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How Can We Prepare for Community Living - Part III

Gordon Yaswen

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Letters To The Editor

Simple Disposition Of Human Manure

To the Editor:

Hal Porter's fourth installment on homesteading was even better than the previous ones, especially his insight into the unfortunate agricultural attitude of our ancestors. But I was glad to read Helen Ryan's follow-up article in which she tries commendably to take the waste out of Mr. Porter's "human wastes."

I'd like to carry this subject one step further toward health and simplicity. My homestead, Tall Oaks, has almost complete privacy, and we don't use concrete tanks periodically with an outhouse that traps vapors and shoots out the purifying action of circulating air and sunlight. I simply have a composting area with no pit or equipment of any kind.

Human manure, or night soil as it is sometimes called, is as wonderful or better than manures from other animals for gardening; it need be composted no more than the manure of domestic animals before applying it to vegetables and trees. It is true that most humans are more diseased now than domestic animals, but there is complete safety, even if there is chronic disease in the household, if the manure is exposed to the sun for a period of at least a week, or in winter composted for a month or more. In a tank, even uncovered, it tends to foster anaerobic bacteria and stay moist, thereby releasing odors that may be objectionable to neighbors. The sun has the power to transmute bacteria that are unfriendly to beneficial bacteria. I simply form small piles daily, then larger compost piles when sufficient is accumulated.

Homesteads without privacy can have a wooden fence around the area 4 or 5 feet high, and perhaps a tall hedge around the entire grounds. Of course, in northern climates one may not be hardy enough for moving one's bowels outdoors in the nude in the cold season. In such cases, a semi-heated privy attached to the house would seem to be the next best way. Or if one cannot extricate himself from conventional plumbing but has his own septic tank, the tank can be opened every few years and the sludge spread in the sun to cure. If this is planned, one should not put any chemical down drains that is not wanted in the garden, such as detergent.

It is generally agreed among naturopaths that sitting while defecating rather than squatting is one of the major causes of the national constipation. And anyone can easily change this habit even though he uses a conventional toilet or privy.

If you want reassurance as to the health and wisdom of using your very own night soil, read *F. H. King's Farmers For Forty Centuries*, London, Eng., Jonathan Cape Publishers. This book can probably be obtained from Health Research, Mokelumne Hill, Calif.

We often quote Chinese proverbs for their wisdom; now let's begin to study their superior agriculture.—Bud Plumb, Box 195, Streator, Ill.

Interest At Center For Study Of Democratic Institutions

To the Editor:

I am an assiduous reader of your *Green Revolution* and have

very great sympathy and admiration for your goals. I've canvassed the possibility of living that way myself, tho it may be late to start now. But with a new baby it becomes very necessary to raise her in an environment in which some of the traditional human values have some scope. The constant round of televisions and delinquency to which the child will shortly be exposed almost anywhere in California is something to be avoided at any cost. Your publication has given me a very clear conception of the problems involved, and I circulate *The Green Revolution* among my colleagues. I think it has been very well received.

I have no recommendations to make to you. It is rather the other way around. . . . I particularly liked your piece on *The Technological Society*. I have seen 25 or 30 reviews of Ellul's work, and yours is one of two that makes any sense at all. I have circulated this review among my colleagues and later may solicit their opinions and transmit them to you. But things here at the Center, thank God, move with a becoming degree of slowness. — John Wilkinson, Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions, Santa Barbara, Calif.

[Editor's Note. Dr. Wilkinson is the translator from the French of Jacques Ellul's *Technological Society*.]

Go Ahead and Live! Helps Natural Birth

To the Editor:

Let us give you the story of our copy of *Go Ahead and Live!* Last Christmas our oldest daughter and Navy husband came home, with another baby on the way. At their base all Navy expectant mothers are given spinal anesthesia. She didn't want it but didn't know how to get out of it and neither did we. A friend gave our second daughter a copy of *Go Ahead and Live!* and I promptly read it, and my wife and I discussed it. We were spellbound with your presentation of the natural birth. This was it!

We wrote about it to our Florida daughter; she was receptive, so we ordered the book and sent it to her. She and her husband read and discussed it and decided in favor of natural birth. Her Navy doctor agreed to it when he saw she meant business and wrote on her record that she was to get no drugs or shots without her permission. So they were all set for natural birth.

The baby went full term, and it was about time for its debut. And one morning at 2:05 a.m., and right at home, they were awakened by our grandson's entry into the world. Forty minutes later she walked into the hospital carrying her newly born baby, just delivered by his own father. She felt wonderful and in full strength, and still does. It was wonderfully simple, easy and painless.

It is difficult to say how they might have confronted this situation had they not been previously prepared. We were all very satisfied and your book brought the understanding which made it possible. — Carl Ogren, Rt. 3, Paw Paw, Mich. 49079

Getting A Hearing

To the Editor:

Glad to see that School of Living is making an appearance in some of the other media:

King Features had an approving comment on May-July 1965 *A Way Out*; so did *The Book-lovers Answer*; and *Guidelines* listed *A Way Out* and *Green Revolution* as among America's most controversial publications; and Kerry Thornley of *Innovator* said in his Agcomm Directory that *A Way Out* carried an unusually wide spectrum of libertarian thought. I also noted that *Fragments* published a letter from MJL, and *Henry George News* developed a long article around one of her letters.—Herb Roseman, 1455 E. 85th, Brooklyn, N. Y.

[Note: Others include an arti-

cle in the Heretics Section of *National Insider*, Jan. 23, 1966 by MJL on the *Green Revolution*; and a feature story on *Green Revolutionaries* in July 10, 1966 *Dayton Daily News*; and in *The Michigan (University) Daily*, July 8-9, by David Knoke, a second generation School of Living member. Reprints of these are available for a stamped envelope. David had Ralph Borsodi with his Student Press Seminar at St. Johns of Annapolis for two days in July, and reported it as "one of the most fascinating experiences of my life."—Editor]

Report From Kerista

To the Editor:

We have moved. We have tried four locations in the U. S.; Ibiza Island, Spain; Dominica Island, W. I.; and Sand Hill, British Honduras. We have formulated a "Law of the Permanent Site": Any site will be considered temporary unless it has a scenic beach and instant swimming, boating and fishing! Our new site appears to have these things, few insects, no poisonous snakes.

We are now ready to receive guests—serious people who are interested in cooperative living. We have Kerista Kibbutz, a Walden II intentional community on this lovely island in Central America; and Kerista Star, enclaves who meet to study Kerista and allied subjects. For texts and theoretical studies we use Skinner's *Walden II*, Neill's *Summerhill*, Huxley's *Island*, Heinlein's *Stranger In A Strange Land*, Spiro's *Kibbutz*, and Gurdieff's *Meetings of Remarkable Men*.—Jud, Coxen's Hole, Roatan Island, Honduras, C. A.

A Gift And A Poem

To the Editor:

I enclose a check as my gift to the Old Mill Center Fund.

Today as I climbed the hills surrounding our city a small creature scurried under a stone. Whereupon I took out my pad, sat on the stone, and wrote:

Peak

It hurt me
that even a lizard
fled
at my approach,
my cloddish
tread.

But could he
really wish
to own this symphonic
silence
all alone? Would
one

so much a part
of hill
deny my being still
a moment,
being kin to crawl
and soar

before again
descending to the
ugly roar?

—C. S. Dawson
Belo Horizonte, Brazil

Education Law

To the Editor:

The following proves that not all are for separation of parents from children by compulsion in public schools. Some carry out favorable legislation when petitioned to do so. From *The Commonwealth of Massachusetts Bulletin*: "House Bill 565 to permit children to be absent from public schools at the discretion of their parents" passed March 3, 1966 by the Committee on Education. I spoke in favor of cutting down separation of parents from children at the public hearing on this. — J. Levinson, 43 Greenock, Dorchester, Mass.

Improved Titles

To the Editor:

May I re-title the pictures in the August *Green Revolution* developed from transparencies which I submitted? On page 1, the "other view" should be captioned. Reroofing Old Mill, a high-spot in our renovation, Sept. 1965. On page 2, "the volunteer" is James Iden Smith (79), who always comes to the workbees and gives generously of time and money to our projects. And let's call Hal Porter, page 4, accompanying his vigorous *Green Rev-*

How Can We Prepare For Community Living?

By Gordon Yaswen
c/o Sheldon, Maloney Rd.
Wapp Falls, N. Y.

Part III

Perhaps the greatest advantage of mobile shelters lies yet unaccounted for. During the initial years of any intentional community I can envision, there will inevitably be members who come with the best of intentions, but for any of many possible reasons (not only negative ones) find they cannot permanently remain, or must for a few years temporarily depart. This has traditionally raised problems in communities where members have invested their own time and money in building their own permanent homes, for the departing member usually feels he is entitled to some remuneration upon leaving, and the community itself usually has not the money to so give him. Few such dilemmas would ensue were the structures in question towable or collapsible.

In fact, I envision a system of communities where prospective members (because they thus furnish their own accommodations) are free to come and sample life in any particular member community of that system, without obligation to stay, and without the community's obligation to keep them because they have perhaps invested themselves in a permanent structure on the premises. Thus mobile, prospective members could perhaps sample several communities before actually settling down to one; and then there should be a higher probability of their staying there permanently, for their previous explorations.

In Case of Failure

Further, in the event that the site chosen for a community becomes impractical for ecological, economic, or political reasons; an entire community, if the bulk of its shelters were portable, could if necessary move EN MASSE to a more favorable location without having to completely rebuild on the new site. That this capability would be of decided advantage with the current economic, geographic, and political trends as they are in this country, seems quite obvious.

I understand how this type of thinking, i.e., planning a community so as to require minimum permanent investment and be relatively easy to LEAVE, may be to many a very negative way of planning a community in the first place. Yet I hold that this philosophy of PLANNING for FAILURE, so to speak, is a reliable method of ensuring success — of building dependability into the system — in that it prevents the highly probable MINOR failures from amounting to a MAJOR one.

I am likewise aware that there are many problems inherent in such a plan, including the propensity it might have for encouraging great instability in the communities that make use of it; and the gaudiness, expense, and inadequacy of the popularly-available portable homes. I feel, however, these are surmountable drawbacks.

Wants Information

I am planning too, within the next three years, to build or modify a towable home, and would greatly appreciate any advice readers might offer. I am particularly anxious to learn of

olution Manifesto, *The NEW "Man With the Hoe!"* — Grace Lefever, Sonnewald Homestead, Spring Grove, Pa.

Favorite of Newcomers

To the Editor:

The *Green Revolution* makes sense, and my husband and I hope to find a homestead, starting this summer. Your publications have become my favorite, most inspiring reading matter. We'd like back copies of *Green Revolution*.—Diane Porter, 888 N. Central Ave., Claremont, Calif.

sources for bare mobile home chassis or chassis and shell assemblies, as well as any helpful books on the subject. I am also beginning to prepare in those other ways I mentioned earlier, and would be interested in communicating with others who are doing likewise.

I want to live in community, but I want any community I move into, or help set up, to have a reasonable chance of success, for I cannot easily re-amass the capital reserve I am now beginning to lay up. Therefore I see thorough and realistic preparation as imperative. Perhaps what is needed, before we have a Movement of communities, is a movement of preparation for them.

Like Book

"It was good to read *Go Ahead and Live!* For years I have been thinking some about most of the problems of living you discuss. To me it is rewarding to see these published as a coherent whole. I hasten to disclaim that my ideas are as comprehensive or as far developed as many of your chapters. I'm 30 years old and certainly have much to learn. And I thank you for helping me discover your group and your school with the near total involvement in life that you express in your book." Matthew Davis, Mill Valley, Calif.

"We've read *Go Ahead and Live!* and it astonishes us that your interests are as broad as life itself. This is wonderful. Our goals tend to match yours—simple, self-sufficient living, real freedom for the individual with no abuse of that freedom by any one." — Carl and June Ogrea, Paw Paw, Mich.

"Just finished your *Go Ahead and Live!* Read every word with the greatest interest, and much admiration for its ideas, organization and your clarity in writing." — Esther Grayson Rockwell, garden editor and author.

Writer, cont'd

this article. (Available for a stamped, addressed envelope.)

One of our members, William C. Lloyd, wrote the following to reporter Walker:

"You presented the case for homesteaders, back-to-the-landers and others very well. I take issue with only one statement in your article. You say, 'Many School of Living members have college degrees but have largely turned against the system that educated them.'

'Now, Mr. Walker, I do not agree that the current system of education ever educated (in its full, true sense) School of Living adherents anymore than it truly educated anybody else! You missed the point of the School of Living and all its writings. There would be no need for a School of Living and the writings of brilliant theorists like Borsodi on education for correct, natural, normal living if the conventional methods and institutions of so-called learning taught these things correctly.

'Green revolutionists have not turned against a system that 'educated' them. They have turned against a decaying system that did not educate them and they are wise enough to know it.

'We aren't the only critics of education, nor the only ones trying to correct it. Read *The Sheepskin Psychosis* by J. Keats, 1966. And read Sydney J. Harris, Patricia Coffin, Dr. Leslie Fiedler, Paul Goodman in "The Deadly Halls of Ivy," Dr. R. M. Hutchins, etc. Most of them agree with the critic who said, 'We have created a Frankenstein monster that has gotten completely out of hand.'

'School of Living is on the forefront of a desperate need for new thinking on the entire subject of education.' — W. C. Lloyd, Burlington, N. C.

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