c.A.L.L.

Communes At Large Letter

INTERNATIONAL COMMUNES DESK

YAD TABENKIN

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Dear Readers,

It is with great sadness that I share with you the news of the passing of Yoel Darom (1921-2014). Yoel was a founding member of the International Communes Desk and was my predeccesor as editor of C.A.L.L. - big shoes to fill after his decade at the helm.

Yoel was always incredibly positive and complimentary. He always had nice words to say to me, whether about C.A.L.L. (over the years he helped me a lot to become a better editor), or the direction of the new kibbutzim and groups of which I am a part of. He also always demanded to see updated photos of my daughter every time we met, which always brought a huge smile to his face.

Though we normally try and stay clear of Middle Eastern politics here at C.A.L.L., we've made an exception by reprinting an article about the role of the kibbutzim and kibbutz members during the escalation in Israeli-Palestinian hostilities last summer. There's no finger-pointing here, just a reflection of the role Israeli communes and commune members take on on a national level.

Elsewhere in this issue, we have profiles on both historic and contemporary communities in Europe and North America, a book review and a reader's letter. We also share with you a visit from members of a German community to the International Communes Desk and a visit by a member of the International Communes Desk to a German community!

I'd like to end with a quote from Yoel's final editorial from issue 20, because it really sums up his inherent positivity, his firm belief in communal living, and how he saw the importance of the ICD as a vehicle to make connections between communities. "I wish you all a successful and satisfying community life", he wrote, "being aware all the time that we are a large tribe, ever stronger the more we deepen our sense of belonging far beyond the borders of each community itself".

MHDSRIP, and may we have the vision, determination and dedication to continue the work that Yoel started.

You can send us your suggestions, corrections, contributions and retributions regarding C.A.L.L., to the usual email address,

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Basis Wulfshagenerhutten Community

We were fortunate to host recently here in Israel a family from a community in the far North of Germany. Martin and Andrea Klotz-Woock, long-time members of the community (more than 30 years) came to Israel with their daughter Maya, who was born in the community, and whilst here they visited both the International Communes Desk and Kibbutz Mishol in Nazareth Illit.

"*But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well*", Mt. 6,33

Basis Wulfshagenerhutten is a Christian community, striving to live according to communal values laid out by Jesus in the New Testament. The multi-generational community numbers 80 people, including both singles and families. The community follows the model of the early Christians, living with shared property, housing and work. Each member works in accordance to their abilities – in the house, in the office, childcare or in the workshop. Their main income is through the production and sale of wooden equipment for kindergartens and schools.

International Communes Desk meeting with Martin, Maya and Andrea (Sitting at the far end of the table) from the community of Basis Wulfshagenerhutten (Sept, 2014)

"And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. .. and had all things in common", Acts 2:42

The community is also active politically – specifically against nuclear power, looking for ways to create more sustainable and renewable energy.

"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.", Mt. 11,28

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Lancaster Co-housing, a visit to Forgebank

Jan Martin Bang

For those of you who have read "Communes Britannica" and "Utopia Britannica" Chris Coates will be a familiar figure. For those who have not read these books, Chris has been involved with the British communes movement since the 1970's, and has recently co-founded Lancaster Co-housing group in North East England. Chris was elected Chair of the ICSA at last year's conference.

The Lancaster Co-housing (LCH) group was formed several years ago in order to create a community based on cooperation, and with a clear boundary between the private and the common. In the aftermath of the financial crash in 2008 property prices fell and many development companies went bankrupt. It was a buyer's market, and LCH found an old derelict industrial property at Forgebank just 3 miles out of Lancaster on the banks of the river Lune, in the village of Halton.

The group bought the property for £600,000 in 2009 and already had a good deal of the organisational infrastructure in place, including architects, planners and lawyers. The total investment for planning and building the 40 terraced houses and installing the heating, sewage, energy and water systems came to around £11 million. Houses at Forgebank were able to be sold at market prices without any additional charge for the high environmental standards and the communal facilities.

Each family or person buys a house on a 999 year lease, and is free to sell it whenever they want. Any prospective buyer has to be voted in as a member of the co-housing group. Should the buyer not be admitted, Lancaster co-housing can buy the house back after a fair valuation, and so be able to sell it on to others.

Lancaster Co-housing is the owner of the site and the buildings. There is also an old mill, which is being managed by a separate holding, called Green Elephant (GE). This is a management company that rents out space to people needing workshops, office or storage space. GE has been operating for less than a year, but looks to be breaking even already at this early stage.

LCH also have other community enterprises, including a food cooperative and a car pool. The food cooperative is completely informal, run by members volunteering their time to order wholefoods and make them available to other members in a locked storeroom to which all members have access. With an annual turnover of over £ 20 000,- the food co-op will probably have to be formalised soon. Another enterprise is the car pool, which is legally registered, now owning 4 cars, including one electric car. Members pay according to both time and distance driven, and membership is open to people living outside Forgebank.

In addition there is a shared laundry, with 2 washing machines operated by tokens available at the co-housing office. There are communal guest rooms and a bike workshop and storage space. Heating is by a district heating scheme, housed in the GE mill, and running off woodchips. In combination with highly insulated houses the heating costs are cut to an absolute minimum. Houses can be relatively small, not needing room for big heaters, washing machines or guest rooms.

The common house has a large communal kitchen where members take it in turns to cook evening meals. The community eats together 3 or 4 times a week, and the common house is used often for coffee and just hanging out. Opposite is a children's playroom, so the whole family can spend time being with others.

What struck me most significantly at Forgebank was the feeling of easy community. I spent quite a lot of my time in the common house, talking to people, and saw how well used it was, and how well looked after.

When I visited, the Forgebank community numbered about 60 adults and 15 children, all the houses were filled, but the mill was still half empty. There was still work to be done on landscaping, especially upriver, where there was a steep slope up from the river which could not be built on, but which could be developed as productive open space, a food forest, small gardens and recreational space. A local company, "Halton Hydro" was building a modern micro hydro on the site of an old mill to provide hydro electricity, and solar panels were still being installed. Forgebank reckons to be exporting energy within a year or two. They have started monitoring their carbon footprint, which is already significantly lower than the UK average.

Jan Martin Bang was a kibbutz member for 16 years, has lived in Camphill in Norway, and has written several books on community and ecology. He was chair of ICSA between 2010 and 2013. This article originally appeared in Bulletin # 55 of the International Communal Studies Association, www.communa.org.il/icsa

Bastions of the left, kibbutzim are on front lines of war

Despite all the changes they've been through, kibbutzim still account for a high share of combat soldiers and are big champions of mutual aid.

By Judy Maltz
Haaretz, Jul. 30, 2014

Barely two percent of Israelis live on kibbutzim, but seven of the 53 soldiers killed in Operation Protective Edge – more than 13 percent – hail from these close-knit, collective communities that once epitomized the Israeli pioneering spirit.

Not only have the kibbutzim suffered a disproportionate share of the casualties in this war, but, with many of them located along Israel's border with the Gaza Strip, they are also among the

A soldier on patrol near Kibbutz Kissufim, alona the border with Gaza.

most vulnerable to threats from Hamas rockets and tunnels. In the last 12 days, Gaza militants have infiltrated Israel through tunnels four times, emerging next to kibbutzim in three of those incidents.

This hasn't prevented the kibbutzim from contributing – also disproportionately, perhaps – to the national common good. Of late they have stood at the forefront of efforts to provide relief to Israelis temporarily displaced by the hostilities, opening their gates in the north to families who have been forced to evacuate the south, while welcoming soldiers in the south who are stationed nearby and are in dire need of rest and respite.

To paraphrase Mark Twain, rumors of the death of the kibbutz movement, not to mention its spirit, appear to have been greatly exaggerated. The movement was originally founded over 40 years before the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948, by young Jews who hailed mostly from Eastern European countries. These idealistic pioneers sought to reclaim what they saw as their ancient homeland and to forge a new life there. Despite overwhelming physical, economic and other hardships throughout the years, these typically socialist-oriented rural, collective communities have played a major role in the development of modern-day Israel.

To be sure, the kibbutzim have lost the dominant status they once enjoyed in Israeli society; indeed, in the last elections, for the first time ever, not one representative of the movement won a seat in the Knesset. But that doesn't mean it doesn't continue to wield a disproportionate influence in Israeli life.

"It just goes to prove how wrong those were who wrote them off," says Dr. Alon Pauker, a historian of the kibbutz movement from Beit Berl College and a member of Be'eri, a kibbutz situated a few kilometers away from the Gaza border.

"There are those who might have had an interest in portraying things differently, but the truth is that despite all the changes they've been through, the kibbutzim continue to account for a high share of the combat soldiers in the army, and they are still big champions of mutual aid."

Broad influence

Michal Palgi, head of the Institute for Research of the Kibbutz and the Cooperative Idea at the University of Haifa, notes that even though kibbutzim have reinvented themselves – for example, by privatizing their operations and changing their ideological orientation somewhat over the years – they "have always been on the front lines, with two-thirds of them located in the periphery of the country."

Despite the myth which Palgi says is largely perpetuated by the religious right, kibbutzniks also maintain a prominent place on the front lines when it comes to Israel Defense Forces activity, and are no less inclined to sacrifice their lives for their country than members of the religious settlement movement.

"According to our figures, 90 percent of children from the kibbutz serve the army, many of them in combat units," Palgi explains.

Indeed, the following casualties of the past 10 days reflect that prominent status at the front: Maj. (Res.) Amotz Greenberg, 45, of Hod Hasharon and originally from Kibbutz Yotvata; Capt. Zvika Kaplan, 28, of Kibbutz Merav; Sergeant First Class Oded Ben Sira, 22, of Nir Etzion, a religious kibbutz; Lieutenant Paz Elyahu, 22, from Kibbutz Evron; Shahar Dauber, 20, from Kibbutz Ginegar; Staff Sgt. Guy Boyland, 21, of Kibbutz Ginosar; and Captain Dmitri Levitas, 26, of Kibbutz Geshur.

Another casualty, Max Steinberg, a "lone" soldier from Los Angeles – meaning he had arrived here without his family and volunteered in the IDF – had been "adopted" by a family on Kibbutz Urim. Plus, several days ago, the grandson of Haim Oron, a kibbutz movement leader and former MK from the left-wing Meretz party, was injured in battle on the Gaza border.

Soldiers walking on Kibbutz Nir Am

"I think that a great disservice has been done over the years to the kibbutzim, this attempt to delegitimize them," says Canadian-born Vivian Silver, who has spent 40 years living on kibbutzim, the past 26 on Be'eri in the south.

Many kibbutzniks, herself included, blame the beginning of their movement's fall from grace on derogatory remarks made by Menachem Begin, the late

prime minister and Likud party leader. In a now-famous 1981 campaign speech, Begin referred to the "millionaire" kibbutzniks lounging around their swimming pools.

Due in part to poor economic management, in the mid-1980s the kibbutzim found themselves on the brink of bankruptcy, with their political opponents gloating.

It was this financial crisis that forced many of these communities to embrace new economic models to survive and paved the way to their large-scale privatization. To many observers on the outside, it signaled the demise of the traditional model of the kibbutz movement.

According to Palgi, following a steady drop, the number of Israelis living on kibbutzim affiliated with various movements today has risen in the past 15 years. Of the 274 kibbutzim today, 60 are still communities resembling the old-fashioned, socialist-oriented kibbutzim, 17 are religiously oriented, and the remainder are "renewed" kibbutzim based on a less collective model.

The increase in new members in recent years has come both from former kibbutzniks moving back home and city-dwellers seeking greener pastures.

"Many have come for the quality of life, but not only," Palgi explains. "The appeal of the kibbutz for many newcomers is that they can have a greater influence on decision-making in their communities."

As Pauker notes, "even in the renewed kibbutzim, there is far more egalitarianism that in other Israeli communities and a far more intensive communal experience."

Considering how close-knit and united these communities are, he adds, it is quite natural that they would be among the first to take on the cause of helping others during the war. Eitan Broshi, secretary-general of the United Kibbutz Movement, the umbrella organization for all nonreligious kibbutzim, says he's not surprised that these communities have been rediscovered.

"The past few weeks have taught us yet again that a united movement, with strength and solidarity, is not only powerful during ordinary days, but critical to its members and Israeli society as a whole during days of crisis and battle," he says.

What might be surprising to some is that the kibbutzim, traditionally aligned with the left and the Israeli peace movement, have been among the staunchest supporters of the current operation in Gaza, urging the government not to bow to pressure for a pullout.

But as Pauker notes, although kibbutzniks may be prominent members of the peace camp, that doesn't make them pacifists. "Almost all the members of the kibbutzim down south will tell you they support a political solution to the conflict," he notes, "but they also believe that this is not a war of choice because they see themselves under an existential threat today. And I say that as a card-carrying member of Meretz."

Caring village faces upheaval

Sue Nelson
http://www.yorkpress.co.uk

For almost 60 years Botton has been a bustling community where able-bodied volunteers have devoted their lives to providing an environment that enables people with learning disabilities and other special needs to accomplish things in their lives that would otherwise be difficult or impossible.

Run by the Camphill Village Trust, home life is provided in an extended family setting in a number of houses, with the volunteers – called co-workers - providing succour and support to those with special needs who are treated and looked after as part of the family. In return for providing this precious family life, co-workers get their accommodation and living expenses paid.

The trust's philosophy has always been that each member of the community has their own unique capability that they contribute to the life of the village.

So they might work on the village farms or in the shop, the bakery or café. They could be found in the village creamery or perhaps the bookshop, sawmill or craft shop. But wherever they go in the village, whatever they contribute, the Camphill ethos allows everyone to offer something of themselves to the community, bringing dignity, self worth and achievement.

Now all this appears to be under threat. Co-workers – many of who have devoted their lives to Botton, bringing up their own families here while providing a family home to those with special needs – are being told their voluntary role will disappear and some of them will be taken on as employees. Those who aren't will have to leave the village.

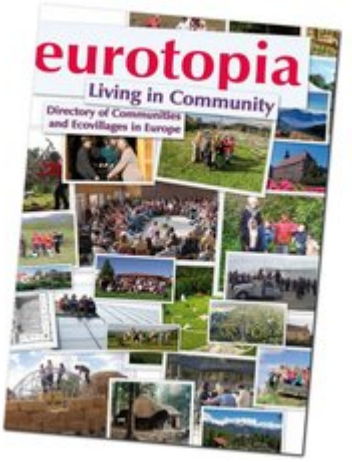
Villagers will apparently be encouraged to live more independently with paid shift-working care staff taking care of their needs. The fear is that out will go the family home philosophy and in its place will come a hostel-like doctrine similar to the care in the community provision we see in our towns and cities.

And the real foreboding is that ultimately Botton itself will disappear as a result. Paid care workers and managers take over, family homes are broken up, the sharing philosophy ebbs away and the village's self-sufficiency vanishes.

eurotopia book review

If the compilers don't remember why 'eurotopia' is written with a lower case 'e', surely we can't be expected to relate to it as anything other than sloppy grammar?!

I love judging a book by its cover. Probably because it's something I was told not to do from a very young age. I see it as a form of rebellion – like teaching my daughter to blow raspberries and having soup for breakfast. The 2014 edition of the eurotopia Directory of Communities and Ecovillages in Europe landed in my postbox and my first impressions were: homemade, chatty and informal. The 1996 first edition was made with recycled paper and, although over the years the production of this resource is supported by a large team of people, including not an insignificant number of volunteers, it still has that recycled-y and grey-y feel to it. It's low-tech – not quite made on a Gestetner – but it could've been. So old-school is this directory, that it is not even available online. For many of us, if something has no online presence, then it doesn't really exist, (turning on its head the notion that the online is the virtual, and the thing that you can hold in your hand is the actual.) The reason we are given for this is that if they gave away the information for free, they'd not be able to fund the work for compiling the database, and anyway, they are quite fond of the written word.



Following the introductory pleasantries, Diana Leafe Christian is rolled out to lecture us about the influence of intentional communities on the wider society – she name-drops the usual suspects: Findhorn, The Farm, Niederkaufungen and Crystal Waters. As overviews go, she does a decent enough job.

What I most like from the forty or so pages before we get to the actual directory, is the interview with Dieter Halbach, a community consultant from Sieben Linden. He presents us with tips for successful community building, from someone who has been there and done that. Great stuff!

The next article is about the interface between researchers and the communities which they study. It is a nice piece, and reminds me a lot of the dilemmas I encounter as a board member of ICSA (The International Communal Studies Association). My feeling from the last few conferences is that our organisation is increasingly becoming a fertile meeting ground for both academics and communards.

Next up, the ramblings of the editor –

his personal epiphanies of his six years living in community. I'm afraid that the less said about this the better.

What follows are more pages written by the editor, starting with a much more interesting piece by him, recalling the various editorial dilemmas he faced in terms of who to include and who not to include in the directory. He recalls an amusing request from an equestrian centre with just one permanent human resident, which described itself as a multi-species community! This article includes a rather serious passage, describing the choice not to publish the communities of the Twelve Tribes, due to the practice of violence within their communities.

Before we get to the listings itself, we are presented with definitions of community and some stats. There are a total of 429 communities published, with a massive 160 of them in Germany alone. The fact that the book is first and foremost a German-language publication (with intermittent versions in English), and is put together in Germany by (mostly) Germans, it is somewhat inevitable that its network of contacts, and subsequently the finished product, reflects this bias.

Further number crunching shows that 330 communities contain at least seven people. Taking away the two biggest communities (one in Russia and one in the Netherlands that can boast 7,400 people between them), the average number of people per community is only 38. In addition, more than 60% of community residents work on-site.

If you're looking for a book featuring the most wonderfully useless table I've ever seen, pick up your copy of eurotopia and hastily turn to pages 44 and 45. The table purports to show how many communities should exist in any given country. It takes the number of communities listed in the directory by country, and compares it to the total population of that country. An overall average is calculated (0.4 communities per 1 million Europeans) and then this number is used to determine how many communities should exist in each country based on this average and the total population of that country. The stunning conclusion is that all but 8 European countries should have less than 10 communities. Priceless!

As for the directory itself, contact details, a description, date of establishment, demography and more, are provided for each community, including some pretty funky symbols used for the key. To be fair, if you are looking to discover and visit intentional communities in Europe, this is as good as exists, anywhere.

Having said that, my major disappointment is that only two Israeli communities feature in the directory (and Israel doesn't appear at all in the aforementioned table). I know that the directory depends on communities actually sending information to the directory, but when I can literally name twice as many Israeli intentional communities than even the number of German entries, the research has fallen short somewhat.

Anton Marks

We reprint a letter we received from our old friends from the Bruderhof in North America. The subject: Greetings to C.A.L.L.

Shalom Anton,

We were thrilled with the latest issue of CALL. No 38. Congratulations!! Of course your initial quote from Henry Near's book describing the collective experience of a young kibbutz in the 1920's, is very striking and inspiring: "There was a sort of mutual yearning, a desire to sit together far into the night, and thereby penetrate the very depth of the vision of communal life. Soul touched soul. We longed to become a sort of river of souls, whose tributaries would merge, and together create a fresh and mighty current of friendship and fraternity." Wow – that is inspiring!! The rest of your first piece is also very good reminding us that all community movements have a similar inspiration and longing even if forms of expression are very varied.

Set amid the orchards of the mid-Hudson Valley south of Kingston, Maple Ridge (established in 1985 as "Pleasant View") has some 350 residents and is one of the largest Bruderhof communities.

It reminds us of the enthusiastic beginnings of our Bruderhof movement starting in 1920 when there would also be long soul searching into the night, and then communal dancing round the fire – the same or very similar spirit, surly. We read of the first kibbutzim how they worked hard all day in the scorching sun and then danced all night in the enthusiasm for starting a new brotherly society!! Such an inspiration to all of us. Our movement went through a revival starting around 1954 in the Woodcrest Bruderhof USA, when there was a similar spirit with enthusiastic singing and dancing etc and a revival of the communal spirit. We are currently celebrating this new start of 60 years ago, in Woodcrest as you can see on our website.

On our recent trip in 2010 to the ICSA Conference in the Emek Yezreel College, we were thrilled to learn more about the new "Communities for Social Action" and

even visited one or two. We were a bit surprised that some of our veteran kibbutz friends did not know about this important movement. One veteran grandmother told us that she wanted to give a birthday gift to her grandson in one of these groups, and he said "No Safta! If it is not something I can share with everyone, I do not want it!!" She was very impressed – reminding her of her youthful communal enthusiasm, arriving from South Africa long ago. So we were most happy to read James Grant-Rosenhead's article and catch up with this important and inspiring movement. Of course we are very pleased that there is now more cooperation between all such groups and we wish all power to all in their longing to serve the underprivileged and live for a truer society of fraternity and justice. Keep it up Chaverim. All power to you all.

The logo of the new Bruderhof magazine – Plough Quarterly

Naturally we were pleased to see a message from our Bruderhof brother Paul Kaiser from Australia. He mentions his father-in-law Hans Meier whose enthusiasm for the kibbutz movement got many of us inspired too. He was sent with others on the first trip to Israel from our Bruderhof movement in 1985 to the first ICSA conference, I believe, and we have kept up the friendships ever since, most recently with a visit here from Kibbutz Mahanayim. We invite any of your kibbutz readers to visit us and exchange thoughts.

As some of your readers will know, we are re-launching our Plough Quarterly magazine and many will soon receive sample copies. Others can order sample copies at http://www.plough.com/en/quarterly with the hope that institutions and libraries around the world will subscribe to it and receive it on a regular basis. The first general page [p.4] of our first issue has a short article about the "educational kibbutzim" , as you will see, with the title "The World's Tallest Kibbutz" !! of course some of us were especially pleased that it was the first article of our new magazine and hope there will be more such contributions.

Shalom and our very best wishes to you and all your readership for all your enthusiasm for true community and fraternity.

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8 Adults, 3 Children, 1 House — And A Big Zoning Dispute In Hartford

Hartford Courant
Nov 20th, 2014
By Vanessa de la Torre

A neighborhood dispute in Hartford sparks debate over what constitutes a family

A neighborhood kerfuffle on one of the city's wealthiest residential streets has triggered a cease-and-desist order, fervent appeals and debate over what constitutes a family.

Residents of 68 Scarborough are, from left: Laura Rozza, Dave Rozza, Kevin Lamkins, seated, Milo Rozza, 7, on table, Simon DeSantis, standing, rear, Maureen Welch, seated, Joshua Blanchfield, Elijah Rosenfield, 4, Julia Rosenblatt, Tessa Rosenfield, 9, and Hannah Simms, right.

The controversy centers on 68 Scarborough St., a nine-bedroom brick mansion shared by eight adults and three children — an arrangement among longtime friends who share monthly expenses, chores and legal ownership of the stately home, said Julia Rosenblatt, who lives there with her husband and two kids.

The residents bought the nearly 6,000-square-foot house for $453,000 in August, although only two of the owners are listed on the mortgage and city property record. They take turns cooking dinner, have pooled money into one bank account and entertained themselves last week with a family talent show because, Rosenblatt said Thursday, "we intentionally came together as a family."

But a coalition of neighbors, while conceding that the occupants of 68 Scarborough "are nice people," have argued that the non-traditional household violates the neighborhood's zoning for single-family homes. Living in the house are two couples with children, a couple with no children and two individuals.

About three weeks ago, 68 Scarborough was hit with a cease-and-desist order from the city after

zoning officials determined that the setup "doesn't meet the definition of a family," said Thomas Deller, the city's director of development services, which oversees zoning code enforcement. The city's code defines members of a family as those related by blood, marriage, civil union or legal adoption.

The West End Civic Association convened a committee meeting Wednesday night to hear arguments from both sides. Dozens showed up to back the 68 Scarborough residents, a group that includes Blanchfield and another Hartford public school teacher, a professor at Capital Community College, employees for Charter Oak Cultural Center and the Wheeler Clinic, and a stay-at-home dad.

Rather than a fight over one mansion, neighbors who oppose the arrangement have framed their case as a broader stand against any challenges to Scarborough's single-family zoning that could chip away at the quiet character of the affluent, estate-lined street.

The 68 Scarborough owners "seem like a nice group of people," said John Gale, chairman of the West End association's planning and zoning committee. On the other hand, he said, he also sympathizes with the concern that a "Pandora's box" might open without a strict interpretation of single-family homes.

The communal mansion under dispute in the leafy suburb of Harford, Connecticut

So far, the owners have spent about $20,000 to upgrade the plumbing — there are six bathrooms — and the electrical system to bring the home up to code, Blanchfield said. They have a household bank account to share the cost of groceries, utilities and mortgage payments, and have also gotten used to the emotional support.

"Even just coming home at the end of the day, from a rough day," Rosenblatt said. "Because there's so many more people to help out, and to be good to each other, it just feels a lot less lonely than I think it might otherwise be."

Next week, the children are planning a night of charades, she said.

"We're not trying to change the zoning law," she said. "We're trying to change the definition of a family."

My children grew up in a commune

When she found herself a single mum with a young baby, Dinah Jefferies decided to try communal living. It was idealistic and it didn't last, but it was a magical time where children roamed freely and a shiny new world seemed possible.

I don't even recall how I found out about the first commune I visited, but it eventually led me to take Jamie to live with a rock band at Church Farm, a rambling Elizabethan house in Sotherton, Suffolk owned by James and Jeremy Lascelles. At that time none of us was impressed by who they were, and even now I have had to look them up on Wikipedia to be sure.

Children from the Church Farm commune, with Jamie on the left and Laurel in the centre.

James played keyboards in the band and is still a musician. He is a first cousin, once removed, of the Queen, and is the second son of the late 7th Earl of Harewood and his first wife, Marion Stein. He and his younger brother Jeremy are great-grandsons of George V, and second cousins to the Prince of Wales. Jeremy was the manager of the band, and went on to become CEO of Chrysalis Music. Their mother Marion was, by then, remarried, to the Liberal party leader Jeremy Thorpe. The band's drummer was Sir Simon Stewart-Richardson: a baronet. The three of them were posh, though the rest of us weren't.

For Jamie and me, there were advantages and disadvantages to living with 20 adults and eight or so children under the age of five. On the plus side, Jamie loved roaming the farm grounds with his readymade "brothers and sisters", and many "aunties and uncles" looking on. With such a large extended family, I never had that trapped feeling some women experience when stuck home alone with kids.

My second child, Laurel, was born at Church Farm. I remember the midwife's horror when she realised that I intended to give birth on purple sheets with an audience looking on. We were a close-knit and strangely traditional bunch of hippies, we bought our clothes at jumble sales, and ate an awful lot of brown rice. Too much. I hate the stuff now.

The good times, amplified by sharing them with so many others, were wonderful. We were known for our dancing, both in the garden during the summer when the band were rehearsing, or at their many shows up and down the country, from the

Rougham Tree fairs to rowdy student union gigs. Sometimes the kids came too and Jamie loved going on the road taking every opportunity to join the band on stage.

The bad times were impossible. What had been so wonderful when shared, took on a nightmare quality when it was over something unpleasant. You couldn't genuinely like everybody, and it could get ugly if you fell out and there was nowhere else to go. There were squabbles over parenting styles, too. As with most parents, it was sometimes hard for us to be unbiased about who had done what to whom.

Dinah Jefferies: 'What I would give to return to those sunshine days, for just one afternoon.'

It was often a tiny thing that upset the balance between sanity or holding it together. The men really had no idea, and the hardest part of the lifestyle was that it was heavily gender biased. The men were in the band, or were roadies for the band, and often on the road: the women were the domestics and child carers – at home. That isn't to say that women didn't go to gigs, or that there wasn't eventually a female roadie. And the men were good with the kids when they were there. They played with them, took them out for rambles and generally loved them.

This traditional division of labour was not really up my street. I felt miserable when we were left behind and suffered debilitating bouts of depression. Cooking, growing vegetables and milking goats were not fulfilling me. I had been a teenager in the 60s and from the age of 15 had felt the need to reject the cloying, oppressive 50s.

There were other problems too. That some of us had money, and some did not, came to matter. And it was strange to see Jeremy Thorpe striding about the house before his fall from grace. He would turn up in his hat and long black coat, with a beautifully dressed and very generous-hearted Marion, to visit her sons and grandchildren, who would normally be looking like ragamuffins.

Times changed and so did some of us. We became tired of scratching around trying to make ends meet. We ended up taking normal jobs, paying off mortgages, and buying expensive tumble dryers. But despite the difficulties, there was something special about that time. Something magical in the air whenever the band were playing their bright foot-tapping music, something lovely about the long, hot summer days when we wore very little and collected elderflowers to make champagne, and something enchanting about kids running about freely from dawn to dusk, and nobody minding when they came in filthy. It was idealistic and didn't last, but for a brief few years it did feel as if there could be a shiny new world.

Reprinted from The Guardian, UK. 'The Separation' by Dinah Jefferies is published by Penguin

Damanhur, Italy

David Bramwell, author of *The Number Nine Bus to Utopia: How One Man's Extraordinary Journey Led to a Quiet Revolution* (Unbound), interviews Tigrilla from Damanhur. Tigrilla works for the Music of the Plants project at the spiritual community, Damanhur in Northern Italy

Tigrilla. To formalize a deep relationship with nature and all its forces, citizens of *Damanhur* typically choose to call themselves by names of animals, plants and nature

Q: How did you end up living in Damanhur?
A: That's a bit of a story… I'm not your usual Damanhur arrival, which is now through the New Life temporary citizenship program. I came to visit after hearing about Damanhur from several friends and students. I was introduced to a woman that was working on a specific project and when she heard about my unusual background from the arts to technology to spirituality, she asked me if I would come do a work exchange to help launch a new project. When I got back home to Barcelona where I was living, my roommate tells me that she is moving back to Argentina and I have to find a place, so after not finding a new apartment I liked, I decided to pack my stuff up and go. It was only supposed to be for six months, but for some reason I took all my stuff with me… that was three years ago.

Q: What do you most love about it?
A: The diversity, the dreaming, the research, the ritual… the fact that spirituality is intertwined in everything, not just something theoretical. The fact that if you can dream it, you can probably find a group of people to build it. The fact that I have different groups to express all the different parts of myself: creative, technological, artistic, studious, etc.

Q: What do you find most challenging?
A: That we are not perfect. We are real human beings each with our own problems. It is easy to think that because we live in a Spiritual EcoCommunity we should all be enlightened, but it is just not the case. Each of us has a different path with different speeds. We are not perfect, we are learning to love and respect one another without judgment just like the rest of the world is. It is great that we have tools, but human nature is at times lazy and habitual. It is exactly what makes Damanhur so amazing and unique that also makes it challenging.

Q: What's the next big project?
A: It depends on who you ask. Damanhur has many big projects: the Tempio Bosco (Forest Temple) and related projects, making our School of Meditation even more accessible, the launch of a new and improved website with more sharing than ever before, the Music of the Plants and Plant Perception research, the Community School for children, Spiritual Physics discoveries, and the list goes on and on.

Reprinted from The Idler at http://idler.co.uk

Home, sweet anarchist home

by George Howland Jr | 6 Jan 2015

Home, circa 1890s

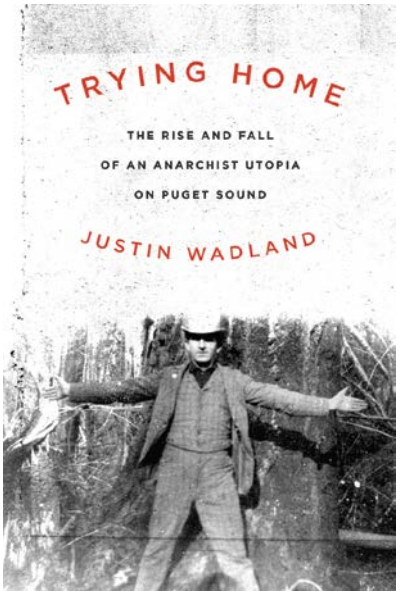
In the late 1800s, three families pooled their resources to create Home, an anarchist community on a peninsula in Puget Sound where they embraced radical views and free love. Historian Justin Wadland writes about the radical experiment in his book "Trying Home: the Rise and Fall of an Anarchist Utopia on Puget Sound"

In Feb. 1896, three men constructed a small boat and floated from Tacoma out onto Puget Sound, until they came to the piece of land that they had heard would be a fine location for their new community. George Allen, Oliver Verity and Frank Odell were looking for a place to form an intentional community. All three men and their families had been part of Glennis, a short-lived socialist community in the Cascade foothills. Its failure did not discourage the families. After all, during the late 19th century, attempts to create utopian communities were commonplace among a small minority of dreamers on Puget Sound, across the United States and throughout Europe.

The three families pooled their resources, bought the land and called their new community "Home." Home lasted until 1919, adopted

anarchism as its guiding philosophy, spawned five newspapers, grew to 250 inhabitants, eventually owned over 200 acres and gave rise to a major free-speech fight that went all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court.

Back in 19th century Washington, the three families' experience at Glennis informed the way they set up Home. The founders did not want to repeat the mistakes of the socialist community, where everything was centralized and rules governing the inhabitants' behavior were passed after many hours of unpleasant meetings.



Instead, Home's founders decided on a bare minimum of formal rules and hoped for a spirit of mutual cooperation. They formed a land trust. All of Home's property was owned in common through the Mutual Home Association. New people who wished to join the community paid the association $1 and then paid for the right to use two acres of the land as they wished. Each individual or family did, however, own whatever improvements — such as houses or stores — they built on their two-acre plot. Also they owned the fruits of that land, whatever they produced through their own sweat by harvesting trees, planting crops or raising animals. Beyond that, there would be no rules governing behavior within the community.

Visitors noted its absences: There were no churches, no saloons and no sales of alcohol or tobacco at the local stores. Yet there were no rules forbidding any of those things.

The residents loved to gather at Liberty Hall, a meeting house owned by the community. There they would have dances with music and merrymaking until the wee hours. Most of all, the community liked to bring speakers into the hall, where they would gather for nights of intense discussion. The speakers might be famous political activists such as Emma Goldman or the Wobblies' Big Bill Haywood. They might be residents of Home, like James Morton, who loved to read aloud the verse of the English poets Percy Shelley and William Wordsworth.

Most families survived through a combination of labor. Some stayed at Home farming, raising livestock and children. The latter attended the community's school. Others would leave the community for months at a time to work for wages in the outside world, sending money back to the husbands, wives and children at Home.

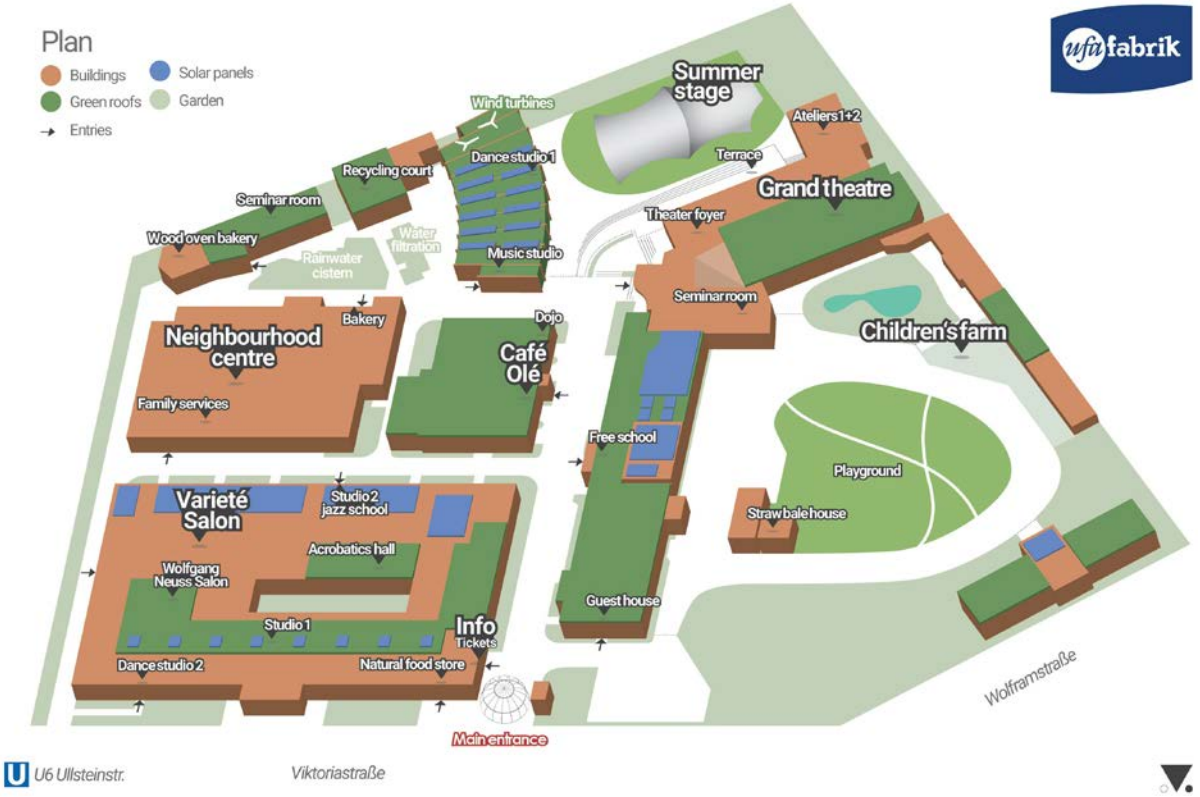
Reprinted from Real Change News, Seattle, Wash.

ufaFabrik – Berlin

by Michael Livni
23/01/15

Physically, ufaFabrik is a compound covering 18,566 m^2 in the Southern center of Berlin. It was originally developed as the Universal Film Studios, the German Hollywood, in 1923. It served the German Film industry until 1964. Pioneering films such as Metropolis (Fritz Lang) and the Blue Angel (Marlene Dietrich) were filmed there. The period of Nazi rule constituted the dark period in its history – this is where Nazi propaganda and hate films were produced. In the Seventies the whole compound fell into disrepair. In 1979, the Berlin Senate planned to tear down the compound and utilize the area for other purposes.

Enter a group of young communards many of whom were active in the performing arts, who had established a collective promoting cohousing, culture, sport and handicrafts in 1972. However, their facilities were inadequate for their collective dream. They wanted a site which would enable them to live together and work together. They wanted their way of life and activity to carry a message to the surrounding area. In 1979 they discovered the former film factory grounds and recognized the potential of the area. However, the compound also constituted a "heritage" site. This was the trigger for a peaceful protest move-in by the collective. The Berlin Senate recognized their action and some months later came to an agreement regarding the recommissioning of the site and its development as a cultural-social-ecological-educational center by the collective. "A new culture in an old factory." A collective of



about 50 people started their life experiment with shared economy and a strong commitment to each other.

Some 35 friends formed the original collective. Today, one third remain, another third have been in the collective 25 years. The structure and economy of the community went through several changes within the last 35 years. The 30 ufaFabrik members currently employ some 200 additional people. Strong social bonds exist between members. Relevant decision making is by consensus.

The attached map shows the variety of enterprises run by the members of the ufaFabrik under its umbrella framework. Ecological building (green roofing, 700 m^2 solar panels, rainwater harvesting, straw bale housing) has been a central theme on ufaFabrik. From day one of their occupation in 1979, living a sustainable life style was at the heart of ufaFabrik's internal values. An additional expression of those values has expressed itself in services to the neighborhood and the Free School. This involved retrofitting physical facilities for a variety of purposes: Cultural events, a guest house, a neighborhood community center with a variety of interest groups with an emphasis on activities and support groups for young families, an organic bakery and a restaurant (Café Olé).

Special mention has to be given to educational enterprises such as the circus school for children (which also puts on performances), and the Free School – alternative education for the elementary school framework. It is an eclectic mix of various pedagogical theories. The educational initiatives were a result of ufaFabrik members desire to provide an alternative education for their children. There is no organized class framework. Each child constitutes an educational focus. There are no marks or report cards. As an alternative to the regular educational system, the Free School became the first alternative school to be recognized as such by the Berlin Senate in 1993. All frameworks are open to the public.

ufaFabrik was/is a unique development by a specific group of people with special talents interacting with a specific historical situation in the post-war redevelopment of West Berlin. It is not, in my opinion, a model which can readily be copied as such. However, many of its projects in the area of ecology, social service, cultural events and education can serve as inspiration for urban intentional communities. Learn more: www.ufafabrik.de or write to info@ufafabrik.de

Living Inter-Generationally at Dancing Rabbit

"The Times They Are A-Changin'..."

By Sharon

When my partner and I first considered moving to Dancing Rabbit, our dear friend Patricia responded in great surprise, "But, you'd be the ELDERS!"

Yes, I agreed, we probably would; Dennis was 60 and I was 50 at the time, and most of the folks at Dancing Rabbit were in their 20s and 30s. And so what? As a teacher, I had spent a good part of my adult life with younger people, and had developed some close friendships with my former students as they grew into adulthood. The role of "elder" didn't daunt me at all. In fact, the thought of living "inter-generationally" really excited me.

Sharon and Aurelia, playing inter-generationally in the straw on Sharon's roof!

Soon after I moved to Dancing Rabbit I began to understand what Patricia was saying. I began to have a strange craving for conversation with ANYONE who looked to be over 40. I started an elders group of the few folks who were over 45. I began to be very conscious of the fact that I could have been the first grade teacher, or even the parent, of many of my neighbors, setting up an expectation for myself that I should behave at all times in a "grown-up" way.

At the same time, I was very conscious that I didn't want to be teacher or parent, and that my neighbors weren't looking for that either. I couldn't quite figure out how to be "me." While I really wanted to be "age-blind," age kept seeming to matter.

It became particularly hard for me when the mostly young interns we call "work exchangers" populated DR each summer. With great energy and enthusiasm, they created their own twenty-something social world, and most of them,

understandably, had little interest in hanging out with someone their mom's age. Though I still think of myself as just out of college, it appears that years have actually elapsed since the 70s, and music, dance styles, lingo, and all the rest of young culture has indeed changed! Suddenly, I am the generation whose "old road is rapidly agin'," as Bob Dylan so eloquently put it.

At some point I realized that I not only craved social connections with 45-year "elders," I was actually needing a true elder, a guide, a "crone," right here in my community. I was a woman going through that interesting transition called menopause, with all its wonders and hard-hitting manifestations. I realized that, in fact, I AM aging, but I'm not yet a true elder. I wanted to talk about it with someone in my community, someone who had experienced these changes and could share some wisdom.

I went to the weekly women's circle in its early days, and found a group of dear and earnest thirty-somethings winding their way through issues around birth control and raising young children. That seemed helpful for them, but it wasn't what I needed. They weren't asking for my wisdom, and they didn't have the kind of wisdom I was seeking. I don't blame them; I don't think at that age I would have had much wisdom-- or even interest-- around the issues of, as some have called it, "crone-alescence."

Most of us who live here-- Rabbits, we call ourselves-- grew up somewhere else. We have come largely from a culture where age has been a social separator. Third graders spend most of their social time with other third graders. Teachers and other adults are NOT your friends– they're not supposed to be. By eighteen or twenty you have no need of parent-figures in your life on a daily basis. Grandparents are far-away folks to be visited occasionally as you explore your own life in the big world. We come from-- and still are-- a culture that really doesn't know how to interact deeply with age-diversity.

Still, I'd wager that most Rabbits would say that intergenerational living needs to be a fundamental part of a new culture. That's a value I am convinced we hold, and it manifests in small, delightful ways. We have the advantage here in community of seeing each other grow through life's changes in a very up-close and personal way. I have "hang-out" dates with my neighbor Aurelia from time to time; I've watched her grow from a tiny two-year-old to a graceful and independent front-teeth-missing seven-year-old. (And who knows? Maybe she's seen me change!)

In a week's time the community celebrated one-year-old Dmitri's birthday and

60-year-old Bob's birthday, both with great joy. Many of us welcomed Dmitri just after his birth, and we've been present to the changes in Bri and Alex's lives as they moved through the first year of parenthood. We celebrated Morgan's 16th birthday with a rite of passage ceremony and cheered him as he left for college last year; he credits much of his ease of transition to college to his intergenerational experiences in community. And at every full moon and seasonal ceremony, the eldest and youngest present are honored as they jointly add a stick to the ceremonial fire.

As with so much of what we do here at Dancing Rabbit, we're in an experimental transition. The thirty-somethings are pushing 40 and may soon find themselves part of Bob Dylan's "old road" ("As the present now will later be past, the order is rapidly fadin', And the first one now, will later be last…"). And that's a great thing for Dancing Rabbit!

We're already developing infrastructure with the less physically-abled in mind. We're moving out of the pioneer phase of development and becoming a village with abundant living spaces and a robust internal economy. We have the creativity to experiment with more ways to incorporate the older crowd into the vibrant social fabric here. As a maturing community culture, we're ever-learning to value the wisdom of life experience for whatever it may offer us. I'm hopeful that, as we transition, we'll naturally attract older folks who are looking for a meaningful place to spend the rest of their lives. It's certainly been a meaningful one for me!

And as for me, I've stopped trying to convince myself that age doesn't matter. It DOES matter. We ARE different throughout the various stages of life. And with that acceptance, I finally embrace the role I apparently jumped into when Patricia identified me as "elder" at Dancing Rabbit. Though I have no crone to guide me, I will move, as gracefully as I can, into true elderhood, gathering wisdom as I go.

I'll be there to "lend a hand" as the Dylan song says, to those who make the aging transition after me. I find myself more and more dedicated to working with my fellow communitarians to build a place-- and a culture-- that counters the subtle practices of age-separation. The times ARE a changin', and I believe that soon we'll be celebrating a deeper kind of intergenerational living at Dancing Rabbit.

Sharon has lived at Dancing Rabbit for the past 5 years.

The Goodenough Community: a rural/urban demonstration

Kirsten Rohde

I came into the Goodenough Community through participating in its educational and personal growth offerings. I was impressed by the multidisciplinary approach to learning in the individual, relationship, and organizational levels. The community's culture was one of non-judgment, compassion, and lots of laughter. People were committed to life-long learning and combined intellectual study with experiential learning. I was not raised with any religious focus, yet in this community, I was drawn to learn more about the spiritual aspect of life much to my surprise. I had been struggling with depression and loneliness and here I found that I could make changes in my life and in how I related to others that gave me a new understanding of what I wanted to do in life. The community was very inclusive. I felt at home and wanted to join and help this wonderful project in community living. I am with close friends and we support each other in life challenges and healing.

We define the approach of our community as a comprehensive methodology for personal and social transformation. The Goodenough Community has always intended to be both a caring, healing environment and a learning/training laboratory. We are about human development with the intent to develop our members well, then guide and support them in serving the needs of society. Founded in 1981, the community focused for many years on relationship and community building skills. While some small groups of people lived together in or near Seattle, Washington, we were non-residential until 2001. Holding retreats and workshops at various retreat centers around the U.S. Pacific Northwest, we dreamed of having our own retreat space. This dream became a reality in 2001 when we purchased property near the Hood Canal in Washington State.

The community runs a retreat center, Sahale Learning Center, for our own and others' use; has applied permaculture practices to the land and food production, and is a fledgling EcoVillage with 6 permanent residents.

Thus we now have two "campuses" – one in Seattle and one at Sahale. Community members and friends easily travel between the two locations for retreats, cultural and training events and programs, work parties, and for recreation and friendship. Our culture includes gatherings for women, men, families, couples, and a group for people over 60 with the aim to support and learn.

I appreciate the emphasis we have on learning in action, for example, taking on a leadership role with the understanding that we would learn more about how to relate with openness, how to work well with conflict and developing agreements, and the skills of developing a community that would sustain over time. Because our community places value on leader development and learning about group and organizational dynamics, we have confidence that we can continue into the future and that we are learning something of value to offer others.

The Goodenough Community Covenant

As a member of the Goodenough Community, I commit to being the best version of myself:

- By entering fully into life's experiences;
- By giving myself fully to the process of transformation through the expression of love.
- By trusting the good intentions of each one of us;
- By relating to others with respect and acceptance;
- By making and keeping agreements with great care;
- By being constant through conflict.
- By honoring leadership in others as a method to develop the leader in myself.
- By taking responsibility for my unique and significant role in the world;
- By acknowledging the inner and interconnectedness of all creation, thus being safe and at home in the universe.

The Goodenough Community www.goodenough.org

C.A.L.L.

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