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## New Harmony

Ferdi Knoess

Rebecca Knoess

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## Fund Drive Begins, cont'd

mitment to libertarian ideals. To implement these ideals a School of Living Center is a vital necessity. Your proper share is whatever you can muster. Your contribution will be evidence that your commitment to a libertarian way of life is more than lip service.

A School of Living Center can help to stem the tide of conformity and centralism which threatens to engulf all of us. Let each and every one of us stand up as individuals and as members of the School of Living to be counted in opposition to that threat. Send pledges and contributions to: Building Fund Drive, School of Living, Brookville, O. Can you do it immediately? Very soon? Before Aug. 27? — Leo F. Koch, Stony Point, N. Y.

### Kern to Help with Center

Ken Kern (trustee, homesteader, surveyor, architect, builder), writes:

"I am excited to learn of the proposed Mill purchase. From what I read, you made a terrific deal: seems that \$15,000 is a low price for all that you are getting. It would cost many times that much out here in California.

"I definitely want to help with the program, and will spend at least a week at the new center in August, helping perhaps with preliminary surveying, topography mapping and general layout planning. I would certainly like to see a dozen or so potential homestead sites available there for 'faculty' members; I should think one-acre sites would be sufficient.

"Some sort of leasehold arrangement could probably be worked out; there definitely should not be outright sale of the land to such holders.

"I'm looking forward to seeing

you again, and many School of Living members and friends." — Ken Kern, Oakhurst, Calif.

### Suggests Financial Arrangement

Eleanor Woods, Blue River, Ore., has given much careful thought to the developing new School of Living Center in Maryland. Frequent letters from her have shared detailed and penetrating suggestions on education, community, and financing. On the latter she wrote, June 7:

"I should think the cost should be paid off as quickly as possible so that we do not have to pay interest. Actually, \$15,000 should not be so hard to collect.

"If 250 people gave \$5 a month for only one year we would have this property free and clear! After that we could take our time about constructing the necessary buildings for school and staff. In fact, building from local materials a la Kern should serve as projects on which we can all learn, and thus be more equipped to teach others. The School will then be able to offer housing free to its future staff. Staff members would be those qualified and willing to work and teach their particular skills.

"Regarding division and use of the property, it seems to me the best, simplest, and most obvious thing to do is to have the entire land, buildings and improvements belong to the School as a whole. I think this would make possible everyone giving what he can afford, rather than having a few people sink their life funds into it as an 'investment,' and being disappointed if things didn't go the way they wanted them to."

[Note: Other members and trustees will be heard from next month.—Editor]



Vardis Fisher  
Self-Portrait at 70

## Letters To The Editor

### New Harmony

To the Editor:

Last summer we searched the Bemidji, Minn., area for a homestead. We rode, slept and ate in a 1951 delivery van bought for \$125. Despite three flats, ignition trouble and other malfunctions our venerable wagon did the job. I had a winter job in Gary, Ind., at \$3 an hour, and waited and worked out the eight dreary months until May Day 1966 when we pushed off for our homestead (named New Harmony).

We have quite a lot of land, and the surroundings offer much more. We intended to get a much smaller holding but ended with buying 157 acres of woods, cleared land and lake. It's an ex-farm with a barn and shed, which we fixed up for a cabin, and we got it for only \$15 an acre. With unexpected financial help we were able to buy and start on our goal this spring. We've cleared, planted and mulched. A neighborly farmer gave us 100 bales of spoiled hay, lots of milk and advice!

People are important to us, and we have land, space and goals to share. We are young and hope eventually to have a community of people interested in essential, simple living join us. We invite interested people to write, visit and plan with us.—Ferdinand & Rebecca Knoess, Pennington, Minn.

[Ed. note: We plan to carry a full story, with illustrations, of the beginning of New Harmony. Here is a couple with ideas, determination and energy; we want to see them succeed.—MJL]

### Return to Idaho

To the Editor:

In 1962 we began our homestead here in Idaho, and after a year of effort our isolation and loneliness prompted us to seek a better place, better people, closer relationships. For three years we have searched—living much of the time in association at the Kern homestead in California. We have learned much, increased our skills. (Besides homesteading skills, Don learned surveying and Annerose learned nursing.) We've met many wonderful, sociable, well-read, community-loving people and are still alone. We have realized more about ourselves and our incurable willingness and drive to live on our own beautiful 80 acres. We have come back to the only place which seems to give us any hope for realization of at least some of our life's dreams. Our knowledge of nutrition, gained by reading, visiting, trading recipes and trial and error gives us more appreciation for the fine soil and virgin environment of this place.

We are living in an old log cabin built in the thirties. It's inconvenient to carry water, wash by hand, battle with rodents and ants, but we take it all gladly for it is our own place. We've come to hate renting, leasing and all the restrictions on creativity and expression that go with it. We are collecting material for our new house and out-buildings. We would like to exchange ideas on all phases of homesteading, especially with readers in a climate like ours—

## Giants of the Earth, the Fishers Homestead an Idaho Paradise

By Mildred Loomis

Vardis Fisher, the famous novelist, and his wife, Opal Laurel Holmes, are giants of the earth who homesteaded 23 acres near Hagerman, Idaho. To people who wonder why, "of all places," they live in Idaho, they send a brochure. The fantastically lovely scenes shown from their area and the description lead us to call it "Paradise."

"In April 1940 the Fishers bought the 23<sup>1/2</sup> acres of mountainside, springs and falls, and wasteland. Their buildings, of lodgepole, erected by them, are a modest 2-bath cottage, a small guest house, 2 single garages, small shop, and a small barn. They have put 26 years of hard labor in the place—a water system, walks, walls, roadbed, plantings. Nearly all the visitors from the East have thought it very beautiful. If the Fishers had had the money they could have made it much more impressive—for instance, there could be as many fountains as the owners wish to have, and more waterfalls could be brought out of the mountainside.

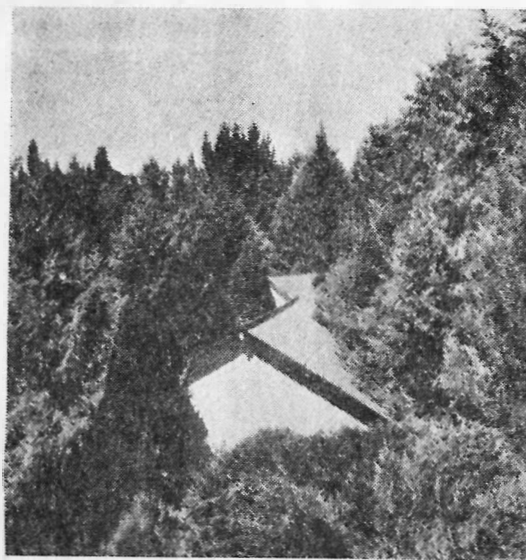
"Nothing is more unusual than the climate, perhaps the mildest in its latitude in the northern hemisphere—milder than Boise's famous climate, 100 miles west; much milder than Salt Lake

City's over 200 miles south. More than half the winters in 26 years the Fishers have been there have had practically no snow; in severer winters it did not reach a depth of more than 4 or 5 inches. It's a dry climate, with some autumn rain and a prevailing western breeze. Even in July and August sleepers want a blanket over them. The months of December and January are cold, with temperatures now and then falling to zero, rarely below. The autumns are long Indian summers to Dec. 1. Springs come early; farmers are often in their fields in February. The elevation is a little more than 3,000 ft.

Vardis Fisher has written more than 30 novels of tremendous emotional power and extraordinary learning. While novels of any author do not appear frequently on my reading list. I greatly regret that it wasn't until a few years ago that I came to know of Fisher's novels. His *Man of the Mountains* and *Orphans of Gethsemane* have shown me that he is a man attuned to nature and to liberty; in fact, a *Man*, whom it has been our loss not to know much longer. Mr. Fisher has contributed important ideas to recent issues of our *A Way Out*, and we're proud to have him as a friend of the School of Living.



A lovely small waterfall, fed by a group of springs.



The Fishers planted thousands of pine and spruce on a wasteland. Their homeplace is now being engulfed.

3,000 ft. elevation, 30 below zero at times.

We still feel isolated from like-minded people and we welcome visitors, single or married, young or old, and particularly folksingers. We are open to and searching for new ideas, discussions, projects. We'd appreciate sharing books with others.—Don & Annerose Rollins, Rt. 2, Box 149A, Rathdrum, Idaho 83858

### Dandelions to You

To the Editor:

We like *Green Revolution* and if other readers are like us everyone must read it very eagerly. But we especially appreciated the February issue with its statement on Moral and Withholding Action. I gave that copy to a friend hoping to win another supporter of the green revolution. Here's our renewal and a contribution.

You are doing a very great work. Over many generations it

### The Green Revolution

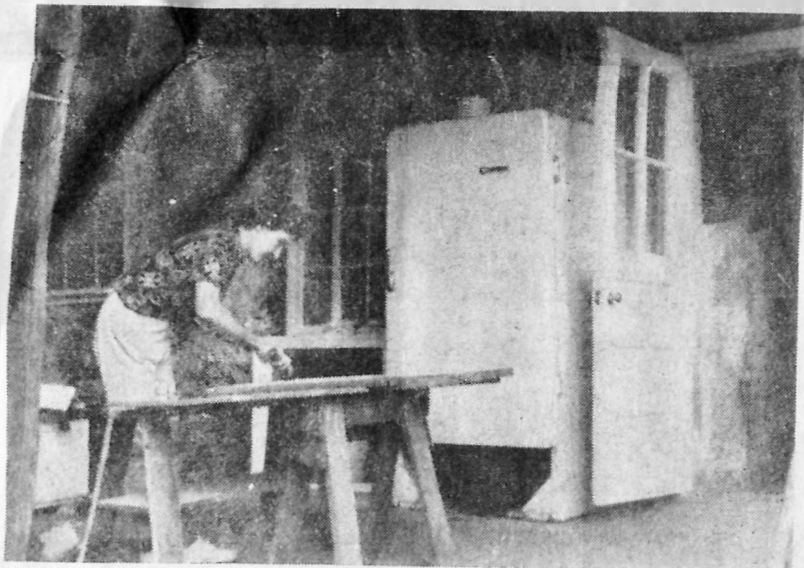
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Sophie Rainer putting old window frames. New door and window bring more light into general living room.

## How Can We Prepare For Community Living?

By Gordon Yaswen

339 E. 94th St., New York City

There seem many people desirous of withdrawing from the urban-mass society onto exurban land in intentional, self-sustaining communities; and I for one am fairly certain that we will, within 15 years, see the number of such communities easily double. We in the School of Living should take little credit for this when it comes; Johnson and those who think like him are seeing to it for us. Therefore the problem is not so much "will we"; but where, when, and how we will. It is my impression that few are ready now for such a move, but I believe preparation must now be going on nonetheless, even before tangible communities are in the offing.

I am aware that some people would consider such advance preparation needless. I, however, feel that the problems which face a group of people seeking self-sufficing community are frankly tremendous, as is borne out by the high mortality

rate of such ventures. Therefore I would wish to solve as many of those problems IN ADVANCE as possible, so that when the community actually forms, its members can turn their full energies to those multitudinous problems as will inevitably remain. I am not much intrigued in Man's present reaching out for Outer Space; but I am profoundly impressed by the thoroughness and methodicalness (as well as with the ingenuity) with which He approaches the awesome dilemmas that that reaching presents. Before any system, no matter how insignificant, is installed in the finished space vehicle it is thoroughly tested in as close to ACTUAL CONDITIONS (with all their foreseeable events both planned and unplanned) as is possible on Earth, and it is so tested not merely once, but possibly over hundreds of hours. I admire this kind of not only pre-thinking but pre-doing, and I think it should be applied to the preparation of intentional communities as well, which are far  
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