Abstract from my projectdescription
in Social Anthropology
University of Oslo,
Norway Pette [SVEIN P. WESENLUND]

'Abstract of Project'

ALTERNATIVE SOCIETIES –
A Response To Western Cultural Fragmentation?

ABSTRACT:

The <u>intention</u> of this project is to carry out an empirical study to find out what kind of values alternative communities communicate about in present day Australia. The analysis will be directed towards the members experience of their possibilities and restrictions in these societies. Further, what does this mean for the actors identity management, in their search to realize some of their ideals – seen in contrast to the mainstream society. On the background that western mainstream society experience an increasingly alarming worry for the future, with reference to ecological crises, socio-psychological sufferings etc. – this project takes as it's <u>point of departure,</u> the following question of current interest: Is it possible to think about constructive alternatives which can compete with mainstream society, which seem to have a charter or monopoly on constituting culture? Alternatives which have the ability to challenge basic values with respect to organizing and maintaining: family or mode of living, social groups; production and distributing goods; rituals/religion – and if so, how can this be done? The alternative movements in Australia have such a goal. The study of alternative communities in present day Australia, could therefore be seen as socio-cultural "buffer zones," where different cultural values are meeting, melting together, revitalizes, and tries to be realized in an alternative context. This special form of incorporating different value-hierarchies, can be viewed as aspects of a model-example for the study of cultural change or transformation in Australia. In addition to this project, the <u>goal</u> is also to investigate how symbolic creativity takes place in interaction with other socio-cultural practices, including the aboriginals contact with the alternative movements.

KEYWORDS: alternative movements; alternative societies; hippies; ecology; utopia; cultural change; symbolic production

ORANGE

Anson Street School
Bogan Gate PS
Calare PS
Canowindra HS
Cargo PS
Condobolin PS
Cowra PS
Euchareena PS
Forbes North PS
Gooloogong PS
Holman Place School
Manildra PS
Mullion Creek PS
Orange East PS
Parkes East PS
Quandialla Central School
The Henry Lawson HS

Bedgerebong PS
Borenore PS
Canobolas HS
Canowindra PS
Clergate PS
Corinella PS
Cudal PS
Eugowra PS
Forbes PS
Grenfell PS
Holmwood PS
Middleton PS
Mulyan PS
Orange HS
Parkes HS
Spring Hill PS
Woodstock PS

Bletchington PS
Bowen PS
Canobolas PS
Caragabal PS
Condobolin HS
Cowra HS
Cumnock PS
Forbes HS
Glenroi Heights PS
Gunningbland PS
Koorawatha PS
Molong Central School
Nashdale PS
Orange PS
Parkes PS
Spring Terrace PS
Wyangala Dam PS

PARRAMATTA

Arthur Phillip HS
Bert Oldfield PS
Carlingford West PS
Cumberland HS
Ermington West PS
Girraween PS
James Ruse Agricultural HS
Macarthur Girls HS
Matthew Pearce PS
Northmead HS
Parramatta East PS
Parramatta PS
Pendle Hill PS
Rowland Hassall School
Telopea PS
Toongabbie East PS
Wentworthville PS
Winston Heights PS

Baulkham Hills HS
Burnside PS
Crestwood HS
Darcy Road PS
Excelsior PS
Grantham HS
Jasper Road PS
Macquarie Boys HS
Metella Road PS
Northmead PS
Parramatta HS
Parramatta West PS
Redbank School
Rydalmere East PS
The Hills School
Toongabbie PS
Westmead Hospital School
Winston Hills PS

Baulkham Hills PS
Carlingford PS
Crestwood PS
Dundas PS
Girraween HS
Hilltop Road PS
Kellyville PS
Marsden School
Model Farms HS
Oatlands PS
Parramatta North PS
Pendle Hill HS
Rosehill PS
Rydalmere PS
The Meadows PS
Toongabbie West PS
Westmead PS
Yates Avenue PS

PENRITH

Blackheath PS
Blaxland PS
Cambridge Park HS
Cranebrook HS
Emu Plains PS
Hazelbrook PS
Katoomba HS
Kingswood HS
Kingswood South PS
Lawson PS
Llandilo PS
Mount Riverview PS
Nepean HS
Penrith PS
Regentville PS
Springwood PS
Wentworth Falls PS
Winmalee HS

Blaxland East PS
Braddock PS
Cambridge Park PS
Ellison PS
Faulconbridge PS
Jamison HS
Katoomba North PS
Kingswood Park PS
Kurrambee School
Leonay PS
Luddenham PS
Mount Victoria PS
Orchard Hills PS
Penrith South PS
Samuel Terry PS
Wallacia PS
Werrington County PS
Winmalee PS

Blaxland HS
Cambridge Gardens PS
Castlereagh PS
Emu Heights PS
Glenbrook PS
Jamisontown PS
Katoomba PS
Kingswood PS
Lapstone PS
Leura PS
Megalong PS
Mulgoa PS
Penrith HS
Putland School
Springwood HS
Warrimoo PS
Werrington PS
York PS

13

Proposed District and State Office Functions

08 SEP '95 18:43

GLOBAL *Thinking* FOR LOCAL MANAGERS

BY PETER REYNDERS

INTRODUCTION.

Are you a local "yes" man or a knowledgeable world citizen? Can you produce a global context to the local decisions you recommend? More and more people will be asking you to, and the time has come when you will have to provide such a perspective. You may have to consult some literature to develop your own conceptual views on where you stand on this globe–as a local manager. Views may differ.

Vidal (1989, p. 1) for example, advises us to "think of earth as a living organism that is being attacked by billions of bacteria whose numbers double every 40 years. Either the host dies, the virus dies, or both die." We are those bacteria.

Vidal also states that "until recently, any attempt to recognise that we are all at risk has been ignored by our rulers because to acknowledge that things are wrong would hurt their short-term profits".

There are other impediments, one of them being a lack of global understanding and a lack of will at the local level to place decisions in the global context.

TREND TO ECCENTRICITY.

The slogan "think globally, act locally" seems to promote a message that it would solve global environmental problems, yet it is inadequate simply because we are running out of time. The need to "act globally now" not just "think globally" ought to be stressed. This well-known slogan is not new as in 1982

Naisbitt (ref 1 p. 56) called "thinking globally, acting globally" the "popular dictum". Past environmental planners looked to business specialists and economists for methodological analysis and decision-making tools as it was observed that plans cost money and therefore must be feasible, affordable, profitable and politically achievable. Economic writers such as Drucker, Kahn, Lee and Naisbitt provided analytical thought which was adjusted and adopted by landuse planners, for example: objective achievement models, checklist methodologies, cost benefit analysis and mathematical modelling. Now there is a reversal: environmental planners are looked to for solutions! It is evident that financial analysts are now requiring more ecocentric, generalist thinking, not because environmentalists are suddenly more persuasive, but because it is increasingly obvious that the world has strict limitations: locally, nationally and globally.

PRO-ACTIVE PLANNING.

Landuse planning is an all-inclusive process. Fabos, an American professor of landscape planning already in the 1970s stressed the need for wholistic analysis in addition to single planning issues. Fabos held then that planning is not needed if no problem exists, but we are now learning that when a problem does surface it may be too late and landuse planning tools may be inadequate to undo the damage. Fabos identified the concept that "some-

thing happening thousands of miles away affects me" (ref 2 p. 7). It now seems that pre-problem planning ought to be our major objective, even though our hands are full with existing identified problems. The Chernobyl nuclear disaster, the Rhine River pollution, the global greenhouse effect, etc. are obvious signals for the need for pre-problem planning: "pro-active planning!"

Most of us learnt geography at school and hence have some global understanding. Over recent years discussion has intensified over the greenhouse effect and there is an acute awareness that the world is approaching its limits in regard to keeping the delicate balance necessary for supporting life. This awareness has firmly implanted itself into mainstream contemporary thinking.

Current landuse patterns have grown out of decisions arising out of local thinking fed by local traditions, needs and opportunities. However, the changes on the land's natural diversity has created an imperative for global action as the environmental impacts of these changes have brought disasters of the international significance.

GLOBAL INFORMATION.

Marshall McLuhan stated in the early 1970s that everyone's effort is needed to prevent these disasters; "there are no passengers on the spaceship Earth, we are all crew" (ref 1 p. 56). It is now an established view that everyone of us must actively engage in averting the trend

towards a disastrous future. Naisbitt encourages us with the notion that "trend is not destiny" (ref 1 p. 18).

There has been a recent burgeoning of environmental and planning content in the media but to generate global action massive volumes of information are required to be compiled and distributed internationally. Reliable global facts and analyses are now needed to develop landuse principles, plans and decisions. The time is ripe to achieve this as we are undoubtedly moving from the waning industrial age into the "information society" (ref 1 p. 11) in which the necessary information for global action can be readily accumulated.

It is not possible to list all global issues here but many directly involve landuse in which local government decisions hinge on an on going bias of agricultural use being subordinate to urban and industrial use, the many social and political barriers to improved land management practices and the ingrained perception that the earth is real estate, there for private possession and exploitation.

Both global and local solutions to these issues require knowledge to halt the march toward environmental crisis. The essential question is: will our gradually accumulating global understanding based on global information and communication systems be fast enough to meet the global threats to our survival? It has been presumed that improved local decision making will somehow cumulatively reduce the global environmental damage but is this in fact so?

The education process about global environmental issues is both slow and uneven across the world and the answer may be that time is running out faster than we assume. For example, Greenpeace has publicised its efforts but will it be all too late? Poor nations have little chance of participating in the vast information and communication networks that wealthy countries create and access freely. The answer may lie with what Mowland (ref 4 p. 212) calls "the third way" which is not liberalism or socialism but attempts to achieve results through dialogue. It seems that when decision making is nationally based all the traditional barriers to accelerated change impede progress but "in the new economic era all the countries of the world scene are growing increasingly interdependent, despite the fact that in our home countries we are behaving in ways which are increasingly independent of our centralised governments" (ref 1 p. 56).

GLOBAL VILLAGE.

Local governments still decide on landuse zonings and standards but these short term local landuse decisions are now being forced to give way to long term global decisions as computer technology, communications satellites and jet planes move us into an era of "instantaneously shared global information" (ref 1 p. 58) transforming Earth into a "global economic village". Hence short term local pollution is now better understood to contribute to long term global damage. A local example is the Grafton pulp mill debate where not only the local but also the global dimensions of environmental decisions are being explored; do we need all that paper? Would recycling be better?

INTERNATIONAL.

Both multinational companies and banking corporations have access to sophisticated electronically transmitted communications that access global financial data. Their financial and investment goals often produce environmentally destructive decisions that impact globally. For example the World Bank has financed many Brazilian projects that encourage clear felling of huge tracts of the Amazonian rainforest, one of the world's major oxygen producing areas. Recently international pressure caused the World Bank and the Brazilian government to withdraw a US$500 million loan proposal for dams in the rainforest. Instead a loan of $400 million for environmental protection and energy conservation was proposed. The World Bank funded Brazilian energy needs as a whole rather than individual projects while the power authority still spends money to build dams that will flood millions of hectares of rain-forest, displace residents and encourage more agricultural clearing.

Power is also needed for aluminium smelters. Some years ago I dealt with three E.I.S.s on aluminium smelters in the Hunter Valley. Aluminium smelters spread fluoride into the environment and the environmental standards of western countries require expensive, sophisticated mega-blocks of electricity. Profits for both the aluminium maker and the power supplier are high if environmental standards are low or non-existent, which is the case in Brazil. Therefore the smelting company obviously locates in Brazil which reflects a worldwide phenomenon: local environmental controls actually encourage pollution in countries without controls. The Chernobyl disaster in the Soviet Union has taught us that pollution does not stay inside national boundaries.

Similarly, ships with cargoes of toxic waste are encountering knockbacks as they sail from port to port simply because some firm has not planned to environmental standards. The toxic waste cargoes will eventually be unloaded in a third world country that will take it for a price.

An interesting example is the Japanese treatment of their forests which cover much of the Japanese countryside. The Shintoist philosophy prohibits the chopping down of the sacred forests yet the Japanese find no problem with clear felling in other countries including Australia for paper pulp and woodchip products.

FOREST.

The global trend of removing vegetation is of great concern too. The world has lost half of its trees since 1950 yet forests are the main oxygen suppliers for the Earth; and the rate of global clearing is 20 hectares per minute! Animal and plant species are lost to the globe at the rate of one per day mainly due to habitat destruction by human economic activity. As well, dramatic climatic changes will ensue with doubling of atmospheric carbon dioxide. Other trends are equally serious; death rates from pesticides, obesity versus malnutrition, pollution statistics, salination, huge military investments, and so on

PEOPLE.

Naisbitt (ref 1 p.98) states that changes in people's thinking are happening "from the bottom up" and he identifies a global decentralisation trend which has local landuse implications. The industrial age caused metropolitan sprawl due to people needing to live near factories but the new "information society" can thrive anywhere with a telephone and a computer. This trend will change urban planning as more companies work from home in this decentralising age. Current industrial decline in maintenance and replacement activities (e.g. car numbers will become static) will have profound implications for parking, traffic, and for both urban and rural population trends.

The traditional urge of some local governments to attract manufacturing industries may have to shift to other efforts as industrial growth wanes. Indeed, the accepted and unquestioned blessing of growth will be seriously doubted if local environmental quality is threatened. Global insight may alter local subservience of agricultural land so that good soils will be kept for agriculture while forest and wilderness landcover may actually take priority over any growth.

Global insight will create increasing suspicion at the wisdom of local business management and financiers as Naisbitt (ref 1 p.83) demonstrated that American business managers were to blame for not recognising global changes, even failing to detect global changes in the trends of their own businesses, to their demise!

PLANNING.

Fabos (ref 2 p.75) states that Naisbitt's new organisational model along with networking, will assist landuse planners to make intelligent local landuse decisions in global context. On the local level, do we really see a relationship between, say, the local rural or urban landuse plan and the Amazonian rainforest issue? Allen (ref 7 p.11) states "it is not absurd to adopt the view that the ability to harvest wheat in Kansas is linked to the success with which tropical rainforests are conserved". The link is made by using the

idea of the "elasticity of the biosphere" and its capacity to recover from both human and natural workings (ref 7 p.15). Fabos, from a global viewpoint, makes the following pertinent observations about local planning, particularly rural planning (ref 2 p.283).

1. "Development should be discouraged in areas of significant resource value..."

2. "Development should be encouraged in areas best suited for it."

3. "Development should be discouraged in areas of natural and man-made hazard."

These three add up to a weighted constraint analysis but he adds.

4. "The ecological carrying capacity of the region should not be exceeded."

Observation 4 is a statement towards bioregional planning.

It is obvious that observation 4 will complicate local landuse planning and it is apparent that global insight does not make planning easier but is it responsible to throw it all into the too hard basket? Fabos' list does direct itself to the pressing question of responsibly accommodating growth on land.

REPAIR.

Myer (ref 2) wants to go even further because he wants to repair, restore and improve our damaged environment and he sets out strong arguments for such difficult tasks and how to go about them (ref 1 p.255).

Can local government be persuaded to not only plan to maintain its natural diversity, etc. but also to aim at repairing and enhancing it, particularly the vast rural areas?

Would local government seriously look at deserted mines and quarries, sheet and gully erosion, salinated valleys, unprofitable farms cleared out of bush, isolated pockets of big scrub, weed-infested deserted paddocks?

Ecological knowledge and technology demonstrate that the Earth repairs itself if given the chance and some help. Rehabilitation of many damaged areas is beyond short-term financial resources. Many ecosystems are climax vegetations

of some hundreds of years growth even when managed. Urban areas need optimum and sustainable amounts of open space and vegetation as funds become available in order to produce more shade, oxygen and improved aesthetics.

COUNCILS.

Can local government here loosen its pioneer ethics and establish general principles followed by action? Planners and managers can only be as effective as their employers allow them to be. However, if local government has an understanding of the global context of planning, it can respond more sensitively to public requests as environmental concerns grow. The difficulty at local management levels is translating global ideals into effective action. Changes to consumer behaviour is a barometer of new public attitudes to landuse decisions and the initiative will be needed from local government managers to search out policies that stimulate changes.

For example, where local fossil fuels are aggravating the greenhouse effect, cycling or walking should be actively encouraged locally by making them more attractive activities. Planners will propose cycle networks and higher footpath standards and good public transport facilities. Where forest depletion is linked to paper wasting local managers will implement paper recycling schemes. Where repair to urban areas is needed, local managers will stimulate planting of appropriate trees and shrubs on private land. Many techniques to improve local environments have been staple diet in the education of planners for many years, yet in many areas these are still not being used. We still encourage large garbage bins to make collection more efficient and cost-effective when we should be actively encouraging garbage separation at the home, we still approve huge bitumen surfaced carparks without adequate shadetrees in planterstrips, and some areas still permit residential land developers to clear all vegetation without asking for a tree survey at the design stage.

GLOBAL ACTION.

Whilst implementing these changes, all of us at the local level should work towards forging both national and international links as well as support networks encompassing environmental issues, even with those distant or seemingly indirectly affecting us locally, as we are all part of the same small planet and are therefore all responsible for its survival just as everyone is a local somewhere, everyone is also global so the interconnections between the two need to become deeper and stronger if we are to face the future trends and the urgent challenges they present.

REACTIONARIES.

However, where there is change there is always opposition and the threat of a change of emphasis on landuse will cause many to oppose it especially if it comes quickly, as is needed. There will be stiff and formidable opposition and there will be an abundance of literature which will argue vehemently to hang on to current trends. The local government manager will directly face opposing forces at the local level. Some opponents will fight long and (see ref 8) dirty, holding up urgently needed change longer than is acceptable.

Global insight will give us the background to properly identify and communicate opponents' flawed arguments and true purposes. The argument for example that "these global problems have nothing to do with here because it is different here" is already bandied about to avoid the necessary change.

MEDIA.

Recently topical issues such as ozone layer damage and the greenhouse effect are widely discussed in the media locally, nationally and internationally and this has forced global thinking upon us and on our politicians at local, state and federal levels of government and it is also creating a new dimension to decision-making practices. Despite the fact that global knowledge has had repeated media exposure, Australia still remains the highest chlorofluorocarbon user per capita in the world! Just thinking about global issues is, therefore, not enough and it is imperative that global action be initiated now at a local level because we are all running out of time.

CONSCIENCE.

A "global conscience" used to be like "a sense of history": you either had it or you didn't. It used to be the concern of middle-class intellectual bores. Now the reality of environmental disasters has given a global conscience new respectability and acceptability in mainstream thought just as "a sense of history" has recently become similarly respectable and acceptable in Australian society at large.

Our Earth is the only hospitable planet in the solar system from a human point of view. It can stay that way only if we keep it clean and ecologically balanced.

READING GLOBALLY.

Do you have time left after reading the wads of government circulars, letters, the local paper and junk mail, to read the relevance about global trends? If not, just browse from time to time through the well illustrated "Atlas of Planet Management" (1985) published by Pan Books, or another overview like that. You will begin to feel like a world citizen and your concerns will start to place your local decisions in a global perspective!

List of references. 1. NAISBITT, John. Megatrends McDonald & Co., Sydney 1985. 2. FABOS, Julius Gy. Land Use Planning: from global to local challenge. NY Chapman & Hall, 1985. 3. MYERS, Norman (ed). The Gaia Atlas of Planet Management for Today's Caretakers of Tomorrow's World. Pan Books, London, 1985. 4. MOWLANA, Hamid. Global Information and World Communication, New Frontiers in International Relations. Longman, New York, 1986. 5. TARLO, Keith. Major Victory for Rainforests: Brazilian Dam Loan Withdrawn. Wilderness News, Newsletter of the Wilderness Society, Vol 10, No. 3, 1989. 6 DASMAN, R.F. Environmental Conservation. John Wiley & Sons, NY, 1984. 7. ALLEN, R. How to Save the World: Strategy for World Conservation. Kogan Page Ltd to London, 1990. 8. JENSEN, D. A Conspiracy Called Conservation. Veritas Publishing Co. Pty. Ltd. 1984. 9. Clark, W.C., MUM R.E. Sustainable Development of the Biosphere. Press Signdicat of Uni of Cambridge 1986. 10. BROEKHUIJSE, Paul. Two Threats We All Face. Sunday Telegraph, May 28, 1989, p. 29. 11. VIDAL, G. Gods and Greens. The Weekend Australian, Sept. 9, 1989.

CONFIDENTIAL
(no authois consent yet)

P. Hamilton

Ex Col J. Arsenal?

EXTRACT

FROM ETERNITY TO HERE:
Alternative models for community planning

Elizabeth Mossop
B L Arch (Hons) UNSW

December 1992

GRADUATE SCHOOL OF THE ENVIRONMENT MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY

Being a project submitted to Macquarie University in partial fulfilment of requirements
for the Master of Urban Planning Degree

CHAPTER FOUR
AN OVERVIEW OF RURAL COMMUNITIES

DEFINING ALTERNATIVE COMMUNITIES

There is great confusion in the definition of this movement which is a reflection of its diffuse nature. Some studies that have been undertaken have used self definition by alternative lifestyle participants, others have studied only intentional communities, defined by certain demographic characteristics. Groups or individuals leading lifestyles which are clearly fundamentally different from the mainstream rural society in some cases strongly resist being labelled as alternative while others leading what are essentially conventional traditional lifestyles are very definite in their membership of the alternative lifestyle movement. A further confusion is the changes that have been taking place during this time in the lifestyles and attitudes of the traditional rural communities. It seems likely that this will increase with time: Australian society in general has become far more pluralistic since the 1960s, in part because of the impact of the counter culture and the alternative lifestyle movement. Increasing environmental awareness and changing land management practices, in particular, have caused a further blurring of the boundary between alternative and traditional.

The rural communities which have developed since the 1970s cover a wide range of ideologies and forms and to aid their analysis classification systems have been developed by Cock, Burrell and Munro-Clark. Cock (1979) distinguishes rural survival communities and rural bourgeois co-operatives. Rural survival communities have low consumption and voluntary simplicity, an emphasis on personal development and expressive activity, and tend to be isolated from mainstream society. Rural bourgeois co-operatives are more highly structured, have higher material standards, the members tend to have mainstream jobs and careers, and there is generally less sharing. The distinction between rural survival communes and rural bourgeois co-operatives made by Cock would have had far more relevance for the communes of the 1970s, for which it was developed, than it does for the groups of today, these distinctions often being very difficult to make in any meaningful way.

The classification system developed by Metcalf (1986) divides rural groups into, spiritual, political and secular. Spiritual groups are those following a religious philosophy. Political groups include those living out their political ideals to develop a utopian community which can provide a model for the rest of society. In this category he includes feminist and conservationist groups as well as the more extreme survivalist groups. The secular category includes the groups which are not spiritual or overtly political (Metcalf 1986, p.127). The difficulty with this system is its inconsistency in having secular and political as distinctive categories, rather than one as a subset of the other.

Burrell's (1984) classification distinguishes between groups whose membership is defined by their relationship to each other, such as shared religious beliefs or family relationships, which he terms relational groups, and precinctive groups whose membership is defined by the joint ownership of land. This system, however, does not make the important distinction between spiritual and secular groups.

The diagram below illustrates the relationships between the different classification systems and incorporates a diagram developed by Munro-Clark to illustrate two different classification schemes of Cock's (1986, p.123).
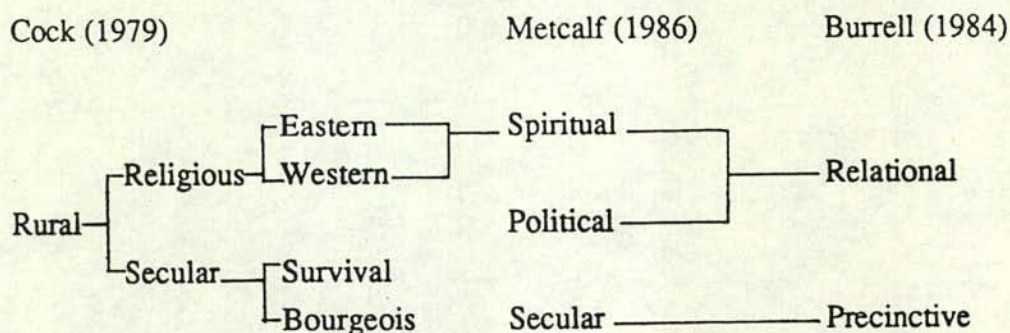
Cock (1979)   Metcalf (1986)   Burrell (1984)

```
                    ┌Eastern ──── Spiritual
          ┌Religious┤
          │         └Western──┘                  ┌──── Relational
    Rural─┤                      Political ──────┘
          │
          └Secular──┌Survival
                    └Bourgeois    Secular ──────────── Precinctive
```

Figure 1 Relationships between community classification systems

A more consistent system of classification has been developed for the purposes of this study. It makes the distinction between religious and secular, as well as between relational and precinctive groups, and is illustrated in figure 2 on the following page.
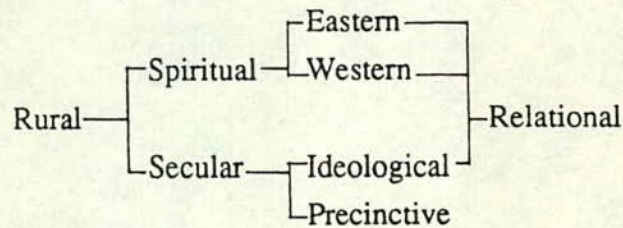
```
                        ┌Eastern─┐
              ┌Spiritual─┴Western─┤
       Rural──┤                   ├Relational
              └Secular───┌Ideological┘
                         └Precinctive
```

Figure 2 Proposed community classification system

To qualify for inclusion as a community, groups should share land and be made up of five or more people from more than one kinship group (Metcalf 1986, p.13). Relational groups in this case include all groups which are bound together by a common ideology which has been articulated in the establishment of the group.

This study will concentrate largely on the secular communities because of their greater relevance for the broader society. A study by Metcalf identified significant differences between spiritual and secular groups which also make the distinction logical. The spiritual groups generally had a higher level of communal ownership of property and very strict membership requirements enforced by a rigidly hierarchical structure, often with a strong leader. This combined with a strong work ethos tended to make these groups more communally productive (Metcalf 1986, p.136).

Using this classification, survivalist groups, which are formed to prepare for the collapse of society, would fit into the secular relational category. These groups, as described by Metcalf (1986), tend to be rigidly patriarchal, hierarchical and militaristic and have little relevance to a general discussion of secular rural communities and will therefore not be included.

A GENERAL OVERVIEW OF RURAL SECULAR COMMUNITIES

Federal government interest in rural alternative lifestyles led to a huge research effort being made into investigating these groups during the mid 1980s and it is the fruits of this, and work related to it, which has provided the basis for a new understanding and analysis of this movement. In particular, there are surveys carried out by Sommerlad, Dawson and Altman (1985), Metcalf (1986) and Munro-Clark (1986), as well as a later study by Pixley (1988). It is largely from these works, supplemented by field observation, that the general description of the communities has been made.

40

Sommerlad, Dawson and Altman (1985) carried out a field survey of twenty communities which aimed to provide a general overview of land sharing communities with an emphasis on evaluating the economic dimension of sustainability based on reliable data. This survey was extremely thorough, collecting data at the three levels of community, household and individual.

Metcalf's work involved studies of the alternative lifestyle movement in general as well as a participant/observer sociological study of over one hundred communities which took place over seven years (1984a, 1984b, 1985, 1986).

Another survey by mail of thirty-six communities in New South Wales was carried out by Munro-Clark. It aimed to give a general description of the communities and to identify further research potential (1986, p.139).

People involved in alternative rural lifestyles are found in all parts of Australia, with the greatest concentration in what has become known as the Rainbow Region, an area in northern New South Wales bounded by Lismore, Kyogle, Nimbin, Byron Bay and Mullumbimby. Other areas with significant concentrations of these rural resettlers are found on the south coast of New South Wales and around Cairns in far north Queensland. Estimates of how many people in Australia are living alternative lifestyles are not particularly useful, varying from fifteen thousand to three hundred thousand (Metcalf 1984, p.9).

The size of land holdings varies a lot but the density of settlement is often higher than is common in rural areas (Sommerlad, Dawson & Altman 1985, p.86). The legal structures that are used for land purchase are also varied, including registered co-operatives, partnerships, trusts, private companies, tenants-in common and various informal arrangements (Munro-Clark 1986, pp.212-215).

There has also been a gradual ageing of the movement overall from the students involved in the movement in the 1960s and 1970s. The characteristic age distribution of rural resettlers is unusual in that there is an almost complete absence of young people in the sixteen to twenty-five age bracket. This has been attributed to their financial inability to purchase land or land shares as well as a general lack of interest in the alternative rural lifestyle. Rural communities have generally failed to attract young people from outside and have demonstrated an inability to retain their own post-adolescents.

The rural resettlers have always been predominantly middle class, with much higher levels of tertiary and post-graduate education than the general population, and the majority of them come from an urban Australian background.

The lack of employment opportunities in rural areas and the preference of many people for not working combine so that few people work full-time and part-time work is also lower than in the general population. These communities are highly dependent on welfare: in the Sommerlad study forty-six per cent of their income was made up of unemployment benefits, pensions and family allowances (Sommerlad, Dawson & Altman 1985, pp.104-115).

According to Sommerlad's analysis, members of these communities have a cash income level of about half the Australian average and eighty-two percent of their survey sample lived below the poverty line (Sommerlad, Dawson & Altman 1985, pp.117-118). All of this analysis is based on formal economic measures only and ignores the value of subsistence production carried out by these communities as well as other informal economic activity. While the people who live in these communities undoubtedly live generally with very low incomes and many experience genuine rural poverty, the informal economic activity in the provision of housing, food and services does contribute to their economic welfare.

While the average length of time that communities exist varies considerably, it is most common that they have a high turnover of members. In the Sommerlad study (1985) the majority of residents stayed for less than two years, and seventy-eight per cent had been there for five years or less (p. 89).

The short life of many communities and their high turnover of residents is sometimes attributed to the conflict between the socialisation that people receive in mainstream society, and the demands of a more co-operative lifestyle. Abrams and McCulloch (1976) maintain that commune membership arises from a 'petit-bourgeois identity crisis' which is the problem of being a possessive individual in a powerless position, and the middle class values of these individuals prevent them from taking advantage of the kind of solidaristic strategies available to the working class (p.94). Thus the nature of the society produces individuals who desire communal life but whose social characteristics preclude their success.

Another factor identified by Pixley (1988) is that without traditional wage/labour relations operating within these communities, they have no way of working out social

obligations between the members. They tend to follow the patterns of mainstream society whereby those possessing more labour power or capital emerge as leaders, and because of the conflict with the communal ideology, the group frequently break up as a result (p.197).

Contrary to popular myth, living arrangements in these communities do not differ markedly from mainstream society, with nuclear families and one person households most common. There is however a higher proportion of single parents than in the general population, the vast majority of whom are women as is the pattern in our society (Sommerlad, Dawson & Altman 1985, pp.89-91).

There appear to be roughly equal numbers of men and women in these communities. Although the alternative lifestyle movement was theoretically in favour of women's liberation and changing traditional gender roles, in practice this has never been the case. The counter culture was based on a 'hip' sexual inequality which forced women carry out traditional domestic labour, often in very primitive conditions. Women tended to be defined by their biological role in reproduction as has been the tradition in communitarianism historically with gender roles defined by a patricentric conception of 'nature' (Biehl 1991, p.134). Other hippy philosophies such as the belief in children's authority and the prevailing sexual ethics led to an exaggerated lack of paternal responsibility and the social stigma attached to 'heavy' behaviour prevented women from asserting themselves in these situations (Pixley 1988, p.194). These attitudes have tended to be reinforced by ecofeminist concepts which often define women in psycho-biological terms, as being innately nurturing and connected to nature and whose sphere of operation must inevitably be the home (Biehl 1991, p.13, p.131).

In the provision of housing, there are significant differences between these communities and mainstream society, many of which relate to the high proportion of owner builders. The experience of building one's own home is generally viewed in a very positive way and significant emphasis is placed on control over the process (Munro-Clark 1986, p.162). Housing costs are significantly lower than for conventional housing, estimated at around seven thousand dollars, and a very high proportion of residents spend years living in temporary accommodation during the building period.

Housing design however remains fairly conventional, with largely autonomous dwellings with few shared facilities. The most commonly shared facilities are laundries and sometimes bathrooms and in a few instances cooking and eating facilities (Munro-Clark 1986, p.171). They do tend to incorporate design features to enhance energy

43

efficiency such as good orientation for passive solar design, heavy insulation, verandahs, the use of skylights and associated planting. Recycled building materials are commonly used as are timber and mud brick because of cost availability and ease of construction for unskilled builders (Sommerlad, Dawson & Altman 1985, pp.94-98).

The design of many house and garden systems incorporates integrated waste disposal systems such as; compost toilets, garden composting, or compost fed to animals, the use of grey water for irrigation and recycling of waste materials such as glass, paper and metals (Sommerlad, Dawson & Altman 1985, p.171).

Siting of housing is generally regarded as an important issue, and visual privacy is often given priority with houses rarely clustered close together. Few communities have established communal facilities (Munro-Clark 1986, p.161).

The vast majority of communities have an agenda of environmentally sensitive land management practices. In many cases the larger part of the land is left uncleared. Programmes for bushland conservation, rainforest regeneration, rehabilitation of degraded land, tree planting, sound forest management and the creation of flora and fauna sanctuaries are all common (Sommerlad, Dawson & Altman 1985, p.170, Munro-Clark 1986, p.144).

There is very little evidence of any horticulture or agriculture being carried out in any communities apart from the provision by the majority of some of their own food from subsistence production of vegetable, fruit and nuts, with about half also carrying some livestock. Most groups are aiming for some level of self sufficiency in food production (Munro-Clark 1986, p.161).

In terms of energy, communities use a wide range of sources including solar, wood, bottled gas and mains electricity. Connection to mains electricity is less common than in rural areas generally. Like the rest of the Australian population, however, communities are highly dependent on private vehicle transport, in part because many are isolated and there is no public transport available. There is little evidence of car pooling or shared vehicle ownership (Sommerlad, Dawson & Altman 1985, pp.172-174).

One of the earliest established and best known communities is the Tuntable Falls Co-ordination Co-operative near Nimbin. It was established on seven hundred hectares of land in the Tuntable Valley in 1973, after the Aquarius Festival. Money to purchase the

land was raised from the sale of shares to the public at two hundred dollars each, in combination with a low interest loan.

There are now around three hundred residents living scattered around the property in a series of hamlet developments comprising both communes and co-operatives and individual dwellings. These usually include between five and fifteen members in either autonomous houses or a combination of shared facilities which organise their own water supply and have some gardens and orchards. In practice, the dwellings belong to those who build them, and can be sold through the co-operative, although by law everything is co-op property. Hamlets break up and re-form and this system relies on there being a very large area with many suitable development sites.

The structure of the co-operative is very loose, with only limited issues being dealt with at the whole community level. Meetings are held once a month to deal with issues of land use, siting of buildings, rates and levies, and membership. The decision-making about all other issues is carried out at the level of the hamlet. The lack of structure means that there is little capacity for any type of collective action and this is the trade-off for the fact that there is minimal coercion of individuals to group interests. In practice there is a de facto structure of leadership provided by some of the community members (Sommerlad, Dawson & Altman 1985, pp.127-130).

Mebbin Springs was a very ambitious project at the more entrepreneurial end of the scale, put together in the 1980s for the development of a rural community to house up to one thousand people. The site was three thousand acres in the Tweed Valley to be developed using strata title. Housing lots of different densities were to be sold to prospective members who would also be able to lease agricultural or business lots from the common land. This common land comprised the bulk of the site and was to remain common property. The price for the individual housing lots included the cost of developing community facilities, the common land and a school. Income producing activities were to be promoted and venture capital would be provided to members' businesses from lease revenue. The project collapsed before implementation.

The rural sub-group of the alternative movement was originally known as the back-to-the-land movement and was very much an extension of the hippy counter culture. In the intervening years, it has developed a different character and it is so diverse today that it is difficult to see it as a coherent movement at all. Sommerlad (1985) describes this as a change to lifestyle communitarianism which has a much greater emphasis on accommodation with society in general (p.36). There are groups with particular

spiritual or political ideologies but the secular majority of these rural settlers share some similar values. These could broadly be described as anti-consumerist, which is the continuation of the ideology of the counter culture, and the other strand which has become increasingly important is one of environmentalism.

TRENDS IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Sommerlad (1985, p.37) makes the point that the environmentalist movement has provided a new utopian vision for society. Table 1 (on the following page) outlines Cotgrove's Alternative Environment Paradigm which illustrated the contrast between the alternative world view largely held by the rural resettlers and the traditional world view.

The alternative movement appears to have shifted its emphasis from an original concern with social and political issues which developed into a focus on self-evolution with the rejection of the broader society (Smith and Crossley 1975, p.2), to a much greater concern for environmental issues and for the implementation at the local level of this environmental vision in the development of environmentally and socially sustainable lifestyles. This is perforce a very broad generalisation, and in what is effectively the disintegration of the hippy movement as such, there are many different groups and diverse interests.

Pixley (1988) maintains that the broader social impact of the counter culture was over before 1980 (p.97) and with the loss of its agenda for radical social change, this part of the counter culture has become increasingly conservative, returning in many cases to traditional rural values.

This can be seen in the fact that the majority live in traditional nuclear families or single family households (Sommerlad 1985, p.92), and tend to maintain traditional gender-specific sex roles which are more difficult to escape in rural areas than in anonymous urban living (Pixley 1988, p.96). There has also been a shift from more communal living patterns to looser co-operatives and more private ownership. This is sometimes because of the provision of more facilities over time, but more commonly it represents an increased understanding of the need to provide for privacy, separateness and individual differences (Munro-Clark 1986, p.172).

46

Table 1 Counter paradigms (Cotgrove 1982, in Sommerlad 1985, p.38)

	Dominant Paradigm	Alternative Environment Paradigm
Core values	Material (economic growth)	Non-material (self-actualisation)
	Natural environment valued as a resource	Natural environment intrinsically valued
	Domination over nature	Harmony with nature
Economy	Market forces	Public interest
	Risk and reward	Safety
	Rewards for achievement	Incomes related to need
	Differentials	Egalitarian
	Individual self-help	Collective/social provision
Polity	Authoritative structures	Participative structures
	Hierarchical	Non-hierarchical
	Law and order	Liberation
Society	Centralised	Decentralised
	Large-scale	Small-scale
	Associational	Communal
	Ordered	Flexible
Nature	Ample reserves	Earth's resources limited
	Nature hostile/neutral	Nature benign
	Environment controllable	Nature delicately balanced
Knowledge	Confidence in science	Limits to science
	Rationality of means	Rationality of ends
	Separation of fact/value, thought/feeling	Integration of fact/value, thought feeling

Pixley concludes that there is nothing in the intrinsic nature of communes that changes gender relations and suggests it may be possible that the position of women and children is worse than in the rest of society. As well as gender inequality within the communities the second generation of rural resettlers will also be disadvantaged by not having the same educational qualifications and the same ability to move back into life in mainstream society that their parents have (1988, p.205).

The movement as a whole has come to a greater accommodation with capitalism as can be seen in the emergence of 'hippy entrepreneurs' in different areas of retail and consumer services and particularly in land development. This often takes the form of the provision of rural land packages with roads, dams and clearings for multiple occupancy. Basic services such as power, drinking water and waste disposal are often not provided and there are very few safeguards against the exploitation of the naive idealists who are often the potential purchasers. The provision of this type of infrastructure, where it is desired, is likely to prove even more difficult for these groups to provide through communal means, than is usually the experience of communes. There is plenty of evidence to suggest that even well established communes and co-operatives find this type of communal enterprise a difficult process.

Metcalf (1987) has chronicled the way in which the movement has shifted from a position of anti-rationality and naive anarchy, with charismatic leadership and a common myth of rulelessness to a position which is rational and uses a bureaucratic organisational model and structured procedures. Changes in the organisational structure of co-operatives such as Tuntable Falls and Crystal Waters illustrate the increasing formality and bureaucratisation of these groups (p.49-50).

Metcalf suggests that the movement has lost any agenda for radical social change but is simply modifying the broader society so that it includes greater diversity (1987, p.50). An illustration of this is that while the traditional farming community still has reservations about this movement because of the loss of productive farming country and the greater competition for rural subsidies, it is willing to grant that the movement may be credible (Pixley 1988, p.188).

Local councils generally remain hostile because they assume that the multiple occupancy of rural landholdings will make greater demands on services while providing them with less rates. This is offset in some areas by the movement becoming such an integral part of the rural community that people from the alternative lifestyle movement

or with this perspective have been elected to councils. This has happened in Byron and Lismore Shires in northern New South Wales and Caloundra Shire in Queensland. Another factor which has been very important in transforming this movement into a respectable part of mainstream society was its inclusion in a variety of state strategies for dealing with unemployment during the 1980s. The Federal Government saw the potential of communes to reduce unemployment, stem the demand for jobs, and reduce the burden of unemployment benefits, and the State Government saw the opportunity to reduce homelessness and violence (Pixley 1988, pp.166-172).

These proposals were severely criticised as a form of economic apartheid, as 'work for the dole' schemes and as a substitute for solving unemployment problems. The advice resulting from the research effort which has been referred to earlier was that it was not a viable economic alternative and the idea was abandoned by the Federal Government. This process had however given the movement a legitimate role as an interest group within the political process and has been instrumental in the formation of groups such as the Australian Association for Sustainable Communities.

The alternative lifestyle movement in Australia developed from a series of local and international political and social events. As the movement progressed it moved towards a total rejection of mainstream society and sought to create an alternative culture. This, in combination with the shift for many to a rural base, caused the movement to fragment and lose much of its collective force. It became a diffuse series of individual experiments that were concerned more with self exploration than with any radical ideology or concept of broader social change.

Many of the experiments were short lived and individuals, disillusioned with the experience, left the movement or shifted into different modes of alternative activity. Those remaining in the movement have increasingly moved towards more conservative lifestyles and the distinction between alternative and traditional lifestyles in many areas is becoming increasingly difficult to draw. The rise of the environmental movement and the increasing involvement of people living in alternative rural communities in environmentalism has led to a fundamental shift in the nature of the movement.

THE JOY OF COMMUNITY

Are organizations beset by "demons" and in need of "exorcism"?
M. Scott Peck says they are – and that community is their salvation

an Interview with M. Scott Peck, by Alan AtKisson

In modern times, the idea of "community" has increasingly been expanded to include not just the place where one lives, but the web of relationships into which one is embedded. Work, school, voluntary associations, computer networks – all are communities, even though the members live quite far apart.

But according to psychiatrist and author M. Scott Peck, for any group to achieve community in the truest sense, it must undertake a journey that involves four stages: "pseudocommunity," where niceness reigns; "chaos," when the emotional skeletons crawl out of the closet; "emptiness," a time of quiet and transition; and finally, true community, marked both by deep honesty and deep caring.

Peck's thinking on this subject is detailed in his 1987 book, The Different Drum: Community Making and Peace (*Simon and Schuster*). He is the author of four other books, including the phenomenally popular The Road Less Traveled. *His newest work, due for publication by Bantam in 1992 or 1993, will focus on organizational behavior.*

Peck – "Scotty" to all who know him – is also the co-founder of the Foundation for Community Encouragement, created to support community-building work, and he and other Foundation staff have since conducted over 275 community building workshops. Here he reflects on that experience and the challenges – and joys – of working together to be in community. For more information on the Foundation, see the box on page 28.

Alan: *In the first sentence of* The Different Drum *you say, "In and through community lies the salvation of the world." You've done five years of* community-building work since writing those words. Do they still hold true for you?

Scotty: Very much so. I had very little experience with community building when I finished the book in 1986. But I now have a great deal of experience, having worked with organizations and groups throughout North America and in the United Kingdom through the Foundation for Community Encouragement. I'm more convinced than ever of the truth of those opening sentences.

My second book, *People of the Lie*, is on the subject of evil. In the second chapter, on *group* evil, I quoted the Berrigans' saying that perhaps the greatest single problem we have is to figure out how to metaphorically "exorcise" our institutions. Recently, I realized that the Foundation is doing exactly that – by building community within those institutions. Of course, to do an exorcism you have to have a willing patient, and a willing organization doesn't come down the pike every day.

Alan: *What are the metaphorical demons that need to be exorcised? And what does "community" mean in this context?*

Scotty: The names of the demons range all over the map, from misuse of political power to apathy, from corporate lies to organizational myths that are unrealistic, and so forth.

Community can be one of those words – like God, or love, or death, or consciousness – that's too large to submit to any single, brief definition. At the Foundation we consider community to be a group of people that have made a commitment to learn how to communicate with each other at an ever more deep and authentic level. One of the characteristics of true community is that the group secrets, whatever they are, become known – they come out to where they can be dealt with.

By other definitions, a community is a group

> *The demons can range all over the map, from misuse of political power to apathy, and from corporate lies to organizational myths that are unrealistic.*

that deals with its own issues – its own *shadow* – and the shadow can contain any kind of issue. We have tried unsuccessfully at the Foundation to come up with a sort of slogan, but one of the phrases that kept coming up was from the gospels: "And the hidden shall become known."

The Foundation just finished a conference on business and community at the University of Chicago School of Business with some seventy-five hard headed businesspeople. The theme was "tension", and the subtheme was that, within an organization, community represents a forum where the tension can be surfaced out in the open and made known. You can't develop a "tensionless" organization. To the contrary, one of the conclusions at the conference was that you wouldn't *want* to develop a tensionless organization.

Creating community in the context of an organization permits those tensions to be surfaced and dealt with as best they can, rather than being latent or under the table.

Alan: *Many groups and organizations in recent years have been experimenting with community building and consensus process. For some it works beautifully – but for others, seeking consensus seems to become a morass that sucks energy out of their efforts. What's the difference between groups for whom consensus works, and those who never quite seem to get there?*

Scotty: One of the things we have to get to is a *definition* of consensus.

The Foundation once did a workshop for a large group medical practice that clearly had a problem with retaining its professional staff. When they called us, they said they had all agreed that they needed a community-building workshop, and that they would take two days off to do it. Now, it's not enough to go into an organization just to build community, because if you do that and leave, the whole thing collapses two days later. So when we work with organizations, our initial intervention is at least three days. We build community in the first two, then spend a third day having the group make written, consensual decisions about what they are going to do to *maintain* themselves as a community.

Well, these doctors said "My god! Do you know how difficult it is for seventeen physicians to take off from their practice for two days, and you're saying we have to do it for three?" I said, "Yup!" They finally agreed.

Physicians have big egos, so they don't ordinarily work very well together. But to give you

M. Scott Peck

an idea of how well a group *can* work in community, here's the definition of consensus they developed on the third day of that workshop: "Consensus is a group decision – which some members may not feel is the best decision but which they can all live with, support, and commit themselves to not undermine – arrived at without voting, through a process whereby the issues are fully aired, all members feel that they have been adequately heard, in which everyone has equal power and responsibility, and different degrees of influence by virtue of individual stubbornness or charisma are avoided, so that all are satisfied with the process. The process requires the members to be emotionally present and engaged; frank in a loving, mutually respectful manner; sensitive to each other; to be selfless, dispassionate, and capable of emptying themselves; and possessing a paradoxical awareness of both people and time, including knowing when the solution is satisfactory, and that it is time to stop and not re-open the discussion until such time that the group determines a need for revision." [© *1988, Valley Diagnostic, Medical, and Surgical Clinic, Inc. of Harlingen, Texas and the*

Mission Statement: The Foundation For Community Encouragement

Founded by M. Scott Peck and ten other people in 1984, the Foundation is a tax-exempt, non-profit educational foundation providing workshops, seminars, consultations and presentations with a focus on building and sustaining community. The text below is their mission statement. For more information, contact them at 7616 Gleason Road, Knoxville, TN 37919-6816, Tel. 615/690-4334.

The Foundation for
Community Encouragement (FCE)
empowers people, in a fragmented world,
to discover new ways of being together.
Living, learning, and
teaching the principles of community,
we serve as a catalyst for
individuals, groups, and orgnizations to:

- communicate with authenticity,
- deal with difficult issues,
- bridge differences with integrity,
- relate with love and respect.

FCE's approach encourages tolerance
of ambiguity, the experience of discovery,
and the tension
between holding on
and letting go.

As we empower others,
so are we empowered
by a Spirit
within and beyond
ourselves.

Foundation for Community Encouragement, Knoxville, Tennessee, reprinted with permission.]

Alan: *That's certainly comprehensive!*

Scotty: It's starting to be used by organizations around North America precisely because it is so thorough. A number of answers to your question come out of that definition. There are a lot of organizations that operate by what they *think* is consensus, but it really is not consensus at all. I've run into three top executives, for example, who have told me that they *"rule* by consensus"!

But to meet the definition's requirements, you essentially *have* to have what we call true community. And if you do not, you can come up with a kind of decision-making process that you *call* consensus, but isn't really.

Many institutions that try to get to consensus fail because they are not yet true communities. They aren't *ready* yet to get to consensus, because they need to work on *themselves* before they start to make decisions.

Alan: *Assuming a group does make it to true community and consensus, how does it stay there? What, for example, did those doctors decide to do to maintain themselves as a community?*

Scotty: Well, the doctors are a wonderful example because they did a number of things, including having a follow-up workshop and doing some work with a consultant. They radically revised their committee system to make all major decisions by consensus, and in community. They used their definition of consensus in their recruitment of new members. Over the year after our initial intervention, they grew from seventeen to twenty-five physicians.

But a year and a half later, having become fat and successful again, the crisis had passed and they gave up working on it. I now hear they are out of community. It takes a significant amount of effort to build community, but it takes even more effort – *ongoing* effort – to maintain it. The biggest problem with community maintenance, as with community start-up, is the problem of organizations simply being willing to pay the price – which is, primarily, a price of *time*.

It's also a price of ongoing vulnerability. And it is a price of being willing to continually re-examine your norms. Sometimes the price is having to *repeat* the work of community-building workshops, or having consultants work with you. And the biggest opposition to paying the price is from people who, just as in individual therapy, want what the therapist would call "the magical solution." There are many organizations that would love to have community if we could give it to them as some kind of free magic. It ain't magic, and it ain't free. It's work, like anything else.

Alan: *But work with a potentially huge pay-off. A clearly focused intention seems to be key here.*

Scotty: Together with vigilance. And I don't want to be discouraging about the price – I think the price is *extraordinarily* cost effective.

For instance, the Foundation did a couple of workshops for two labor/management negotiating teams, for a Fortune 100 company. They had a two-month obligatory negotiating period, and

they vowed to try to keep themselves in community for those two months, which they succeeded in doing.

Instead of "coming to the table," they got *rid* of the table. Management and labor had previously eaten separately; they ate together. Management vowed to come in with its bottom line, financially, right at the very beginning. They each vowed *not* to try to caucus for the two months, and they succeeded.

They changed the rules, and they collaborated on a contract. Both sides were saying things like, "Hey, you guys are overlooking this thing that is to your advantage." This was the highest paid consulting contract we've had for the Foundation. We probably charged them $16,000, but they probably saved $16,000,000 for a strike that didn't happen.

Alan: *What sustains a community in the long term?*

Scotty: I'm not sure how sustainable community is unless it has a pretty clearly defined task. Healthy organizations have a mission statement, often along with a philosophy and a vision statement, which they continually update and revise. I suspect that there are a lot of intentional communities, for example, that either don't have a mission statement or haven't looked at it for years and years.

Alan: *So communities of all kinds need to say, "This is what we are going to do together."*

Scotty: And "This is our *purpose* for being together." And that statement has to be reexamined, ritualistically, every couple of years. Doing this requires that the organization's cultural values be explicit. At each of our Foundation's board meetings, not only do we have a list of our ground rules – our whole *culture* is spelled out in a big flip chart somewhere where everybody can look at it.

These values include openness, being willing to be challenged, to re-look at norms, being willing to change. There has to be love and respect, of course – but there also has to be valid data. There has to be a kind of tension between caring and a terrible dedication to reality.

Of course, there are some organizations or communities that should probably *not* be maintained or sustained. That gets into the issue of, "When has an organization outlived its usefulness?" That, again, gets into re-visiting the mission statement. "Do we still have a mission? Maybe we don't anymore."

A critical part of the art of sustaining community is integration of *task* and *process*. Task is working on your mission, and process is working on yourselves as a community. This art requires an enormous amount of practice.

A group of people never become a community and stay a community. They continually fall out of community, back into chaos or pseudo-community. What character-izes a healthy, ongoing, sustained community is the rapidity with which it is able to say, "Hey, we've lost it. We need to go back and work on ourselves."

Alan: *"We need to leave off working on our task for awhile and do some work on our process."*

Scotty: Right. Switching from one to another is difficult. The timing is an art, and requires discipline.

We work by doing the community process first, and then going on to the task. One of the things that characterizes our work is that it's very gentle. But there's one exercise we do that is *not* gentle. For groups that are interested in issues of sustainability, and task versus process, we will have them work on themselves as a community for fifteen minutes. Somebody will be in the midst of talking about themselves, saying something terribly deep, and they'll be crying and heartbroken. But at 15 minutes, the leader will snap his or her fingers and say, "Now start working on your task, your mission statement."

It's amazing how good people get at this after awhile. They can be in the midst of rephrasing a policy document, and the leader can make a snap of the fingers again and say "Now go back to your process," and they can go right back to that person who was crying fifteen minutes ago, who starts crying again.

Now in reality, you want to be much more artistic than that, rather than switching by rote every fifteen minutes. But we use this rather brutal exercise just to demonstrate to groups how they *can* overcome their inertia. It shows that it is *possible* for a group of human beings to switch like that on a moment's notice.

Alan: *Suppose you want to create community*

There has to be love and respect in community – but there also has to be valid data. There has to be a kind of tension between caring and a terrible dedication to reality.

in your office, or right on your block, but you don't have a workshop to go to. What do you do?

Scotty: One of the reasons that we set up the Foundation was precisely to help those groups that are not able to do it on their own. Somewhere between twenty-five and fifty percent of the groups that read *The Different Drum* and try to develop community on their own are able to do it. But the other fifty to seventy-five percent can't. They just don't have the process skills, or the right combination of people. They've got to get expertise.

But sometimes the expertise they need may in fact be task, rather than process, expertise. For instance, when we started the Foundation we were a bunch of "do-gooders" who really didn't have the foggiest idea about *how* to do good. If you had asked me six years ago what strategic planning was, I would have said it was something that was only done by the Air Force, like strategic bombing. As a Board, we had to learn strategic planning and how to run a business. In some ways, that's actually *harder* than starting with a structured, task-oriented organization and trying to develop community.

> *If you had asked me six years ago what strategic planning was, I'd have said it was something that was only done by the Air Force.*

Alan: *That certainly seems to have been true for many intentional communities over the years. Often it seems to have been the business, management, and structure issues that have proven to be the Achilles' heel.*

Scotty: This is something I'm quite passionate about. Structure and community are *not* incompatible. To the contrary, they mutually thrive on one another. Actually, the greater the structure in an organization, and the clearer that structure is, the easier it is for us to introduce community into the organization. If a task-oriented business group that is not well-structured builds itself into community, it will discover, I think, that their very next task is to define roles. Invariably, those roles are going to be in some sort of hierarchy.

The purpose of community is not to get rid of hierarchy. Again, part of the *art* of all this is for an organization to learn how to function in a hierarchical and highly structured task-oriented mode, *and* learn how to function in a community

mode. It also needs to learn the technology of switching back and forth. The more clearly defined the roles are, the more structured the organization actually is, the easier this switching back and forth becomes. The more blurred the structure, the harder it becomes.

Alan: *In* The Different Drum *you write, "An organization is able to nurture a measure of community within itself only to the extent that it is willing to risk or tolerate a certain lack of structure." Is what you're saying now a modification of that earlier view?*

Scotty: An elaboration of it. The only obstacle to building and maintaining community within an organization is not structural. It's *political.* If you get somebody at the top who is not willing to relinquish the structure, even temporarily, or who has to dominate everything, there's no way you can have community in that organization. So the people in the organization, particularly at the top, have to be willing to temporarily lay aside their role and their rank.

Alan: *You've described personal growth as a "journey out of culture". Is growth toward real community similar? Is community "a-cultural"?*

Scotty: No, it's not a-cultural. I think there is a distinct culture of community. Remember that at all of our board meetings we have, among other things, a list of about thirty values in our organizational culture. The principles of community are some of the parameters of what might be considered a new *global* culture. Those are values like respect, and using valid data. Only a very small minority of people – under 5% – can't buy into those values.

Alan: *What would "global community" look like? Is it even possible?*

Scotty: Sure it is. We have built community in every walk of life and pretty much in every culture. We did a workshop last year for Jews, Christians, and Muslims to build community. It was so successful the Muslims have donated money to help us put it on again.

But the word global gets mushy unless it is related to a real problem. For instance, I can practically guarantee you that if you took five Anglos, fifteen Afrikaners, and thirty-five Blacks from South Africa and put them together in the same room and got them to work towards committing themselves to learning this "technology of community," that at the end of three or four days you'd have them coming out respecting each other, loving each other, and able to work profoundly effectively on whatever it is that they

need to work on. Community doesn't look any different wherever it is. The problem is to get the people into the room.

Alan: *And to keep them there through the four stages of pseudocommunity, chaos, emptiness – and finally community.*

Scotty: Right. The only requirement we have is that people stay there and not walk out. Incidentally, another thing we've learned consistently, which I didn't know at the time I wrote *The Different Drum*, is that it's much easier to build community among unsophisticated people than among the sophisticated. A group of diplomats or psychiatrists are really tough, because you have to penetrate their sophistication to get to their innocence.

But I believe creating community is always possible, and when people see that you can attain community consistently – that there are rules and principles you can follow to get there – that fosters real hope.

Alan: *So "the salvation of the world," as you re-fer to it in your writing, is attainable.*

Scotty: Very much so. Let me read you part of the Foundation's Philosophy Statement, which captures some of the essence of this vision: "There is a yearning in the heart for peace. Because of the wounds, the rejections, we have received in past relationships, we are frightened by the risks. In our fear we discount the dream of authentic community as merely visionary. But there are rules by which people can come back together, by which the old wounds are healed. It is the mission of the Foundation for Community Encouragement to teach these rules, to make hope real again, to make the vision actually manifest in a world which has almost forgotten the glory of what it means to be human."

Being in community in an organization isn't a panacea. Reality still exists. And as is characteristic of a healthy individual life, there's actually more pain *in* community than outside of it. But there's also more *joy*. To me, what characterizes a true community is not that it's less painful, but that it's more *alive*. ▲

HUDDLING TOGETHER

For tens of millions of years, we primates have lived in tribes. I'm sure we originally came together for mutual interdependence in child rearing, security, and food gathering. The *fun* we experienced was a powerful side effect.

When we changed from hunter/gatherers to an agricultural society, we left the traveling band and began dividing up individual plots of land, with groups of people huddling at a distance by householding in villages. As villages grew into cities, huddling happened in neighborhoods. As we moved further apart, the experience of community was narrowed to the extended family, then to the nuclear family, and finally to the solitary dweller. This progression is otherwise known as the alienation of our society.

In my years of being a physician intimate with thousands of folks, I have known very few people who felt part of a circle of deeply committed friends. In fact, I find the vast majority of people feeling lucky to have a few close acquaintances. Even in marriages I often don't hear the serenade of friendship.

Yet ultimately, everything goes better with a circle of friends. Without this circle of safety it is extremely difficult to erase the fear that coats our health, relationships, economics, etc. This fear has been a major stumbling block in reestablishing community and must be cast aside.

Community can be experienced in many forms, and I suggest exploring lots of them. Live your life embraced by concentric circles. I have lived communally for nineteen years, and it has been one of the most significant factors in the progression of all of my dreams, both personal and public. Nothing can let you dream more freely and outrageously than living with mutually supportive chums.

My wife and I have also been together for nineteen years, and I am sure that community is the major reason why we still have a rich vibrant love for each other. And child rearing – oh, this may be the best, because our children have had such magical input from each community member.

My personal growth has also been enhanced by community. I graduated from medical school head smart, but while living in community I have learned to build buildings, farm, keep a goat herd, produce movies, do rope working, unicycle, and so much more – all as by-products of intimacy. These things are dwarfed, however, by the happiness I feel in being alive in the bosom of so many friends. *There* is a security that transcends economics.

– *Patch Adams*

Patch Adams, M.D., is the founder of the Gesundheit Institute, a free hospital based on the principle of maintaining health through community, friendship, and plain old fun. Contact him for information at 2630 Robert Walker Place, Arlington, VA 22207.

BUILDING HEAVEN IN THE CITY OF ANGELS

Coming Soon: The Los Angeles Eco-Village will set an urban example that could be imitated everywhere Hollywood reaches

by Lois Arkin

Lois Arkin has been organizing within Los Angeles and Southern California for over ten years. Her vision of humane, cooperative living is manifesting as a truly urban eco-village project that is making rapid strides toward realization. Lois also edits a newsletter, L.A. Co-op Networker, that goes out to over 3500 cooperatively minded people throughout the world. Send $10 to the Cooperative Resources and Services Project, 3551 White House Place, Los Angeles, CA 90004 to subscribe. Write Lois (same address) for an eco-village information packet including village performance objectives (include a self-addressed, stamped envelope).

Los Angeles – known for its congestion, smog, concrete, freeways, runaway high-rise development, crime, alienation, homelessness, pop culture, high cost of land and housing and many other more or less awful qualities – is a city in pain, a microcosm of much of the developed world. Urban ecologist Paul Glover wrote in *Los Angeles: A History of the Future*, "L.A. is an army camped far from its sources of supply, using distant resources faster than nature renews them... Our region today is so dependent, so uninhabitable, yet so inhabited, that it must transform or die. Sooner or later it must generate its own food, fuel, water, wood, and ores. It must use these at the rate that nature provides them. It can."

Los Angeles is also known for its cultural diversity, entrepreneurial spirit, arts, media and entertainment industry, academic institutions, innovation in lifestyles and social experimentation, search for consciousness, social change and community organizations, political and economic diversity, mild climate, ecological diversity, and many other more or less wonderful qualities, depending on your perspective.

Many ecologically-minded people exploit our city no less than those whose purposes they view as the most crass and materialistic. They use L.A. to make friends, expand networks, get an education, make lots of money, then leave for smaller, more conscious, more sustainable communities when they have enough money to make the move.

I feel – as do my colleagues involved with Los Angeles Eco-Village – that we must work for transformation wherever we are and with whatever we have. We want to help build a culture, right here in Los Angeles, in which decisions are based on environmental harmony, and rewards come from a healthy and spontaneous spirit – and practice – of cooperation. We are people with hope and a desire to heal the wounds in ourselves, one another, and the great Gaia. Our city – all cities – beg for this healing.
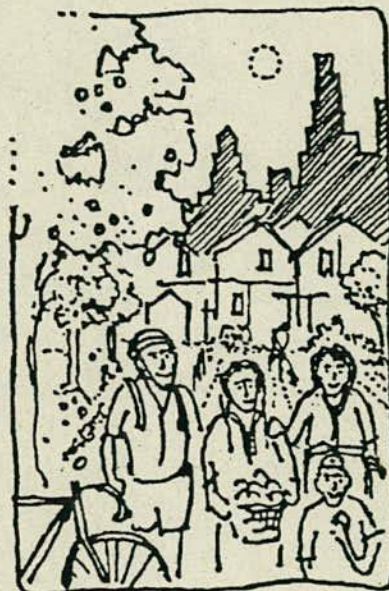
RECYCLING A DUMP SITE

During the Summer of 1983, the Cooperative Resources and Service Project (CRSP) – a promoter of, and federation for, cooperatives and cooperative networks throughout Southern California – brought together a 20-person volunteer group to create and forge the founding vision of our non-profit "developer" – the Los Angeles Mutual Housing Association (LAMHA). Composed of activists in affordable housing, urban ecology, social change, economic development, and cooperatives, our intention was to bring together all the resources and expertise CRSP had accumulat-

ed in the past (and would continue to develop in the coming decade) for the ongoing creation of sustainable urban communities. LAMHA is charged with a commitment to permanent affordability of land, housing, and business spaces; democratic control and on-going member education; broad-based community support; a sustainable approach to development; and a high level of self-reliance among its members.

> *If we prove that friendly, healthy, sustainable neighborhoods can be built in Los Angeles, that in itself might change the world!*

In 1986 we learned about an 11-acre dump site, located in Northeast Los Angeles about five miles from downtown, filled with sand, rock, gravel, and dirt from Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (DWP) street construction. DWP owns the site, and it was scheduled to go to public auction as surplus land. We organized quickly and successfully lobbied local politicians to remove the property from public auction so we can have the opportunity to develop it as Los Angeles Eco-Village.

Our major accomplishments, so far, include:

• Putting together a large, open, skilled, and diverse volunteer Design Team

• Preparing a detailed exploratory design study and project development schedule

• Having the project concept incorporated into drafts of the City's General Plan and Housing Policies

• Developing a process for obtaining broad-based neighborhood support for the project

• Annual reporting to the City Council Committee which oversees the DWP (to keep the vision of the Eco-Village alive with elected officials)

• Developing a brochure and slide show on the project

• Broadening constituency for the project

• Coordinating the First Los Angeles Ecological Cities Conference, June 1991, co-sponsored by the Eco-Home Network, the UCLA Graduate School of Architecture and Urban Planning, the City of Los Angeles, the Department of Water and Power, and many other prominent organizations and agencies in Southern California

• Maintaining and honing vision

• Preparing a major proposal to the Neighborhood Reinvestment Corporation (a national nonprofit) for funding and support

We are now well positioned to obtain the site and to enter into a partnership arrangement with the City of Los Angeles and the Department of Water and Power to develop Eco-Village.

THE DESIGN TEAM

We knew from the beginning, of course, that we had to start with the people. Our 50-member, all volunteer Design Team stewards the vision of Eco-Village and moves the work forward. Among them is Berkeley-based community architect Harry Jordan, who prepared an exploratory design study for the site. The study has been enormously helpful in introducing people to the possibilities for the site. Other members include the retired Planning Director for the City of Los Angeles, Cal Hamilton, who is guiding us through the process of lining up support from key representatives of all the City's agencies that will be affected by Eco-Village. By garnering such support now, assuming that our political work continues to be successful, the various City agencies will not feel that the Eco-Village project is being forced upon them. They, too, along with politicians, existing neighborhood residents, future residents, and the whole spectrum of sustainability advocates, become stakeholders in the success of Eco-Village.

Design Team members also include planning and architecture faculty from local universities, ecological designers, and alternative energy experts, as well as activists in affordable housing and other community organizers, gardeners, engineers, secretaries, carpenters, lawyers, librarians, artists, bookkeepers, photographers, and doctors.

The Design Team has four working committees: The Architecture and Design Committee has been working on site analysis and the beginning of an Environmental Impact Report. The Neighborhood Relations Committee has been meeting with individuals (in a two year door-to-door campaign) and with groups throughout the areas neighboring our site. They also have been circulating a petition of support. Participation in the Cohousing Process Group is required for the nearly half of Design Team members who intend to be future residents of Eco-Village. (Future residents must also begin saving money cooperatively in the Ecological Revolving Loan Fund or other approved depository, and join the Local Exchange Trading System, a third-party computerized barter system). The Administration and Coordination Committee keeps everything knit together. All Eco-Village organizers have also been soliciting

political and financial support for the project, of course! We anticipate that other committees will grow out of these as organizing and coordinating energy expands.

INTENDING TO BE IMITATED

Our stewardship of the Eco-Village vision has served the purpose of promoting sustainable urban communities well. We've received a deluge of written requests for more information on Eco-Village, both from people interested in living in such a neighborhood and from those who are in various stages of planning for their own eco-villages. Eco-Villages are rapidly beginning to learn of one another and share information in a way that accelerates the learning curve for all of us.

One of our major goals is to empower people with the vision that we can do this sort of thing again and again, in our city, and in cities everywhere. We have worked at making our constituency diverse – intergenerational, multicultural, mixed income, multiskilled – and non-adversarial. We are a consensus-seeking group. I believe that members of the Design Team are working as much in the public interest as in their own personal interest. The non-profit Mutual Housing Association is committed to the on-going development of Eco-Villages, so that the learning will not be lost after the first project, and anyone who wants to live in an Eco-Village can be accommodated.

Another major goal is to create a neighborhood model in such a way so as to convince leaders in the developing world to *bypass* the unsustainable development patterns of American cities and suburbs, and perhaps to modify their unquenching thirst for the "good life" depicted in the pop culture exported from right here – Los Angeles.

If we prove that friendly, healthy, sustainable neighborhoods can be built in Los Angeles, that in itself might change the world! When our friends and colleagues who work in the media become enamored with the visionary Eco-Village – some may even live there themselves – they will begin to produce the media that can help reshape values

DENSITY AND SUSTAINABILITY

The Norwegian Institute for Urban and Regional Research is finding that *increased density* in urban development provides environmental benefits over continued urban sprawl. And new development plans for many of Norway's municipalities, or *communes*, are taking that research into account as they work to comply with the fundamental principles of the 1987 report issued by the World Commission on Environment and Development, chaired by Norway's Prime Minister, Gro Harlem Brundtland.

For example, in Borre/Norten, one of three study areas, a 60% increase in the number of housing units could be accomplished by 2020 while decreasing the average distance from home to work by 5%. In contrast, continued urban spread following present trends would increase commuting distances by an average of nearly 80% over current figures.

Some of the "gray" areas – streets and parking lots – would be converted to "green lungs" by planting trees. And even exposure to traffic noise would decrease by 65% in the high density developments – compared with a 45% *increase* if current trends persist.

The higher-density, environmentally friendly development gives higher scores than the present trend on 24 of 32 goals based on the Brundtland Commission's objectives. The trend alternative is better on only two, and the two options scored equally on the other six goals.

For more information, contact Petter Næss, Research Manager, Norwegian Institute for Urban and Regional Research, Gaustadalléen 21, PO Box 44 Blindern, N-0313 Oslo 3, Norway; or Chris Canfield, Cerro Gordo Community, Dorena Lake Box 569, Cottage Grove, OR 97424.

– Duane Fickeisen

worldwide.

We constantly remind one another to manifest the ecological and cooperative values in our planning and development process that we want to happen in Eco-Village. Simply, we have to practice what we preach. We must be willing to remind one another in gentle and caring ways when we feel that any of us is straying from those values, and work at not becoming self righteous.

When working on a vision, it's been said, one has to build in the methods or processes for achieving the vision. Ultimately, Eco-Village is an on-going process, like all of life. We are midwives, who fully expect to be transformed by the process of birthing such a child. ▲

SKILLS FOR LIVING TOGETHER

Tools for better understanding yourself, others in your community, and how to get where you want to go

by Duane H. Fickeisen

Community is all about getting along. But as anyone awake at the end of the twentieth century knows, getting along is often quite a challenge. It takes intention, practice, effort, and skill. Fortunately, the skills can be learned, and while learning them isn't always easy, not learning them makes life harder still. As the preceding articles demonstrate, people skills – understanding how to listen, lead, manage, resolve conflicts, understand the differences between people, and most importantly, understand oneself – are an essential curriculum for anyone wanting to develop community.

Context Institute administrator, researcher, and resident group process guru Duane Fickeisen, an ecologist who also holds a Master's degree in Whole Systems Design, has put together a "people skills survival kit" to get you started – and help keep you going.

Commitment of the heart is a necessary – nearly sufficient – condition for community building. People who are *seriously* committed to living together in community seem to rise to the challenges of differing goals, values, and strategies. There are some tools and skills that help develop community – but the best of them are of little use without that underlying commitment.

But if you already have a passionate commitment to living together, here are some ideas that may help you move toward community.

HONORING DIVERSITY

Successful communities find ways to draw on the unique strengths of their members. Awareness that not everyone else learns, thinks, feels, senses, or is motivated to action in the same way that you do can be very helpful in developing effective ways of working (and playing) together.

These personal characteristics can be examined through many different lenses – books, ideas, models, diagnostic instruments, role-playing games, group processes, and the like – that can provide insight into your own strengths as well as those of others. But I urge you to approach any of them with caution. The models are necessarily simplistic, and each represents only a piece of the truth. They are at best lenses that provide a view of reality from a single direction. After experimenting with several of them, you may choose those that seem to "fit" best for you.

In my experience, the primary value of such tools is in awakening awareness of the special abilities and talents each person brings to the community. From that you can seek complementarity among your combined skills.

HERO ARCHETYPES

One of these windows on ourselves makes use of a model of the "hero's journey" and six archetypal heroes defined by Carol Pearson in her book *The Hero Within* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, rev. ed. 1989). The six archetypes are innocent, orphan, wanderer, warrior, martyr, and magician. This model suggests that during our lives we typically experience stages when different hero types are active. Each archetype has distinct goals and fears and approaches life differently.

The *innocent* is both pre- and post-heroic. We are born innocents and may return to the innocent archetype after completing one or more of the hero journeys. Innocents have no need for goals, fears, or tasks.

When confronted with the need to take up the journey, the innocent "falls from grace," often feeling betrayed and orphaned. Pearson argues that the fall is necessary for our development and that we can return to the grace of love and abundance only after taking the journeys of the hero archetypes.

The fall from innocence casts us into the *orphan* archetype. We have been abandoned, and

we seek safety. People in the orphan stage may cope with their sense of abandonment through various forms of addiction as a way to deny danger and seek answers and protection from others. In the heroic stage of the journey, the orphan learns that suffering is universal, and that we are not powerless, despite our dependency on each other and on the earth around us.

The *wanderer* usually begins the heroic journey fleeing from a villain (the person, organization, job, or belief that is causing their misery). Life becomes an adventure of exploring new ideas. The task of wanderers is to find their identity in order to claim their independence within the context of relationships with others.

The *warrior* hero has an identified enemy and works to eliminate it. He or she wants to change the world to conform to his or her own values and is willing to work to mold others to meet his or her expectations. The warrior is a strategist, monitoring progress toward his or her goals. The task of the warrior is to learn to be assertive and to establish boundaries. When one completes the warrior's journey, he or she learns to respect one's friends, colleagues, institutions, and one's self.

The *martyr* hero seeks salvation through embracing suffering. People in this stage of their journey sacrifice for others or for a cause that is important to them. When the sacrifices made are inappropriate, and made in the expectation that the sacrifices will lead to redemption, martyrs move further from self-understanding; but when the sacrifices are appropriate and are made in the spirit of giving rather than expecting a return, martyrs create the opportunity to learn about their own values and goals and about the depth of their commitment.

The *magician* archetype recognizes that the universe is not static, but in the process of development. A magician is ready to take responsibility for his or her role as a co-creator. The goal of the magician is to find wholeness and balance from which to practice co-creation – but caution must be exercised to avoid misuse of the magician's powerful tools of creativity and change.

There is no "best" archetype. Each has its unique strengths and weaknesses, and each faces special challenges and dangers. A community made up of one predominant archetype may experience itself overly focused on the tasks of that archetype. A community with people in many phases of their journeys may benefit from their various perspectives and strengths.

PERSONALITY TYPES

Personality differences can be viewed though the lens of the Myers-Briggs Typology. For a primer, see David Keirsey and Marilyn Bates, *Please Understand Me* (Del Mar, CA: Prometheus Nemesis Book Company, 1984), which includes the "Keirsey Temperament Sorter" to indicate your "type."

According to this model, the ways we *gain energy (introvert/extrovert), gather information* about the world around us *(sensor/intuitive), process that information (thinker/feeler)*, together with our comfort with *decision-making (judger/perceiver)* define sixteen distinct personality types. People tend to pick careers, avocations, and mates according to their type. Identifying and recognizing such differences in type can help build relationships and mutual understanding.

The typology may also help identify tasks and responsibilities that are aligned with your preferences or that will stretch your experiences beyond them.

> *The primary value of these tools is in awakening awareness of the special abilities and talents each person brings to the community.*

LEARNING STYLES

We also have different ways of learning. Harvard educator Howard Gardner proposes that there are at least seven different human intelligences *(verbal/linguistic, logical/mathematical, spatial, musical, kinesthetic, interpersonal,* and *intrapersonal)*. We develop skills in each of them to different degrees, and group learning has been found to be enhanced significantly by use of all seven in teaching. In addition, we also exhibit *cognitive* style differences: some of us are *field independent*, preferring a learning path that leads from the details to the big picture, while others are *field dependent* and prefer to have the big picture first. [See IC #27 for a more detailed look at both these ways of understanding learning].

Another model of learning, developed by David A. Kolb ("Learning Style Inventory" and technical manual, available from McBer and Co.; 137 Newbury Street; Boston, MA 02116; 617/437-7080), assigns preferred learning styles based on preference for *abstraction* or *concreteness* and preference for *action* or *reflection*.

Learners with a preference for concrete experience and active experimentation are *accommodators*. Accommodators learn from doing.

They like to implement plans and get things done, and they tend to accept risk. Accommodators also rely more on other people for information than on their own independent analysis. They excel at getting things done and providing leadership.

	Active Experimentation	Reflective Observation
Concrete Experience	*Accommodator*	*Diverger*
Abstract Conceptualization	*Converger*	*Assimilator*

Those who prefer concrete experience over abstract conceptualization, and reflective observation over active experimentation, are *divergers*. They tend to learn by integrating and synthesizing information from many sources. Divergers like group discussion but need quiet time for reflection. People with this style are innovative and imaginative and seek involvement in important issues. They excel at recognizing problems and understanding people.

Those with a preference for abstract conceptualization and active experimentation are *convergers*. Convergers have a need to know how things work and learn by testing theories. They value strategic thinking. People with this style have limited tolerance for uncertainty and need to know how things they are asked to do will help in "real" life. They are valuable in drawing a discussion toward completion and in bringing closure to an issue. Convergers excel at problem solving and decision making.

The *assimilators* are those with a preference for abstract conceptualization and for reflective observation. Assimilators have an appreciation for logic and tend to form theories and seek facts. They learn by thinking through ideas, value sequential thinking, and need details. People with this style want to know what experts think. They are enthusiastic group members. They excel at planning and creating models.

A community may find it valuable to examine learning styles and to draw on the unique characteristics of their members as needed for the issues at hand. For example, if the community finds itself to be predominantly divergers, it is

These windows on diversity provide ways of finding the value inherent in differences.

likely that they will find difficulty in bringing closure to a discussion. In that case, it may well prove helpful to empower the divergers to make an intentional effort to move things along and to empower any convergers in the group to help focus on decision-making once several alternatives have been identified.

MOTIVATIONS

Yet another window on diversity is the Strength Deployment Inventory®. This diagnostic questionnaire measures factors that "motivate" behavior. The underlying model is that we are motivated by desires to be *directive, helpful,* or *analytical,* and the instrument measures the importance of each of these three factors both when things are going well and when we experience stress. Scores on each of the three dimensions are used to define a style of behavior.

I have found this model particularly helpful with members of a team. It helps members of the group understand each other's behavior, support effective action, and complement group strengths.

These and other windows or lenses on diversity provide alternative ways of understanding and finding the *value* inherent in differences. None of them captures the whole truth, yet they each contain important elements of truth.

My advice is to explore several of them and use those that seem to fit for your group. Avoid assuming that the types are inflexible, or that they restrict your range of abilities. And don't get trapped into introspection to the exclusion of action! These tools take on increased meaning when they are experienced through application to real problems and projects.

GROUP PROCESS

One of the best ways to experience your strengths is in the context of a community. In a community you'll have an opportunity to discover the synergistic effects of different styles of behavior – both when they enhance each other and when they conflict.

But don't expect the groups you affiliate with to remain static. All groups experience stages in development that can be quite well defined. Most models of group development assume that there are several stages of development that a group experiences in a patterned order, and the development of the group can get stuck at one or more of these stages until the issues of that stage are resolved.

Of course no group follows the models precisely, and progress through the stages may be complicated by being stalled, or by reverting to an

earlier stage. It is helpful to recognize which stage the group is in so that appropriate facilitation can resolve issues related to process.

A model proposed by William C. Schutz (*The Interpersonal Underworld*. Palo Alto, CA: Science and Behavior Books, 1966; originally published in 1958 as *FIRO: A Three Dimensional Theory of Interpersonal Behavior*) describes three stages of development: *Inclusion, Control,* and *Affection.*

Inclusion • When a new group begins, its members face issues of discovering if and how they fit into the group. Individuals face the paradox of wanting to be recognized and included, thus seeking to draw attention to themselves, and at the same time denying individual differences. Most of the information that is shared is superficial, and there is a high need for conformity.

At the inclusion stage, the group is likely to be dependent on a designated leader and to carefully watch and model the leader's behavior. Group productivity is usually low, and there is a focus on understanding basic goals and developing norms for structuring the group. The effective leaders will focus on clarifying broad objectives of the group, clarifying expectations for participation, and modeling commitment to the group through punctuality, attendance, and welcoming new members.

Control • Once the issues of who is in the group are resolved, issues of control arise. At this stage conflict is common as differences become apparent and individuals fight to get their way. The group faces issues over how it makes decisions while individual members face issues over their influence in the group.

Group development is facilitated at this stage if the leader is comfortable with conflict and chaos, and does not attempt to ignore the reality of the control issues, but helps guide development of procedures for participation and decision making.

Affection • If the group successfully works through the issues in the control stage, it may move to the affection stage. Members let go of being defensive and of the judgment and assumptions that have created barriers to effective communication. Individual differences are respected and used effectively to assist the group rather than to divide it.

Conflicting views are welcomed and worked through to resolution. The group becomes much more effective, and members feel close to one another. Leadership of the group moves among members, and a unique culture begins to emerge with its own jargon, roles, rituals, and norms. Experimentation and innovation are prevalent, and there is a high level of energy.

In a sense, any group or community is a new one *each* time it meets. Not only may attendance vary – new people join the group or current members leave – but those who are present will have had different life experiences since the last time the group met. So the group may find itself moving temporarily back to a stage that it had already moved out of. Also, the group may find that a new issue causes it to move back if the current norms for operating don't take into account the new situation.

PARTICIPATION AND INFLUENCE

The degree and quality of participation in the group is an indicator of the stage of development of the community and of its ability to use diversity and conflicting opinion constructively. There are many styles of participation, however, and the person who is actively listening and says relatively little may be engaged as much as the more vocal members of the group.

There is an important difference between *influence* and *participation.* Influence is not necessarily proportional to participation. For example, it may well be that the person who quietly listens, and occasionally offers a synthesis or summary of what has been said, will have more influence than those who are actively debating an issue.

The person who is actively listening may have more influence than those who are more vocal.

Effective group leaders notice which members dominate the discussion and ensure that others have an opportunity to speak if they desire. This "gatekeeping" role is often shared among group members. A discussion leader may also ask if anyone can summarize the content of what has been said as a means of moving the group process ahead. This can serve to assure those who have expressed their views that they have been heard and thus enable the group to move on.

TASK AND MAINTENANCE

Task functions are those that move a group toward a particular goal or solving a problem. *Maintenance* functions are behaviors that help the group build relationships and effective processes. Both are important for the long term, effective health of a group.

Task functions include initiating discussion, seeking and providing information and opinions, giving directions, evaluating options, summarizing the discussion, and diagnosing problems.

Maintenance functions include encouraging participation, harmonizing and compromising, facilitating communications, observing and commenting on process, building trust, and solving interpersonal problems.

Responsibility for these roles should be shared and flexible. While it may be helpful to designate a "process observer" from time to time, or someone to provide process directions, usually groups operate without such formal roles. However, leaders within the group should be aware of the two kinds of functions and monitor the group's progress for a balance between the two. When problems arise, it may be helpful to try to identify whether they are related to being stuck in working toward completion of the task or to ineffective relationship maintenance.

> *Our filters enable us to hear or see only what we want to hear or see to a greater extent than we recognize.*

COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Our sensory organs gather far more information than we are able to effectively process and use. To cope with the overwhelming amount of information, we have developed filtering mechanisms. Our filters enable us to hear or see only what we *want* to hear or see to a greater extent than many of us recognize.

Communications are further complicated by non-verbal factors. Perhaps as little as 7% of what is communicated face-to-face is contained in the verbal message; the remaining 93% is non-verbal. Both the verbal and the non-verbal elements are subject to our filtering mechanisms and to our interpretation.

High quality communication takes a lot of effort. But fortunately, communication skills are learned, and we *can* learn new ones. Begin with practicing *active listening* – really paying attention and affirming the speaker. Listen to understand, and don't get distracted by formulating your response. Instead, ask clarifying questions and check out your understanding.

One way to check out your understanding is to paraphrase – tell the speaker what you think they have just said, in your own words, and ask whether you have gotten it correctly.

Another important element in good communication is to be explicit about *describing feelings*. If you rely only on your non-verbal cues, you may not be understood, so describe your own feelings by identifying and naming them. Feeling statements have the form, "I feel angry" (or happy,

anxious, calm, nervous, etc.). Note that statements beginning with "I feel that ..." most often describe what you *think* rather than what you *feel*.

When you interpret another person's feeling or purpose, check out your interpretation. Start by describing the behavior you observe, giving your interpretation, and inquiring if you are correct. For example, "Your face is red and I suspect you are angry with me. Is that right?"

Don't give up on these new communication skills when they feel awkward. With practice you will become more comfortable with them.

DECISION MAKING

One of the most important decisions a group makes is deciding how to decide! Unfortunately, this most critical decision is often ignored or made by default, at least until there is a critical issue involving high stakes at hand.

Decision-making methods range in the degree that those who will be affected by the decision are involved in the process. Decisions can be made by:

- a single decision maker without input from others
- an expert on the question of concern
- a single decision maker with input from others
- averaging of individual decisions or positions, without discussion
- a sub-group or committee
- majority vote
- consensus

No single method is ideal: the appropriate one to use depends on the situation.

With a high degree of participation in decision making, there will be more support for its implementation. Additional time and effort spent reaching the decision may be offset by reduced time and effort to implement it. It usually takes more time and energy to reach agreement with high participation methods. In some cases the issues don't merit this degree of involvement, and the process may become burdensome and inefficient unless alternatives are found.

When a group has reached the stage of development where differences are welcomed and there is a high level of trust (Schutz's Affection stage, described above), it may be appropriate to use consensus for decisions that require greater cooperation to implement and when the stakes are high. However, for those decisions that are less important, when group members lack relevant expertise, and when implementation does not require full cooperation, it may be appropriate to use one of the less demanding methods of deci-

sion making, for example, decision by an expert or by a committee.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Conflicts are unavoidable in human relations. Our *approach* to them can be one that makes use of conflict as a means of building trust, creating innovative solutions to problems, and strengthening relationships. But unless serious attention is given to resolving conflicts constructively, they can generate distrust, destroy relationships, and stifle creativity.

Conflict is often approached as a zero sum game with the assumption that there must be a winner and a loser, and that the winner can only gain at the expense of the loser. Sometimes that's true – for example, when a limited resource must be divided between competing interests. But often a creative alternative can be found that meets the needs of both parties.

A key to conflict resolution is to identify the interests of all the stakeholders. Knowing clearly what your own interests are allows you to evaluate proposed solutions from the standpoint of meeting your underlying needs.

Interests are the underlying principles that are non-quantifiable and cannot be negotiated, as opposed to *positions* or *issues* which are measurable and can be bargained. For example, one's *interest* might be to have good nutrition. A related *issue* would be wanting to have access to a 400 square foot garden spot in which to grow vegetables in raised beds. It would be possible to negotiate for the location and size of the garden spot, but not over the desire to have good food.

In conflicts it is often helpful to make the interests of all of the stakeholders explicit and public. Clear understanding of everyone's interests may lead to creative ways to meet all of them.

Individual styles of dealing with conflict cover a range of behaviors that differ in their focus on the importance of the *stakes* and the importance of the *relationship*. If neither are important, it may be appropriate to avoid the conflict or flee from it. If the relationship is important but the stakes are not, it may be appropriate to accommodate the other party. Conversely, if the stakes are very important but the relationship is not, then compelling the other party to agree to your position may be the best strategy. A *collaborative* solution is called for when both the stakes *and* the relationship are important.

LEADING AND MANAGING

There is an important distinction between *leadership* and *management*. Leadership is involved in the process of creating new approaches and innovative ideas, envisioning a purpose, and enrolling others as co-creators. Management is the reactive process of maintaining the status quo, organizing resources to accomplish a goal, and solving problems that threaten to interrupt progress. Both are needed for effective community action.

Many corporations are overmanaged and underled, and they are attempting to develop leadership. Consequently, literature on the difference between leadership and management often seems biased toward leadership as a preferred style. However, both are needed, and it seems more likely that a community will suffer from lack of management than from a lack of leadership.

Management roles in a community include *monitoring progress* and *tracking resources*. The manager translates plans into action, monitors progress against milestones, and finds ways to recover from setbacks or unexpected turns of event that threaten completion of the project.

In a group that is functioning effectively at the Affection stage of development, leadership is a shared responsibility. Leadership qualities are not necessarily related to personality type, nor are they something we are born with. Rather, leadership involves a set of learned skills and behavior,

> *Unless serious attention is given to resolving conflicts, they can generate distrust, destroy relationships and stifle creativity.*
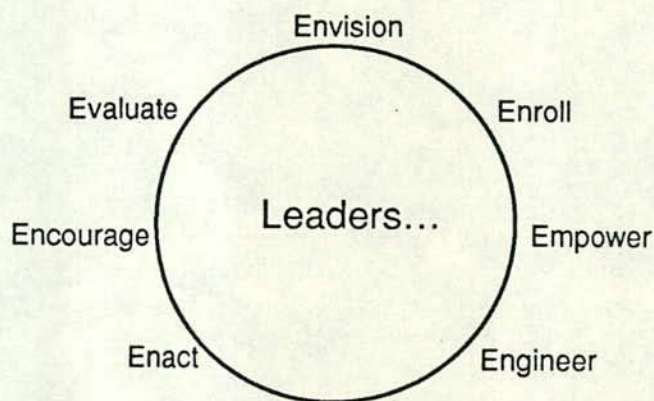
©1988 Duane Fickeisen

and most of us are quite capable of learning these skills. Of course, there is also an art to applying leadership skills, but with practice that art can be developed.

One model of leadership, adapted from the work of William D. Hitt (*The Leader Manager:*

Living Together, Or Living Apart?

Cerro Gordo is a planned community in Southern Oregon that has been under development since 1971, though it was stalled for many years while waiting for bureaucratic clearances (see *IC* #25, "The Town That Time Almost Forgot"). Its members have shown remarkable persistence, and today Cerro Gordo is moving steadily towards realizing its ambitious plans to be a demonstration ecological community.

But when members of Cerro Gordo first began considering land use, many of them wanted large home sites – which would have scattered the planned 2,100 residents about the 1,158-acre property in the foothills of the Cascade Mountains near Eugene. With large home sites, it was thought, each family would enjoy privacy and a piece of the natural environment that drew them to the place.

Over the years, however, as the members learned more about the site and about each other, their vision for development of the property shifted. From ecological studies conducted as part of the planning process, they began to understand the larger place and the complex interrelationships among the natural communities of plants and animals that also called Cerro Gordo home. And from their work together they realized the value of another kind of community – a community of neighbors and friends. Large, scattered home sites, they realized, would neither protect the foothill ecosystems nor promote the developing relationships among future human residents.

The answer they came up with was clustered development. By grouping several home sites on small parcels of land and leaving plenty of open space between the clusters, they were better able to protect the meadows and forested areas and at the same time to live in community with each other.

The model of cluster development with preservation of open space is one that other communities could well adapt as a means of providing affordable housing, conserving energy, protecting ecosystems, and encouraging development of human communities. Current zoning that requires 2.5 or 5 acres per home site is perhaps the worst way to plan land use in developing rural areas [see, for example, the illustration on page 47 of this issue]. Innovative land use regulation – and a shift in understanding and values like the one experienced by Cerro Gordo community members – is a badly needed remedy for suburban blight.

– *Duane H. Fickeisen*

For information on Cerro Gordo contact Chris Canfield, Cerro Gordo Town Forum, Dorena Lake Box 569, Cottage Grove, OR 97424, Tel. 503/942-7720.

Guidelines for Action, Columbus, OH: Battelle Press, 1988), describes seven key activities of leadership.

Envision • Create a vision of the preferred future. Make it specific and allow it to create its own reality in your consciousness. Involve others in its development and talk about the vision often. Keep it visible and present as you go about your work.

Enroll • Get others to join in sharing the vision you have created. Enlist their support and find ways for them to participate meaningfully.

Empower • Facilitate processes of group development. Find ways to define roles and processes of working together. And discover the skills represented within the diversity of your group.

Engineer • Develop an action plan to accomplish your vision. Make it specific and be sure to include not only *who* and *what*, but also *when* and *with what resources* each task is expected to be accomplished. Make sure the resources needed to accomplish the project (people, funding, materials, equipment, skills) will be available at the right time and place.

Enact • Assign people responsibility for the roles needed to accomplish the task and provide the authority they need to carry out their roles. Implement the plan and do the project.

Encourage • Be a cheerleader for your team! Assist by facilitating problem solving and conflict resolution and celebrating the completion of interim goals.

Evaluate • Take time to evaluate the effectiveness of your actions as a group in terms of the results you accomplish and the relationships you are developing. Evaluate the process as well as the results. Examine your own role as leader.

The Envision, Enlist, Empower, and Engineer steps comprise a design phase. The Enact and Encourage steps are an action phase, and the Evaluate step is a time for reflection – and celebration!

Putting It All Together

Well, that sounds like a lot of work. It *is* a lot of work! And it can be frustrating to focus on process. But getting to know who you and your colleagues are, how you relate to each other, and how you work together is the most effective way I know to build and sustain a community. Even so, *knowing how* to do it isn't enough.

You must *do* it – *experience* community. That takes courage, creativity, and commitment as well as skills. It all starts with a simple decision to *be* in community – a decision of the heart that, once taken, creates its own fulfillment. ▲

COLLABORATING ON COMMUNITY

Of the many new books surveying the development of co-housing and related European housing forms, Dorit Fromm's Collaborative Communities, *published by Van Nostrand Reinhold (1991), is perhaps the most useful single source on how to do it yourself. It provides information and guidance on everything from creating a sense of community, to choosing a site, to structuring building ownership. Fromm is an architect and planner living in San Francisco, CA, and is currently researching a book on eco-villages. The following are sample excerpts from the book. Contact the publisher for information at 115 Fifth Ave., New York, NY 10003, Tel. 212/254-3232.*

◆ EUROPE AND THE US

European examples attest to the many benefits of living in collaborative communities – security, friendship, sharing of tasks, and a good environment for children. "That's all very well, but would I want to live there?" questioned a working mother at a talk on collaborative housing [in the US]. Her concerns were the greater possibility of conflict within the group and a loss of personal freedom. She is not alone in her fears of interdependence. A magazine article on new housing, specifically on redesigning the suburbs, received this comment: "With all its obvious drawbacks, the single house on a suburban lot allows more control over one's territory.... The American Dream is not just a box on a lawn. It's a chance for a small portion of creative independence."

◆ FINANCING

The local government is conspicuously absent in the development of most of the US examples, unlike most European models. European developments receive direct government support. The Danish government provides very good terms for cooperative developments, and the Dutch and Swedish governments subsidize rental cohousing. But lack of government support in the United States has required communities to rely on their members' resources.... The US is far behind these countries in housing options for low – and moderate – income residents.

◆ COLLABORATIVE ATTITUDE

In collaborative development, a sense of community appears long before walls have been built and the legal papers signed... The development process begins by forming the individuals into members of a core group. They commit themselves to meet regularly. Each member of the group takes on some of the development tasks and can influence many of the decisions made. Together, the members talk about their needs and find a way to fulfill them. Through this struggle to develop the housing, members begin to share a common history.

[The collaborative attitude] is a process in which people switch from an individual mode of thinking to one of an awareness and care of the group. Wanting to become a cohesive group does not create such a group (as witnessed by the number of groups that break apart) nor do people divide into those who naturally have this attitude and those who do not. Rather, it appears to be a process that involves the active participation of all members – their finding an way of working together through conflict.

◆ THE PROCESS

There are three basic ways to develop [collaborative] housing:

1. The group members decide to take on the entire housing development process themselves. They search for a site, find the financing, and design and build the buildings. Most groups do not have financial, design, or construction expertise, and they hire consultants for assistance. Nevertheless, the group directs the development and oversees the work of consultants.

2. Future residents hire a developer to buy the land, select the architect, and construct the housing. The predevelopment costs, often subsidized in Denmark, Sweden, and Holland by the government, are borne by the developer. Members lose some decision-making power but gain help in the development process.

3. The group negotiates with a non-profit housing developer to help them develop the community. The nonprofit organization owns the property and rents or leases the units to the residents. In this way, more affordable housing can be realized.
— *Dorit Fromm*