

C.A.L.L.

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



INTERNATIONAL
COMMUNES DESK



YAD TABENKIN



Dear Readers,

The relationship between an intentional community and the wider society surrounding it will often actuate difficult dilemmas. How can the community maintain its status as an alternative society by keeping negative influences from the outside to a minimum, and yet prevent itself becoming isolated from the society at large?

This predicament is only relevant when a community has at the core of its mission, the aim to influence the society around it. There are of course, those examples of communities that reach the conclusion that wider society is rotten to the core, and therefore pursue a life living "off-the-grid", no longer connecting to even the most basic of utilities provided by the defective society.



This form of community has essentially given up on the idea of reforming society at large, and is instead attempting to build a community for its members. But what of those communities that face the challenge of working towards societal change?

The first question is one of location. An intentional community by definition has some sort of boundary between itself and the general populace. Is this boundary a physical distance (i.e. living in a rural area), or is it possible to retain its independent identity by living in the city? Which is more preferable / effective when the mission is to heal society, which is only possible when a strong community exists as a foundation for doing this work? Is it best to live in close proximity with those that you are impacting, or can you justifiably come to them during the day, and then in the evening, return to your home elsewhere?

Secondly, what methods should be employed to affect change in the wider society? Seminars and workshops are popular tools used by intentional communities all over the world to spread their messages to short-term (and sometimes longer-term) visitors. The many new communities in Israel today are also using education (both formal and informal) as a means for working towards a more just society. Rather than waiting for interested visitors to come to them, however, these communities are actively coming to schools, community centres and youth groups with their message of social justice. And if there is no pre-existing structure, or it is deemed to be inadequate for the needs of its patrons, then one is simply established from scratch.

I would love comments from our readers on any of these issues – After all, I see experience-sharing and information-sharing as the main goal of C.A.L.L.

You will find all the usual columns in this issue such as Kaleidoscope and Kibbutz Shorts, plus some original articles written especially for us by William Green of the Anahata community and Mary Kraus of Pioneer Valley Cohousing, and loads more as well!

I want to take this opportunity to thank Moshik Lin of Kibbutz Netzer Sereni, for many of the wonderful cartoons that adorn the pages of this issue of C.A.L.L. Moshik is a well-respected political cartoonist of a daily newspaper here in Israel, a lecturer in Visual Communication and an illustrator of Children's books. We will hopefully be seeing more of his fantastic illustrations in upcoming issues.

Looking forward to hearing from you,

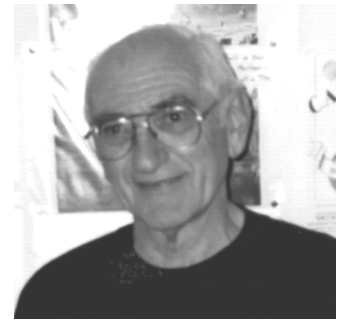
Enjoy C.A.L.L.

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Dear Reader,

The best community news is that there is now an Online Communities Directory website: <http://directory.ic.org> . The FIC Directory is now a free searchable database of intentional communities. Many thanks to those responsible!

The tsunami tragedy has affected many of us communarians, proving – once again – how puny is mankind. Different communal bodies have reacted in different ways, a few of which are noted on page 23. The far greater man-made tragedy of the Holocaust was also brought home by the media through the Auschwitz Memorial services. Without a doubt, every kibbutz has members who lost relatives in Nazi Europe and several kibbutzim were actually founded by concentration camp survivors.

Desk members received outsider-but-intimate views of Hutterite life from Geography Professor Yossi Katz, his wife and teenage son, who spent almost a month on 2 of their Canadian colonies. Each had a fascinating tale to tell.

"Communal tourism" has been slow in the last months, but the members of the German Catholic Integrierte Gemeinde continue to come to their centre near Jerusalem and keep up the contact with various kibbutzim, especially nearby Tzuba. Four Bruderhof members have spent 6 months in Bethlehem, doing humanitarian service to the Christian Arab population and have visited a number of kibbutzim.... We have heard occasionally that other communarians have been in Israel for various reasons, but haven't contacted us. In fact, Yvette Naal of L'Arche del Vasto was 35 kilometres away from my kibbutz but couldn't get in touch, because she didn't have my phone number (02-9908365) or e-address. What a pity! Bear in mind that through us, you can contact all sorts of communities in Israel.

Another community internet achievement is the eBook of the 2004 ICSA conference proceedings. You can download a copy from the International Communal Studies Association web site at <http://www.ic.org/icsa/conference.html> and clicking on the appropriate link. There's lots of interesting material for all of us who missed the event. Kudos to Peter Foster, now in Holland after a long Polynesian stint, for his sterling and rapid work.

The great majority of the CALL feedback forms that we received have been very positive, with a number of critical comments to be taken into account. We also very much appreciate the contributions which have come in together with the forms – thank you very much! Even if you aren't in a position to assist us financially, you can still help us by voicing your opinion of CALL. (A copy of the form appears on our website at <http://www.communa.org.il/questionnaire.doc>).

The latest "communal discovery" is a Christian kibbutz of an aboriginal tribe in Taiwan! We will give details of Smangus Atayal in the next issue of CALL. A different kind of "discovery" – for us - is the British journal "Camphill Correspondence", which reflects the work/lifestyle of this worthy movement in various parts of the world.

The number of Israeli urban communes is steadily growing, despite other pressing matters here. There should be some details of their activities in the next CALL.

Finally, a big round of applause to Kibbutz Representatives (UK), which has given us enough financial support to enable us to consider expanding our activities. Up till now, we have been kept going almost entirely by the annual contributions of the 2 kibbutz movements.

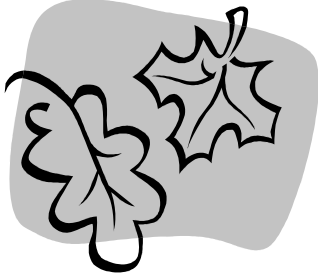
Looking forward to hearing from you,
Sol Etzioni, Kibbutz Tzora, DN Shimshon, Israel 99803 or solrene@tzora.co.il

PS. Do take a look at www.communa.org.il .



Thoughts on Income Areas at Twin Oaks

I value, and the community has historically valued, having some amount of our income areas that are driven by individual members and meet their needs. Examples of this include ornamental flowers (Woody), herbs (Hilde), woodworking (Woody/Kana), crafts (Stella, Cleo, others). I hope we continue to support this. It makes it easier for some people to live here, who are often productive, skilled people and those skills spill over in to their other work, and usually doesn't take many hours overall. I think these types of area serve both our members and the community as a whole, and I wouldn't want to sacrifice them.



There are some income-areas that in addition to bringing us income have other less tangible but still important functions. Primarily these are the Women's Gathering, Communities Conference, Kat Kinkaid's book and FIC Directory Distribution. We get under \$10,000/year generally for each of these areas, but both bring us a lot of value in terms of getting our name out there as a vibrant, vital community. They also are not big drains on labour overall. Many communities don't get visitors unless they fairly actively solicit them - we have the luxury of having people flock to us, and

part of why they do that is they hear our name over and over again any time they have anything to do with the communities movement (eg. Buy a directory or Communitas Magazine, ask about events throughout the US that they can attend, etc.) That is a value to the community which I hope we bear in mind. I think these types of areas serve both our members and the community as a whole, and I wouldn't want to sacrifice them.

Thoughts about other, more significant income/labour areas we may decide to take on:

- good to have income areas that are in line with our values - both our values around sustainability, etc. but also around our values about what types of work we like to do and how we like to do that work. Eg. Hammocks serves us well because it's easy to learn (lots of turnover) and can be dropped and picked up at a moment's notice (oakers like to have flexibility and lots of control over our time)
- good to have a balance of different types of income areas that offer different types of work (physical, sit-down, etc.) so a range of types of members can easily and enjoyably participate
- good to have at least some income areas that don't require a lot of detailed training for a lot of the aspects of the job



Group Hammock Weaving

- good to have income areas that are the types of work Oakers generally like to do (eg. As a community, we more than East Wind have historically been suited to more sit-down/paper-work type jobs like indexing)
- good to have income areas whose finished products and services can be of direct benefit to the community--currently tofu is the strongest in this area.

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The True Confessions of a REAL ecovillage
Klein Karoo, South Africa
By Erika of Berg-en-Dal

Disenchanted with the rigours of city living, a group of us who share a vision of bucolic living in a community setting purchased a farm in the Little Karoo in late 1999 to start an ecovillage. As such it is still in its pioneering phase and all efforts are centred on infrastructure development: upgrading of buildings and roads, streamlining of water supply, setting up processes for group dynamics and getting to know each other better. Working towards a sane and beautiful world we find ourselves working on a blank canvas waiting to be coloured.

The biggest obstacle is the lack of money. Many shareholders are bound to the city to generate an income because it will be a few years yet before the farm is self-sufficient. So while some are being “asphalters”, it is left to a small group resident on the farm to continue with core activities. But farming is a full-time job like any other and there are just not



The front verandah and expansion of the vegetable garden.

enough hands to develop it as fast as we'd like. Just building your own house is a demanding task, not to mention general tasks of developing food gardens, water harvesting and infrastructure maintenance.

There are other challenges too, many of which are also hugely beneficial. People ask: “Doesn't the

isolation get to you?” Well we like the serenity of retreating to country living in the first place, but the isolation doesn't get to you as often as you think – there are many wild and woolly people who live in the platteland. And everyone has to face isolation at some time or other in their lives, and you begin to differentiate between being alone and being lonely.

You learn to bliss out on the utter perfection of nature, to find your inner resources, to let your mind roam. Besides, people like to visit ecovillages: from curious townsfolk wanting to de-stress and who have “always dreamt of doing something like this” to WWOOFers (Willing Workers on Organic Farms) wanting to exchange their labour for a stay off the beaten track and exposure to alternative lifestyles. And you finally get round to reading those books you've always wanted to read, doing those crafts, learning that instrument.



Serena & Mavanwe

Despite the tough conditions, when it comes to group dynamics it's often the gentler “yin” energy that succeeds. And group dynamics are not something that a hierarchical and patriarchal Western culture prepares you for. So we experiment with techniques such as group facilitation skills, stakeholder analyses, holistic goal formation, consensus building in decision-making, sharing skills and resources, using a talking stick, conflict and support ... heady Aquarian stuff. Sometimes this veers towards the power struggles of the tribal councils of Survivor rather than the “healthy sense of belonging, greater generosity, better distribution of resources, and a greater awareness of the needs of the self and the other” as espoused by Malidoma Patrice Some in “The Healing Wisdom of Africa”. But we're still learning.

So far it's been an interesting journey of discovery, one that's teaching us about the fine line between vision and illusion, dreams and hard work, personal wishes versus community imperatives. It requires a commitment to ideals and to other people, and you can lose any of them along the way.

Best of luck

Erika

www.berg-en-dal.co.za



A Reader of Communities Magazine (Summer 2004 Issue) asks: Are Hierarchical Communities Really "Intentional Communities"?

Dear Communities:

I have recently been involved in an intense debate within a newly forming intentional community as to whether a group with an authoritarian form of government could even be called an intentional community. It seems to me that this form of government violates the principle of intent—and thus the basic definition of intentional community.

John
(No last name or location given)

Longtime FIC activist and "Peripatetic Communitarian" columnist Geoph Kozeny responds:

John, I believe you are mistaken to assign the definition of an intentional community as excluding any with an authoritarian form of government because this form of government "violates the principle of intent—and thus the basic definition of intentional community." The communities movement is a very broad and inclusive collection of social experiments and no one person or group owns the concept. I think that your definition applies much more aptly (and accurately) to communities which specifically consider themselves "egalitarian intentional communities" or "democratic intentional communities." The working definition used by the Fellowship for Intentional Community (which our committee labored over on and off for at least a year) is as follows:

"A group of people who have chosen to live or work together in pursuit of a common ideal or vision. Most, though not all, share land or housing. Intentional communities come in all shapes and sizes, and display an amazing diversity in their common values, which may be social, economic, spiritual, political, and/or ecological. Some are rural; some urban. Some live all in a single residence; some in separate households. Some raise children; some don't. Some are secular,

some are spiritually based, and others are both. For all their variety though, the communities featured in our magazine hold a common commitment to living cooperatively, to solving problems nonviolently, and to sharing their experience with others."

This very generalized definition does not specify tightly defined values or practices. And note that, within this definition, it is perfectly acceptable for a group to come together with the intention to have a wise and inspiring charismatic leader or some other form of nonegalitarian structure. Naturally many community activists aspire to invite them to consider more democratic forms, yet the idea is likely doomed to failure unless all the players align with the vision and get behind it with their full enthusiasm and participation. Otherwise it's trying to force someone, against their will, to live a certain way.

In having visited over 350 groups that call themselves "intentional communities," I've found some hierarchic groups that seem more humane and empowering than some so-called egalitarian groups that got caught up in unexpected power struggles based on the egos and bad habits that the members brought along (undoubtedly an unfortunate residue from their upbringing).



Utopian Societies: from Pythagoras to Damanhur

Sociologist Bill Metcalf teaches at Griffith University, Brisbane, Australia. He was President of the International Communal Studies Association (ICSA) from 1998 till 2001 and is presently carrying out research into Australian communities. Bill Metcalf has a profound knowledge of historical communities and it was on this subject that he talked with QDf (Damanhur, Italy - Community Newsletter).



BILL METCALF

QDf: What elements make a community an 'historical' community?

Bill Metcalf: We always speak about intentional communities, so as to distinguish them from those that have always existed.

Communities have formed throughout the millennia for the same reasons for which Damanhur was born: to form new societies.

The most ancient community, of which we have historical data, was created in Italy by Pythagoras in 250 A.C. From there on we have traces of many other intentional communities, such as the Essenes in Palestine, and the first Christians who united in community groups in order to create a new world. The Cathars in France; the Valdese in Italy, groups in the United Kingdom, such as the Anabaptists, many of whom later left Europe for other countries and the 'Nueva Italia', created in 1880 in Australia by Italians who wished to found a utopian society. In this latter case it is interesting to note, that they were all socialists from the area north of Milan but their experience only lasted for one generation, because their sons married Australian women. A museum of this utopian society still exists. Another group of 'Nueva Italia' immigrated to Paraguay in 1850 and their community lasted for two generations.

The Damanhurian story has only just begun.

You have arrived this far but I do not know what will happen. The most significant aspect of historical groups is that everything is included: a beginning, a peak and an end and for a researcher this is a fabulous study condition.

From our point of view, it is interesting to note how everything that occurs today in community groups has already happened in the past: free love, charismatic

leaders, violence and so on. From an historical point of view, these groups have failed simply because their experience was interrupted, although they have left a positive influence on the society.

At the beginning of 1900 the Jewish youth movement in Germany created a way of life that followed Marxist ideology and socialism, experience that was then transferred to the birth of Israel, which became a great example of applied socialist ideology, of which there is almost no trace left today (Editor: Maybe Bill Metcalf forgets that there are still over 100,000 people that live on Kibbutzim in Israel today, not to mention the new communities that are spearheading a process of renewal of socialist forms of living in Israel).

One of the most longstanding communities still in existence in the world today dates back to 1794: they are the American Shakers and are called 'The Sabbath Lake'. Today there are only eight surviving Shakers compared to the two or three hundred they used to be. The index of success of small communities is much like that of small companies, from birth to failure. Some companies grow and become big, many others fail and disappear.

Once in a while I hear politicians say, "These communities all fail anyway, they are only temporary..." and I point out that the same goes for most companies. We have seen that most people remain in a community for more or less the same time that they remain with a company: some leave within a year, others after ten years, others remain for their entire life. Therefore, as Damanhur, you have the same longevity potential as that of a business: if you grow you will become big, and then we shall see..." From this point of view Damanhur is thirty years old and it is as if it were still a child.

QDf: Children, however, grow up quickly. What do you think will be the next phase we have to face?

B.M.: It seems to me that Damanhur is growing quickly, maybe and I repeat, maybe too quickly.

I am referring both to the number of people who participate in it as well as to the distance that is generated between people who have been participating for a long time and new arrivals. According to the normal analysis of social groups I would say that if within the next 10 years you keep the number of people constant you will have the possibility of becoming stronger, of becoming stable. On the other hand, if you will grow too quickly, you run the risk of the central part becoming weak and that which surrounds it taking an upper hand. It is a bit like what has happened at Findhorn, which is now something less than an intentional community. From a historical viewpoint evidence shows that this is a problem, because if the growth is too fast, an increasing number of people will no longer accept a central authority.



Our Story

The growth of the New Creation Christian Community

Northampton, UK

The New Creation Christian Community is made up of people who have felt God call them to live shared lives, as in the book of Acts. There are marrieds, children, committed celibates, and singles, living in properties ranging from ordinary three-bedroom houses right up to a former hotel with room for sixty people.

The Community has grown and developed from quite humble origins. The Baptist chapel at Bugbrooke, Northamptonshire, came alive in the charismatic renewal of the early 1970s. From day one, God planted in peoples hearts a deep love for one another. We wanted to be together seven days a week! So even on evenings where there wasn't much on, folk would gather in someone's home and spend literally hours sharing their hearts and praising God.

We were quite a mixture, too! Village chapel-goers, Pentecostals, converted drug addicts from Northampton, intellectual seekers from Oxford, and hippies from almost anywhere, found that Jesus broke down dividing walls. As we gave ourselves to this, a love was born, and the foundations of a whole new society were laid. There was a two-way influence: the "straights" patented the "freaks" into a more ordered lifestyle, and the hippies (who were used to communes) convicted the middle-class by their emphasis on simple living and care for one another.

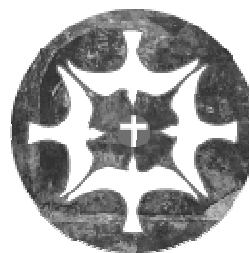
Around 1973, some families took in a single or two and started living in "extended families." Someone had the idea of buying food in bulk at the cash and carry, then sharing it around the church, as a way of living more simply and leaving more money for God's work. There was a notice board in chapel where people could pin notes: "Sheila needs a sofa," "Fred has time to mow lawns on Fridays," "Barry has a carpet to give away." We were starting to share what we had (Hebrews 13:16).

Suddenly Acts 2 and 4 came alive! The first Christians had shared everything in common. The love of Jesus had abolished the social injustice of "haves" and "have-nots." Here was a new culture, a "city on a hill," a "Zion of God," where brotherhood and equality reigned. We were already half-way there, so shared community living was the logical next step. So, as God provided the funds, we bought one or two larger properties, and folk sold up their own homes and moved in.

Houses and businesses

That was 1974, since when we have grown to the point where there are around 80 community houses, large and

small, spread over much of the UK. The road hasn't been easy, but it has certainly been blessed by God. We've had to learn many things. How to live at close quarters with all kinds of people, even those you don't like! How to respond when trials come and love burns low, and how to overcome with faith and devotion. How to arrive at a right "mix" of people. How to manage finances and ensure everything is done fairly. In the early days, as we labored to restore old properties, we realized that working together was a good thing! So the vision was born for several businesses, owned by the church and staffed from the Community, which could provide a service to the neighborhood and bring in an income for the Lord's



work. After all, Paul made tents to finance his ministry. So we founded a building supplies firm, a farm, a health-foods wholesalers, and a painting / decorating / plumbing service, all of which are still trading, with over 200

of our own people employed there.

Jesus Fellowship Community Trust owns the community properties, furniture, equipment and vehicles as well as the House of Goodness Group of businesses. Day-to-day running costs are met from Common Purses at each house. There are separate funds for charitable church activities.

There was a notice board in chapel where people could pin notes: "Sheila needs a sofa" "Fred has time to mow lawns on Fridays" "Barry has a carpet to give away." We were starting to share what we had.

Servant-heartedness

Most of the members of the Community live together in large houses, pooling their goods, income, resources and abilities in God's service. Others live in their own place but are still part of the common purse of the large house to which they belong.

Community doesn't exist for itself. Having premises with space available, and a community team that has learned to love one another, warts and all, means that we can invite people to come and stay a while with us. Our street outreach to the disadvantaged can be backed up by the offer of a time of restoration and growth in a family atmosphere.

Christians searching for a New Testament way of living, and for relationships that go deep, can also come and stay in our houses for some "hands on" experience of faith that works through love (Galatians 5:6).

From Shalom Connections, Summer 2004



KIBBUTZ PAG-ASA, THE PHILLIPINES

The approach of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) to poverty alleviation, for all its good intentions, is as old as poverty itself. The real problem lies in the implementation of its project on the national level. For as long as local farmers are not given the free-hand and direct influence in instituting policy reforms and programs that would advance their interest, multinational companies would always subvert international and national efforts of food production for their own financial gain, making the farmers more subjugated and poorer than before.

Recent history has taught us that complex problems can be solved by simple approaches. The success of Israeli Kibbutzim is one prime example. Though their pioneers were confronted with a hostile environment and a land desolated and neglected for centuries (not to mention their lack of experience and agricultural know-how) they were able to build a socio-economic system that basically solved society's problem on food, housing, education and social justice. Their approach relies on the fundamental concept of tilling the soil and creating an environment that empowers man to overcome obstacles through self-reliance and mutual aid.

Kibbutz Pag-asa Farm Builders Association Incorporated recognizes global concerns on poverty alleviation and takes inspiration from Israeli Kibbutzim, where it got its name.

Kibbutz Pag-asa Farm Builders Incorporated is non-profit organization founded by OFWs, writers, journalist, engineers, former military officers, rebel returnees and students dedicated to social justice, economic development and education through modern agricultural communes and civic activities.

Kibbutz Pag-asa Farm Builders Incorporated organizes indigenous farmers and is a developer of unproductive agricultural lands into a vibrant and productive communal settlement.

WE BELIEVE IN...

Self-reliance, Social Justice, Mutual-aid, Joint labor, Volunteerism, Pluralism, Integrity, Credibility, Cooperation, Equality

OUR MISSION...

To bring about social justice and economic development through communal organizations and proper utilization of agricultural lands.

OUR VISION...

Kibbutz Pag-asa Farm Builders Incorporation vision is to be at the forefront of the government's programs and people's desire for food sufficiency and modest housing in the atmosphere of political peace and social justice.

10/11/2004

Dear Sol,

We have encountered difficulties in setting up the first Kibbutz here. Our government, unlike in Israel, has difficulty grasping the urgency and potential of communal settlement as an important vehicle in its efforts to eradicate hunger and solve the housing problems of Filipinos, particularly in the rural areas.

Though it is a signatory, and participates in numerous international conventions and forums relating to poverty reduction, the government's policies and programs remain as White Papers, and are not directed at creating organizational frameworks to help farmers help themselves. Our lobbying and requests to provide us with government land to start a kibbutz has fallen on deaf ears. Perhaps because of our small numbers, we are not yet in a sufficiently influential position.

Another problem is the cultural attitude of our people. We remain regionalist and divided, not willing to let go of the traditional ways of farming that has bound us for centuries. It is very hard to convince people to give up their small parcels of land in favor of a communal settlement that will look after their needs. I am very sorry if I sound frustrated. I am desperate but we are not willing to give up, not yet.

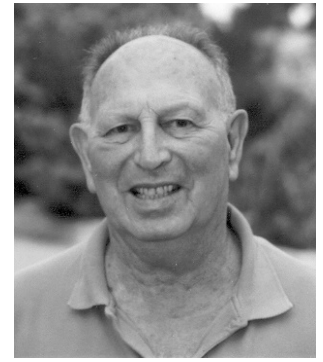
As a start we have decided to enter into a Memorandum of Agreement with big land-owners. They will provide us with land and we will build a farming settlement in an agreed period with an agreed division of profits. This is far from our ideals but we believe that we are planting the seeds of a communal spirit in the hearts of the people.

Elbert Cainday
elbertbanc@yahoo.com



KALEIDOSCOPE

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



For a long time we have been searching for an accurate, concise definition of the Kibbutz. Seems to me the solution appeared recently in an Israeli TV commercial, where a sinister mafiosi is trying to blackmail a volunteer from abroad - and the hapless victim mumbles apologetically: "It's a Kibbutz - they don't pay..."

Another, rather more cynical view is expressed by the saying: "Children, seniors and pets enjoy a wonderful life on Kibbutz - all others have to toil very hard!" Truth is, cats and dogs (separately, of course) enjoy the good life with us. Actually, more than once we observe some vehicle driving into our space; a door opens up, and some obviously reluctant four-legged, furry creature is given over to our unwilling care by some frustrated owner, looking for an alternative shelter for his unwanted pet.

Personally, I consider myself a cat-person, empathising with feline qualities like independence, pride and unpredictability (see Rudyard Kipling's "The Cat that walked by Himself in Just So Stories). At our Kibbutz you can meet a lady called Iris, whose main hobby consists of feeding and attending to about two dozen assorted, multicoloured cats of all ages and sizes, good-or-bad-tempered, each one with a given name and a close relationship to her - who frequently carries extended, intimate conversations with each and every one of them.

From "Francesco" nr. 24 of Spring 2004 I borrow part of a delicious little piece entitled "How Cats simply live differently", by Brother Fritz Giglinger:



In our community we own two "official" cats: Jenny, who is at home with Christl and Franzl; and Molly, picked up from the street by a teenager as a tiny something, because he pitied the little creature and didn't know what to do with it. Then he thought of the "Franciscans" and thus Molly landed with Helli and Fritz.

Our cat population used to be even larger, but from time to time even cats die or just disappear. Anyway we don't need to worry about the propagation of those mice-catching pets. Firstly, people frequently bring over box loads of ever so little kittens and put them down nearby in the belief that the Franciscans must be pet lovers. Secondly, time and again new ones join us of their own free will. Of

these strays again there are two kinds: one whose habit is to give birth anywhere in our stables -of course quite secretly - and then, when the kittens are able to stay standing on their own paws, they leave them with us and go away. The second kind settle down as illegal immigrants without asylum approval and you can't drive them away, neither by threats nor by persuasion. Those I record simply as "Alternative Cats", some living in homes and some in chicken coops.

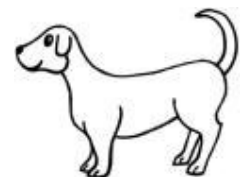
Everybody in our community likes animals, of which we own so many different kinds that frequently kindergarten and school-classes come to visit us. Because, where else can you still watch cows, pigs, sheep, chickens, ducks, bunnies, bees and cats - all at one site and near town? At our community, of course.

For the sake of equal rights and the benefit of that other part of mankind who prefer the submissive, hand-licking and cat-hating creature named dog, I discovered and extracted from Kommuja nr. 62 of September 2004 a dog's perspective of mankind, as observed by Stefan, currently staying at the Olgashof. Quite appropriately, it is entitled: "Legitimacy of our Needs".

Was there just now talk of dogs and their little human beings? And what might dogs be thinking about? Supposedly not much, except: does my Mensch really love me? Almost as if they would like to teach us to stand by our feelings. Appreciation and affection certainly add up to half the basis of my life. Although it's not only the other half that distinguishes me from a dog. He loves almost unconditionally and indiscriminately anybody who pays him attention - a quality which could enhance the soul of not a few Communards.

Only, an animal quite clearly misses a sense of responsibility. And further: we humans made a conscious friendship decision - but the dog has no say about that. Can we assume such a dishonest relationship? But then, is friendship amongst human beings more honest?

Let us be frank: are our own needs of a more disinterested nature? I don't think so. The question is: are they honest?



Browsing recently through my files, I retrieved a little note from our late, beloved secretary Shlomo Shalmon, citing Brazilian Bishop Helder Camera, the "Poverty Bishop": When someone dreams all by himself, it's just a dream. But when people dream jointly together, it is the beginning of a new reality".

For the superstitious ones amongst us, consider the following excerpt from the Springtree Newsletter of December 2003, which carried a vivid description of what they deemed at the time to be "extreme weather". Little could they foresee, when they asked at the time "what else could be in store" the extent of destruction in 2004... Talk of opening to the devil!



Aside from excessive rainfall (and several driveway-blocking snowfalls), we had a couple of truly bad-weather days this year. May 8 we got extreme high winds and hail, a combination which broke windows in the house and barn, leaving us to sweep up large hailstones indoors. The barn roof was badly damaged, the possibly tornadic winds ripping a portion of it off and exposing the hay to rain. A dozen or more trees in the woods were uprooted and all other trees were stripped of their leaves, particularly on the windward north side. Just-planted peppers and tomatoes, blooming strawberries, and much else in the garden was shredded and lost.

Our second no-good, horrible, very bad day was September 19. Hurricane Isabel sent us more high winds and five inches of rain. As luck would have it, we had spent September 16-18 replacing the barn roof with a shiny new one. When we heard this day-old roof fly off the barn and over the mulberry tree into the garden, smashing the grape trellises, we didn't rush out to see it, because we could also hear oak and maple trees crashing down in numbers—an estimated 75 of them. There followed nearly four days without electricity.

We try not to take personally any of this extreme weather. Floods, fires, and other disasters beset the country and the rest of the world in 2003. It did seem ominous, however, to be shaken by a 20-30 second, 4.5 earthquake December 9—what else could be in store for this year! We do hope 2004 brings us gentler, less extreme weather.

And then, the eternal question about the existence of some kind of "Supreme Power" - call it as you wish - keeps nagging at our so-called "rational way of thinking" - and making us hope that some answers may eventually appear. From an old issue of the now defunct "Down to Earth" I harvested this little piece:

*The Prayer That's Left Unsaid
Like a letter that's unwritten,
Like a book that lies unread,
Like a field unploughed, untended
Is the Prayer that's left unsaid.*

*Though God knows
the thoughts and wishes
That are secrets of the heart.
Yet the Prayer must still be uttered,
For his healing power to start...*

*Though at times
we might neglect him
And refuse to hear his call...*

*When we think
that we don't need him
Then we need him most of all...
There are lessons all around us
In the skies - the sea - the sun,
In the flight of every sparrow
"Let his holy will be done"*

*But we turn our hearts to pleasure
And the wealth we reap is care
We forget the only answers
Are the ones we find in Prayer.
Let's resolve to write that letter
Read that book we've laid aside,
Tend that field and reap a harvest
Of humility not pride.*

*And we'll find our
cares and worries
Will be turned to joys instead,
For we'll never
close our hearts to him
And leave the prayer unsaid!*

- Anon



And of course there are different ways of communicating with the Divine, some of them in the mystic mode. Again from Down to Earth, who borrowed from Osho's "I am That":

The Dance of Meditation

' When you dance meditatively, your dance starts to have
a new flavour - something of the divine enters into it.

Because if you are dancing meditatively then
the ego disappears, the dancer disappears.

That is the whole art of meditation:
disappearance of the ego, disappearance of the mind.

The dancer becomes thoughtless, silent.

The dance continues and the dancer disappears.

This is what I call the divine quality:
now it is as if God is dancing through you,
you are no more there.'

- OSHO from the book, I AM THAT.

Editorials aren't usually my cup of tea, being mostly on the tedious side - and having written quite a few myself, I ought to know what I mean. Nonetheless, the editorial of Dancing Rabbit's March Hare newsletter of Spring 2004 opens up with a remarkably frank disclaimer by Tereza:

Truth and perspective

What you read in articles in the Hare is always true. But it's good to remember that it might only be true for the person writing it. You may not always get the complete picture from one person's perspective on an issue. I'd like to ask that you think about that when you read our fine newsletter, especially if the topic at hand sounds like it might be emotional, or complex. Basically I want you, Dear Reader, to understand that most of what is written in the Hare may not be the gospel Dancing-Rabbit-as-a-whole truth - especially since I'm not even sure that such a thing exists!

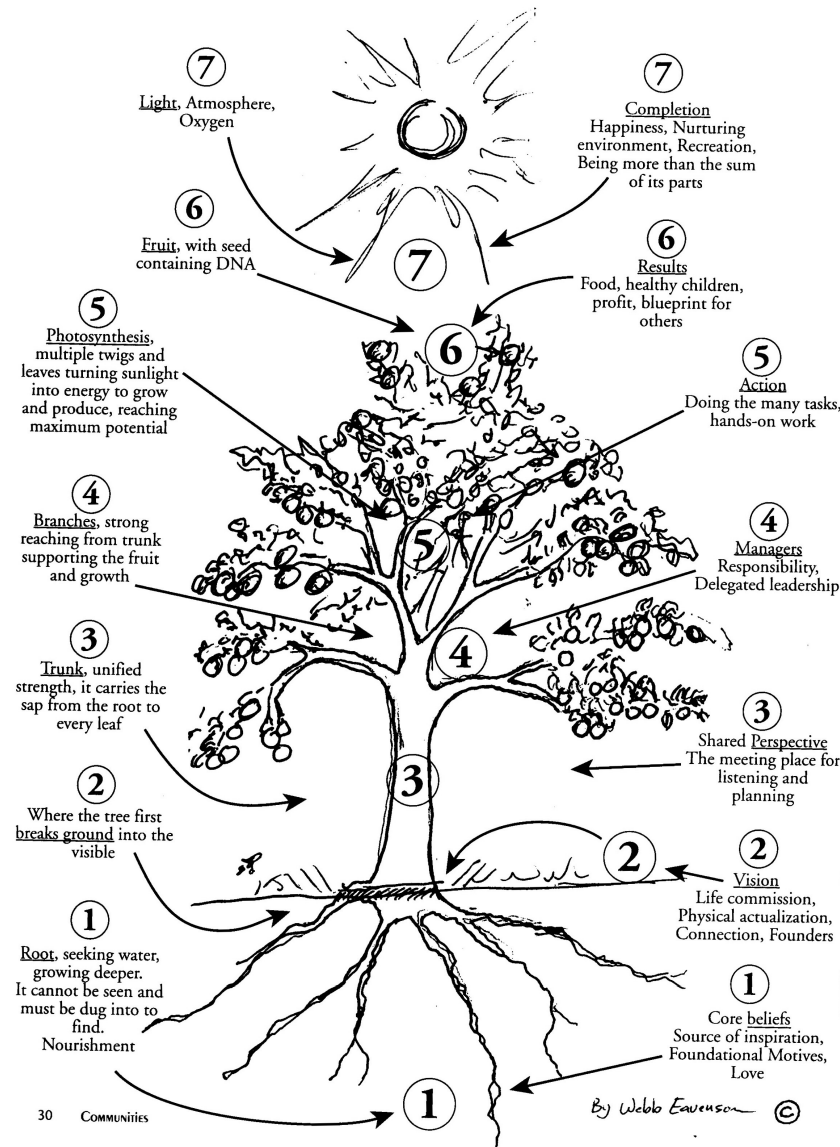
Why am I writing this? Two reasons: there are several controversial topics addressed in this issue and I want folks to know that there are lots of angles to them that may not be presented here. Also, word has gotten back to me that Andra's article in the last issue of the Hare, explaining what led to her decision to leave, made some readers think that people at DR don't want to have close relationships. Your humble editors (myself and Perm) know Andra, and know what she meant in her article - that she wasn't able to find the close relationships here that she wanted, and that DR-the-non-profit-organization doesn't have a goal of creating strong relationships among its members. (Seems like having that whole goal of creating a small town focused on sustainability is plenty to concentrate on...) Which doesn't mean that the people who live at Dancing Rabbit Ecovillage don't want deep and abiding connections with others. While I don't have a picture of the whole truth either, all the Rabbits I've talked to about it do indeed want just that, and many of us are doing our darnedest to help make it happen.

Thanks for reading, and as always, please let us know what you think. Send comments to: 1 Dancing Rabbit Lane, Rutledge, MO 63563, or via email to: dancingrabbit@ic.org, Arm: March Hare Editors.



How to present your very own Community to prospective newcomers, so as to give them an accurate impression and a basic understanding of what they are getting into -i.e. your/our complex, outlandish Way of Life? Lamborn Valley Community seem to have stumbled upon an original solution, as described by Webb Eavanson:

Level One—Roots: Potential. This is the deepest, invisible part of the soul. It starts as a single seed, a dream, a potential. The seed works its way through the soil of life and circumstance, through stillness and prayer. Will it take root? When all of the elements come together, the answer is "Yes" and great trees will grow. The seed grows small roots, and sending its first stem up through the soil, is our community's inherent potential. The roots continue to grow over time, and ever more firmly anchor the tree in the ground.



Level Two—Seedling breaking through the soil: Manifestation. This is the community purpose becoming manifest in the physical. It is the inherent idea breaking through into the light. It is the foundation, where we find the vision and mission statements and where we honor those who have created a space for our community.

Level Three—Trunk: Perspective, Decisions, Agreements. This is where, with all of the depth of our hearts, gifts, weaknesses, and struggles, we come together as a group. With a strong, unified will to grow, it grows in a single direction as one body. We come together to explore ideas about our community's tasks and projects at Level Three, always in prayer and consensus.

Level Four—Branches: Projects. We move out from the Trunk and branch into responsibilities with support and encouragement from the unified group at Level Three (Trunk). The shared perspective of Level Three delegates, empowers, anoints, and nourishes those stewarding each Branch (Level Four), or project, of the community.

Level Five—Twigs and Leaves: Work, Activities. From this Level Four (Branch) place of responsibility comes the actual doing of the tasks, the field of Action. It's where everyone in the community jumps in to do the work, whether individually or in teams. It's the level of manifestation and inclusion. The Twigs and Leaves spread out to absorb the maximum amount of sunlight, doing the "work" of photosynthesis, turning light into carbohydrates and growth. This is what builds the physical substance of the tree itself.

Level Six—Fruit: Results of our Labor. These are the Results of our Work, yielding healthy,

whole individuals who contribute to each other, to the community, and to the world by living meaningful lives. It's living sustainably. It's raising inspired children. The Fruit shows up in many forms. Some are tangible Fruit—our people, physical health, money from the sale of goods and services. Other Fruit is intangible—our friendships with each other, love and connection, our quality of life, and joy itself.

Level Seven—Fruit returning to Earth: Appreciation, Enjoyment. This is the day of rest. It's appreciation and enjoyment, recreation, or re-creation. It's Fruit ripening and dropping off the tree, delivering its DNA blueprint to the soil and thus nourishing the Roots in Level One or planting seeds of new trees. And it's the atmosphere around the Tree, rich in oxygen, which also nourishes the Roots.

Our community has found that being part of a living organism, envisioned as a tree, enriches the quality of life. It helps us share our hearts, maintain our values, and keep growing toward the light. Just as one tree standing alone doesn't have the energy to change a whole ecosystem, but a forest does, one healthy community can't positively influence very much of the wider culture around it, but a whole network of healthy communities can affect the wider culture.

Webb Eavanson, 26, has lived in Lamborn Valley Community with his parents and grandmother since the community was founded. Planner and developer of the tree analogy for the group, Webb helps explain and manage it. You can contact him at guques@hotmail.com

Another, simpler way is presented by Maril Crabtree of Hearthaven, together with her daughter Virginia Lore of Duamish Cohousing at Seattle, who teamed up to compose a simple formula for newcomers to Community:

You Know You Live in Community When...

By Virginia Lore and Maril Crabtree

- You don't have to go to a bookstore to find a good read.
- You can't remember the last time you took the trash out.
- You can always find someone to take you to the airport, watch your pets, water your plants, and eat your brownies.
- Someone's always up for a hike or a hot tub.
- You've talked about world peace, the global economy, and the Bush administration – all before breakfast.
- You know at least one person who has been arrested for demonstrating their belief.
- You know what "polyamory" means.
- You feel guilty about your TV viewing habits – if you have any.
- You have to try 14 keys to find the one you want.
- You know a dozen ways to cook tofu.
- Your parenting style regularly comes up for review.
- Your spending habits regularly come up for review.
- There's always something fattening in the kitchen.
- The leftovers are still there only because you hid them in a yoghurt tub.
- Laundry day is any day the washer is free.
- You've had to sell your kayak because the community already has two.
- The question "but where will we put it?" plays a big role in your buying decisions.
- Honoring the process is more important than making the decision.
- Deciding when to start planting the community garden requires the negotiating skills of Bishop Tutu.
- You know someone who has carried a grudge since 1972 when the mailboxes were reorganized without consensus.
- You hate to admit it, but you're that person.
- You fantasize more about winning a weekend getaway than about winning the lottery.
- Other people's kids call you "Mommy."
- You know where to go for a hug.

Virginia Love is a cofounder of Duwamish Cohousing in Seattle, Washington; Her mother, Maril Crabtree, is a cofounder of Hearthaven, an urban community in Kansas City, Missouri.

From Communities Magazine (#124)

And finally, a little glimpse at kibbutz Sde-Boker in the Negev, south-east of Beer-Sheva - copied from "The Vineyard" of June 2004 - for those who relish good wine:

GLIMPSES OF ISRAEL

SDE BOKER

Established in 1952, Sde Boker means Rancher's Field. Despite the harsh dry location the first settlers motivated to reclaim the wilderness saw the opportunity to pioneer the breeding of cattle. No water or roads and in danger of attacks from local bands of marauders, these young Jewish men and women overcame many hardships and survived.

Israel's first Prime Minister, David Ben-Gurion joined the kibbutz in 1953, after resigning from office. However, he was recalled to be Minister of Defence months later, and from 1955 to 1963 was re-elected as Prime Minister. Ben-Gurion retired from public life in 1970 and returned to Sde Boker where he died and was buried in 1973.

In 1967 Ben-Gurion asked Elisha Zurgil*, whose wedding he was attending, to plant a vineyard with wine-quality grapes in the Negev. He envisioned modern vineyards that would make the desert bloom. Twenty-five years later the vineyards are proving to be a successful experiment within the environmental constraints of the Negev Highlands.

Experimental station agronomists mix the brackish water with piped-in fresh water at different concentrations to ascertain optimal grape-growing water ratios. It was discovered that grapes irrigated with brackish water tend to have more berries per kilo of yield and are smaller than grapes irrigated with fresh water. These smaller, thicker-skinned grapes have a high sugar content in both the red and white varieties, which in turn causes the wine to age well!

Today the kibbutz has successfully reclaimed the desert. Source: Israel Info-Access www.israelinfoaccess.com

**Elisha is an active member of our Communes Desk.*

Wishing you-all a happy Easter/Pesach, still awaiting your comments/suggestions/ reactions / contributions and whatnots, yours communitarishly
Joel Dorkam



Montsalvat: an artists' colony in Australia
By Sol Encel

Montsalvat, an artists' colony about 15 miles (25 km) from the centre of the city of Melbourne, was established in 1934. It provides accommodation for up to 20 artists-in-residence. The name is derived from Christian mythology, as the legendary site of the Holy Grail. It is mentioned in the legends of King Arthur and the Round Table, and again in Wagner's opera, Parsifal (Montsalvat Symphony, 2000).



Apart from its social character as an intentional community, Montsalvat was also a radical experiment in architecture. Its buildings used the technique of rammed earth (pise), described as far back as the first century C.E. by the Roman writer Pliny.

Montsalvat was created by a charismatic artist and architect, Justus Jorgensen (1894-1975). The son of a Norwegian sea captain who settled in Melbourne, he trained as an architect and practised off and on for 20 years, until he devoted all his attention to building Montsalvat. In 1934, he purchased a large block of land in the outer Melbourne suburb of Eltham, a forested area with several creeks running through it. Jorgensen recruited a number of artists, writers, and personal friends to assist in the building of Montsalvat.

Montsalvat extends over 15 acres (6 hectares), and includes the main building, a row of artists' studios, two galleries, a chapel, a metalworking studio, a glasshouse, an ornamental pond, a vineyard, a milking shed, and a coffee shop for visitors. Two of its major features are the Great Hall and the Long Gallery, both built mainly by Jorgensen's students and resident artists.

The Great Hall was finally completed in 1963. The Long Gallery was still unfinished when Jorgensen died in 1975, but the state government of Victoria provided a grant, which enabled the work to be completed in 1978. A subsequent state government recognized Montsalvat as a heritage property in 1989, and in 1998 the Federal government placed it on the register of the National Estate, the nationally recognized list of important historic sites and natural features.

Since the 1960s, real estate values in the area have soared as more and more suburban development has taken place. The result was a sharp increase in land taxes. To meet the financial problems, the Montsalvat community decided in 1963 to make the property available for commercial purposes. Much of its income now comes from fees paid for the use of the buildings for private functions, including receptions, weddings, banquets, conventions, lectures and concerts. Advertising agencies also use the premises as a background for TV commercials. After Justus Jorgensen's death, the control of the property was placed in the hands of a charitable foundation, the Montsalvat Trust, whose current chairman is Jorgensen's son, Sigmund.



In a book on the history of Montsalvat, the Australian artist John Olsen sums up its significance. "The influence of Montsalvat has spread far and wide throughout Australia. It has touched a chord with those seeking alternative lifestyles. Architecturally it has influenced the mainstream of Australian building....Jorgensen and his group...offered an alternative style of living, showing how to escape from the economic strictures of a society wherein status was entirely conditioned by wealth and possessions. Jorgensen's notion of rural romanticism, an idea incidentally not dissimilar to Tolstoy's in his later years, envisaged man free from exploitation, co-operating in all things, poor but independent, rich in his relations with the earth."

You can download a copy of the 2004 ICSA conference proceedings from the ICSA web site at <http://www.ic.org/icsa/conference.html>



A spotlight on two new websites that have come to our attention, one from Canada and the other from The Netherlands. They are both aiming to be a resource for those living in community, forming community or simply for those searching for community - both locally and internationally.

<http://www.silentpartners.ca/>

'The Celebrating Community' vision is to link up existing and forming Communities across Canada and develop strong communications within the network. This will open opportunities for each of us to share in the wealth that communities have to offer.

There are many forms of community in existence today, including ecovillages, cohousing, intentional communities, ecohamlets, religious orders, communes, eco-learning centers, cooperatives, collectives, and other eco-community initiatives such as friendly neighbourhoods. Each community, whether residing together or not, with its own approach, supports values that celebrate the spirit of community.



Do you identify with this concept? Then please join us as a participant on this project, and share the benefits of the celebration! Contribute your discoveries, draw on the pool of resources, and

nurture the growing trend that supports community values.

What are we offering to participating communities?

- A perspective on existing communities and on initiatives to form new ones
- Access to a listing of the above to allow contacting each other
- Information sharing
- Announcement of open house invitations
- Helping each other
- Contact with a regional coordinator for support and information
- Finding solutions for a transition towards a better social system
- Sharing our wisdom with each other and with the next generation
- Increased visibility to the public so they can join in, and so that the public, the legislators and the administrators better appreciate us

<http://www.omslag.nl/wonen>

This year (2004) Omslag, Workshop for Sustainable Development in The Netherlands, is setting up an information-service on 'Other ways of housing and living'.



Omslag (Turning Point) is a non-commercial grassroots organisation, founded in 1994. We are active in the fields of environment, peace and non-violence, different economics, worldwide solidarity and multiculturalism. We also publish a bi-monthly magazine, 'ZOZ'.

Over the years, we've become a sort of 'reference-resource' for people who are seriously looking for places (and people), where they can live and work in a way that matches with their own ideals of community, humanitarianism, ecology and autonomy.

Last year we published a (Dutch) book with examples of community-projects and other related initiatives in The Netherlands. As a follow-up for this book - and in reply to the increasing number of questions about projects and initiatives in other countries - we've decided to set up an information service. Besides our own book, we are a re-seller of the book 'Eurotopia'.

Our aim is to create a public service for people who are looking for inspiring examples of co-housing and community-living, both in The Netherlands, and in other countries.

Main items of this service-project are:

- communities and living/working projects
- ecovillages
- co-housing and co-housing for elderly people
- squatting and mobile living
- projects which offer voluntary work
- promoting social sustainability (multiculturalism, community-gardening, neighbourhood-initiatives...)
- on the website there is a special activities-agenda, a news category and a notice-board with small ad's
- background stories about: Why different ways of living?
- good advisory and consultancy (addresses and networks)
- subject-related magazines, books and green publishers
- ecological architecture, building and gardening
- ecological lifestyle and critical/ethical consumerism





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

Compiled and translated from kibbutz publications by Yoel Darom,
Kibbutz Kfar Menachem

Second Thoughts

As anyone who was among the founders of a commune knows only too well, it takes years of physical and mental effort to build and consolidate a kibbutz. Now it turns out that the dismantling of a kibbutz - taking apart its old ideological and material building stones - takes no less thought, initiative, debates and decisions.

About one third of the 260 existing kibbutzim have (so far) resisted this new trend and stayed full communes, holding on to the fundamental principle of full sharing and equality. The others have taken the road to "privatizing", the most radical amongst them going the whole hog and today resemble a private settlement of individual families with some communal commitments.

But recently a wave of second thoughts has swept over the leadership and delegates of the movement, and an important, fateful decision is being hammered out: As long as you define yourself as a KIBBUTZ - and this has legal (and tax) consequences, too, in Israel - you cannot shed your responsibility for the old, the sick, the physically or mentally handicapped, be they members of the kibbutz or sons (some of them - fourth generation!).

No one knows if each group will be ready or capable of raising the sums of money which are required for the upkeep of this "guarantee" of mutual responsibility. But this looks like an important stepping stone, or could one say "stopping stone" on the path to becoming a non-kibbutz.



Geva-tron

Sing Peace

At the festive opening of the new Israeli airport, the well-known kibbutz choir "Geva-tron" (of Kibbutz Geva and neighbors) played a central part with a series of Peace songs, as befits good kibbutzniks

My Home is my Castle

The new trend on many kibbutzim, is a response to year-long demands by members, to be able to leave something, after their lifetime, to their children. Up to recently no private property was allowed on the kibbutz, everything (except your private belongings inside the house) was common property.

The latest cry on kibbutzim is the privatization of your house: Soon it will belong to you and you'll have some real asset to bequeath to your children. This is a rather complicated procedure; a number of government departments have to agree and undersign such a completely new pact between the kibbutz and each of its members, and indeed up to now only two kibbutzim have completed this transfer of property. Many others are in the midst of negotiations, and when this process comes to its hoped-for end, we shall all be proud house owners and be able to bequeath "something" to our children and grandchildren.



Communal Life is natural

Henri Rapaport of Kibbutz Galed formulated a scientific-philosophic theory, according to which "Human Nature" is not egoistic but of social character. That's why the capitalist way of life causes people frustration and makes them try to escape towards alternative satisfactions like wild music, sex, drugs. The voluntary communal lifestyle is the most desirable for human happiness, and many such groups will form in the future. Is he right? The next generation will know the true answer.

Liberty Torch

A unique kibbutznik recently died at the age of 70. Prophetically named Cherut Lapid (= Liberty Flaming Torch), he made his life work the "saving" of convicted criminals by personally rehabilitating them and finding them a home on a kibbutz. Israel will greatly miss him.

Pelicans !

Moshe Alpert of Kibbutz Afikim won first prize in a nature-film festival in Estonia with his film in which he recorded the flight of thousands of pelicans over the Jordan valley (where his kibbutz is situated), a breathtaking spectacle that repeats itself year after year and attracts thousands of bird-watchers from all over the world.



Life-Long diary

Some time ago Kibbutz Be'eri in the Negev desert celebrated the 14 thousandth copy of the daily newsletter of one or more pages, which the kibbutz has been issuing for forty years now. It is distributed every weekday at suppertime and even sent out by e-mail to all sons and daughters of the Kibbutz who happen to be abroad.

Join Forces

Since the beginnings, each kibbutz has been managing its different branches of agriculture, industry and self-service all by itself. Following a recent campaign for economizing and streamlining, a new form of communality has formed: neighboring kibbutzim joining together to run one common, well equipped, more professional service. Five religious kibbutzim in and near the Jordan valley are about to pool their resources and center around one regional dental clinic, laundry, transportation such as driving the old and sick to town (hospital, purchases etc.). Other settlements unite their cowsheds to be able to make them more efficient and ecologically sound. We shall see if this trend catches on to many more in the near future. Some kibbutzim have become partners in field work or factories.

Volunteers

Two main factors have reduced the continuous stream of volunteers from all over the world to work on kibbutz: security reasons and the professionalization of work on the kibbutz. But all those thousands who have gone through a period of kibbutz work, do not forget it all their lives long. To create or renew contact between them, a new site has been set up on the internet, by a London journalist, who worked on Kibbutz Mefalsim eight years ago and who wants to share his experiences with fellow volunteers. In its first month, 745 ex-volunteers from 30 countries have visited this site, and many more are expected.



Address - for anyone interested - www.KibbutzReloaded.com

Are Camphill Communities Sustainable Communities?

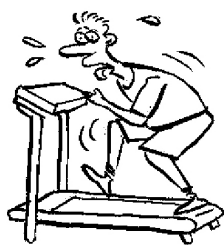
Noel Bruder, Camphill Community Greenacres, Dublin

The terms sustainable communities, eco-communities and eco-villages are used almost interchangeably to describe 'a human scale, full-featured settlement in which human activities are harmlessly integrated into the natural world in a way that is supportive of healthy human development and can be successfully continued into the indefinite future' (Ecovillages and Sustainable Communities, Robert and Diane Gilman (1991)).

My particular preference is to use the term 'sustainable community' rather than eco-community or village. I believe this conveys a clearer meaning of the holistic nature of the social endeavour and describes the inclusive, participative, aspects. The 'community' involved exists on all levels from local to global and is furthermore not solely defined physically but includes common interests, aspirations and challenges. With this in mind and in light of the Camphill context, a suitable definition of a sustainable community might be: an attempt to integrate the ecological, social, economic and spiritual aspects of life towards creating a harmonious and inclusive society in perpetuity.

Although most of us in Camphill don't realise it, we in fact have had a pivotal role in the development of the sustainable communities movement. Albert Bates of the Global Ecovillage Network (GEN) and the Ecovillage Network of the Americas (ENA) cites Camphill communities as some of the pioneers in the movement (Communities—Journal of Cooperative Living, Issue 117, Spring 2003). Related curative communities such as Hertha in Denmark and Solheimer in Iceland are also well regarded as sustainable communities. Jan Martin Bang from Solborg Camphill Community in Norway has, in a number of publications including the pivotal 'Ecovillage Living—Restoring the Earth and Her People' (Jackson and Svensson, 2002), successfully described Camphill's place in the mainstream of the sustainable community movement. His outline of the Camphill ideals and the kind of day-to-day life we lead should be very familiar to those in other sustainable communities.

Why should the Camphill movement care whether its communities are seen as being sustainable or not?



- The Camphill movement is arguably at a turning point in its history. Certainly my experience in Ireland is that Camphill is being challenged to remain an inspirational social initiative. In this endeavour, we need to renew our vision and ideas. The movement in support of sustainable communities is a dynamic force offering a real alternative to mainstream views. We need partners like this. A particular concern for the future of Camphill communities is to attract enough people to be able to flourish in the future. It seems to me that this 'new blood' is already out there searching for worthwhile initiatives to join.

- In many ways, Camphill has been a remarkably successful social experiment. From humble beginnings the movement is now a vibrant force in over 100 communities worldwide. This is something to shout about! Indeed I think that if we don't shout a little louder and raise our profile we risk becoming increasingly isolated.

I believe that the real value of allying ourselves with the sustainable communities movement lies in the lessons that we in Camphill have learnt in our 60-year history.

- Camphill offers a living, working, well-integrated example of what a sustainable community is. We are therefore an alternative to mainstream society at a time when many people are seeking a different path.
- The spiritual dimension of sustainability is often overshadowed by the economic and ecological aspects.

However, within Camphill, the ethic for what we do highlights the spiritual realm. In simple terms, we promote sustainability out of a feeling that the Earth and her people need nurturing. Lifesharing has got to be at the core of a sustainable community. Otherwise, it will mostly be an elite minority who will benefit. Worse still, the seed of an inclusive society contained in the concept of sustainability may be lost if the benefits of this life are not shared.

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Noel is a co-worker in a pioneering community in Dublin called Camphill Greenacres. Previously he was in Camphill Carrick-on-Suir, Ireland and in Sylvia Koti, Finland.



Affinity Teams – Getting the Work Done at Pioneer Valley Cohousing by Mary Kraus

For me, one of the great pleasures of living in community is working side by side with my neighbors – weeding the garden, preparing a meal, organizing the kitchen, pruning fruit trees. But as satisfying as this work may be, we have sometimes faced challenges in getting all of the jobs done. Our work system has evolved over the years, until we have found an arrangement that seems to work well for us.



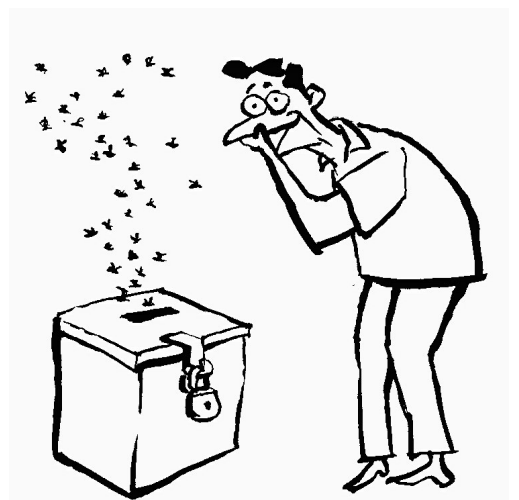
Second-Wednesday-of-the-month cook team
(From left: Epi, Mary & Janice)

The largest task in our community is providing for our twice-weekly common dinners, held in the great room of our common house. Teams of three prepare each meal, chopping and baking to feed about sixty people. One person sets the tables and brings out the food, and after dinner another team of three washes the dishes and cleans up the kitchen. When we first moved in, we signed up for cooking and cleaning slots on a volunteer basis. This worked well for

cooking, but we frequently fell short on cleaners, and had to fill the gap at mealtime with last-minute volunteers. So it was time to develop a more organized system.

We created “work teams”, five or six teams of about 10 adults each. Each team had a rotation of jobs, with a different responsibility each week: cooking common dinners, cleaning up after dinner, cleaning the common house, outdoor work (seasonal tasks as needed), planning a social event, and one week of “vacation” during which the team might plan a special activity together. The smaller teams provided accountability, and we managed to fill all of the cooking and cleaning slots.

In addition to the specific weekly tasks, there were other jobs that individuals in the community were taking on: publishing a newsletter, working on committees, gardening. But these were not given “credit” in the work system, which was a problem for some people who carried out a lot of these extra tasks. Also, some of my neighbors did not participate in the common meals, and felt they should not have to cook and clean, but rather should be able to do other community work. And finally, some of us preferred the idea of concentrating on one or two types of jobs for which we had a particular affinity – whether it be cooking, plowing snow, or cleaning the common house.



So we developed a new system, which we called “affinity teams”, with each team centering around a particular type of work – including those tasks that had previously remained uncounted. Each person was to sign up for one or more affinity teams. This would allow each of us to focus on our preferred work within the community, and to work closely with others who enjoyed the same tasks.

We now have a mini-cook-team assigned to each meal. The same three neighbors cook every first Monday of the month, another threesome prepares dinner every fourth Wednesday, and so on. We have even created two standard menus for each meal slot, so that teams can become expert at preparing their meals (though some chefs develop a custom menu instead). Our clean-up teams are similarly organized in set teams. Working regularly in these small teams provides a nice connection with a specific group of neighbors.

And then, we have work days. These are times to accomplish larger tasks that require more person power and energy: planting trees, preparing garden beds, etc. These are good opportunities for us to get together and feel the satisfaction of accomplishing a lot all at once. Plus, someone usually coordinates childcare and some good eats.

To make sure all of the community work is covered, we have a group of five people we call the “hub”, consisting of one chair and four work team coordinators. Each coordinator tracks about twenty community and associate members, making sure they are signed up for community work slots, and helping them to fill empty slots

as needed. Our work load is roughly 6 ½ hours per month per adult, but this is just a guideline, not an official requirement. We just try to make sure that all the work gets done, and that everyone is pitching in.



A Pioneer Valley Cohousing work team having a cocoa break on a work day

And what about the kids? Children are not required to sign up for community work, but they often participate. In particular, children of various ages help to set the tables before dinner, and kids often participate in work days, helping to plant trees or clean up the grounds.

At one of our yearly retreats, when we were kicking off what was then our new work system, some of

our neighbors set up a word puzzle for the teams to solve. The solution was a quote: “Work is love made visible.” Sure feels that way here.

Mary Kraus has been living at Pioneer Valley Cohousing Community in Amherst, Massachusetts, USA, since its completion in 1994. She is a principal architect at Kraus-Fitch Architects, Inc., specializing in cohousing and sustainable design. She can be reached at mkraus@krausfitch.com

Anahata Community, New Zealand

At Anahata Community, in the northern part of New Zealand's North Island, we sometimes feel we have the best of both worlds - we live on 12 hectares of native forest in a beautiful valley, yet in 15 minutes (by car) we can be in the centre of New Zealand's largest city, Auckland. This closeness to all kinds of



amenities makes Anahata a desirable option for those who want a communal experience without the isolation of living far from an urban area, as is the case with many communities in New Zealand. Being close to Auckland also makes Anahata a convenient arrival and departure point for WWOOFers (and other travellers interested in community) on their journey through New Zealand.

How do communities get started? Its probably fair to say that most communal groups begin with a vision and, from that germ of an idea, gradually build their communities. We, however, 'inherited' a ready-made

community built for a much larger group of people. The facilities are excellent but the the previous community wasn't very interested in the likes of solar power or other alternative energy sources and this has been an issue for us in the four years since Anahata was formed - is it better to modify something already existing or to start from scratch and build for ourselves something more sustainable?

Since our inception the number of residents on site has fluctuated but at the time of writing there are 26 adults and 12 children. Most residents work off-site in jobs as diverse as teaching, counselling, construction, bus driving and piano playing. Nobody buys land or houses (most of the accommodation is in long accommodation blocks divided into rooms) but each person pays a weekly board which covers room, food, electricity, gas, etc. We also have an orchard with some farm animals, a shade house for growing organic vegetables, a large swimming pool and a hot tub.

We have weekly business meetings and our decisions are made by consensus. Rather than sinking into the hurly-burly of everyone speaking at once we use a system of six coloured cards. In ascending order of importance they are - blue (to comment); green (to clarify); yellow (to ask a question); orange (to acknowledge); red (to indicate a departure from the agreed process); purple (to indicate that an interpersonal difficulty prevents participation). The facilitator of the meeting must be fully conversant with the relative importance of the cards - for



instance, if three blue cards are being held up and someone then holds up a red card, he or she is then allowed to speak before any of the blue cards are acknowledged. We also use the cards for decision making and in this instance they signify - green (agreement); blue (neutral); yellow (minor reservation); orange (major reservation); red (blocking the proposal). A person who blocks a proposal must give reasons (for the good of the community, not merely a personal grievance) whereupon some sort of negotiation may be entered into or the proposal may be modified or dropped. It can be a slow process and there can be difficult moments but by and large the process works well.

As in all situations there are positives and negatives. At times the sound of machines building housing blocks around us, the high rainfall and the ever-increasing rent for the property are things that worry us. However, with new directions and opportunities for expansion emerging we look forward to a positive future.

By William Green
wegreenpiano@hotmail.com



The Tsunami Disaster and Us

Few community members could have been left untouched by the vast human tragedy of the tsunami. And no less were we awed by the tremendous power of Gaia, Mother Earth. We bring here in brief the varied responses of several communal bodies:



From the outset of the seaquake, the Italian federation of communities, Damanhur, has been active in collaborating with the local populations hit by the sea surges: the community of Auroville in southern India – and with the network of Sarvodaya in Sri Lanka. In fact, Damanhur was asked by the European Global Ecovillage network (GEN) to be a point of reference for the collection of funds on behalf of European Ecovillages.

Orata of Damanhur wrote: The situation in the two countries is very different: at Auroville funds are necessary to reconstruct the community that was destroyed by the tsunami, rather than to help the local population to whom they are giving relief and support. In Sri Lanka, however, materials,

money, equipment and volunteers are needed and greatly welcomed as the country was badly hit and is decidedly less well organized than India. The villages of Sarvodaya are also hosting 500 orphans from other villages. Damanhur, together with the councils of the area, has offered practical support to its friends hit by the disaster by raising funds....We wish to be certain that the money will be managed by people that we know and we want to be able to follow the development of the aid that we are supplying.

Bruderhof leader, Johann Christoph Arnold, hosted a live online discussion about how they can respond to the tsunami devastation. Some of his thoughts were:

Personally, I believe the tsunami and its aftermath is the most serious issue now facing humankind. The 'war on terror' in Iraq and Afghanistan looks like child's play in comparison. We need to talk about it and share with one another so that it can continue to shake us—and bring us together.... As tens of thousands of bereaved families mourn the loved ones they have lost, one wonders, "Why does God allow this to happen? Why, if death is his mortal enemy, does he allow it to destroy so many people?" In this life we may never find a satisfactory answer to that question. Yet we must still hang on to our faith that God is Love, and that no dark power can ever overcome him, even though, at a time like this, it looks as if that is the case. We must remember God's promise that one day, every tear will be dried.

Martin Johnson wrote, We have sent quite a bit of money and are sending an few of our brothers and sisters there who happen to be on their way to our Australian Bruderhofs.

From Leila Dregger of the German commune in Portugal, Tamera:

The planet has come off its hinges. Deep down inside we already knew all along: We cannot constantly hurt the earth and, nevertheless, expect it to just carry on as if nothing has happened. Since we have ignored the warnings of environmentalists, we live in the expectation of catastrophe. The whole of human civilization is built on the disrespect and destruction of the living. As long as we do not realize and change this fact, separate environmental repairs and appeals to the common sense of the human being can not succeed.

Something freezes in the soul when we see these pictures. Pukhet, Aceh, Southern India and Sri Lanka: Why are the poorest of the poor the victims? How is it that "even" the animals have a much more reliable warning system as many fled inland from the wave and saved their lives? Is there a connection between the human doing and this apparently purely natural catastrophe? How is it that the modern human being is so helpless and ignorant inspite of all the technology and development?



Within 2 days, the Kibbutz Movement sent to Sri Lanka a consignment of baby food, preserved milk and mineral water – products of kibbutz factories – and began to raise money to buy food and medicines locally (and more cheaply). The Israeli Disaster Reaction Centre, headed by a kibbutz member, quickly sent 3 field kitchens and a clinic, with volunteers - not only kibbutzniks - manning them for 3-weekly periods. In the meanwhile, individual kibbutzim collected clothing, utensils and cash donations. Long tense days passed until contact was established with travelling kibbutz sons and daughters in the disaster areas. Sadly, one of them (from Kibbutz Chorshim) and his partner, were not among the survivors.

Stop Press. Since the above was written, we have received word from many communities telling how they have reacted to help the tsunami survivors.



Attention Community Members - Especially in the UK

Young people from all over the world are invited to come and stay on kibbutzim as working volunteers, to get some insight into life in the largest communal movement in the world. Being aware that the media never reports the whole truth, thousands of young people are coming to Israel to see for themselves. Added to the many fascinating aspects of this "Old-New Land" is the growing movement of urban communes, working to better society.

For community members/supporters (and others) in the UK, there is an office in London which can give you more details and facilitate your joining this programme. Just contact Kibbutz Representatives, Accommodation Rd. 16, London NW11 8EP, or by Tel. 020-84589235 or writing to enquiries@kibbutz.org.uk. From other countries, you should contact the Volunteers Department of the Kibbutz Movement directly at kpc@vollentir.co.il. First open <http://www.kibbutz.org.il/> and go to "English" and then to "Volunteers". You won't regret it!



rtsSolborg
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Dear CALL

Have any of you out there ever visited a Camphill Community? Did you know that there are over 100 of them in 20 different countries around the world? Did you know that they are very idealistic (but very practical too!), usually grow lots of their own food, organically? And that they have various workshops in each village, such as bakery, weavery, farm etc? And that they live and eat communally with mentally and physically "handicapped" people – special people with special needs?

And did you know that many of the villages are run with the invaluable help of volunteers that come from around the world, usually for a minimum period of 6 months – one year?

And, by the way, we at Solborg are in need of some help from the beginning of April...

Best wishes and Shalom!

Ruth Wilson



CONGRATULATING THE BRUDERHOF COMMUNITY - HON. BILL SHUSTER of Pennsylvania in the House of Representatives, Wednesday, October 6, 2004

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Bruderhof Community in their recent efforts to spread peace. The "community of brothers" is pursuing its goal of acceptance through construction of the "Peace Barn," a sanctuary for those who need silence and a gathering place for those who seek progress. In the wake of September 11, 2001, a shadow of grief was cast over America. Nearly every citizen felt the reins of instability tugging at the society we once thought to be impregnable. With the strength and ambition that typifies the character of Americans, however, the Bruderhof Community turned devastation into promise by contributing to the Flight 93 Memorial and building a "Peace Barn." Just two days after the terrorist attacks, the Bruderhof Community mobilized to realize its goals. In an effort to contribute to the Flight 93 memorial in Shanksville, Pennsylvania, the community children have produced hand-made benches with the names of those who lost their lives engraved into the backs upon the request of the families. To date, the group has produced 27 benches



and has no plan to stop. Additionally, by merging its resources and gathering its members, the Bruderhof children have created a refuge for reflection and a hall for meetings out of an old, neglected, and weathered barn. Now, the Peace Barn functions as a place of encouragement, healing and sharing. Since its inception, the barn has welcomed scores of visitors seeking peace. Grieving families are comforted by the photograph-adorned walls that inspire memories of the lives that were lost on Flight 93. Holocaust survivors are

heartened by the optimism and goodness that pervade the atmosphere in the barn. Curious travelers are impelled to spread the message of peace throughout their relative communities. In a world wrought with terror, the achievement of world peace is a formidable task. The Bruderhof Community has espoused the idea that the pursuit of peace needs to start small and diffuse gradually. With every welcoming hand that is extended to visitors and every memory that is triggered through the photos on the wall, hopefully the Bruderhof vision for the future will materialize. On September 11, 2001, our Nation lost the ability to take peace for granted. With the construction of the Peace Barn, the Bruderhof has initiated a trend that all of America should follow.



Dear C.A.L.L.

This is a rather exciting day in the life of our commune: a representative of the government, the mayor of our town and a number of reporters are going to come for the final decision: we shall be allowed to build! Our plan includes a 'services' house, a gym for the handicapped, an office for planning Solar Power, a hall for Supervision and Psychotherapy, our centre for non-violent communication etc.

Today, our first Solar Power electricity was connected to the national grid, in accordance with the wide-spread initiative in Germany to exploit the sun's energy for creating electricity. At the moment we get good financial support from the authorities, so that it is worthwhile not only on environmental but also on financial grounds.

Tomorrow we celebrate our yearly HOF-FEST, and prepare ourselves for up to a thousand guests!

Our contact with the ZEGG commune is becoming more and more intensive, which makes me happy. Our contact group - together with ZEGG, Sieben Linden and other communities in Germany, meets regularly. Lately we have been trying to formulate what social aspects characterize community life as opposed to private family life, and we are about to deepen our exploration into this issue.

With many greetings,

*Yours Monika F.
Niederkaufungen*

Why does anyone do this?

At this community's third "floofy meeting" the truth comes out - community living isn't simple or easy.

So, we had our weekly house meeting the other night. We recently decided to have every third meeting be what is now called a "floofy meeting," where instead of having a detailed agenda and talking about house logistics and issues, we use the time to get to know each other better and talk about personal topics. You know, floofy kind of touchy-feely stuff, as opposed to "taking care of business."

During this particular meeting (our third official floofy meeting), we decided to each share our experience of living in this community. Nine of us share a 4000 sq. ft. house, Walnut St. Co-op, in Eugene, Oregon, and, despite our commonalities, we are definitely nine very distinct personalities. We're an eclectic mix of teachers, facilitators, students, activists, introverts, extroverts, thrash-metal to folk to riot-grrl aficionados, vegan to carnivorous, irreverent to slightly-less irreverent, opinionated to indifferent. We share dinner five nights a week, rotate chores, and do our best to help support each other when we can, which sometimes we do successfully and sometimes don't.

During the two-hour meeting, people expressed a wide range of perspectives, feelings, and opinions. Two people here used to be romantically involved and are no longer, which makes for an interesting dynamic. Two others have

been couple for many years. Some people are extremely busy, and sometimes find it challenging to make time for the house, while others put in many hours each week to keep the co-op going. The thing that struck me the most was how challenging it is for many of us, regardless of our personal situation, to live in

community. I suppose that that in and of itself is not too surprising given our upbringing, but it got me to question and wonder why, given all of these challenges, we continue to live this way. Isn't the point of living in community to make our lives easier and simpler?



Yet, during this meeting, it didn't seem like anyone's life was necessarily easier or simpler. One person didn't feel like she was getting enough support from everyone in the house. Another felt overwhelmed and stressed by all of the things that needed attention here. Someone else felt that living with so many people was difficult. Others expressed frustration at having to accommodate food needs, cleanliness needs, and social needs. I realized that living communally was more complicated for me as well. In past living situations, my cost of living was lower, I had more control over my food and my space, and wasn't necessarily putting any more energy into routine chores and tasks. Had we been doing something wrong, or is it just the way community living contrasts with our individualistic upbringings?



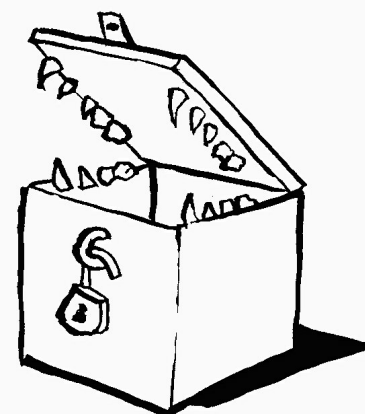
I thought of my experience spending time at Lost Valley Educational Center, another community about 20 miles southeast of here, which has become an almost second home for me over the past five years. For years I've seen many people come and go at Lost Valley, in frustration and dissatisfaction, their expectations shattered. Being close to many people in the community, I've heard countless retellings of their challenges: ways that their needs aren't met, endless hours of meetings, financial struggles, communication breakdowns, hours of work put into the community, and difficulties in agreeing over the most basic things such as paint colors (also probably the most heated and agonizing topic our own community has had to make in the almost six months that I've lived here). And for what? Why do we put ourselves through all this?

As I shared during my turn in our meeting, I felt curious about this seeming contradiction. As I talked about some of these realizations, I noticed oddly enough that I didn't feel a charge around them. When I paid attention to my body, I noticed that I felt calm and relaxed. I had no sense of wanting to live anywhere else, and, despite my frustrations, actually haven't given a thought to leaving during the whole time I've lived here.

Maybe the experience of actually getting to be close to people (or even the possibility of being close), of sharing our lives together, overrides any other obstacle that might arise. Maybe our need for connection, family, and tribe is so deep and primal that it makes everything worth it. Instead of living our lives through televisions or computers, we desire real, face-to-face conversations. Rather than living vicariously through fictitious characters or silently stewing in cynicism, we choose to attempt to resolve our difficulties and work together. We choose not to play it safe, to find a way to not be ignorant *and* to be blissful, and to meet basic human needs that are seldom met in our culture.

I love the fact that sometimes someone will make a special treat for the whole house. I love when some of us will spontaneously decide to rent a movie, make popcorn, and pile onto someone's bed; or walk over to the neighborhood bar to shoot pool and sing karaoke together. I love being able to stop and talk with someone for a couple of minutes, to have people who can pick me up from the airport, and to laugh at meals with, or to know that if someone can't do something around the house that someone else will volunteer to cover for them. I love that sometimes we can support each other around our struggles and difficulties, and help each other out.

I am still curious about how to make the end that I believe many of us seek (simplicity, connectedness, sustainability, harmony) become the means rather than the end, but I also know that I am in good company in this discovery. Perhaps that is what we are learning together.



David Franklin is actively involved putting on Naka-Ima workshops at Lost Valley Educational Center, writes, and leads workshops of his own in sacred sexuality, musical creativity, and men's issues, www.David-Franklin.org; www.EvolvingCulture.com; www.Note-A-Day.com

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