community Plan and 2 newsletters. *Jim Wetzel, Nancy Wood, PO Box 520, Paonia, CO 81428-0520; 970-835-8905.*

EDEN VILLAGE COMMUNITY, Mendocino County, California. How to build an eco-village. Sustainable living, shared stewardship, natural way of life, alternative education, natural healing environment, egalitarianism, finding your people, starting a new world. Some of this should interest you. Prospectus \$3. *Eden Village, POB 849, Glen Ellen, CA 95442.*

GARBERVILLE, CALIFORNIA. We are a homeschool family with 5-year-old. We have been developing our homestead and organic fruit and nut tree orchard on the Mattole River in northern California. We have also worked extensively on land and stream restoration. We do sustainable logging for our building and firewood needs. We've developed solar and hydro alternative energy systems. We would like to have a community of families living here. Sharing gardens, homesteading, etc. There are lots of possibilities. Our vision is to share our place with people who are interested in learn-

ing with us how to live sustainably on the land, developing both our interdependence on each other and the land. We have a 2-bedroom cottage that is available for renting. We would like to have a family rent the cabin with the future hope of buying into one of the permanent homestead sites. We are also open to talking with people about different ways/ideas of building a community of families here on our farm. *Robie and Gil, 1901 Dutyville Rd., Garberville, CA 95542; 707-986-7787.*

HISTORIC COHOUSING COMMUNITY. Looking to form a group of like-minded partners to help save historic houses from demolition, acquire the houses for free, dismantle, reconstruct, restore and sell to like-minded people to form a co-housing community. *Carla Cielo, 43 Chestnut Hill Place, Glen Ridge, NJ 07028; 201-743-7217.*

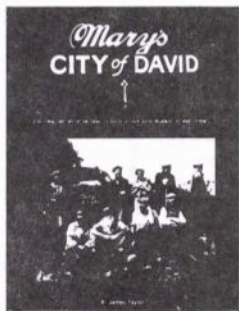
INTENTIONAL COMMUNITY, Raleigh, North Carolina. To house and nurture troubled kids and lonely older folks. Seeking caring and talented people to help plan and implement. Responses to: *Dan, 7306 Sweet Bay Lane, Raleigh, NC 27615, 919-847-1664.*

JEWISH HOUSING COOPERATIVE, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Forming in Philadelphia to create a strong Jewish environment in an egalitarian, democratic community. Call *Laurie, 215-713-0473, or write: 345 Meechan Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19119.*

LaSENDA ECOVILLAGE, San Miguel deAllende, Mexico. Aztecs 'Eternal Spring' plateau offers year round mild, sunny permaculturalist 'dream' location. Beautiful canyon riverfront 40 acres has four one bedroom plus studio units plus common area/laundry/jacuzzi. Rent six months with purchase option. 'Kindred spirits' packages in 30Ks. Need commitment to: growth of self/spirituality/responsibility/living simply/joyfully/well. LaSenda mountains gallery/boutique in town for creative energies/sustainability. *Rick Welland, APDO 595, SMA, GTO 37700, Mexico.*

MEADOW CREEK CONSERVATION COALITION, Monterey, Tennessee. Situated in a beautiful, rural, wooded area of eastern middle Tennessee, 15 miles from college town. Independent households will form total community of 2,600 acres with development restrictions emphasizing conservation and protection. Twenty miles of trails currently completed linking bluffs and creeks through hemlock, rhododendron, pine and hardwood forests. 800 acres still available at \$650-\$1,200/acre with a 25-acre minimum. Call or write for information: *Bob Lee, 250 McGee Lane, Cookeville, TN 38501; 615-451-2874, (Nursery), 615-268-2439 (Home).*

MOUNTAIN HOMESTEAD, Northeast Washington. We are a Waldorf-inspired homeschool family with sons age 8 and 11 years old. We are open to sharing our beautiful 160-acre



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homestead with other natural foods vegetarian homeschooling families. We are dedicated to individual spiritual growth and personal development, as well as living in harmony with the environment. We value a healthy life free from television and violence for our children and ourselves. We love gardening, skiing, celebrating festivals and working and playing together on this beautiful mountain. *Max and Joni Stemple, 2482 Hawks Road, Colville, WA 99114; 509-732-6249.*

NAMASTE GREEN, Barnstead, New Hampshire. Full chakra intimacy, permaculture activism, cluster cohousing, investors of time/resources/vision. SASE: 373 Peacham Rd., Center Barnstead, NH 03225; 603-776-7776.

NASALAM, Fair Grove, Missouri. This erotic spiritual community is being built on sacred land in the Ozark Plateau of sw Missouri. We are vegan, substance-free and dedicated to following a simple lifestyle that is easy on the land and respectful of all its creatures. Our spirituality is inclusive, believing that all religions and philosophies contribute in some way to a greater purpose of the whole. Spirituality as a way of life, as a way to realize our true selves, individually and as a group, to be an example of right living to the world, is our design. We are primarily interested in attracting polysexual (gay/bisexual) individuals oriented toward a polyamorous lifestyle with tribal overtones. Contact us for more information. Nasalam, Rt.

3, Box 332, Fair Grove, MO 65648; 417-759-7854; e-mail: nasalam@aol.com; Internet: member.aol.com/nasalam/.

OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA. We are looking for a family to join us in low-impact urban living within the diversity of the Bay Area. We have been living cooperatively for over 15 years. Our children are 5 and 8. We live in a large house with a big back yard and garden that currently has 3-4 rooms available in addition to an abundance of common space. We seek others who are politically progressive, enjoy cooking (prefer organic), are financially stable and want to create a supportive and caring environment. *Anaya or Gary, 510-547-8935.*

PENROSE, COLORADO. 40 acre building site, part of 160-acre parcel bordering public lands. Beautiful year-round creek with swimming holes runs through the property. Consensus decision-making, earth-friendly homes, natural power. 45 minutes from Colorado Springs. 55K. Qualified buyers only please. 4737 S. Delaware St., Englewood, CO 80110; 303-789-2868.

PORTLAND, OREGON. Seeking one or two individuals or couple, for shared household/potential community in the Portland Metro-area. We have urban and rural property to share. Prefer those who are well educated in the humanities and are financially secure. Write *John at 2630 NW Cornell Rd., Portland, OR 97210; 503-222-0169.*

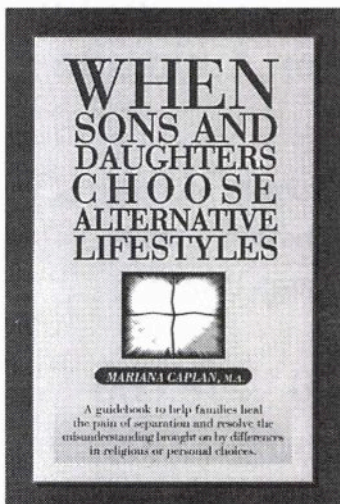
POTASH HILL COMMUNITY, Cummington, Massachusetts. On 115 acres of woods and pastures in Western Mass, 25 miles west of Northampton, a five-college town. 13 privately owned two to five acre lots with share in 60 acres of common land ranging from \$23,000-\$30,000. Plans for community building and sauna. An educational arts facility including large stone house equipped for group dining, and three workshop/studio buildings is also for sale to community members. Our vision is to establish harmony, cooperation, creativity and reciprocity of support. We value relationships, business, the arts, natural healing, education, gardening, celebration and fun. We foresee a community of independent thinkers with the initiative to take responsibility for shaping their lives and their community. Call: *Neel or Deborah 413-634-0181 or send SASE to Neel Webber, 9 Frazier Lane, Cummington, MA 01026.*

REDWOOD, Los Gatos, California. Forming a small cooperative community, (10-15 people) to provide an extended family for our children and ourselves. Located 20 minutes from Silicon Valley or Santa Cruz, the property is 10 acres with large house, shop, pool, sauna, hot tub, orchards, Redwood grove and large organic garden space. Share vegetarian meals in common kitchen. Interests include: yoga, singing, clothing optional lifestyle, drumming, high-technology, spiritual exploration, children and living simply. Shares in

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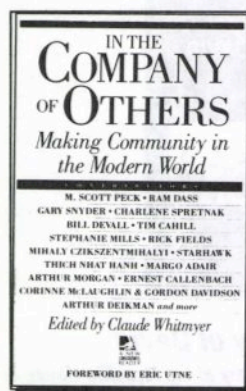


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community may be purchased or rented. 24010 Summit Road, Los Gatos, CA 95030; 408-353-5543.

REJENNERATION, Jenner, California. Forming on five knolltop acres in an ecologically diverse coastal canyon with stunning views about one hour from Santa Rosa, CA. One house, some outbuildings and a garden have been built. We are looking for partners (\$10,000 min. down) to build (sweat equity) and live in the second, larger co-op household. Values include earth stewardship, earnest work, simplicity and a respect for diversity. Shared meals. Call or write including some personal history and a SASE for date of next open house: Box 42, Jenner, CA 95450; 707-632-5458.

RICHMOND COHOUSING, Richmond Virginia. Organizing group is planning cohousing community for metro Richmond area. For more information call 804-231-2547.

SHARING FUTURES, LTD. and NOAH'S ARK 2, Near Austin, Texas. Establishing: plant, fish, animal, human shelters, greenhouses, cisterns, domes, yurts, teepees, earth-shelters; food, water, air purification/preservation systems. Goals: surviving drought, fire, heat, earth changes, social discontinuities. Participants: 7 (plus weekend workers, retreatants, visitors) short-term pessimists, long-term optimists, realists, idealists, naturalists. Facilities: house, out-buildings, well, utilities (electricity, water) fences, 3-way access, tents, platforms, RV/campers, underground excavation. Solar/wind power site. Rustic peaceful views. Sandy soil, forests, pastures, fruit and nut trees, established 1905. One hour east of Austin. All welcome at the last minute. Bring your own food, amenities. 4001 Oakridge, Houston, TX 77009; 713-863-0433; 103360.2476@compuserve.com; Quddusc@aol.com; http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/SHARING FUTURES.

WINDTREE RANCH, Douglas Arizona. Earth spirituality, eco-centered life, non-profit intentional community on 1227 acres of remote, off-grid, off-road, 4WD access, unspoiled foothills at comfortable 5200', health conscious, toxin-free, naturist, intergenerational, holistic, polysexual, Radical Honesty for sustainable relationships, serving Mother Earth through simplicity, stewardship and hard work (physical, emotional and spiritual). *WindTree Ranch, RR 2, Box 1, Douglas, AZ; 856-607-9802; e-mail: WindTreeRanch@Juno.com.*

PEOPLE LOOKING

DWM, 49, ENTJ, egalitarian loyal polyamorist, Libertarian intellectual, omnivorous aware responsible computer professional, ethical humanist atheist, (com)passionate, sensual. Is into: prosperity, massage, sci-fi, chocolate, sailing, laughter, theater, personal and spiritual growth. Seeking like-minded individuals and couples with broad interests that are independent yet cooperative minded, adventurous and liberated for a polyfidelitous group. *Rich, PO Box 1295, Madison, WI 53701.*

TRACKER (TOM BROWN) STUDENT seeks people interested in forming primitive intentional community based on earth spirituality, practice of wilderness skills and respect for all living things. *Steven McCullum, 622 Robinwood Lane-Apt. 3, Hopkins, MN 55305.*

MARRIED COUPLE SEEKING FELLOW BUILDERS of a self-sustaining, intentional community in Tennessee. We espouse consensus decision-making, are non-sectarian and hard-working, and will incorporate permaculture methods to share the land's natural resources and energies to build and grow, including solar/wind/ water/hydrogen for power generation. We are naturists and prefer a clothing-optional environment; also open to

moral polyfidelitous families within the community. We have started our journey and invite those who are interested in these concepts to contact us, to determine if there is a practical basis between us to build upon. *George & Lynn, PO Box 501, Lutz, FL 33548.*

ON HOLISTIC PATH. Male, 30-year-old college grad seeking long-term environmentally good living situation. Sensitive to smoke and pesticides. Can pay for accommodations, but also is willing to work and fit into the community. Contact: *David Silverman, 12824 Caminito Olas, Del Mar, CA 92014.*

SEEKING TRULY SUSTAINABLE community and/or those persons seeking same. Simpler living. No cars, pollution, ignorance. Focus on health, happiness, love, higher consciousness. Hard work. *Bob Beach, Star Route #1, Box 56, Haiku, HI 96708.*

RESOURCES

ALTERNATIVE EGALITARIAN COMMUNITIES welcome visitors/potential members. Live in the country with others who value equality, ecology, and nonviolence. For our booklet, write: *Federation of Egalitarian Communities, East Wind, CM97, Tecumseh, MO 65760, or call 417-679-4682. Free (\$3 appreciated.)*

COMMUNITY SEEKERS' NETWORK OF NEW ENGLAND. For joining, starting, and learning about intentional communities via: trips, meetings, and "Many to Many" style newsletter. *CSN/NE c/o 15 Marcus Rd., Sharon, MA 02067; 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, POBox 460141, San Francisco, CA 94146; 415-821-2090.*

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Please specify which section you wish your ad to appear under:

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FIC MEMBERSHIP, COMMUNITIES MAGAZINE, & DIRECTORY ORDER

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The FIC is a network of communitarians promoting communication and understanding about and among intentional communities across North America. The Fellowship:

- publishes *Communities* magazine and the best-selling *Communities Directory*.
- built and maintains the Intentional Communities site on the World Wide Web
- hosts gatherings and events about community.
- builds bridges between communities and the wider culture.
- serves as an information clearinghouse for all aspects of community—for individuals, groups, and the media.

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- invitations to board meetings and other activities.
- first notice on whatever we're doing, and the opportunity to get in early!

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- Yes, I'll join the Fellowship for Intentional Community! (Check appropriate membership category)
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Organization, \$20 for under 10 members, \$35 for 10-50 members, \$50 for over 50

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#95

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Food, Glorious Food!

FOOD—SHARED AROUND THE DINING ROOM table—is often the focal point for creating a sense of community. Count up the number of days in a week that a group shares meals, and you'll have a reasonably good barometer for measuring the closeness of that community.

It doesn't seem to matter much whether a group shares one, two, or three meals a day—as long as there's some daily convergence at the feeding trough, the interpersonal magic can happen. The shared meal dynamic could conceivably be replaced by some other form of coming together (group meditation, worship service, sharing circle, planning meeting), but it's tough to know that with certainty because groups regularly using any of those processes also tend to have frequently shared meals.

SOME of my fondest memories of shared living fall under the category, "Meals to Remember." Several outstanding dinners come to mind.

First, there was the time when Bill and Hugh signed up to cook dinner, and in the midst of their culinary ministrations were spontaneously overtaken by a spark of creativity and mischief. That afternoon, housemates returning from jobs, schools, and errands discovered that the kitchen and dining room had been cordoned off, with a sign posted on the closed door that read: "Do Not Enter—A special dinner is in process. Please dress for dinner ... costumes appropriate!"

Dinner that night started a little late, of course, and you can imagine the suspense with all us costumed housemates milling around merrily in the living room. When the dining room door was finally opened, we were treated to an eyeful of colorful India prints draped from the ceiling tent-style, and a fabulously arranged low table surrounded by pillows—with the upside-down compost bucket as a centerpiece, decorated like an old-fashioned Christmas Tree. It was Bill and Hugh's new holy holiday—Saint Ricotta Cheese Day!

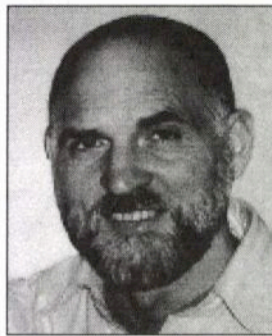
We enjoyed tasty dish after tasty dish, interspersed with music and song. Late in the evening, Bill rose, and said with a smile, "In such times of rapid social and spiritual transformation, it's critical that we not take ourselves too seriously!" Whereupon, standing very still, he ceremoniously poured a pitcher of water over his head.

MEMORABLE Meal #2 was equally festive, though planned weeks in advance, with the scene and the props were set ahead of time. However the actual creative process was quite spontaneous, and involved the entire household and a number of close friends. We decided to have an elegant dinner where the setting, serving, and consumption of the entire meal were experienced as performance art.

The huge dining room table was covered with long rolls of butcher paper, and the food was artistically displayed in a wide variety of serving dishes. The first "course" involved using the food as art medium, creating food sculptures and drawing on the butcher paper with various colorful foods, such as tomato paste, blueberry jam, and guacamole. The adults were probably more enthusiastic than the kids.

Although we'd been nibbling from our art supplies all along, eventually it was time to eat the masterpiece, which happened in several stages. We began *Tom Jones*-style, with only fingers allowed to get food from table to mouth. Next it was "feed someone else and not yourself," with fingers still the implements of choice. At some point it was "no hands allowed." I don't recall what other phases we went through, but the entire meal was two wonderful hours of nourishment, entertainment, creativity, socializing, and merriment.

The grand finale was dessert—a festive watermelon trussed up to resemble a roast pig, carried in on a huge serving tray and decorated with assorted fruits and nuts. Yummmmm!



BY GEOPH KOZENY

We began *Tom Jones*-style, with only fingers allowed.

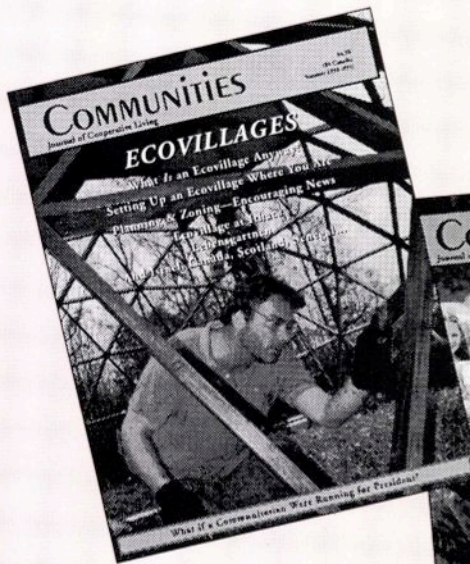
HAVING monthly or weekly community-wide potlucks seems just not enough time in fellowship for weaving folks' lives together. When the frequency gets up to four meals a week or so, somehow the social glue gets stronger. This bonding sometimes emerges through some formal sharing or ritual that happens at the common table, but I've witnessed it most often as a comfortable byproduct of informal conversations over a bowl of soup or a plate of lasagna.

I've visited a number of communities, particularly urban households, where everyone seemed so caught up with their independent lives that there was seldom time to sit down together for a meal. What a loss! While it can be wonderful to sit down alone, or with a friend or one's own small family, to enjoy a quiet, relaxing meal, sharing community meals together offers a social/bonding aspect of that's inspiring ... and irreplaceable. Ω

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#96



“ . . . To love each other we must know each other in the breaking of bread
and we are not alone anymore.

. . . Love comes with community.”

—*Dorothy Day*

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