

C.A.L.L.

Communes *A* + *L*arge *L*etter



INTERNATIONAL
COMMUNES DESK



YAD TABENKIN



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Fall 2003

Dear Readers,

Welcome to the Fall 2003 issue of C.A.L.L.

It is obvious to me that the stronger individual relationships are within a community, the stronger the community will be as a whole. It's a bit like a bicycle wheel – the stronger the spokes, the stronger the wheel. However, the physical layout of a community is often underestimated as a significant factor towards a healthy community. For example, what is the balance between spontaneity and chance meetings and the necessary private/personal space? Furthermore, in having a communal kitchen/dining room and no private facilities for cooking/eating, does that mean that members are forced to come together or should it always be a matter of choice.

There are two options I see when dealing with these issues: Firstly, creatively using the space that you have or secondly, designing your ideal arrangement and having it built. There are several communities today in Israel that are going for that second option and building their physical landscape according to their vision of intentional community. (Due to the obvious financial considerations of option two, my community is, for the time being, going for option one!). In this issue of C.A.L.L. we have a couple of interesting pieces on architecture and the importance of physical structures in community.



We are also publishing articles in this issue which were commissioned specifically for C.A.L.L. Tamera in Portugal and Solheimar in Iceland duly delivered on their promise to send us articles (Rather than me lifting info about them from someplace else!). Hopefully this will start a new trend for us in printing more original material.

In addition, we have a report from the Woodcrest Collective, a weekend of discussion, music, art, and work in nature, hosted by the Bruderhof and a report on the visit of Kibbutz members to the Mondragon Co-operative in the Basque region of Spain.

I recently came across a new website at <http://icdb.org/> which is an up-to-date intentional community directory which will serve both communities and their organizations and community seekers. Check it out!

While I'm mentioning websites, don't forget that you can find more information about the International Communes Desk, including valuable resources on communal living in Israel and abroad by visiting <http://www.communa.org.il>

If you have any comments or suggestions related to C.A.L.L., please email us on ruthsy-t@bezeqint.net

Enjoy,

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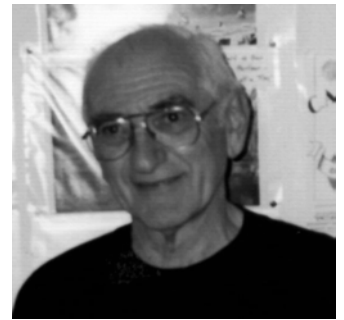
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Dear Reader,

"Summer time and the communities are jumping" - with **activity**: numerous camps at ZEGG and Tamera and a spate of community gatherings of various kinds: at The Farm, in Boulder (Co-housing), two(!) at Twin Oaks and the Bruderhof's Woodcrest Collective 2003, (see page 21).



General interest in the communal scene around the world is reflected in a number of **relevant books** that have recently been published:

- Creating a Life Together: Practical Tools to Grow Eco-villages and Intentional Communities, by Communities magazine editor, Diana Christian (see page 6).
- Another Kind of Space: Creating ecological dwellings and environments, by Alan Dearling with Graham Meltzer
- No Heavenly Delusion? A Comparative Study of 3 Communal Movements, by Michael Tyldesley (see page 4).
- In Hebrew the four-booklet series Communal Living Around the World, by Desk member Eliyahu Regev (Tzetze) has just been successfully completed.

Despite the tense situation, **"community tourists"** have kept coming. Old friends Martin and Burgel Johnson of Maple Ridge Bruderhof, plus younger member Reuel Clement, are here as I write these lines.... Sandra Francis, of an urban family in Philadelphia, came to Israel, among other reasons, to look for a suitable research project.... But once again, the German Catholic **Integrierte Gemeinde** takes pride of place with its steady stream of members, based on their centre near Jerusalem. The founder of Bet Shalom, theologian/journalist Dr Rudolf Pesch, and his wife Ingeborg have returned home, after 2 years sterling service, leaving Manfred and Christine Gross to carry on their good work.... Which brings me to the **Urfeld Circle**, that unique Israeli kibbutz/German IG circle, which continues to meet regularly. This summer a whole contingent visited the IG communities in Germany.

These days, major communal interest in Israel centres on the **urban kibbutzim** and the newer **communes** of the youth movement "graduates". They featured prominently in 2 conferences: that of the Communal Stream of kibbutzim and that on Research of the Kibbutz..... Nearly a hundred members (plus children) attended the 2nd annual gathering of the Circle of Communal Groups, in which many of these communes and 3 urban kibbutzim, are loosely associated (See page 8).

Plans are underway to establish **two new intentional communities**, both to be bi-cultural (Hebrew and Arabic). We who belong to any form of communal living know how problematic living in even a mono-cultural community can be. Well-established Neve Shalom/Wahat al-Salam (= Oasis of Peace, in Hebrew and Arabic) isn't finding things easy in the present situation. We certainly wish both ventures well and will assist them if we can.

For good or for bad, **changes in kibbutzim** are continuing to take place. Some recent data, as well as a sound analysis for the reasons behind the crisis, are to be found in our **updated website**, www.communa.org.il Since the term "kibbutz" has legal status in Israel, a government committee has been studying how these changes can be officially recognized. The next issue of C.A.L.L. will look at this complex situation.

Please note **changes in our office** at Yad Tabenkin, including a new phone number, (972) 3 534 4458, extension 4, and a new e-mail address ruthsy-t@bezeqint.net . The latter - deservedly - honours our smiling and on-the-ball secretary, Ruth Sobol.

Dear reader, do let us - and the rest of the world - know what's happening with your commune, co-housing, co-op or other kind of intentional community. What you are doing and thinking, as well as your latest problems - if any!

Your faithful and ever hopeful Secretary,
Sol Etzioni, Kibbutz Tzora, DN Shimshon, Israel, 99803.
solrene@tzora.co.il

PS. The hard-pressed Kibbutz Movement was not able to slightly increase our modest budget. So, a small donation from YOU, instead of a subscription to CALL, will be very welcome.





No Heavenly Delusion? A Comparative Study of Three Communal Movements

By Michael Tyldesley (Liverpool University Press, 2003)

Among the communes of the 20th century, you would be hard-pressed to find three more important movements than the Kibbutz, the Bruderhof, and the Integrierte Gemeinde (IG). These movements have all stood the test of time, resolving crises and adapting to the changes of modernity. Each has multiple settlements and over a thousand members. For communal movements, the three, however, could hardly be more different in terms of their background, outlook, and structure. The IG and Bruderhof are unified bodies with well-defined religious ideologies, while the Kibbutz is comprised of a variety of mostly secular movements and ideological streams. The IG is urban and the other two mostly rural, they have differing views on communal property, and so on.



In *No Heavenly Delusion*, Michael Tyldesley argues that the three movements, despite appearances, actually have quite a lot in common. Tyldesley's thesis, a constant presence throughout, rests upon two propositions. Firstly, that all three communal movements owe their origins to the German Youth Movement of the early 20th century, and second, that the three movements are, at least in theory, committed to interaction with, and involvement in, wider society. These two propositions are the motivation for Tyldesley's research.

This survey is not taken up entirely with analysis – the history and ideology of each movement is described briefly in an introduction, then again in depth in separate chapters. Description is definitely Tyldesley's strong point. A great deal can be learned from the concise, yet detailed, movement overviews. There is also a full chapter on the German Youth Movement, clearly defining its stages and currents of thought.

When the theorizing is reached, however, the quality drops off significantly. Although it is interesting to see how he traces the German Youth Movement's links to the later movements, Tyldesley never quite seems to prove that there is anything more than an accidental relationship. Also the final chapter, looking at the extent to which each movement is "counter-cultural", feels like it has been taken out of a different study, not following on from the author's original claims.

Let me make clear that *No Heavenly Delusion* is first and foremost an academic study, with the requisite notes and critical comments on other researchers. For this type of work, however, it is unusually lively and accessible to the casual reader. The author, in addition to referencing existing studies and written materials from the movements, has conducted first-hand interviews with present and former commune members. These interviews, though obviously not free of bias, provide a fascinating look into how the members view the movement and their experiences within it. There are also some unusual angles; for example, I was pleasantly surprised by the time devoted to urban Kibbutzim, which are not usually considered a part of the Kibbutz mainstream.



For all its flaws, *No Heavenly Delusion* is a surprisingly readable book, at least for those who are interested in communal movements and have patience for the scholarly style. I do not know how this book was received in the academic community, but I found it to be a treasure-trove of information on communes that I had been previously unfamiliar with. Depicting ideology and history in equal measure, and able to reflect, at least a little, on how the movements see themselves, it is definitely a worthwhile read.

Review by Robin Merkel, Kvutsat Yovel



No Heavenly Delusion? Issues and Thoughts.

By the author Michael Tyldesley



The researching and writing of No Heavenly Delusion? raised a number of issues in my mind, and some of these have only really crystallised now that the book is finished and published. In no specific order let me go through them.

Looking at movements (Kibbutz, Bruderhof and Integrierte Gemeinde) that had their background to some extent in the “German” Youth Movement raised the question of the roots of the movements. It was interesting to see how these different movements felt about their roots. The Bruderhof take a broadly positive view of the Youth Movement from which they emerged in the 1920s. For the Integrierte Gemeinde, on the other hand, the break with the traditional Catholic Youth Movement of immediate post World War Two Germany was a vital step towards becoming something ‘new’, a very important point for them. The reality of the Holocaust and the failure of Christians in Europe to prevent it made any return to earlier forms problematic. The Kibbutz simply seems to see the Youth Movements as one of its sources. It speaks with a less unified voice than the other movements, and there are certainly voices to be found in Kibbutz history who have raised serious questions about these movements. That said, I found it very interesting that it is from the classical Zionist Youth Movements that a possible source of renewal of the Kibbutz is emerging: the Urban Kibbutz. This is a fairly new phenomenon, and we cannot as yet judge what its lasting impact will be. But this does suggest that Youth Movements can represent sources of renewal for communal movements, bringing new generations with new ideas to longstanding bodies.

The second issue that has struck me as being important was that of freedom and free choice in commitment to life in community. This, I think, is a question that goes beyond the three movements I studied, with a wider relevance for life in communes. When people choose to live communally, how can that commitment remain a freely given one? If all that the communards own is given in to the collective at the point of joining, and perhaps no guarantees given about its return should communards choose to leave, then does continued membership still reflect deeply held beliefs or might it result from inertia? Could people who joined a commune in order to change the world end up remaining there simply because

they are “stuck” there, with other options looking rather risky? There are, of course, good reasons for communes adopting such procedures; how can a commune possibly plan a course of development if it stands to lose a huge proportion of its resources at a moment's notice? Although the Integrierte Gemeinde is not a commune per se it is a very real community. Perhaps its modus operandi of combining continued personal or family holding of resources, with community life and also with a system whereby potential new members undergo craft apprenticeships in order to ensure that they will always have a trade to fall back upon should they choose to leave the community, has a lesson for communards to ponder.

The final issue that came to mind is what one might call the “City on the Hill” factor. Communes are often set up in order to teach the rest of us some lessons about life by witnessing to strongly held beliefs about the right way to live life. As I said earlier, to change the world – obviously for the better. To rephrase Paolo Soleri, communes are often “social laboratories”. Communal failure is easy to report and deride; see the mainstream press, who love to unearth this kind of failure and mock it – often with the subtext that “normal” bourgeois life in modern, developed societies is the best of all ways for us to live. Let's remember that often communes DO have important lessons for the rest of society. Anyone who has spent any time at a Bruderhof will be aware of the way in which the older members of that community are socially integrated into the life around them, as against the segregation of old people into social spaces that the rest of us very rarely go into, like “old folks’ homes”. The rest of society has quite a bit to learn from that – to cite just one instance that comes to mind. To end on a positive note; perhaps communes and researchers into communal matters should be prepared to be a little bit clearer about such instances. It's perhaps too easy to get involved in considering the micro-politics of communes and writing about spectacular failures.



Accountability and Consequences: How can we help each other stay accountable to the group? What are our options if someone repeatedly breaks community agreements?



One of the most common sources of conflict in community occurs when people don't do what they say they'll do. As in business, this often causes repercussions "downstream," since some people count on others to finish certain preliminary steps before they can take the next steps. But by putting a few simple processes in place, community members can help each other stay accountable to one another in relatively painless, guilt-free ways.



One is to make agreements about tasks in meetings, and keep track of these tasks from meeting to meeting. This involves assigning tasks to specific people and defining what they're being asked to accomplish and by what time. It also involves having a task review at the beginning of every meeting – the people or committees who agreed to take on these tasks report whether they have been done, and if not, when they will be.

It also helps to create a wall chart of assigned tasks with expected completion dates and the person or committee responsible for each. Assign someone the task of keeping the chart current and taping it to the wall at meetings.

Community activist Geoph Kozeny suggests creating a buddy system, where everyone is assigned another group member to call and courteously inquire, "Did you call the county yet?" or "Have you found out about the health permit?" This is not about guilt-tripping; it's about helpful inquiry and mutual encouragement. These methods rely on the principle that it's



more difficult to forget or ignore responsibilities if they're publicly visible. Social pressure can often accomplish what good intentions cannot.

If not, completing tasks becomes an ongoing problem with one or more people in the group, you can add additional processes. For example, when anyone accomplishes a task, thank and acknowledge the person at the next meeting. When someone doesn't accomplish a task, the group as a whole asks the person to try again. After a while, the simple desire not to let others down usually becomes an internalized motivator for more responsible behavior.

Why is not completing tasks such a common source of community conflict? I think it's about developing the habit early in life of procrastinating or agreeing to take on more than is possible, and not having enough motivation to change. When we live alone or live with our families, it's relatively easy to change our minds about whether or not, or when, we'll do something we said we'd do, or just plain let it go. But in a community this can have widespread negative impacts on other people, and we'll certainly hear about it. It can take time, energy, and commitment to shift from "live-alone" or "single-family" mode to consistently considering how our actions will affect others.



When people repeatedly don't do what they promise and others continue to hold them accountable, it usually results in the person either changing their habits or eventually leaving the group.

By Diana Leafe Christian

Excerpted from *Creating a Life Together: Practical Tools to Grow an Ecovillage or Intentional Community* (New Society Publishers, 2003) by Diana Leafe Christian.

Reprinted from *Communities Magazine* #117, edited by the book's author.



The Peace Village Project by Dieter Duhm

Our planet is not merely undergoing a crisis within a specific form of religion, nation or government, but a crisis of the entire human civilisation. Peace villages are places where the structures of destruction are overcome and structures of healing are created. Places of reconciliation between human and human, between man and woman, human and animal, human and nature and human and creation. The structures of social co-living must comply with the higher orders of life and creation themselves, then human living can recover its anchor. Reconciliation is the central motive of the peace villages. We need places on earth where wounds can heal.

If we manage to develop a violent free existence in some places on earth, according to the laws of the morpho-genetic field building theory, a global healing field will be created that may, in turn, lead to the establishment of similar centres. The co-operation of all living beings creates the possibility for their original unity and belonging together to become effective again in a violent free existence. True peace will only be possible if we create true structures of compassion and co-operation with all beings in nature, as we are all connected in the great network called life.

The creation of peace villages is not bound to a certain religion or church but to the sanctity of life itself. We believe in the unity of life on earth and in a common evolution of all living beings. We believe in the possibility of peace among all beings. We leave behind the fight which has been fought against each other by different peoples, nations, religions and forms of life. We all

form part of the one and the same humanity. The multiplicity of living beings, their varying forms, kinds, or races are all aspects of the one living body, organs of the same organism. The organism of life is sustained by the peaceful co-existence and co-operation of all organs of which the same matrix of life is effective. We as human beings want to come together in a new consciousness for we are the gardeners of the planet earth.

In the peace village human beings choose a new direction for their evolution and a fundamental change of paradigm in their existence: it is no longer



government of nature but co-operation with nature, no longer the power of destruction but the power of healing, no longer the suppression of other forces but their integration, no more punishing the guilty but eliminating the causes of the wrong, no longer a morality that derives from suppression but a new ethic deriving from empathy and compassion and the transformation of our own dark sides. We can only cause as much peace in the outside world as we carry within us. The new direction includes also the relationship between the genders. There is no peace on earth as long as there is war in love.

For a peace village to be able to work or function its founders and members must enter a human evolutionary process during which time they change and purify themselves. Members

must decide to no longer solve conflicts with the old matrix of violence or government. By taking a decision in favour of living a connected life they will attract the forces and knowledge needed to create an efficient place of light on earth. For the necessary personal transformation of the members we have mental, artistic, and therapeutic means at our hands, proven to be useful. The strongest transformation in a human being takes place when a person has the chance to learn to let go of his or her masks and camouflages and enemy images within an environment of trust in a human community.

When a peace village achieves a uniform functionality and passes a critical limit this automatically creates an effect reaching far beyond the borders of the village: the field building effect in the sense of the morpho-genetic field building theory. The very piece of information enters the information body of the earth (noosphere) and can thus be retrieved anywhere. The existence of the new piece of information increases the probability that the powers of life manifest themselves also elsewhere on the planet. This is not only of local interest but connected with a healing process having a global effect. Peace villages could be mainly installed in the critical areas of the world, for example in Israel/Palestine, Colombia, India and the Balkans, which would generate healing powers, making reconciliation easier and open up new conflict solving possibilities.

Peace is not a small correction to the existing society but a totally new existence of the human being on the earth.

A Peace village in this sense has been developing for some years in the south of Portugal, calling itself: Healing Biotope 1 Tamera. For further information or a copy of the full text please contact: Tamera, Monte do Cerro, 7630 Colos, Portugal

Dieter Duhm is the co-founder of Tamera - Healing Biotope 1 and author Of the 'Sacred Matrix - From the Matrix of Violence to the Matrix of Life'.

Tamera is based in Portugal and acts as a research project for the questions of developing non-violent social models. This edited text is available in full from Tamera: Tamera@mail.telepac.pt



A New Kibbutz Movement?

James Grant-Rosenhead, Kvutsat Yovel

Crises and privatisation are still ravaging the traditional Kibbutzim, once heralded by Buber as 'the experiment that did not fail'. Meanwhile, new models of Kibbutz are emerging, and tentatively forming a network – the Circle of (Communal) Groups – between themselves. Is this the beginning of a new Kibbutz movement?

One model is the 'urban Kibbutz', such as Tamuz in Bet Shemesh. In their own words: "Kibbutz Tamuz is an urban Kibbutz, a small Jewish community, and like the traditional Kibbutz, Tamuz is a collective. Its 33 members function as a single economic unit, expressing the socialist ideals of equality and cooperation, ideas and praxis. However, unlike the traditional Kibbutz, we are located in an urban environment, keeping us in tune with what is happening in society around us." (see <http://www.tamuz.org.il/english/about.html>)



The urban Kibbutz title is also used by Migvan in Sderot (www.migvan.org.il), Bet Yisrael in Jerusalem (www.reut.org.il), and Reshit in Jerusalem. However, when considering the Circle of (Communal) Groups network, this terminology is misleading, since neither the words 'urban' nor 'kibbutz' best describe many of the other groups which have been founded in recent years...

Another model is that of the 'Tnuat Bogrim' (graduate movement) groups of the youth movement Noar Oved ve'Lo'omed (NOAL for short). Such new NOAL communities tend to define themselves as 'educational' or 'societal', deliberately placing the emphasis on the projects which they take on in tackling the ills of modern society, rather than on their geographical locations. Indeed, whilst most of their members work in various educational and social projects in urban centres, Ravid, Eshbal (www.eshbal.org.il) and Hanaton are physically located in green, northern, rural settings, rather than within towns. Even more confusing terminologically, is that others of these urban / social / educational communities are not using the word Kibbutz, preferring instead to refer to themselves as 'kvutza', connoting their smallness and intimacy.

The crises and privatisation of the traditional Kibbutz framework in the 1980's meant that NOAL graduates were no longer attracted to Kibbutz on the one hand (historically they built many) and the Kibbutzim could no longer afford to send their best emissaries to work for the youth movement on the other hand. In response to this decline, a new stream developed within the youth movement during the 1990's, producing many small, intimate, consensus-driven, anarcho-socialist groups of graduates. The new NOAL graduates of the 1990's decided to cut out the Kibbutz intermediary from their traditional symbiosis. They retained their small, intimate group life as separate new adult communities after they had graduated from the youth movement and the army. Instead of integrating into a traditional Kibbutz, they took on responsibilities within the youth movement which were formerly undertaken by the Kibbutz emissaries. At first, many Socialist Zionists saw this as an historical betrayal by NOAL, abandoning the Kibbutz. One decade later however, it is already becoming clear that this change in methodology has revitalised NOAL as the primary creative force behind dozens of small new Kibbutzim / kvutzot / communes all over Israel.



Both 'urban kibbutzim' and 'graduate movement kvutzot' function similarly internally, replacing the democracy and bureaucracy of the bigger traditional Kibbutz with the levels of consensus and anarchy attainable in small intimate groups. Externally, the urban kibbutzim are primarily involved in education and social action projects in their local communities, whereas the NOAL kvutzot emphasise the growth and development of their national network, multiplying their ranks by bringing forth increasing numbers of new graduate groups each year.

In the past 5 years, the boundaries between these two categories have blurred for various reasons:

- Many NOAL kvutzot have formed in urban centres;
- Some urban NOAL kvutzot have conglomerated to form bigger communities whilst maintaining each small intimate kvutzot within - Eshkol in Beer Sheva is such an urban NOAL 'kibbutz of kvutzot';
- Some NOAL kvutzot have started taking on more local community projects and less responsibility for their own youth movement; and
- Several other Socialist Zionist youth movements which were once traditional Kibbutz builders have formed their own graduate groups, drawing on a mixture of elements from both the NOAL and Urban models (eg Habonim Dror's Yovel - www.kvutsatyovel.com, Kvutzot Habechira in Migdal Ha'Emek - <http://study.haifa.ac.il/~oshapi03/html/roots~1.htm> or www.yesod.net/info/essayes/hevra2/kvutzot.htm, Hashomer Hatzair's Pelech, and Machanot Ha'Olim's Na'aran - www.naaran.org).

These new groups are each trying to work towards social justice and equality in Israeli society, through a wide variety of



educational and social initiatives on both local and national levels. The number and variety of these groups is growing each year, and the rate of growth is increasing too. Contact between the various groups is developing through the umbrella of the 'Circle of

(Communal) Groups' (<http://circle.kibbutz.org.il>), which held a successful second annual conference weekend in May 2003. Inter-group discussions are already taking place regularly, with the main questions on the agenda currently being about the aims of the inter-group contact. It is still too early to call the 'Circle of Groups' a new Kibbutz movement, but it is not too early to see that as a work in progress...

The Commune - OLGASHOF

We are currently six adults and two adolescents, and at weekends up to six children. The place belongs to those of us who have decided to live here. We run a seminar and vacation center, a carpenter's workshop and an architect's office. We have lots of fruit trees and, unfortunately, too many cars.

We cook and eat together, but each of us has his/her own room. We meet at least once a week for plenum discussions, conflict-solving, communication-training and to make all the important decisions - using consensus and veto methods.

We see ourselves as a vital part of self-organization, local, regional and worldwide. Two differing ideas clash sometimes: Anthroposophy and Anarchy. External politics in which we are involved are: Fascism, War and the Environment.

We see the commune as an alternative answer to the problems of our time: war, unemployment, isolation of the individual, growing poverty, forced consumption, debts, globalization, and a hungry and exploited world. The community serves also as a field for experiments in the areas of men-women-children relationships, training for communal life, anti-sexism structures, and more.

Olgashof 1
23966 Olgashof, Germany



ARCOSANTI

Arcosanti is an extremely interesting project based in the Arizona desert. We include here a brief explanation of Arcology and correspondence between the editor of C.A.L.L. and Wes Ozier, workshop coordinator from Arcosanti.

Since 1970 over 4500 people from diverse backgrounds have participated in the Arcosanti Workshop Program and building effort of the worlds first prototype Arcology. The mix is always interesting, stimulating and a unique educational experience. The five-week Arcosanti Workshop is a process of experiential learning designed around the basis of Paolo Soleri's hypothesis called "Arcology".

In short (VERY short), an Arcology is a compact, three-dimensional city-complex surrounded by agricultural, recreational, and natural environment within a defined ecological envelope. The Arcology would be built to a human scale allowing for pedestrian, rather than automobile traffic, to be the main mode of transportation throughout the urban complex, bringing all of the facilities and opportunities offered by urban living together more efficiently. An Arcology would provide space for a lively urban complex as well as land for agriculture, preservation and low impact recreation.

Here at Arcosanti we use Organic landscaping and gardening practices, meaning we use no synthetic or chemical herbicides, pesticides or fertilizers on any of our gardens. As the buildings exhibit multifunctional uses, so do the gardens. We try to make use of the micro climates created by the building structures themselves to grow plants that may not normally be able to survive here. One can always expect to learn about composting, preparing the soil, weeding and sweeping the site, preparing beds for planting, planting and watering. Landscaping and Organics are responsible for maintaining a 15.5 acre site. We develop our gardens using xeriscape, permaculture and edible landscaping methods. We also maintain two experimental greenhouses which serve as agricultural spaces and passive heating elements for living spaces.

Arcosanti is a company town with a college campus feeling to it. It must be stated this is not a commune nor an intentional community. We are an educational organization/facility dedicated to teaching by building the physical structure, which will eventually house a community of considerable size. Of course we are trying to construct a space that encourages culture instead of one that dissipates it. To this aim we host monthly cultural events, not to mention the spontaneous cultural events by the residents. Many people choose to stay on at arcosanti for periods from one month to many years to live, work and participate in the unique life of the place.

Although you state that Arcosanti is not an intentional community, from what I understand, the building complex is itself 'intentional' ie. Designed specifically to fulfill the needs of its occupants. Is this a reasonable assumption?

Yes of course the buildings are intentional, but the community is not.

On the philosophical side, Paolo makes this analogy that he is building a piano (the structure) upon which people can play the music (the urban life). So there is no plan for the community of Arcosanti, whatever happens inside the structure is what happens. So the Arcology theory has no parallel social theory and the Cosanti Foundation has NO community aspirations or plans, the Foundations sole purpose is to get the structure built.

It is a more accurate perspective to think of Arcosanti as running more on the university or company town than an urban civic town. Everyone who lives here works for the Foundation as the Foundation needs to get the structure built and the jobs taken care of.

There is the Community Council, which is a five person elected body to handle community related issues, conflict resolution, and to just be there for community members who may have issues. The Council is recognized and receives some budget from the Foundation, but has little power over the project, but can have a major impact on Arcosanti from time to time.

How do occupants come to live at Arcosanti? Can anyone come and move in? Is there a selection committee or absorption process?

To come live here you must first complete the five week workshop. If you want to stay on you submit a Letter of Intent to the Community Council, giving residents a chance to voice any objections (Which I've never seen happen in three years of being here). After that you can easily stay on as a volunteer, meaning housing is free, or if you are here long term you can try to secure a paying position but it may take three to six months to get a full time paycheck. When you are full time paid housing costs a total of \$110.00.



When designing the structure itself - was there a discussion about balance between private space and public space? What about the needs of the occupants?

In the Arcology design concept it is important to balance public and private space. For most of the apartments I believe the balance is struck quite well. For example my apartment is right off the amphitheater, but during concerts there can be a crowd of people right outside my place by my apartment still feels secluded, but walk ten feet and I'm at a jazz festival. Acoustics is the main oversight for the interaction of people and architecture. Living off an amphitheater is great for a concert, horrible when someone tells a knee slapping joke at eleven o'clock and wakes up half of site.

Paolo criticizes Arcosanti right now as being too small for anonymity, which he believes is highly important to a private/public life, alas that's a function of size, when we get bigger we can have anonymity.

I'm still having difficulty understanding that the focus here is the building itself and not the social interactions between people.

Without buildings where would those people live?

Surely the building is only a tool to cater for both the environmental consequences of urban sprawl/the environment and the needs of the community?

Yes the building is a tool for that, and that is the point of Arcosanti as a prototype Arcology, to try and develop a model for a better tool. That tool will also affect the society within.

Paolo defines a concept called the Urban Effect . Simply put this is what happens when



elements of a system come together in greater densities and begin working together. The current sprawl city is pulling apart the Urban Effect, you stay in your house then jump in your car then get to your destination spend money and go away. Less density creates less social interaction, conversely a higher density creates a higher level social

interaction which will create more culture let's say.

You specifically state that you are not an intentional community? Is that because you don't want to be labeled as such? What is your definition of intentional community that enables you to state that this is not what you are?

Arcosanti is an architecture project. I state the intentional community perspective because many people do arrive here with the preconceived notions of 'intentional community' and not the perspective that Arcosanti is a project of the Cosanti Foundation dedicated to building a working model of a new urban design.

Of course the resident population (about 80) constitutes a community, and most people who come here enjoy or stay for the community and social aspects.

Personally I like to refer to the resident population as a micro- or proto- culture. Also I prefer to think of Arcosanti as an Urban Center rather than a 'community', to me the difference there is that an 'urban center' is composed of communities, and more open to the general public. 'Community' often involves what I call social monoculturing i.e 'we are a vegetarian community' or a 'spiritual community' or some such. Communities focus around a central social tenet and are generally unaccepting of those who do not conform to a set belief system. That is fine, birds of a feather and all, but an Urban Center is open to a diversity.

*I cannot stop polluters,
but I can clean up my own back yard.*

*I cannot stop bigotry,
but my Family can be of many colors.*

*I cannot tell others not to over consume,
but I can avoid the Wal-mart parking lot.*

*I cannot stop others from being inhumane,
but I can treat those I meet with kindness.*

*I cannot stop wars,
but I can live peacefully.*

*I cannot guarantee the survival of humanity
nor produce a new culture for mass consumption,
but I can live a full and rewarding life among others
who would simply choose to do the same.*

unknown



Heart Club: Good Will and Connection at Lama

It's Wednesday night. I've spent the entire day doing the traditional program at Lama Foundation in northern New Mexico: 6:30 a.m. meditation, breakfast, practice and tuning (our morning meeting), community labor until late afternoon, then preparing dinner. Soon it's time to head to the dome for Heart Club. All day I have looked forward to this, our weekly sharing time, because I usually have a lot to express.

"I'm really tired right now," I say with a sigh. "I worked all afternoon in the garden and the people who said they would help didn't show. On top of that the kitchen cleanup person was late for the dinner shift, and when he showed up he gave me an attitude for mentioning it. It really makes being here a drag!"

Over the years I have truly come to appreciate this opportunity to share my inner experience at Heart Club, whether getting things off my chest, expressing joy and appreciation, crying with frustration, or simply being silent and listening to others: "Well I had a really good heart-to-heart with Sylvia today," says the person who was supposed to be the kitchen helper. "I lost track of time and was late for my cleanup shift. I guess I could have been less uptight about it though. Sorry, Scott."

Heart Club is a process which has helped form the community glue that has sustained us at Lama Foundation these many years. Some residents attend with joyful anticipation, others with deep aversion, still others with confusion or total indifference (one member lies prone the entire time, appearing not to listen). It is a time when we get in touch with our emotional selves in a group setting, free to talk about anything we need to, so long as it is personal and not a business topic. It's an opportunity to truly investigate who we are and allow others to see sides of us they don't see at work, play, or mealtime.

Heart Club is almost as old as Lama. It evolved from the half-hour daily discussions early residents had to allow the circle to get into the heart space, a high value within our community. It usually starts with a "check-in" in which individuals all have a chance to express how we are feeling in the moment to get current with the group, and may evolve into a more "meaty" process which has taken many forms, both structured and unstructured. It can become, for example, a guided meditation followed by group process work with a trained facilitator; self-facilitated small groups discussing the same topic; "fish bowling" where two people sit in the circle and speak openly as if no one else were listening; "popcorning" in which people speak when they feel called to simply share their own personal process with no cross-talk; or simply passing the Talking Stick.

Heart Club also changes with the seasons. In summer when we have more visitors, Heart Club may be attended by 30 or more people, all with very different personalities and a need to share, which creates time limitations and a less intimate meeting. Summer meetings are usually facilitated by the "Watch," a resident who is "in charge" of the community's energy for two weeks and is familiar with the process. All staff and residents who have lived in the community for at least a week are invited.

These Heart Club meetings tend to be more structured since more people trained in process and facilitation are present. In winter Heart Club becomes considerably more intimate and emotional—more like a group marriage in which all are committed to the needs of the circle. As in any relationship, a lot of difficulties can arise in a close and focused residential community, which usually means a lot of processing among individuals, an activity that is more prevalent in the more intimate winter meetings.

Heart Club also tends to be good training for the fall and spring membership meetings, in which we share on an even more intimate level. In the fall, summer staff as well as current resident members apply for residency at Lama by giving and receiving feedback among all applicants. This is a deep and sometimes emotionally charged process. The spring meeting involves current residents only. Because becoming a resident at Lama requires unanimous approval by all (not including abstentions), not every applicant makes it through. We trust that just the right people will remain and those who are not meant to stay will find their place elsewhere. Communication skills learned in Heart Club help prepare us for these important fall and spring meetings.

Regardless of my state of mind when I got there, I usually get caught up in the warm and snugly feeling that Heart Club evokes. Any of the resentments I carried in with me from the day tend to dissolve: beginning dinner preparation without help seems so much less important now. I linger afterward, enjoying the increased sense of closeness, familiarity, and oneness.

Scott Thomas lives on Lama Mountain in Northern New Mexico and has been a Continuing Member at Lama Foundation for several years. Contact them at info@lamafoundation.org

Corn

There was a farmer who grew award-winning corn. Each year he entered his corn in the state fair where it won a blue ribbon. One year a newspaper reporter interviewed him and learned something interesting about how he grew it.

The reporter discovered that the farmer shared his seed corn with his neighbors. "How can you afford to share your best seed corn with your neighbors when they are entering corn in competition with yours each year?" the reporter asked.

"Why sir," said the farmer, "didn't you know? The wind picks up pollen from the ripening corn and swirls it from field to field. If my neighbors grow inferior corn, cross-pollination will steadily degrade the quality of my corn. If I am to grow good corn, I must help my neighbors grow good corn."

He is very much aware of the connectedness of life. His corn cannot improve unless his neighbor's corn also improves.

So it is in other dimensions. Those who choose to be at peace must help their neighbors to be at peace. Those who choose to live well must help others to live well, for the value of a life is measured by the lives it touches. And those who choose to be happy must help others to find happiness, for the welfare of each is bound up with the welfare of all.

The lesson for each of us is this: if we are to grow good corn, we must help our neighbors grow good corn.

From Ecovillages Vol. 8, Edition 2



KALEIDOSCOPE

The Communitarian Scene from all Over and Under
Compiled (and partly translated) by Joel Dorkam



During a very intriguing and successful (as I thought at the time) visit to an American commune in San Francisco, based on polifidelity, whose members claimed to have overcome aggression, competition and jealousy - I once asked one of their very smart women: "In which house are you living?" In response she smiled indulgently and said: "You mean, where is my toothbrush residing today?" Not surprisingly, that commune disintegrated after a few more years. It could be compared to a very gorgeous plant without roots....

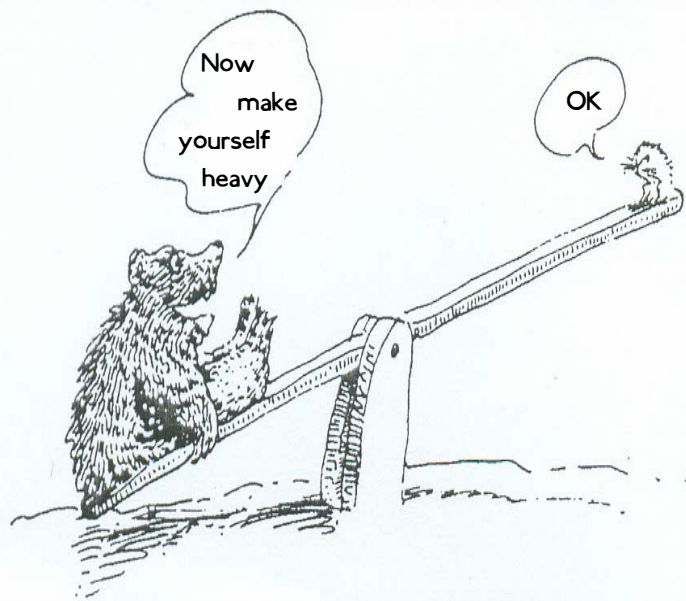
Question is, can a community survive in the long run without achieving a certain measure of stability, without creating kind of a "home ambience"? Thousands of people have passed through our own kibbutz, Tsuba near Jerusalem, which presently counts nearly 300 adult members and candidates, plus about 200 children (another one might be born any moment) - and many have come, stayed a few months or a few years, and gone on, leaving behind some vague memories and the slowly healing (or not) wounds of ruptured relations...

I remember many years ago, during a preparing session for moderators to lead an intergenerational workshop: we were asked to regroup according to one of three possible definitions of Kibbutz: Idea, Way or Home? To my utmost amazement, the great majority of the twenty participants of various ages flowed towards the "Home" poster rather than the two other alternatives - and stayed there in spite of a round of persuasive debate.

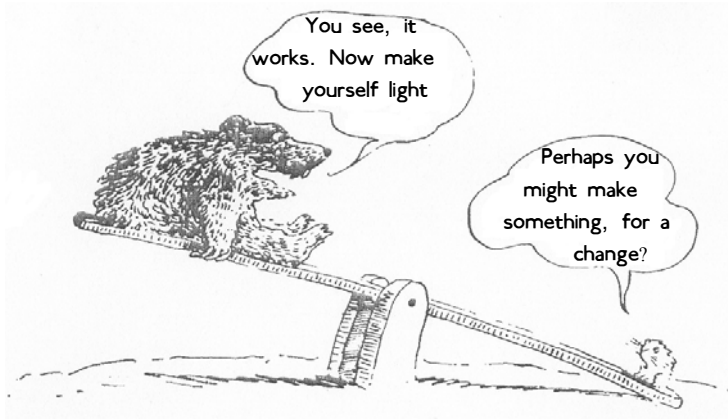
Of course we didn't get the real life possibility of opting for 2 or even all three definitions: we had to make a choice of priorities. Now if you don't mind, try this out on yourself? And please be sure to be entirely honest: What shall it be for you?

From "Kommuja" No. 52 of 8+9/2002, edited this time by the Berlin Zorrows commune (they take turns, very refreshing) we take this little announcement from E.V.:

"This year I won't be coming to the commune meeting. I have the feeling that it just won't fit into my everyday routine, which moves between my family and several projects. At present I'm busy trying to set up in Berlin a countryside association, the "Network of Self-Administration and Self-Organization" - which mainly signifies using the present opportunity and political climate to establish production cooperatives. This could perhaps revitalize the collective scene..."



On the front page of the ever jovial "Leaves of Twin Oaks" No. 98 of Fall 2002 we found this little report by Mala + many others:



And from the same "Kommuna" under the title "News from Urupia", we find a long, long dissertation about the process of change, which sounds strangely familiar to us kibbutzniks. Here is only a short excerpt:

"When Urupia became Reality 7 years ago, after 3 years of intensive meetings, plannings and communal Dreaming - one of our main impulses was to overcome the separation between political activism and everyday life. Most of our communes' founders had a "political history" and were imprinted with longstanding experiences of social opposition and engagement into ecological, feminist, anti-militaristic and libertarian groupings. Being politically involved was for a majority amongst us like "daily bread", a central component of our personal identity.

At the same time, we felt a growing dissatisfaction about the gap between political action and our social living conditions: wage work, rented housing, daily experienced, various forms of alienation - not the least, concerning our nutrition. This dissatisfaction was coupled with the wish to discover and explore new forms of political involvement, based not only on the limited amount of leisure time, but rather covering the entire daily routine. Our political activism should express itself not only by opposing the social reality, but also by attempting to live alternatives in practice.

For some of us the founding of our commune meant also a "return home" from northern Italy, to rediscover roots from which we had been cut off for years; to refind the language of our childhood and youth. The commune offered us the concrete possibility to return to where we grew up, to a region from which we had escaped many years ago..."

At the end of the summer we bid goodbye to short-term but much-loved members A-drianne and Nathan, who returned to Oberlin to finish their degrees. After several weeks of agonizing, Raj followed their lead, going on a PAL to try out grad school in Indiana. Mele also went on leave to pursue her passion for ornithology by working for Hawk Watch at a remote camp in Utah. Lee returned to Ann Arbor, Tatiana moved to Acorn, and tofu intern Lew is trying out life with the Krishnas in Pennsylvania. Frodo dropped membership, headed west for Burning Man, and returned to Twin Oaks as a guest.

Our hipness quotient doubled when Anja, Jane, and Mary-Margret, Meg, Mele, and Shiloh all returned as members. Other new members include Juniper, Kate, Russ, Jason, Madge, Marcello and Gitta. Non-human arrivals include Hugo, a grey stray cat adopted by Hildegard; Marley, Ted and Samadhi's new ferret; and Bree, a car named after the ex-member from whom we purchased it. Other new names in our lexicon are the result of name changes rather than turnover: Lawrence, Jay and Mary decided to take on more descriptive names by becoming (respectively) Lune, Woody, and Gaea.

Our population now stands at 87 adults and 15 kids; despite having already lost several bets along these lines, recruiting manager Paxus is staking a pizza on us hitting pop cap (92 adults) by his son's first birthday (February 14, 2003). High population is, of course, dependent on retention as well as recruiting; on that side of the equation, this summer McCune became the first Oaker to celebrate thirty years of membership.





From the very same Leaves, I lift a bit of Pilgrim's Vision for new forms of living:

I, like many other communards far and wide, have a vision to help create a new Intentional Community. However, it seems that nine out of ten communities fail for myriad reasons, which makes me feel the need to be prepared before I embark on a harrowing adventure such as this.

Upon searching, I was greatly surprised to find out that there were few types of Community Organizer internships available. It seems to me this is an obvious position for TO to sponsor, as we have been successful for so long. Upon reading the FEC website I noticed this compelling statement, "Our aim is not only to help each other; we want to help more people discover the advantages of a communal alternative, and to promote the evolution of a more egalitarian world". Subsequently, I also read the Twin Oaks Bylaws, which state "Together, our aim is to perpetuate and expand a society based on cooperation, sharing, and equality: which serves as one example of a cooperative social organization, relevant to the world at large, and promotes the formation and growth of similar communities..." As this is a primary goal of both TO and the FEC, I believe my proposal may be able to help to achieve this in part.

I would like to develop a curriculum geared towards FIC communards interested in establishing additional Intentional Communities worldwide. The programs would teach all of the basics of what it takes to start an Intentional Community. I envision this program to last 1-2 years with classes covering conflict resolution, land acquisition, tax status, grants, appropriate industries, labor systems, consensus decision-making, sustainable building, labor exchange trips to FEC Communities, trips to established non-FEC Communities and many more areas.

Recently, I coordinated a structured conversation with a number of the community movement's most experienced and published personalities. We began to articulate the necessary ingredients needed to better equip individuals for the rigors associated with building a community from the ground up.

In an old issue of "Shalom Connections" I discovered this view from Joanna Lehman of Reba Place Fellowship:

For me, common finances are an integral part of what it means to be in community. It is where the rubber hits the road, where the vision and ideals become flesh. This seems to me comparable to the faith and works dance. Faith without works is dead. The beautiful ideals by which we express the meaning of community and the warm fuzzy feelings of belonging become reality when we can willingly and joyfully submit our resources for the good of one another, and, as a community, give all we can beyond ourselves.

Contribute everything and receive what we need: In this model, we all contribute everything we have and receive what we need. There is a financial equality possible I've not seen in other models. There are not some in the body who are struggling to have the bottom-line basics, while others can indulge their wants or whose standard of living is free to keep rising. Also, because we as a group can live more economically (not having to buy insurance, sharing cars, etc.), we have more resources in both time and money to give beyond ourselves. We are able to free some folks to serve in ways not possible if we were each having to make our own ends meet.

Only if we seek the good of others: Of course, this can only be a life-giving and joyful experience if we truly are seeking the good of our brothers and sisters as well as our own, and if we humbly recognize that our own self interest, biases, and limited judgment can cloud what is best regarding important decisions. Seeing this, we welcome the counsel and testing of brothers and sisters.

Yes, there are certainly frustrations and problems in our current financial structure. However, I believe they are due more to our humanness, our failures in love and sensitivity, than to structure itself. To live this way calls for a lot of patience with and forgiveness of one another – time and again. But I believe it is worth it! If we gave up the common purse, we would exchange one set of problems for another because we are still the same imperfect people.

Speaking for myself, I have not experienced or witnessed the common purse causing undue control of people over each other's lives. Also, my observation has been that money issues become more central for those outside our communal life rather than the other way round.



One of the branches of Kommune Niederkaufungen near Kassel, Germany - or more precisely, of the affiliated Association for Ecology, Health and Education - run week-long or weekend seminars, including lodging and meals. Here is just one sample of a workshop for Intergender Conflict Resolution:

"You just can't possibly understand me!" - "Men are from Mars, women from Venus!" Those are two of the most-read book titles about relationships between men and women. And actually, quite frequently such encounters are replete with misunderstandings, exhausting debates or lack of dialogue and miscomprehension. Usually this also includes a waste of lots of energy which could instead be invested in:

- Accepting and productively utilizing differences
- Promoting mutual understanding
- Removing blocks and searching for solutions (also finding them!),
- Taking into account the wishes and needs of both partners.

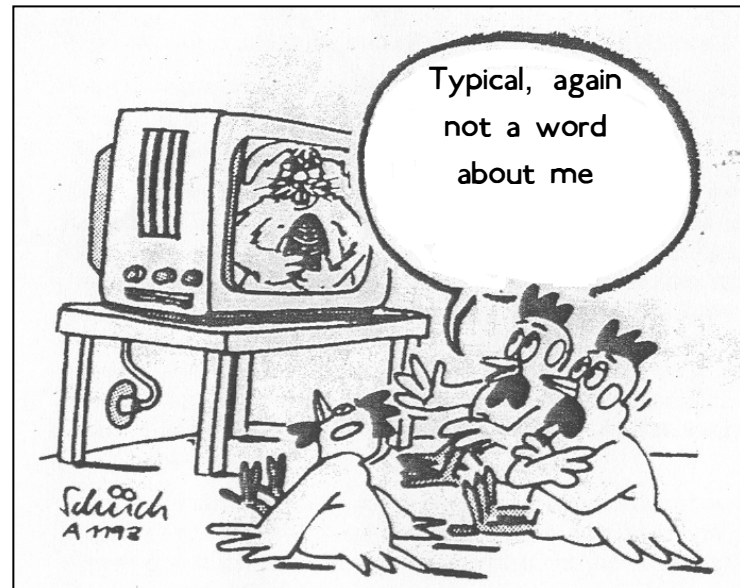
A little hesitantly I purloin an excerpt from the Zegg Reader (bashful types might skip this one) by Ulf Leonard, entitled:

An Open-Hearted Relationship:

I always was a rather lascivious type who likes women. Since 1984 I'm connected to this project and I've built stable friendships with some people, who are now here at Zegg - in previous communities where we lived together. For various reasons I moved in 1993 from Zegg to Munich. There I met a fascinating woman.

We first had a series of introductory conversations, to find out if we had the same concept of a loose friendship, which could grant us enough freedom. We both just had behind us nerve chafing relationships and wanted to bet on a safe number before going to bed together. But then it turned out quite differently.

Behind the initial timidity of our encounter I felt something so oddly familiar and well-known - that it filled me with joy and thankfulness. Together at last! I was so touched that I had a sleepless night. I just couldn't place properly this adventure into my experiences up to now. The next day I absolutely wanted to find out if I was left alone with my confusion or if it had gripped her the same way. It was the same with her!



We then fell in love mutually so strongly that we stopped dating others. Until then this was unknown to me. Even when I felt an intensive love relation to one woman, I had at the same time other sexual contacts. And this time we had initially agreed mutually that we could - but we didn't seem to want anymore!



Shalom Connections No. 2 of Summer 2003 brings us Good News:

We just returned from a week with our sister community Valle Nuevo in El Salvador, encouraged by a reunion with our long-time friends and by signs of new unity in the community.

Growing unity

Over the last decade, several cooperatives and corporate structures have been formed to title the 265 acres of land that Reba and Plow Creek helped Valle Nuevo buy a decade ago. None of these groups, however, seemed to be able to rally or sustain a consensus of the community in the complex and controversial task of how to title the land. In recent months, as leaders of these various groups have been meeting together, they have reported a movement of the spirit amongst them, a sense that God has been bringing reconciliation for the sake of the common good. Instead of titling only the agricultural lands, the community wants to make one unified project to title the houses, ecological reserves, common areas and the fields all at the same time. A land project promoter sponsored by CoCoDA has been visiting the community regularly to facilitate this process. Though many concrete decisions remain to be made, community issues look more hopeful than they have been for many years.

A passion for peace

Even though the impending war in Iraq did not affect them directly, we were surprised everywhere we went among the *campesino* population to hear their grief over another war. "We know the suffering of war, and the pain of every one involved. The poor are usually on the receiving end, and there is nothing good about it." Many, many people went out of their way to explain why it is of such grave concern to them, and then ask us how we felt. On March 19, several hundred teachers, students and parents held a silent march and gathered in the chapel to pray for peace. Andy Horst, one of the youth in our group, said it well: "I've been against war all my life, but now I know why and why I need to do something about it."

That's it, folks. We are ready for positive/constructive/ indignant comments or contributions, thank you.

Tim Lockie of Reba reports a slightly less optimistic view:

"About twenty-five years ago we tried to count up those who have lived with us for more than three months and it was over a hundred. We don't have a historian. Who knows how many we've lived with by now! I especially remember Eliseo, a refugee from El Salvador who lived with us a year and could make the best meals out of ordinary stuff. Then his family came and now they live down the street. I enjoy hosting Wendell and Jane Sprague who come once a year so Wendell can be everyone's dentist and Jane can go to the operas in Chicago.

"How do we do it? I still enjoy shopping, which is fortunate, because I do a lot of it. Hilda Carper has been with us most of these last forty years. She organizes schedules, creates work lists, and makes things beautiful with music and flowers. Julius keeps getting new ideas and organizes how we will do them. Others like Bob, Char, and Denise have made it a very durable team. I see lots of advantages in living this way. I think the Lord has been good to us, and the people who have stayed with us for the long haul have made it possible. This is God's grace because community and household are very fragile, yet we're all together. Spiritually we make a home for one another."

Joel Dorkam



Terra Mirim is located in the Simoes Filho municipality, Bahia, in a lovely green area, where nature reveals all its beauty. A lagoon, a river, fruit trees, a vegetable garden and a medicinal herb garden are part of the landscape, where the visitors can feel peaceful and experience serene moments in close contact with nature.

It was founded in 1992 and today Terra Mirim Foundation is an eco-spiritual non-profit entity recognized as a Public Utility. It is a vocational and residential community linked to the international Eco-Villages Network.

Integrative Ecology is its main focus - a vast ecological concept that encompasses the belief that the cure for Planet Earth depends on human beings' well-being at all levels, from the physical to the spiritual one.

Terra Mirim's Environmental Preservation Program relies on participation of the whole community. The Itamboata River that crosses the foundation was cleaned, thus facilitating the Pure Water Projects. The program is trying to gather resources for expanding its scope of action: recovery of the surrounding wood area, environmental friendly activities from the water spring to the mouth of the river, as well as educational friendly activities with the neighboring community.

The Herb Garden, part of the Environment Project, cares for the region's native herbs. Plants not only feed, but also cure human beings, as part of their service to nature, to the Planet and to mankind.

More than 5 thousand trees were planted around the lagoon, along the river banks and in many other areas over the last two years, making the landscape even more beautiful; making it a most pleasant place to take a stroll or to just relish the pleasure of being there.

Guests and visitors from all over the world come to Terra Mirim. They can stay in cottages or in individual rooms, which are simple but cozy. They take part in the community's routine: daily meditation, sharing and being together, and the daily chores: namely cleaning, preparing food, working in the vegetable garden... They also participate in the Study Groups, Workshops, and Art Workshops supervised by the Foundation members.

At Mirim food is a special issue and therefore is prepared with great care. The pleasures of cooking, the eating itself and the savoring of the flavors are all to be enjoyed. There are no special dietetic regimen; here we simply do not eat any kind of meat, not for religious or health reasons, but simply because we deeply love animals, and consider them our brothers and sisters.

Maria Helena Avena, from Terra Mirim Foundation, has been in correspondence with our very own Sol Etzioni. She explains that today Terra Mirim Foundation has 35 adults and 10 children living on site as members of the community. They also have about 50 volunteers who come to work helping the members, but don't actually live in the community.

View their website at <http://www.terramirim.org.br/> or contact them at hospedagem@terramirim.org.br





Welcome once again to “Kibbutz Shorts”, where we discover what’s new on the Kibbutz in an update from around Israel.

Compiled (from the two Kibbutz weeklies) by Yoel Darom,
Kibbutz Kfar Menachem

What do the Veterans on the Kibbutz do? What they’ve been doing their whole life - W O R K

A recent survey of hundreds of the older Kibbutz members (after pension age) show that 70% prefer to keep on working, at least 2-4 hours a day. The reason is not payment: even on Kibbutzim who have introduced some kind of a "wage system", these few hours are not being paid.

No, it is the old principle that these men and women have been living by since they came to build their Kibbutz 50-60-70 years ago: to serve the community to the best of their ability. Work also adds better health, a sense of belonging and the notion that they are still contributing their share.

A special, outstanding case is Moshe Dital who - at 97 the oldest member of Kibbutz Yifat - does not (yet) think of retiring. He still goes to work at the Kibbutz factory, which produces copper and aluminum wires, every morning at 6 A.M., for his 5-hour shift at the production line. "He is one of the team" say his co-workers with true admiration.

Kibbutz on the web

The Kibbutz Website becomes richer and more varied every day. Whatever you may want to learn about Kibbutz - from history to guesthouses to problem-solving you may find it at: www.kibbutz.org.il. But be warned, most of it, so far, is only in Hebrew.

Creativity Shines Through

In the last few years, the Kibbutzim have encouraged individual initiatives that would give satisfaction to creative members and serve as a source of income for the Kibbutz. One of those original artists, Malka, of the religious Kibbutz Tirat Tzi (mother of five), opened and now runs a workshop in which she produces beautifully colored glass windows (see picture) - and is now too busy to supply all her customers with these magnificent vitrages.



Two Kibbutz General Secretaries?

Four years ago, the two major Kibbutz movements united and formed a common framework. Some of the departments stayed apart, but most show a good joint activity. Up to now, each of the movements - the United Kibbutz Movement (UKM) and

the Kibbutz Artzi - elected a "secretary" of their own, and now the issue is raised in an ongoing discussion in the two Kibbutz weeklies: has not the time come for one single leading personality, which would not only prove more effective but also symbolize the true union? There are a lot of pros and cons, and next year's elections will have to be held *after* the final decision.

Majority on Kibbutz!

Many of the Kibbutzim keep moving in the direction of less communalism and more "privatization", including real wages paid to the members, according to the job-market valuation of their work. Others stand by the old Kibbutz principles of full sharing - and receive their budget tailored to the size of their family.



The two Kibbutz General Secretaries

But there are quite a few Kibbutzim who cannot make up their communal mind. The Kibbutz regulations demand a majority vote of 66% (or in some cases 75 %) of the votes in each case of a major-change operation, and such a majority is not easy to achieve. This situation creates high tension, uncertainty and even bitterness - and unending attempts to change the basic regulations and find a loophole that would allow a Kibbutz to make its changes without having to command such an overwhelming number of aye-voters.

Mondragon - Collective Living, the Spanish way

By Ilana Lapidot, *Executive Director of Seminar Efal, the seminar center of the United Kibbutz Movement*

A select group of 25 Kibbutznikim and Moshavnikim travelled to Spain, to renew their batteries with new experiences about collective living. The visit to Mondragon Cooperation Corporation was organized under the auspices of the Efal Seminar, which aspires to set up a school of higher learning on the subject of communal living.

During four intensive study days we met with the founding members, the head of the movement and the various division directors, as well as visiting some of the cooperative business enterprises and the University of Mondragon. The studies took place in "Ottelora", a majestic castle erected in the Middle Ages by a gentleman of that name, situated in the rolling hills of the beautiful Basque region.

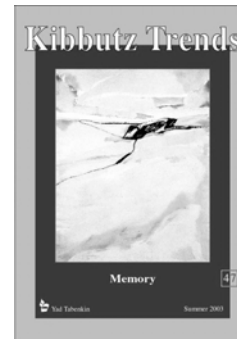
We found a captivating movement, successfully merging a modern business outlook with ideology of solidarity, social economics and mutual help. The movement has continually expanded, since its founding, even in times of malaise.



MCC today counts 148 cooperatives: 119 industrial, 2 banks, 7 educational institutes, 3 retail businesses, 4 research institutes and 10 service branches. The movement totals 67000 workers, 7000 of whom work in various factories the movement set up around the globe. During the

present MCC congress it will be discussed how to enable these workers to become members of the movement. The cooperatives in the Basque area adhere to the strict rule that no more than 20% of their workers are hired, and 80% are members. There is a waiting list of no less than 3000 people to join the movement. Acceptance of a new member is based on a free place of work in one of the movement's cooperatives. One cannot be a member of the movement without working for it. When one loses his job for whatever reason, the movement will find him a place of work at one of the other cooperatives. Workers are moved around, rather than paying them unemployment payment. This is a cooperative of work, not one of capital. The net profits are divided amongst the workers according to their input, the difference in salary levels have moved from 1:3 (when the cooperative was established) to almost 1:6 today. The directors are pleased to inform us that the minimum salary in the cooperative is higher than that on the open local market, while the managers get less than their counterparts on the local market. Each cooperative pays taxes to the movement according to its number of members. Ten percent of the income of the movement is dedicated to the community. We met many interesting people, such as one of the founders (today a pensioner). We were very impressed with the modesty and simplicity of this man who led a large successful movement and managed its bank for many years. Today this is the fifth-largest bank in Spain. The gentleman drives around in a 5-year old Fiesta, and does not need any status symbols. We met of course many more interesting people, but this is not the place to go into too much detail. (We could tell you a story about each and every one. We are very grateful to all those who helped organize this visit, and all those who received us so nicely and turned our stay into such a pleasant one. Besides our deep impressions of Mondragon, we will forever carry with us a love for the beautiful countryside of the lush Basque landscape.

Kibbutz Trends



An English language journal on kibbutz life

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CALL FOR PAPERS

The Eighth International Communal Studies Conference
International Communal Studies Association

"The Communitarian Vision"

The Amana Colonies, Iowa, USA
28th-30th June, 2004

Pre-Conference tour: 26th-27th June, 2004

Our conference will take place over three days in the heart of the Amana Colonies. A two-day tour of historic and contemporary communal sites will be held just before the opening of the conference. Information about conference and tour registration will be published in subsequent editions of the ICSA Bulletin and posted on the ICSA website.

Proposals may be submitted in English by the 1st November 2003. This may include the presentation of a paper, the organization of a panel or the presentation of a film or other creative project. Proposals should be limited to one page (about 250 words) and must include the following information: title, author, mailing address, telephone number, fax number and email address.

The program committee is chaired by Elizabeth A. De Wolfe, Associate Professor of American Studies at the University of New England in Biddeford, Maine, USA. Abstracts may be sent to Professor De Wolfe at edewolfe@une.edu

From ICSA Bulletin, April 2003

Each of You Who Came Changed Me

Thanks For Sharing Your Visions

By Jean Potts

Many of you who attended Woodcrest Collective 2003 came from trapped and stifled places where it's hard to imagine life any other way. Your oppressive circumstances hardly inspire a vision of a future that's a totally different world. But you had a vision anyhow. In turn, you renewed those of us who live in more comfortable circumstances, whose vision can easily become clouded and narrow, though we also try to live out a just and peaceful future every day.

What is it that drives a handful of students to move to Camden, NJ and imagine vegetable gardens in the middle of the sewage and industrial run-off of Philadelphia? But they've moved in, and they are serious about this vision even if there are no beds to sleep on and someone has already broken into the house.

She drove up from the Bronx on Saturday and walked onto a lawn where a breeze was blowing and we were enjoying fresh sweet corn and thought she was in another world. How can this 18-year old from Guadalajara, Mexico reach out from the cycle of poverty and oppression that she faces daily and still believe that every person can find stillness within themselves? But she believes and she knows it's found by demanding more than the material satisfactions that lure people to our western culture. I told her and her friends that this isn't paradise, that community takes work and struggle. They told me "vale la pena"—it's worth it. And they are right.

The fist-pounding urgency of a college student who lives a few miles from my home puts me to shame with her pleading that our generation takes responsibility for our future. She asks, why can't we make a commitment towards a better life for our children? What is keeping us disunited?

I am left speechless and challenged by the peace and forgiveness that radiates from a wheelchair-bound father of six, left paralyzed by an accident. His poetry bursts with images of himself exalting in the beauty of the surrounding mountains, taken

for granted by most of us. My eyes are brimming because I know I can still embrace that natural glory, walk in it, run and swim in it whereas he faces a life confined to a chair.

Some of you are just starting out in making your visions reality—you have planted an urban garden for families of every race to come and work together. Others strive to provide an organic farm for your rural community to experience the rich rewards that farming offers—and you are still waiting for the parking lot to fill up with eager families. You said you were moved by the exceptional singing at the Woodcrest Collective, but you reminded me how singing can often be the best way to express what is in our hearts, and that we can do it every day.

It takes vision to bring a teenage daughter halfway across the country in an attempt to open her eyes to belief and discipleship. So does moving into an old Cathedral with a few equally dissatisfied college students, disillusioned with the status quo and hoping

their life of service will advance a new world order of equality and respect. Making caring homes for teenage mothers, traveling to war torn countries to make peace within your soul as well as with people there - all these take vision.

All of us who gathered at Woodcrest were inspired by words spoken years ago by Eberhard Arnold, calling the world to awareness that "the thing we have almost forgotten is truly and nevertheless possible." Together, with each and every person who came, we can make this a reality in 2003. With this vision, our own lives won't matter anymore; nor will our selfish desires take up all our thought-time.

If your hope was restored after the Woodcrest Collective, know that mine was too. You left me challenged, humbled, stretched; a lot more compassionate and prayerful for the countless un-headlined efforts, the bloodied fists, the many warriors for the truth who won't let setbacks deter them from the goal. Thank you for coming. You opened my mind to the reality of God's global working today.

The Woodcrest Collective was held at Woodcrest Bruderhof from August 1-3, 2003.

"The thing we have almost forgotten is truly and nevertheless possible."

Eberhard Arnold



The Findhorn Foundation recently received considerable press coverage in Scotland following the release of a report which showed how valuable the Foundation is to the local economy. Apart from an article in the "Northern Scot", Richard was also interviewed by Moray Firth Radio and featured on the morning news. There was also a live interview by BBC Radio Scotland and a longer feature later in the day.

We reprint an article from The Press and Journal ("The Voice of the North") - a Highland newspaper.

New report highlights £3m value of Findhorn Foundation

By Robert Leslie

The Findhorn Foundation helps to generate almost £3million in local household incomes and supports about 300 jobs in the Forres and Findhorn area, according to a study commissioned by Moray Badenoch and Strathspey Enterprise.

On a wider basis, the Moray-based charity helps to generate over £5million and support over 400 jobs in the Highlands and Islands economy.

The study was carried out to determine the economic impact the foundation has locally, as well as to investigate its future business potential, and areas of work and expertise that could benefit communities throughout the North of Scotland.

The study was carried out on behalf of MBSE by Brian Burns Associates in association with economist, Steve Westbrook. In addition, Findhorn Foundation staff gave their full co-operation to the study.

The consultants' findings highlight the role of the foundation in helping to generate and support new business start-ups and expansions in Moray, and in helping to broaden the area's skills base.

Additionally, the report highlighted several social, educational, cultural and environmental impacts. These include attracting residents to the area, helping to sustain services and community life in Findhorn and Forres, and helping to diversify educational provision in Moray by supporting the Moray Steiner School.

The foundation is also active in implementing sustainable development policies and practices, while the Universal Hall at Findhorn provides a local venue for a range of cultural events.

The report makes a number of recommendations, such as awareness-raising of the foundation's activities and development of tourism links, and identifies the potential in relation to issues such as renewable energy.

MBSE chief executive Douglas Yule said the findings of the study were important in planning ahead for the area's economic and social development.

He added: "The report clearly demonstrates that the Findhorn Foundation is an important player in the Moray economy.

"As well as bringing a great many people to the area for conferences and courses, the activities of the foundation help to maintain a diverse range of skills in the area's population and make major contributions to the main learning centres.

"This report will help us to develop strategies and make decisions about Moray's economic development in the future. We will be looking closely at the various recommendations made in the report by the consultants with a view to seeing which ones we can pick up in the short to medium term.

"We will also be making the report available to partner organizations such as the Moray Council. So they too can make use of the information."

Geoffrey Colwill, finance director of the Findhorn Foundation added: "As the foundation community enters its 41st year, we appreciate the support of MBSE in providing an external, objective assessment of the financial and other contributions that the foundation makes to the local community.

"Although our status worldwide is high, as demonstrated by our status as an NGO associated with the department of public information of the United Nations, our local standing and relationships have often provided some of our greatest challenges.

"This report is a further step in improving our local connections and identifying areas of mutual benefit where we can work more closely together with individuals and organizations in the area."

He said that the foundation's recent financial turnaround should enable it to ensure the long-term presence of a thriving community, making its contribution to the local region on many levels.

Tuesday 11th March 2003



Utopia rising

Back in the 1970s, as budding sociologist Peter Cock protested against the Vietnam War, marching in an environment of discontent beside the anti-capitalists, feminists and environmentalists, he decided to create something positive.

Out of the seeds of social revolution came Moora Moora, on Mount Toole-Be-Wong near Healesville (an hour from Melbourne - ed.), one of Australia's most progressive utopian communities. The aim was to build a satisfying, alternative lifestyle – a thriving group with a connection across families while living in harmony with nature, using only solar and wind-generated power.

Thirty-one years on, Moora Moora has about 50 adults, from their late 20s to 50s, and 17 children living in six hamlets of cluster housing – three clusters each flanking the community centre.

Cock, a sociologist and environmental scientist who works part-time at Monash University, has also done significant research into utopian communities. He believes that about one in 10 is successful. Why has Moora Moora beaten the odds?

"We've done well to survive 30-plus years," he says. "We're now into the issue of generational change. In the '80s we were ageing but in the '90s we started to get younger, with new generations coming in and babies, the place is buzzing again with pregnancies."

"We addressed it (the ageing issue) a few years ago by providing loans for people to come in, making it easier for them ... It's another sign of success, while a lot of communities established in the '70s haven't been able to get over that hurdle."

According to Cock, an important aspect of Moora Moora was its location. "It was a conservative design in that it was close to the city, so people could maintain their connections with the wider world, which made that change or transition easier."

At Moora Moora, each house is an autonomous unit for a single person, couple or a family sharing some facilities such as a laundry or garden and power. A federated cooperative owns the land in common and the facilities, such as tractors.

Each housing cluster has a work day once a month, as does the cooperative, and there are committee meetings to attend, but the Moora Moora people also work outside their haven. And, like all close communities, they have had to deal with friction.

"Moora Moora has had its crises, as all communities do, particularly in the early stages," says Cock.

"We've had conflict mediation sessions over many years, sometimes bringing in an outside facilitator. In addition to that, we have set up the Moora Moora circle group, a place for eight trained facilitators – the cooperative paid to have them trained – which provides a safe space for people to share their stories about what's happening."



It was modelled on a similar set-up in a German community (ZEGG - ed.) and Cock says that the more turbulent the world, the more interest there is in alternative communities.

He believes that as society evolves into smaller households, the capacity for strong community is diminished.

"You might not have a sister or brother any more, so you don't learn to fight and negotiate with each other, for example, but the need for it (community) is no less."

As Cock says, we've gone too far with individualism, and it's time to pull back.

"There are many forms of communities, I wouldn't want to prescribe that for all the world ... but spaces of community and co-operation are more realistic than the communal dream because individualism is too much rooted in our psyche," Cock says. "The balance between community, privacy, autonomy and accountability is what we have to struggle with for our sanity and survival, and it's an ecological issue, too, because the more we share, the less footprint we have."

"We're social beings and communicating on the email and phone isn't going to do it, nor is investing in one other partner as the saviour of our lives ... But we're socialising people who can't cope with waiting five minutes. We're living in cuckoo-land and the ground stone of our times is very superficial and potentially, very explosive."

Moora Moora welcomes visitors on the first Sunday of every month between 1pm and 4pm. For more information its website is at <http://mooramooraa.org/index.htm> or email mooramooraa@hotmail.com

Printed July 3 2003, The Age, Australia



Excuses to (Still) Live in Community by Meghan Reha

Plow Creek Fellowship

"So you live in community, eh?" Someone asked me one day, as I was trying to relax in the living room in Auckland, New Zealand. I groaned inwardly thinking, "Here we go again." See, I've had this conversation before, and I could never tell anyone what community really was, because really, what is community to me? Every time I try to have this conversation, it gets bogged down somewhere between the legal ramifications of coordinating finances and the truth about Mennonites (no, I don't wear a bonnet!). The frequency of the question has helped me formulate a more concise and interesting answer. Or at least one that I like better. (It's funnier.)

The principles I have gleaned from my vast experience of community are few (and simple if you have enough practice). They even apply in the wild blue yonder.

1. Just say NO. A very basic rule to any sort of calm co-existence with anyone else is that you must learn to say no. The trick is to say no in a quietly suggestive manner so



that the other party is neither offended nor embarrassed. In fact, the most subtle of all can make it seem like the other person thought of it him or herself, saving everyone that awkward moment. However, when subtly doesn't work, Just Say NO. I have Mark and Louise Stahnke to thank for such a lesson - else I might still be at their house playing computer games!

2. Don't start something you can't finish. I can't say that I have a lot of personal experience with this one, but I know that giving in community can sometimes get out of hand. I am sure that somewhere in my parent's house is a white elephant "gift" that changed hands regularly and has beached itself in my father's workshop. I also remember my mother telling stories about a round of pranks that ended with someone's underwear in the refrigerator disguised as burritos...?

3. The more people, the more fun. Like it or not, work projects aren't what they used to be. Despite all my complaining when it was time to wake up, the effort was worth it after a morning's worth of stacking wood and throwing snowballs and a warm cup of hot cocoa with the mini marshmallows. And it was such a team effort - all the men splitting, women and kids loading into trucks, then driving to such and such a house lining up and passing it piece by piece down some narrow hatchway, sometimes counting it, sometimes naming each piece and sometimes just cracking jokes with whoever stood beside you.

4. Food is just an excuse to get together. Come on now - you don't think we went to common meal just for the Soup did you? (Although, Margaret, that soup was excellent!)

There are many other rules that probably belong on this list, but as I consider what I love about community, I think the one thing that I could never quite communicate about this community business is that community, for all that it is distinguished by sharing property and finances and endless meetings, really isn't about those things at all! It's really all about the people. What good is "It's time to go home now, Meghan," if you haven't spent a lovely evening together? What good is a practical joke if there's no one to laugh about it with later? Why bother stacking firewood if there's no friend to share the fire with?

As I wandered the world these past months, far from everything I understood as community, I saw it everywhere. Community is just friends caring for each other. Community is not something that we invented or that will die out when we are gone. People will always want to be together and to know each other intimately. People will always want to grow close to God in that way. There will always be people sharing long talks, games of soccer, watermelon, clothes. And for my future, well - I intend to take that secret with me and to bring community wherever I go. It may not be the purest form of community, but there will be food, and what is food but just an excuse to get together? And what is community but just getting together with an excuse?

Meghan graduated from Princeton High School in 2002 and then went to New Zealand with Youth With A Mission. Plow Creek is still home for Meghan.

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The lifework of the architect Hanan Hebron, one of the designers of the National Library in Jerusalem, was Kibbutz Reim in the Negev. Hebron can be seen as the embodiment of the kibbutz movement and of the 'good old' Israel.

The contribution of the architect Hanan Hebron (1931-2000) to the design of the Jewish National and University Library in Jerusalem in 1955 was his entry ticket to the history of Israeli architecture. The National Library building is one of the most highly regarded architectural works in Israel, both by many in the public at large and by professionals, and is one of the visual and cultural symbols of an entire era. At the same time, if there is a work that can be said to be a lifework, as well as the visual expression of the architectural and social ideas that Hebron espoused, it is the design of Kibbutz Reim, in the Negev. Hebron was one of Reim's founders and a lifelong member of the kibbutz.

"Reim is Hanan's design creation from A to Z," two of Hebron's colleagues, architects Asaf Kashtan and Yoram Bar-Sinai write. "We know of no other community that is the work of one architect, from the master plan to the details of the last of the buildings and the lamps that illuminate the yard," they note. "The lucid contour lines, the equilibrium between the houses and the vegetation, and even the details of the exposed drainpipes and the edges of the paths are a faithful expression of the pioneering settlement in the Negev and of Hanan's modest, clean line."

More than anyone else, writes Hebron's veteran colleague, the architect Vittorio Corinaldi, "he succeeded in making his kibbutz a living and integrated manifestation of the fusion between physical planning, architecture and the kibbutz idea."

Loyal modernist

Hebron was one of the first members of the United Kibbutz Movement's planning department and one of its senior architects, all of whom were kibbutz members; they were responsible for the visual appearance of many kibbutzim in the first few decades after Israel's establishment in 1948. Like much else in the kibbutz movement, planning and design has also been privatized in recent years. In the early 1950s, Hebron became one of the first kibbutz members to be sent to study engineering at the renowned Technion in Haifa, in order to assist in building kibbutzim. Many of these young professionals lived together in a commune in Kibbutz Yagur and afterward in Kibbutz Hahotrim. They viewed the architecture of the period and their "inner truth" as an authentic expression of the ideology they espoused, writes the architect Ziva Armoni, a fellow student of Hebron and his partner in the profession for many years.

"As young architects who 'breathed architecture,'" she recalls, "we aspired to execute precisely the principles of the style of the period - the International Style, which was dominant in Europe - in our studies at the Technion. It was a style that called for building in accordance with the new, industrial means of production, alluded to the changes that would occur in the future in the building, and advocated giving this practical and aesthetic expression. The architects who influenced us most," Armoni says, "were Mies van der Rohe and Le Corbusier, with his doctrine and his buildings of exposed concrete."

"Whereas Hanan believed he was fulfilling a social mission," Kashtan says, "and doing battle for the values of equality and frugality through architecture without commercial sycophancy, the kibbutzim started to go wild with an architecture of 'meatball palaces' (as the ornamented communal dining halls were dubbed), arches, and stone and marble overlay." Hebron's premature death, Corinaldi writes, "spared him the protracted pain and disappointment, which he probably already felt, in the light of the deep changes in the kibbutz and in the professional arena. It wasn't easy for him to adjust to the situation, which has been dominant for some years now, of competitiveness and arrogance that are radically at odds with the aesthetic and spiritual heritage of the modern movement."

Daring boldness

"Hanan and his generation," Kashtan writes, "planned the country. At an early age they took upon themselves the planning of whole communities and large and important buildings, which today constitute part of the national architectural heritage. Their boldness is breathtaking." Hebron designed homes, dining halls, cultural and memorial centers, clubs, sports centers and other structures in kibbutzim in every part of Israel; was in charge of designing the Alyn Hospital for disabled children in Jerusalem, of which his father was the director for a time; and planned Eshkol Center in the Negev over a period of 25 years, from the early 1970s until the mid-'90s. In 1981, he designed Yigal Alon House at Kibbutz Ginossar on Lake Kinneret, a structure of exposed concrete and basalt that is marked by sculptural contour lines and a monumental presence, perhaps too much so.

By Esther Zandberg Reprinted from Ha'aretz 9th May, 2003



An article written for C.A.L.L. by Anna Margrit Bjarnadóttir of Solheimar Eco-village in Iceland.

Solheimar is a self-sufficient community with a notable past and is the first community of its kind in the world, where people with special needs and those without live and work together. Inspired by the theories of Rudolf Steiner, Solheimar has focused on cultivating the individual and the environmental and was the first community in Scandinavia to practice organic cultivation.

Solheimar was founded in 1930 by Sesselja H. Sigmundsdóttir who studied the care of children and the mentally challenged in Germany and Switzerland. Sesselja was fascinated by the vision and theories of Rudolf Steiner, and based her work primarily on his methodologies. She emphasised organic horticulture, healthy food and artistic expression in her work with both children with learning difficulties alongside with those without. Today, Solheimar is a charming village of about 100 inhabitants, renowned for its international, artistic and ecological atmosphere, and prides itself on its varied cultural, social and sporting activities.

There is a famous theatre group, founded in 1931, active all year around, a gallery with art exhibitions, a choir, a sports club and a Scout troop. Other attractions include a sculpture garden, geothermally heated swimming pool with hot tub, a theatre and gymnasium. There are also a number of fine walking paths in beautiful surroundings.

It is really the diversity in Solheimar as a community, the surrounding environment and the participation of everyone which contributes to the development of the individual and acts as a form of therapy. Recognition of collective responsibility increases the self-esteem and confidence of the individual. The focus on working, social, and cultural activities is stronger here than in other

places for people with special needs. The main aim in developing work in Solheimar has been to create diverse, demanding work with an emphasis on creativity and the environment. Solheimar puts great emphasis on caring for the environment; cultivation is entirely organic and for other production only natural or recycled materials are used.

Sesselja put great emphasis on giving the children what she called a cultural upbringing. She wanted them to get to know the four main domains of art; music, dance or eurhythm, theatre and visual arts. For a long time there was a school in Solheimar. The children also had access to musical instruction, years before this was common in Iceland, and decades before it was accessible to the mentally challenged.

Today the emphasis is mainly on theatre, visual arts and music. Now Sesselja's children have grown and some of them are already elderly, so with time the emphasis has changed from working with children to working with adults. The children living in the community are the children of the staff and other inhabitants and they go to the county school. The mentally challenged people living in Solheimar today are all adults. They all have access to the South Iceland Institute of Further Education and access to a wide variety of courses in Selfoss, the nearest town, and in Solheimar.

In Solheimar there are various cultural and social activities, which try to meet the needs of all residents, whatever their age. Many of the cultural and social events have a long tradition, such as orrablot, a festival of food, the Christmas ball and the first Sunday of Advent. The social program is organised so that there is something happening every month. In 2002 there were over 50 cultural and social events.



There are many good artists and craftsmen living in Solheimar. In the building Ingustofa, there is an exhibition hall, which is a venue for art exhibitions. During summer there are summer exhibitions focusing on the work of one of the artistic workshops. During winter there are individual exhibitions focusing on the work of one of the many resident artists.

Solheimar has many different workplaces where people with special needs work alongside those without special needs. This variety of opportunities for work, in particular in creative employment, is unique in Iceland. Some of the workplaces are run by Solheimar Day Services, and there are four independent companies. Five international volunteers assist in the workplaces when needed.

There is an art workshop, ceramics, a weavery, a soap factory, a candle factory, a wood workshop, an organic tree nursery and reforestation centre, organic horticulture and farming, a hotel, cafe and restaurant, a general store and crafts shop, a maintenance department, cleaning, telephone and postal services.

Solheimar is blessed by a hot spring that generates near boiling water at prodigious rates—12-15 gallons per second. This is more than adequate to provide central heating, a wonderfully warm swimming pool with hot tub and hot water and to supply a large number of greenhouses that grow vegetables and nursery trees year-round.



at Solheimar. Sesselja House is by far the largest and most challenging project undertaken so far.

Sesselja House is Iceland's first Eco-centre' and opened in 2002. The building was named in honour of Sesselja on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of her birth (she died in 1974). Sesselja House Eco-centre is run by Brekkukot Travel Services and hosts conferences, meetings, and environment-related



courses within a showcase of green technology. The interior theatre seats 100, and exhibition halls, smaller conference rooms and

offices are all wired for Internet, sound and projection capabilities. The building is 100 percent PVC-free, uses a variety of exterior natural insulation materials, employs driftwood for interior panelling and trim, is thoroughly earthquake-resistant, uses recycled tyre rubber for floorboards, uses sustainably-harvested timber products for trusses, minimises use of cement by substituting rammed earth, has a wet composting toilet, employs energy-efficient lighting, earth-chilled and geothermal-warmed air circulation and heat recovery, solar photovolta and geothermal electricity and several novel features not seen before.



The Solheimar community is self-sufficient, and has both worldly and spiritual aims. The core idea is to create a harmony of tradition with new technologies that responsibly utilise natural resources, thereby handing over to future generations a planet in balance with itself that can provide the same opportunities for individual and communal self-fulfilment. Self-sufficient communities such as Solheimar are leaders in discovering natural solutions to environmental problems facing the world today. We did not inherit the earth from our ancestors; we borrowed it from our children.

You can contact Anna at anna@solheimar.is

