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To Florida and Back, Part V - Our Second Home Led to a Battle With City Hall Officials

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Two Summer Meetings Spark Further Activities in California

A bevy of appreciated reports volunteered from California indicate that alert, responsible people attended the two summer meetings there, and that plans were made for continuing association. Forty people met on July 16-17 in San Francisco and half that number in Los Angeles on Aug. 6 and 7.

Meeting in the Friends Center, the Bay Area people began by "revealing themselves and their interests very deeply right off," reports Pat Herron, who assisted with preparations. Included were intentional community, an education better than public schools, sharing closely with others, and achieving a more meaningful way of life. Good talk continued at lunch nearby.

Later, with Paul Marks (Los Banos) as chairman, they heard Don Hoffman (Burlingame), author of *The Coming Culture*, predict a more rural culture (see main article on this page). Gerry and Carol Elsbach (San Carlos) on Bridge Mountain and Eden West communities, Bill Peavy (Merced) on organic gardening, and Pres. Leo Koch (Stony Point, N. Y.) on the needs of the School

of Living and Collaberg School. Sunday noon they picnicked in Golden Gate Park and continued in session there for benefit of children's play, and heard Ephraim Gugel of Living Research Assn. (San Jose) present the ideas of B. F. Skinner and Walden II. Discussion of the proposed School of Living Center in Maryland was followed by a freewill collection.

One member reports: "We felt warmed and inspired by contacts with searching people, in sharing their ideas and expressing our own." Mr. Marks proposed a meeting in Fresno in a few months; a Round Robin is circulating among some of the attendants, and some have weekended since on a ranch of one of the members north of San Francisco.

Pat Herron and Frances Crary (600 Stanyan St., San Francisco) were chosen co-chairmen of the Northern California School of Living. They write, "It was exciting to find such a strong interest in intentional community. How can we think out the details of community? Are there books and articles? Our thinking (continued on page 4)

From A School of Living Speaker— Our Modern Cities Are Dying; Future Decentralization Will Be Necessary

By D. P. Hoffman

[Daniel Hoffman, 48 Park, Burlington, Calif., is the author of *The Coming Culture* and other books about the Gandhian movement. This article is a summary of a talk given by him at a School of Living area meeting in San Francisco on July 16.]

America has the most centralized culture in the world. The city in western history generally has exploited the surrounding country. The rural young people generally seek their fortune in the city, thus causing a steady migration from the farm to the city. Today, in America, this migration has disappeared, and foreign immigration has practically ceased. The city has lost its regenerative force. Children are seldom wanted in the city, and because of the evolution of our urban culture, it appears that America will undoubtedly be losing population in a few years despite propaganda to the contrary. With the disappearance of rural life and farm factories, our agriculture is based on destructive materialistic methods, which affects the fertility of

the soil and the health of the people.

Our great cities are dying in the center, and are filled with an ever increasing number of the mentally and physically ill. Urban living is conducive to an increase of crime and smog plus a host of other factors which actually change the ecology under which we live. The tax situation is also frightening. It appears that our materialistic culture has unleashed the evils of Pandora's box. This sounds like a pessimistic picture but so did the successful campaign speeches of Congressman Lindsay when he ran for mayorship of the City of New York.

The betrayal of the materialistic culture is becoming apparent to the rest of the world, and we are fast losing our moral leadership. This startling fact is the conclusion of the most famous social and philosophic thinkers of Western civilization, including Spengler, Sorokin, Toynbee, Schubart and Schweitzer. These philosophers believe that our materialistic culture which has infected the church morally can not lead to the necessary peaceful society of tomorrow. This moral leadership is expected to come from the East.

fact that life most likely is a matter of soul travail, and an endeavor to learn by trial and error to use our free will for God or good, is not appreciated by the spiritual leaders of the West. It is present in great literature, such as *Pilgrim's Progress*, *Divine Comedy*, *The Iliad*, *Paradise Lost*, etc., but this factor is seldom stressed in modern education or life.

Concepts which resulted in a truly responsible approach to life will never be accepted in the West without great suffering. Suffering opens the hearts of people. A desire for a more enduring brotherly economy can only come when the hearts of people are opened. Considering America's karma, suffering well could play a big part in our future. We have degraded nations to acquire their resources; been parties to violence and force while pretending to export freedom and democracy. Freedom based on violence is based on fraud. Vietnam is the last of a long line of our violent actions. Nations like individuals pay for their wrongful acts. A God of love does not smite nations, the people learn by suffering for their wrongful acts or collective errors, so that truth is ultimately appreciated.

Heathcote Notes

Aug. 14, 1966

As nature has finally smiled on us and brought some welcome showers in the past 10 days, all the effort in keeping the hillside garden alive during the June-July drought now seems to have been worthwhile. A bucket brigade started during the June community conference had to be continued by ones, twos or threes until Ken returned from his pipe organ rounds in July. He then set up a pump to bring water up from the stream. The soaking of the parched earth gradually showed the benefits of cultivating and mulching. We hope to share luscious tomatoes, peppers, cucumbers, squash, beets, etc., with those who attend the workshop—about 10 days away as I write this.

An electric wire around the garden (50 x 200 ft., incidentally) finally proved to be essential (and effective!) in repelling small wildlife. This and the watering system made it possible for the Spragues-Hamiltons to take a breather — a trip to Florida to meet our recently acquired grandparents (who had been awaiting us since April). A happy occasion for all of us marred only by the death of our little dog, Pixie, whom some of you will remember.

Since we returned to the hollow our time has been spent trying to get ahead of that two-week growth of weeds in the garden. Also the smell of paint, varnish, wet plaster and the whrrr of the saw here at the Old Mill indicates we're in harness again.

An able and amiable assist, as of a few days ago, is being given by 18-year-old Dan Scott of Rochester, N. Y. He tore down the old wheelhouse almost singlehandedly but for the heaviest timbers. The cleanup looks like one good workshop project. Our sights are now trained on that event as an opportunity to work together and for free and open discussion of all aspects of the Old Mill and School of Living.

—Ken & Dee Sprague

Early American Communities

Historically, America had many social communities such as those advocated by The School of Living. These communities usually were cemented together by a religious belief. They were successful despite the subtle propaganda to make us think otherwise. The only reason many of these early communities ended (Oneida, Shakers, New Harmonists, etc.) was because their youth would not necessarily follow the religious oddities of their parents in an expanding and exciting frontier economy. The temptation was too great to enter the materialistic American culture of the post Civil War era.

The farmer who is truly independent so far as food, clothing and shelter are concerned has traits of character which many admire. Seldom is there exploitation in such an agricultural community. A spiritual approach to life is generally accepted. If the community is small enough there is true democracy and the individual has a true identity, which is not built on public relations propaganda such as in a mass urban culture. The average man in America is beginning to look upon the politician as an anti-social individual, who does not truly represent him. The politician also has to be an aggressive unsocial person, which ultimately affects him.

Strong Motivation Needed

It appears to me that the greatest problem in establishing a rural planned community would be a central or moral motivation. Few people in the Western world think in terms of a purpose in life. People are skeptical of religion because it has been exposed by modern methods of communication. Reincarnation certainly results in a responsible approach to life. Although this idea is accepted in the East, the West ignores or does not accept this doctrine, nor does the West advocate any responsible substitute. The

Catastrophe Foretold

If our centralized culture is disrupted, a great catastrophe will probably be the cause. If the City of Topeka, which was recently hit by a tornado, does not immediately rebuild, many a skilled technician will be forced to leave the community, and the economy will suffer. This could happen on a large scale. Decentralization could be caused by man or nature. Whatever way it comes it will be catastrophic and will not be thought of as a blessing. A catastrophe will have to take place to revolutionize the heart of the average American. Gandhi, Bhava and Narayan of India appear to be the moral leaders of Decentralization. Ralph Borsodi, who has given his life to this movement, has not affected the average American. The majority of Americans are living in a temporary materialistic paradise. It does not appear to be too long before suffering will result in an inward revolution in America which will also change social concepts and cause Decentralization.

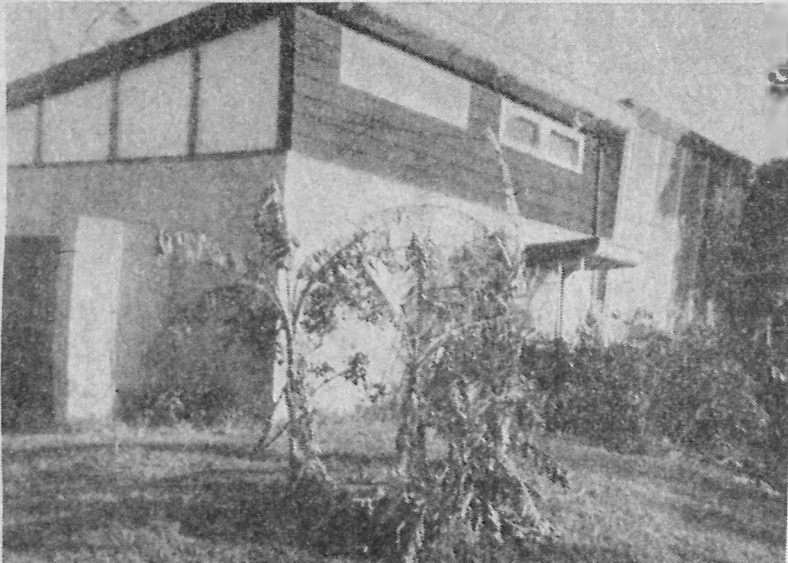
I suggest that people plan to live the life advocated by the School of Living, not only because of the unknown future, but because of improving one's way of life. The decentralized culture is absolutely essential.

Writer Corrected On Miseducation

The Ohio Homestead Festival and education for living were featured in the *Dayton Daily News* of Sunday, July 10, with some pictures of guests and activities at Lane's End Homestead. A rather extensive, well-written item was titled "Green Revolutionaries Battle for Back to Nature Society." It carried the by-line of Doug Walker, a staff writer.

Several School of Living members have appreciated a copy of (continued on page 2)

To Florida and Back, Part V— Our Second Home Led To A Battle With City Hall Officials



Present Owner-Built Eisman Home, Miami, Fla.

[Editor's Note. We continue here from last month Mr. Eisman's account of his homestead building in Florida. Above is a view of his second home. The opposite side of this house consists of two large window areas, on either side of a charming stone fireplace. The large window sections slide on barn-door tracks, to open on the garden-lawn area, including pool, that extends to Mrs. Eisman's mother's cottage, 100 feet away. This outdoor area is all screened, top and sides, on sturdy framing.

From the back door one enters a beautifully equipped kitchen, passes along the eating bar, into the living room, to find oneself in a lovely planted area, under and around a winding, wrought iron stairway to a balcony and bedrooms. One may step down to the left and the bath; or proceeds up three steps to a beautiful lavender-green room, light and airy. From the balcony railing hang the family artist's striking paintings. It is esthetically satisfying.—MJL]

By Sam Eisman

Most people are satisfied to build one house during their

life-time, but when I married 14 years ago the housing problem again arose. Once more I rebelled at the idea of contracting a 20-30 year debt. I still can't understand how people can so lightly undertake such long term debts, but for most I suppose there is no alternative.

With the experience of one house under my belt, I designed what I thought was a more sophisticated house. At least from an esthetic viewpoint it is more pleasing than the first. Still, it is no better suited for the modern homesteader. At the time I did not yet understand or appreciate the health benefits to be derived from home produced food, and did not plan adequately for this.

This house, unlike the first, was built a room at a time. The kitchen was first, and when it was "wind- and winter-tight" as they say in the building trades, we moved in. The rent we saved was used to continue construction.

Build the Whole Shell

To all prospective home builders, let me plead: finances permitting, build the complete shell (continued on page 3)

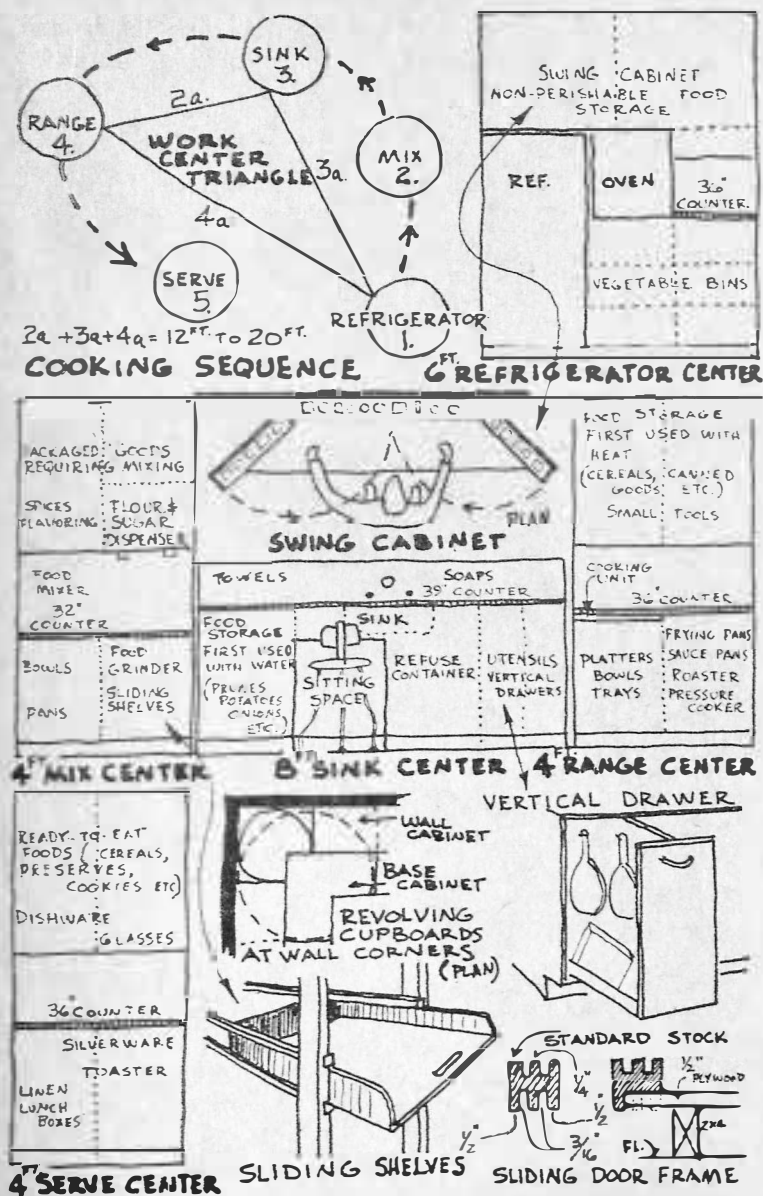
By Ken Kern

In the *Group Living Space*, design and structure, chapter, open planning and flexibility concepts were discussed—concepts to enhance and embellish space for esthetic appreciation. Following this, *Individual Living Space* design and structure considerations stressed the need for a physically and psychologically healthful space arrangement.

This present section on the design and structure of cooking and dining functions likewise includes esthetic and healthful considerations, but also some concepts that have to do with *human engineering*, which is simply engineering for human use. In our use of cooking appliances, for instance, we design for optimum efficiency (measured by the comfort, safety, accuracy and speed of the function to be performed). The house that holds the appliances should be designed the same way. Many "physiological work studies" have been developed in England and in Scandinavian countries to better determine housing needs. Designers in these countries have gone far to engineer equipment to meet human requirements. Their considerations take into account: (1) the psychological aspects conditioned by tradition and social pattern; (2) the physical aspects of solar orientation, view, indoor climate, air circulation and sound insulation; and (3) the human engineering considerations that have to do with a person's convenience arc, involving his or her height, reach, motion pattern, and space needs.

Contrast this human engineering approach with our present condition: a recent University of Illinois Small Homes Council survey of over a hundred housing developments found that 90% had inadequate base cabinet storage, 77% had too few wall cabinets, and 67% had constricted counter space. From the standpoint of human engineering there are five requirements for an optimum cooking-work center: (1) adequate activity space; (2) adequate counter space; (3) adequate equipment space; (4) adequate storage space; (5) an arrangement of all these areas for maximum efficiency. Obviously, few home builders follow the necessary steps to develop a truly efficient work center.

"Motions take time." So, in designing a cooking layout the first question is, "Where is the best location for what?" In answering this we first must analyze the work to be done. For a righthanded person the cooking sequence is from right to left: store, mix, sink, range, serve. For each of these areas we next determine the equipment and supplies needed. Pieces of equipment and supplies should be arranged in order of sequence of activities required to do the job, and at heights related to your body and its ability to use them in that position. Cooking research at Cornell University established a 12-foot to 20-foot relationship between refrigerator, sink, and range. A continuous counter would be convenient in some respects; but from a human engineering standpoint the sink (for the modal American adult) should be three inches higher than the standard (36-inch) counter height, and the mixing center should be 4-inches lower (32-inches). A physical strain occurs when a modal worker reaches into a storage cabinet lower than 20-inches from the floor or higher than 60-inches from the floor. Strain also occurs when a negative (backward) angle of bend is made by the body, while straightening up to avoid being hit by an opening upper cabinet door. Sliding doors are to be preferred. Sufficient floor space for working in front of and passing between each element of the work-center should be provided. Finally, planning should consider such necessary features as light, acoustics, heat, and ventilation.



(continued next month)

To Florida, cont'd

at one time rather than a room at a time. The former method is more economical, simpler and will produce a better house. Finances not permitting, build a separate garage or utility building, move in, then build the house all at one time.

In my case, the room-at-a-time system caused so many difficulties with the municipal authorities that in disgust I altered the plans to reduce the eventual size of the house. By building in two stages and having to apply for a permit to expand through the second stage, I made myself vulnerable to what amounted to virtual blackmail. The city council used an ordinance that had been passed during the time I was building the first stage to try to force me to make a free concession of land to widen the road passing the house. This, in spite of the fact that the city attorney opined that I had the right to proceed without interference.

In attempting to make some compromise, I ran into a wall of indifference. I had been stopped because I had refused to be intimidated, and that was all that was important. Lawyers were of no help. They were interested in the size of the fee, hardly in fighting for a principle.

I had heard that "The Poor Man Can't Fight City Hall." Those with money to spare do it all the time by taking their cases to the State Supreme Court if necessary, but most of us despair after a few feeble attempts.

I believe in the worthy fight even if defeat is the probable outcome. Some money placed in the right hands would have allowed me to proceed unhampered but I had enough principle and energy to butt instead of backing off.

Let "Them" Take Action

I reasoned that if I could not afford to take the city to court, I would let them initiate the action on the assumption that they were not really interested in the principle involved. I defied them by building a small frame room off by itself, asking no one for permission. It wasn't long before one of the building inspectors came around while I was away at work and left me a note to cease construction. I ignored the first notice and several succeeding ones until finally a "condemned sign" was put on the frame room. There was a certain satisfaction in having a city official come looking for me after months of vainly going to them.

It Worked!

I paid no attention to any of their actions and continued with construction of the frame room. By being ignored, the city officials were confronted with the choice of taking legal action or doing nothing, because most were men of little integrity and there was no financial gain for them in taking legal action. In later years, I saw time and again that seldom would any civic project be undertaken unless there was some cream to skim off the top.

On several occasions, my brother and I offered the city council an easement to the land they wanted when they tried to halt construction on my house. They professed to show interest, then proceeded to forget about the whole idea of widening the street. I've told all this to show that you can fight City Hall, but it's usually expensive. Far better to locate where there are few or no building restrictions. In such case, it is wise to insulate oneself from neighbors by obtaining enough land.

My house today consists of two bedrooms, two and a half baths, living room and kitchen. It's hardly a homesteader's house, but to us it is esthetically satisfying; and to me, its most important feature is lack of a mortgage.

Because of our mild climate and our insect problem, we make free use of much screening. I'll have to admit that in this field, modern technology has developed a superior product. Both aluminum and fiberglass are fairly free of corrosion and quite durable, in addition to being reasonable in price.

Notes From Fiddler's Choice

By Helen Ryan, Franklin, N. H.

We have been homesteading at Fiddler's Choice for nearly two years. We have built Joe's Workshop, in which we are still living. The snapshot below shows Joe putting siding on the west end of our rigid-frame-construction shop. (American Plywood Assn. prints very specific plans for buildings of various spans.) The building has no ridgepole or horizontal framing, this function being performed by the plywood skin over the frames. Plywood sections are glued and nailed into shape on the ground, then raised into place by pulling on a rope tied to the top.

We also have built a tool shed, and have plans to build at least the shell of our house this summer, and perhaps our sauna-laundry-sap-and-greenhouse. After our house is finished we plan to use the sleeping lofts in the shop for visiting would-be homesteaders to work alongside us.

We have begun our third gardening season. Slowly but surely the soil is building up so that something will grow in it. Poultry houses around here have contracts to let dairy farmers take their manure. For us, sawdust, cover crops and compost are our sources of enrichment. Owners gave a nearby old sawdust heap to us, so we have something to help build the moisture in our sandy, sieve-like soil. Some sand is so pure we use it for mortar without washing it.

The Engineered House

Those who are interested in house building — specifically, wooden houses made of boards, planks, and posts, ought to know about Rex Roberts' book, *Your Engineered House*. Although it is aimed at the person who will



hire an architect and contractor, there is much of it that is most pertinent for anyone planning to build his own house. It is published by M. Evans and distributed by J. B. Lippincott.

Roberts examines the construction of a wooden house and discards or modifies all techniques that he does not find good reason for. Besides general chapters on sites—very readable and informative—and styles (which he finds useless) and materials, he goes into great detail on his systems of foundations, walls, roofs, windows and doors, and partitioning and arranging the interior. He is quite concerned with getting the most livability for the individual family's particular needs at the least cost, both in original construction costs and in upkeep and tax costs.

He not only shows many ways of cost-cutting; he shows techniques for planning to get the most out of the site, avoiding expensive grading, bulldozing, and re-landscaping to try to restore the havoc of the bulldozer. He has good suggestions for making space serve its intended functions and for having what the owner thinks of as several rooms and the tax assessor regards as only one room. We highly recommend this informative and delightfully readable book as a good complement to Ken Kern's volumes. If your library doesn't have it, the Hatch Loan Library does (St. Johnsbury, Vt.).

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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 for insertion in ring binder, as were Vols. 1, 2, and 3. 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
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Contact Corner

Here we list (and will continue to list) names and addresses of persons who want to be in touch with others about the use of land and development of community. Send your data for listing.

School of Living Center, Heathcote Rd., Freeland, Md. 48 acres.

Ferdi & Rebecca Knoess, Pennington, Minn. 145 acres.

Mrs. Joy Valsko, 657 7th St., Traverse City, Mich. 100 acres (near Suttons Bay).

Paul Marks, Box N, Los Banos, Calif. 4 acres for trailers (near Ripley, Calif.). Planned community in Central America.

Chester Dawson, Box 2468, Belo Horizonte, Brazil. Small acreage in Arkansas.

Ed & Mary Borsodi, Star Route 1A, Smithville, Okla. 74957

Don & Annerose Rollins, Rt. 1, Box 149A, Rathdrum, Idaho.

Chas. McAdams, Box 1165, Chautauqua, N. Y.

Mike & Joan Smith, 12696 Dupont Rd., Sebastopol, Calif. 95472

I wonder if readers would be sure to send a self-addressed and stamped envelope when they write a letter to the School of Living that requires or is likely to get a personal answer. This will save us money, but most of all it will save time.—Editor