

# The Village eView

**February 1, 2012**  
**The On-Line News of the**  
**Goodenough Community System**

## **Intention**

*Please notice that Throughout this eView are some new dates. Please mark your calendar. And . . .*

**We have a question about our Annual Meetings Weekend in March: Could you come if it was scheduled for March 16, 17, 18? There are several reasons in placing it here rather than when it was announced. Please email [hoff@goodenough.org](mailto:hoff@goodenough.org)**



## **Preparing for the Annual Meeting**

*John L. Hoff*

The annual meeting of the Goodenough Community System generally happens around the last two weeks of March. Representatives of the corporations and some of the programs make a formal report to those assembled (usually about 40 people). These reports include financial statements and identify the programs of the previous year as well as offering a budget for the coming year and a description of the programs to be offered in the coming year. We make time for discussion of these reports, yet much of the weekend is spent in conversation on how we could improve our lives and our system of governance.

My perception is that for several years we have been dealing with the question, "what is the purpose of this community?" I have enjoyed this focus, and you have heard me say that as a communitarian, I think a central purpose of community is to attract and develop good people; that is, people whose personal intention is to be a good human being, interested in making a positive social contribution. Communitarians understand that communities are primarily engaged in

human development. I call this process “human permaculture” because the **tests of viability and sustainability** must be applied to both human culture and agriculture.

In developing a sense of community in your neighborhood or church, the following steps in a community organizing process will become visible:

**Phase 1. Gathering persons interested in:**

- Their own **life-long human development**.
- **Freedom** for one’s unique self-expression.
- Pleasant and effective **relations** with others.
- Forming a **satisfying cultural environment**.
- An effective method of community **self-governance**.

**Phase 2. Consciously developing an awareness of relationship, by:**

- **Honoring existing relationships**.
- Sharing and responding to each other’s relationships in **an attempt to learn** about them.
- **Educating about relationship** and how it functions in human life as: attachment, dependency, belonging, support for differentiation, and empowerment for autonomy.
- Facilitating the attainment of **social intelligence** where an individual appreciates the inwardness of others because of knowledge of their self.

**Phase 3. Encouraging the expression of culture through:**

- Passing forward of **knowledge (education)**.
- The encouragement of natural skills in **the arts**.
- **Creating a variety of social environments** that feature aspects of culture.
- **Encouraging creative people** by making ways for them to contribute to social life.
- Appreciating the natural and historical **empowerment of culture as necessary for full human development**.

**Phase 4. Providing a system of governance that acknowledges the need for some general ground rules for the conduct of:**

- Individuals.
- Partners.
- Property ownership, lease or rental.
- Business.
- Participation in organization within city, county, state, and nation.

**Phase 5. Based on the premise that the sum is always more than its parts and that any system requires continuous care and adjustment, this step involves developing a system of governance** (think of the governor on a machine that responds to human guidance) that balances, moderates, corrects, and improves by attending to problems developed at any level of the social organism. Such a process of governance is basic to sustainability and continuous function. It is concerned with accomplishing a mission in accordance with a vision while taking seriously feedback from persons implementing the work being done—a **system that is learning from the experience of each of its operatives**. This system of self-governance is guided usually by the most wise, best-informed, reliable, and trusted persons available. They are chosen carefully and honored as a last resort in matters of governing.

So, from a communitarian perspective, these are five phases in developing a community. “Communitarian” refers to what Amitai Etzioni once referred to as a hidden political force or an informal political party that is always present whether it is formally acknowledged or not. It is founded on generally acknowledged human values that call to human decency and cooperation. The only place “politics” play a major role is in phase 5 where **governance has the responsibility for the sustainability of the whole social venture and the passing forward in time of a society from one generation to another**. In the Goodenough Community system, we have utilized the phases mentioned above and are now engaging Phase 5 work once again—we are looking to improve our lives by changing our system. We start that process by examining our lives and discerning what we need from our community. Then we are able to look at system changes that will enable us to accomplish our mission and goals for the future.

If you have an interest in this process and would like to help us, let one or all of the following people know of your desire and your thoughts:

Kirsten Rohde, president of the American Association for the Furtherance of Community,  
kirstenr62@gmail.com,

Barbara Brucker, chair of the board of Convocation: A Church and Ministry,  
b1brucker@comcast.net.

Colette Hoff, administrator, hoff@goodenough.org.

John L. Hoff, training director, hoff@goodenough.org.

**Editor’s Note:**

After reading the above article, I found myself thinking about a piece of writing John and I wrote called “Where Do We Come From: Understanding the Communitarian Movement”? It is relevant to the times we’re in to remember the communitarian movement and how community can serve you.

We will serialize the article over the next few weeks.

You will find the first 7 pages of the article beginning on the last page of this eView (page 17). Please send your comments to office@goodenough.org

**Dance the doorway  
until the doorway disappears!**

A bumper sticker from a our training weekend.

## Community is About Relationship: A Shout Out to Couples!

Dr. John L. Hoff

**Couples weekend: February 10 to 12, 2012**

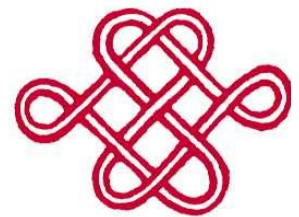
This workshop is about the importance of our feelings and the distinction between feelings that connect us and emotions that signal that we are reacting to each other and not really co-municating.



*Is there one specific characteristic of community that remains constant and centrally important over hundreds of years?*

**YES!** Community has always valued relationship!

We have entered the Age of Relationship. We now require that marriage be a collaborative relationship between friends who are equals in all important ways. We now see family as a relational system that holds, guides, and develops each individual therein. Communities of people are necessary for a humane society. In fact, as we learn from bees regarding their hives, ants and their anthills, elk and their herds, the sustainable entity, the real organism, is not the individual but the collective. Human beings are essentially social and best understood as individuals but rather as partners in a community system that supports individuation and the choice for responsible relationship.



Oriental love knot

We have awakened to the fact that this world of interconnecting patterns and relationships is myriad with subtlety and paradox so that things are not always what they seem, and what seems polarized might actually be two sides of the same coin.

The Couples Workshop will be held at Sahale Learning Center, beginning with dinner and close at 3:00 on Sunday, February 12. The cost of the weekend is \$350.00 per couple.

If you are interested in this couples workshop, and need to ask some questions, please feel free to contact us at 206-323-6782 or email us.

*Choose Connection*

## **About Leadership Training – it wasn't just one weekend**

Kirsten Rohde

I hear from a number of people who were at our training weekend two weekends ago that the process is still going on. I join in the feeling that assimilating and applying what I've learned to daily life is very present. The choices come up many times in a day – will I choose a new behavior or lazily default to the usual? One of the readings we had is called “The Game of Goodenough: A Social Learning Game.” It's a document that has been around for a while but I read it with new eyes this time.

“The Game of Goodenough is an infinite game designed to bring the possibility of hope and order to all aspects of life, from the way a task is completed to the spiritual connection possible in relationship...”

“This is a game that can only be played by human beings. Moreover it can only be enjoyed by beings who know that, overall they are goodenough to risk living openly, sharing truth-about-inwardness, choosing together to create the finest and fullest experiences.”

Some of the purposes of the game are:

“To help each player know their inner life of thoughts, intuitions, feelings, emotions, and sensations through studying their mental process...”

To introduce archetypal roles to the modern psyche...

To improve the nature and quality of the inner life and relational life of each player.”

What I find unusual is a leadership training program that starts with such a deep emphasis on inner thoughts and feelings and moves to exploring, through interaction with others, how we are experienced in the outer world. I've received a lot of training in various work contexts and I'd say we never spent much time on inner exploration and the discovery of how our inner and outer realities match. I don't know as I notice many people standing up in front of a group, a crowd, a convention, who indicate an awareness of inward processing about the outer experience while leading.

I'm just really impressed with what we have in this unique opportunity to learn in our leadership training. I like the feeling of letting it be real, what my friends have told me, and choose to be the best I can rather than default to less than the best.

I haven't exactly always made the game moves in my daily life since the weekend, but sometimes I benefit from choosing well. So when my boss came to my office door the other day to, it turns out, say “hi”, I fortunately now remembered in the nick of time that I had a choice –to smile and say “hi”, or to head into an enumeration of some frustrating aspect of work. I chose to smile and say “hi.” Whew!

### **Here are some additional responses to the leadership training:**

Thank you John and Colette for a powerful weekend of learning. I felt properly filled which tells me I did some deeper learning. I find myself thoughtful about the feedback I received over the weekend. Trying to integrate it, learn from, mostly research it and be grateful for it.

Thank you all,  
Leslie

I, too join in deep appreciation for an amazing weekend. By the end of the weekend, it felt like we had been to lab. When it feels that way, it reminds me that the work has been deep and the assembled have been present. The use of the concepts of sanity, maturity, proactivity, and creativity was a powerful way to step up our honesty (with ourselves and others) in feedback and to re-immense ourselves in the kind of learning experience that makes lab.

Thank you to John and Colette for a masterfully designed weekend and the ongoing process of working with us to help us catch on at ever deeper levels. Your mastery is showing!

Love,

Barbara ●

### **Joining self and service by Palmer Parker**

Our deepest calling is to grow into our own authentic selfhood, whether or not it conforms to some image of who we ought to be. As we do so, we will not only find the joy that every human being seeks - we will also find our path of authentic service in the world. True vocation joins self and service, as Frederick Buechner asserts when he defines vocation as "the place where your deep gladness meets the world's deep need."

Buechner's definition Starts with the self and moves toward the needs of the world: it begins, wisely, where vocation begins - not in what the world needs (which is everything), but in the nature of the human self, in what brings the self joy, the deep joy of knowing that we are here on earth to be the gifts that God created.

Contrary to the conventions of our thinly moralistic culture, this emphasis on gladness and selfhood is not selfish. The Quaker teacher Douglas Steere was fond of saying that the ancient human question "Who am I?" leads inevitably to the equally important question "Whose am I?" - for there *is* no selfhood outside relationship. We must ask the question of selfhood and answer it as honestly as we can, no matter where it takes us. Only as we do so can we discover the community of our lives. As I learn more about the seed of true self that was planted when I was born, I also learn more about the ecosystem in which I was planted - the network of communal relations in which I am called to live responsively, accountably, and joyfully with beings of every sort. Only when I know both seed and system, self and community, can I embody the great commandment to love both my neighbor and myself

There are at least two ways to understand the link between selfhood and service. One is offered by the poet Rumi in his piercing observation: "If you are here unfaithfully with us, you're causing terrible damage." If we are unfaithful to true self, we will extract a price from others. We will make promises we cannot keep, build houses from flimsy stuff, conjure dreams that devolve into nightmares, and other people will suffer - **if** we are unfaithful to true self.

This article is excerpted from Yes! A Journal of Positive Futures, Spring 2001.

Parker J. Palmer, writer, teacher, and activist. has been named one of the 30 most influential senior leaders in higher education. From *Let Your Life Speak: Listening to the Voice of Vocation*, John Wiley & Sons. 2000. Excerpted by permission of Jossey-Sass, Inc. • a subsidiary of John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Remember the Oneness . . .



## Convocation Corner

### **Sunday Evenings Circle of Practice**

Barbara Brucker

This came to me from a friend who often forwards inspirational material. I like this paraphrase of St. Francis. It provides food for thought and fits well with the current focus of the Circle of Practice. We are working with the spiritual practices that John and Colette identify as central in their work with people. The first practice involves noticing a difference between what is ordinary and non-ordinary. The second practice is about choosing to trust and rely on others. We will be dealing with a primary method of learning trust—to practice being a trustworthy person.

The quotation of St. Francis identified below caught my attention and added to my understanding of what it means to be a good person-

Where there is charity and wisdom, there is neither fear nor ignorance.  
Where there is patience and humility, there is neither anger nor annoyance.  
Where there is love and joy, there is neither greed nor selfishness.  
Where there is peace and meditation, there is neither anxiety nor doubt.

#### **Where There is Charity and Wisdom**

---- St. Francis of Assisi (paraphrased)

If you are interested in exploring these practices, the circle is open and you are welcome. We meet this Sunday evening, February 5, 7 - 9 at the community center.

#### **Announcement:**

Convocation: A Church and Ministry is presenting a Silent Retreat on the weekend of **April 6 to 8** at Sahale. The following article suggests the importance of learning to do inner work, of being alone and of using silence as a way of learning about the noise in your mind and the many voices that call to you from your life. Tod Ransdell a member of the Board of Convocation is developing this event.

<http://www.utne.com/archives/TheSecretofSolitude.aspx>

*Helen Cordes Utne Reader*

Many of us are destined to be home alone. Baby boomers are losing kids to adulthood and mates to divorce or death, and their continued sluggish marriage and birth rates also will create more solo households in the years ahead.

Some might find this trend disturbing, especially at a time when the virtues of 'community' are being touted as a cure-all for an alienated society. But a spate of observers have spoken up lately about the value--the necessity, really--of solitude. Even for those who plan to always live with another or others, it's essential, they say, to practice being alone. During sessions of solitude, periods of silence, or 'time retreats,' we shun life's chattering distractions and simply notice what is left: ourselves.

The process of quiet self-examination can be uncomfortable, and sometimes painful. But learning aloneness may be a prerequisite to interacting meaningfully with others and participating effectively in society. Community simply can't happen without solitude, says Glenn Tinder in **First Things** (April 1996): 'If you have never, all alone, tried to define your major convictions, you cannot enter into truth-seeking conversation and thus are incapable of deep human relations. If you cannot be apart from others, you cannot engage in prayer and meditation and thus cannot enter into genuine relations with God. If you recoil from solitude, it may even be said, you are politically disabled; you necessarily lack the spirit of independence needed to stand for what is right in the public realm.'

So how do we begin to be alone? Some are starting with silent retreats, the increasingly popular events typically held at Zen centers, monasteries, or other quiet spaces. The advantage is that the cold-turkey immersion includes in-house technical advice. The disadvantage is that the sink-or-swim approach can result in, well, some sinking.

Indeed, Bob Banner confides in **AdBusters** (Spring 1996) that on the third day of his ten-day silent retreat he was seized by the urge to run across the surrounding pastoral fields screaming 'Let me out!' But while its strict rules often proved excruciating, Banner found the retreat provided 'vital and necessary soul nourishing food.'

The retreat helped 'decondition the TV culture within me--the incessant pull to distract myself,' Banner writes. He eschewed reading, writing, drawing, listening to music, and, of course, watching TV, largely in favor of sitting meditation. And while his bliss lasted just six days after the retreat, Banner felt less addicted overall to distraction and gained a sense that 'I didn't have to run away

from myself or run toward someone else for the answers, whether it was a governmental leader, spiritual teacher, or famous critic of pop culture.'

Quiet introspection can, of course, happen anywhere. In **New Age Journal** (May/June 1996), Stephan Rechtschaffen prescribes 'time-shifting,' a technique that integrates limited periods of focused (but not frenetic) busyness with regular periods of silence. Solitude can actually be stressful at first, he warns. We become 'afraid to confront who we are when stripped of our 'doing' nature. We feel a need to be surrounded by people, by activity.'

Once we become at ease with aloneness, though, the payoffs begin. 'Care of the self is groundwork for any relationship, and self-esteem comes not from others but from within,' writes Rechtschaffen, who elaborates his ideas in *Time-Shifting: Creating More Time for Your Life* (Doubleday, 1996). Facing down loneliness and distraction is the ultimate test of strong self-esteem.

Being alone and observant can also bring a new appreciation of the world. In **DoubleTake** (Spring 1996), Charles Baxter notes how filmmakers prefer relentless action to even a few minutes of stillness. He calls for media makers--and the rest of us--to slip some stillness into our daily drama, though it may not always be acceptable: 'The daydreaming child, or a daydreaming adult, is usually an object of contempt or therapy,' says Baxter.

Yet when we begin to see ourselves and our world with childlike freshness, he writes, we may well gain a refreshing new energy and perspective, a sense of wonder at the world. 'Wonder is at the opposite pole of worldliness, just as stillness is at the opposite pole from worldly action,' he explains. 'Wonder puts aside the known and accepted, along with sophistication, and instead serves up an intelligent na?vet?. Why should anything be as it is? Why are things as they are?' Answering these questions in thought and actions could reinvigorate us and our planet.



**Walk the razor's edge as if your life depended on it!**



### **Staying Friends: Couples Retreat, February 10, 11, 12**

Using guidelines from the John Gottman work, the Hoffs add their common sense advice to couples who are parents of children of any age—“Your kids need you to be friends.”

*Organic Community:  
Give yourself free range!*



### **Sahale EcoVillage Tidbits Bruce Perler**

It's 3 p.m. on this sunny afternoon February and the shadows from the trees are just beginning to touch the bottom of the solar collectors on the Weavery's roof. The collector temperature, as read on the digital readout, is 179 degrees. On similar sunny winter days over the past two weeks I've seen this temperature as high as 195 degrees. The result, on the wood boiler side, is that it's been idling since about 10 a.m. this morning, needing no wood added and requiring no electricity to operate the blowers in the boiler. The water system temperature is at 191 and has been above 180 since I checked the boiler this morning about 8:30 a.m. All this to say, our system is working well and saving us wood on sunny days, even when it's quite cool outside.

*Do the Math: Community Adds Up!*

## The deAnguera Blog: Service 2012



Last week we were cleaning out the walking-in cooler in Potlatch. Irene is cleaning two shelves we moved outside. Joseph was hard at work cleaning the inside of the cooler. Have to scrub real deep. Lots of elbow grease. Also grease of other kinds. Look at that sunshine! Hard to believe these photos were taken in January. I could almost convince you it's summer! One of the privileges of living here is all the maintenance we need to take care of. Luckily there are more of us out here.

Last weekend, my church, Findlay Street Christian Church, tried out a new worship space: the Garden House on Beacon Hill. The house is over a century old and the local Garden Club has been in it most of that time. We held the service in the large hall on the main floor. Afterward, we had refreshments and some of us toured our property just a few blocks away. It's an old duplex done in the Southern California Moorish style without the red tile roof. The duplex is currently unoccupied and that must cost us mint of money every month. We originally wanted to put a new sanctuary on this site but financing didn't come through.

Of course I might ask, where who would Jesus be hanging out with? Why, the Occupy folks at an empty warehouse at 10<sup>th</sup> and Union. A group of them wanted to take over the building for use as a museum and an arts space. A space of their own. Something a lot of folks don't have. All the land in the city is owned by somebody. I just think it would be groovy for young people to have their own space that they can do whatever they felt like. The Occupy folks are trying to make positive social change by confronting the folks in power. That's one of Jesus's favorite vocations.

The Occupy folks planned on holding a potluck inside the building so of course I wanted to check them out. I found them clustered outside the building's entrance. The warehouse was surrounded by a cyclone fence. So we all stood out in the rain. I had been given a container of Starbucks Coffee at my church which I brought to the potluck. I set the container on a small table with a few pies on it right by the warehouse's entrance

I was told that when the Occupy folks took over the building, they felt the tribal spirit as they installed electric lights and toilet facilities. One woman, Bayonia Aivaz, actually got married to the building. All of this reminded me of our feelings for Sahale. That's the kind of commitment making possible our care of Sahale. Sahale brings all of us together in caring for her and the

warehouse at 10<sup>th</sup> and Union had the same potential. Imagine people of all ages helping each other build community with an abandoned warehouse. A great crime fighting tool.



Baylonia Aivaz in the wedding gown she wore to her wedding in the warehouse.

*“Community: dancing with the stars”*

## Programs & Events in the Goodenough Community System 2012

(For more information on any of these events and programs, go to [www.goodenough.org](http://www.goodenough.org))

### Presenting Our Cultural Programs

For the Goodenough Community, cultural life is an arena for creative expression and for drawing forth the best versions of ourselves. **All programs and events are open to the public and we welcome your interest and participation.**

#### **Weekend Workshop for Couples —Friendliness between Partners-- February 10 to 12, 2012**

This couples weekend is a tune-up and an upgrade for your relationship. Our goal will be to improve the feeling of and the behaviors of friendliness between partners.

We encourage couples to **register your interest to attend early** ([office@goodenough.org](mailto:office@goodenough.org)) and we'll help you prepare for the weekend with some assignments to do ahead of time. If you know of other couples that would like a relaxing weekend in the country with lots of warm support around for deepening conversation and improving relationship.



## Women's Program:

We invite you to join us **March 17 from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.**, Our discussion will build on what was begun in January. This will be a discrete event, and you can readily participate whether you were present January, or not.

### Cost:

We suggest a donation of \$20 for each of the Saturday sessions, and encourage you to gift according to your means.

### RSVP:

We always appreciate an RSVP, but please feel free to drop in.

To RSVP, call **206 323 4653** or send an email to

[hollisr@comcast.net](mailto:hollisr@comcast.net)

### Location for Saturday gatherings:

2007 33<sup>rd</sup> Avenue South, Seattle, Washington  
206 323 4653



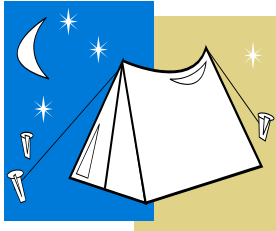
I hope that you will plan to attend our gathering on **Saturday, March 17**, when we will be enjoying our **-annual clothing exchange**. And, after that, we'll have an entire weekend **April 20 to 22** together as women in the comfort and beauty of Sahale. Please mark these important dates on your calendar, and let us know that you'll be able to attend!

## Family Enrichment Program

The Family Enrichment Network sponsors **SAHALE SUMMER CAMP** for Youth aged 9 to 12, **Sunday, July 1, to Saturday, July 7, 2012** at Sahale Learning Center.

Contact Irene Perler for more information (206) 419-3477 or [irene\\_perler@hotmail.com](mailto:irene_perler@hotmail.com).

As the calendar is taking shape this spring, we're wondering if the weekend of **June 15 to 17** might work for putting up the big white tent. We need about 8 persons. Please let Bruce Perler know if this date might work for you. [[bruce\\_perler@hotmail.com](mailto:bruce_perler@hotmail.com)]



# Human Relations Laboratory

**August 12 to 18, 2012**

Seven Fun-filled Days of  
Social Creativity & Experiential Learning

About Relationship and Friendship

Sahale Learning Center

Sponsored by  
The Goodenough Community System

**Featuring**  
**Singer-songwriter Joe Crookston**  
**and Dances of Universal Peace**  
**led by Dyanne Harshman**

## Being Friends

Visit our web site:  
[www.goodenough.org](http://www.goodenough.org)

### Seasonal Events:

**Memorial Day Weekend, May 25-28, 2012**

at Sahale Learning Center

A weekend of well-organized work parties balanced with play, wholesome meals, hot tubbing and relaxation. The only charge is a donation for food.



**A Fall Harvest Weekend Workshop November 2, 3, 4, 2012**

**Joe Crookston in Concert**  
**Thursday, May 3!**

This is a good time to invite your friends to put this concert date on their calendars. Joe will be in town for the HRL training. This concert will be at the Youngstown Center in West Seattle, 7:30.

Get your tickets at Brown paper Tickets.



*I have A Dream: It is here now!  
Brought to you by your local community*

## Events of Interest

### **Kathryn Mostow in concert!**

Kathryn was the third bride to marry at Sahale. She is a fine musician and will be in concert at the Columbia City Theater on Sunday February 5<sup>th</sup>. It will be a great concert!



### **OutCast Productions Presents Season 2012**

(This is a theater group on Whidbey Island that Gabe Harshman often performs with.)

Tickets available through [www.brownpapertickets.com](http://www.brownpapertickets.com) one month prior to each show's opening night. Limited tickets available at the door.

*Election Day* by Josh Tobiessen

March 23, 24, 29, 30, 31 at 7:30pm March 25 at 2pm

*Oh! What a Lovely War* by Joan Littlewood, Theatre Workshop and Charles Cilton

Research by Gerry Raffles

June 29, 30, July 6, 7, 13, 14 at 7:30pm July 1 & 8 at 2pm

August: Osage County by Tracy Letts

September 16 at 2pm



### **Sur La Table Services is BACK**

Do you have painting projects? Are you ready to clean out and organize your garage, attic or some other space? Does your yard need to be weeded or mowed? Does your house need cleaning or do you need help with filing and organizing? Do you need someone to run your errands during the day?

If you answered yes to one or all of these questions, please consider Sur La Table Services. These are just some of the things I



can help you with; if you can think of others let me know. I charge \$20 an hour. Booking time in 4 to 8 hour blocks assists with time management.

Thanks for your support. Please e--mail me at [normanleslie@hotmail.com](mailto:normanleslie@hotmail.com) or call (206) 683--3252 to schedule.



By Elizabeth Jarrett-Jefferson

## Happy Birthday!

**Kathleen Buchmeier – February 2 Happy birthday, Kathleen!**

**Irene Perler – February 7. Happy Day, Irene!**

## Groundhog-Type Humor



Three engineers are arguing about which is better, mechanical, electrical or civil engineering. The mechanical engineer says, “God must have been a mechanical engineer: Look at the joints in the human body.” The second says, “No, God must have been an electrical engineer: Look at the nervous system.” And the third says, “God had to be a civil engineer: Who else would have run a waste disposal pipeline right through a great recreational area?”



A woman sends her husband out to buy some escargot for a dinner party that night. Instead of going straight to the store, the husband decides to stop at the local bar. He has a few beers, and then some more, and pretty soon he looks at his watch and finds he is over an hour late for the dinner party. He dashes to the store, picks up the escargot, and frantically drives home. When he walks in the door he can hear his wife coming from the kitchen. So he takes the bag of snails and quickly throws them all over the floor. When his wife walks in the room, he says, “Come on guys, we’re almost there!”



### *Haiku #1*

Groundhogs are sleeping  
They don't give a flying fluff  
About the weather

### *Haiku #2*

No groundhog shadow  
Means we get an early Spring  
Can not believe it

### *Haiku #3*

Sahale groundhogs  
Make a mean root cellar  
Watch your turnips.

# Where Did We Come From?



## Understanding The Communitarian Movement:

### History, Vision, Process, Leadership, and Lifeways

Dr, John L. Hoff

Colette Hoff, MEd.

#### **Introduction:**

The word *community* is used in a variety of ways, sometimes referring to people and other times to a place, and still more often as a spiritual connection—glue or lubricant—that holds people together around ideas and causes. We offer this definition of the human word *community*:

- 1. It is a human collective, truly a family of families and individuals.***
- 2. The emphasis within the collective is on passing forward in time the relationship, culture, and organization that has been received and improved throughout history—social evolution.***
- 3. The collective regulates its life through the relationships or connections among its members. A community is an organized social response to authentic life.***
- 4. The resulting community or tribe has a reality and an identity that it offers to its members and partners, the gift of self-knowledge—supportive membership and empowered agency.***

The reality of community is grounded in nature. From the introduction to the book, *America's Communal Utopias!* Donald Pitzer writes, "Communal sharing is as old as the earliest known fossils of living things on earth and as new as electronic communities in cyberspace. More than three billion years ago, stromatolite bacteria formed colonies to protect all but those on their exteriors from deadly ultraviolet sunlight." Carl Sagan, in *Shadows of Forgotten Ancestors*,<sup>i</sup> referring to this earliest illustration of community-in-nature, wrote, "This may have been an early impetus for a communal way of life. Some died that others may live ... we glimpsed the earliest life forms on

earth and the first message conveyed is not of nature red in tooth and claw but of a Nature of cooperation and harmony.” Sagan states that human community is necessary for human evolution adding, “In the dim recesses of the past as human beings began to develop, they also discovered the security, solidarity, and survival offered by cooperative and communal organization.”

Dieter Duhm is a sociologist, historian, and psychoanalyst from Europe. In an essay titled, “Community as a Universal Way of Living,” in *Beyond You and Me*,<sup>ii</sup> a Gaia Education book on the ecovillage movement, he writes

“The original community of humans is not the family but the tribe. The original community is the human vessel into which human life, including the family, is embedded. It is part of what I call the sacred matrix, inherent to life. In it, the cosmic order connects with the social order. It is not bound to certain times or cultures, rather it is an integral part of our human social existence that lies beyond history. It could only be destroyed through violence, and it is only when we have found a full equivalent to it that is aligned with our times, that we again can enter into full and wholesome relationships with each other.”

Robert Kegan, in *The Evolving Self*<sup>iii</sup>, describes how a human life—your life too—goes from one envelopment to another, from one holding environment to the next, the first being the womb, the second the family, the third the neighborhood and school system, etc. Kegan points out that the individual becomes too large to confine and the holding environment becomes too stressed to contain, and this forces an emergence into a next stage of development and the next holding envelope: society.

Our society receives the individual person into its care under the assumption that youth 18 to 21 years of age should be able to handle their own affairs. The belief is that by this age children have become mature enough to ask for the information, assistance, and special help they need to make a living and engage the institutions of society. However, this assumption is proving to be questionable because colleges, employers, spouses, and friends are complaining that development has not been adequate and that many individuals cannot keep necessary agreements for living and working together.

Regarding raising and educating children, most parents confess their own inadequacy yet are quick to point out the faults of schools and institutions designed to help them. In the worst of their stories parents and families are isolated, alienated, and act out their frustration against society. And with regard to society’s challenge of offering each individual a place, a role, a job, a community that resources them, there is much evidence that as a *public* we are not doing well enough. Of course, *all* parents will never do a *perfect* job of parenting, and the policies, laws, and regulations of government will be incapable of being adequately individualized and personalized to provide a satisfactory social environment for children. **Hence, the communitarian movement through all time and in all cultures is based on the recognition that a human community is required to train and support parents and guide other institutions to create positive relationships in human community.** The communitarian movement encourages compassionate relationships. Thus, communitarians value the commitment in their relationships, the shared

vision that sustains their efforts, and the good people and their methods for building a vital society.

The communitarian vision is a humble one. It recognizes that human beings truly need to be protected, corrected, guided, motivated, and inspired in order to do their best. In fact, it appears that human beings tend to wait until they are required to inconvenience themselves in order to accomplish a change. Perhaps our global situation is becoming shockingly real enough that some critical mass of us will turn to each other, crossing all boundaries and surpassing all previous limitations, in order to steward life on this planet. To do this we will need to practice relationship in manageable-sized human communities. This always has been the work of communitarians. This is motivated by the knowledge that nothing worthwhile is accomplished that does not come from relationship—from conversation, from dialogue, from disputation; through conflict to moving toward agreement, and finally celebrating shared lifeways that carry us forward into community.

Kosha Anja Joubert and Robin Alfred, editors of *Beyond You and Me*<sup>iv</sup> in the Gaia Educational Series, write:

“Sustaining community necessarily involves a healing process in which we step out of the cycles of pain, mistrust, and violence that run through human history and take responsibility for initiating new patterns. Most of us have been educated in a way that has made us believe that we are fundamentally greedy and selfish, and that the good life consists of a constant battle against evil forces within and without. We have come to mistrust the inherent goodness of human beings. This is a paradigm that breeds violence, instead of peace.”

Cultural historian Paul S. Boyer<sup>v</sup>, in the foreword to *Americas Communal Utopias*, writes of this:

“The communal impulse seems encoded in the genetic makeup of nearly all life forms ... One key to understanding the national character has always been balanced by a powerful affiliative drive drawing men and women into religious congregations, fraternal lodges, ethnic organizations, sports clubs, reform groups, mutual-improvement juntas, professional societies, civic associations—and communal ventures ... Developmental communalism rests on . . . assumptions. First, communal living is a generic social mechanism available in all ages to all peoples, governments, and movements. Second, communal structuring usually is adopted in an early stage of development (or in a crisis) because of the security, solidarity, and ease of experimentation it promises.”

## I. The Communitarian Movement Has History

In the 1980s Bill Moyers introduced us to a historian of world stories—mythology. Joseph Campbell was a student and teacher of world cultures and he revealed to us their stories, rituals, and art. He focused on the teaching stories of each culture. In so doing he helped us see how similar humans are no matter what culture or what historic period. Campbell awakened a real hunger in many of us, a hunger to understand our own inner workings and our relationships through having insight into ancient human themes in our own lives. **Myths** contain a variety of observations and aspirations. Similar to our awakening to the value of mythology is our need to awaken to historic community as a **source** of myth, myths being the *curriculum* for educating and training individuals.

The direct study of human relationships in all cultures and times is done by studying the forms of community that were established. Apart from reference to “humankind,” *community* is the largest word we use to describe how human beings relate to each other. People have always lived in communities because human beings are particularly **dependent on** each other for survival. We humans are slow to develop and slower to attain our full potential of human intelligence. Human beings have always been developed by their communities. One generation develops the next. Whatever else we grow, **the most important crop produced as a collaborative venture by community is the next generation of itself.** Community, being a relationship among families and individuals, has ever been charged with the responsibility to provide security, order, and a sense of direction. Community-as-relationship impresses its values on all segments of relationship: marriage, family, friendship, and collaborators in work settings. **Communitarian history focuses on the connections people have with each other. An individual’s community provides the meaning and the purpose to a variety of relationships and even establishes standards for them—all of which encourages trust-building.**

Dieter Duhm<sup>3</sup> states,

“Communities flourish if there is trust between their members. They do not function, or only seemingly function, if this trust does not exist. They break down quickly if the social glue was brought about through conformism or hypocrisy. Trust is the core power of a community. Without trust it can maybe take forceful action in the short term but in the long run it will perish. The amount of mutual trust that is present is determinative for everything that is important in the community. Trust determines whether true healing can occur, whether the community grows and flowers in the personal, mental-spiritual, and political realms. I am speaking about trust between men and women, in love relationships, between adults and children, trust in leaders, trust between the center of the community and the periphery, and between different project groups.”

No matter how a human collective is organized, *community* mostly refers to the ongoing everyday nature of human relationships where people are trusting and reaching out to each other. For millennia, within these relationships children were bred and raised and set forth. In these relationships individuals learned to be wise and to have skills and to make plans for the improvement of the whole. Here in relationships—from family to community and on to some larger sense of social order—the moral sense is cultivated, aesthetic awareness is appreciated, and human goodness is honored. Whatever fine things we might say about historical institutions and nation states, they have all been dependent upon the prior relational work done by marriages, families, neighborhoods, or in a word, *community*.

In the book, *Beyond You and Me*, Malidoma Some’ from Ghana, who travels throughout the Western world saying, “My purpose is the reclaiming of our intrinsic human nature—our humanness. We have to start by recovering or reinventing family and community, and redefining what a purposeful life is. For this I rely on ancient indigenous wisdom. Having shared life with traditional natives in the Yukon territory as a child, John says, “I also know we have not only slaughtered indigenous people we have darn near killed off our own natural wisdom and spiritual insight in modern times.”

**Communitarian history observes a great river of interconnective relationships that flows through the terrain of human activity.** We are often blind to the point of stories and myths until as adults we discover the practical wisdom in them. Our formal histories have focused too much on the obvious—property, government, crime, and warfare—and have not much valued the relationships among people wherein lies the true human story. Perhaps one of the most world-changing ideas in modern life comes from historical research by women into the lives of women and the relational world they lived in. *The Great Cosmic Mother*<sup>vi</sup>, by Monica Sjoo and Barbara Mor, published in 1987, presented the fact that most history was a story of men and their exploits and ignored daily life, home life, and the world of familial relationships. They wrote:

“When we say that women created most of early human culture, we are not trying to sound radical. The evidence is there, quite tangible. When we realize how many basic life industries were the invention of women—cooking, food processing and storage, ceramics, weaving, textiles and design, tanning and dyeing, everything related to fire (e.g., chemistry and metallurgy), the medicinal arts, language itself, and the first scripts and glyphs. Grain domestication, animal domestication, religious imagery and ritual, domestic and sacred architecture, the first calendar and the origins of astronomy and on and on—then we don’t need to project our imagination far back into the past to confirm these inventions, They are still around us today, they constitute our world . . . We do have to use our imaginations to remember that all were once warm, personal, and lovingly tended arts and crafts originated and sustained by early communities.”

Malidoma Some', upon learning how we live in the Western world, offers a dream to restore something that we have almost lost. He writes:

“I dream of a world in which the global village *is interested in drawing together all traditions of the world* to synthesize them into a tradition that is not compartmentalized, hierarchical or competitive; one that doesn’t say that one tradition is better than another; one that looks for the kind of beauty that each culture has. It is possible that once synthesized this global village would reflect a cultural universalism. It is a big task and won’t happen overnight. But it is worth tackling.”

**Communitarian history pulls aside the veil of governments and industries and reminds us that a truly good life is relational. All of community life is lived in the intimate zone of mutual care.**

Within the communitarian movement, a primary concept is that the welfare of the individual relies on the welfare of the whole community because it is a primary purpose of the whole community to support the concerns of the individual. Communitarians claim that this concept must be rediscovered in each generation. Rudolf Steiner, philosopher and founder of Anthroposophy and the Waldorf School’s approach to education, says of this:

*“The healthy social life is found*

*When in the mirror of each human soul*

*The whole community finds its reflection,*

*And when in the community*

*The virtue of each one is living.”*

We are encouraged to appreciate our embeddedness in community, which is a *membership* that prepares us for a larger *citizenship* that respects regulation, law and leadership, so long as that leadership and those regulations **uphold a general standard of civility.** It is community that trains individuals in **propriety and responsibility.** It is community that provides a **civil society that protects** the intimate world of marriage, family, friendship, and also **prepares** people to handle the whole span of living problems. It must be remembered that this psychosocial reality is not created or enforced by law, courts, police, or military; rather, this relational world receives guidance and support primarily from the social pressure of friends and the influence of public opinion. **The whole life of community is lifted when its people are relating effectively and happily with each other and when there is hope for the future of all.**

Ever since we founded the Goodenough Community with a group of friends 30 years ago, we have attempted to shape a social context where the collaborative relationship between individual and society is obvious. For the communitarian, community is an extensive resource that encourages men to help each other, women to help each other, couples to offer mutual support and families to collaborate in finding the resources they need. The entire community organizes to provide conscientious leaders and clear values to guide the activities of each of these relationship groupings. **Thus, community becomes a comprehensive methodology for personal and social transformation.**

This essay introduces you to the communitarian movement by first pointing out that to see its history is largely a matter of knowing what to look for. Actually, what we are looking at grabs us because we have a feeling response to relationship. To be a sustainable community depends on sustainable relationships and these relationships require open, consistent communication. This consistency is supported by a variety of programs and processes in which we learn to plan, decide, and act. **It is a core intention of community to build strong relationships** that are in turn of great value to the sustainability and effectiveness of the whole community. Again, men help men (with marriage, parenting, work, personal development, and community responsibilities) and something similar might be said of women; also, relational partners work supportively with each other and families resource each other; and, working groups of various kinds not only attend to their tasks in teams but also maintain their relationships. **As a communitarian reviewing the worthiness and effectiveness of any aspect of community, one is looking for intentional relationships that make valuable contributions to the larger community and society.**

So, to study communitarianism involves going back into history with the knowledge of what to look for—trust, commitment, endurance, ability to resolve conflict, loyalty, and the willingness to follow guidance and direction. Beyond this, we are to look for the transfer of knowledge and power from one person to another, from one group to another, and from one generation to another. **It is through relational empowerment that the commonwealth of one generation is**

**passed forward to another generation ... and to another.** Notice that the building of capacities is dependent on the development of relationships that have the capacity to reconstitute themselves in a next iteration and another generation. Here we are looking both at an educational process and at relational rituals and celebrations that acknowledge the value of personal **maturity, sanity, positive attitude, and creative abilities—four key goals** of human development.

Another aspect of communitarians is that they learn from the past as the **first** step in preparing for the future. *Preparation* is a **key** word because it not only refers to preparation for the next week or season, it also refers to phases of community life where plans are made to positively influence the next generation, making sure that the stories, myths, rituals, and accomplishments of prior history are kept clear and strong as they are passed forward. This is a very practical matter of orientation, education, and training in such areas as agriculture, food storage and preparation, shelter-building, protection, and warfare; and of course, the maintenance and improvement of all manner of relationships in which healing, teaching, and skills-training are on-going.

Dieter Duhm<sup>3</sup> reminds us:

“Community is the natural social entity that has experienced the greatest damage. It is a necessary part of the world, which was destroyed worldwide. Wherever people were abducted, enslaved or sold, communities were annihilated, thus destroying the life nerves of entire peoples. This process started with the Kurgan people’s invasion of Neolithic river settlements 7,000 years ago. It continued with the annihilation of the Native American peoples by the European invaders during the 17<sup>th</sup> century and continues to the present day, when the last indigenous people on all continents are being driven out of their natural habitat in the name of commercial interests.”

From a communitarian standpoint, there is a prevailing interest in how communities were able to develop strong, wise, talented, and compassionate individuals. Communities do not keep track of gross community *production* nearly as much as they count happiness, freedom, sustainability, and hopefulness as ways to describe a good life. **The commonwealth is defined less in terms of finance and wars won than by descriptions of peaceful life, harmonious cultural activities, and hopefulness.** History is important to communitarians because it reflects their search for understanding and highlights what has been learned. Communitarian history is not a single story but an interweaving of narratives. Also, history is not placed in the past because history is a prologue to the present and the future—the future of the community of relationships and culture.

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<sup>i</sup> Carl Sagan, Ann Druyan, *Shadows of Forgotten Ancestors* (NY: Ballantine Books, 1993),

<sup>ii</sup> Dieter Duhm, “Community as a Universal Way of Living,” in Kosha Anja Joubert and Robin Alfred, eds, *Beyond You and Me* (Gaia Education Series, UK: Antony Rowe Ltd, 2007), 2.

<sup>iii</sup> Robert Kegan, *The Evolving Self: Problem and Process in Human Development* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982),

<sup>iv</sup> Kosha Anja Joubert and Robin Alfred, eds, *Beyond You and Me* (Gaia Education Series, UK: Antony Rowe Ltd, 2007),

<sup>v</sup> Paul S. Boyer, foreword to *America’s Communal Utopias*, Donald E. Pitzer, ed (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1997), ix.

<sup>vi</sup> Monica Sjöö and Barbara Mor, *The Great Cosmic Mother: Rediscovering the Religion of the Earth* (San Francisco, HarperOne, 1987), 33.

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Remembering the emphasis of our training program on the importance of personal development for leadership training. We offer this statement of Parker J. Palmer