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

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Self-Reliance Contest

We know there must be more than 2,000 people in the world who would subscribe to RAIN—if they knew about us. We have a few ideas about where to find these people and how to reach them, but we need more ideas. Send us your ideas, plans, and suggestions for making RAIN economically self-reliant and known to its potential readership. The person who sends in the best and most useful plan (what to do and how to do it) will receive: (1) a complete set of back issues, including out-of-print issues; (2) one hour on-line with Steve Johnson (phone or computer); and (3) a Peace Poster autographed by Diane and Joel Schatz or a RAIN T-shirt autographed by the RAIN staff. Second prize is an autographed T-shirt or Peace Poster and a one-year subscription. Third prize is a one-year subscription. The person who submits the best local entry gets lunch with the RAIN staff and a tour of the Rainhouse (tell us if you consider yourself "local"). We'll accept entries until June 1, 1984, and we'll publish the results in the September/October 1984 issue. Send to: Self-Reliance Contest, RAIN, 2270 NW Irving, Portland, OR 97210.
Dear Rain,

Choose your own title: the message reads the same. Life is a gift, and only the power of love allows us to linger a little longer on this jewel of a planet. But there are those who persist in promoting law-passing as a shield against tyranny, violence, and hate.

In his article “Creating Nuclear Free Communities” (RAIN X:2), Don Skinner outlines the experience of Ashland residents in effectively passing a non-nuclear ordinance. The federal government, of course, is not bound by such a puny ordinance, as Skinner admits. So what is the point? “The process of becoming an NFZ brought with it a satisfying examination of constructive alternatives.”

industry and was ready to begin an examination of constructive alternatives.”

Sounds convincing, until one considers that a sense of community must be based on love and cannot be legislated. Law makes a weak crutch for moral disability, and so the NFZ movement becomes at best a harmless diversion, at worst institutionalized hypocrisy. Playing the devil’s game on his home court does not seem a very insightful means of “examin­ing constructive alternatives.”

Don’t be confused by the clamor for new laws to protect us. We must see clearly that moral choice, not trivial legislation, is the issue. We need to declare daily a demilitarized zone in our hearts and in our lives. A zone of peace within ourselves, in our relations with others, and with the earth where love is in control, where hate and violence find no quarter.

I appreciate the range of views presented in RAIN. Keep up the good work. I’d like to see more articles about people living peacefully.

Larry and Marge Warning
Oysterville, Washington

Dear Folks,

I recently obtained a copy of your tenth-year anniversary issue (RAIN IX:6) and have enjoyed reading through it very much.

Paul Cameron
Durham, North Carolina

Dear RAIN,

I’ve really enjoyed your anniversary issue; found it very inspirational.

Marc Kolmon
Chapel Hill, North Carolina

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LETTERS

RAINDROPS

It hasn’t rained much since I recycled myself back to RAIN, but it has been cold. For a few golden afternoons I basked in the warm sunshine streaming through the windows, though. Ah, renewable energy!

Speaking of recycling people and renewing energy, we want your contributions. We’re developing a couple of networks: One, a network of knowledgeable people around the country who can recommend and review books and other materials of interest to RAIN readers; the other, a network of people around the country who are information brokers in their communities and can send us periodic reports on what’s going on in the provinces (see also the introduction to the Northwest Bioregion Report). Write me a letter or postcard if you’re interested.

If you send us material to publish, make sure it fits the general style and format of RAIN. Avoid the passive voice (say “The authors describe . . .”) rather than “It is described . . .”). Type it doublespaced with wide margins and, if you want us to return it, be sure to include a self-addressed envelope with sufficient postage. For reviews, include the title, author, year published, number of pages, price, and name and address of the publisher. Tell us what the book is about and why it’s special. The shorter, the better. Also, tell us what you do and why you’re special.

Some of you will receive two copies of RAIN this month. It’s intentional: We learned from our readers’ survey that people learn about RAIN from friends, so we’d like you to pass on that extra copy to a friend. Also, tell all your friends how much you love RAIN, give RAIN subscriptions and posters as gifts, and send us names of people we can send sample copies to (for every list of at least 10 names and for every friend you recommend who subscribes, we’ll extend your subscription by two issues).

We’re also interested in donations of services or supplies. Recently, one kind person donated a pickup truck to the resource center! We’d like to have a couple of correcting electric typewriters. Right now, all we have left are borrowed machines: our last IBM had a nervous breakdown — electrical problems — in the middle of copy deadline for this issue. We could also use a photocopier — it would save us innumerable trips downtown and elsewhere, in our drive to reproduce whatever we write.

By the way, don’t miss our contest announcement on page 2. —TK
It Beats Reading Cereal Boxes':

by Than James

The readers' survey, which went out with our August 1983 Sprinkle newsletter, brought enthusiasm for RAIN. We were pleased to receive better than a 10% return. Most surveys were filled with many well thought-out comments, criticisms, and suggestions. We learned a great deal from your thoughts, and we appreciate the time you spent. Even with this high return rate, however, we are reluctant to come to absolute conclusions about our readers. At best, we can assume that we heard from those of you who enjoy filling out questionnaires that come in the mail—a slightly suspect group to begin with.

With that said, here is what we learned. RAIN readers are diverse, but you still present some clear demographic trends. Seventy-five percent of you are male. Hmmm. We also learned that 90% have college degrees, and 50% of these have post-graduate degrees. The average age is in the mid-thirties, and almost half of you have an annual income of $20,000 or more. Your occupations seem to cover the entire spectrum; however, most of you are involved in education, planning, and management, or design (artists, architects, and so on).

The lifestyle question brought various responses regarding housing, religious perspective, outlook on life, community involvement, and political attitudes. It is difficult to summarize such varied responses, but it's fair to say that most of you live in traditional family units or shared housing situations. You reside in urban settings or rural communities. Community involvement is a priority for you, and your lifestyle is outdoors-oriented and health-conscious.

RAIN's readership is small but dedicated. You feel involved in what we are doing, and you are anxious to see that RAIN stays in print, despite hard economic times (for us all). You praise the layout, editorial style, design, and perspective. A majority of you feel that we should not significantly alter RAIN's format and editorial policy.

We asked you if you would like to see changes in the use of graphics in RAIN. You overwhelmingly rejected the idea of color graphics and expressed a preference for

What is RAIN to you?
RAIN is a great magazine, perhaps because of its unpretentious, authoritative air.
You tie together, better than any other source I know of, the various threads of what is really important.
RAIN is an important part of the history and success of the A.T. movement.
RAIN seems to be getting a bit impersonal and dry.
A concerned and caring outlook.

Why do you read RAIN?
I read RAIN to learn about interesting developments in their infancy.
RAIN puts me in contact with other like-minded individuals and organizations.
RAIN stimulates thought in areas that tend to get neglected.
It beats reading cereal boxes.
I think I have grown, become more aware and productive, since I started reading RAIN.
I appreciate your honesty in admitting mistakes.
Readers Reflect on RAIN

RAIN’s simple graphic design: “Black and white is unique, and it speaks to what RAIN and its readers are all about,” according to one reader. Others simply stated that color was unnecessary and expensive.

Several of you expressed your dislike for the newsprint paper that we currently use inside the magazine. Since many of you collect back issues for future reference, you’d prefer that we use more durable paper stock. We agree, and we’re looking into the cost of better paper.

We asked you about your reactions to changing RAIN’s subtitle. Some of you thought RAIN needs no subtitle—that such an identifier would act as a limiting factor. Others suggested subtitles containing the words sustainable, community, bioregion, and self-reliance. By far the largest group, however, advised us to retain Journal of Appropriate Technology. In fact, Journal of Appropriate Technology hasn’t appeared on our cover for several years now. We have always been a resource guide to A.T., but we have focused on the use, effects, and potential of technology (which is what A.T. has come to connote to long-time RAIN devotees) rather than the nuts and bolts.

(Frankly, our staff is divided on the subtitle issue. Some of us feel we need a more descriptive title on the cover to reach out to potential subscribers who don’t understand the term appropriate technology. Other staff members feel that a subtitle would clutter our simple cover and that our statement on page 2 describes what we do better than any subtitle could. For now, we’ve dropped the subtitle [it last appeared inside the June/July 1983 issue].)

The topics and concerns we have emphasized in RAIN over the years, and for which our readers have shown continued enthusiasm, still lack the broad-based support that we sought nine years ago when RAIN began. Although we usually don’t follow the same course as mainstream culture, we must continue to evolve in these rapidly changing times. We conducted this survey to learn who you are and what you expect from us. What we learned is that many of you were once involved in the network that RAIN represents, but now find yourselves in the mainstream—losing touch with an alternative network that is still important to you. Reading RAIN is a practical way for you to remain informed of and affiliated with the people and ideas that
are now less central to your lives. RAIN remains a primary introduction to many of the resources and discussions at the forefront of renewable energy, permaculture, community self-reliance, small-scale economics, and community uses of computers. RAIN readers want the stimulation that comes with well thought-out analysis from the concerned and dedicated individuals who are involved in these areas. You want to see continued attention given to topics that RAIN has always emphasized.

It is evident from this survey that RAIN's readers find the magazine a valuable and necessary resource and want to ensure its continued existence. Comments such as "I find RAIN worthwhile at any cost" and "I'd be willing to pay extra for RAIN" made us realize that our readers care about RAIN and are willing and able to help keep the magazine in print. Some of you suggested that we make a greater effort to explain our financial situation through an annual report and periodic updates in the magazine. (We have prepared a financial report for this issue.)

These are difficult times for small publications and for many of their readers. We want to make sure that RAIN stays affordable for those on lower incomes, but many of you have expressed a willingness to give additional financial support to RAIN. You may have noticed that we have begun offering extended subscriptions for readers who help us find new subscribers. The results from this survey show us that you—our current readers—are our best potential source of advertising. We have also begun offering Sustaining and Contributing subscriptions.

We have received many wonderful comments and suggestions from this survey. We look forward to hearing more from you. □□

RAIN Fiscal Statement
September 1982 through August 1983

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In the August/September 1978 issue, RAIN published a financial statement with a headline of HELP!, and the budget was $15,000 larger than it is now (that's a 56% difference!). As in 1978, the first place to turn for assistance is our current subscribers. The recent readers' survey indicates that we have many loyal readers who are willing to help. The following is a list of ways you can help (see also Raindrops):

1. Renew as a Contributing or Sustaining Subscriber, make a tax-deductible contribution to RAIN, or become a Patron (lifetime subscription and set of back issues in return for $500).

2. Take RAIN brochures to events you attend, and distribute brochures to community centers, libraries, and other places. We will send 40 free brochures to anyone who requests them; for more than 40, we request a donation to cover postage.

3. Send us a list of at least 10 potential subscribers, and we'll extend your subscription by two issues.—RB

Rain Community Resource Center pays the cost of rent and some other overhead expenses. In exchange, the magazine contributes review books to the resource center.

Includes graphic artist, intern ($160/month) and 1½ editorial staff members ($750/month total). Salaries have recently been raised to $600/month—approximately minimum wage. The magazine relies on a large amount of volunteer time and the time of resource-center staff.
ACCESS: Waste

**Future Water**, by John Sheaffer and Leonard Stevens, 1983, 269 pp., $14.95

Like a massive ice block ready to calve off a glacier and crash into a calm fjord, America’s water crisis looms over us. As both urban and rural aquifers are increasingly depleted and contaminated by toxic wastes, our sewage treatment plants pump away resources: food-growing resources, energy resources, economic resources. In fact, the evidence that *Future Water* presents for whole-system use of “wastewater” makes conversion of almost any municipal treatment plant a cost-effective must.

The public’s and engineers’ arguments for the linear-dilution solution to the sewage question have been, the authors claim, largely unsubstantiated fears and unknowns. In fact, vigorously aerating sewage in lagoons, storing it in settling ponds, and then irrigating crops with the resulting nutrient-rich water eliminates undesirable odors and health dangers. Since 1974, Muskegon County, Michigan, has fertilized over 5300 acres of corn with partially purified effluent at a yield of 30 bushels per acre above that of the rest of the county. The corn is sold as feed and generates over $1 million for the county annually. Moreover, the living soil filter effectively removes over 125 chemicals from the county’s industries with “no contamination detected in the corn crop,” a study concludes. After irrigation, an underground drainage system collects the purified water—ready to drink.

The hot news is that a “biomass utility” is being planned for the Chicago Center for Industry. Based on a study by Chicago’s Center for Neighborhood Technology, the circular sewage conversion system will make $4.1 million yearly from sales of electricity and steam from methane, ethyl alcohol, greenhouse vegetables and ornamentals, potting soil, and compost. Before long, local public servants as well as informed taxpayers will be arguing that, as the authors concede, “wastewater disposal is detrimental to economic growth.” By the way, where does your community’s “wastewater” go? —KN

**Work from Waste: Recycling Wastes to Create Employment**, by Jon Vogler, 1981, 396 pp., inquire for price from:

ITDG/NA Publications Office
PO Box 337
Croton-on-Hudson, NY 10520

This is a how-to book for people in developing countries on starting a waste-recycling business. The first part of the book describes the different types of waste material, who discards it, who buys it, what can be sold, and the relative value of different types of waste within a given category. Each chapter also includes descriptions of required storage, safe handling procedures, and low-tech, hand-operated processing equipment.

In the second section, Vogler outlines general procedures and analysis for arranging to pick up waste, hiring collectors, the relative merits of different types of transportation, marketing strategies, options on sorting, and bargaining. This book contains a wealth of knowledge on waste collecting and handling, with good and easy-to-follow guidelines on making business decisions. The only problem I found with the book is that it was sometimes hard to determine who the intended audience is. For example, at one point, Vogler suggests that you should find someone who can read and write to help you start your business. —Gail Katz

Gail Katz works as a mechanical and electrical engineer in Portland.

**Dead Tech: A Guide to the Archeology of Tomorrow**, photos by Manfred Hamm, text by Rolf Steinberg, 1983, 132 pp., $14.95 from:

Sierra Club Books
2034 Fillmore Street
San Francisco, CA 94115

There are tons of steel and miles of concrete illustrated in the pages of this book. The ruins of wars and simple recreation lie still beside the remnants of dated industrialism. Old gas works and collieries and derelict nuclear power

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**The Components of a Modern Land Treatment System**

![Diagram of a modern land treatment system](image)

From: *Future Water*
plants are all as equal as kings and poor
people in their graves.

No one planned that these things
should rot somewhere in a desert or on a
beach. They were all built with progress,
with successful ventures, in mind. And
yet, there they are—billions of dollars
and years of effort rendered meaningless
by the next step that technology or
common interest took.

For some of them, like the acres and
acres of B52 bombers ordered readied for
World War II and Vietnam, the best hope
we can have is that they be allowed to
rust quietly or be recycled into soup cans.
It was impossible for me to read this book
without thinking of our latest “ruins
complex” in the making: the MX missile
scheme. Like the B52s, the very best that
can happen to our enormous investment
in this thing is that we never be compelled
to use it.

What can be the lesson learned from
this artful rendering of decaying ambi­tions? That we benefit from the lessons of
history? That we mark our own progress
by its consequences?

The futurist Robert Jungk in his memo­rable introduction to this book explains
how desperate the stakes have become.
“Never before in history have the effects
of war or of catastrophes been irrevers­ible. Each blunder was something one
could learn from, every error one could
afterward try to repair.”

The lesson, it seems, is that from now
on, the repair must come before the deed.

—Carlotta Collette

Carlotta Collette, a former editor of RAIN, is a
Portland-based free-lance writer.

Hazardous Waste in America, by Samuel
S. Epstein, Lester O. Brown, and Carl
Pope, 1983, 593 pp., $12.95 from:
Sierra Club Books
2034 Fillmore Street
San Francisco, CA 94115

Here is a book that could serve as a model
for anyone attempting to present complex
environmental information in a clear,
well-organized, highly readable fashion.
The authors characterize hazardous
waste as “the environmental problem of
the century” and back up that dramatic
assertion with a convincing, no-nonsense
description of faulty disposal methods
and the heavy risks they pose to people
in many parts of the U.S. They also detail
the political battles that have broken out
in recent years over efforts to regulate the
hazardous-waste flow.

Hazardous Waste in America not only
advances the cause of citizen awareness
and makes evident the need for citizen
action, it can also serve as a field manual
for the activist. It lists the locations of
thousands of hazardous-waste dumps
around the country, describes how to
organize community “hunts the dump”
campaigns, and explains how dumpers
can be fought in the courts. All in all, this
is a fine book that conveys not only a
sense of urgency about hazardous-waste
problems, but also a sense of the power
that we have to address those problems
directly. —John Ferrell

ACCESS: The Living Earth

health, and the value of a feelingful relation­ship with nature. —JS

The Global Brain, by Peter Russell, 1983,
251 pp., $8.95 from:
J.P. Tarcher
9110 Sunset Boulevard
Los Angeles, CA 90069

What can I say—this book says it all. It’s
a highly readable recapitulation of past
evolution and a vision of future evolution
from a human, global, and universal
point of view. Russell shows how we—
humans, the earth—are at the threshold
of an evolutionary leap as profound as
the origin of life or the development of
human consciousness. The impetus for
this leap comes not only from outside our
skins, but also from within, and in fact,
the two are indivisible. Individual evolu­tion or enlightenment is thus equated
with global evolution or enlightenment,
and we can visualize human “cells”
experiencing a change of perspective
such that they join to form a global mind/body.

The Global Brain is the ultimate synthe­sis. It encompasses both logical and
mystical, past and future, particular and
universal. Reading it brings the joy of
escaping ourselves, of seeing the world
and the human purpose from a universal

Well Body, Well Earth, by Mike Samuels
and Hal Zina Bennett, 1983, 275 pp.,
$12.95 from:
Sierra Club Books
530 Bush Street
San Francisco, CA 94108

Well Body, Well Earth, subtitled “The
Sierra Club Environmental Health
Sourcebook,” is a well-organized presen­tation of the state of the world’s health.
The skeleton of the book is “The Source­book,” a 94-page section detailing the
effects on humans and the prevalence in
the environment of radiation, chemicals,
air pollution, and water pollution. The
subject is complex because of the many
types of radiation and chemicals, and the
statistical treatment is necessarily exhaus­tive. The statistics would have been more
understandable if the authors had con­verted some of them into common units.
For example, the book gives no explana­tion of how the radiation units “rad,”
“rem,” and “Ci,” listed in different
tables, relate to each other.
The flesh and blood of this book con­sists of sections on the evolution of a
balanced system for maintaining the
Toxic chemicals that are dumped are dissolved by rains and percolate into the ground. Plumes are then formed in ground water that bring these chemicals up in wells that tap the water sources. Septic tanks, sewers, toxic waste dumps, waste pits, and disposal wells all send toxic chemicals into the streams and fresh water wells.

From: Well Body, Well Earth
living earth, the identity of the earth’s health and human health, and actions we can take to improve our personal and our planet’s well-being. Samuels and Bennett bring out many perceptive insights in these parts of the book. Some excerpts:

The solution [to the problem of creating a healthy world] lies not in denying our power, but, on the contrary, embracing it. Only by embracing it can we hope to learn it fully, and learn to use it to benefit the greatest number of people. It is not, after all, power itself that creates problems; it is the way we have chosen to use that power.

Until recently, invention [including thoughts and ideas] has been staked out as a persorial possession, an extension of the ego, which is that aspect of every system which strives to maintain its separateness and individual integrity. Although ego is essential, it is also transitory... Higher, more complex structures become possible only if less complex structures are able to relinquish some of their interest in maintaining their separateness. There seems to be a time in the life of every separate entity, from elementary particles to humans, when ego is translated into an interest in oneself as an integral part of a larger system.

Taken as a whole, Well Body, Well Earth makes an excellent current reference and also dishes up plenty of food for thought. Samuels and Bennett, authors of the successful Well Body Book, have once again furthered our understanding of the world around and within us.

Prejudice against Nature, by Michael J. Cohen, 1983, 279 pp., inquire for price from:
Cobblesmith
Box 191, RFD 1
Freeport, ME 04032
I like the title. In our culture, the word prejudice is so value-laden that it can’t help but arouse interest. And the accusation fits. In his book, Cohen argues convincingly that our western culture has a long history of prejudice against nature, and he contrasts this with the attitudes of other cultures in the U.S., most notably those of Native Americans.

Cohen is the founder and director of the 15-year-old National Audubon Society Expedition Institute. The institute conducts experiential learning courses on environmental education in a unique way: High-school, college, and graduate students spend a year at a time traveling throughout the U.S. in a school bus. They sleep in tents or under the stars during their treks to Amish farms in Pennsylvania, the Okefenokee Swamp, the Hopi mesas, the Olympic Peninsula, Downeast Maine, and many points between—all in pursuit of knowing and feeling the natural world and humans’ relationships with it. Prejudice against Nature is mainly a distillation of Cohen’s experiences, thoughts, and feelings from those 15 years with the institute.

As a former participant in a similar eye- and mind-opening environmental-education experiment in the Grand Canyon area, I greatly appreciate Cohen’s work with the institute. Experiential environmental education is undoubtedly the best way to guard against prejudice against nature; its value is priceless.

Cohen’s experiences in this regard are fascinating and well worth reading. Be prepared to sift these out, though—the book is about twice as long as it needs to be and is loosely organized (in a few places, I felt that my time could have been better spent backpacking). Distractions such as Cohen’s dialogues with Mother Nature detract from the flow and force of the book. These may emphasize the fact that nature is alive, but only in an anthropocentric way. I had an uncomfortable feeling while reading that Cohen was biased against science, technology, and the western way of thinking, that he was “denying our power,” when, in fact, these things are also a part of the natural world—they come from human nature.

On the plus side, the afterword, “Sharing the Good News,” by Jim Swan, is an excellent essay. Also, Cohen’s discussion of the world as a tension-release system is clear and thought-provoking. The Expedition Institute is an important model to keep in mind in our search for educational excellence.
Avoiding the GRUCC*: Creating a Community Currency

*GRoss Universal Cash Collapse
(with apologies to Bucky Fuller)

Believing that the world's economy is somewhat unstable these days is no far-fetched notion; it's becoming household gab. A few economists, though—who see a new set of assumptions cropping up—are citing startling signs of larger, more dismantling waves, not just ripples, in money flow. Bucky Fuller, in his last book, The GRUNCH* of Giants (*Gross Universal Cash Heist) [see RAIN IX:5], warns that "the financial market world is now assuming that the U.S. government will soon reach a crisis point beyond which it will no longer be able to pay off either its short- or long-term obligations... [When] they see the moment of formally acknowledged bankruptcy of the nation to be less than a year away, someone is going to announce the emperor has no clothes [and] they'll try 'Title 13' to terminate all risks of private enterprise."

The chairman of the Intermediate Technology Development Group of North America (ITDG/NA), Ward Morehouse, writes in the introduction to The Handbook of Tools for Community Economic Change that "so serious has the situation become that it has been argued that the Third World should wipe the slate clean by collectively repudiating its external debt and starting all over again." And Shann Turnbull, a Handbook contributor and Harvard Business School alumnus consulting in Australia, observes, "There is no longer any commitment by the banking system to convert paper money into any unit of production, be it a commodity or service... While this innovation [central banking with paper money] has increased the stability of individual banks, it has done so at the cost of decreasing the stability of the currency and indeed the whole financial system... Most bankers can observe the lumps in their system but do not wish to believe it is cancer. Those who do see it as a cancer believe that their government has remedy ready to hand out if the patient shows signs of dying. But here is the sting. They do not. In fact, it is governments [that] have created the cancer by mutating the concept of money and credit to suit their own self-interest."

Whether the economic cancer spreads throughout every nation's monetary system or subsides into remission, we can't expect government to institute systematic changes, preventative or otherwise, for a more democratic, decentralized economy. But we can experiment with opportunities rising out of the crises. Quietly and slowly, new models are appearing in discrete communities. Eight successful experiments appear in the Handbook, which is based on three E. F. Schumacher Society seminars on community economic transformation (see RAIN X:2). Below is a Handbook excerpt from "Building a Community Banking System" by Robert Swann, a former cohort of E. F. Schumacher and president of the Schumacher Society (Box 76A, RD3, Great Barrington, MA 01230). The Handbook's conceptual tools include the community land trust, the cooperative land bank, community self-management, and community currency and banking. It's available for $20 (plus $1.50 postage and handling) from ITDG, Publications Office, PO Box 337, Croton-on-Hudson, NY 10520. —KN

The so-called energy crisis has made it clear to almost everyone that energy is the key factor in all forms of production and in meeting the needs of society as a whole. In this respect, gold, as the traditional form of reserve currency, is being replaced by commodities or sources [that] provide essential energy. Thus, oil is referred to as "black gold."

... Almost every community has renewable resources for producing energy. Such resources could be wood, wind, hydro, or waste material [that] can be burned in a modern furnace such as a pyrolytic burner, which converts wood waste or other wastes into gas, oil, or charcoal. [For other alternatives, see Future Water, page 7.] All such energy sources can be converted into electricity or measured in kilowatt-hours.

[The first step] would be the creation of a community-based organization, possibly set up as a cooperative, as a worker-owned business, or owned by a community development corporation, to produce energy from any or all of the locally available sources. This organization would offer for sale notes, called energy notes, at the going rate of electricity. For example, if local utility rates are presently 10 cents a kilowatt-hour, then $1 would buy 10 kilowatt-hours for future delivery. Owners of the notes sold in lots of 10, 50, and 100 units (comparable to current values of $1, $5, and $10) would hold these notes for future redemption in kilowatts—no matter what the future dollar rate of kilowatts. In effect, these owners would have a guarantee against future inflation of electric rates. This would be the attraction for purchase of notes. The community organization or corpora-
tion would issue the notes only in amounts equal to [its] projected output of electricity, thus avoiding inflation of the currency.

The organization [or] corporation would then invest the dollars received in exchange for the energy notes for equipment to produce energy locally. This equipment could be pyrolytic converters for wood waste, wind generators or a "wind park," or generators for hydro-electric, depending upon the most abundant source of renewable energy available in any particular location. Up-to-date cost analysis demonstrates that such intermediate technology can compete favorably with oil, coal, and nuclear technology in today's markets—assuming proper conditions (such as tested wind sites) exist...

The electricity generated would be fed directly onto the existing grids of utility companies under laws enacted under the PURPA legislation. The utility company would either pay cash for the electricity so generated or, ideally, would agree to accept the energy notes issued by the company, in payment for bills of its customers—kilowatt-hour for kilowatt-hour. Such a system would constitute the best way of redeeming the energy notes. For instance, assume Mary Smith has bought 5,000 kilowatt-hours for $500; that would mean that at any time in the future, Mary could pay an electric bill of 500 kilowatt-hours with five of her fifty 100-kilowatt-hour notes.

The utility company would have to agree to accept such payments in advance of selling energy notes. Some utilities may be willing to do so and others not. However, if there were a broad base of public support for the concept, including environmental groups and anti-nuclear groups, it would be difficult for utilities, many of whom are in financial trouble today, to refuse a reasonable proposal. PURPA legislation requires utilities to accept or buy such energy, but does not specify the terms of the sale...

The validity of the energy notes does not, however, rest on the agreement of the utility companies to redeem the notes. The community corporation that originally issued the notes might ultimately be the redeemer based on its cash income, which would increase as electric rates increase. The investor in energy notes could still receive 10 kilowatt-hours of value in the future for a 10-kilowatt-hour note purchase today.

Redemption is one concern for the creation of an appropriate currency, liquidity is another. Assume that Stanley Graves purchased energy notes equal to 10,000 kilowatt-hours of electricity. Knowing that as a single man he only consumes about 3,000 kilowatt-hours of electricity per year, he has made an investment in his future as well as an investment in his community's self-reliance. But unexpectedly, Stanley finds he needs cash today. He might sell the energy notes to a friend, or barter them for services he needs. However, if a bank would accept the notes, it would provide Stanley with a broader base for the sale of his energy futures. It is the appropriate function of banks to be the managers of money—to deal with the question of liquidity. A local bank has an important function in the creation of a community-based currency.

A local bank could buy and trade in energy notes [as] it might foreign currency or securities. The dollar value of the energy notes would fluctuate as the price of electricity increased. Another institution might be set up to provide the same function, but a bank already has the staff and processing equipment to handle the management of money. Such equipment and staff would be costly to duplicate.

In order for a local bank to agree to accept energy notes, it would have to have confidence in the capability of the community corporation initiating the project. But again, broad-based public support would make it hard for the bank to resist handling the new currency. Soon other companies besides the utility might accept energy notes in payment for bills. Mary Smith might open a savings account with her extra energy notes. Before long there could be a broad local market and trade in energy notes. All [would be] traded with the confidence that ultimately this currency, at least, is redeemable for something of real value—energy that can heat the home or warm the meal or produce the light to read by. And, with the satisfaction that this energy was produced locally from renewable resources...

Still the question remains of how to capture the value gained in this trade of energy notes back within the community. It is a question of community reinvestment. Although banks are the proper managers of money—essentially dealing with accounting questions—they are not necessarily the most competent to make decisions about the lending of money. In the question of lending community capital, an ethical dimension should be at work. Social and ecological considerations should come into play as well as purely short-term financial considerations.

But how is this not-for-profit dimension brought into banking? ... Working with a local bank, ... a community group could open a separate account, designating that deposits would be loaned only for specific purposes—such as providing increased community self-reliance in the areas of food, energy, housing, and essential services. [See "Investing in the Community," RAIN IX:3.] The depositors would assume all the risk. However, with demonstrated community support for the businesses receiving the loans, the chances for the success of those businesses would be very good. Although the interest rate to the depositor might initially be lower than available from money markets, in the long run the return would be higher in terms of local availability of basic items. Such a fund could begin with U.S. dollars, then gradually accept deposits of energy notes. A percentage of each loan could be made in the new currency—facilitating and expanding its circulation....

Of related character are plans in the Mid-Hudson Valley in New York State for a wind park [that] would sell energy notes as a means of self-financing. Sites for such a wind park have been tested over a two-year period and can be demonstrated to compare favorably with other sources of energy production available to utility companies. (This initiative, involving Mountain Power, is also further described in Section II of the Handbook.) □□

For another example of a community currency, see "Restaurant Pioneers Means to Dreams," RAIN IX:4, page 33.
Hidden Costs of Housing

by Tom Bender

Tom Bender’s offhand mention in our October/November 1983 issue that we could reduce housing costs by 90% raised many eyebrows. Possible? A pipe dream? We asked for more details, which follow. We learned also that these ideas had already won a $15,000 top award in California’s Affordable Housing Competition two years ago.

Let’s get some action on this, and more of this kind of rethinking of how we do things! —TK

Most home purchases are financed. Yet few buyers could tell you what their total purchase cost will be by the time their house is paid for. They don’t know because they don’t want to face the fact that they may have to spend all their next 10 years’ income just to pay the finance charges.

What makes up our housing expenditures? Let’s look first at the financial costs that add up over a person’s 50-year “housing lifetime” with our present patterns (see Figure 1). These costs add up to quite a bundle out of our pockets, and the labor and materials cost of constructing the house is only a small piece of the overall cost. As we look at the separate categories of expenditures, we need to make a distinction between economic and financial costs, realize the pivotal role that durability plays in housing “costs,” and see how housing scarcity masks a basic cost difference between new and used housing.

Economic vs. Monetary Costs

Making a distinction between the economic and monetary dimensions of housing is essential to seeing how decisions affecting the flow of work and money have interacted to build up today’s excessive costs. The economic cost of a house consists of the work, materials, energy, and land employed in its construction. Once the house is built, that economic cost has been fully paid. If built correctly, the house has no further economic cost to its next several centuries of users, except for maintenance and operation. The economic costs deal with all the real, objective, and physical costs of a project—no matter who incurs them. By contrast, monetary costs stem from the rules a society sets up for distributing the benefits of economic work. Interest rates, tax laws, loan maturities, government subsidies, and the prices that different trades and professions can convince others their time is worth all alter monetary costs. As a result, they alter the final price that must be paid for economic work, who has to pay it, and who profits from it.

Monetary structures often obscure the real economic work and come to seem like some immutable natural law. In reality, they are constantly changing public policies that help shape the nature of a society—the equality or inequality of wealth, the concentration of economic and political power, and the ends to which

Housing that lasts 400 years costs only a fraction more to build. In addition to dramatically lowering economic costs, its long life makes feasible the generosity of design that separates our shabby “low-cost” housing from ample, comfortable, and livable homes.
society puts its efforts. They can, and frequently do, add a great burden on top of economic costs. Only by separating out the underlying real economics can we see the true effect of each policy affecting housing and understand how to alter such effects.

**Durability**

Once we can penetrate the barrier that financial thinking has put between us and understanding economic costs, we can examine the actual productivity of our various housing expenditures. Construction costs, for example, are largely unavoidable economic costs, and they appear irreducible. But what is important is not just the cost, but the number of years of housing we get from that cost. The longer a building lasts, the smaller are the economic costs per year or per generation. Durability of construction is the key to economic productivity of housing.

Houses built to last 400 or 500 years can shelter 15 or more generations under their roofs before needing replacement. Each generation then has to replace only one-fifteenth of its housing, and expenditures on housing are 90% less than what they would be if new homes had to be built for each generation. Housing that lasts 400 years costs only a fraction more to build. In addition to dramatically lowering economic costs, its long life makes feasible the generosity of design that separates our shabby “low-cost” housing from ample, comfortable, and livable homes.

During the “Dark Ages” in Europe, people built solid and comfortable houses, which are still in use today. Not having to replace their homes freed the labor and materials to build their soaring and beautiful cathedrals. Those Gothic cathedrals have already served more than 24 generations in their 800 years of use. Although the initial effort of their construction was great, their cost per generation has been far less than our shabbiest construction today, and they stand as a powerful challenge to our tradition of “economic” thinking.

Although durable construction costs somewhat more initially, it costs much less in the long run. Clay tile, slate, lead, and a few other roofing materials, for example, have a several-hundred year life, compared to 20 years for standard asphalt shingles. The initial cost of a tile roof is about two and one-half times that of asphalt shingles. But the repeated replacement necessary for the shingle roof boosts its economic cost over 200 years to four times that of clay tile. Over 300 years, shingles would cost six times as much as tile, and over 400 years, eight times as much as the lifetime roof! Actually increasing our economic expenditures on construction is to our advantage where it increases the durability and therefore the long-term economic benefit of the building.

The value of housing durability means more than just “build to last.” It shows the importance of looking at how we lose as well as how we build housing. War, fires, changes in land-use patterns, tax policies that result in neglect and abandonment of housing are as important “loss-makers” as is poor construction. And the savings involved in reuse of housing underscores the high economic burden of additional housing required by population growth and relocation.

**Scarcity**

From an economic viewpoint, there is a fundamental difference between the cost of new and older housing. For an older house, the economic cost has been largely paid, and what remains is only the cost of operation and maintenance needed to keep it habitable and comfortable. For a new house the economic cost is the full cost of construction. The price of used houses should therefore be far less than for new ones, and this has been true when there has been a surplus rather than a scarcity of housing available. Today, however, the opposite is true, with the monetary price of used houses paralleling that of new ones because of a combination of real and artificial scarcity.

Real scarcity arises from a growing population and...
the natural shortages of preferable climate and living conditions. Artificial scarcity stems largely from institutional pressures on the housing market—from finance structures and government monetary and tax policies. The situation is similar to that in the oil industry. When supplies are plentiful compared to demand, a buyer's market exists, and the price tends to fall toward the real economic costs of producing the oil. In a seller's market, where demand is greater than what is being produced, the sellers can soak the market for all it will bear. In such situations, prices have no relation to the actual costs of existing oil or housing supplies. They are limited only by the cost of available alternatives—alternative energy sources and conservation on the one hand and the economic cost of new housing on the other.

Although both economic and monetary costs are usually affected by pressures on the housing market, they are differently susceptible to the influence of public policies. Population growth, for example, may cause protracted housing shortages, resulting in scarcity prices. Such price increases are monetary, not economic, and can be reversed through proper expansion of the housing supply. Public policies can assist this expansion of housing supply.

As the housing supply expands, it shifts toward a dominance of new housing, raising the average economic cost of the housing supply. These increased costs are real economic costs, and they take a generation to be absorbed and eliminated. Public policies can have little impact on this process, other than to create a housing surplus to ensure that prices drop as economic costs are absorbed. Population growth also interacts with limited factors of favorable location, climate, scenic and cultural conditions, thereby generating more competition for housing and increases in the monetary cost of housing in such locations. Such increases are generally permanent and largely irreversible.

Our building industry hasn't been able to prevent or eliminate housing scarcities, largely because of government tax and monetary policies and the nature of our financing structures. Most other major industries have become concentrated in a few firms that have their own consumer-finance divisions and that finance their growth and operations internally through retained profits. In contrast, the housing industry has remained decentralized and dependent upon bank-mortgage financing, which bears the brunt of government monetary policies. Monetary policies that rely on manipulation of interest rates to control the economy have little effect upon internally financed industries. They do, however, have a disproportionate impact on the housing industry, causing periodic massive curtailments of its output. When the money is available, the industry doesn't have the capacity to meet the demand, and when it has the capacity, people can't get mortgage money.

Keeping these ideas in mind, let's now look at how we can reduce—or avoid the need for—each of our expenditures for housing.

1. Eliminating finance costs: No-interest revolving loan funds

A no-interest state-wide revolving loan fund for housing can, in one stroke, reduce the total purchase cost of a home by 65% to 75%.

Finance costs are by far the biggest single factor in what consumers pay for housing, amounting to 65% to 80% of the actual price paid. The average house is bought and sold, mortgaged and remortgaged, every eight years. Instead of being free to its users after a century of use, the house costs its new occupants several times as much as the original sales price, and has cost its users 10 to 12 times its total economic cost in continued finance charges over that period.

Our present home-financing concepts are an outdated and unaffordable legacy from a time of low interest rates, few mortgages, and a housing market dominated by existing housing and low prices. These low prices and interest rates meant that the surcharge of finance payments were also not large. But with today's population growth, scarcity housing prices, dominance of new housing on the market, and high interest rates, the impact of finance charges upon housing costs has become unbearable. Yesterday's justifications have become unworkable in today's conditions.

Today virtually all housing is bought with mortgage money, and everyone ends up paying an immense financing surcharge. We do not all need mortgage money at the same time. So what really takes place is an equal loan of the same money back and forth, from one of us to another, as we each have need of it. For a necessity that virtually everyone "purchases," housing mortgage loans can and should be treated like the true economic trade of time and energy they are—without a massive finance charge. It is absurd that each and every one of us should have to pay an added financing "tax" of up to 10 years of our labor and income. That outdated concept triples the cost we must pay for housing.

The numerous special-interest loan-subsidy programs for veterans, the elderly, low-income households, farmers, and others are clear testimony that our conventional financing concepts are not considered workable today. Most of those programs, however, consist of a continued outflow of our tax dollars to finance institutions to underwrite their lending fees, which buyers cannot afford. Such programs do not reduce the actual costs, but only alter which pocket pays for it.

Operating in the normal money market has also meant that home mortgages have had to compete with other investments whose high profits from exploitation

Operating in the normal money market has meant that home mortgages have had to compete with other investments whose high profits from exploitation expectations of return on investment.
of people and resources set exorbitant expectations of return on investment. The result is that we, and our housing expenditures, have been pulled into a similarly exploitative relationship. Removal of housing finance from that market is necessary to permit humane and sound housing decisions to be made.

A no-interest revolving loan fund recognizes that social and economic productivity, not short-term financial “rate-of-return,” are the essential measures of the use of our housing dollars. Resources shifted into extremely durable ways of meeting basic needs produce an unusually high level of social and economic value. Conversion of home financing to nonprofit public operation, as occurs with public streets, highways, water supplies, and utilities that serve everyone, means both immense cost savings to everyone and a much more effective use of our dollars. Removal of finance charges from housing expenditures would also allow building costs to more closely reflect economic productivity of more durable housing by eliminating interest surcharges on their higher initial costs.

A revolving loan fund should operate on a state-wide basis to provide no-interest home financing for all state residents. It should be tax-funded rather than bond-based, as its intention is not to secure cheaper finance money for home buyers through the state’s borrowing power, but to remove the home-purchasing market from the high-profit finance industry.

Such funds would involve large sums of money and require several years to build up. With a massive initial backlog of new housing demand and outstanding loans on existing housing purchases, loans would at first be restricted to new construction, and later extended to all other housing purchases. Because of the cost savings to buyers, the initial emphasis on new construction would shift purchases into new housing to expand the housing supply. As housing vacancies eventually developed, the fund would be self-regulating—prices of existing houses would drop closer to their economic cost, it would become cheaper for most people to buy existing houses rather than to build new houses, and less use would be made of the fund. Loan repayments would be kept as close as possible to those of conventional mortgages as feasible within household budget guidelines. Because of the lack of interest charges, repayment would occur in one-half to one-third the usual time, making the funds available more quickly for other loans.

The function of the fund would be that of an exchange mechanism, where all state residents exchange their time/energy/money as they each establish their housing

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**PURCHASE COSTS OF HOUSING**

- **NEW**
  - Finance Charges
  - 200% Sale Price
  - 11% Financing
  - 17% Builder's Profit & Overhead
  - 22% Labor
  - 25% Materials
  - 25% Land

- **USED**
  - Finance Charges
  - 200% Sale Price
  - 6% Real Estate
  - Scarcity Price
  - Locational Cost
  - Economic Cost

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Tom Bender
Inexpensive conservation can reduce energy expenditures by 75%.

Two of the largest reductions possible in housing costs could be accomplished through this mechanism. It would remove one of our most expensive basic necessities from massive, unnecessary finance charges. It would make possible the stable and high level of housing production needed to eliminate housing scarcity and scarcity prices. And it would also eliminate the drastic impact of federal monetary policies upon the state’s housing industry by removing its mortgage financing from the finance market so heavily burdened by federal monetary controls.

2. Reducing energy operating costs: Conservation

Inexpensive conservation can reduce energy expenditures by 75%.

The second largest hunk of housing dollars goes to energy operating costs. Over a 30-year period, this can easily amount to $50,000–$75,000. An extra economic cost of a few thousand dollars for superinsulation could result in a 90% reduction in heating costs, and the new generation of small-size fluorescent lights and more efficient appliances could similarly reduce energy costs in these areas by 75%. Along with more durable construction, these are prime examples of increased first cost of construction providing major savings over the life of the house. It also underscores the importance of dealing with financing costs, which put a massive penalty charge on such sensible first-cost alternatives.

3. Extending economic productivity: Durability incentives

Increasing the durability of housing construction and renovation to an anticipated life of 400 years would generate a five- to ten-fold increase in the economic productivity of our resources put into housing. It would correspondingly reduce the economic cost of housing by an equivalent 80% to 90%.

The benefits of housing durability are great, but not quickly obtainable. Their consideration is essential, however, in a period when substantial expansion of our housing stock is occurring and when durability has not been a central feature of our housing tradition. We must make proper investments now if we are to reap the eventual massive benefits of durability. Durability incentives can reduce maintenance and repair costs, stretch the useful life of the economic work that went into the original construction of a house, and reduce insurance expenditures.

4. Reduction in selling costs: Community housing exchanges

Virtual elimination of realtor’s fees, through establishment of community housing exchanges, could realize lifetime savings in housing expenditures amounting to 25% to 50% of the sale price of a home.

Every home sold through a realtor diverts an average of 6% of the sale price from the homeowner’s pockets. With houses being bought and sold on the average of every eight years, homeowners pay an average of six realtor’s fees during their lifetime. And if the money saved from paying the realtor’s fees was applied to reducing the mortgage on the house purchased, it could save two to three times its amount in interest charges.

The need for realtors or other professional services has generally escaped close scrutiny; we can reduce or eliminate the need for many such sources by using standardized documents, new technologies, or public education.

Multiple-listing services (MLS) have been set up in most communities by realtors to simplify access for themselves and their clients to information on properties available for sale. The seller fills out a card with detailed information such as lot size, number and size of rooms, kind of heating, tax assessment, mortgage situation, and amount of insulation. The realtor sends the card, along with a Polaroid picture of the computer-prepared booklet containing the pictures and information on all the houses for sale in the community, broken down by location, price bracket, number of bedrooms, and so on.
The cost of a MLS is minuscule compared to the fees charged by realtors. A normal charge to a realtor is $65 a month for the service, plus a $25 charge for each listing sold.

The technology of multiple-listing services makes most of the services that realtors perform in the housing market unnecessary. A nonprofit MLS operated as a community housing exchange could make such listing booklets available to prospective buyers in libraries, post offices, shopping centers, employment services, personnel offices of businesses, in banks, and on newsstands. Simple guidebooks could advise both buyers and sellers what to look for, how to evaluate a house, and how to make a fair deal. They could also include necessary standard forms for contracts, earnest money, escrow, and land contracts.

People would still be able to go to realtors for any special assistance or services they wanted. But for the vast majority of sales, a community housing exchange could perform the job for about one-thousandth the cost of listing with a realtor.

5. Construction labor/Owner-building

Owner-building provides a reduction in the economic cost of housing only where it makes use of human resources that would otherwise not be taken advantage of, as with sweat-equity housing grants as part of public housing programs. It does provide financial savings to the owner-builder when it avoids finance charges or taxes, as well as providing social and personal benefits.

6. Infrastructure: Reducing water, sewer, road, police, commuting, and other costs

Our patterns of housing location, design, and use substantially affect our community costs for utilities, roads, parks, and police, as well as our commuting costs. Alternate sanitation, water and energy conservation, solid waste reduction in the home, and working at home can reduce the costs of off-site development, commuting, and community services, but these savings are beyond the scope of this overview.

This overview has focused on ownership costs of houses, but similar costs and savings are possible in other sectors of the housing market. Additionally, in the rental market, separation of economic and financial analysis has developed the logic for change in mortgage regulations that would give renters ownership equity for a portion of the rent that now goes to an investor's mortgage payments—50% or more of most rental payments.

The changes we've discussed make possible immediate reductions of 75% in the cost of housing purchase and ownership, and eventual long-term savings of up to 90% in the overall cost of housing for generations to come. These changes are likely to improve, rather than sacrifice, comfort or quality, and would release vast amounts of resources and money for other social needs. At the same time, they forcefully document the value of rethinking our social institutions and economic processes to remove the encrustations of financial policies and practices that have crippled and debilitated our basic economic systems.

Housing has taken a vital leadership role in realigning our energy thinking and policies for a new era. It can fulfill a similarly vital role in the revitalization of our economic system and its reorientation toward fulfilling a greater destiny for our society.
ACCESS: Farms and Gardens

The American Cropland Crisis, by W. Wendell Fletcher and Charles E. Little, 1982, 193 pp., $7.95 from: American Land Forum 5410 Grosvenor Lane Bethesda, MD 20814

This book offers a thorough analysis of one of America's most insidious problems—the loss of farmland through development. The history of the problem, the value of farmland, and potential solutions are examined in an open style that looks behind the vast array of statistics on the subject. Among our most common strategies for preserving farmland, zoning is inexpensive but can be easily changed, whereas purchase of development rights is permanent but extremely costly. The most likely solution the authors give, after examining many alternatives, is the establishment of a "farmland conservancy" as a middle ground between zoning and purchase of development rights. A good background book. —JS

A Gardener's Guide to Propagating Food Plants, by Franklin Herm Fitz, 1978, 1983, 152 pp., $11.95 hardcover from: Charles Scribner’s Sons 597 Fifth Avenue New York, NY 10017

Wouldn't it be nice to grow a tomato especially suited to your area and taste? Or maybe a nice heirloom dry bean that's especially tasty? Well, this book gives practical, step-by-step instructions on how to save seed from vegetables and fruits, as well as information on other forms of propagation, such as cuttings and grafting. The author does an excellent job of providing clear and complete information on all forms of propagation, without getting overly technical. A large part of the book is devoted to specific vegetable and fruit listings with information on how they are propagated, making it a useful book for both beginning and veteran gardeners. —Collette Gardiner


An interesting guide to seed catalogs. The book focuses on seed companies that carry open-pollinated seed or companies that have varieties well-suited to the home gardener.

It gives a brief review of each company and then lists exceptional or unusual seeds carried by the company. The catalog covers the whole spectrum of seed companies, from a giant like Burpee to a small, local business like Territorial in Lorane, Oregon. Most of the companies are located in the U.S.; some are located in Canada or England. The catalog also offers information on whether the seed is organically grown or has been chemically treated before shipping. This is a good introduction for those unfamiliar with seed-catalog companies, and it provides a few unusual sources for even the seasoned gardener. —Collette Gardiner

Ten Acres Enough: The Small Farm Dream Is Possible, by Ralph C. Miller and Lynn R. Miller, 1982, 249 pp., $8.95 from: Mill Press 3890 Stewart Street Eugene, OR 97402

If you've ever wondered what a Walden for family farmers would be like, then wonder no more: Ten Acres Enough is that book. First published in 1864 by an anonymous New Jersey truck farmer, this gem was recently unearthed by the Millers of Small Farmer's Journal fame. In this edition, they've reprinted the original Ten Acres Enough and attached a section entitled "The Small Farm Dream is Possible," co-authored by the Millers, which analyzes and comments on the former.

The author of Ten Acres Enough led a financially uncertain life as a self-employed Philadelphia businessman before he and his wife became convinced that life on a small truck farm would bring their family much more happiness and satisfaction than they had had eking out an existence in the city. Through liberal application of the three great manures (sweat, brain, and horse), the author and his family established themselves as highly successful fruit truckers on only ten acres of land, raising peaches, strawberries, raspberries, garden crops, and a few animals. Ten Acres Enough is a thorough record of the authors' experiences in setting up the farm and making it prosper, while exuding his conviction that ten acres is indeed sufficient land for a family farm. The book is a delight to read and, with the Millers' help, has just as much relevance today as it did over a century ago. —JS
ACCESS: Deserts

Saguaros and sand dunes, barren reaches, aridity, distances that deceive, scrubby vegetation, openness, lizards and jackrabbits: jumbled images of the desert. Someone once asked a prominent environmentalist what natural area in the U.S. he'd sacrifice to the developers if he had to sacrifice some place, and he looked around—they were driving through Utah or Nevada—and said, "The desert." Then he thought a bit, looked around again, and decided the desert was too strange and beautiful to sacrifice.

The desert is an ever-changing landscape of chimeras, packed with surprises. Those who live in the desert know its powers and know how to seduce beauty and lure knowledge from rocks and sand. These two books—both written by people who ventured in—give insight into the desert and desert dwellers. Venture into it and be amazed. There are wonders there. —TK

Spectacular Vernacular; A new appreciation of traditional desert architecture, text by Jean-Louis Bourgeois, photographs by Carrollee Pelos, 1983,110 pp., $14.95 from:
Peregrine Smith Books
PO Box 667
Layton, UT 84041

Wind scoops, towers studded with fertility symbols, mud vaults and domes, and "sandcastles" in Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, and Senegal. The sculptured, sun-baked mud looks fragile to a waterworld person, but the mud structures are massive and imposing. Bourgeois invites you to suspend your cultural and climatic prejudices, to understand the fittingness of mud in the desert. Some 1.5 billion people use sun-dried mud in their shelter. There are religious places and dwelling places, and even pigeon towers (to catch pigeon droppings for Iranian farms), and all of them bespeak an understanding of climate and culture. Ornamentation abounds, from intricate mud tracery to deep-sculpted, shadow-playing facades. The beautiful photographs and the insightful, informative text divulge riches. Bourgeois writes with grace and understanding. He celebrates the ingenuity and aesthetic impulses of desert people, and he approaches these desert wonders as part of the continuing culture, not as artifacts or remnants of a long-ago life. Moreover, he gently explains that the homes are shelters from extremes of heat and cold, refuges from intense glare. We see desert windows as small and rare, but "we reason from the wrong sky. Massive mud walls turn the house into a thermal, optical, and psychological fortress."

These words and pictures on vernacular architecture in the desert are unlikely to be equaled.

Tracks, by Robyn Davidson, 1980, 254 pp., $3.95 from:
Pantheon Books
201 East 50th Street
New York, NY 10022

Camels are witty. Robyn Davidson didn’t know this when she arrived in Alice Springs and saw “the dry red parchment of the dead heart, god’s majestic hidy-hole.” She didn’t know anything about camels and she didn’t know anything about deserts when she arrived in the heart of the Australian desert, the outback. All she knew was that she had to walk across this desert. Images of the desert filled her dreams.

Tracks chronicles what Robyn learned. She spent about two years in Alice Springs, learning what she had to know about deserts and camels so that she could walk the 1700 miles from there to the western seas.

She put her heart and her soul into the learning and the journey, despite adversities, and her sensitivity to the land and its native people grew. She had always enjoyed the company of Aboriginal people, whom most Australians despised, and she saw this trip as an opportunity to visit them on their own lands, to get to know them better. She found an Aboriginal man to lead her through the sacred places near Pipalyatjara. The man exuded “strength, warmth, self-possession, wit, and a kind of rootedness, a substantiality that immediately commanded respect. And I wondered as we walked along, how the word ‘primitive’ with all its subtle and nasty connotations ever got to be associated with people like this . . . what was so outstanding in him [was that] he was healthy, integrated, whole.”

The desert and the camels transformed her. The trip bristled with disasters, yet at the end she realized one clear fact: “The trip was easy.” The two things she learned were “that you are as powerful and strong as you allow yourself to be, and that the most difficult part of any endeavour is taking the first step, making the first decision.”

From: Spectacular Vernacular
Burden of Dreams: Building Community

by Meg Roland

"The specific goals are what brought us together. However, there are many other hopes each of us brings to the project... People with diverse political and social philosophies working together in a face to face community setting, learning a new respect for each other's skills... the forming of new social relationships, new ways of seeing and behaving. Dreams? Perhaps, but that is where we begin." —from a 1979 report by R.U.N.T.

Throughout the construction phase of the project, numerous discussions occurred over the often conflicting goals of finishing the house and being involved in community development.

RAIN and RUNT have been closely involved for several years: Rainmakers have served on RUNT's Board of Directors, participated in its workshops, and wielded hammers and nails at deadlines. RUNT volunteers have worked at the Rainhouse and written book reviews for us. The folks involved in RUNT are a source of expertise we call on when we need specialized information. When the RUNT House was finally completed in summer 1983, we felt it was time to tell its story in RAIN. Meg Roland came to RUNT as a VISTA volunteer four years ago, and she has been involved with RUNT ever since. —TK

Fitzcarraldo, a Werner Herzog film, was popular with Eliot Energy House volunteers. Burden of Dreams, a Les Blank documentary about the filming of Fitzcarraldo, was equally popular. We could relate to both Herzog and Fitzcarraldo—a real-life zealot and his equally zealous fictional character. Both were absorbed in the arduous task of dragging a large steamship up and over an Amazon mountain (yes, on land) in pursuit of their dreams: Herzog's to achieve cinematic realism, Fitzcarraldo's to reach lucrative rubber resources.

Building an energy demonstration house by renovating a condemned building with volunteer labor, borrowed tools, and scrounged materials was in no way any smaller, or less passionate, a dream. We often laughed at the comparison, but at times we wondered if dragging a boat over a mountain might almost have been easier...

For the past five years, the Eliot Energy House has been the major effort of a group called Responsible Urban Neighborhood Technology (RUNT). A forum
Inferior of Eliot Energy House

held as part of the May 1978 Sun Day activities gathered 100 people to discuss the possibility of creating an energy demonstration house in Portland, Oregon. They saw the Farallones Institute’s Integral Urban House in Berkeley, California, as a possible model.

From discussions and meetings held over the next few months, a unified vision of what such a project should be emerged—a community-based effort to establish an “integral urban house” that would demonstrate a variety of appropriate technologies, affordable and approachable by the average urban dweller. In the process, such a house could provide a hands-on laboratory for participants in the design and installation of these technologies.

In July 1978, the group incorporated itself as RUNT and negotiated with the City of Portland’s Development Commission to acquire one of the city’s 70 abandoned houses.

There it was—the dream house. For 10 years it had stood vacant, and its years of neglect were sadly evident: no front door, windows broken out, the paint gray and peeling. Inside, a fire had gutted part of the house, the electrical and plumbing systems were unusable, and pigeons had made the attic their home. Still, it had a sound foundation!

Between the first Sun Day forum and the first day of demolition work nearly two years later, the Board of Directors and members of RUNT—most of them, then as now, volunteers—clarified their hopes and visions for the project and agreed on goals, an organizational structure, and an implementation strategy. They also assumed ownership of the house and began to raise funds. A garden committee formed to organize an organic community garden in the lot across the street from the house, and a design committee began on the working drawings.
In December 1979, RUNT received a conditional title to the house, stipulating that the house be brought up to code within 18 months. (It ended up taking three and one-half years.) With pledges of donations, construction materials, and skilled labor, and a $10,000 grant from the Oregon Department of Energy to pay a coordinator, the group commenced its quixotic endeavor.

Being part of this organization was a bit like taking a ride on a roller coaster. There were times when we harbored decidedly noncooperative, non-nurturing, antipacifist, and just plain angry feelings about each other. And yet, many of us continue to be close friends: We've been through an ordeal together. We've argued over countless design decisions and cried when a major fundraiser failed. We did wonder when, though rarely if, we would eventually complete this project. Collectively, RUNT comprises many unabashed optimists—people who were determined to see it happen.

That the house be built by sharing skills, essentially through hands-on workshops and consensus-based decision making, was considered vital to the success of the project. Throughout the construction phase of the project, numerous discussions occurred over the often conflicting goals of finishing the house and being involved in community development. The debate centered not on whether they were both desirable goals, but whether there was enough energy and resources to pursue both goals at once. But the community-development supporters prevailed, and RUNT furthered this commitment by bringing in three VISTA volunteers to increase community participation in RUNT and to begin community-organizing efforts in the Eliot neighborhood.

What were the results of these years of hard work? Well, at least two marriages and a dozen romances are directly attributable to those people's involvement in RUNT.

An early decision of RUNT was that a committee would design the house and that this committee, at least initially, would strive to operate by consensus. Strong personalities and varying opinions gave the design committee a stormy character. A couple of design committee members, who have agreed on the impossibility of consensus decision making for a task of this nature, have come away with different opinions of “design by committee.” According to Jerome Chievara, who began to volunteer in fall 1981 and later became construction coordinator, “Design by committee, in my opinion, is not a good way to do a project of this nature. We never really arrived at a congenial consensus on most things in the house.” John Perry, a volunteer architect who was a member of the design committee from the beginning through the completion of the house, says, “I think it [design by committee] works. I think anyone who has been through it would agree that the end result is much more vital, and really better. It added a lot to the design of the house—it added a complexity of ideas that one person never would have come up with.”

In the process of completing the house, RUNT held approximately 50 workshops on topics ranging from safe demolition techniques to finish carpentry. Says Chievara, “For us, the process of building was as important as the product. This house was supposed to be a learning process for everyone who participated.” The workshops were clearly an excellent means to teach valuable skills, but they were a less than effective way to renovate and retrofit a house. “To sum up about the workshops,” says Chievara, “the original idea that individuals from the community at large would turn out to learn construction skills and that the house was going to be completed by this process was overly optimistic.”

As it became apparent that RUNT could not possibly hope to complete the project by workshops and volunteers alone, it began to explore other methods. RUNT
made appeals to local unions, to community-college construction classes, to vocational schools, and to the court system’s community-service “volunteer” program. With the exception of the court program, these efforts were largely unsuccessful. It was the commitment of a relatively small core of RUNT volunteers who came week after week to finish what had begun over three years ago that finally brought the house to completion.

The project’s emphasis on process, however, began to break down in the final months of construction. Loans from members and the staving off of creditors allowed the organization to meet the construction cost demands, but everything else was sacrificed. The office coordinator was laid off, the newsletter terminated indefinitely, no further workshops were planned, and the organization went deeper into debt. It was an extremely stressful time for both board members and volunteers.

When the house finally received the long-awaited certificate of occupancy in summer 1983, everyone was too tired, too worn out, to celebrate.

What were the results of these years of hard work? Well, at least two marriages and a dozen romances are directly attributable to those people’s involvement in the organization. A few members have opened their own energy-related businesses, and many have taken jobs in both the public and private sectors where they are using the skills and knowledge they learned through RUNT to impact public policy, to offer energy-saving products, and to coordinate conservation programs. Members have made changes in their lifestyles, added solar greenhouses to their homes, caulked around their windows, and planted herb gardens.

Jane Peters, one of the early RUNT organizers, says, “It’s an incredible education process. Look at the people who volunteered at RUNT and where they are now. It’s been a training ground for people to learn all kinds of skills.” Chicvara notes, “The group of people who benefited the most from the Eliot Energy House were some of the court-appointed volunteers, who put in thousands of hours. They might have come as court volunteers, but they left as Eliot Energy House volunteers. It was a beautiful thing to watch this kind of metamorphosis and to see someone’s community spirit catch fire.”

And, of course, there is the house itself, which is no small accomplishment. The house includes an attic solar greenhouse (so placed because of the lack of property on the south side of the house), a wood stove, front and rear airlocks, a variety of window treatments, extensive insulation and weatherization, a library of renewable energy books, water-saving fixtures, and a recycling area. A caretaker resides in the house to maintain the systems and to give tours.

The Eliot Energy House has been the largest undertaking of RUNT, but there is more to this organization that just the house. RUNT is actually a nonprofit corporation that serves as a governing “umbrella” for the Eliot Energy House, the Neighborhood Garden and the Community Energy Project (CEP). Other projects of RUNT have included the Eliot Food Buying Club, which has since spun off to become an independent organization, and, more recently, the Farmer’s Market, which is a city-funded cooperative project of several Portland groups (including RAIN).

Almost a full year before any construction began on the house, the garden had begun to swing into operation. A local tavern owner donated use of a vacant lot across the street from the house in spring 1979. The community garden offered plots to neighborhood residents and to members of RUNT and encouraged the use of organic, raised-bed gardening techniques. Although some of the participants from the neighborhood resisted the all-organic techniques, the garden did have high neighborhood participation and well-attended workshops. Much more than the house, the garden appealed to neighborhood residents; participating in the garden were blacks, Indochinese, and senior citizens as well as the predominantly young, white members of RUNT. The garden provided a relaxed and pleasant atmosphere within which to share techniques, exchange seeds, and commiserate over slug attacks with a diverse mixture of people.

The Community Energy Project (CEP), a VISTA-initiated project, was initially funded in 1981 to provide low-cost/no-cost weatherization workshops to low-income city residents. The CEP has reached hundreds of low-income people and has distributed free weatherization materials through its workshops. It continues to be one of RUNT’s more tangible services to low-income people living in inner northeast Portland.

Although neighborhood participation was an important goal for RUNT, the CEP and the garden are the only continuing efforts that have reached out to the neighborhood. The construction of the Eliot Energy House had little neighborhood support. Chicvara comments, “A lot of people in this neighborhood are renters or low-income, and most of these workshops just weren’t relevant to them. The more basic workshops, such as building plastic storm windows or gardening, were better attended by area residents because they had a direct relevance to their situation.”

Phil Conti, another early RUNT organizer, is now a homeowner in the Eliot neighborhood and has a broader...
At the beginning, there was a lot of vision; people got excited. The trick lies in keeping that vision alive.

new roof and gutters anyway, but I have also enlarged my house. Seeing that house improve so very much, I said to myself, ‘Well, I can improve mine some too, because that house was really run-down.’” Referring to the greenhouse, she adds, “And that penthouse is really nice. You can see it from the corner there as you come up Williams Avenue; it just lights up the block. Now, I would love that for my house.”

Mrs. Howard thinks that the project “is a really great thing,” even though she has never actually been in the house. “That house stood there vacant with all the windows out and doors open, and I was always afraid that some criminal would be in there. It has improved the neighborhood; I know so.”

Physically improving the neighborhood and actually having people from the area accept the project and feel a sense of ownership are two distinct issues, though. Annette Osso, the current director of the CEP, says, “It will be a gradual process, but I think people will begin to feel that it is something that belongs to their community, especially if we are good about getting people from the neighborhood on the board and the CEP advisory council. Then, I think people from this area will be having an impact on the project.”

Osso points out that of the three neighborhood members on the board, one is black. This continues a pattern of under-representation of blacks. Throughout the history of the project, there has never been more than one black person serving on the board at any one time. In a neighborhood considered to be part of the black community, this is hardly representative. It is something the organization has struggled with since its inception.

“I think the old idea of involving this house in the neighborhood is now beginning to happen,” says Osso. “Maybe it just couldn’t happen in the construction phase.”

At present, future plans for the Eliot Energy House and Neighborhood Garden are uncertain. “The interesting thing to me,” notes Perry, “is now that the house is done, the energy level of the organization seems to have died. Here we had all this adversity and all these problems, and we could get 20 people out on a weekend to work on the house. Now we have it made, and nobody shows up.”

Conti, an ardent student of the community-development process, observes, “A project, or different aspects of a larger project, need at least one person who identifies with it so strongly that if the project fails they feel like they failed. RUNT doesn’t have that right now.”

According to Conti, “The important thing is that RUNT owns the house. It is a visible product; the tool is now complete.”

The current board of RUNT has many new members and is struggling, as it has so often in the past, with debilitating financial problems. It is also trying to rekindle the energy needed to develop the house as the community resource it was originally intended to be, to recruit volunteers, and to plan for the future.

Although no specific plans are in the making, ideas are brewing in people’s minds. Osso says, “I’d like to see RUNT do more community-development work. For example, to be a neighborhood housing service which could provide low-interest loans to low-income neighborhood residents for housing rehabilitation.”

Conti believes, “Energy-education programs for children are especially important, and I would like to see RUNT move in this direction. Not so much for the technological aspect, but rather to impart values about living with the earth.”

According to Howard, “It would be a good idea if people could come and get training, because a lot of people need it. Like my son—he is in job corps. A lot of young people would like to do something to help themselves.”

Peters says, “I don’t have a lot of pie-in-the-sky ideas for it. I’d like to see it as a center for organizations that are doing energy and social-change stuff—just what it is right now: an educational resource center.”

RUNT has received numerous requests from groups around the country seeking advice on how to start a similar project. Five years of experience has been a hard lesson in the realities of undertaking such a project, and members are cautious about encouraging other groups. To Peters, it was “a worthwhile project, but I don’t think there are any guidelines. I’m an optimist; I think it would be wonderful if every city did this type of thing, but it’s expensive and hard to accomplish.”

According to Chivvara, “Any group intent on taking on such a project would need an abundance of resources such as money, skilled and unskilled labor, and access to tools. All these things need to be lined up in advance.”

For those persistent souls who have set their hearts on developing such a project, Perry offers this advice: “My impression of the way a project like this could succeed is if a handful of people took it on as the only
thing in their life—much like the Integral Urban House or the New Alchemy Institute Ark. Those projects had grant money, and there were two or three highly skilled people for whom the project was their life. The Eliot Energy House was a totally different kind of thing."

Chicvara observes, "There was no genuine sense of shared need on the part of the community that was theoretically to build the Eliot Energy House. Building an energy demonstration house is not as relevant to a community as, say, building a fire hall."

To Conti, what's important is the collective spirit of the group. "At the beginning, there was a lot of vision; people got very excited. The trick lies in keeping that vision."

RUNT has come through a long struggle, fraught with setbacks, burn-outs and disappointments. Although those involved feel that it has met many of its goals and that they personally learned a great deal, it seems that the project has lost heart somewhere along the way. In many respects, it is like a person: It began full of dreams and lofty expectations but has suffered the burden of attempting to realize these ambitions.

What remains to be seen is if RUNT's "adolescence," so to speak, has tamped out the fire or if the project will, after a respite, reawaken its heart of dreams and pursue them again—only this time with the depth and maturity that can only come through experience and with age.

ACCESS: Integral House Projects

Interested in finding a RUNT house in your region? At last count, there were 22 of them. The following information comes from Jeff Ball of Suburban Homesteaders, who has been compiling a directory of integral house projects in the U.S. and Canada. The list below is from the fourth edition of the directory (May 1983). (If you write to Jeff—or any other contact people listed here—be sure to include at least a self-addressed, stamped envelope for a reply.) —TK

**Integral Urban House**
The Farallones Institute
1516 Fifth Street
Berkeley, CA 94710
J. Brody

**Ecology House**
12 Madison Avenue
Toronto, Ontario M5R 2S1
Canada
Dave Coon

**TERAD House**
West Virginia University
Technology Education Program
2945 University Avenue
Morgantown, WV 26506
Paul DeVore

**Eliot Energy House**
Responsible Urban Neighborhood Technology
3116 North Williams Avenue
Portland, OR 97227

**Energy and Self-Reliance Center**
Energy Research and Information Foundation
3500 Kingman Boulevard
Des Moines, IA 50311
Linda Nicholson

**Long Branch Environmental Education Center**
Big Sandy Mush Creek
Route 2, Box 132
Leicester, NC 28748
Paul Galimore

**Princeton Education Center at Blairstown**
Maclean House, Princeton University
Princeton, NJ 08544

**Gislund Farm**
Maine Audubon Society
118 U.S. Route One
Falmouth, ME 04105
Christina Donovan

**Dudley House**
305 Dudley Street
Providence, RI 02907

**Dahlem Environmental Education Center**
Jackson Community College
7117 South Jackson Road
Jackson, MI 49201

**Guelph Energy Conservation Centre**
15 Suffolk Street East
Guelph, Ontario N1H 2H7
Canada
Pat Gibson

**Energy House**
5000 Tacoma Street
Philadelphia, PA 19144
Hap Haven

**The Mesa Project**
Community Environmental Council
930 Miramonte Drive
Santa Barbara, CA 93109

**Urban Options Energy House**
135 Linden Street
East Lansing, MI 48823

**Resource Management, Inc.**
Route 2, Norman Drive
Fletcher, NC 28732
Ian Booth

**The Urban Environmental Laboratory**
Brown University
Center for Environmental Studies
Box 1943
Providence, RI 02912
Harold R. Ward

**Upland Hills Ecological Awareness Center**
2575 Indian Lake Road
Oxford, MI 48051

**Energy Information Center of SPEC**
The Canadian Society Promoting Environmental Conservation
2150 Maple Street
Vancouver, British Columbia V6J 3T3
Canada
Susan Raschau

**Kalamazoo Nature Center**
7000 North Westnedge Avenue
Kalamazoo, MI 49007
Doug Wood

**Suburban Homesteaders, Inc.**
17 Greenhill Road
Springfield, PA 19064
Jeff Ball

**The New Alchemy Institute**
237 Hatchville Road
East Falmouth, MA 02536

**Conserver House**
Conservation Council of New Brunswick
180 St. John Street
Fredericton, New Brunswick E3B 4A9
Canada
Dana Silk
**TOUCH & GO**

_Carotenoids: foods that may decrease the level of carcinogens in foods_. Some foods, however, such as carrots and citrus fruits, contain natural anticarcinogens. (From _Discover_)

**Endurance:** The Oriental rat flea can jump 600 times an hour for three whole days without stopping. (From _Science Digest_)

**Cage on cacti:** Composer John Cage played on eight cactus plants at a recent concert in New York City. "Botanical materials make lovely sounds when they're amplified," he said. He strung up the dried cacti on a sort of wire clothesline and stroked them with feathers to produce sounds not unlike plucked strings. "I like the cactuses where the spines are separated," Cage said. "When they're close together they don't vibrate freely."

While he was in New York, he also read one of his works, entitled "Rocks Speak," which he said was inspired by Thoreau. He recited it like this:

rocks speak
the tales inscribed
on them
so from
time to time
not enough
of the stony element in us
as if
you were
that boulder
gradually increasing in number

(From _The New York Times_)

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**ACCESS: Community Uses of Computers**

_A Meeting Puzzle (or, too many late-night database developments)_

Flew over brown and white America in December, just before my 38th birthday, to land in rainy Washington, DC, from rainy Portland, Oregon. Went there for four days of shuffling between DuPont Circle and the Steward Mott building on Capitol Hill, across the street from the Supreme Court.

It was a small conference, or sometimes an almost too large roundtable discussion (at a rectangular table), about computers, telecommunications and (mostly) nonprofit public-interest/community organizations. The Public Interest Computer Association (PICA) pulled together what felt like the first event of its kind—no wagers on what to call "it" yet—in a short time, and successfully! It had the impact of small computers, big and scary ones, telecommunications, operating systems, appropriate computing, electronic mail, database management, group needs assessments, and so on. Hours of fruitful conversation ensued between people trying to cope with changes in the community/public-interest world being brought on by the small-computer and telecommunications revolution.

The conference was a tentative but large step forward toward developing a unified voice and support base for the computerization of the nonprofit world. The group is exploring an electronic mail system as a means to carry on its work. You can reach PICA at 122 Maryland Avenue, NE, Washington, DC 20002; 202/544-4171. It has a useful periodical on public-interest uses of computers.

As I contemplated a method for summarizing the conference, I looked back on the attendees, remembering some of the conference as I pictured the individuals. Then I looked at the names, and in my mid-winter work mind (I have been creating databases of books and groups), what stood out was the characterization of the conference by the issues represented by the groups, all trying to figure out this new electronic wizardry.

New Technology Resource Center (Chicago) was there, along with David Burnham (The New York Times), reminding us of the dangers of the "coming computer state" (he wrote a book with that title). Some people were there talking about and showing us this here thing they called a Community Memory (Berkeley). Then there was a Public Citizen (Washington, DC), and someone who kept talking about laws and rights (Stu Gay, ACLU), and kind of the same with Michael Goldhaber from the Institute for Policy Studies. Tall John McComb with the Sierra Club would stand up now and then and talk about its experience using computers for data processing as well as communications between branch offices. Mike McCullough was there passing out copies of one of the best grassroots journals on all this stuff (Re:Set).

What strange names we are when stripped of some articles, all huddled together trying to figure out this electronic stuff. Things like: new technology, information cooperative, community memories, appropriate computing, public citizens, and winged mercury networking.

Most of the information below is part of a project I'm compiling on community uses of computers. I plan to list current information in each issue of RAIN, and you can order a 5-page bibliography on "Community Uses of Computers and Telecommunications" for $2 from RAIN. —SJ

**International Network for Social Network Analysis**

Centre for Urban and Community Studies
University of Toronto
455 Spadina
Toronto, Ontario M5S 1A1
Canada

The International Network for Social Network Analysis is an interesting network. I receive Connections, its quarterly bulletin. It sometimes has articles, but most often it is a dense collection of abstracts and bibliographies, information about information all over the place, about people studying how people connect with other people into networks.

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If you just started thinking about all this networking jazz, or if you’ve been into computer networking stuff since you were a whiz kid at 16, or perhaps just figured it was a variation on dressing for success, then this sociological networking analysis will astound you. This is serious stuff, and much of it is important.

Here are the things they are talking about these days: Social clusters and opinion clusters, pattern recognition, the group as agent of change, communal diffusion of friendship, estimation of population totals by use of snowball samples, communication networks and information hierarchies in Native American folk medicine, communication of scientific information, diary-keeping; a review of its use and utility as a research tool, and friendship and urban inter-residential social trip length.

That, and much more, in *Connections* — a sometimes esoteric journal, but it reports on valuable sociological research about how we communicate.

Listed below are three community groups that are using computers and telecommunications to analyze, gather, or share information.

### Environmental Defense Fund

**444 Park Avenue South**  
New York, NY 10016  
212/686-4191

The Environmental Defense Fund has developed ELFIN (Electric/Finance), a computer program that allows users to quantify the effects of alternative-energy proposals. It has used the system to present evidence in testimony about the development of energy plants. It is developing similar computer programs to deal with other issues, including alternative methods of farming irrigation in the central plains of Texas and California’s Central Valley.

### Appalachian Network for Environmental Education and Cultural Needs

**Council of Southern Mountains**  
PO Box 1188  
Clintwood, VA 24228  
703/926-4495

The Appalachian Network provides a monitoring program for surface and deep mines in the southern Appalachians. Services include a housing referral; establishment of a list of human needs and employment services; information on health data; and a centralized file of news clippings and topical information on the region. Apple Computer’s Community Affairs Program supports the network.

### Eco-Net

**c/o Pacific Research Unit**  
University of California  
Santa Cruz, CA 95064  
408/429-2195

Four U.S.-based organizations concerned with appropriate technologies for community self-reliance are developing a transnational computer network for global communities and appropriate technology, to refine existing telecommunication and staff technical abilities and organizational resources. The Apple Community Affairs Program supports Eco-Net.

### Partnerships Dataline U.S.A.

**National Municipal League**  
55 West 44th Street  
New York, NY 10036  
212/730-7930

A computerized database of 6000 community- and economic-development case studies and sources. Cosponsors of the project are the Citizen’s Forum on Self Government and Partners for Livable Places. The now-defunct President’s Task Force on Private Sector Initiatives gathered the information in the database.

### Interlink Press Service

**777 United Nations Plaza**  
New York, NY 10017

Interlink provides U.S. subscribers access, via computer-based delivery systems, to a large volume of news provided by the Inter Press Service, which Focuses on news stories in developing countries. Each week, Interlink provides more than 150 feature articles covering economic, development, human rights, population, environmental, energy, urbanization, disarmament and political issues.

### Community Information Exchange

**Community Information Exchange**  
老人家 National Urban Coalition  
1201 Connecticut Avenue, NW,  
4th Floor  
Washington, DC 20036  
202/331-2400

The National Urban Coalition is establishing a Community Information Exchange (with support from the Rockefeller Foundation), which will focus on community economic development and housing. An on-line directory of technical- assistance providers is being developed, as well as a communication system for electronic mail and teleconferencing to facilitate network building among groups working in community development.

### Data/Net

**1015 18th Street, NW, #300**  
Washington, DC 20006  
202/635-5577

A nonprofit group developing a computer system for exchange of information between individuals and groups. The focus is on public/private and private/private partnerships in dealing with issues of concern to local communities and DATA/NET members. Members will access electronic mail, bulletin boards, and other members' newsletters.

### ACRES

**Farm Bureau**  
225 Touhy Avenue  
Park Ridge, IL 60068

ACRES, the Agricultural Communications and Resource Evaluation System, is a cooperative venture of state farm bureaus and the American Farm Bureau. The system provides information on market prices, farming legislative news, and other general farming news. The system is interactive and is available using a communications-equipped small computer or terminal.

### Program on Neighborhood and Regional Change

**Massachusetts Institute of Technology**  
Room 9-322  
Cambridge, MA 02139  
617/253-6305

MIT's Program on Neighborhood and Regional Change was established to measure and analyze change in neighborhoods and regions as a basis for understanding how that change might be directed to the benefit of those living in the areas. The program uses large databases, including basic census data, for its analyses. From this, it provides information through publications and services.
VOICES OF REINHABITATION

Reinhabitory—refers to the tiny number of persons who come out of the industrial societies . . . and then start to turn back to the land, to place. This comes for some with the rational and scientific realization of inter-connectedness and planetary limits. But the actual demands of a life committed to a place, and living somewhat by the sunshine green plant energy that is concentrating in that spot, are so physically and intellectually intense, that it is a moral and spiritual choice as well. —Gary Snyder

The Prairie Bioregion

The prairie bioregion is difficult for a bioregional organization to represent because of its size. It stretches from Texas to Saskatchewan and from a mosaic of Eastern deciduous forest and prairie to the Rocky Mountains in the west (see map). Building on already established personal contacts in the central portion of the prairie bioregion, an organization called the Kansas Area Watershed (KAW) Council was formed. We represent the Kansas River watershed, 60,000 square miles of land in northern Kansas, southern Nebraska, and northeastern Colorado. This is an area of prairie and plains that is formed by the Republican, Arikaree, Smoky Hill, Solomon, and Saline rivers; joined downstream by the Big and Little Blue, Vermillion, Delaware, and Wakarusa rivers. We emphasize the rivers of our watershed because they connect the land and people, and their confluence of energy is symbolic of ours.

We call ourselves KAW Council, and the acronym KAW is a native form of the word Kansas. It is one of the many names of the Kansas, Konza, Kanzas, Canzas, or Kansa Indians who previously inhabited this watershed. The word KAW means “people of the south wind.” The warm south wind is common in our region, and wind characterizes the spirit of the inhabitants of this area. The word KAW is also the commonly used nickname for the Kansas River, and we use the word (pronounced kah) to call each other (like the native crows) and as a group chant sound.

KAW Council has three main foci for our organizational efforts: political, ecological, and cultural. The political focus was highlighted at our first KAW Council gathering in spring 1982, when over 100 people gathered on May Day weekend while the land was greening, dotted with wild indigo and verbena blossoms upon the prairie, and sweet william and mayapple blossoms in the woods. We developed a platform of resolutions for nine interest areas (such as Ecological Politics and Food and Agriculture). These resolutions have been called “the best model for organizing bioregional committees” (see Raise the Stakes, Winter 1983, page 15, published by the Planet Drum Foundation). Since then, we have been directly supporting the Kansas Natural Resource Council for its environmental lobbying efforts with the Kansas legislature, and we have become a cosponsor of the North American Bioregional Congress (see page 30). We will update and improve our resolutions at our Fall KAW Council.

The ecological focus of KAW Council has been emphasized by campouts at various natural areas (such as in the Flint Hills and along the Republican River), by nature walks at our more formal events,
and by discussing the ecology and environmental problems of our region. Agriculture and food are very important issues to KAW Council. We live in the breadbasket of the country, and we export tremendous amounts of wheat and other grains. (See The Kansas Food System study published by the Cornucopia Project of Rodale Press for more information on the flow of food in the region and the environmental impacts of its production.) At KAW events, people bring and share a cornucopia of food. While we prepare and eat the food, the conversation usually turns to the food system that created it—who brought it, how it was grown, the weather, how it tastes—nourishing both our bodies and minds with homemade bread, watercress, venison, watermelons, and other foods of the bioregion.

Changes in the ecology of the prairie are disturbing. Only a small percentage of native prairie is left, groundwater depletion is causing rivers such as the Smoky Hill to be reduced to intermittent streams, and an excessive amount of soil is eroding from our farmlands. We write about various aspects of prairie ecology in our newsletter, Konza. Also, we are currently putting together a bundle of materials on the ecology of our prairie bioregion that will have charts on seasonal cycles of plants and animals, edible prairie plants, and much more. It will be the focus of our next council—our Prairie Heritage Council—to be held April 27-29, 1984.

The cultural focus of KAW Council has emphasized bioregional poetry, songs, dance, and the reviving of storytelling. Emphasizing our culture is important to us because we believe that sharing and further developing our prairie culture will strengthen our roots and give us a greater understanding of this land we call home. Artistic expression is encouraged because it can give us new insights into the natural world around us; and stories, songs, and poetry can tell us more about the culture, ecology, and our "sense of place" in the prairie bioregion. Stories that were told of eagles, springs, pioneers, and previous prairie inhabitants, while the full moon was rising over the Flint Hills at our 1982 Labor Day Campout, are now part of KAW Council's own story and folklore. Stories, songs, and poetry that we have shared at this and other councils are then printed in our newsletter for a written record and to share with those not present.

We look forward to the long-term process of developing and sharing our bioregional perspective here in the heartland. As cosponsors of the North American Bioregional Congress, KAW Council will help coordinate food for the event and emphasize our ecological and cultural perspective. If you would like to know more about our council, our prairie bioregion, or be kept informed of our upcoming events, please subscribe to our newsletter—Konza, $5 for the next four issues, c/o The Appropriate Technology Center, 1101½ Massachusetts Street, Lawrence, KS 66044. □□

Betty Dutton
Prairie Perspective

The original inhabitants of these prairie lands were pushed onto small Indian reservations as Manifest Destiny brought white settlers, many of them recent European immigrants with the desire to farm, to inhabit the prairie bioregion. The pioneers who came to this region had great difficulties relating to a land with few trees, with droughts, thunderstorms, prairie fires, and grasshopper swarms. They even had difficulty relating to the success of those few who made this land an agricultural region. These stories have been told by prairie writers such as Mari Sandoz, Willa Cather, and others. (See CoEvolution Quarterly, Winter 1981, for a bibliography).

There has always been a flux of people moving into and out of the region. However, since the Dust Bowl and World War II, the countryside has been greatly depopulated. During the late 1960s and early 1970s, there was not a strong back-to-the-land movement in the prairie bioregion. How many communes or collective farms do you know of that got started at that time in Kansas or North Dakota? I believe that there was not a large back-to-the-land movement in the prairie bioregion because: (1) it's open country and not conducive to building a homestead way back in the woods; (2) the land is primarily valuable for its agricultural production and is not cheap (it is somewhat ironic that bioregions that did experience a strong back-to-the-land movement, such as the Ozarks, have thin soil and mineral-poor rocks, which are not conducive to food self-sufficiency); and (3) a majority of people in the prairie bioregion still have farm ties through relatives (even in our small cities), and because of this access there was less desire to return back to the land.

It is significant to note that our prairie bioregional organization—KAW Council—has its origins not only in the back-to-the-land movement, but also in having maintained personal long-term connections with these prairie lands. As a result, a significant portion of the core members of KAW Council are people whose roots in the prairies go back to the first white settlers or whose roots give them a strong sense of earth, land, and heritage. As an example, I am the fifth generation of Kindschers to have lived on an 1871 homestead claim above the Republican River near Guide Rock, Nebraska, and my folks still farm there.

North American Bioregional Congress

To congress: To come together in a spirit of earth stewardship, translating ecological law into human law—as a constitution and as an ecopolitical platform for the economic, agricultural, technological, social, and political rehabinbing of North America under the ethic of sustainability. Such was the intention of the resolution passed by the second Ozark Area Community Congress on October 12, 1981, calling for the convening of individuals, organizations, and native peoples at a North American Bioregional Congress (NABC) [see RAIN IX:3].

The hope is that people will coordinate as much as possible within their regions and then bring that energy to NABC I. Listed below are the bioregional groups that have formed or are in the process. NABC I will be held May 21-25, 1984, at Camp Doniphan, northeast of Kansas City, Missouri. The cost is $130 to $150, depending on your accommodations. The organizers urge interested participants to preregister now, so that they can anticipate the needs of the entire body. Send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to NABC, Box 129, Drury, MO 65638. If you can't attend, you can read the report, which will contain caucus reports, resolutions, position papers, and information on future NABC activities. Please reserve a report now by sending $10 to the above address.

Bioregional Congresses

The Great Lakes Bioregional Congress (held first congress in October 1983), Route 1, 586 Casson Road East, Maple City, MI 49664
Kansas Area Watershed Council (held second council in May 1983), 1225 Delaware, Lawrence, KS 66044
Ocooch Bioregional Network (first met in October 1983), Route 1, Box 77A, Chaseburg, WI 54621
Ozark Area Community Congress (congressed for the fourth time in October 1983), Box 129, Drury, MO 65638

Areas Organizing

Colorado Plateau: (planning a Southwest Bioregional Congress for summer 1984), SBC, 227 East Cororado, Sante Fe, NM 87501
Interior Low Plateau: (Kentucky/ Tennessee) Tennessee Organic Grower, Route 6, Box 56B, Crossville, TN 38555
Interior Pacific Northwest: Friends of the Trees Society, Box 1064, Tonasket, WA 98855
Maritime Pacific Northwest: RAIN, 2270 NW Irving, Portland, OR 97210
New England Region: Institute for Social Ecology, Box 89, Plainfield, VT 05667
New York State: New York State Coalition for Local Self-Reliance, Box 6222, Syracuse, NY 13217
Southeast: The Long Branch Environmental Education Center, Route 2, Box 132, Leicester, NC 28748, and SUNREP, Box 10121, Knoxville, TN 37919
Bioregion—a continuous geographic area seen in terms of similarities of plant and animal life and climatic and geological characteristics...and a terrain of consciousness—a place and the ideas that have developed about how to live in that place. —Peter Berg

Pacific Northwest Bioregion Report

Gregory Bateson, the late wizard of systems thinking, was often caught saying, “The map is not the territory.” Well, quite often I find myself wondering if other readers don’t feel similarly about the Northwest Bioregion Report. While we run our phones mad, checking into exciting Northwest news, mapping out the region’s activity, it still falls short of what’s actually brewing and swirling in the territory’s communities. Simply put, we’re looking for news tidbits, sketches, black-and-white photos, poems, and new publications that reflect community development, cooperative efforts in solving social and economic crises in urban areas, and creative ways of making neighborhoods more self-reliant. Help us bring more of the territory to you. To show our appreciation, we’ll send you RAIN for six months, provided we print your submission. —KN

Maritime Northwest Bioregional Meeting
RAIN, as a member of the Coordinating Council of the North American Bioregional Congress (see page 30), would like to hold a precongress meeting of those interested in attending in May and those wishing to take part in this phase only. The one-day gathering will involve laying out our collective priorities for resolutions to be adopted at the congress. (No, we will not plagiarize Ecotopia Emerging.) The meeting will be held Saturday, April 7, from 11 to 4 (brown bag lunches), in Portland; the exact location will be announced after we receive written responses from those interested in attending. R.S.V.P. (2270 NW Irving, Portland, OR 97210) by Wednesday, March 28. Those living east of the Cascades should contact Friends of the Trees Society, Box 1064, Tonasket, WA 98855.

Chestnut Revival
Tilth (the Northwest organization for sustainable agriculture) and the Northwest Chestnut Project have declared 1984 The Year of the Chestnut. What seems to have become an agricultural hermit may hold little-noticed attributes. The chestnut is nutritionally superior to potatoes and rice, and the chestnut tree yields a competitive 2000 pounds per acre. As a hardwood that once dominated forests on the East Coast, it grows throughout the Pacific Northwest—even on marginal lands. In fact, the largest chestnut tree in the world is in Oregon City, Oregon.

“The purpose of the project,” said Tilth’s Mark Musick, “is to inform and inspire people about the history and potential of chestnuts in the Northwest. We’re collecting, organizing, and distributing chestnut lore, recipes, and information on existing trees.” The project will promote appreciation of the chestnut tree in backyards, bordering streets (some aren’t edible), and in parks, as well as investigate its potential as a new agricultural industry in the Northwest. A packet of information on the project and chestnuts is available for $2 from the Northwest Chestnut Project, 2519 NE 14th, Portland, OR 97212.

Meditation Network
For several years now, members and friends of the Chinook Learning Community on Whidbey Island in the Puget Sound have met on Sunday...
mornings to share a sense of affinity with the earth and its inhabitants. As visitors have come to Chinook and returned to their homes around the Pacific Northwest, a network of meditators has developed. Beginning at 9:30 a.m. every Sunday, Northwesterners from all walks of life silently connect with the planet and each other. At 10 a.m., the participants envision light where their counterparts reside throughout the Pacific Northwest. "Effective earthkeeping and change happen on all levels," observed RAIN staff member Kris Nelson. "This is one of them. It's time for 'soft tech' to more actively encompass one of the most ancient appropriate technologies." For more information, contact Kris at RAIN or Fritz Hull at the Chinook Teaming Community, PO Box 57, Clinton, WA 98236.

Environmental Groups
A list of environmental organizations in the Northwest is available from Ecopeace Northwest, Box 1555, Beaverton, OR 97075. The group occasionally publishes a newsletter, Northwest Eco, on key legislative issues. Send a self-addressed, stamped envelope with your request.

Artists Wage Peace, Awareness
A group of performing and nonperforming artists in Eugene, Oregon, has organized both to augment peace-related events sponsored by other groups and to expose publicly what's called committed art—works that have socially inspirational or political themes. The group, Artists for Social Awareness, is planning a display event in Eugene, compiling a list of interested artists (including writers and poets) throughout the region, and seeding chapters in other Northwest communities. For details, contact Solala Towler, PO Box 21062, Eugene, OR 97402.

Recycling Gets Boost
On the theory that householders' participation in recycling begins with awareness, Oregon's Clackamas County Recycling Task Force recently joined 14 other sponsors—representing citizen's groups; schools and colleges; and state, county, and city governments—to stage the county's first Recycling Awareness Week.

Portland Energizes Sewage
Ernest Callenbach, author of Ecotopia Emerging, once commented that until cities begin using sewage—a resource out of place—to help feed, fuel, and resupply water to residents, we can't featured on cable TV—followed the next day by the grand finale: the "First-ever Intercity Competitive 1.3-yard Unlimited Dumpster Derby," with a representative of each entrant's city government "riding shotgun" in the dumpsters. (In the interest of physical safety, future derbies will be less "unlimited.") In addition to those who attended the various events, others were made aware of recycling procedures through numerous news stories, pictures, feature articles, and editorials and by TV news coverage on three channels. For information on how to successfully conduct such an event, contact Jerry Hermann at the John Inskeep Environmental Learning Center, 19600 S. Molalla Avenue, Oregon City, OR 97045. —Dick Barney

Dick Barney is a free-lance writer living in Oregon City.
expect to endure with one-way dispos­
al systems. In Portland, sewage reuse
is imminent.

Through the efforts of City Commis­sioner Mike Lindberg, Portland will soon be selling surplus methane produced at its sewage treatment
plant. The buyer is Malarkey Roofing
Company, located one mile from the
plant. In the past, Malarkey has relied
on costly natural gas to heat tar and
other substances applied to roofing
materials. The company’s peak sum­
mer demand matches the treatment
plant’s peak production of methane.

"This project is distinctive in the
country because of its direct and
simple distribution and usage, and
because the characteristics of the gas
and its production fit so well with the
needs and interests of a nearby busi­
ness," Lindberg explained. “The
surplus methane has not previously
been marketable because of its low
quality and corrosive nature, and
because the supply fluctuates and is
interruptible.”

With the construction of a gas line to
Malarkey Roofing, all the treatment
plant’s methane will be utilized,
earning the city $130,000 a year.
Previously, only a portion of the gas
was used to heat the methane-produc­ing
digesters, sludge composters, and
the treatment plant itself. (See also
Future Water, page 7.)

**Model Bike Map**

Salem, Oregon, doesn’t sparkle
with bike lanes alongside traffic lanes,
so area cyclists often rely on lesser-
used streets. With this in mind, the
city’s Bike Committee has produced a
map that designates desirable routes
for bicyclists, identifies hills and bike
repair shops, estimates travel time by
10-minute intervals (using concentric
lines), shows how to ride safely in
traffic, lists local organizations of
interest to cyclists, and can be cleaned
with a damp cloth and ironed (Texo-
print by trade name— it’s pretty rainy
here). The map shows all bike paths,
and you can fold the street index to
use while perusing the front. A Traffic
Safety Commission grant funded the
map. Get details from City Traffic
Engineer, Public Works Department,
555 Liberty Street, SE, Salem, OR
97301.

**Salem: Oregon’s Solar
Capital**

According to Spectrum, the newslet­
er of the Willamette Valley Solar
Energy Association, the Willamette
Valley has more solar-installation
activity than the sunnier central and
eastern sections of the state. The hot
spot in the Willamette Valley, with
more solar installations than any other
community, is the state’s capital,
Salem.

**Natural History Database**

Rain Community Resource Center
(RCRC), with the assistance of the
local Audubon Society’s Urban Natu­
ralist Program, is developing a data­
base of significant natural and historic
sites. The initiative for the project
came from Bob Benson, a local histori­
an, cartographer, and natural-history
buff (see "Patron of our Place," Know­
ing Home, RAIN VIII:3). For years Bob
has collected information about
significant places. He has more than
3000 items on index cards for one of
the three counties in the Portland area.
The keyword thesaurus of terms,
which ranges from Indian holy places
to unique fungi, is presently being
refined. For information, contact
National and Social History: A Biore­
gional Database, c/o Rain Community
Resource Center, 2270 NW Irving,
Portland, OR 97210.

**Neighborhood Survey**

The Goose Hollow Foothills League,
a neighborhood association in Port­
land, has contracted with RCRC to
computerize an extensive survey done
of Goose Hollow’s neighborhood
residents, including individuals’ skills
and interests and issues considered
important. Goose Hollow Foothills
League, Northwest Service Center,
1819 NW Everett, Portland, OR
97209; 503/223-3331.

**Do Something Wild!**

Oregon’s Watchable Wildlife: A Viewer’s
Guide describes 90 sites, species, and
best viewing times for Oregon’s fish
and wildlife. The guide is available
from Watchable Wildlife, Oregon Fish
and Wildlife Department, 506 SW Mill
Street, PO Box 3503, Portland, OR
97208. Donations go directly to Ore­
gon’s Watchable Wildlife Program.

**Nongame Wildlife Fund**

“To preserve and protect nongame
wildlife and their habitat.” Funded
with dollars donated through the
checkoff boxes on the Oregon state
income-tax form by nongame enthusi­
asts, the program believes that “all
species are part of this web of life and
are valuable indicators of overall
environmental conditions,” and “to
dismiss some species and habitats as
unimportant is short-sighted.” You
can obtain further information from
Nongame Wildlife Program, Oregon
Fish and Wildlife Department (see
address above).
Write-off of housing investments and recent tax laws that allow for rapid buy the houses at a predetermined, affordable price. Investors are expected to be large, because of the partnership as their individual active for 10 years, after which time the shelter investments. They will lease the properties to the housing cooperative, with the help of REACH, to buy the houses back after 10 years. With this daring strategy, REACH hopes to create a perpetual supply of affordable, good-quality housing, close to the city center. Not a bad deal. REACH is at 317 SE 16th #7, Portland, OR 97214 — Scott Androes

Scott Androes, a former RAIN intern, works for an insurance company in Portland.

Creative Co-op Financing

Why would wealthy individuals spend $10,000 apiece to rehabilitate older houses and then lease them to a cooperative of low-income people? For the tax breaks, of course. At least that's why they're doing it in Portland.

A neighborhood group called REACH Community Development has put together an innovative arrangement in which investors will spend $400,000 of their personal wealth to buy and rehab about 50 units of housing. Other money will come from foundations, private donors, bank loans, and loans from the city's development commission. The investors will own and operate the housing through a limited partnership, a form of corporation often used for tax-shelter investments. They will lease the properties to the housing cooperative for 10 years, after which time the cooperative will have the option to buy the houses at a predetermined, affordable price.

The investors may claim the losses of the partnership as their individual losses, thereby decreasing their individual taxable income. The losses are expected to be large, because of recent tax laws that allow for rapid write-off of housing investments and even faster write-off of rehab costs that are related to low-income housing. "We're just taking advantage of the Reagan tax laws for a good cause," says Dennis Gilman, director of REACH.

Property sellers may donate part of the value of a house by selling it to REACH at a bargain price. The property seller gets a tax deduction for the donation, and REACH is able to turn around and sell the house to the limited partnership at the higher, full market value, thus acquiring instant equity (actually, instant debt, since REACH takes a mortgage from the partnership). This instant debt will help make it possible for the cooperative, with the help of REACH, to buy the houses back after 10 years.

With this daring strategy, REACH hopes to create a perpetual supply of affordable, good-quality housing, close to the city center. Not a bad deal. REACH is at 317 SE 16th #7, Portland, OR 97214 — Scott Androes
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HOW TO HELP Yourself While Job Hunting: A Woman’s Mini-Guide. Send $2 to M.T., 807 S. 16th, Sunnyside, WA 98944.

RAIN INTERN PROGRAM: RAIN’s intern program enables staff interns to gain a thorough knowledge of magazine publication and resource center operation. The work is a mix of activities, including promotion, library and office maintenance, information requests, publicity, and local education or organizing efforts. Applicants must be self-motivated and able to work with minimum supervision; technical skills are appreciated, but not necessary. A three-month commitment is required. Benefits include a stipend of $40 a week and the excitement of being in touch with the latest information from around the country. Send resume to Rob Baird, RAIN, 2270 NW Irving, Portland, OR 97210.

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Spreading the Word

In our effort to inform more people about RAIN, we are requesting that those groups for which we list upcoming events make our brochures available to event participants. We’ll send the sponsoring group up to 40 brochures when we mail the magazine. We enjoy getting the word out for upbeat efforts; we hope you will, too. Gracias.

Sponsored jointly by the National Center for Employee Ownership and the Association for Workplace Democracy, the Conference on Employee Ownership and Participation will be held April 7-8 at American University in Washington, DC. Co-ops, ESOPs, workplace democracy, quality of worklife, and organizational development are among the workshop topics. Contact Corey Rosen, NCEO, 1611 South Walter Reed Drive, #109, Arlington, VA 22204; 703/979-2375.

Farallon's International announces a 10-week course in Appropriate Technology and International Development Strategies. Intended for international-development professionals and students, the course will run from April 2 to June 8 at the Farallon's Institute Rural Center. Tuition, meals, and field trips cost $1000 per person. For more information, contact Glen Price, Director, Farallon's International, 15290 Coleman Valley Road, Occidental, CA 95465; 707/874-2441.

"The Big Party idea is an excellent one and it should be tried every year until it works and most of the people participate," according to Robert G. Muller, Assistant Secretary-General of the United Nations. The Big Party is a weeklong worldwide celebration set for October 24-30 whose purpose is to help people visualize a world where creating weapons of war is impossible. Endorsers include Pete Seeger, Maggie Kuhn, Flo Kennedy, and Father Daniel Berrigan. For a $25 donation, the Aquarian Research Foundation will supply 200 invitations, a manual, a newsletter subscription, and other information. Contact the Aquarian Research Foundation, 5620 Morton Street, Philadelphia, PA 19144.

The Florida Solar Energy Center will hold more than two dozen workshops and short courses in the next few months. The Florida Solar Energy Center sponsors short courses and workshops on such topics as Solar Merchandising (March 15-16); Solar Systems, Daylighting and Ventilation Design for Schools (March 29-30 and April 5-6); and Fundamentals and Applications of Photovoltaics (April 26-27). For more information, contact Ken Sheinkopf, Director of Continuing Education, Florida Solar Energy Center, 300 State Road 401, Cape Canaveral, FL 32920; 305/783-0300.

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More than 400 educators and environmentalists from 16 different states attend Stalking Education in the Wild each year. The conference is a weekend learning extravaganza with 15-20 different sessions and classes going on each hour. This year, the conference runs from May 3-6 and will focus on individual and world concerns and issues. Contact Barb Brining, Colorado Outdoor Education Center, Florissant, CO 80816; 303/748-3341.

The Women's Peace Presence, an encampment by women to protest the escalating arms race and, in particular, Project Elf (the Navy's first-strike, one-way transmitter for the oncoming fleet of Trident nuclear submarines), will open in northern Wisconsin on May 28. With the encampment, the women hope to raise consciousness about Project Elf and many issues of special concern to women. They hold in common the belief that the arms race must end, the desire for the world to be at peace, and the need to be actively and powerfully involved in this process. For more information or to offer personal or financial support, contact Women's Peace Presence to Stop Project Elf, National Media Web, 1016 North 9th Street, Milwaukee, WI 53233; 414/272-7457.
Visions and Soundscape: Turtle Island, in preparation for the North American Bioregional Congress, is calling for "photographic slide images of your place and the songs of the people who share the voice of the land." Slides will be woven together to represent the uniqueness, beauty, and strength of our bioregions throughout Turtle Island (poet Gary Snyder's name for the continent we live on). The songs should speak of your land, water, and lifeways; poetry, natural earth music (howls, hoots, winds), or prose reflecting essentials of your bioregion is also well-come. Contact Turtle Island, 4200 Rock Quarry Road, Columbia, MO 65201.

AFSCME on Cancer: The American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) has challenged the American Cancer Society (ACS) in a letter stating, "Until the ACS takes the necessary steps to become a strong advocate of national policies that reduce or eliminate human exposure to carcinogens, AFSCME cannot in good conscience continue to support ACS." Citing the "ACS's past history of inaction in the public policy arena . . . on carcinogens other than tobacco," AFSCME requests the ACS to expand funding for preventive programs and lobby for adequate budgets for such regulatory agencies as EPA and OSHA, among other measures. For more information or a text of the letter, contact the Center for Science in the Public Interest, 1755 S Street, NW, Washington, DC 20009; 202/332-9110.

100 Years: Ralph Borsodi, who started the School for Living, was born in 1883. The School is celebrating 1983-84 as the School for Living Anniversary Year. For more information, contact Mildred J. Loomis, School of Living, RD 7, York, PA 17402.

Nuts and Fruits: Northwoods Nursery produces an interesting catalog, "Trees for food, wildlife, woodlots, and beauty." The catalog lists unusual and hard-to-find varieties of fruits and nuts, including seven varieties of the apple pear. Northwoods Nursery, 28696 South Cramer Road, Molalla, OR 97038.

Chinese Artisans: If you live on the West Coast, don't miss the exhibit at the Pacific Science Center in Seattle. "China: 7000 Years of Discovery" will feature 18 Chinese artisans demonstrating such skills as papermaking, bronze casting, and silk broadloom weaving. The Chinese invented the world's first movable type, seismograph, navigational compass, and paper. The exhibit also includes artifacts from China. Initiated in 1980 by the Chinese Association of Science and Technology and the Ontario Science Centre in Ontario, the original purpose of the exhibit was to illustrate to North Americans the Chinese contribution to science and to teach the Chinese how to develop a "hands-on" science museum. The exhibition will be in Seattle March 1 to August 31. Pacific Science Center, 200 Second Avenue North, Seattle, WA 98109; 206/625-9333.

Eating Your Landscape: The Farallones Institute is offering an apprenticeship in Biointensive Agriculture/Edible Landscapes. For more information, write to Apprenticeship Program, Farallones Institute, 15290 Coleman Valley Road, Occidental, CA 95465.

Appropriate Books: The new 32-page catalog of Books by Post is available free from the Intermediate Technology Development Group. Write to IT Publications, The Old Brewery, Tisbury, Wilts, SP3 6NH, UK; some of the publications may also be available from ITDG/NA, Publications Office, PO Box 337, Croton-on-Hudson, NY 10520.

Solar Phone: The U.S. Department of Energy still maintains a toll-free phone number for inquiries about renewable energy—despite the current administration's plans to let it die quietly by not giving it an advertising or promotion budget. The information is free, and service is relatively prompt. Renewable Energy, Box 8900, Silver Spring, MD 20907; 800/523-2929 (U.S., including Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico); 800/462-4983 (Pennsylvania); 800/233-3071 (Alaska and Hawaii).

Neighborhood of the Year: A contest sponsored by Neighborhoods U.S.A. Some of the criteria for judging will be "the extent of neighborhood involvement, significance of accomplishments, amount of self-help, and effectiveness of partnership building." The deadline is March 1. For more information, write to Don Hines, City of Tacoma Community Development Corporation, 740 St. Helens Avenue, Suite 1036, Tacoma, WA 98402; 206/591-5223.

International Program: At Warren Wilson College, "everyone works and has a global view," according to Chris Ahrens, International Program advisor. The one-year curriculum consists of language study, global issues, cultural orientation, and appropriate technologies on campus, followed by eight weeks of working with people in a developing country. This year, students will work in Mexico, Sri Lanka, and the Dominican Republic. Warren Wilson College, International Development Program, Swannanoa, NC 28778.


Cooperative Games: Global Learning Software is produced by Global Learning, a nonprofit organization dedicated to fostering global perspectives. The games are designed to develop problem-solving skills and help people learn to work together. Globe Learning, 40 South Fullerton Avenue, Montclair, NJ 07042.

Community Investing: According to a recent issue of the Council on Economic Priorities Newsletter, your personal banking habits can make a difference. Your investments at a minority- or women-owned bank will increase its profits and its assets. Most accounts are insured federally up to $100,000, so there is no risk involved. Bank rates vary, but are generally competitive. In return for a stamped, self-addressed envelope, CEP will send you a list of community-oriented credit unions in your region. CEP, 84 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10011.


Ladakh Project: Helena Norberg-Hodge, a linguist who visited Ladakh, India, eight years ago to make a documentary film about Ladakh, fell in love with the country and has been trying to maintain what she calls "one of the last traditional cultures still essentially intact" by bringing appropriate technologies to Ladakh. She believes that what she sees in Ladakh mirrors almost precisely what Margaret Mead saw in Samoa. Helena will be in the Northwest to give slide shows on the Ladakhi culture from about April 30 to May 6, if she can find enough interested groups. Contact the American Friends of the Ladakh Institute, c/o Max Berking, Drake-Smith Lane, Rye, NY 10580; 914/967-3199.

Rainbow Sign: Hundreds of Jewish communities and congregations have joined to "make the Rainbow Sign" by doing at least one act a month toward preventing a nuclear holocaust. The organization is committed to exploring a Jewish approach to nonviolent civil disobedience. Rainbow Sign, Menorah/Public Resource Center, 7041 McCallum Street, Philadelphia, PA 19119.
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