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Volume IV - Design and Structure - The Owner-Built Home - Chapter 5 - Individual Living Space

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Volume IV — Design and Structure
The Owner-Built Home — Chapter 5
Individual Living Space

By Ken Kern

Under the heading of *individual living space* is included all private and personal recreational, sleeping, bathing, and dressing activities. Again, in matters personal, as with family arrangements, our concern here is not so much with "room planning as with the various activities that are pursued. The manner in which the planning procedure should operate is as follows: First, list the various activities in their relative importance to social, family and personal life. Then assess the conditions necessary for their pursuit in terms of space, "atmosphere," efficiency, comfort, furniture, and equipment. Next group those activities that can be carried on together, and those that cannot—in terms of place, frequency, time, and sequence. In short, the determination of living requirements is based on the threefold relationship of Space (place), Equipment (facilities and furniture), and Atmosphere (physiological aspects, control of heat, noise, etc.). The successful determination of these three conditions will naturally lead to a *Healthy Environment*.

Health is man's ultimate need, and as such should become the criterion of housing design. A dearth of research exists on this all-important subject. The most notable instance of work in this field has been done, of course, in the Pioneer Health Centre at Peckham (London)—from 1926 to 1951. Doctors at Peckham practiced *preventive* medicine and treated the *whole* person: disease in relation to living environment. Health is possible, they discovered, only when movement and flexibility are not impeded. In their building design they considered free circulation, visibility, and the flow of space into space all vitally important components of the healthy environment. Hallways were eliminated—as the whole building should function as circulation space.

The central purpose of the Peckham Experiment was to study *function* in *healthy* man. To realize his *full* function man must live in a fully free environment. The open-plan and New House design concepts go far to achieve these ends.

A more detailed building design analysis of the functions of family living was conducted in 1941 by the Pierce Foundation. Interesting space and motion studies were made as well as actual field studies of families in their homes. Family habits, attitudes, and possessions were evaluated and physiological and psychological housing requirements determined.

All of which leads this writer to feel that the environment where we spend more than one-third of our time is the most neglected by designers and manufacturers. A person's living space should offer something more than what furniture can be crammed into a 10x12 sleeping-room-box.

(continued next month)

Needed: A Manifesto For The Green Revolution

By Miles T. Roberts

In the February *Green Revolution* the editor asked, "What should we be doing to express the Green Revolution?" Change the *status quo* is suggested as one of the chief goals. The idea is, I believe, that each individual or family group deliberately changes the mode of living in such a way as to free them to some extent at least from the spider's web of over-complex, extremely artificial living patterns of the present time.

Most people simply adapt the best they can to whatever is, call it a "rat race," a "spider's web," or what. However, there are quite a few others (and some of them who have sampled about everything the "modern" way has to offer) who stamp the whole thing as somehow N.G. Discussions concerning methods of achieving some kind of radical change in their ways of living (i.e., their *status quo*) are at least intelligible to these. There are few enough of them. Possibly one in a hundred now, but becoming fewer all the time as a larger and larger proportion of the younger ones adapt near irretrievably to the push-button culture. Few of them have had opportunity at any time to know or even imagine that human existence could be made less complicated, less hectic than it now generally is found to be.

Manifesto Outlined

In answer to your question as to how the "green" revolution could be best expressed or gotten on with I would say the first thing would be to build a very explicit ideological foundation under it. This has so far not been done and we still are all the time having to explain to people what "Homesteading" means. What has been lacking all the way through is a very expressly worded writing in the form of a Manifesto which, first: Describes the so-called "status quo" as it generally actually is in the United States today.

As a "Bill of Particulars" preceding the Manifesto proper, a

first part of the document would provide some unusually frank observations in regard to different developments of a cultural, social or economic nature as they now stand. Very obviously they are anything but flattering to the national community.

Second, and as the main part of the Manifesto, an accompanying series of recommended specific courses of action (i.e., resolutions) to be followed henceforth in opposition to ever so many of the things in our modern American way of life in general that don't make good sense in any language.

In short, simply tear a page out of earlier American history and this time come up with not another political declaration of independence, but a cultural Declaration of Individual Secessionism or of personal non-participation: of individual non-contribution to any number of common procedures the main body of citizens supinely accede to and go down the line with evidently without a question and without a qualm toward unfortunate endings.

Through the Manifesto the word to ever so much of the current Americana would simply be "Nuts!" And in properly saying it there would come into being the aforementioned very necessary ideological foundation for the Green Revolution. I don't think the "green" revolution can ever probably come to much of anything at all until this essential placing of first things first has finally been gotten around to.

The Manifesto would all have to be very carefully and comprehensively done so as to have singled out and included most of the more obvious and glaring fraudulences and moronic deceits and hypocrisies in the modern setup, and this followed with the series of counteractive proposals or resolutions. Just now nothing is more needed to express the Green Revolution than a really comprehensive Manifesto stating what some of the defects in the modern way are and how a person who is unhappy

about it all means to go about it in refusing any more participation than is absolutely unavoidable in things that are seen as utterly silly and wrong.

Submit Manifesto for Signatures

The historic "Declaration of Independence" was set forth subject to signing by different ones who agreed with the sentiment expressed in it. The same procedure should be followed in the case of a Secessionist or "Non-participationist" Manifesto. A large number of them printed and distributed about for the signatures of those who generally agreed with the sentiments expressed in the Manifesto (and return of same) would soon conclusively settle the question if there can ever be such a thing as a "green" revolution or if the idea of such a movement is only an exercise in imaginative idealism on the part of a few at this time and for years past.

In a way it would be putting the whole thing up to a vote. Signing and returning would be a yes vote. Declining to sign and return a no vote.

"The 'electorate' in this case would not necessarily be confined to the School of Living group nor to the subscribers of the two publications. Could be submitted to anyone anywhere in the United States [world?—Editor] for approval or rejection. Likely it would be as good a method as could be found for attracting more people into the School of Living.

Letters, cont'd

agement, but warn against over-evaluation of our work. We remain a very small group; some readers may assume that because a newspaper comes each month, more is being accomplished than actually is. Sometimes I wonder if it might be better not to publish at all. Our purpose is to stimulate and help readers to action, but sometimes, seeing one's ideas expressed may satisfy vicariously and so lead to no-action. A first step—a local discussion group or School of Living—is one that a reader, homesteader or not, can do to advance this work.—Editor)

Praise for Cold Potatoes

To the Editor:

Most people know that a cold potato is a soggy, sorry thing. But if you peel it while it is hot, and slice it immediately, it stays mealy and fine textured. When you want to reheat it, put a bit of vegetable oil in a skillet, cut in some onion and garlic, and lay your mealy potato slices on them. Heat thoroughly and you have a delicious dish.—Mrs. George Stomberger, 3592 Old Salem Rd., Dayton, Ohio.

Homestead vs. Stocks

To the Editor:

I've enjoyed June Burn and the Nearing's and their books, and now your *Go Ahead and Live!* All are vanguards in a wonderful philosophy. I had a homestead and lost it, but I learned a lot. I want another in a less harsh climate. I feel that the market value of stocks is slowly and definitely dropping due to government spendings, inflation, heavy taxation and now the Vietnam War effort. There is just not enough money around to buy up the flood of things produced under the late easy-credit era. I like your motto: Creation dignifies labor, justifies suffering and gives significance to life. One of mine is: Wisdom—live in the present, face the duty at hand without regret for the past or worry for the future.—Florence C. Mouton, 64 Linnhaven Park, Brunswick, Me. 04011

The Times Are Out of Joint

To the Editor:

Looking in my Green Revolution files I came across this in *Time* magazine, 1962, about the "Gandhi of Europe, Joseph Lanza del Vasto, head of the Companions of the Ark Community in France:

"Lanza knows that the Companions are turning their backs on the times, but he believes it

is the times, and not the companions that are out of joint. 'The crowding together of masses of people in uninhabitable big cities will, sooner or later, provoke a return to the country,' he says. 'The survivors of cataclysms soon to come, caused by the hand of man, will oblige humanity to regroup itself for a natural, peaceful and wise life. So we shall have had a head start on humanity.'—Ivan Innerst, Rt. 4, York, Pa.

Kern Homestead Reports

To the Editor:

Recently our extra time has gone into developing the barn-workshop section of our homestead. It has involved the expense of necessary tools and equipment, but now I am set up to do complete overhauling on our car, truck and tractor, my type of welding or wood working, and general homestead maintenance.

We put out more orchard and grapes. We raised the level of our lake 3 feet, with our own tractor-earthmoving equipment. A lot of fencing was done. Elliott, who lives here and is a very good machinist, built us new metal gates. So gradually we get the homestead in better physical shape.—Ken Kern, Sierra Route, Oakhurst, Calif.

Self-Support in Arkansas

To the Editor:

I am a naturalist (amateur botanist) and believer in simplified living, a longtime reader of Henry Thoreau. I recently bought 40 very rural acres and intend to support myself despite the Great Society's plans for us. I would like nothing better than to join your ranks and become a part of this most moral revolution.—Sam Norris, Rt. 3, Box 667, Mena, Ark.

Book for Homesteaders

To the Editor:

I would like to bring to the attention of *Green Revolution* readers, *A Book of Country Things*, by Walter Needham, published by the Stephen Greene Press in Brattleboro, Vt. It is full of valuable ideas and information for a homesteader. A long useful life to School of Living. I think *Green Revolution* is one of the few worthwhile publications on the market.—Joseph Jura, 61 W. Ontario, Chicago, Ill. 60610

Poverty or Adequacy

To the Editor:

It was Gandhi, primarily, whose writings convinced me that living justly required being voluntarily poor—a principle easily grasped by the intellect, but oh so difficult to put into practice. But then, I guess the difficulty of living as one recognizes one should is life's essential struggle.—George A. Lear, Jr., Movement for Peace and Justice, Lexington, Va.

(Note: To the problem of the proper standard of living, we see an answer on three levels: poverty, adequacy, affluence. A homestead is more in the second class—providing land and equipment so that a family is adequate to living humanely—neither in destitution nor affluence. Editor)

More on Semesto Board

To the Editor:

May we commend you on such an informative paper? We're new subscribers and have gained much. We'd like more information on the low-cost Semesto Board mentioned in the Wend article on Human Engineering Research. We're unable to find anything on it in this area.—Mrs. F. D. Fields, Rt. 5, Box 171, Dalton, Ga.

(Note: Semesto is a trade name for a two-inch wall, in 4'x8' sections. The outer covering is cement-asbestos and the inner a composition wallboard. This is the only wall used on a low-cost home built by the Wends in cold and snowy New England, with satisfactory results according to reports.—Editor.)

Wood Ashes

To the Editor:

We had very good results, summer 1965, using liberal amounts

THE GREEN REVOLUTION — 3 July, 1966

ADVERTISING RATES

Classified: 35¢ per line. Minimum 3 lines or \$1.05. Average line has 40 spaces.

Display: \$5 per column inch. No discounts on any ads. Payment must accompany order.

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7-66

MANUAL FOR A SIMPLE BURIAL. A very useful little booklet, written by Ernest Morgan (3rd edition). Shows how to obtain simplicity, dignity and economy in funeral arrangements through advance planning. Has lists of funeral and memorial societies and eye-banks; tells how to bequeath your body, etc. \$1 from School of Living.

THE OWNER-BUILT HOME is nearing completion. Vol. 4 will be finished in October issue of *Green Revolution*. It will be reprinted in looseleaf form, 3-hole punched insertion in ring binder, as were Vols. 1, II, and III. Each volume is \$2, from School of Living or direct from Ken Kern, Sierra Route, Oakhurst, Calif.

BOOKS FOR SALE

Go Ahead and Live!, Loomis \$4.00
Normal Neurosis, Putney 4.00
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FOREST FARM, HARBORSIDE, MAINE

of wood ashes as a fertilizer on our garden, particularly for root crops and onions. The ashes must be mixed thoroughly into the soil, as direct contact with them will burn seeds and plants.—Margaret Cole, Bear Lake, Mich.

To the Editor:

Here's an item from my scrap book: "Wood ashes are valuable, to make soap, to spread on icy sidewalks (but cinders are better), and for the garden. Spaded around individual plants or broadcast, they supply potash (potassium) which helps make crops vigorous and floriferous. A tablespoon of wood ashes for every lily clump is just about right. Don't let rain and snow leach the goodness away; store in tight cans until soil-tilling and planting time; then use freely."

I like the School of Living because it makes me think as well as gives me information. Here's an interesting quote: "The second industrial revolution through which we are passing has devalued the average unskilled human brain just as the first industrial revolution devalued the unskilled human hand... the average human being has nothing 'to sell' worth anyone's money to buy."

How can people in slums, who have no money to get out, be helped to live in a more natural way? How teach them to choose more wisely what the city has to offer, and live on a small income?

I'm still wanting to learn how to twist yarn, and where to find a yarn twister.—Mrs. Charles Wickware, Richland, Kans.

Clearing House

To the Editor:

I am a strong believer in organic gardening and try to follow drugless therapy. The *Green Revolution* supplies a need—a clearing house on information that is music to my ears. We are middle-aged teachers and hope to buy a piece of land, cultivate woody ornamentals and raise small animals.—Paul Miller, Spring St., Willard, O.