

Portland State University

PDXScholar

RAIN: Journal of Appropriate Technology

RAIN

6-1-1982

RAIN

ECO-NET

Follow this and additional works at: https://pdxscholar.library.pdx.edu/rain_japt

Let us know how access to this document benefits you.

Recommended Citation

ECO-NET, "RAIN" (1982). *RAIN: Journal of Appropriate Technology*. 82.

https://pdxscholar.library.pdx.edu/rain_japt/82

This Book is brought to you for free and open access. It has been accepted for inclusion in RAIN: Journal of Appropriate Technology by an authorized administrator of PDXScholar. Please contact us if we can make this document more accessible: pdxscholar@pdx.edu.

SPECIAL ISSUE

RAIN

Reinhabiting The Land



VOLUME VIII No. 8

\$1.50 No Advertising

RAIN MAGAZINE

Editors:

Mark Roseland
John Ferrell

Contributing Editors:

Laura Stuchinsky
Gail Katz

Graphic Design:

Linnea Gilson

RAIN COMMUNITY RESOURCE CENTER

Staff:

Nancy Cospers
Steve Johnson
Steve Rudman

Comptroller:

Lee Lancaster

Interns:

Ann Borquist
Bruce Borquist

RAIN: Journal of Appropriate Technology

Volume VIII, Number 8 June 1982

Printing: *Times-Litho*

Typesetting: *Em Space*

Cover Photograph: *Karen Gottstein*

RAIN Magazine publishes information which can help people lead more simple and satisfying lives, make their communities and regions more economically self-reliant, and build a society that is durable, just, and ecologically sound.

RAIN is published 10 times a year by the Rain Umbrella, Inc., a non-profit corporation located at 2270 NW Irving, Portland, Oregon 97210, telephone 503/227-5110. Subscriptions are \$25/yr. for institutions, \$15/yr. for individuals (\$9.50 for persons with incomes under \$5000 a year).

Copyright © 1982 Rain Umbrella, Inc. No part may be reprinted without written permission.

Raindrops



The movement rents.

Not everyone, but far too many of us are renters. In the cities and in the countryside, renting makes us vulnerable, it makes us weak. For some it may be unavoidable, but for many the limiting factors are psychological and technical, factors which can be overcome.

"Over half the total national wealth of the United States is tied up in real estate, and over 25 percent of all real-estate value in America is in land. After equipment and structures, land is the largest single component of national wealth. Three percent of the population owns about 55 percent of all American land and 95 percent of the private acreage, most of it in ranches, farms, and forests. This includes ownership by fewer than six hundred companies and corporations of about 11 percent of the nation's land area, and some 23 percent of all private land in America." (from *Wolf's Land in America*, reviewed on page 15).

Life comes from the land. And so the land must be cared for. The government and the big corporations have made it clear that they are not going to care for the land, an affront both to the land and to us. It is therefore apparent that if we are indeed committed to creating a society that is durable, just, and ecologically sound, we need to take the land back. And we need to care for it — properly — with respect, kindness, intelligence and love. That's what this special issue is all about — reinhabiting the land.

We begin with a history of what-turns-out-to-be-not-so-new thinking about land, then explore various models for getting ahold of land — urban as well as rural. These include

land trusts, intentional communities, and communal ownership. Further on we take a look at rural economics, information access for country people, building codes and owner-builders, and ways to make (or avoid making) a living. We've tried, as always, to be *useful* as well as stimulating, to provide you with the tools and resources you need to bring your dreams to life.

This issue is inspired by my own experience, in recent months, of buying land communally (see how on page 12) and preparing to make a hands-on go of it this summer — housebuilding, fish farming, tree crops, ducks, you-name-it, practicing what I preach and trying to make it work. I'm also starting up a non-profit research and educational center, The Matrix Institute (PO Box 240, Applegate, OR 97530 — put us on your mailing list!), to carry on the work I've been doing for the last several years in education, appropriate technology, social ecology, information access, attunement, and half a dozen other buzzwords.

Consequently, I'll be cycling out of RAIN, for a while at least, but you'll continue to see my contributions along with those of Carlotta, who has gone back to school to finish up her degree, and Steve Rudman, who is heading off across the waters for a sabbatical year in Europe. (People don't actually leave RAIN — they just go through "life changes." Steve Johnson, one of RAIN's founders, and former editor Tom Bender are both contributors to this issue.) We're leaving the ship in good hands, so don't you worry.

'Til next time, smooth sailing and happy landings!

—Mark Roseland

This Land Was Made For You and Me

Finding New Roots In The Past

by John Ferrell

The land shall not be sold in perpetuity, for the land is mine; for you are strangers and sojourners with me. — Yahweh to the Children of Israel, Leviticus 25:23

There is on earth no power which can rightfully make a grant of exclusive ownership in land . . . For what are we but tenants for a day? Have we made the earth, that we should determine the rights of those who after us shall tenant it in their turn? . . . Let the parchments be ever so many, or possession ever so long, natural justice can recognize no right in one man to the possession and enjoyment of land that is not equally the right of his fellows. — Henry George, Progress and Poverty, 1879

All the natural resources of the earth — the land, the forests, the oil, the minerals and the waters — are the gift of nature, or Nature's God to all humankind. No title to absolute ownership of any part of the Earth can be traced back to a deed issued by the Creator of the Earth. All natural resources are by their nature trustery, not property. — Ralph Borsodi, A Decentralist Manifesto, 1958

When Henry George died suddenly in 1897 his passing was a news event around the world. His funeral in New York City resembled that of a departed president or great national hero. Yet today few people even recognize his name. Seldom has a man so famous in his own lifetime fallen so quickly and completely into historical obscurity.

Who was Henry George? He was a self-educated printer and journalist who watched closely and thoughtfully as America expanded rapidly westward following the Civil War. It was a "Gilded Age" of land speculation which brought incredible wealth — to a few. George, who had fought his way out of dire poverty and had observed extremes of wealth and impoverishment in many parts of the world during his early years as a seaman, was deeply troubled by economic inequities. Like Karl Marx, he set out to discover a remedy for the poverty which persisted — and deepened — amidst expanding wealth.

In 1879, George published the results of his research in a book called *Progress and Poverty*. In it he challenged his readers to re-think the very concept of land ownership. "Wherever we can trace the early history of society," he said, ". . . land has been considered . . . as common property, in which the rights of all who had admitted rights were equal."

In George's view, this was simply a recognition by our ancestors of a law of nature, and its violation in modern societies was at the root of the economic injustice he sought to remedy:



Henry George 1839-1897

The great cause of inequality in the distribution of wealth is inequality in the ownership of land. The ownership of land is the great fundamental fact which ultimately determines the social, political, and consequently the intellectual and moral condition of a people. And it must be so. For land is the habitation of man, the storehouse upon which he must draw for all his needs, the material to which his labor must be applied for the supply of all his desires; for even the products of the sea cannot be taken, the light of the sun enjoyed, or any of the forces of nature utilized, without the use of land or its products. On the land we are born, from it we live, to it we return again — children of the soil as truly as is the blade of grass or the flower of the field. Take away from man all that belongs to land, and he is but a disembodied spirit.

As a believer in the free market of Adam Smith, George had no quarrel with individual title to land and did not advocate confiscation or nationalization. Instead, he called for recognition that landowners were actually tenants on a commons belonging to human society as a whole and should pay a fair rent on the value of their land to society. This rent could be collected in the form of a land tax falling only on the unearned income which landowners would be able to realize by the mere fact of ownership rather than on any additional value they might create through their own efforts. Thus, hoarders and speculators would be punished while small farmers and entrepreneurs who used their holdings carefully and productively would be rewarded. Over time, George believed, the land tax would result in resources being redistributed to those who could use them best. The tax burden of hard-working people would be significantly less, income levels would rise among the formerly disadvantaged, and the problem of unemployment would lessen.

Progress and Poverty was a publishing sensation. It was

translated into all the major European languages and became a worldwide bestseller. George's ideas gained a following among millions of ordinary people and were praised by as diverse a group of intellectuals as ever agreed on a single issue. Tolstoy read *Progress and Poverty* to his peasant workers and urged the czar to give serious attention to what George had said. Sun Yat Sen, the future father of the Chinese republic, vowed to make George's teachings the basis of his program of reform. George himself became an important American political figure, and came close to being elected mayor of New York City.

Georgism as a major political movement did not long survive its leader, but it continued to inspire an eclectic mixture of politicians and social thinkers at both ends of the political spectrum. Many leaders of the early-twentieth century progressive movement in the United States said their interest in reform began with Henry George. George Bernard Shaw said the same was true for many of the early British socialists. Even Chiang Kai Shek, after being driven off the Chinese mainland by the Communists, tempered his rightwing authoritarian rule on Taiwan with a land reform policy based largely (as Sun Yat Sen had wished) on Georgist principles.

One of the most interesting of George's American followers was Ralph Borsodi. Born in 1886, Borsodi was, like George, largely self-educated. He lived through nine eventful decades, always more than a little ahead of his time. He pioneered in the back-to-the-land movement, organic agriculture, natural foods, intentional communities and appropriate technology — all before World War II. During the war, he published a global peace plan which anticipated today's bioregional planners by stressing the need for replacing nation-states with administrative units based on land areas whose topography made them naturally unified systems. The plan also harked back to Henry George in calling for a tax on the possession of mineral resources, which were to be treated as the natural heritage of all of humankind. This tax would be used to support a Global Authority with limited administrative functions.

The world's leaders were clearly not ready for Borsodi, but his ideas about land and resources made a lifelong impression on a young man named Robert Swann who was in prison for conscientious objection to the war. Swann joined a study group with other prisoners interested in decentralist politics and learned about Borsodi's experiences in the 1930s organizing intentional communi-

ties as trusts with each member family leasing land from the community as a whole. Over the next twenty years, as Swann actively involved himself in the peace and civil rights movements, he continued to ponder the need for new systems of land tenure and as he worked with Blacks in the deep south during the mid-60s, he was particularly struck by their urgent need to acquire a land base of their own. He learned that Ralph Borsodi had just returned from India where he had spent several years studying the Gandhi-inspired Gramdan movement, which placed donated land in trusteeship under village control for the benefit of the poor. Swann and Borsodi made contact and decided to join forces. In 1967 they formed the Institute for Community Economics which was dedicated to sponsoring and assisting in the formation of community land trusts based on Borsodi's concept (derived from Henry George) of "trustery," or stewardship, toward land and resources.

Swann met with Slater King, a Black real estate dealer and civil rights leader who shared his interest in providing a land base for southern Blacks. King was impressed with the land trust model as outlined by Swann. It seemed to be a particularly equitable method of landholding which also could provide protections against Blacks losing their investments through white chicanery. Swann and King, together with other civil rights leaders, eventually secured funding from a variety of sources to begin New Communities, Inc. on 4,800 acres near Albany, Georgia. The trust combined five acre private homesteads on some of its land with cooperative farming in other areas. Families received a lifetime lease on their land from the community as a whole and held private ownership of their improvements. Today, New Communities is still active, and its Featherfield Farm project is the largest Black-owned single-tract farm in America.

Since the experience with New Communities, the Institute for Community Economics has assisted in forming dozens of land trusts in a variety of rural and urban settings. Community land trusts have yet to acquire an amount of property sufficient to bring real changes in American land use patterns, but they are serving an important purpose in providing the models which inspire increasing numbers of people to recognize there is more than one way to look at their relationship to the land. Henry George predicted a century ago that attitudes toward land would change slowly. But he also predicted that "one day, justice and peace will flood the world, and people will treat land as their common heritage." □□

ACCESS

Henry George School
5 East 44th Street
New York, NY 10007

Henry George School of Social Science
833 Market Street
San Francisco, CA 94103

Both of these institutions offer courses and publications relating to Georgist social and economic theory.

The School of Living
P.O. Box 3233
York, PA 17402

· Founded nearly half a century ago by Ralph Borsodi, this organization has been at the forefront of many movements for change. They have a good selection of literature by or about Borsodi and Henry George.

***Progress and Poverty*, by Henry George,**
1978 edition, \$10.00 from:
E. P. Dutton
2 Park Avenue
New York, NY 10016

The Institute for Community Economics
151 Montague City Rd.
Greenfield, MA 01301
413/774-5933

Building Trust

Making Way For The Future

by Anne Maggs

For three days last October, 40 people met in Cambridge, Massachusetts at the invitation of The Lincoln Institute of Land Policy to discuss their private efforts to save land in the United States. The people who participated and their counterparts at home represent a complementary alternative to government involvement in land conservation and preservation. They are part of a diverse and innovative group known collectively as the "land trust movement."

Whether they call themselves "trusts," "conservancies," "foundations," or "reliances," members of this movement share one unifying characteristic: a commitment to the preservation of land resources (natural, aesthetic, cultural, economic or social). They are organized to preserve land for the public good through private efforts.

While a few land trusts date back several decades, the emergence of local private land conservation groups on a widespread basis is a relatively recent phenomenon. Since 1975, local programs have been organized at the rate of 20 per year and now total over 400 nationwide. They have so far secured over 675,000 acres of open space and resource land in all parts of the United States.

Types of Land Trusts

The majority of the people who attended the conference in Massachusetts came from trusts that work specifically to preserve open space, which traditionally is not developed or farmed but is preserved for public recreation. In the case of wilderness areas, it may be preserved in its natural state. The Nature Conservancy (1800 N. Kent St., Arlington, VA 22209) is an example of this type of environmental trust.

Emerging from the environmental land trust movement is the farm trust movement. The New American Farm Land Trust (1717 Massachusetts Ave. N.W., Washington, DC 20036) is an example of a trust established to save prime farm land. They are concerned with public education, land protection, and policy development as well as with providing technical assistance to help save farms from urbanization.

Community land trusts go beyond the preservation of natural resources to the preservation of the cultural, economic and social resources of the land. CLT's are primarily focused on land for housing and productive uses. They work in both rural and urban settings to preserve family farms and revitalize neighborhoods. The Featherfield Farm project in southwest Georgia is an example of a large-scale CLT. It set out to build an entire small town on a several-thousand acre farm under the control of local low-income people. Ownership is for the

common good by providing access to land and decent housing as well as facilitating long-term management.

Community land trusts offer support and assistance to another group of people who are outside of the land trust movement but closely aligned with it: the homesteaders and commune dwellers who have intentionally located in a community in order to establish ties with the land.

The Land Trust Legal Model

Homesteads and communes are faced with the problems of setting up a legal system to hold title to the land. The land trust model may offer them a legal "statement" of their shared values toward the land.

Legally, a land trust is a group of people who have joined together in the form of a non-profit corporation, and because the group is formed for purposes that benefit the public interest, it is eligible to apply for tax exempt status under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. This status can serve as a double-edged sword: it breathes life into the organization by allowing tax-deductible donations while at the same time choking it with IRS restrictions and standards.

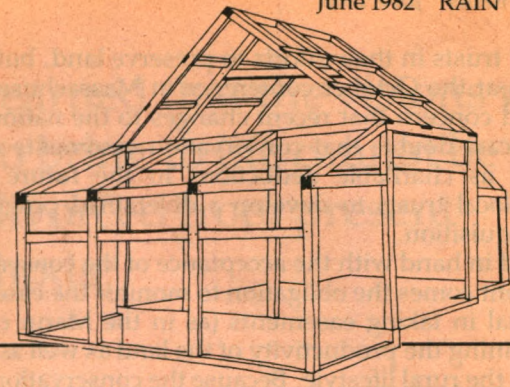
Once a group is incorporated as a non-profit corporation (done at the state level) and has gained tax-exempt status (done at the federal level) it has a wide variety of tools at its disposal to actively seek acquisition of land and its resources. These tools include charitable contributions, conservation easements, bargain sales and limited development rights.

Charitable contributions. The charitable contribution deduction in the Internal Revenue Code allows taxpayers to donate land, interests in land, cash and other resources to tax exempt organizations and subtract these gifts from their taxable income.

Conservation easements. An easement places a use restriction on the title to land. A conservation easement defines what limited use is allowed. For instance, the Marin Land Trust holds conservation easements to farms which were threatened by high speculation which would convert that land to urban use. By granting the conservation easements to the land trust the farmers protected their land from urbanization and thereby served the public interest by preserving agricultural land, food production and rural community.

The easement reduces the value of the land from its speculated use to its actual use. The trusting of the easement legally binds the owner or future owner to the restricted use (agricultural only) in perpetuity.

Conservation easements have become a popular tool



of land trusts in their efforts to preserve land, but participants at the October conference in Massachusetts expressed concern that recent changes to the national tax policy cast doubts that conservation easements will be treated as charitable deductions in the future. They urged local trusts to develop a diversified program of land acquisition.

Hand in hand with the acceptance of the conservation easement comes the obligation to monitor the easement. The goal in taking easements (as in the Marin case) is maintaining the productivity of the land as well as maintaining the rural lifestyle. Because the conservation easements are granted in perpetuity, the trust holding them must design its internal structure to accommodate this responsibility.

Bargain Sales. In the case of a bargain sale, the owner conveys to the trust the full title at a price below its fair market value. The owner can then claim the difference between the sale price and the fair market value as the charitable contribution. This technique is often used in the pre-acquisition of land for public agencies. Once purchased the trust sells the land at cost plus operating expenses to get it into the public domain. This method has worked well in areas where the government is slow to act and land of public significance is liable to be lost in the shuffle.

Limited Development. Limited development always involves compromises and some loss of open space. The role of the land trust is to persuade the developer to cluster the development in order to preserve the special characteristics of the land (e.g. an ecosystem, or prime agricultural soil).

Benefits of Land Trust Status

Association with a land trust, be it a small local group or a regionally-based one, offers homesteaders and communal residents the benefits of shared resources such as technical assistance, news of other land trusts, updates on regulations and laws affecting land use and (most importantly) the support that comes from a shared land ethic. To be part of the land trust movement is to actively address our need to assure the preservation of land and its resources for ourselves and those who will come after us. □□

Anne Maggs is a land trust advisor and treasurer of the Oregon Community Land Trust (c/o Dept. of Landscape Architecture, 409 Agriculture Hall, Oregon State University, Corvallis, OR 97331), a regionally based land trust which seeks to network land trusts in Northern California, Oregon, Washington, Idaho and British Columbia.

ACCESS

The Community Land Trust Handbook, edited by Charles Geisler and Charles Matthei, 1982, from:
Rodale Press
Organic Park
Emmaus, PA 18049

This hasn't been published yet, but it promises to be a knockout. In the meantime, contact the authors for more information at the Institute for Community Economics, 151 Montague City Road, Greenfield, MA 01301, 413/774-5933.

"How To Form Your Own Land Trust," single copies free from:
The Trust for Public Land
82 Second Street
San Francisco, CA 94105
415/495-4014

Emphasizing preservation of agricultural and public use lands, this folder has loads of technical information.

The Land Trust Exchange
3 Joy Street
Boston, MA 02108

Publications available include the *Proceedings* of the October '81 land trust conference mentioned above (\$14.00 ppd.), a *National Directory* listing 400 land-saving organizations (\$14.00 ppd.), and *Exchange*, a new bi-monthly periodical (\$20/yr.).

Rekindling Trust

The Adventures of New Society Gardens, Inc.

by Lee Lancaster

Nobody owns the house I live in. Or rather we own it as a community. I live in a community land trust house. Our land trust was formed eight years ago as a way to radically change our relationships to property and to be part of the movement to create a more nearly just, ecologically sound and sustainable society. We grew to

own two large houses in the city and a spin-off group purchased a 64 acre farm nearby. Now we are at a loss for where to go from here. It seems that the dreams we had are impossible.

Our most cherished ideal was to replace the notion of private ownership of land with holding land in "trust"

for the common good. We saw evils inherent in the private ownership system that lead to the exploitation and destruction of land for short term profit and that left large numbers of people impoverished and powerless. We heard of others who were trying to solve some of the problems of land tenure and some of these new ideas rang with a truth as old as the hills. Property can be defined as the value created by people. You can "own" only that value that you make. Everything else, particularly the land, the air, the water, is the birthright of all living things, and cannot be owned as property but should be used as "trustery" — in trust for all, present and future. The relationship we wanted of people to land is not of ownership but of stewardship.

We formed a non-profit — but not tax-exempt — corporation (New Society Garden, Inc.) to own the land and purchased houses. We discussed our relationship to the land and to each other. We developed processes for making decisions in an atmosphere of respect and mutual benefit. We wrote consensus decision making into our bylaws. As a group we were able to accomplish things we couldn't have done alone, we were more powerful. Members in the household collectives shared incomes and decided together how to pay expenses. People were supported to work on projects like anti-nuclear power campaigns or starting a recycling business. When that no longer seemed the best way to meet diverse needs we changed it. Our involvement together helped to bring us out of ourselves, to broaden our horizons and to develop us as individuals. We felt strength in support and sharing.

Out of our progress came our hardest problems. We did not like our landlords. Landlords profit by exploiting the need of the landless for housing, landlords interfere with freedom of expression whether it is driving nails into walls to hang pictures or putting political slogans in the windows. Landlords are loath to spend money on paint or insulation or fixing the leaky faucet. Landlords have the power to raise the rent and evict. The landlord-tenant system institutionalizes roles of power and powerlessness. So we abolished the role of landlord and decentralized the function. Each house would be maintained by the collective of people living in it. Each collective would be responsible for selecting who would live in the house and for paying the bills.

We failed to acknowledge the services provided by the landlord role; provision of capital, property management and long term maintenance. We also failed to account for the skill and work required. Most of us have been trained as tenants our whole lives, some as property owners. We did not succeed in putting off those roles. The dichotomy of owner-renter roles was reinforced by habit, by the expectations of new people moving in and ultimately by the other legal and economic structures in our society.

Our collectives lacked cohesiveness and long term commitment because we were committed to preserving our individual mobility. We wanted the corporation to have the responsibilities of ownership but did not want to exercise that commitment as individuals. As people left the communal/collective situation it became difficult to find new members to share the costs, much less the responsibilities. The corporation had to become more the landlord. The Board of Directors, made up of some of the residents and other people from the community, had to look for new tenants when a house became vacant, to replace the furnace when it broke, and to raise the rent to

We learned that the visions we try to bring to life cannot be too far divorced from present methods.

pay the costs. We had to have work parties to clean up the accumulation of years. The work didn't hurt us, the lost idealism did. Responsibility and accountability also need tools and structure to work.

Our excitement about this new land tenure system diminished. Our structure did not permit any individual to have equity except in the form of a loan to the corporation. This limited the sense of individual involvement and hampered the ability to attract capital for new houses. As we began to make payments on the principal of the mortgages we found we had to pay corporate income tax, taxes that would not be paid by individuals owning their own homes. And finally, as the economy changed (particularly the skyrocketing interest rates) it became impossible to consider growth of the land trust as we had envisioned it.

We learned that the visions we try to bring to life cannot be too far divorced from present methods. We learned that we must allow and expect ideas to change in the face of experience. We can make our work easier if we are able to restate our goals to be compatible with currently acceptable legal and economic arrangements. There are lots of options and I would like to briefly present some that I have heard of:

LAND TRUSTS have become a great deal more sophisticated in the last decade and have developed a variety of tools for saving land. Usually they are tax exempt organizations that hold or convey land for some public benefit. In rural settings land trusts work to preserve special land as scenic, wilderness, forest or agricultural areas. In cities land trusts hold land as historic places, open space, and in some cases provide land for such things as low income housing projects.

HOUSING COOPS are organized to benefit their members. Limited equity coops are usually designed to provide housing for low and middle income people. Unlimited equity coops are more favorable investments, much like condominiums.

JOINT OWNERSHIP AGREEMENTS can allow people to share the benefits and responsibilities of property much like a partnership.

CREATIVE COMBINATIONS can overcome some of the hurdles in the current real estate market. For example, tax-exempt land trusts can convey donated land to communities to use as gardens or for low income housing cooperatives. Housing coops can attract capital by forming limited partnerships with investors for the tax shelters. Other types of organizations focus action on aspects of land use, environmental and economic issues.

We can see some of our visions become reality, but not by charging off blindly like Don Quixote to conquer evil and defend virtue. We need to be clever, to learn well the use of the tools available to us, and to persevere. □□

Sometimes The Magic Works

Alpha Farm Ten Years Later



Alpha Farm

by **Caroline C. Estes**

In the early 1970s a group of people in Philadelphia, along with many others throughout the country began to have a strong "leading" that they should start a land based intentional community somewhere in the United States. All of them had been involved in some kind of social activism, and were aware that there was something else drastically needed to change the direction of our social order. At that time they wrote a prospectus stating — "The renewal of the social order, we now see, must begin with ourselves . . . We seek to change our basic assumptions and patterns of daily living, to accomplish this we must alter our patterns of thought. We must live ourselves into the future we seek." It was felt that a rural, holistic community was needed and — within one short year of the initial vision — land was found, funds raised, like-minded people gathered and the community life begun in rural Oregon. As though by divine design, the name for the community became known: the old homestead had once served as a tiny post office named Alpha. And so, Alpha, the first letter of the Greek alphabet — meaning the beginning — was the community name.

Our feeling concerning land ownership was that it involved a responsible stewardship and that the owning of land was a privilege. Each plot of land has a sense of "place." Each has its own function and cycles and those living on it need to always learn how to tune into these

cycles. In all cases, the land must be treated — along with everything else — with care. Such different sources as the American Indians, biodynamic agriculturist Rudolf Steiner and our friends at Findhorn Community in Scotland have influenced our learning of an appropriate harmonic role in relation to the earth. We garden and farm biodynamically, raising most of our own vegetables, grains, fruit, honey, eggs, and dairy products. Our diet is primarily ovo-lacto-vegetarian and dinners have become a family ritual.

But self-sufficiency on the land is mostly still a "dream" for us, and it is necessary to have other economic endeavors to meet our many needs. Along with keeping up the homestead, we run a local cafe/bookstore/craft shop in a nearby community. This has allowed us, from the beginning, to interact with our neighbors, and to become active in the concerns of our area. Beginning the store at the same time we started Alpha stretched us, and in some ways too far. But on looking back, it was very important to our being able to stay together and to begin fulfilling our basic desires in coming together. It gave us a necessary day in and day out opportunity to express to others our concerns and our dedication to renewing the world — and the specifics of how we saw that being done. Also during the first year we bid on, and were awarded, a contract for rural mail delivery with the U.S. Postal Service. This has been a steady source of income and has again allowed us to get to know our neighbors over a thirty mile area. It also required us to be constant and diligent in our work — since "the mail must go through" — and it has, through all the types of weather Western Oregon is prone to having. This has been an important factor in our acceptance in the community.

Ten years ago it was a different social climate than today, and it would have been easy to have been dismissed as "those people up the road" or as "laid back hippies." The store and the mail route allowed us to demonstrate that we were serious in our commitment to the community, and allowed others to have a chance to meet us in a business way. It is important to remember that the early 1970s were a bit more hostile to new ideas than the early 1980s. Much is now taken for granted that was new at that time.

We also perform seasonal contract work for the Forest Service, mostly treeplanting; engage in some construction contracting and custom tractor work; and from time to time have had small-scale cottage industries, most recently sandal-making. Our most recent economic happening has been the opening of a hardware store in the same small community where our cafe/bookstore is. It appeared that this was a need the area had and we were

fortunate in being able to fill it. It seems to us that one of the key ways intentional communities can become a part of their larger community is by watching for ways they can fill "holes." It might be anything from helping a local clinic get started to furnishing a baby-sitting service. Most small communities are lacking in the everyday services that are taken for granted in cities — and people moving into intentional communities often bring talents and skills that can be utilized by the larger community. By developing and offering a variety of skills to your neighbors it is possible to generate an income, but more importantly it is a way of being in contact with those about you. We have tried to make the saying "work is love made visible" real in our area. And the mutual exchange of ideas on social or political issues becomes easier over a cup of coffee after you have worked together or had a chance to meet.

Although the variety of undertakings offers some economic stability through diversity (and an absolute guarantee against boredom), economics is not a primary motivation for living at Alpha. We have a common purse; all income is shared collectively, and each person's needs are well covered, but not expensive habits or desires. Our income is largely re-invested in building the community. The community is organized as a cooperative corporation; each person who becomes a member is also included in the directorship of the corporation, and whatever economic assets she or he has are transferred to the corporation in return for shares until such time as they might wish to leave. Thus, individuals living at Alpha are economic equals.

One of the commitments made in the beginning was to try and simplify our lifestyle. Compared to middle-class America, life at Alpha is simple. We heat with wood, and we do not own a television or many of the amenities that are frequently taken for granted. But we live comfortably. On our 280 acres we have a variety of homes — a large old farmhouse, an assortment of cabins, cottages, lodges, yurts, trailers and a pyramid, plus a new five bedroom house. Each person has their own room and this is true of couples as well as single people. We eat breakfast and dinner communally — with each person taking turns fixing the meal during the week. And, obviously, the amenities of life — clothing, toothpaste, soap, rugs, furniture, etc. — are provided by the farm to the extent that we have any. All that goes to make a home in the country under a moderate definition of "simplicity."

And the definition of simplicity, along with all else, is decided by consensus. Alpha uses the Quaker form of decision-making which honors "that of God" within each individual. This means that when making a group decision, each individual must listen carefully, remain open-minded, and consider deeply, knowing that she or he must accept the consequences of the decision since all are indispensable to its being decided. So we never vote or have a minority overruled — we only proceed on the basis of agreement. In the beginning, before we knew each other well, we made virtually all decisions in group meetings. Over the years, we have delegated a great amount of responsibility and therefore decision-making to teams, committees and managers. Now we still meet as a group once a month to act on overall policy decisions, but most of the everyday work is decided by small groups or individuals.

The importance of trying to be in touch with all aspects

of community life requires each of us to be awake all the time. On one occasion we had a woman visiting from Findhorn who believed she was in touch with the nature spirits. She told us that she felt the nature beings at Alpha were needing a space kept wild for them — where we did not intrude. In our desires to be good stewards of the land, to improve the land, and upgrade its fertility, we had assumed that we needed to work each foot of ground — when in fact we needed to listen more carefully. And so we set aside a space at the beginning of Alpha Creek — a wild and wonderful spot on the land where we would not encroach, but allow the nature spirits to have as their home. To some this seems odd, but to us it seemed right.

However, it is also true that our land did need a lot of work and love — fertilizer and lime, tilling and toiling — and now it is beginning to return to us as useful crops. We have learned through trial and error what will grow in the Coast Range of Oregon (where we get about 70 inches of rain each year). Our garden is bountiful and we have just planted a large orchard which will begin bearing in about 5 years.

The other aspect of living communally which is important — as important as the land we live on or the work we do — is the interpersonal work we do with each other. Living closely and being mirrors for each other evokes a need to be honest and truthful, but also compassionate and caring. We have used a meeting to work through our problems with each other, as well as other personal "one on one" meetings. The one thing we are sure of is that problems do not just go away. They need to be faced, worked with and solved. Be they interpersonal or community wide, the need to be aware of each situation as it arises is paramount. Energy can be dissipated quickly if someone is trying to not deal with a problem.

The first ten years of our life together has been exciting and challenging and we are beginning to see more clearly the way ahead — but we still are just beginning . . . "to live ourselves into the future we seek." □ □

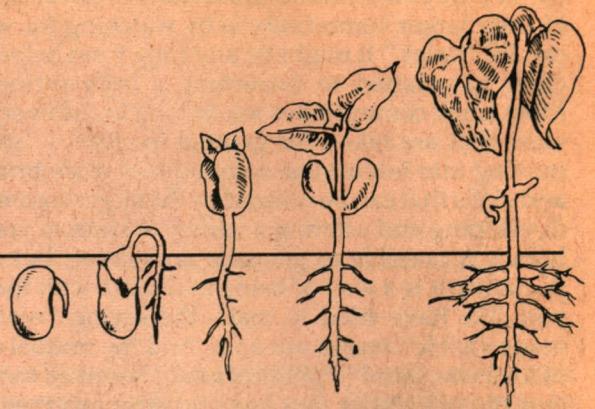
ACCESS

EARTH ComeUNITY NEWS
PO Box 465
Mapleton, OR 97453

Earth Community Network (ECN) is a "network of light centers (new age missions) to help us develop and maintain the rising culture through the dark ages of ecological and economic catastrophe." About 30 west coast groups from San Diego to Vancouver, B.C. are involved. Sponsored initially by the Institute for the Study of Conscious Evolution in San Francisco, the ECN newsletter has merged with Alpha Farm's bi-monthly newsletter (\$4/yr). ECN held a networking conference last fall, and another is being planned for October of 1982. For more information about ECN or its member groups, send a SASE to the above address.

Bhagwanecology

Riparian Recovery at Rajneeshpuram



One model of land tenure has received an uncanny amount of attention this last year — the religious commune. (For a good overview see "Spiritual Communities," April '82, special issue of *Communities*, \$1.50 from *Communities*, Box 426, Louisa, VA 23093).

The followers of a controversial Indian mystic, Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh, have been making waves worldwide since their \$6 million purchase last July of the 64,000 acre (about 100 square miles) Big Muddy Ranch on the high desert of north-central Oregon. Their vision is to turn the desert into a "green oasis of farmland" and establish a "planned community" of some 2000 inhabitants on a part of the ranch. This kibbutz-like city will be called Rajneeshpuram ("expression of Rajneesh").

In nearby Antelope (pop. 40), however, the neighbors are quite convinced they are the victims of an "invasion" of these orange- and maroon-clad disciples from Western Europe, India, Australia, and the U.S. Unlike the people at Alpha Farm (described elsewhere in this issue), the Rajneesh have made little effort to befriend the existing community, and town-gown relations have gone from cool to hostile.

The media, smelling blood, have arrived in force — over 100 different crews were there on the same day in April — yet the

reports also indicate that few of the reporters have even the vaguest understanding of what the Bhagwan and his followers are about. There is more than one side to this story, and in all modesty the only report I can in good conscience recommend is my own ("Om, Om On The Range," *New Age*, Jan. '82, \$2.50 from *New Age*, 244 Brighton Ave., Allston, MA 02134).

Most of the attention is focused on the effort to incorporate Rajneeshpuram, which at this writing is tied up in two ludicrous elections and a series of court battles. In addition, the Governor has made some foolish comments, the federal immigration service is trying to deport nearly a third of the Rajneesh community — Bhagwan himself may be up for review in June — and a "watchdog" group has sprung up called "Citizens for Constitutional Cities."

Meanwhile, back at the ranch, the work continues. To our knowledge, the following report is the first to describe what is actually being done to create this "green oasis" in Oregon's high desert.

—Mark Roseland

by John Perry

The modern mind has been too aggressive against nature, and it has created the ecological crisis. Our whole approach is wrong, it is destructive. We only take from the earth, we never give anything back. We only exploit nature; we only go on taking, and all the resources are being spent.

But things have now gone to the extreme. Either man has to drop his aggressive attitude or man has to get ready to say good-bye to this planet.

—Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh

Last summer a number of followers of Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh purchased and settled on the one hundred square mile Muddy Creek Ranch in semi-arid central Oregon. Their objective was "a place that could be restored to a green oasis as a tribute to a living and loving Master." They could hardly have taken on a more difficult task. They chose a land overlooked by nature and abused by humans. The thin soil, steep slopes and low rainfall combine to create an ecologically fragile environment that has suffered over the years from shortsighted and insensitive farming and ranching practices.

The ranch land is sculpted out of the high lava plateaus

that lie to the north and west. It constitutes nearly two complete watersheds — the Muddy and Currant Creeks — which slope to the east where they join the John Day River. Looking east from the ranch one can see the beginning of Oregon's northeastern highlands, the alpine-like Blue Mountains. This is open range, big sky country and it is beautiful.

The low annual rainfall (12½" average) was once enough to provide a continuous flow of clean and clear water, even in the driest months. Wherever water exists in arid lands nature usually provides a bloom of life, a plant life which in turn provides a rich and varied habitat for animals large and small. This interactive system of water, plant and animal life, the riparian system, over the years becomes fine tuned to provide mutual support for all its parts.

Science is just beginning to understand the important role that the plants in a riparian system play in regulating the flow of water as well as cleansing the water through filtration of soil particles. Streams with a healthy riparian system carry clean water. If the riparian community is destroyed, one can expect streams with high sediment loads. One can also expect lower ground water levels if the rate of runoff is not checked by plants. Healthy up-



Solar Greenhouse, Rajneeshpuram

John Perry

land grasses and riparian vegetation lock the water in the soil long enough to allow percolation into the ground where it can stay and reemerge as a spring during drier periods. Plants are part of nature's flywheel, controlling and regulating the flow of water. Without their work water takes on a destructive role, flooding and eroding the land.

The first pioneers here saw a land that looked rugged but was, in fact, quite fragile. It could be ranched and farmed, but only with the greatest respect and sensitivity to the existing natural order. Easily harmed, it would be slow to heal.

Unfortunately, overgrazing has taken its toll at Muddy Creek Ranch. Much of the perennial grass on the hill-sides has been replaced by annual grasses. Weeds began to take over — cheatgrass and medusahead. Very little vegetation is left to slow runoff from a spring thaw or a flash storm. Gullies appeared, the soil transported down streams in intermittent muddy torrents. The cattle, unable to forage on the depleted slopes, grazed more and more along the banks of the streams. Plants and the habitats they helped to create were destroyed as cows trampled the banks and the streams. The water, loaded with sediment, no longer benefited from the cleansing action of the plants. Streams that once had perennial flows began to dry up in the summer. First it was only at the upper reaches. Later, as the ground water level dropped, some of the streams dried up along their entire length. Soon the junipers began to dominate the creek banks, denying water to nearby vegetation and inhibiting the natural, successional recovery of riparian plants. The creeks which once were a linear oasis in the desert became muddy wastelands incapable of supporting life.

The conditions found at Muddy Creek Ranch are, unfortunately, ones that most Oregonians have come to accept. But the followers of Rajneesh have a different vision and are realizing it with incredible speed. They are working toward the time when their ranch will provide most of the needs for their planned community of 2,000. Their short-term goal is to control erosion in the upland gullies and to rebuild the riparian systems.

Fences are being built to keep out livestock and grass is being planted in and along the gullies. Workers are cutting the junipers and laying the cuttings along the stream banks as an organic riprap where they will slow the water and promote the natural recovery of the riparian plants. Willow slips are being planted in place of the junipers. They are fast growing and will help to stabilize the soil and provide the needed canopy over the streams. The soil erosion program alone is an immense undertaking.

They have decided to halt the open grazing, even at a reduced level. But these people are not willing to settle for a smaller yield from the land. On the contrary, they expect more. The flat land in the low valleys will be intensively farmed. They have already constructed five greenhouses and planted 1,200 acres in grain. This spring they will plant 8,000 fruit trees as well as 18,000 grape slips. Sixty acres will be planted in alfalfa and another 50 acres in assorted vegetables.

None of this can be done without water for irrigation during the summer growing season. It is estimated that if just one inch of runoff from the entire watershed could be held on the land, it would be capable of irrigating 1,500 acres. The key to this will be a new dam that will impound water from the newly restored streams.

Major improvements in the riparian system are expected to happen quickly, but replenishment of the ground water will take longer — perhaps up to one hundred years. An aquifer recharge program is being considered to speed up that process.

Their plan is to be self-sufficient in food and to make a profit on their other operations within three to five years. There is much at stake. Much of what they are doing is untried. If they succeed they could be a bright spot in central Oregon's depressed economy. But the real success or failure of the project will hang on its ability to demonstrate a new way to settle the land. If they are right, they will have indeed produced a fitting tribute to their Master. □□

John is a Portland architect specializing in appropriate technology and renewable energy designs.



The author and a friend

Rusty Park © Matrix Institute

Have you discussed your hopes and dreams? Are you willing to commit your energy and money come hell or high water?

To Love, Honor, and Convey How To Create A Communal Ownership Contract

Owning land or buying a house doesn't mean you have to be — or get — rich. Nor does it mean you have to join or form a community with lots of people. You can do it with just a few close friends. I know. The communal ownership contract described below made it possible for four of us to buy 40 beautiful acres with an initial investment per person no higher than \$4000 and in one case as low as \$1000. Here's how.

— Mark Roseland

© by Becky West

Buying land (or a house) communally can be a piece of cake. All you need is a place that grabs your heart, a small amount of money, and plenty of time to do your homework.

A successful and happy purchase of 40 undeveloped acres in Oregon with three other people prompts me to share this information. We bring to our land a diversity of knowledge and experience. We are a writer, a nurse, a medical technologist and a special education teacher, of various ethnic and regional backgrounds. None of us have high-paying jobs, none of us have lots of money.

What we all have is a vision, a common desire to live on, own and care for land.

We found trust, knowledge, and the relationships you have with each other to be the essential ingredients for communal ownership. (Hopefully, lots of trust and knowledge.) Have you discussed your hopes and dreams? Are your attitudes toward life similar? Are you willing to commit your energy and your money for a period of time come hell or high water?

Although your contract will set the structure for your legal interactions, your day-to-day interactions will be much less defined. Begin with the intricacies of group dynamics. Assure one another of your willingness to be open, honest, and flexible. This is your foundation. Make it unshakeable.

With your interpersonal relationships clarified, it is time to look at some contractual considerations which you can later tailor to your particular needs. The following factors are integral to a successful and legal communal ownership contract. They are stated here briefly in a checklist form to provide the contract designer easy access to important considerations. This model may not

suit your exact needs, but it will give you a good overview from which to work. Listed at the end of the article are useful resources for models and examples of communal contracts. Do your homework, talk to people with experience, and draw from all your sources before you actually construct your own contract. Here's what you'll need to consider:

Title

The title heads the contract and states the general tone of the commitment to follow (e.g., "attunement," "agreement," etc.).

I. Identity of Communal Owners

This part states the names of the owners as they wish to appear on all legal documents (contracts, deeds, accounts).

II. Identification of Property

Each parcel of land has a specific location and legal description. This appears on the deed and is also registered with your County Recorder. The legal description can be given a name and used throughout the contract.

III. Use of the Property

This determines at the outset how the property will be used and for what purposes. Consider the advantages and disadvantages of private vs. public access (don't forget zoning).

IV. Shares/Units of Ownership

This segment determines the unit or share of an individual owner's investment as compared to the group's total investment. It is also the area where your financial and social creativity can emerge.

Rights, responsibilities, and powers are often determined by weight of investment and/or length of involvement. There may be a group of initial primary investors followed by a group of secondary investors. You can shape this section to fit your own preferences for cooperation and democracy in decision-making.

It's a good idea to safeguard your feelings of communication and trust by being as explicit as possible in determining who has what rights and responsibilities and when they have them. Being clear about this may seem like an extra hassle now, but if you can't be explicit and agree on this part you may later find yourselves with "big troubles." Consider:

- _____ the current determination of \$/shares invested
- _____ differing levels of financial commitment
- _____ the rights, responsibilities and powers of each owner

V. Tenancy

Tenancy deals with the actuality of living on the property. It determines how the property will be occupied and under what conditions. Consider:

- _____ undivided or parcelled ownership
- _____ the status of resident and non-resident owners
- _____ the rights of non-owner residents (friends, renters)

VI. Major Financial Responsibilities

This category determines where your major expense money will go, when it will go, and who will get it there. Consider:

- _____ meeting your monthly payments of interest (mostly) and principal
- _____ determining priorities for investment and work on major improvements
- _____ your method of recording major expenses
- _____ a contingency plan if you should fail to meet your payments

_____ loans and their potential benefits and hazards for your group

_____ determining and recording the value of sweat equity

VII. Minor Financial Responsibilities

This concerns money spent for basic upkeep of the property, usually in the form of monthly or annual payments. Consider:

- _____ how to determine, pay, and record yearly taxes and monthly/yearly maintenance funds
- _____ how to determine, acquire and record additional assets or equipment

VIII. Termination of Contract

Changes in life sometimes demand changes in responsibilities. These situations often lend themselves to a re-evaluation or termination of an existing contract. Consider:

- _____ the transfer or sale of an individual's share or investment (including determination of the property's value at the time of transfer)
- _____ the choice of "tenants in common" (in death ownership passes to heirs) or "joint tenants with right of survivorship" (in death ownership passes to surviving owners)
- _____ the conditions under which the property may be sold and how the proceeds will be distributed

IX. Meetings

For the most part, owners will be in frequent contact with one another, making formal group meetings unnecessary. If this is not the case, and even if it is, it may be worthwhile to schedule group meetings so that visions and concerns can be discussed and key decisions reached.

X. Amendments

Try as we might to include every aspect of uncertainty the first go around, new information inevitably appears and needs to be addressed. Develop a procedure for the addition of new information to the existing contract.

XI. Arbitration

What, us disagree??? Hopefully not, but if you should ever find yourselves unable to resolve a dispute, a plan for the selection of an impartial arbitrator can save both time and money.

XII. Date and Signatures

This is it. The end. Oh boy! On the final page of your meticulously completed contract provide a space for the date, the place of signing, and the signature of each happy owner.

You have read about communal ownership. You have a helpful example of a communal contract (see access) to model toward or from. Now you begin to write. Prepare yourselves for at least a full day's worth of discussion and writing. Fortify yourselves with wine and nutritious food. Be flexible. Be adaptable.

After you proudly hold the finalized version of your communal contract, you have but one step remaining. Take the contract to a lawyer you respect and trust to certify that the legal lingo is correct and will stand up in your state against any potential dispute. If your lawyer says this is all illegal or impossible find yourself another lawyer, one who knows this rather innovative legal terrain. Once certified, sign it, date it, and welcome to communal ownership! □ □

Becky is a consultant and board member of the Matrix Institute in Applegate, OR.

ACCESS

***Shared Houses, Shared Lives: The New Extended Families and How They Work*, by Eric Raimey, 1979, 216 pp., \$4.95 from:**

St. Martin's Press
175 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY 10010

Raimey describes the origins of the communal household, explores the significance of this growing trend, and offers the budding life-sharer a fairly comprehensive guide to joining or setting up a shared household. We were turned on to Appendix C, "The Communal Home Ownership Agreement," by some friends

who used it to help draft out a contract when they bought a house together in the city. We found a copy in our library — you might, too.

"General Agreement and Attunement," donation plus .50¢ p&h from:

The Matrix Institute
PO Box 240
Applegate, OR 97530

The absolutely best way to design your communal land or home ownership contract, of course, is to find a successful

example to use as a model. If you ask around enough, you may find some folks in your area with contract experience and a willingness to share it. Then again, you may not find anyone who knows what you're looking for. To help you out, we're making our contract available through the Matrix Institute, a non-profit research and educational center with operations based on our land. The newly-formed Matrix Institute is organized in part to help people get on land and stay on land — through information access, integrated ecological systems, and attunement to people and nature. Contact us if we can be of assistance!

Of Land and the City



by Patrick Mazza

The most profound economic truth I ever heard came not from a professional economist or a university professor, but from an old farmer in Quincy, Washington. "All wealth comes from the land," he told me.

That simple statement focused my thinking in a new way. It gave me a tool for understanding economics that many conventional economists seem to ignore. It made clear to me that rural areas are of fundamental importance to the entire economy, that cities are completely dependent on what they import from the country.

The modern, industrial city is like a space station. It requires uninterrupted shipments of food, energy, raw materials and sometimes even water from planet earth. The city must keep its vital connection with the land, for the land is the source of its life.

Yet as significant as the countryside is, its importance is not acknowledged in the basic economic relationships that govern our society. The American countryside is in the same position as any Third World country. Its raw materials are sold to the industrial metropolis for low prices, and re-purchased in much more costly processed form. The city sets the terms of the market, so the price of raw materials does not keep pace with the cost of industrial goods. The flow of wealth is from the countryside to the metropolis.

This unequal relationship leaves rural areas economically and ecologically damaged. The impacts include depopulation of the land, generally poor incomes, disastrous soil erosion, depletion of water, mutilation of forests and employment of rip-and-run mining practices. Increasing amounts of rural land, especially in the Western U.S., are being sacrificed to the energy god. Now, more

than ever, the question must be asked — Will our rural areas be merely resource colonies for the cities, or will they be renewed as living communities?

Urban as well as rural people have an interest in a sound answer to this question, for while rapid and cheap extraction of resources benefits cities in the short run, in the long run it means disaster. Destroying rural economies drives people into the cities, thus increasing unemployment and competition for available jobs. Ruining rural ecosystems erodes the basis of urban civilization, which is the ability of the land to produce surplus wealth. Without a sustainable and healthy rural economy, the cities too will be economically sick. The illusion of separation cannot last much longer. We truly are all connected.

That consciousness is perhaps farther advanced in the countryside, if for no other reason than that rural people are experiencing firsthand the devastating effects of the exploitative economy. The economic depression that has hit many cities has already spread through most American rural areas. Where most of the cheaply extracted trees or minerals have been removed, there is massive unemployment. Where farmers have become heavily dependent on increasingly costly manufactured fertilizers, chemicals and equipment, which is virtually everywhere on this continent, they are finding it tougher and tougher to stay afloat.

The desperate economic condition of rural areas is a result of control by urban institutions that have little interest in the longterm cultural and ecological integrity of the countryside. The people who live in a place generally realize there is a limit to how much they can foul their own nest. They have a stake in its fate. This is not true of

planners in distant urban towers who see rural areas as places from which to extract maximum economic gain according to "rational" calculations of costs and benefits. For rural communities to survive, their inhabitants must take the future into their own hands.

In many areas, this starts with the restoration of diversified agriculture. Though the exploitation of country by city is in some ways as old as civilization, the rise of one-crop farming has added a new dimension. Many rural communities have become dependent on food shipped from other regions, an absurd situation for places that could be nutritionally self-sufficient. Monoculture cropping, by using the best land, forces the import of food and the export of income. It also makes rural areas far more vulnerable to price swings.

Another step towards the economic revival of rural communities is to bring back traditional renewable energy sources such as wind, wood, water and draft animals. The rise of the petroleum economy has meant a continual drain on rural income, a drain that did not exist just a few decades ago.

An example of the efforts that are being made to reverse the food and energy dependency of rural areas and to revive the countryside economy is a study being done by the Partnership for Rural Improvement in Okanogan County, Washington. The topics of the study read like an agenda for the economic renewal of rural America:

- 1) A search for new and old crops to produce food and energy and to ease dependence on monoculture crops (in this case, apples);
- 2) Creation of new collective and cooperative arrangements for direct farmer-to-consumer marketing, a step that leaves more money in farmers' pockets by eliminating middlemen;
- 3) Development of locally controlled financing through co-op banks and credit unions;
- 4) Establishment of a consulting network to help small farmers solve problems, and,

5) Encouragement of small, local industries that supply and support the rural economy.

Such steps make it easier for individuals and families to get into farming and to stay there. Behind the study is a realization that the small farm is the key to re-populating and reviving the countryside.

The Okanogan study focuses on what a small, rural county can do to help itself. Such local solutions are necessary to create a rural economic renaissance. But it will take a national effort as well. The decline of the farm population must be understood for what it is, a great failure that has left vast stretches of the United States culturally and economically barren. National agricultural research and aid must be directed toward helping small farmers rather than agribusiness. Less expensive farming techniques and supplies must be developed.

More than that, the flow of wealth must be made less one-sided. Rural areas must once again become food and energy self-sufficient. Production of commonly used goods must be dispersed. Incentives should be given for job creation in the countryside, so more people can return to small towns and open country. In sum, economic power must be decentralized.

Polls consistently indicate that most city dwellers would rather live in the country. But people are blocked by economics. The jobs are in the cities. The flow of wealth in our economy makes this inevitable. So cities become more crowded and unliveable, and rural areas become poorer. We become cut off from nature, and are forced to participate in continental and global systems that deplete nature and make a future less possible. There is no sustainability in this. The angst that pervades cities is perhaps an unconscious recognition of this fact. Common sense dictates that we change course. The land is the vital connection for city and country dweller alike. It must be wisely used and deeply respected. If we are interested in survival, economic and ecological, we really have no other choice. □□

ACCESS

***Land in America: its Value, Use and Control*, by Peter Wolf, 1981, 591 pp., \$20.00, from:**

**Random House
201 E. 50th St.
New York, NY 10022**

Directed toward a lay audience, *Land in America* challenges the mystique of land/real estate as the most secure and tangible investment: a hedge against inflation. Instead, Wolf suggests, the land market and the future of land as a resource are at a crossroads, effected by intricate connections between government policy and private wealth. It is these interrelations that provide the primary focus for Wolf's writing.

Mingling photographs, commentary and quotes, Wolf creates a vivid historical portrayal of land ownership in the U.S. That history has shaped the thinking of North Americans about land: the trans-

fer of massive amounts of publicly owned land to private property at minimal prices (to appease the masses and build up the federal coffers); land speculation that drove up land prices many times over; town booms and crashes with the advent of the railroads; and the systematic removal of Native Americans from their lands. In the past decade there has been a difficult transition from absolute private rights to increased public control, punctuated by heated court battles. In the last twenty years the debate surrounding land law has intensified, characterized by some as the "quiet revolution." This legal context, Wolf suggests, defines the battle between land as a commodity and land as a resource.

Public policy, in areas such as transportation, environmental protection, land use zoning, and federal tax regulation has also had significant and often underrated impact on the value of land. Wolf describes these connections and their in-

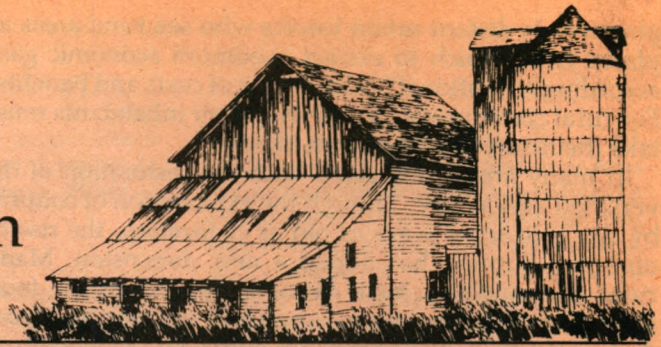
herent inconsistencies. For example, rather than taxing wealth, discrepancies in how real estate taxes are applied favor large landowners over small. Land trusts, designed to protect specific parcels of land from development, often cause the value of adjacent lands to escalate. And zoning, developed to protect vital areas, has too often become a tool of discrimination, escalating housing costs and forcing out low- and moderate-income people.

Brief historical tid-bits, current day examples, and clear technical explanations make *Land in America* a good beginning text. What *Land in America* lacks in documentation (no references are cited for many of Wolf's declarations), is balanced by the book's readability. Wolf's point is not to expand government or create new legislation, but to evaluate the impact of existing laws. With this clarity, he suggests, we can improve planning and future protection of our land resources.

— Laura Stuchinsky

Milking It For All It's Worth

A Scale of Two Farmers



by Bruce and Ann Borquist

A commercial dairy in an isolated area of Oregon's Tillamook County is not where you would expect to find a journalist who majored in Chinese history at Radcliffe and a psychiatrist with years of experience and successful practices in two major cities. But in late 1977 Viviane and Ted Tallman bought a defunct 160-acre dairy farm with "no clear idea of what we were going to do with it" other than the goal of living more rurally, simply, and "lightly." As Vivi says, "We came to the farm with the firm conviction that with enough elbow grease and problem solving skills we could master most any problem that came our way. It was Wendell Berry, Laura Ingalls Wilder, and Horatio Alger all in one."

The one goal overshadowing all others has been to remain solvent. That has meant putting some "organic" goals on the back burner.

Young cows bought in 1978 started producing milk the next year, and animal by animal the herd was built. Today, Ted and Vivi manage 90 Jersey cows, 50 milkers and 40 young ones, altogether producing about 500,000 pounds of milk annually for the Tillamook County Creamery Association, a very successful producer's co-op that makes cheese. Like other Tillamook County dairy farmers, half of their \$80,000 annual milk income goes for feed, with the balance taken by labor, fixed costs, and supplies. Even though the Tillamook Creamery pays more for milk than almost any other in the country, Ted must practice psychiatry part-time in Portland to support the family. "It's marginal any way you look at it," they say, and the long-term goal is simply to break even, at least until the mortgage is paid off. For Ted, Vivi, and their family the years since 1977 have been ones of struggle, growth, and re-evaluation as they pursue the goal of making a new kind of life as commercial farmers with homesteader's values.

Not many people will go "back to the land" and start dairies this year. Some will consider going commercial in order to support themselves, though, and here the Tallmans' experiences can be valuable. They started out with the ideal of running a family dairy that was labor-intensive and environmentally sound, but as it expanded compromises had to be made. The one goal overshadowing all others has been to remain solvent, and that has meant putting some of their original "organic" goals on the back burner. It started with the new West German milking machines, then they had to spray for tansy ragwort when they didn't have time to dig it under. This year they had to dust their cows with an insecticide for lice and will probably have to spray against flies in the summer so milk production doesn't fall off. Each time the compromise has been painful, but seemingly necessary.

In many ways, theirs is a problem of scale. Homesteaders can use labor-intensive alternative methods, while large commercial farms have the methods and products created for them by university and corporate research. Compromise has been necessary for the Tallmans because of the size of their operation and the physical effort it takes to maintain it. While in their limited free time they do research alternatives — "when we have energy left" — those alternatives often mean still more work. When you "barely have time to go to the feed store to buy the recommended [chemical] powder," the financial and emotional risk involved in depending on an "organic" method that may or may not work as well is too great. It's a dilemma — a balancing act that is present in every decision.

Some ideals won't be sacrificed. They still have the long range goal of operating a family farm that is gentle on the environment and so they will not use chemical fertilizers on their pastures. The real bottom line for them is their family. If they ever have to make a choice between the farm and the family, the family is more important.

Each year the Tallmans learn more, and hard choices may come more easily with experience. They read the stock manuals and the journals when they can, but more and more they rely on conversations over the fence and in feed stores with other dairy farmers in the area. The wisdom accumulated through years of living and working in that one place is what they are gaining now, and they have learned there is no substitute for that. It has been, and probably will continue to be, an uphill struggle to keep the farm, but you sense a hopefulness in them now that "living with the cows, the plants, and the windstorms" they will find their way to the "sustainable" farm of their dreams. □□

To Beat or Become? That Is, The System

by Mark Roseland

The vote's still coming in on the dream of rural self-sufficiency, but the tally so far indicates that if you really want to make it on your land (or at home), away from the drugery and cheap thrills of the 9-to-5 routine, you'd better try to insure that your cash flow is two-way.

Cash flow is a simple concept. To improve it you either make more money or spend less. Obviously (at least to those of us who choose to "live lightly"), it makes more sense to spend less cents. And our experience is vast enough now that we've even developed *methods!* For uplifting overviews full of helpful tricks, see *How To Survive Without Money*, by Charles Long (1981, 220 pp., \$7.95 from John Wiley & Sons Canada Limited, 22 Worcester Road, Rexdale, Ontario M9W 1L1 CANADA) and *The Barter Book: The Consumer's Guide to Living Well Without Using Money*, by Dyanne Asimow Simon, (1979, 152 pp., \$4.50 from E. P. Dutton, 2 Park Avenue, New York, NY 10016).

The other, not quite as sensible way to improve your cash flow is to make a living. There are several ways to do this, of course, but for the moment let's think grandiose.

If you always worked for somebody else you may well think that starting your own corporation is only possible for the very rich or the very smart. That's just what you're supposed to think — but it ain't true! All you need is a good idea, perhaps a little capital (can be borrowed or scrounged), and lots of labor, imagination, and perseverance (your own!).

It's the initial paperwork, however, that nips it in the bud for lots of people. That's no longer necessary, fortunately, as a trip to the business shelf of any good bookstore will reveal a variety of helpful "how-to" titles. One of the best, *The Complete Layman's Guide To Forming A Corporation — In Any State* (by John C. Howell, 1982, 110 pp., \$5.95 from Prentice-Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, NJ 07632), even contains sample forms to guide your every step.

If your orientation is more toward the public good than private gain, forming a non-profit corporation may suit your purposes. It involves substantially more paperwork, but there's no need to be intimidated — and you may be eligible for tax-exempt status. It helps greatly to see the files of a similar non-profit, but you can probably make do with any or all of the following:

- "How to Incorporate and Become Tax-Exempt," by Ken Bossong, 1979, \$1.45 from Citizens' Energy Project, 1110 Sixth St. NW, Suite #300, Washington, D.C. 20001, 202/387-8998.
- "Model Incorporation and Tax Exemption Application Documents," \$4.00 from National Economic Develop-

ment and Law Center, 2150 Shattuck Avenue, #300, Berkeley, CA 94704, 415/548-2600.

- Technical Assistance to Community Services (TACS), 1903 SE Ankeny, Portland, OR 97214, 503/239-4001, is working on a book for non-profit groups with the Community Law Project in Portland. Meanwhile, TACS gives a variety of workshops and is available for consultation.

• Publication 557, free, from the Internal Revenue Service (they're everywhere — look in your phone book), tells you how to fill out IRS Form 1023, the application for tax-exemption. Not exactly entertaining, but helpful. As with all projects of this sort, you've no need for a lawyer (if at all) until *after* you've done your own research — you'll be amazed at how quickly and cheaply you can get out of a lawyer's office! □ □



Karen Gottstein

Older and More Manure New Developments In Rural Information

by Steve Johnson

In 1974, the year that *RAIN* started, a fledgling group called Tilth hosted a Northwest regional conference on alternative agriculture. Held in Ellensburg, Washington, the conference drew over seven hundred people. Some planned and many more spontaneous workshops were held. There were few experts and, relative to now, very little technical information; but it didn't matter because it was clear that just sharing what information existed and communicating about experiences and problems made the conference worthwhile. Since then conferences as a means to share information and create communication networks have become a tradition, and the techniques for convening them an art form.

Since then, too, new ideas as well as revitalized old ideas have emerged to meet the information and communication needs of rural communities. Directories of individuals listing skills, resources, and needs have been published; formalized networks have been created; and information and communication network-oriented journals such as *Smallholder* have been started. Political associations have emerged, and resource centers, community centers, book lending services, traveling energy roadshows and bookmobiles have been tried. There is no doubt that the movement which started out as a back-to-the-land movement has matured, leaving most vestiges of its naive beginnings behind. There have been changes of perception among these new age homesteaders about what it means to drop out, the relationships between their personal lives and the larger political world, and their relationship to rural and urban areas. The ideas, technical information, and structures for organized resource sharing, marketing, trade, and political analysis are mature institutions and processes that have had a tremendous (if not completely transformational) effect on rural life. Information based on careful research is more available to new settlers, and communication networks (often informal) tie individuals together, linking up the watersheds in a region.

In the State of Washington, thanks in some degree to the now defunct Appropriate Technology Small Grants Program, several rural resource centers and libraries have been formed, including the NEWACT Resource Center (P.O. Box 385, Republic, WA 99166). The Resource Center recently published a catalog of current publications useful for small farms and others interested in sustainable agriculture and appropriate technology (\$1.00).

The Tilth Information Service (P.O. Box 7094, Olympia, WA 98507), is a mail-order book service for sustainable small farmers, urban gardeners, and suburban permaculturists. The book selection is sizable and carefully select-

ed. The catalog, which costs \$1.50 ppd., is a good read by itself.

Food for Thought Books (67 N. Pleasant St., Amherst, MA 01002, 413/253-5432) is a non-profit, collectively-run storefront and mail order book service with an excellent selection of energy and social change titles, including many hard to find "out of print" books — their catalogs are good reading, too. If you become a member (\$15-\$30/yr.), you get a free book of your choice (up to \$10 value) and 10% off on anything in the store for a year. Volunteers get a 20% discount.

The EarthWorks Lending Library (P.O. Box 556, Harmony, PA 16037) is a national mail-order rental library system, specializing in self-sufficiency do-it-yourself titles. A \$5.00 membership fee gets you in, and \$1.00 per title (which can go toward the purchase of the book) gets the title of your choice sent to you.

A new challenge for the movement occurred in 1978 when Control Data Corporation announced its Rural Venture program for small farmers, a computer-oriented service whose purported goal was to help small farmers attain information and technical assistance. It is difficult, at this point in time, to see the proper place for electronic information and communication systems in the small farm or alternative food production movement. Some would venture to say leave it alone; unfortunately, as with other battles, there is no place to hide. We've passed the watermark; it's too late to turn back.

Another, more positive way of looking at this growth of new electronic technology is to take a step forward: pro-acting, seeking ways to use the technology to further the goals of sustainable agriculture and sustaining the established communication networks. For example, rising fuel costs may eventually limit the frequency of interactions between communities. Without inexpensive transportation, valleys and mountains may once again take on their old qualities of husky physical boundaries. Mass transit and elaborate information and communication technology will allow for continued information exchange in the cities, but communities more exclusively dependent on automobiles might become more isolated. Fortunately, micro-computer networks and interactive cable-TV systems that can sustain communication are now available. Computer-based networks are already being used for sharing research findings, matching skills and needs on electronic bulletin boards, and accessing tremendous stores of knowledge available through other large computers.

In the late 1970s new information services were developed for use on interactive cable-TV, starting with

systems in Britain (Ceefax and Oracle). The new services, variously called "videotex," "teletext," and "viewdata" have been a major topic of interest in the information and communication industries. Major corporations, including IBM and AT&T, are jumping into the ballgame, particularly since the recent settlement with the Department of Justice which has freed AT&T to compete in the growing information delivery service field. Analysts have predicted a \$15 billion market for videotex services alone by 1985; they have also predicted a \$1 billion videotex industry in agriculture itself by the same year.

A surprising number of agriculture computer projects are already up and running. The American Farm Bureau has pilot projects at the University of Kentucky and the University of Maryland which are in part supported by USDA. The Professional Farmers of America have a service called Instant Update. They also provide a data base called Agvision to Elanco Corporation customers who

receive a videotex terminal when they buy 250 gallons of Treglan, a weed killer that Elanco markets. Firsthand is offered by the First Bank System of Minneapolis and is being tested with two hundred farm sites in North Dakota. Agnet provides information and electronic messaging to extension agents and other interested participants. Doan-Western, which publishes *Agricultural Computers*, a periodical, is making it available on-line. One of the most ambitious projects is Grassroots, which uses the Telidon videotex system. The information service is presently being offered in Manitoba and to some farm sites in the San Joaquin Valley in California.

Information is powerful, and the challenge of the new technology is to keep it flowing. If information and communications networks are open and accessible to all, we may eventually witness a durable and sensitive rural revival. □□

I've Looked At Codes From Both Sides Now

by Tom Bender

Building codes have glibly been made the scapegoat for housing problems by developers and owner-builders alike. A different story has emerged, however, as I have explored the energetics and economics of housing over the last ten years, and worked with codes and construction as an owner-builder and as an architect.

To learn more, last year I took a job as a part-time building inspector. It has given me a chance to look more thoroughly at housing construction and codes in operation. I've had to deal with builder's and homeowner's constant code questions as well as my own. I've gotten an inside view of the people responsible for code writing and enforcement, and the good and bad of developers, contractors and owner-builders. I've probably asked them more questions than they have asked me. I've also seen the side of building that many people don't — the effects of inadequate foundations, roofs ripped off by high winds, houses ripped apart for expensive repair of rot and termite damage, and houses pushed into the ocean by landslides. My present feeling — still open to challenge — is that most codes and code requirements are pretty reasonable, and worth the hassle in 99% of the cases. Here's why.

The reasons for many code requirements are not obvious in everyday living. Houses have to be designed for extreme as well as everyday conditions. Clearance requirements for woodstove installations, for example, may seem excessive. You might feel differently, however, if you've ever had a chimney fire, or have ever gone into your kitchen for a couple of minutes and returned to find

a visitor has unwittingly filled your woodstove with pitch logs. Having to sit up until three in the morning with all doors and windows wide open and a stove so hot you can't get within six feet of it makes you think differently about adequate clearance to combustibles.

Similarly, code-built houses are unquestionably overbuilt. They're not designed for the one 95 lb. macrobiotic Zen student living there this week, but for the oddball (there's a lot of us) with several tons of friends, books, antique cannons or waterbeds who may be the next occupant. They're also designed for the considerable abuse that most houses have to take over their lifetimes — accidental or purposeful construction errors, hacking up by plumbers, weekend remodelers or termites, and nudging by bad drivers. Real-life strength requirements are very different from laboratory theories.

Codes have major benefits to a community. Many code requirements, such as for foundations, have improved housing durability significantly and reduced the far more expensive periodic repair and replacement necessitated by less farsighted construction. Housing durability is by far the most important element in the economic costs of housing. A house lasting 400 years (not unreasonable), rather than 80 years, reduces the economic cost per year by 80%. Fire and life safety requirements also help prevent the premature loss of buildings as well as reducing emotional and economic losses resulting from fires.

Codes protect owners against unscrupulous or incompetent builders. They give builders equal performance specifications to bid against, and are a good source for

adequate construction practices. Codes help avoid causes of liability and lawsuits. They eliminate the need for detailed review of hidden parts of a building at each stage of its life: construction, financing, and resale. Most people never look behind the walls of a home, and benefit from some assurance that the plumbing, wiring and structure are there, will work, and work properly.

Most complaints against building codes concern the one percent of the population wanting to be "experimental owner-builders." That experimentation is important, and some of these complaints are valid. My first experiences with the codes, as an owner-builder with little detailed knowledge of the codes, may be typical. I didn't know what *was* required, was intimidated at having to purchase an expensive, thick and difficult code reference, and had an underlying fear the codes would force me to do something I didn't want to do, couldn't afford, or hadn't made provisions for in my design. I didn't know that a small and readable booklet, *One and Two Family Dwelling Code* was available which covered the

I've seen the side of building that many people don't — the effects of inadequate foundations, roofs ripped off by high winds . . .

residential code requirements of all national codes. That would have helped a lot! I had heard a lot of horror stories and was afraid an inspector might accidentally or purposefully hassle me. One did. If I knew then what I know now, I could have more easily gotten him off my back. Looking back, I'm actually glad the codes forced me to do some things I didn't want to take time for in the press of construction.

Most of the code restrictions resulting in the excessive building costs mentioned in Edmund Vitale and Ken Kern's books have been eliminated. Sheetrock, plastic plumbing, single top plates, owner-wiring and plumb-ing, romex wire, etc., are now generally permitted.

Owner-builder advocates say codes make no provision for alternative ways of building. This is only partly true. Most codes *require* approval of alternatives, but (I think rightly) require *you* to do a competent job of demonstrating that the alternative will perform adequately. In most cases, that merely means doing structural calculations that should have been done anyhow, or getting an architect or engineer to check out the design and approve it. Some structures, such as domes, can't be calculated easily, but should have been tested by the original designer and such information made available.

No code can satisfy everyone. If simplified structural tables are given only for douglas fir beams (most of what is sold), people complain that alternatives are not allowed. If tables are included for all strength/stiffness situations, people complain that the code is too complex to use. If inspectors are usually older, experienced builders, they're blamed for being conservative and considered rejects from the construction business. If they are young and technically trained, they're blamed for lack of maturity and practical building experience. One book complains in the same paragraph both that there are more than 2000 different codes in effect in the U.S. and that codes are too standardized and don't take into account local conditions!

Almost every code-reform book includes a standard tirade against flush toilets. Having been involved in development of compost toilets, their code approval, and having built and used one for five years, I've found many of the code concerns about materials, operation and health problems quite justified, and have found very few designs and installations that have performed adequately. After more than ten years, I still see no broadly acceptable alternative to the flush toilet on the market. In this case, the code reformers are the ones who have not measured up to their claims.

Codes have generally changed for the better over the last ten years. Oregon, whose code I know best, now has an owner-builder exemption which eliminates a number of code requirements. (It's buried, however, in the appendix, with no reference from the contents or index!) Recycled and ungraded lumber is permitted with visual inspection of the building inspector. Compost toilets and woodstoves are legal. Electricity is not required, and privys are not specifically outlawed. There is a little-known provision for seasonal homes permitting a hand-filled tank of water to qualify for a water supply, a pitcher and washbasin for a sink, a tin tub for a bathtub, and a compost toilet for toilet requirement. The Basic Building Code (BBC) specifically includes mortise and tenon woodframe construction. Domes, solar systems, demand water heaters and heat exchangers are now code-approved in many states. More widespread adoption of such changes can go a long ways to providing necessary code flexibility for experimentation and more varied lifestyles.

In addition to actual code changes, the way we approach codes and inspectors is an important element in how easy our building process becomes. Some pointers:

1. **Have your act together when you go to deal with your inspector.** When you don't know where your property lines are, have only a vague sense of what you want to build, or leave out posts or beams in your plans, you make it hard for your inspector to believe much of anything you try to convince them of.
2. **Deal one-on-one if at all possible.** It's easier for an inspector to bend a rule without others around. Try not to deal with more than one inspector at a time — together they try harder not to miss something that the other inspector might catch.
3. **Treat inspector as people.** Our often-negative attitudes towards them makes their attitudes more negative, and also keeps better people from doing the job. Draw them out, ask for their ideas on how to solve problems. You might find they have some good ideas, and it will certainly improve your relationship.
4. **Know your code.** Get the *One and Two Family*

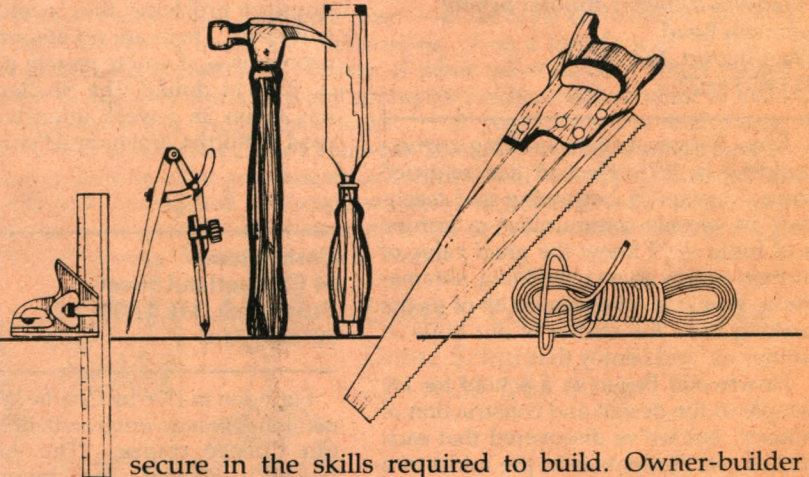
Dwelling Code (\$14.25 ppd. including supplement from Building News Inc., Northwest Division, 4306 SW Admiral Ct., Portland, OR 97221) or read the few sections of your local code dealing with housing. Ask questions. If told to do something you don't want, ask for the code reference for the decisions, ask what exceptions there might be or alternatives. READ that code section. Call the state code department and ask them what alternatives, interpretations or exceptions might apply.

5. **Find out if other codes allow what your code doesn't.** (See Vitale's book for a good overview of differences). That's the quickest and best support for a code challenge or appeal, or to give an inspector a basis to approve what you want as an alternative.
6. **Ask about the appeal process if you get a decision you don't like.** Ask about the inspector's authority. See if it is a code or zoning requirement, who can reverse the decision or who has final say in the department. Many decisions get rethought rather than go through the bother of appeal.
7. **An architect or engineer's stamp on your drawings is magic.** The engineer accepts liability, takes your

inspector off the hook, and lets them know you've had some (supposedly) competent review of your project. It may be a justified necessity if you're doing something really oddball.

8. **Lay your cards on the table** (usually). If an inspector thinks you're not playing straight, you're liable to have everything gone over with a fine-toothed comb.
9. **Get a copy of Edmund Vitale's *Building Regulations*** (\$12.95 from Charles Scribner's Sons, 597 Fifth Ave., New York, NY 10017). Many details are out of date, but it is an excellent source of how different codes cover different topics, how to challenge an inspector's decisions, how to read the code (what it really requires, doesn't require, or is really vague on), and lots of other good tips on dealing with inspectors and codes. It's the best detailed source on dealing with codes.
10. **Don't blame codes for a bad design.** Outstanding homes can be built with no code problems. Codes don't cause bad designs. But not dealing with safety, structural, and other valid concerns until too late *can* cause an expensive mess with any design.
Happy building! □□

If I Had a Hammer Tools For Owner-Builders



by Tanya Kucak

*And they shall build houses, and inhabit them . . .
They shall not build, and another inhabit . . .*

— Isaiah, early owner-builder

Most people have built their own houses, often with help from family and friends. It is only in the last hundred years that large numbers of people have not participated in the design and building of their shelter. From the kit houses in Sears catalogues of the early 1900s to the boxy clones built by contractors in suburban developments, more and more control over our surroundings has been relinquished and our dwellings have become more impersonal and even interchangeable. It was not always like this.

Vernacular architecture and folk traditions — pueblos of the Southwest, for instance — remind us that shelter suited to the bioregion and climate, responsive to the physical and cultural needs of the people, and built with local materials and ingenuity can take on many forms while maintaining a natural and even artistic unity with the environment. When we build our own houses we can experiment exuberantly, exploring passive solar and energy-conserving design and trying out many ideas to see what will work — all of this while remaining rooted in a place.

But before we can play with the ideas we need to be

secure in the skills required to build. Owner-builder schools build both confidence and know-how as they demystify the process of building. All of these schools provide the information and the hands-on practice needed to build intelligently and economically. According to the Owner Builder Center, an owner-built house saves 58% of the cost of a comparable contractor-built house — even more if recycled materials are used.

All of the schools listed below offer a full range of courses, from short courses in cabinetmaking or plumbing (\$50-\$100) to semester-long evening courses on housebuilding and remodeling (\$200-\$300) to 3-week summer intensive residential courses (\$375-\$600). Summer courses are often booked solid six months before they start — classes are generally kept small (30-40) and publicity in national publications like *Time* and *Newsweek* stirs considerable interest. Students who have taken the courses are enthusiastic, and anywhere from 30 to 70% of them eventually build, subcontract, or remodel.

Cornerstones and the Shelter Institute run bookstores and publish excellent booklists — a good place to find the books worth reading for ideas and solid information. Shelter Institute and the Owner Builder Center also publish quarterly newsletters featuring information on new products and stories about the houses built by their graduates. □□

ACCESS

Yestermorrow
Box 344
Warren, VT 05674
802/496-3437

Yestermorrow's focus is on design-integrated or "whole system" design. Founded in 1980, this is one of the schools trained by the Owner Builder Center and the only one of those offering summer residency as well as evening courses. Like the other schools, Yestermorrow requires no previous experience — "only common sense and the desire to learn" — and imposes no age requirement — "you're never too old; students under 15 must be interviewed."

Heartwood Owner-Builder School
Johnson Road
Washington, MA 01235
413/623-6677

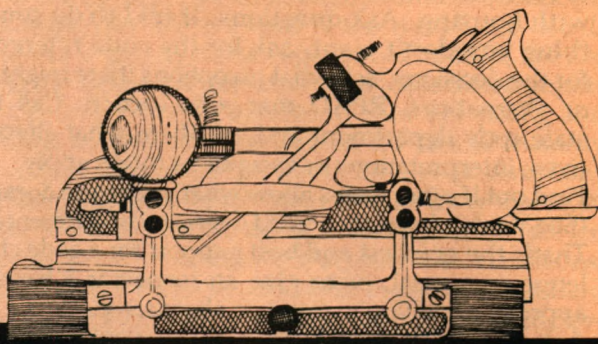
Elias Velonis began teaching owner-building in 1978. He had just returned from "7 years of carpentering and teaching" in various communities in Europe and India — "I knew the great value of human energy given in building, shramadana, how it symbolizes for all of us the making new, the shelter of our hope. It unifies us, and I enjoy that.

Heartwood began as a school for lay people in the design and construction of houses, but we've discovered that each one of our students is in the midst of a personal transition that involves questions of lifestyle, identity, motivation, even the spiritual. And so it happens that all of us here become models — examples of a lifestyle that most of them didn't know was possible — whereas we're just folks up here in the Berkshire hills trying to make sense out of it all, and live kindly and lightly. Several students have told me we give them *permission* to take control of their lives!"

Heartwood is entirely residential, offering 3-week courses from June to September.

The Shelter Institute
38 Centre Street
Bath, ME 04530
207/442-7938

The Shelter Institute began in 1974 because Pat Hennin, the director, was asked to build more environmentally conscious houses than he could in 1972 and 1973. "We realized," co-director Patsy Hennin says, "that if more people had



the right information they could design and/or build their own houses better — more to suit their own needs and their finances. Pat grew up believing that people were capable of solving problems, that given the right understanding of physical problems they could be self-sufficient. There are no insurmountable problems — if you're certain you can do it, it'll get done." The Shelter Institute has taken its 3-week intensives on the road to North Carolina and Pennsylvania.

Cornerstones
54 Cumberland Street
Brunswick, ME 04011
207/729-5103

Founded in 1976 by Charlie Wing, Cornerstones was an outgrowth of his Bowdoin College course, "The Art of the House." Besides the owner-builder school, Cornerstones maintains a full-time research and development department devoted to developing a steady flow of state-of-the-art information on energy efficiency and passive solar building techniques. Cornerstones also offers special housebuilding and carpentry courses for women.

The Owner Builder Center
1824 4th Street
Berkeley, CA 94710
415/848-5950

The Owner Builder Center began teaching housebuilding classes in 1979 and within a year was seeding the owner-builder movement across the country by offering training for people to start their own owner-builder schools. About a dozen more schools have begun this way, from Anchorage to Chapel Hill, most of them, like the Berkeley center, in urban areas. Courses are offered in several California locales as well.

Before You Build: A Preconstruction Guide, by Robert Roskind, 1981, 150 pp., \$7.95 plus 50¢ p&h from:

Ten Speed Press
P.O. Box 7123
Berkeley, CA 94707

Buying land and building a house is a tremendous organizational challenge. All too often unexpected costs or poor planning introduces such stress to the owner-builder that the potential for creative personal expression is lost. Robert Roskind, of the Owner-builder Center in Berkeley, has developed a preconstruction guide to significantly reduce that stress.

At first glance, the workbook format, with its abundance of empty page space, suggests simplicity. However, anyone who is seriously considering buying land and building her or his own home had best take a good look! All those empty blanks are preceded by well-organized, in-depth questions on subjects ranging from understanding your land, to dealing with permits and codes, to developing the inner resources necessary for undertaking such a project.

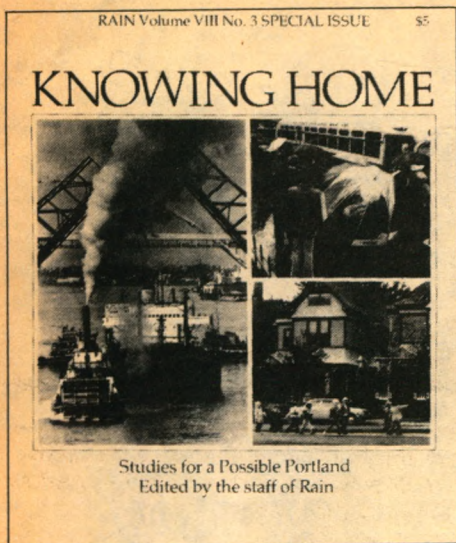
After a more careful look at the book I was overwhelmed by the number of questions I couldn't answer. Fortunately, its excellent organization provided relief. Each chapter is arranged by subject, such as water systems, wastes, power, phone, and codes. I found the easiest way to answer many of the questions was to visit my local county planning office and just start asking. Though I found one outdated entry on septic size requirements (at least for Oregon), I came away impressed by the depth and scope of this guide.

In short, *Before You Build* can help lead owner-builders toward that satisfaction that arises from a job well done, that satisfaction which draws most of us to initiate such a venture in the first place.

— Rusty Park

Rusty is an owner-builder and a board member of the Matrix Institute in Applegate, OR.

Rain Publications



KNOWING HOME: STUDIES FOR A POSSIBLE PORTLAND

Editors of RAIN
88 pp., 1981, \$6 p.p.d.

Knowing Home expands upon the ideas covered in *RAIN* each month with an integrated approach to self-reliance in one bioregion: our home town. An inspiring model for other cities and towns as well as an excellent way to introduce friends and family to community self-help, this beautifully illustrated book includes articles on the history of self-reliance in Portland, a bioregional map, our sense of place, strategies for a sustainable city, life support systems, profiles of community self-help projects, plus visions for an ecologically and socially balanced future. "A vision has emerged in our minds of how Portland and other communities around the country can meet the special challenges of the coming decades and become more democratic, more beautiful and more self-reliant places in which to live."

SUBURBAN ECOTOPIA POSTER

Diane Schatz
22" x 30", \$3.60 ppd.

The first exciting glimpses of an Ecotopian vision . . . chances are you've already seen Diane Schatz's Urban Ecotopia Poster — on the cover of *Rainbook*, reprinted in countless numbers of books and publications, or on a friend's wall. Its city street scene gives literal expression to the idea of urban self-reliance — where cottage industries, cooperative institutions and appropriate technologies combine to make the city a habitable and happy place to be. . . . If your concern is reinhabiting the suburbs, you should visit Diane's Suburban Ecotopia, where the same potential can be seen in gardens, solar greenhouses and windmills. The Stepping Stones Poster is an elaborate bio-regional landscape which vividly details local economies and energies at work and play. All three of these line-drawn posters are rich in detail and perfect for coloring. Great for home or work!



URBAN ECOTOPIA POSTER

Diane Schatz
22" x 33", \$3.60 ppd.

ORDER FORM

RAIN Subscriptions

| | | |
|--|-----------------|-------|
| 2 years/20 issues | \$25.00 | _____ |
| 1 year/10 issues | \$15.00 | _____ |
| 1 year/institutional rate | \$25.00 | _____ |
| 1 year/living lightly rate (income under \$5,000) | \$ 9.50 | _____ |
| Foreign surface mail | add \$3.50/year | _____ |
| (including Canada and Mexico; inquire for air rates) | | |
| RAIN Back Issues | | |
| Individual back issues | \$ 1.20 | _____ |
| Back issues by volume, per volume (III-VII): | \$ 9.00 | _____ |
| Complete back issue set, Volumes III-VII | \$36.00 | _____ |

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Hide my name when you exchange lists!

Send a gift subscription to: (payment must be included)

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

RAIN Publications (indicate quantity; all prices include 20% for postage and handling)

| | | |
|---|---------|-------|
| ★ Knowing Home | \$ 6.00 | _____ |
| Energy-Efficient Community Planning | \$11.50 | _____ |
| Stepping Stones | \$ 9.50 | _____ |
| Rainbook | \$ 9.50 | _____ |
| Consumer Guide to Woodstoves | \$ 3.60 | _____ |
| Stepping Stones Poster | \$ 3.60 | _____ |
| ★ Urban Ecotopia Poster | \$ 3.60 | _____ |
| ★ Suburban Ecotopia Poster | \$ 3.60 | _____ |
| Community Alert Poster (in color) | \$ 6.00 | _____ |
| Helping Ourselves | \$ 6.00 | _____ |
| Editing Your Newsletter | \$ 7.75 | _____ |
| Complete Publications List | free | _____ |

40% discount on orders of 5 or more copies of *Woodstove Guide* and posters.

Subscription _____
 Gift Subscription _____
 Back Issues _____
 Publications _____
 Donation (tax deductible) _____
TOTAL ENCLOSED _____

All orders must be prepaid in U.S. Dollars
 For those requiring an invoice, billing fee is \$5.00

In This Issue . . .

Raindrops 2

**This Land Was Made For You and Me: Finding
New Roots In The Past**, by John Ferrell 3

Building Trust: Making Way For The Future, by Anne Maggs 5

**Rekindling Trust: The Adventures of New Society
Gardens, Inc.**, by Lee Lancaster 6

Sometimes The Magic Works: Alpha Farm Ten Years Later,
by Caroline Estes 8

Bhagwanecology: Riparian Recovery at Rajneeshpuram,
by John Perry 10

**To Love, Honor, and Convey: How To Create A Communal
Ownership Contract**, by Becky West 12

Of Land and the City, by Patrick Mazza 14

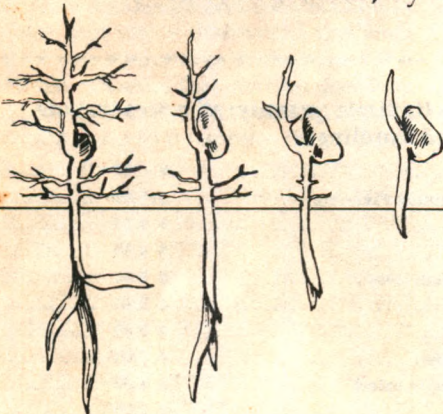
Milking It For All It's Worth: A Scale of Two Farmers,
by Bruce and Anne Borquist 16

To Beat or Become? That Is, The System, by Mark Roseland 17

**Older and More Manure: New Developments In
Rural Information**, by Steve Johnson 18

I've Looked At Codes From Both Sides Now, by Tom Bender 19

**If I Had a Hammer: Tools for
Owner-Builders**, by Tanya Kucak 21



RAIN

2270 NW Irving, Portland, OR 97210
(503) 227-5110