

TEMPORARY SERVICES

Group Home: Writings on Intentional Community

This is an advance sampler of the (still in-progress) Group Home booklet. The process of culling interviews from a large, diverse group of residents of intentional communities, student cooperatives, missionary collectives, and "group homes" is a complex and time-consuming one.

Each person and community who responded favorably to a call for feedback has their own set of priorities. The artificial time constraints of an art exhibition are not always relevant to their schedules.

Nevertheless, a few excerpts are ready to share, and we present them to you as a brief snippet of things to come. The Group Home booklet will be available at the Smart Museum very soon. If you wish to have a copy mailed to you, e-mail us at servers@temporaryservices.org

The community idea is big enough to stimulate a lot of different dreams. Some are noble visions of a brighter future for mankind; some deal with the inner reaches of the soul; many people seek a place to work out experiments in fundamental cultural change, particularly in traditional sex and family roles. But commonest of all is the personal dream. The dream of no longer being lonely. Whatever else brings people to community, the hope of a compatible mate or a close, warm group of friends is usually just underneath the surface, and the success or failure of a person to be content with community often depends on his success or failure in finding love.

Kat Kinkade, A Walden Two Experiment, 1973

Question: How did you feel about your life prior to joining the community?

Pam, 40:

There was something lacking in my life. I was a loner, didn't like a lot of people, kept distances.

Joe B., 57:

I felt good about life in general, but sensed that something was missing. I had the feeling that I should be doing more.

Erik, 29:

Something was lacking. What was important to me was not being confronted by others.

Rita, 32:

I was very much satisfied but I knew it wasn't a permanent state, was aware of the fact that it was temporary. Now I feel at home. There is no place I'd rather be.

(All above answers from members of High Point, a rural survivalist community in southern Illinois)

Some Resources for and about Living in Community:

Cohen, David. **Not Of The World: A History of the Commune in America**. Follett Publishing, Chicago, 1973.

Fike, Rupert, ed. **Voices From The Farm: Adventures in Community Living**. Book Publishing Company, Summertown, Tennessee, 1998.

Guidebook For Intentional Communities. Community Service, Inc., Yellow Springs, Ohio, 1977.

Kinkade, Kathleen. **A Walden Two Experiment: The First Five Years of Twin Oaks Community**. William Morrow and Company, New York, 1973.

Schehr, Robert C. **Dynamic Utopia: Establishing Intentional Communities as a New Social Movement**. Bergin and Garvey, Westport, Connecticut, 1997.

Zablocki, Benjamin D. **Alienation and Charisma: A Study of Contemporary American Communes**. The Free Press/Macmillan Publishing, New York, 1980.

Zablocki, Benjamin D. **The Joyful Community: An Account of the Bruderhof, a Communal Movement Now in Its Third Generation**. Penguin Books, Baltimore, 1971.

All of the books listed above are available at the Chicago Public Library, which also stocks *Communities*, the periodical from the Fellowship For Intentional Community, an internationally-based group. *Communities* lists, among other things, lists of communities currently looking for members and lists of people currently looking to build or join communities. The FIC has a terrific web site at www.ic.org

Other web resources include:

www.ic.org/qic | Networking and resources for LGBTQA persons interested in inclusive intentional communities

www.cohousing.org | The Cohousing Network, intentional communities where the members have separate homes on shared land

www.umich.edu/~nasco | North American Students of Cooperation, resources for (mainly) college students interested in cooperatives

www.thefec.org | The Federation of Egalitarian Communities

www.webpal.org/list.htm | A list of Survival-Preparedness communities (often rural, militarist, or preparing for the possibility of nuclear war)

www.sustainablecommunity.homestead.com | An essay on the sustainable community movement and links to related sites

www.coophousing.org | National Association of Housing Cooperatives

www.co-ophousingcoalition.org | Cooperative Housing Coalition (lobbies for positive public policy on multi-family home ownership)

www.qumbya.com | Hyde Park's largest housing cooperative

I met all my ex-husbands at the ranch. I thought I left that kind of life behind, but I was pretty pleased to find the same kind of active people here. I've gone through two boyfriends so far.

Vivian, 73, former member of Black Oak Ranch, a defunct community in Texas; current resident of retirement home in Chicago.