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What Should We be Doing to Express the Green Revolution?

Mildred Loomis

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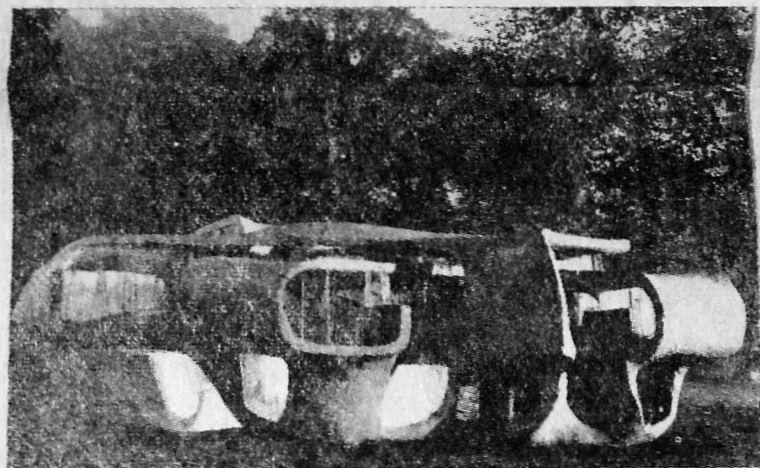
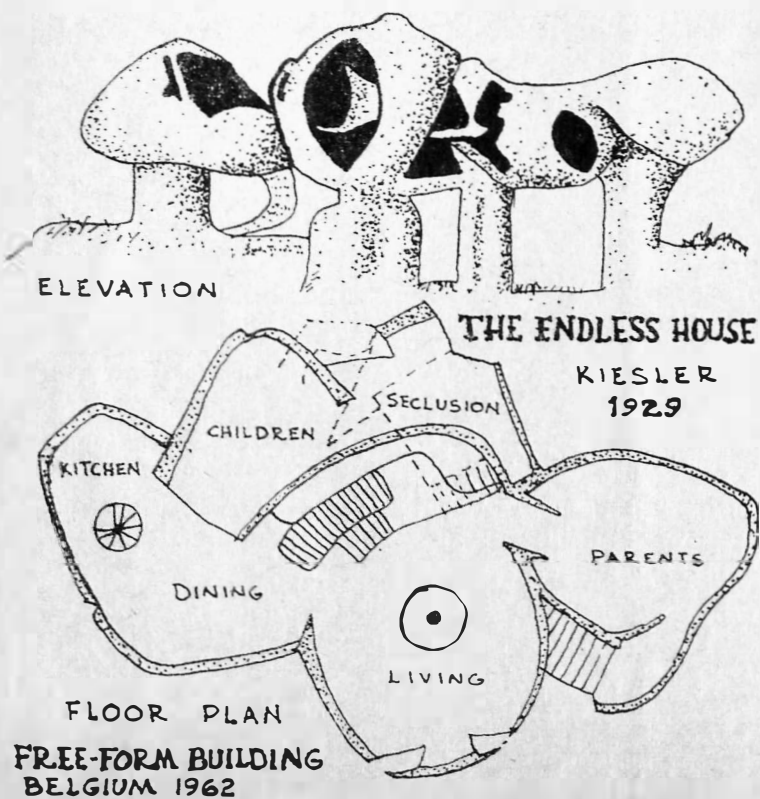
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The Owner-Built Home — Chapter 3
Volume IV — Design and Structure
**Planning Systems:
The Free-Form House**

By Ken Kern

During World War I architect Gaudi was busy developing a new curving free-form architecture in Spain; architect Rudolf Steiner was independently establishing metaphysical credence to the curving free-forms of his famed Goetheanum in Dornach, Switzerland. At the close of the war a group of architecturally disillusioned German designers formed a discussion group for purposes of exploring the problems of establishing an improved house. Gaudi and Steiner were searched out, and a "round-robin" correspondence began which lasted for some 20 years. Mendelsohn, Kiesler, and Finsterlin continued in their search for an entirely new free-form building style, but most of the original group were wooed into the more prosperous International Style.



In more recent years a group of younger architects are building upon what was learned from the German pioneers. Foremost among these are the Italian, Leonardo Ricci; the Americans, Paolo Soleri and Bruce Goff; the Brazilian, Oscar Niemeyer; the Mexican, Juan O'Gorman; and the Britishers, Hans Hollein and Walter Pichler.

There is a great deal about the free-form house that is applicable to owner-builder construction. This type of building is not a mere free-flow art form or a return to nature, but, as Kiesler states, it "derives from living a life dedicated to fundamentals rather than to mechanized equipment and interior decoration." The measurements of the final form and shape of the house are determined by actual requirements in height, width, and depth of the various areas designed for eating, sleeping, living, and working. Every defined function can be closed off from other areas or opened up, making one continuous space. Finsterlin talked of the New House as being organic: a person inside such a house would be as inside an organism, wandering from organ to organ, "the giving and receiving symbiont of a giant fossil mother body."

Designers of free-form homes feel that there should be a greater independence from our constantly increasing automotive way of life. By way of architecture they seek to encourage a more natural way of living. Kiesler talks of basing his house on simple, healthful, and direct ways of living, where work can also be recreational.

One basic difference between the free-form building type and traditional houses is that the free-form building is continuous shell, not post and beam construction. The floor of a free-form room curves at the rim into wall, and the wall curves uninterrupted into ceiling. Much thought has gone into the elimination of the flat horizontal plane as the area of movement for people. The traditional solid and opaque floor would cut through a free-form room like a "pathological diaphragm." Glassy, transparent floors were therefore included in the plan:

The bare foot will caress the floor sculptures with every step, bringing new life to the neglected tactile sense and enriching the reactions which nowadays reach the level of our consciousness only as the grossest fragments, instead of as inconceivable delicate and pure melodies of the material world by which we are surrounded.—Kiesler

(continued next month)

What Should We Be Doing To Express The Green Revolution?

Talent, energy, intelligence—all these are qualities in good measure among *Green Revolution* readers. And when our people get together—as in the October New Frontiersmen Festival in New Hampshire—we experience a fellow-feeling, an esprit de corps so strong that "parting becomes sweet sorrow." Can all this be developed, made visible in more actual forms, so that our "movement" takes a place, makes a contribution to current, public thinking? (See our October, 1965 editorial, "Is A Green Revolution Possible?")

This requires, not doctrinaire but deliberate, effort—repeated getting together, sharing, exchanging; in effect, some effort at organization. Some are reluctant to do this, fearing dogma, domination and bureaucracy would result. Others urge that we give earnest effort to improving structure, curriculum and organization, but keep it free, and participatory.

It seems to me we have at hand many aids to such an effort. First, of course, we have a name that implies our goals, i.e., The Green Revolution—life, freedom, growth, change from the status quo. We have a 20-year-old, chartered, membership-educational organization, The School of Living—a good title, many think, that means learning, seeking (as well as teaching) about LIFE and living.

We have a trio of symbols that are, and can be further, invested with feeling and satisfaction: The Tree of Life, as an insignia; the green tam-o-shanter to wear; the homestead, independent and cooperative businesses and professions as a way of life.

Slogans have been suggested: Liberty, Security, Creativity, and "Get out of the rat-race; get on a homestead."

Several lyrics have been set to familiar tunes (going along with the growing pattern of folk music):

The Green Revolutinn
(words by MJL to *Finlandia*)

This is our song, a song of Life and Living;
A Life of Health, of Work and Liberty.

This is Our song, the song of Home and Fam'ly;
This is our hope, our dream and shrine;

A hope that we may find in balanced living,
A goal fulfilled, for your life and mine.

We have a curriculum: Seventeen Basic Problems of Living, resulting from 30 years of work. A 700-page introduction to these problems will be published this spring. Ralph Borsodi presents these problems by lecture and discussion; I prefer to state the problem and lead two-hour discussions on each. I plan a month-long intensive study of them with eight or ten qualified people at Lane's End this summer, from July 9 to Aug. 13. I will be more available for presenting this series elsewhere when the record-keeping, mailing of our journals and other detail work is taken over by other persons.

We are in process of developing a new center, a headquarters at Heathcote Old Mill, near Freeland, Md. There capable, devoted persons are gathering to help foster a green revolution movement.

What do *you* want from the School of Living? What can you *give* to it? Can you become a vocal, active part of the green revolution?

—Mildred J. Loomis



MRS. HAL PORTER (Rt. 1, Box 1472, Port Orange, Fla.) is shown here putting palmetto leaves through a chopper constructed by Mr. Porter (and described in our issue of December, 1965).

THE GREEN REVOLUTION — 3
February, 1966

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ADMISSION FREE. All welcome. Every Tuesday from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. at Julius Levinson's, 43 Greenock St., Dorchester, Mass. Phone GE 6-3795. Speakers. Round table discussions. Read here from my free lending library. Come and go as you see fit. Mail, fault-finding, questions, etc., unsigned or signed welcomed with thanks. (2-66)5

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PIONEER SCHOOL on land and sea, Shimer Beris, "The Children's Estate"—a rare education for American students, ages 10 and up. Physical, mental, and moral fitness program. Vegetarian. Write Dr. David C. Burden, Apartado Postal 157, La Paz B. C., Mexico.

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JUNE BURN'S book, *Living High*. Joyous account of homesteading in San Juan Islands and "troubadouring" throughout the U. S. Illustrated edition with postscript, only \$3 paid to "Green Revolutionists." Regularly \$4.50. Wellington Books, 346 Concord Ave., Belmont, Mass. w(4-65)y

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FOREST FARM, HARBORSIDE, MAINE

Young, cont'd

is just another example of a project where the child gets all of the credit while the parents do the work. This is not the case with young Eugene Williams. Except for the sale of honey when he is not at home and for jobs obviously beyond his physical ability, the business is his.

He startled his elders this summer when he appeared at Pennsylvania State College for an adult course in beekeeping. They soon found that they were in for further shock treatments when they became aware of his knowledge about bees.—from the *West Virginia Market Bulletin* (free on request to Charlotte 5, W. Va.).