



The Village eView

September 10, 2014

Colette Hoff, Editor

On-Line News of the Goodenough Community System

- The American Association for the Furtherance of Community
- Convocation: A Church and Ministry
- Mandala Resources, Inc.
- Sahale Learning Center

[September 12 to 14, Couples Weekend, Sahale](#)
[September 20, Women's Culture Gathering](#)
[October 3, Third Age Gathering](#)

FUTURE:

The indefinite time yet to come; something that will happen in times to come . . .

The future influences the present just as much as the past. ~Friedrich Nietzsche

Every thought we think is creating the future. ~Louise Hay

The future is a part of the past that hasn't happened yet. ~John L. Hoff (from an interview)

The future is an expression of past experience. ~John I. Hoff

The future is available to us only through our imagination. Even futurists who claim to have a sense of the future through the study of trends and some theory of possibilities admit that the same data can be used to describe quite different futures. They are using their imaginations.

While we are interested in the future, we are actually and factually resistant to knowing about the future, even thinking about it. For instance, we know that certain trends in our society and ecology will have destructive consequences that we do not engage issues enough to really change things. Also, in our personal lives we know the result of trends and tendencies yet we continue to act as we do. If we knew the future more exactly it might not change the way we act now very much.

Our future is being shaped now by our imagination and a process that we call "planning." For instance it would be an important thing for us to do as a community: to imagine how our Goodenough Community could be in ten years. It would help us to see ourselves growing and changing over the ten year period and to state the kinds of people we want to be 10 years from now. The Goodenough Community has been developed on the premise that human beings need a "families of families" (community) that would encourage us to work together as men, as women, as couples, as friends, as

families and as organizations. A family is a relationship that cares for and develops each member by creating experiences that all can learn from. A family accomplishes this through anticipating the growth and development of each individual. Sometimes one or more individuals need special care. Some individuals resist change and learning more than others in both families and in communities. Community is a larger version of a human family where kids enjoy growing up with each other, couples support each other in the adventure of marriage, and families provide examples of how life may be lived. Yet in community we take the time as women and as men and couples and families and as friendship systems and as organizations in order to objectively look at our behavior and lifeways and notice what is working and what isn't. We do this because the Goodenough Community is attempting to fulfill an ancient role assigned to communities, neighborhoods, extended families.

Here are some useful ideas for evaluating and futurizing in the Goodenough Community:

1. What are the primary intentions that have shaped this community? I would like to hear the story about how those intentions unfolded historically?

2. I understand that the cultural programs of the Goodenough Community are invitations for me, or my partner and me, to work toward goals we have in our own lives as a man, as a woman, as partners and friends.

3. I am hearing that the intention of the Goodenough Community is to encourage people to enter into dialogue around questions they have or disagreements they have around acceptable conduct. Imagine making a list of the issues you would like to talk about.

4. Understand that the Goodenough Community is a learning community and that it educates experientially; that is, by creating experiences where people can learn in certain areas of life, I also sense that this community focuses on learning from relationships. **What does that mean?** One answer is: we focus on friendship training and learning how to be heartfelt friends to each other. More specifically, we try to improve our **communication**, to resolve **conflict** more easily, to **deepen our intimacy**, to **improve sexuality**, and **enjoy our friendships**.

5. If you want to engage with us, and we'd really like that, we need you to know that as a community we have raised several crops of kids and adolescents and we've shared with hundreds of people who have enjoyed our company and programs for a while yet have moved on in life so that we have established lifeways and traditions that stand the test of time and evaluation. We nevertheless always want to improve yet ask those who join us to show respect for our customs, at least to begin with.

We are obviously committed to friendship and want to learn how to be a good friend to you. You can help us by telling us what you need and want.

The best way to improve the future is to begin in the present by living the life we desire. This community is slowly opening to the changes it needs to make. You can be of great assistance to us by believing in our future and joining us in making a goodenough community.

Here's to a good future, ***John and Colette Hoff***



A Workshop for Couples: Friendship and Fun . . .

September 12 to 14, 2014

John and Colette Hoff



There have been several studies of relationship that were done in the last 10 years and they draw a similar conclusion:

- Long-lived relationships value most the friendship that has grown.
- Friendship is defined partly by the ease with which partners live with each other, and partly by the thoughtfulness with which partners tend to each other's needs.

We are developing a weekend for couples with help from the Perlors and some other couples that will be attending. We have decided to encourage couples **to focus on strengthening their friendship and learning how to work together as partners who bring important but different gifts to the relationship.**

In our 34 years of marriage we have also worked together coaching people to be friends and married people to be more effective partners. The couples who have been rearing children tell us they receive complements from their children on the way they work well with each other. These children parents acknowledge they are learning how to be friends with each other. So we are focusing on the specific intentions and the practical agreements that make marriage and family and friendships work.

There is always a lot of value in practicing together and noticing how the same skills are practiced by different personalities and in a variety of situations. We are convinced that trying harder doesn't help as much as consciously developing skills. Could **your** relationship use a tune-up and some support from others?

Preparing for This Workshop

Couples have always indicated to us that they have a certain amount of apprehension in coming to a couples workshop. We suggest that you use this energy wisely preparing together to get some of the work you need to do – **done!** Here are suggestions.

To help this workshop meet your specific needs:

1. **Together**, set aside an hour (not more) to **identify the trouble spots in your relationship.**
2. **Individually**, reflect on what you could **do** to improve your effectiveness and enjoyment your relationship. That is, **state your intentions to individually improve your relationship.**

3. Individually, write a brief note to each other that **promises to do your part** to make this relationship workshop effective for you both.
4. Discuss **together** some of the **songs that you have been mutually enjoyed** and be prepared to share them.

What You Can Expect at This Workshop

This workshop will be held at Sahale Learning Center, a beautiful setting at the tip of the Kitsap peninsula on the Tahuya River about a mile from Hood Canal. You will be able to hike and get some exercise. You will also be paired with another couple or two where you can practice and be observed and receive feedback. You will also have several **sessions together as a couple** when you practice skills and explore ideas alone and together. We will be sharing bountiful meals and will have opportunities to socialize as a group.

Cost: The cost of the weekend is \$350 per couple which includes room and board as well as learning materials.



The following is an article we would like you to read. It will help you understand what we are doing at Sahale where we are drawing people together in the ecoVillage. We anticipate as many as 20 people making up the ecoVillage at Sahale in the future and we have been blessed by the presence of four “interns” this summer and the article gives a flavor of our experience with them.

Irene Perler has been selected as the focal person for the ecoVillage and as you know she and husband Bruce has moved there almost two years ago in order to move things as far as they are. As you develop practical questions about the ecoVillage, direct them to Irene at irene_perler@hotmail.com

The Dirty Business of Growing A Cohousing Community Farm

By Sandy Thomson; Communities Magazine Summer 2014

Here is an excerpt:

Sounds wonderful, doesn't it? But many questions can come up when a business venture is proposed that operates within a community setting, especially if the members are creating the business primarily to meet the needs or desires of the community. Be forewarned it is not an easy process no matter how well your community functions. There are so many things to consider when resources are shared and relationships are complicated and interdependent.

Community members might want to know:

- Who owns the business?
- What are the liability ramifications for the community?

- Should the community be compensated for the use of community resources? If so, how much? (This is a big one.)
- What kind of oversight is needed for the business entity? (We're all members here after all.)

Not to mention the complexities associated with hiring interns (*see sidebar*) to work on the business. Interns were an essential part of the farming operation and our goal of making the world a better place.

- Do they pay Home Owner Association dues?
- Where do they live?
- Who is responsible for their behavior or their use of community resources?

Well, we have a pretty amazing community. They were willing to jump right in and say go for it even though there were still so many unknowns.

(Turn to **page 18** to read the entire article)



The importance of evaluation

Kirsten Rohde

We have received some post-Lab evaluations and I'm giving you a smattering of comments from these **as a way to encourage more evaluations** be sent. As you know "complaints and compliments" about an event after it is done is very important for those of us who were involved in creating the event. It's important to know if intentions for this Lab were met as well as to hear about each person's experiences. We value knowing not only what was learned but also how the learning happened. What was effective and what was not so effective?

For example, here are some comments on the small groups:

- It was enthusiastic and supportive. Each person contributed, and from my experience, earlier in the game than usual
- Each of us offered ourselves in an incredibly self-revealing way around our individual issues in relating.
- Many "mirrors" to reflect back behaviors and attitudes
- Specific suggestions for ways to use the Lab community could have been more intentional.
- I asked for feedback in very specific areas and it worked for me
- When the leaders didn't do their own work, the group is held up. Equally there was appreciation for group leaders openly working out their co-leading experience in order to become more effective leaders in the group.

Appreciation was expressed for the overall community of Lab:

- The only good way to learn, at least for me, is in company with others. Lab provides that necessary context.
- I enjoyed meal times and after hours in the Swamp for providing chances to have good talks with someone else.

- The ritual we did on Monday about joining made a difference in my intention to learn.
- I liked the talking and provocation of new ideas around being an open hearted friend and I could always enjoy even more singing and dancing
- The telling of the “Prodigal Son” story was very effective, as it touched on so many aspects of conflict, on my own difficulties and on the different work that I knew was going on.

There is general appreciation of the leadership provided by John, Colette, and Dyanne as well as specific mention of others who spoke up, were supportive coaches or good listeners.

Comments about learning:

- Understanding my underlying attitude is important to learning how to be more friendly
- Making the decision to trust another in order to learn
- Understanding communication styles and ways to give and receive feedback is very important.
- Freedom is an inside job and needs a welcoming environment.

Please add your experience and critiques so that we have a more complete picture of the Lab experience. The community planning group begins talking about next year’s Lab this fall and we do take all feedback to heart. **Thank you!**



September 8 - Back at the Swedish Spa AND BRAIN CANCER WALK COMING UP 9/20

By Barbara Brucker — Sep 8, 2014 4:03pm

Today finds me back in the Swedish Health Spa. This time I'm in room 1258 (for those of you who visit when I'm in here). Really nothing to report at this time. My kidney function continues to improve and today my creatinine level (which is a measure of kidney function) is at the upper edge of normal limits for the first time in many weeks (about 5 weeks). It's still a little high for my baseline, but headed the right direction. Onward with chemo. I'm prepared for another long stay given that my kidney function isn't as good as earlier.

MORE IMPORTANT IS THE BRAIN CANCER WALK

It's just around the corner - September 20th. I plan to participate (assuming I am out of the Health Spa) and to invite you to support me either by registering for the walk and walking with me or donating in my name. It's true that my fundraising has exceeded my goal. In goal setting I choose the lowest amount, and now can't figure out how to raise the bar on the site. Just because a few generous souls have helped me exceed my goal doesn't mean it's too late for you to participate. Any amount is great - it all adds up, so please consider supporting me in this walk. It's a short walk, so very do-able for anyone of my able bodied friends if you're inclined to participate..



Happy Sep 9 Birthday, Barb!

I chose to join Sam Staats' team, Dain Bramaged, rather than develop my own team given that my ability to plan ahead is limited right now. Of course, the purpose is to raise money for brain cancer research. Please join me by donating or signing up for the team. Every person who runs, walks, donates or volunteers is helping us have a positive effect on brain cancer research.

Here's the info on the walk:

Sam has registered a team, Dain Bramaged, for you to join. If you are registering to walk, that's the team you want to join! The event takes place September 20 at Seattle Center, with activities beginning at 7:30 AM. The walk itself begins at 9:00.

You may use the following link to join the team or to donate.

<http://community.swedish.org/barbarabrucker2014>

The following link takes you to Dain Bramaged Team Page if you're interested:

<http://community.swedish.org/2014-sbcw-team-page?tab=0&ftid=1515>

and here is the Seattle Brain Cancer Walk Home page:

<http://www.braincancerwalk.org>

Please join the team and encourage your friends, family, and coworkers to join you.

I look forward to seeing all of you out there on September 20.



Coming Soon!

Beginning Sunday, **September 28 at 7:00 p.m.** we are inviting all interested to participate in a **"Pathwork Process,"** a process of sharing our own faith journeys. The focus is on what is happening in life now and not on earlier history. It is a process in which we **coach each other** and elicit insights from those who have done psychological and relational work with themselves. John and Colette Hoff have been asked to provide leadership and to resource us thematically. John and Colette would each welcome meeting with anyone interested in attending. Email hoff@goodenough.org to RSVP.

Building the future of the Goodenough Community

Bruce Perler



In the spring of 2013, I and about 25 other members and friends, attended a working weekend of the community sponsored envisioning, learning and training experience, Project Renaissance. This project, which stretched over nearly a year, involved many new and long time friends in understanding more deeply and dreaming more vividly a future and renewal for our community. It invited, with John Hoff's coaching and a team of leaders' organizing efforts, a collaborative dreaming and discerning across several of the key areas of the community and important and desired aspects of the future we'd like to see. Some of the areas of work were; Sahale as a home and a business, culture and events of the community and, the model underlying the communities design and implementation.

Project Renaissance was a great start in an important process of renewal and energizing for a next version of the Goodenough Community, one founded in core principles, well tested over time that integrates the changing needs and shifting priorities of today's community's as well as the concrete changes that have taken place in our community over these last few years, including; letting go of the Seattle Community Center, relocating John and Colette's home to Sahale, aging and retiring of long time key leaders, increased interest and participation in the ecoVillage at Sahale, the Perler's move to Sahale, learnings from Lab 2014 and others.

In late October, that's next month, leaderful members and friends interested in this community's sustainability and future will be invited to the next steps in our renewal process in the form of a Leadership Training Retreat, **October 24 to 26 at Sahale**. John Hoff will be providing key leadership for this event and will be bringing his experience, feeling and thinking to meet yours in what will be an exciting and energizing gathering designed to clarify and motivate a renewed leadership body with a refreshed understanding and feeling for what is needed now and in the future of the Goodenough Community.

I'm looking forward to this training weekend and know it will; be full of good conversation, leaning into important decisions, broadening understanding and feeling for the need of community now as well as some surprises. community gatherings always have surprises, that's part of what makes them real and emergent - happenings. Hope to see you there!



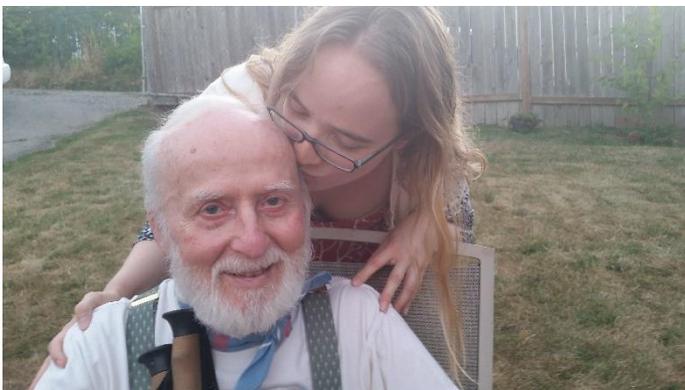


A major event this week turned out to be the birthday party for Phil Stark who turned 80. He is a much loved man and his birthday gathering was well- attended by family and friends.

Here are some pictures taken by Jodine Hatfield followed by Mike deAnguera's account.



Rosemary and Phil Stark



Jillian and Grandpa



Hollis and Elizabeth



Good Friends



Karen, Phil's Daughter

The deAnguera Blog: Phil Stark's 80th Birthday



The most significant thing about 80 is that you only get to be 80 once. 80 is definitely a milestone up the mountain of life. That's over 21 years beyond my age. These folks are true survivors and are some of the wisest people I know.

My 60th birthday is September next year. Guess that makes me ready to be a Third Ager.

How does one age gracefully and artfully? Well our elders are a good example. One day all of us will be their age.

What I know is that life is brief. When I was young it seemed like an eternity. When I get older it seems brief. The years fly past faster and faster. That's because my perspective is changing.

We held Phil's birthday celebration at the home he shares with Barbara Brucker, Jim Tocher, and Joan Valles. They all look out after each other.

I can't imagine living my older years in anything other than a community setting. We are all family for each other. This is something I can't stress enough.

Patch Adams, a clown doctor would tell us that no ailment can touch the horror of loneliness. Community is the best medicine for loneliness.

I have known Phil since 1998, my first Lab. I remember him as 'Grandpa Phil' who taught the kids archery. He really knew how to handle a bow.

I'm glad I had the chance to meet his wife, Rosemary, daughter Karen, and granddaughter Julienne. Several in laws were there as well and everybody loved Phil.

Photos of Phil's life were posted around the living room-kitchen area of the house. I was especially interested in seeing him as a younger person. There were family photos of siblings and various relatives. Some of the most fascinating were of Phil when he was a kid.

My brother Paul is busy going through old family photos, saving the ones with people in them and tossing the rest out. Those photos show the lives he touched. I have very few such photos in my collection and wish I had more. One advantage of writing the blog every week is it forces me to take more people shots which I will treasure in the coming years.

Phil Stark usually has many words of wisdom when he speaks. How is that so? Well, I believe they result from his reflecting upon the challenges of his life. That is the gift of the older years and Phil lets it shine through.

Birthdays in particular help us celebrate and reflect on the meaning of each person's life. Each person is valuable. I am glad we celebrate birthdays.

My birthday is coming up on September 23rd. I understand quite a few of us were born during this month. More parties?



Sometimes the best present is a nice note from a loved one.



Are People Happier Living in Community?

The FIC Wants to Find Out

Laird Schaub

FIC Executive Secretary

The FIC is teaming up with researchers to try to answer this question.

The FIC is teaming up with researchers [Bjorn Grinde](#) (chief scientist with the Norwegian Institute of Public Health), [David Sloan Wilson](#) (distinguished professor of biology and anthropology at SUNY Binghamton), and [Ian MacDonald](#) (PhD student at SUNY Binghamton) to **try to answer this question by going straight to the source: asking people living in intentional communities what they think.**

To accomplish this, we are **inviting all adults living in intentional communities to participate in a study** that can be completed online in about 25 minutes. With the idea that communities may

have something important to teach the mainstream, the research will attempt to measure to what extent the quality of life has been enhanced by living in a community.

As scientists who study communities of all sorts—including businesses, volunteer organizations, congregations and urban neighborhoods—the researchers are especially interested in how the organization of social groups influences the psychological and physical wellbeing of members. Intentional communities, they feel, offer an ideal opportunity to study these important topics.

Our hope is that the results will benefit your community, the Intentional Communities Movement, and the general public. We all wish to learn how to improve quality of life.

Here's how it will work:

- Interested communities should **contact Ian MacDonald** at imacdon1@binghamton.edu
- They will be provided with a **link to an anonymous survey**.
- The survey contains questions about life satisfaction, community organization, social relations, and general well being.
- As **an incentive**, every community member who participates will earn their community an **entry into a lottery** (1st prize is \$3,000; 2nd is \$2,000; 3rd is \$1,000). Winning communities will be announced and contacted after the survey is finished.

This project is supported by a **grant from the John Templeton Foundation**. If you have questions about the project, please contact Ian MacDonald at imacdon1@binghamton.edu.



EVENTS OF INTEREST

If you're a woman, see you at the [West Coast Women's Permaculture Gathering](#) happening **September 18 to 21** in Washington.

Camp Hamilton is located near Monroe, Washington and provides groups the perfect opportunity to retreat into the woods. Camp Hamilton's natural beauty contains 570 acres of forest, 80 acre Lake Hannon and trails throughout the extensive property. Bunk/dormitory style facilities are heated and have restrooms and showers nearby. They serve home cooked, family-style meals in a cozy dining hall.

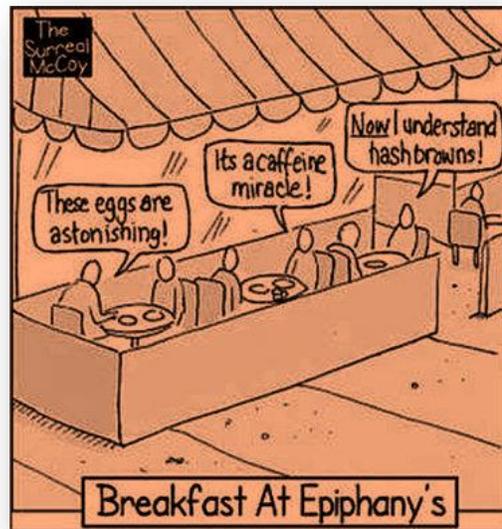
Or, if you'd like to converge with the whole western hemisphere, see you at the [North American Convergence](#) (link)

Bite O'Fall

Elizabeth Jarrett-Jefferson

Birthdays and Anniversaries

- 🐾 Claudia Fitch - September 11. Happy birthday, "Claudette"!
- 🐾 Happy 2nd Birthday, Cooper Roosevelt Jarrett-Jefferson- September 12



In Praise of Coffee

*Oh coffee, you dispel the worries of the great,
you point the way to those
who have wandered from the path of knowledge.
Coffee is the drink of the friends of God,
and of His servants who seek wisdom.*

*As coffee steeps in the cup
it gives off a musky aroma
and turns the color of ink.*

*No one can understand the truth
until he drinks of its frothy goodness.
Those who condemn coffee as causing man harm
are fools in the eyes of God.*

*Coffee is the common man's gold,
and like gold it brings to every man
the feeling of luxury and nobility.
Coffee differs from pure, gentle milk
only in its taste and color.
Take time in your preparation of coffee
and God will be with you
and bless you and your table.
Where coffee is served
there is grace and splendor
and friendship and happiness.*

*All cares vanish
as the coffee cup is raised to the lips.
Coffee flows through your body
as freely as your life's blood,
refreshing all that it touches:
look you at the youth and vigor
of those who drink it.*

*Whoever tastes coffee
will forever forswear
the liquor of the grape.
Oh drink of God's glory,
your purity brings man only
wellbeing and nobility.*



11059—A Coffee-house in Palestine.

~Sheikh Ansari Djezeri Hanball Abd-al-Kadir





Harvest Weekend, October 31 to November 2 (NEW DATE)

This year, our apples are ripening early! In fact, we've decided to hold our harvest weekend on October 31 to November 2. While some trick or treaters may not be able to attend, there will be cider-making and lots of applesauce as well as good meals. Feel free to join for the day or overnight. Email hoff @goodenough.org with your plans.

The Goodenough Community: Cultural Programs & Events in 2014

For the Goodenough Community, cultural life is an arena for creative expression. All programs and events are open to the public. We welcome your interest and participation.

Over thousands of years human communities have organized not only their work life but also their relational and cultural life. The Goodenough Community organizes its cultural life around encouraging human development—through our programs for men, women, committed couples, families and around age groupings. Cultural programs usually encourage maturity, responsibility, and the development of valued relationships. Some of our programs bring everyone together with a seasonal emphasis. Following, are program offerings for the next period on our calendar.

Third Age Gathering, Friday, October 3

Joan Valles

"Old age is ready to undertake tasks that youth shirked because they would take too long." W. Somerset Maugham



The Third Age group is for older adults, approximately age 60 and up, who are interested in exploring the issues of living well while aging, and supporting each other in this "third stage" of life. Call Joan Valles for more information at 206 763 2258, or email me at joanvalles70@yahoo.com

"The value of old age depends upon the person who reaches it. To some men of early performance it is useless. To others, who are late to develop, it just enables them to finish the job."
--Thomas Hardy

Women's Culture, Upcoming Saturdays: September 20



Hello, dear women friends!

Here it is, Labor Day ... informally considered the end of summer. And indeed I can feel autumn in the air. Though the sun is warm, the breeze is cool, and the fragrance in the air is changing.

With this new season, a new year in the Goodenough Community's women's program and culture begins, and I am writing to invite you to **women's gatherings in September**. Please mark your calendar and plan to attend!

Saturday, September 20

10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

We will meet at the home of Rose Buchmeier:
9033 13th Avenue SW
Seattle, WA 98106

For directions, call Rose: 206 764 0193

As is our way, we will gather at 10:00 a.m. for a brief social time before sitting down together. We will have time together in the large circle, as well as time for individual reflection and time to share with one or two other women. And we will provide lunch.

We love it when a woman can attend every gathering throughout the year, and believe that the experience is richer when you can do that. However, **each program is discrete**, and you need not commit to attending every time.

While we do not charge a fee, **we welcome contributions**, and suggest a donation of \$20. We trust that you will contribute what is right for you.

An RSVP is not necessary, but we like to know about how many women to expect, so please write to hollisr@comcast.net if you know you are coming. But don't stay away just because you didn't send an RSVP!

All the best, Hollis



Mark your calendars for 2015!

Human Relations Laboratory

August 9 to 15, 2015

The best event to experience the Goodenough Community!

Seven Fun-filled Days of Social Creativity & Experiential
Learning about Friendship and Effective Relationship

Sahale Learning Center

A 68-acre retreat on Kitsap Peninsula

Family Enrichment Network Parent Group

If you are interested in developing a supportive parent circle for study and conversation about family life, to begin this fall, please contact *Irene Perler* at 206-419-3477 **or email** irene_perler@hotmail.com. Topics could include: simplifying and organizing life, creating a family culture, development stages and sibling dynamics, understanding roles within the family.

True Holidays Celebration - Saturday, December 6



Our annual celebration will be held on Saturday, **December 6, 2014**. This event has more than 25 years of history and is set early in the holiday season in order to deepen and enrich the winter holidays for people of all faith traditions.

This interfaith celebration will again be at the **Mercer Island Congregational Church** and commences at 7:00pm

Winter Solstice Bus Trip – Saturday, December 20

Old fashioned fun for all ages! With your friends and family, enjoy this day-long journey that embraces the longest night of the year.

We will board a chartered bus and travel over Snoqualmie and Blewett Passes to the beautiful Bavarian Christmas village of Leavenworth. Then we'll head to Eagle Creek Ranch, just outside of Leavenworth, where a horse-drawn sleigh ride awaits us, followed by a buffet dinner.



New Year's Eve Weekend at Sahale!



This year New Year's Eve is on **Wednesday** night. You are invited to come to Sahale for the weekend to join in saying goodbye to 2014 and hello to 2015. You are welcome to come as early as Friday. We plan to have our usual times in good conversation, winter walks, hot-tubbing, making meals together and celebrating the change of year. **Dinner will be served at 7:30pm** on New Year's Eve. Of course, we will have our **7th annual** Train Dominoes Tournament. Time will also be given for serious reflection and joyful celebration.

Email Kirsten, Bruce or Elizabeth: krohde14@outlook.com, bruce_perler@hotmail.com, elizabeth.ann.jarrett@gmail.com

Quest: A Counseling and Healing Center

Our belief is that mental and emotional health are prerequisites for spiritual well-being, collaboration, and the expression of compassion. **Quest's** counseling and education programs, open to all interested individuals, focus on empowering individuals, couples, and family groups to be happier and more effective. **Call John (206 963-4738), Colette (206 -755 8404). We're continuing to use the office at 2007 33rd So in Seattle.**

Continued from page 4

The Dirty Business of Growing A Cohousing Community Farm

By Sandy Thomson; Communities Magazine Summer 2014

The idea of creating Heartwood Farms came about during a visioning retreat in 2007. You know the type, an all-day, community-wide retreat hosted in the common house with lots of positive energy, good food, and everyone in a good mood? Picture five or six smaller groups gathered around, on the floor, sitting on couches, hanging out around the kitchen island, all trying to come up with the perfect vision of what our community would look and feel like in 10 years!

We live on roughly 250 acres in rural southwestern Colorado. Seventy of those acres are irrigated and we as a community have agreed to steward them in the best way possible. Now we are basically a bunch of city kids wanting to experience the rural lifestyle...environmentally friendly with strawbale houses, kids collecting eggs as one of their chores, that sort of thing. So when the idea of growing our own food came up in numerous subgroups within the retreat, a group of us decided that of course we need to grow our own food. Let's do it! We produced collages, word boards, and pictures in our heads of beautiful vegetables and fruits grown organically on our land by people we love. We pictured days sitting in the grass while the children played with the baby goats and chased good-natured chickens around the pasture.

Simple, right? We had land and we had water, now all we needed were some seeds. We even had a whole community that eats organic and supports local food sources AND an experienced grower to grow that food living right here in the community. We have a word for this kind of idea at Heartwood; it is called a "no brainer." Only a "no brainer" at Heartwood is not what you think. A "no brainer" here means an idea that you think could not possibly have any opposition, that everyone will agree with, as in "duh, that's a no brainer," but in reality there are a thousand questions and almost as many

concerns. This is a difficult dynamic ever-present in community; there is always a group raring to go and another group wanting to consider every possible thing that can go wrong. But what it ultimately comes down to is power and trust.

Our core identity statement (*see sidebar*) reads: “We cultivate a fertile ground in which members bring forth their gifts, talents, and passions to manifest a marvelous diversity of creations. We embrace, celebrate, and support those diverse manifestations that are consistent with our stated values.”

Sounds wonderful, doesn't it? But many questions can come up when a business venture is proposed that operates within a community setting, especially if the members are creating the business primarily to meet the needs or desires of the community. Be forewarned it is not an easy process no matter how well your community functions. There are so many things to consider when resources are shared and relationships are complicated and interdependent.

Community members might want to know:

- Who owns the business?
- What are the liability ramifications for the community?
- Should the community be compensated for the use of community resources? If so, how much? (This is a big one.)
- What kind of oversight is needed for the business entity? (We're all members here after all.)

Not to mention the complexities associated with hiring interns (*see sidebar*) to work on the business. Interns were an essential part of the farming operation and our goal of making the world a better place.

- Do they pay HOA dues?
- Where do they live?
- Who is responsible for their behavior or their use of community resources?

Well, we have a pretty amazing community. They were willing to jump right in and say go for it even though there were still so many unknowns.

The first few years were exciting and fun. We built thousands of dollars worth of infrastructure with seed money from individual community members, fund raisers, and veggie sales—not to mention thousands of volunteer hours from interns and community members. As the farm grew and prospered, changing, growing organically, some members of the community were getting uncomfortable with the still unanswered questions. But a business like a farm is hard to pin down. A farm is not a clod of dirt; it is more like mud that slips through your hands, gets on your boots, and is tracked all through the community. We wanted this to be an integrated farm and it was—deeply integrated with the community. Now a few members were asking for it to be separated out, put in a box, and defined. Some members didn't trust the farm because the members on the farm board couldn't answer all these complex questions.

Bad feelings developed on both sides. Some of the energy on the farm turned sour. The member who was the primary grower left for greener pastures or ones less bogged down in the manure of community process. This trying to define and pin down the farm has gone on now for the last two years. We have had meetings and more meetings. We formed a task force that did great work on trust, hurt feelings, and misunderstandings. We recently consensed on a new structure for the governance of

the farm, but questions still persist. Our next retreat will be with a skilled outside facilitator who will help us see where the process went wrong. He will help us further untangle issues of power and trust that have been brought to light by this experience.

For those of us who have been part of the farm since the beginning it has been an exhausting two years—much more exhausting than all the physical labor that we put in during the first two years making the farm great. I am not sure where the farm will go from here. The constraints from the community and from the county have us bogged down. It feels heavy, like walking through the heavy clay soil we have to work with. Some see it as a new beginning, a chance to create something new with full community buy-in. I am worried that trying to do something like this in the confines of community is too exhausting and time-consuming to deal with. But I have hope. I have to.

What have I learned from this process?

- It is very difficult to run a business within a community setting.
- It is important for people to know how to follow as well as lead.
- Nothing polarizes a community faster than talking behind each other's backs.
- There is nothing cut and dried about farming.
- Sometimes a squeaky wheel is just a squeaky wheel.
- Being in community is about letting go but not giving up.

Really when it comes down to it, it has to do with trust. Trust in each other. Trust in the process. Trust that everything will turn out all right.

If I had it all to do over again, would I do it?

Yes. It is in alignment with my values and those of the community. *(See sidebar.)*

What would I do different?

I would follow our interpersonal agreements and insist that others do the same. *(See sidebar.)*

It seems easy when you look at it this way. Just follow your vision and values and every one of your interpersonal agreements. Anyone who lives in community knows these are ideals and hard to live up to all the time. It is the 20-somethings, those goofy interns, who continually remind us to keep striving for those ideals. It takes work and sometimes it's messy but in the end it is worth it.

If you want to start a business inside a community structure put your hat on, pull up your boot straps, and hang on. You are in for a wild ride.

Sandy Thomson is one of the founding members of Heartwood Cohousing in Bayfield, Colorado: www.heartwoodcohousing.com. She and her husband Mac have raised three children in their community. Sandy created and ran a homeschool co-op when her kids were little; now that they are in high school she has turned her attention to creating Heartwood Farms, a nonprofit foundation to support local agriculture and the education of our future farmers (www.heartwoodfarms.org).



Interns: The Spice of Life

Interns are the spice of life in a cohousing community. You take the soup of families with kids of all ages, older single people, retired couples, dogs, cats, and you add the secret ingredient: that 18-25 age group that is notoriously missing from cohousing. They are upbeat, idealistic, friendly, hard working, and fun. They aren't afraid to get dirty and they dive right in. The kids and dogs love them because they are willing to look silly and come down to their level. The older set love them because they can hire them to do some of the backbreaking labor around their homes. The 40-50-year-olds love them because they wake up that often dormant feeling of hope and idealism that is so important at that time of life when we are questioning if it can be done and is it worth fighting for or not?

Our interns have added so much to the experience of living in cohousing that when members are asked, "What is the best part about the farm?," it is not the food, or the land stewardship, but the presence of interns that is often the answer. They answer it with a slight smile on their face as if they are remembering that time in their own lives—the time in their lives when anything was possible.

Intern energy! I wish I could bottle that and sell it. I bet I could get a lot more for it than the dollar a pound we get for potatoes.

Intern energy is like a litter of golden retrievers with powerful brains that are working all the time.

Some things that can be heard when eavesdropping on the interns at common meals:

"Hey let's try to do without money the rest of the season."

"I finally got the recipe for shampoo right—look, my hair actually looks clean. Now I don't have to buy into all those chemical corporations."

"Maybe we can just all live in trees and live off the land, wouldn't that be great?"

"Yeah and we can play music and make art and be happy."

"I want to learn how to be totally self-sufficient. I want to learn how to grow my own food, build my own house, and make anything that I might need."

You just don't get that kind of energy from the meat and potatoes of cohousing!



Community Vision and Values

These are Heartwood Cohousing's community vision and values:

Vision

To create and live in a community which fosters harmony with each other, the larger community, and Nature.

Values

Honesty and Trust: We act with openness and honesty because of the trust we have in each other. We have the courage and trust to speak up when we see contradictions or inconsistencies between our behavior and our stated values and goals.

Cooperation: Through tolerance, generosity, sharing, and compassion, we live cooperatively with one another. When appropriate, we place the interests of the community ahead of our own self-interests.

Interconnectedness: We recognize our interdependence with all life. To all that came before us, we offer our respect and remembrance. To all with whom we share this world, we seek mutual understanding and respect. And to all who will come after us, we strive to leave for you a better world.

Commitment: Though we know that the path may be rough at times, we are committed to our Vision for the long haul.

Participation: Knowing that our community is fueled by the energy we give it, we all actively participate in community life and work at Heartwood. Each of us chooses how to give his or her energy.

Support: Our community supports friendship and an extended family environment, thereby creating a sense of belonging. We support the growth of each other individually and the relationships amongst us. Each of us is willing to work on our own personal growth so that we can improve those relationships.

Respect: We respect the freedom of each person to live as he/she chooses, so long as that doesn't interfere with the freedom of others in the community to do the same. We respect personal privacy. We respect diversity in ideology, spirituality, interests, talents, beliefs, opinions, race, age, income, and so on. And we welcome expressions of that diversity.

Equality and Fairness: We value every member, including children, equally and treat them with fairness.

Stewardship: We live gently on the Earth. We are thankful for Nature's resources, being conscious to take good care of them and use them efficiently.

Safety: Our community is a safe place—emotionally, physically, and spiritually.

Balance: We maintain balance in our community life: between group and individual; between building for tomorrow and enjoyment of today; between heart, mind, and soul; etc.

Responsibility: Each of us, as well as all of us as a community, takes responsibility for our actions.

Education: We seek the exchange of knowledge, skills, and resources with each other and the larger community.

Flexibility: Creating community is an ongoing process. We remain flexible to change.



Interpersonal Agreements

These are Heartwood's interpersonal agreements:

To Communicate with Integrity: I agree to tell my truth, with compassion for myself and others, and to trust that others are doing the same.

To Listen with My Heart: I agree to listen respectfully to the communications of others and attune to their deepest meaning.

To Own My Feelings: I agree to take responsibility for my feelings and how I react to the words and actions of others. And I agree to express those feelings in a spirit of openness and compassion.

To Honor Each Person's Process: I agree to acknowledge that everyone, including myself, is making the best possible choice or decision we are capable of at that moment.

To Express Appreciation: I agree to appreciate others and myself.

To Cooperate with Others: I agree to maintain a sense of cooperation and caring in my interactions with others.

To Honor Our Differences: I understand that goals are often the same even though methods for achieving them may differ.

To Be Aware of Conflict: I agree to look for the unresolved issues within me that create a disproportionate adverse reaction to another's behavior.

To Resolve Conflicts Constructively: I agree to take problems and complaints to the person(s) with whom I can resolve them, at the earliest opportunity. I agree not to criticize or complain to someone who cannot do something about my complaint, and I will redirect others to do the same. I will not say behind someone's back what I am not willing to say to their face.

To Maintain Harmony: I agree to take the time to establish rapport with others and then to reconnect with anyone with whom I feel out of harmony as soon as it is appropriate.

To Freely Participate: I agree to freely choose and re-choose to participate in the Heartwood Cohousing Community. It is my choice.

To Lighten Up!: I agree to allow fun and joy in my relationships, my work, and my life.

(Note: These Interpersonal Agreements are based in large part on those of Geneva Community.)



Core Identity

What makes the Heartwood community distinctive?

- We are a close-knit, multigenerational, rural cohousing neighborhood.

- We are committed to deeply knowing, supporting, respecting, and caring for each other and ourselves as distinctive individuals; as a result, deep interpersonal relationships are possible here.
- We share with each other the value of sustainable interactions with the planet, though our individual efforts and choices may vary. We steward our land to maintain or improve its viability and vitality over the long haul.
- We are interconnected with all of humanity. We welcome new ideas and interactions with the larger community and are open to associations and the sharing of resources with those who share our values.
- We cultivate a fertile ground in which members bring forth their gifts, talents, and passions to manifest a marvelous diversity of creations.
- We embrace, celebrate, and support those diverse manifestations that are consistent with our stated values.

All of these distinctive qualities are part of our enduring core identity, which does not change. What does change are the various manifestations themselves. These dynamic expressions that come and go over time add a rich flavor to our community culture.