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Let Asparagus Fern Grow

Mildred Loomis

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Letters to the Editor

Is A Green Revolution Possible?

"The Green Revolution moves opposite to the Red Revolution—not bloody and violent, but quietly via persuasion and education. Not through government and the State, but through personal and family action. Not through control of some people by other people, but free of external controls. Wherever individuals, agencies and institutions distort and dominate the purposes and activities of other individuals, there the Red Revolution is active. Wherever individuals decide and implement their own purposes, they are part of the Green Revolution. The Red centralizes; the Green decentralizes." — From *Go Ahead and Live!* by M. J. Loomis.

The Green Revolution is more than a movement to the land. But a rural revival is surely part of it. Here I want to deal with five arguments often opposed to this aspect.

1. "People don't want to live in the country." Such a remark errs by the all-inclusive, unsemantic term "people." More accurately: *some* people don't; *some* people do. From indications we have, *many* people do. Scores of letters which we have published, and scores which we haven't, indicate a widespread longing to leave the city, get out of the rat race; indicate a wish for a productive life in touch with nature. And if economic conditions were more favorable, or if education encouraged it, that number would be much, much higher.

2. "There isn't enough land for everyone in the country." (Is it assumed there is enough land for them in the cities?) Here again a non-semantic, wholesale term: *everyone*. Not even the most eager Green Revolutioner assumes that *everyone* should live in the country. But certainly all who *want* to, and all who can be encouraged to, should have a *free and easy opportunity* to so live. (This is not now true.)

A good survey should be made to locate the total land available for modern small homesteads. As I have seen unused acres in Pennsylvania, Virginia, the New England states and all the mountain states, vast areas are available. There's a wide band of land through central New York State open enough for all in New York City to "homestead." See the February 1964 issue of *The Green Revolution* for an account of how S. E. Eisman is developing 30 acres in that area, bought for \$40 an acre. See the market bulletins of the southeastern states for hundreds of ads of small homesteads. See this October issue for homesteads and land for sale in our classifieds, and all our issues for similar situations in ads and articles.

3. "It sounds like the 'good old days.'" Or, "You can't turn the clock back." As some of us know and practice modern homesteading, it is *neither* the heavy, drudging work of the 1800 farm pattern nor today's costly, technical commercial-farming. It consists of, and implies, rather, good *new* days, days of balanced physical-mental work on small plots of land (often supplemented by cash income from other work), using efficient small-scale machines, participating with nature and with neighbors in a creative, independent and esthetic way. Modern homesteading combines the best of both city and country, of both the old and the new. It all adds up to a new, humane, decentralized culture.

4. "The problem is not *out there* in the environment; it is inside—in the feelings, minds, psyches and bodies of—human beings." With this argument I have much sympathy. But I hold that it is too monistic, too either/orish. Most human beings *are* troubled and in conflict within, for lack of a true, accurate and acceptable Self. Much can and must be done by, and within, each person, himself, to solve this "problem." I agree that faulty problem-people create faulty problem-environments and social conditions. *But*, the environment, in turn, affects human psyches, especially children and all immature, undeveloped psyches that have not yet attained the selfhood and the strength to "master" outer conditions.

But I see no value in continuing wretched social and environmental conditions merely as a challenge against which to "grow" strong. Some philosophers, and some laymen, speak as if there were some virtue in "living above" environmental conditions, and doing nothing to create better conditions. The Green Revolution pleads for both: improve the inner man and create the environment which makes it more possible for children and the undeveloped to grow and fulfill themselves. This demands freedom of action, liberty in all areas of living.

5. "Cities wouldn't be bad if we didn't have an exploitive economic system. If we remove monopoly and privilege, if everyone got the full product of his labor, there would be no poverty, slums and unwanted unemployment."

Agreed. And this removing of monopoly and privilege is *part* of the Green Revolution, part of finding adequate, libertarian answers to the Possessional Problem of Living. (See May-July *A Way Out*.) If and when we implement these answers, then the *city*—and the *country* too—will both be as "good" as they can be. Then people will be free and able to choose whichever they desire.

So let's get on with the education—the re-education—via local, state and regional Schools of Living—to make all this possible.—M.J.L.

Prefers Growing Peanuts

To the Editor:

Well, all the peanuts are gathered at last and hung on the poles. Not a very good crop, maybe; I don't know. About 25 peanuts for one planted. You don't get that many playing golf. I used to like to play ball till I was 12 or 13, but now I like to see something for my time and energy. When my neighbor arrives with his machine and offers to help me because I'm old, I wonder how Mr. Eisenhower would feel if a younger man came and offered to help him play his game of golf. It's funny about games—how some people can play them all their lives without wanting one single thing in return for the energy spent. Me, I like to count my peanuts.—F. Burn, Florida

Two-Family Homestead

To the Editor:

I have two 10-acre plots an hour's drive north of Toronto which should provide grains, potatoes, fruit, and animals for milk, meat and eggs to get two families through the most disastrous kind of depression. We have erected two sturdy cabins, have brought water to the land, have covered garden plots with spoiled hay and planted fruit trees and berries. We want to systematically build up the homestead and would appreciate guidance, especially with regard to the buildings that are required. We have access to cheap building material, and are financially independent. I need someone with experience and guidance in building. Anyone interested in sharing this with me actively would be very welcome.—Hans Birk, 76 Falmouth Ave., Scarborough, Ont., Canada

Borsodi in Paperback?

To the Editor:

Are those of Mr. Borsodi's *Flight From The City and This Ugly Civilization* being reprinted in paperback by a School of Living publisher? Then everyone could have a copy. . . . Eleanor Woods and I discussed a western branch of School of Living library. I have an unused side porch that could house it.—Nina Johnson, Newberg, Ore.

On 50 Acres?

To the Editor:

I enjoyed reading Sam Eisman's illuminating article in June *Green Revolution*. I know Sam personally and consider him one of the most intelligent and capable men I know. But on 50 acres (that's a lot of terrain!), who needs a privy? That word probably comes from the same root as the word "private." Why does Man need privacy? Why are we ashamed of our bodies and of performing natural functions? I don't see animals hiding themselves when they defecate. If I had 50 acres of land I would go to a different place in the woods each time and cover it with leaves and/or dirt. In our socie-

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Those who pick their asparagus closely or for a too-long season may be making a mistake. Next year's crop of asparagus depends upon the growth made by the asparagus foliage, or fern, this season.

Hence, the best plan is to allow the slender shoots to grow without picking, and not to pick the heavy stalks (in temperate areas) past mid-May. Allow them to grow into foliage, for the food in the top part of the plant will move to the roots during the fall months, to strengthen them and produce a heavier yield and sturdier stalks next year.

It's a good idea, the horticulturists say, to let the fern stand all winter, then early next spring disk it down or incorporate it with the soil with shallow cultivation.

ty, normal has become abnormal and abnormal has become the standard. In the next go-round I hope that I am a different type of animal than a homsaphead. — David Stry, Self-Appointed President of the International Society for Making All Animals Wear Clothing and Use Private Toilets, Cerritos 5A, Cuernavaca, Mexico.

Avoid Large Universities

To the Editor:

Author Colin Wilson holds that in most cases the home or homestead is superior for learning. He says, "Colleges today are great 'Mediocrity Factories' and the degree system a farce and fraud. . . . My advice to parents is: If you have a child with any originality, do not send him or her to a university unless it is a very small one. Students should be encouraged to stay at home and study, and the government should concentrate on schemes for education at home! For the creative intelligent person, already in a university, I have one piece of advice, get away from this stultifying atmosphere as fast as possible." Isn't that a real indictment?

I'm so enthused about your excellent *Go Ahead and Live!* that I'm giving a copy to a friend. It should fill a longfelt need among people who had a lot of stale knowledge crammed into their heads in school and college, but no practical help in how to live according to natural, moral needs of man.—Wm. C. Lloyd, 310 N. Broad, Burlington, N. C.

Correspondent Wanted

To the Editor:

I am a homemaker on a small farm where we raise some of our own food. I would like to correspond with someone who has a family living on a homestead where they are self-sufficient and who teach their children at home.—Barbara Woodward, Rt. 1, Pennsburg, Pa.

In Indian Territory

To the Editor:

We're off in Indian territory working with the Rural Learning Association which is an amalgamation of three older adult education bodies. This region is cut off, and something like your *Go Ahead and Live!* is good as a core for our regional program. This and the work of Arthur Morgan have value for the emerging Indian leadership as another alternative to living it up on Skid Row or dying off slowly on the reserve. To date, nothing realistic has been put forward which fitted with Indian values.—Cliff Bennett, 231 Briar Bay, For William, Ont., Canada

Homestead Report (July)

To the Editor:

We have been strawberrying like mad, the prospects for a large raspberry and blueberry crop are excellent and we will literally have tons of hazelnuts this year. Our bees are putting up honey faster than we can buy supers for them. . . . Interchange sounds like a good idea. . . . perhaps we should have a number of them within our homesteading network in order to help beat the system. Here at Cass Lake

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cash is very scarce and a tremendous amount of barter goes on.

Frankly it disturbs me that our colleges are producing young people who are intent on getting on the government payroll rather than preparing themselves to strike out and use their skills to construct a new world. The tragedy is that our institutional diploma mills perpetuate this system, with tenure and seniority the end and goal in life. . . . We must develop a college of self-reliance, a college that includes as legitimate study atheism, anarchism and an agricultural approach to life.—Gary DeYoung, Cass Lake, Minn.

From New Zealand

To the Editor:

I'm a high school teacher of biology and geography, a graduate of Cambridge University, and have lived in Australia and New Zealand for five years (age 39). I am trying to coordinate the activities of people who want to live in New Zealand, close to the land, in the same neighborhood as other like-minded persons; who see the importance of conservation, of handicrafts and light industry; who may want to become communal in time, who are concerned in education and a rational approach to life, who believe that heredity and environment are equally important, and who want to circulate name and address to others. I will be glad to put people in touch with one another.—G. R. Roberts, Waitaki H. S., Oamaru, New Zealand

To Intentional Community?

To the Editor:

There are many young people in New York who hate city living. They stay there only because nowhere else can they find so many "great" people to interact with. The School of Living could have an important message for these people; help them see that they can leave the city and develop their personal relationships in and through "community." I hope the activity of Abigail Grafton and Leo Koch with teenagers will lead to area School of Living meetings in New York. Similar meetings might be held in other large cities.—Ben Zablocki, Intentional Community, Box 281, Baltimore, Md. 21203

Utopian Manual

To the Editor:

I would like to receive brief concepts on building of utopian communities, with name or not as you please. I will see they get circulated. Utopian groups and individuals are often vague about what goes on, even in thought, beyond their immediate surroundings. Sharing information (continued on page 5)

Revive Utopia-Building

"We abound in social critics but our prophets are silent."—Elizabeth Janeway, in *New York Times Sunday Book Review*.

"The craft of utopia-building could use a revival. Altruism (in the Negro's cause, war on poverty, Peace Corps) is not an adequate base for idealism. It debases to a kind of SPCA morality—what Jacob Riis called the 'menagerie view' of human rights—unless accompanied by ideal goals for the society as a whole. And, unless we can formulate such goals and recover the idea of an American experiment of universal significance, no amount of altruism can solve what seems to me the most pressing moral problem of our time: the existence of a frustrated mass in an affluent society." — Jane Newitt, in *Change* (Center for Study of Democratic Institutions).