

Chris Roth

More Chaos Ahead

I found our current theme especially resonant with my own experience—in intentional community, in life in general, and even in producing Communities, where "Chaos" and "Order," always in dynamic, interdependent tension, both play essential roles in each issue's evolution from uncertain nothingness to curated, page-numbered somethingness (a.k.a. meticulously ordered chaos). One cannot love the process of magazine-making, artistic creation, community, or perhaps anything else in life without, in some way, also loving both of these elemental forces.

I'm grateful to all the authors who took the time to share stories and perspectives arising from their own lives within community; their insights and lessons apply far beyond the particular situations they describe. Prominent patterns and issues arose across the range of submissions, most reminding me of experiences that I and/or people I know have had, with wisdom that could make many familiar challenges more manageable.

While perennially relevant, the theme itself might have stayed on the back burner without a perception of the overwhelming, unsettling, destructive chaos that seems to be at the heart of the "order" we are living in right now—including at the very highest levels of government. In this light, intentional communities are an attempt—a valiant, idealistic, and also often very practical, savvy attempt—to bring workable, meaningful order to an increasingly chaotic world. At the same time, since this chaos is presenting itself as the new (and supposedly old) "order," as a dominating status quo that would marginalize anyone who dares to question it, intentional communities are also a way to defy and disrupt it, tap into the creative chaos that can offer paths out of our current predicaments.

Hopefully what follows will offer support for efforts to introduce order to chaos, and chaos to order, in ways that help us toward a more viable, cooperative future. The process can be just as rewarding as the product in this pursuit—and will need to be; the "goal" may take several additional generations' lifetimes to reach. In the meantime, there is clearly more chaos ahead of us.

Thanks again for reading, and to all those who contributed!

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Chris Roth edits Communities.