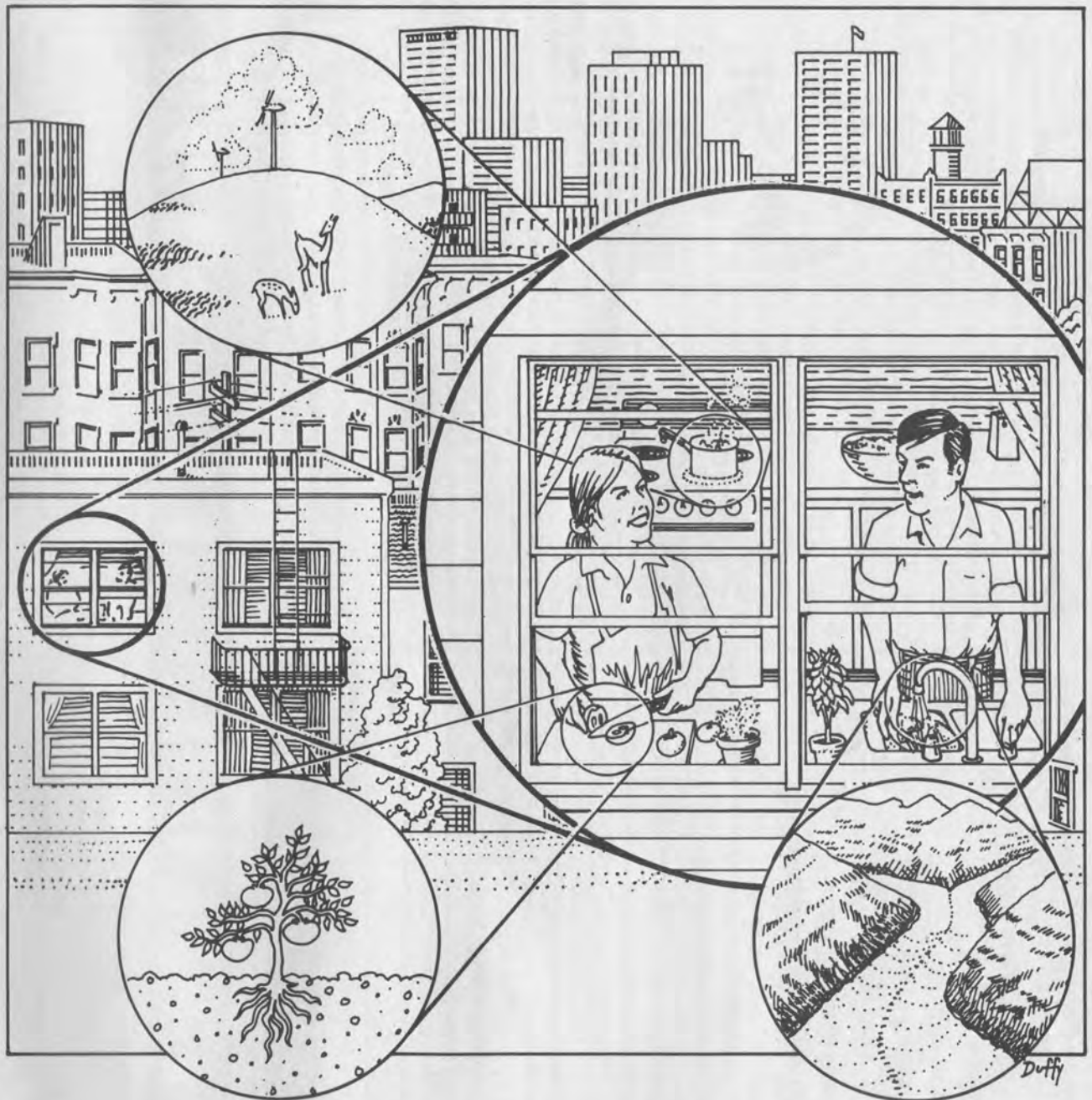


# RAISE THE STAKES

NUMBER 17

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## Exploring Urban Frontiers

# ACCEPTING THE URBAN CHALLENGE

**t**he most recent North American Bioregional Congress (NABC IV) held in summer 1990 couldn't come up with resolutions or an effective platform to recognize urban areas within bioregions and make them more sustainable. Laura Kuri, an activist in Cuernavaca, Mexico who attended the Congress wrote about this lapse, "If the problems of cities aren't resolved, surrounding bioregions won't be able to resolve their own problems. NABC IV was wonderful, estu-penda, hermosa, fuertisima...but there was one thing that made me feel bad and that is that big cities were not considered adequately. If we don't consider them we are just dreaming about the future and not living the present. I want to live in a really bioregional way so I must consider big cities if I want to do something for my place. If bioregionalists don't consider big cities, what do they think is going to happen to them? Are they going to disappear?"

Cities present a monumental challenge. Many people have left metro-

politan areas because they seem inherently unlivable and most traditional ruralites maintain that urban areas have always been doomed. Recent signs indicate that urban-related problems will only increase as unprecedented numbers persist in relocating to urban environments. Whether this occurs out of cultural desire or human necessity resulting from displacement by corporate agriculture and deterioration of rural areas, it is definitely related to the way cities currently function and the extent to which they impact on their own and surrounding bioregions. Still, ecologically conscious city dwellers continue to think great changes can be made that will benefit us all. Given the trends and our commitment as bioregionalists to protect and celebrate our life-places, we can't afford to be selectively holistic about our approach.

The bioregional movement needs an appropriate and effective urban translation aimed at creating Green

Cities. With this issue of *Raise the Stakes*, we intend to examine Green City from several points of view and create dialogue fostering communication and cooperation between both urban and rural groups. *Exploring Urban Frontiers* surveys both achievements and common frustrations. It samples Green City planning from a proposed TV eco-channel for NYC to an eco-development project in Brisbane, Australia. There are also several accounts of what visionary urban pioneers are doing to recreate their own neighborhoods. To keep naive optimism in check we balanced the mix with immediate concerns and astute criticisms from both urban and rural perspectives. Also featured are inspiring regional reports and compelling followup letters to our last issue on bioregional emergence in Europe.

This is *Raise the Stakes'* fourth urban-oriented issue. RTS #3, *Cities—Salvaging the Parts*, came out of reactions to Planet Drum's Listening to

the Earth Conference and voiced positive visions for urban communities. RTS #11, *Urban' Bioregion: Green City*, undertook developing a specifically bioregional context for urban areas, and RTS #13, *Nature in Cities*, represented a wide range of approaches to city greening. (Check out the publications page for a special package deal on these back issues.)

There is much to be done and the prospect can certainly be daunting, but Planet Drum believes healthy cities are intrinsic to any serious reconsideration of life-places. How we live in cities is inextricably linked to the health of all bioregions and will certainly be the primary ecological issue of the next decade. This is urgent and important work that has to be dealt with by everyone.

— Marie Dolcini

Marie Dolcini is editor of *Raise the Stakes* and a fledgling eco-cellist.

## richard register ecological rebuilding

## interviewed by and evolutionary healthy marie dolcini future cities



MD—

**Y**ou've been involved in ecological rebuilding and urban sustainability thought and action for many years, wrote several books including *Ecocity Berkeley* and *Ecocities*, established the group Urban Ecology and organized the first Ecocity Conference here in Berkeley last spring. What developments do you see as a result of this highly successful Conference and what are some recent projects that spring to mind with regard to planetary ecocity activity?

**RR—** Many of the participants have been interested in keeping in touch with each other and building toward an international ecocity association or at least some kind of loose-knit movement. We're not sure what form that will take yet. There are people in Australia, Mexico, Germany, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, France that came to the Conference as well as a few people we've run into elsewhere. For example, President Havel's office in Czechoslovakia wrote to us. The English teacher there is very interested in the ecocity/green city idea and wants to be able to teach English in the President's office using green city materials. There are a lot of people scattered thinly around the world who seem to have clocked the notion that we have to deal with cities and who want to do something about it.

I was really startled to find in the South (in North and South Carolina) the sprawl, what I thought was a Western pattern, is actually almost universal in this gas-guzzling culture—strip development, the far flung grid, the gigantic intersecting streets throughout suburbia that have these enormously long street lights. When these streets occur every five blocks like they do in L.A.,

it's just amazing. Why people just sit there and tolerate it is beyond me, but it's all over the country. It's like the country's soul has been sold to oil and automobiles and that's the way it is. And so few people recognize that ecological problems have something to do with that layout—the way cities are built and that sprawled format—but it hits home over and over again.

If you fly in an airplane you see the

smog starting on the West Coast and it doesn't abate. You're up 30,000 feet and you can see this sort of whiskey yellow that used to be relegated to Los Angeles Basin and you now see it at much higher elevations. We've created a universal problem and people in a lot of other places are beginning to say "you know, this isn't quite right."

The bioregional approach is a context into which ecological city think-

ing fits really well, but not all bioregionalists I've run into have thought about this Green City notion that you're dealing with at Planet Drum. And I think, as in the environmental movement in general, people don't think about it. It's pretty exciting when a few people are actually popping up and saying, "Let's not just talk about bioregionalism," which is a very major step towards getting our house in order, but "Let's consider the city our house and let's get that in order. Let's make that an ecologically healthy entity."

**MD—** There was a call at the Conference for a planet-wide ecocity network. What is its current status and what needs to happen in order for it to be an effective tool for the Movement?

**RR—** The thought was to come up with an "ecocity association" which could serve its members like most professional associations. But in this case we didn't move on to form an actual institution of some sort and we didn't have enough time at the Conference—I guess a lot of us probably didn't really have the inclination either to try to hammer our way through a decision-making process.

There are many new institutions that could be formed. One of the new things we have at Urban Ecology is the Restoration and Development Project. You can start as small as possible in the reshaping of the city with a new institution like the Restoration and Development Project and a community development corporation, coop, nonprofit corporation, or a for profit partnership or single proprietorship.

The Restoration and Development Project has its own unique thing. If it existed as an institution, it would be available for some of the transfer

*Continued on next page.*



photo: Ana Li Tatter

"It's pretty exciting when a few people are actually saying 'Let's consider the city our house and let's get that in order. Let's make that an ecologically healthy entity.'"



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continued from page 1.

of funds which presently subsidize automobiles, and it would initiate sane building. It would consist of two pieces of property. One piece has to be in an area that's either environmentally damaged in some particularly bad way or is automobile-dependent. The second piece has to be in a diversity center—a place where a lot is going on already that's usually of higher density. The essential thing is to create more and more diversity closer together so you don't have to travel so far to put your life together—your economy, your social life, cultural life.

On property #1, for example, you might remove a couple of houses from suburbia and restore a creek there or bring back some agriculture or even let it go natural depending on the circumstances. Then you could do a restoration project. Maybe you could put back the kind of critters and plants that will be able to make it there. On the other property you build an equal or larger amount of whatever the service to people was that used to be on the first property. If it's housing—say you took away two housing units—you'd try to build two, three, four housing units at the other site. And you would do it in a place where jobs and transit are closer so that if you lived in those new housing units, you wouldn't have to use an automobile to piece your life together. You'd have enough happening close enough that it would be a viable way to live with much less energy expense and much less pollution being produced.

This transfer would be taking place on a very small level with two properties involved and just a few units changing from one location to another. You could probably go into business for half a million or one million dollars, which is the kind of scale coops, nonprofits and small partnerships can get involved in. You could also do larger projects. Larger companies might want to get involved in this sort of thing too. Urban Ecology has a project and we have a savings account now and we're having a series of meetings you have to pay \$10 to go to. The money goes into this particular savings account and is slowly building up—it's ludicrously small, it's just a little under \$500 right now. We just started. It accrues interest and later there might be matching money for loans. We bought a house before by the way—a \$150,000 house—so we're imagining doing something that's about four times as big on this one. You've got to start somewhere. When this thing actually starts happening, we'd also be putting legislation in to give it further advantages. Right now we can use some of the existing financial advantages such as mitigation money for restoration of natural features. We can go directly for creek restoration money from the state, there's research and development money that should be

available for stuff like this, and Urban Ecology's nonprofit status can help

raise a little bit more. Once the advantages to these kind of projects become apparent, then it's possible they could replicate very rapidly.

A lot of people say you can't change cities or they're too big. The fact is they're much messier now than they were 20 years ago and much worse than they were 40 years ago and it's not just scale, it's the style in which they're built. If we start building them in the right style, we'll be constantly progressing in the right direction.

One of the things we're about to float in Urban Ecology is promoting an international ecological rebuilding program. We'd also be calling for departments of ecological development in cities, states and national government, and an ecological redevelopment agency that the U.N. could help educate about and run some experimental, small scale programs leading in the right direction that could become touchstones. The idea of having an ecological development department is that nothing exists right now in any government to actually focus on the green city idea and say "Let's build it." We have worthwhile environmental protection agencies of various sorts in countries all around the world, but all they really do is clean up and restrain people from doing negative technologies. What we need instead is something like the Defense Department or Housing and Urban Development which actually goes out and builds stuff, lets contracts for large and small projects. We should get the kind of money that flows through small business administration right now and get it over to restoration development projects and to mixed use developments in town and diversity centers.



**MD**— Do you think there's an Ecocity Movement—with a capital "M"?

**RR**— Yes, if you define it small enough (laughter). It's pretty small.

**MD**— What are the kinds of things Ecocity activists do?

**RR**— There are ecology centers focused on city problems in Denmark and all around the U.S., they're redesigning streets in certain parts of the world, France has several projects going right now, Berlin is talking about "street calming"...reducing the speed limits like we're doing in Berkeley with the slow streets project. People are promoting bicycles, some are trying to get mixed use development or are supporting it, and there's a lot of work around greenbelts.

It's interesting that people are beginning to realize how important greenbelts are to cinching the city in, but aren't yet dealing with the existing urban sprawl or facing up to what you



do to actually withdraw from the present structure which is such a disaster. For the most part, all these separate little projects are taking place with people

having just a little sense of the whole. And in some cases, maybe no sense of the whole at all.

**MD**— Right, just that it's their single project.

**RR**— Yes, well in talking with people I know who supported renewable energy, they did so with almost no thought to city structure. For example, solar energy for cars. So you're running cars on solar energy and that's a step—at least you're not burning fossil fuels or using electricity from a nuclear power plant—but automobiles still kill an extraordinary number of people every year, they still contribute to sprawl. The more efficient the car, the more efficient the creating of sprawl is, a little ironic twist, because for less money, you can sprawl out even farther and pave over even more land. We lose three million acres of farmland every year in this country alone, and powering your cars on some other energy source doesn't deal with that. It encourages it to happen.

**MD**— Now we can drive on okra!

**RR**— Now we can feel really good driving our cars.

**MD**— You've said ecocities can become a reality in about 100 years. How did you arrive at this estimate and what are the impediments to realizing them sooner?

**RR**— Well, 100 years isn't quite an accurate way of looking at it because even then, even if you had extreme change, how would you know you had really obtained the optimal ecologically healthy city? Of course part of the theory is it would be very different from one location to the other because every location has to fit its bioregion; it dovetails with bioregionalism all over the place. It's going to take a long time to change the infrastructure largely because it's going to take a long time to change people's way of thinking.

I think I said something like 75 to 150 years for very significant change, for the sort of change that would reduce our energy consumption to one tenth of what it is now for example, and would halt population growth—maybe even turn it negative for a while so we can get down to more reasonable numbers, reduce consumption of material goods a lot and still have a really viable and evolving cultural life. There's an awesome quantity of asphalt, concrete and building out there and I can't imagine changing that quickly in a very major way. But if you look back over the last 100 years you can certainly imagine a slab of time that big in which pretty amazing changes took place. Aside from the destruction of wars or really bad earthquakes when cities are bombed out and rebuilt very rapidly, it seems there's a slow evolution. They ought to put the new good ideas in after the earthquakes happen, but because

too much money's involved in the old channels, it dictates what's physically built. Even with crises like that, they're probably not going to build it back right because the real flow is the mental flow.

So if we can get the ideas flowing and build a new economy through notions like an ecological rebuilding program, then we can change it all the time. I just can't imagine withdrawing rapidly. Not within a few years because oil is going to last for probably around 50 years and that is even stunning to me when you see what's built. These buildings and new highways going in right now are going to last longer than that. It's all based on the notion that oil is going to be forever. It's not going to run out really, but it's going to get much more expensive. Solar will come on line and there will be more electric cars probably, you're going to have rationalization as part of the mix where people say, "Well now we've got 'bio-cars' so what's wrong with living way out there? You know it's not bad compared to the way it used to be—now we're not putting CO<sub>2</sub> into the atmosphere."

Also, cities are big. People used to think in long terms around single buildings like cathedrals or pyramids that took a long time to build—in the case of cathedrals, 6 or 7 lifetimes. It's amazing from our point of view but I think ecological cities are like that—they're not going to come to culmination until several generations from now.

**MD**— What is the difference between Green Cities and Ecocities? Planet Drum has approached urban issues from a bioregional perspective—are there limitations to this approach? What are the limitations you face that are different at Urban Ecology?

**RR**— I think it's more of a rhetorical or poetic emphasis that's different. Green Cities implies green and growth and healthy growth as opposed to population growth and it's kind of poetically charming or attractive—it feels good. Ecocities sounds a little bit more mechanical but in taking you back to ecology, I think it's maybe a little more real as to what we're dealing with because we're looking essentially at an ecological view of the world we're part of which sees the interconnections of all the parts. At Urban Ecology we've been using that sense as well as looking at living systems—dealing with the connections of all systems—a sort of systems approach to everything. From that viewpoint ecocities seem a slightly richer notion to us than the green cities notion which is part of the ecocity notion. Of course you can use green cities very broadly if not talking about the color or the inferences of urban biology.

Every ecocity should be different according to the bioregion of course and according also to its own history and who lives there and the cultural ideas that are part of the matrix. We also say there's an overall wholeness; the word ecology fits well for us because it talks about the interconnections. It implies interconnections right from the start. It's almost like saying "whole systems cities."

People do see it as too limiting in the sense that it's too broad. They'd be



more interested in one little piece. But to me, if we don't start dealing with the whole city—by whatever name—we're going to miss the main idea. And as long as we never learn how to build our habitat in a way that has any future to it, that is literally destroying the sources of sustenance and polluting the rest, then we're not going to solve the big ecological problems. Ecology isn't simple for one thing. It's extraordinarily complex. There are patterns that make sense and we can make something that's very complex seem very comprehensible and easy to relate to ultimately, but it's not simple. There's something in what green cities and bioregionalism are about and there's something in what Urban Ecology is about, what ecocities are about, which brings all those pieces together and makes the package comprehensible and, in fact, should make it second nature.



**MD**— Understanding that the Conference was a lot of work and Urban Ecology was its host last spring, what is the likelihood that The Ecocity Conference, or something very similar to it, will become a regular event either here in the Bay Area or elsewhere?

**RR**— I think it will become an annual or semiannual event moving around the world, and the organizers would like it to come here once in a while. But we also are very dedi-

cated to the notion that it should be international and involve, encourage and support Third World countries as much as possible because they're involved in ecological cities too. This first one was 80-90% wealthy or "over"-developed countries. We'd like to shift that and have conferences deal with issues relating to the majority of the world and its whole environmental context.

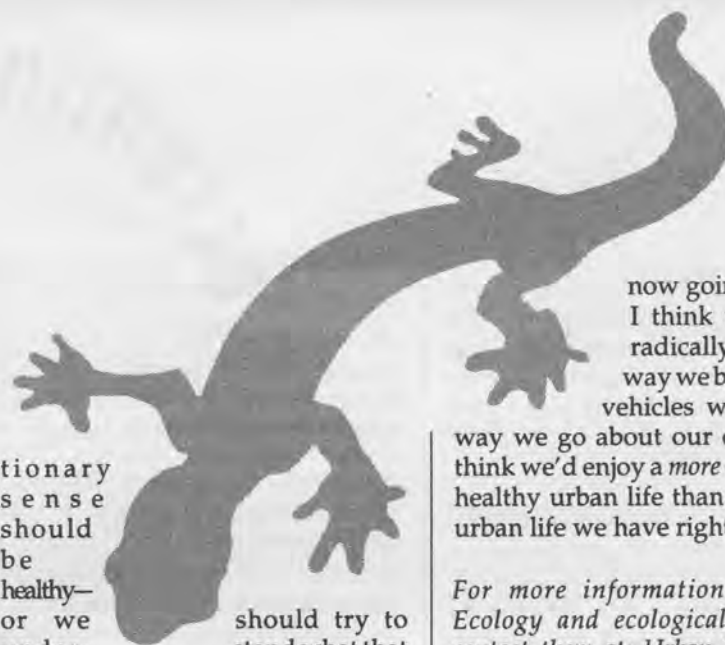
There are alliances there that should be very firm that are barely existent at all in the environmental movement now. There are glimmerings in that direction—one of which is the Habitat Center—between minorities and environmentalists all around the world, of which we have more and more all the time. There are also those between builders and environmentalists. Urban Ecology is not anti-developer they're anti *bad* developer. Those two alliances should be very much in everybody's mind as future ecocities conferences are put together.

**MD**— Other thoughts about urban sustainability and more ecological cities? What are the criteria and what should the direction be? What are some more promising indicators?

**RR**— One thought deals with the word sustainability. I think it's a slightly problematic term like "centralization" or "decentralization." I would much rather have people talk about what's *healthy* in the broadest, longest term's sense, which is ultimately, ecologically, *evolutionarily* healthy. Even changes in the evolu-

tionary  
sense  
should  
be  
healthy—  
or we  
under-  
means.

should try to stand what that "Sustainability"—I've seen that word twisted around in some bizarre ways. You know it means keeping going what's going *now* basically. Do you really want to find some way to keep what we have



now going like this? I think we have to radically change the way we build and the vehicles we have, the

way we go about our daily life. I think we'd enjoy a *more* ecologically healthy urban life than the kind of urban life we have right now.

For more information on Urban Ecology and ecological rebuilding contact them at: Urban Ecology, PO Box 10144, Berkeley, CA 94709 Phone: (415) 549-1724. The Ecocity Conference Report is available from Urban Ecology for \$7 postpaid and is included with Planet Drum membership.

## announcement

### CERRO GORDO, OREGON:

#### Ecovillage Building & Ecocity Networking

Here at Cerro Gordo we are building an ecological village for up to 2500 people on 1200 acres on the north shore of Dorena Lake, near Eugene, Oregon. Our purpose is to explore and demonstrate a more sustainable, symbiotic way of life. As we envision it, this will require fundamental changes in land use and settlement patterns, so our strategy is to prototype by building a new town rather than trying to reform an existing city. However, our goal is to do more than escape to the woods: we hope Cerro Gordo will provide a living inspiration for the greening of existing cities. Now that our land use approvals have been finalized, we're building clustered solar homes and moving small businesses on site. Our updated *Cerro Gordo Community Plan* will be printed soon (and will be available for \$5 postpaid).

Together with Urban Ecology in Berkeley, CA we are continuing to enlarge the international network of people and projects working to rebuild our civilization in balance with nature. Our most current project is the planning of a lakeview lodge and conference center—a minivillage cluster with shops and offices for global networking, publications and educational programs on ecocity projects around the world. Please contact us with any people or projects you want included in the Ecocity Network and future ecocity conferences. Our address is Cerro Gordo, Dorena Lake, Box 569, Cottage Grove, OR 97424, USA.

Christopher Canfield is the Cerro Gordo community development coordinator and editor of The Ecocity Conference Report 1990.

"If we don't start dealing with the whole city—by whatever name—we're going to miss the main idea. And as long as we never learn how to build our habitat in a way that has any future to it, then we're not going to solve the big ecological problems."

# cities in climax

BRUCE  
HINKFORTH

The following excerpted piece was submitted in full to the Fourth North American Bioregional Congress Proceedings and appears with the *Green Cities Committee Report*.

**b**ioregionalism will never be achieved as long as cities exist in their current state. It is imperative that the bioregional vision includes cities. The bioregional vision currently has no implicit place for cities. In some ways we are the untouchables of the movement. Some bioregionalists often refer to cities as "cancers." But let us take the cancer analogy a step further. If a cancer goes unheeded, indeed it ultimately destroys the organism, the system. Some people would destroy it, and go about their business as if nothing were wrong. Others would try to isolate it or cut it out through some radical surgery. But what is nature's answer? Clinical investigators now believe that the vast majority of tumors are healed spontaneously by the body, reabsorbed by a healthy immune system. This is nature's answer when the system is strong and uninhibited.

The current emphasis in bioregionalism on sustainability is insufficient to provide answers to the "cities" question. Sustainability is important as a criterion or indicator but provides no real model or unifying

theory. Sustainability itself is a concept abstracted from classical ecology, a characteristic of the "climax community." Climax communities by definition are sustainable, whereas the inverse is not necessarily true; sustainable communities have not necessarily reached climax.

If sustainability is the main criterion there will always be arguments over what level is desirable or possible. There will always, too, be a tendency to say "cities" must become sustainable with the implication that they must do it themselves. People in rural areas will continue simply to point their fingers at urban dwellers and say "we've achieved sustainability, what's your problem?" But their perceived sustainability is an illusion as long as cities are ignored. It is selfish and ultimately self-defeating. Sustainability, because it is only a characteristic, a parameter, by itself provides no ultimate goal, no absolutes. The concept of climax community, however, is a model which can provide the absolutes.

The climax community is well established in the literature of ecology. Many principles and parameters of climax communities have been es-

tablished of which sustainability is but one. We are already aware of and use many of the others. Climax communities are characterized also by maximum species diversity, the predominance of cooperation, mutual relationships, maximization of material and energy flows, succession, soft-boundaries, cycles that mesh with the environment, etc.

To carry the analogy further, we could say that we are living in pioneer communities. These are created when the climax community undergoes a great disturbance. They can only be maintained through continued disturbance. Left to itself, the climax community will return through succession.

When European colonists arrived on this continent, Turtle Island, it was a land of climax communities. This included the humans who lived here. Native Americans and their culture were part of these climax communities. Far from being primitive, native cultures can be seen as having reached a state of climax. In contrast, European-derived culture is characterized by a tendency toward monoculture, low diversity, competition, unsustainability, non-

adherence to cycles or linearity, etc.

Only a vision of our communities in climax will provide the framework into which cities can be seen in their full potential. The greatest resource of cities is their human populations. Only when viewed within a model of a climax community can people be seen as a "resource" instead of a "problem." As in other models, climax community may never be achieved, just as pure democracy may never be achieved. It is, however, a goal or limit to strive for and can provide the motivation and stimulation to the imagination in a way "sustainability" cannot. Sustainability as a concept is too easily associated in the popular mind with stagnation, no growth, no progress. If anything is needed in our movement, it is a concept which can grab the popular imagination, dissolve artificial boundaries and provide a new constructive channel. Thus bioregionalists, Greens and all like-minded people who care for the Earth, all its species and all generations to come, and who believe that the tide must soon be turned, must strive for a vision that is inclusive and empowering. We must strive for a vision that relates all parts to the whole, a vision not just of the steady state but of the ultimate state of all our regions in full blossom, a vision of our communities in climax.

Bruce Hinkforth lives in the Great Lakes bioregion and is an activist with the Milwaukee Greens and Witness for Nonviolence.

"Only a vision of our communities in climax will provide the framework into which cities can be seen in their full potential."



# recreating urbanity

PETER  
BERG

The following has been excerpted from Peter Berg's essay "A Metamorphosis for Cities: From Gray to Green" and is available in its entirety in City Lights Review #4, published by City Lights Books, 261 Columbus Ave., San Francisco, CA 94133.

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"Bioregionally founded values that are appropriate to each place should be agreed upon and then used to direct municipal policies."

"... the city is at a point of major transition... Urban people will be obliged to undergo a thorough transformation."

he first step toward reconceptualizing urban areas is to recognize that they are all situated in local bioregions within which they can be made self-reliant and sustainable. The unique soils, watersheds, native plants and animals, climate, seasonal variations and other natural characteristics that are present in the geographical life-place where a city is located constitute the basic context for securing essential resources of food, water, energy and materials. For this to happen in a sustainable way, cities must identify with and put themselves in balanced reciprocity with natural systems. Not only do they have to find nearby sources to satisfy basic human needs, but also to adapt those needs to local conditions. They must maintain natural features that still remain and restore as many of those that have been disrupted as possible. For example, restoring polluted bays, lakes or rivers so that they will once more be healthy habitats for aquatic life can also help make urban areas more self-reliant in producing food.

Different geographical areas have different conditions depending on their natural characteristics. Bioregionally-founded values that are appropriate to each place should be agreed upon and then used to direct municipal policies. Guides for doing this can be transferred over from some basic principles that govern all ecosystems.

## Interdependence

Heighten awareness of interchanges between production and consumption of resources so that supply, reuse, recycling and restoration become more closely linked. Reduce inequitable exploitation.

## Diversity

Support wide ranges of means to satisfy basic human needs and a multiplicity of cultural, social and political expressions. Resist single-interest solutions and monoculture.

## Self-Regulation

Encourage decentralized activities carried out by groups in neighborhoods and districts. Replace top-down bureaucratic agencies with grassroots assemblies.

## Long-Term Sustainability

Aim policies to work under various conditions and for several genera-

tions. Minimize short-term programs and patchwork remedies.

When interdependence, diversity, self-regulation and long-term sustainability are consulted it is possible to make much more ecologically coherent and therefore more practical decisions than are generally seen today. Applied to the cycle of food production and consumption, for example, they could lead to these beneficial features: more small-scale farms and gardens near or in the city that employed greater numbers of people, preserved and restored green spaces, reduced transportation costs and provided fresher produce; wider use of permaculture (permanent agriculture) and native food plants to conserve and build topsoil, lower water use and maintain natural habitats; subscription buying by institutions and groups of individuals who spend a yearly amount to receive a specified quantity of produce—thereby stabilizing farm incomes and levels of food production; collection of tree and yard trimmings, food scraps and other organic wastes to create compost fertilizer; reuse of urban grey water on farms and in gardens to reduce fresh water consumption; and some type of food production on everyone's part ranging from backyard, rooftop, window box and community gardens to work-sharing on farms.

For A Green City Program to succeed, there also needs to be a radical new consciousness about living in cities on the part of individuals. City-dwelling has traditionally been easier and more luxurious than country life. Residents have been accustomed to services and amenities that were relatively inexpensive and whose continuous supply was not their responsibility. People still assume that water, food and energy will continue to flow into cities as effortlessly as in the past even though they know that the places where those resources originate have been severely degraded. But the realities of urban life are changing rapidly and will change more drastically in the near future. Since mid-century, utilities, health services, food prices, and housing costs have increased many times over. They will rise even more sharply as cities continue to expand and compete for resources that are diminishing in quantity and quality. Presently, travelers return to comparatively prosperous countries like the United States

shocked by the desperate conditions in places like Calcutta, Rio de Janeiro and Nairobi. They believe that their own communities are immune to the spectrum of problems ranging from inflation and endless delays to widespread diseases and abject poverty that they find there. Soon it will become clear that although these calamities have struck Third World countries first, par-

allel developments are due for many other urban areas. There simply aren't enough basic resources, even in developed countries, to sustain the huge urban populations that are accumulating. The abundance of oil, electricity, foodstuffs, and fresh water they enjoyed in the 50s and 60s will be seen as an anomalous historical period when precious commodities were lavishly consumed, in the same way that we now view the high quality of wood and stone used to construct ordinary buildings in the last century.

City life was once mediated and stabilized by social and cultural groupings that occupied particular districts. Established historic and ethnic communities often played the largest part in fostering an individual's sense of identity and personal angle of perception for relating to the city as a whole. These zones of security and belonging have been seriously eroded or completely destroyed and replaced by growing wastelands of anonymity and fear. Their loss is a main reason why cities are less convivial and more threatening.

Although cities as we know them are on the verge of collapse, people aren't aware of the great changes that are coming. Media coverage is restricted to isolated situations like the plummeting decline of Detroit or abysmal lack of public services in East St. Louis, and politicians are reluctant to air the bad news even as they quietly move to the suburbs. In fact, the city is at a point of major transition. We are beginning to see an historical shift comparable to the birth of the modern industrial city in the late 18th Century. Urban people will be obliged to undergo a thorough transformation. To reclaim a positive outcome from deteriorating situations, city dwellers have to become "urban pioneers" in a concrete, steel and glass wilderness, developing new urban forms and remaking their own lives as they simultaneously recreate the urban landscape. To do this they need to learn new skills, redirect their energy and inventiveness, and align their efforts with the more self-reliant and sustainable vision offered in A Green City Program.

The profile of an urban pioneering life includes these elements: working several part-time jobs rather than a single-employment 40 hour week; growing some food on a continuous basis; recycling household wastes and water; refitting dwellings for energy conservation and maintaining some means for producing energy from renewable sources; restoring wildlife habitats; reducing or eliminating the use of a personal automobile; developing new cultural expressions that reflect bioregional and planetary themes; and participating in a neighborhood council to decide everything from planning and justice to social services and celebrations. It will replace the often deadening and escape-seeking urban existence of the present with stimulating, highly varied and creative pursuits that are more related to artists and naturalists than to factory and office workers. Even in a densely populated metropolis, these new urbanites will be able to

claim personal home-neighborhood-villages and be fully involved with them. Many people are already doing some of the things that lead to this transformed urban life. When most people are doing all of them, urban-dwelling will be much richer and more livable.

In a municipality dedicated to carrying out a Green City Program, the citizenry could have much greater interaction with government than at present. To accomplish recycling goals, for example, people wouldn't merely put out materials to be collected. They would expect the city to help create jobs by assisting groups and businesses who remanufacture products from those materials, and to purchase them whenever possible (with preference for, etc.) preferably from neighborhood-based companies and cooperatives. The government would be viewed as an instrument for carrying out the residents' intention to make the city self-reliant and sustainable.

† he future prospect for cities is at a critical juncture. If allowed to continue in their present course, the detrimental effects on people, bioregions and the planetary biosphere will soon reach an intolerable point. Currently, 850 million urban people worldwide are squatters: 50% of Third World city-dwellers have no plumbing or electricity. By 2000, the number of squatters will more than double to over 2 billion with a similar acute increase in those living without rudimentary necessities. A nightmarish scenario with billions crowded into urban heaps and living in despairing poverty has already begun. It will surely proceed to even worse stages of routine breakdowns in production and distribution of essential human requirements, collapse of basic infrastructures, extreme conflict between social and economic groups, and governmental chaos.

There is a saving alternative to this painful outcome but it requires a thorough transformation in the purpose of cities and the ways that people live in them. Bioregionally-oriented governments and ecologically-conscious residents carrying out Green City Programs can end and even reverse the present ruinous trends. Rather than destroying the bases for obtaining resources, we can develop renewable energy, recycle materials and water, and produce food within cities themselves. Rather than destroy natural areas, we can maintain and restore habitat for native plants and animals and increase the number of green spaces. Rather than watch urban areas become more anonymous as they become larger, with more violence, lack of jobs and homelessness, we can empower neighborhoods to carry out community services on a local, personalized and mutual basis.

Cities must change soon and in profound ways, and this huge metamorphosis can be the occasion for a positive shift in consciousness that harmonizes the needs of society with those of the natural systems that ultimately support it.

Peter Berg is a writer and director of Planet Drum Foundation. He is currently working on opening a Green City Center for San Francisco.

Abandoned car on Maui.



photo: Judy Goldhaft



# urban recycling: collection to source conservation

5 EXPLORING  
URBAN  
FRONTIERS

BERYL  
MAGILAVY

**h**ike through the residential sections of San Francisco's Haight Ashbury District any Tuesday morning and you'll find the sidewalks dotted with blue plastic containers stuffed with newspapers, beer bottles, and tin cans. Around nine o'clock a specially designed, high-tech recycling collection truck shoehorns itself along, stopping in front of nearly every three-story Victorian lining narrow, tree-lined streets. San Francisco's comprehensive residential curbside collection program, not yet quite city-wide but well on its way to being the largest municipal program in the country, has brought recycling to town in a big way. Participation rates have exceeded expectations.

It would be tempting to dust one's hands after a good decade's work and think "Ah, recycling! That one's at least been a success." But sit in the hearing rooms when the costs of municipal programs are being argued; peer into late night windows at non-profit recyclers trying to figure out how they're going to make payroll; try to find a recycling company willing to take the more obscure containers marked "recyclable," and it becomes clear that the Green nirvana of a reuse society is still pretty far off.

For many people "recycling" means collection. Whether it's the community recycling center, a curbside collection program, or vending machines in front of the neighborhood supermarket. When the bottles go down the chute, "recycling" has occurred. But collection is only one part of the process, and recycling won't be a success until it is perceived more broadly.

Cities are going to have to accept that, as the word itself implies, recycling isn't a solitary act, but a circle of behavior that touches every stage of the act of consumption—from purchase, through use, reuse, recyclables collection, distribution, remanufacture, and sale again as a product with recycled content. Without the circle of remanufacture and subsequent sales, collection has no economic ground on which to stand.

Early recycling advocates, faced with a solid wall of indifference to their resource conservation enthusiasm and rightly figuring that you have to start somewhere, concentrated their activities on getting

those collection programs started. Inspired by Earth Day in 1970, housewives in the Richmond District of San Francisco started collecting recyclables in boxes on front porches and transporting the materials to East Bay markets in private vans and Chevys.

Over the next couple of decades, nonprofit recycling centers began to appear around town, staffed often by volunteers, whose small collection could be absorbed into the existing used-materials infrastructure. Then came the Great Filling Up of the Landfills. Cities all over the U.S. got religion and started collection programs—municipal collection programs—with a tax base and enormous tonnages. With no significant change in the economy's interest in used materials, and all that new collection, the bottom dropped out of the materials markets.

Earth Day 1990 came and went, and marketing professionals all over the country got religion and started selling Green. Suddenly your plastic shampoo bottle sprouted curling triangular arrows and the words "recyclable container." Catalog orders arrived cushioned in "Recyclable Polystyrene—It's Better Than Paper!" with a little enclosure note lauding the environmental purity of the sender. There are a few collection programs in the U.S. that accept shampoo bottles and styrofoam "popcorn," but only a very few. In San Francisco today, neither product will find a recycler willing to accept them.

The market slump and mismatch between theoretically and actually recyclable are both traceable to the immature state of recycling in America. All we're doing so far is collection. We have to follow through on the rest. We have to develop programs for distribution, remanufacture, and sales of recycled products.

Distribution in a recycling context involves getting materials from the consumer to a collector to a processor and back to market, the economics of which are closely linked with the density and intrinsic worth of the material. Styrofoam and other plastics are light and very cheap. In parts of the coun-

try far from plastics reproducers, their intrinsic worth does not yet approach the cost of collection and shipment. San Francisco Community Recyclers estimates their cost to handle many types of plastic containers (buying it from the public, sorting, baling, and storing it) at 8-10¢ a pound. Local markets offer 1-2¢ a pound for the small bales a nonprofit collector such as this can produce.

Remanufacture and sales of recycled products are obviously inextricably linked, and their success determines the success of collection programs. What fine-paper manufacturer would risk converting to post-consumer recycled fiber, with its occasional specks and shorter fibers, without a strong indication that the letter-writing public would tolerate it? What newsprint mill would invest in major de-inking capacity when major newspapers like *The Washington Post* still use as little as 2% recycled fiber in their editions? (As an illustration of what's possible, *The Los Angeles Times* uses 75% recycled fiber.) Until there is a clear market demand, remanufacturing capacity will not expand to keep pace with the availability of collected materials, prices will remain low and the economic viability of collection programs will be taxed.

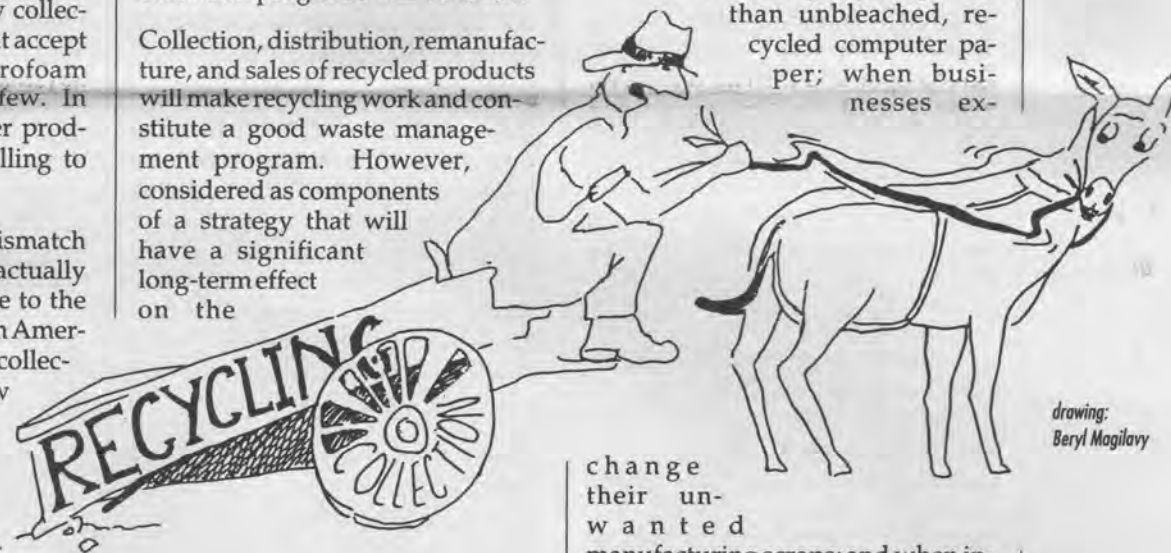
Collection, distribution, remanufacture, and sales of recycled products will make recycling work and constitute a good waste management program. However, considered as components of a strategy that will have a significant long-term effect on the

an ecological point of view is to remove materials as slowly and renewably from the planet as possible. Recycling really achieves its highest ends when its practice reduces the need for virgin material in the production process.

Many people working in the recycling process are becoming painfully aware of the necessity to include distribution, remanufacturing, sales, and source reduction to their recycling collection programs, but real change is just beginning. The states of Connecticut and California have recently passed legislation requiring publishers of newspapers to use recycled fiber in increasing percentages over the next few years. Purchase agents for the city of San Jose, California are required to specify the percentage of recycled content in anything they purchase. An increasing number of municipalities have switched to recycled paper for all their official correspondence; San Diego, California requires that any proposals sent to them be on recycled paper as well.

These are small, good steps, but if they are to be effective in establishing a true resource conservation ethic, they must be merely the seed from which a fundamental change in consumer behavior grows. The day it's common to see people carry their own collapsible cups from cappuccino take-outs; when they refuse to buy anything other than unbleached, recycled computer paper; when businesses ex-

*"Consider any purchase, from a new shirt to a second car. Is the purchase necessary in the first place? Could this purchase be replaced by an item you already own, repaired or modified?...This examination is the heart of a resource conservation/recycling program and raises it above waste management."*



drawing:  
Beryl Magilavy



health of the planet, they lack an essential additional element. Successful recycling will only solve the landfill problem and create wealth. Adding a comprehensive look at the original purchase will turn a waste management program into a resource conservation program.

Consider any purchase, from a new shirt to a second car. Is the purchase necessary in the first place? Could this purchase be replaced by an item you already own, repaired or modified? Is the purchase reusable and/or refillable? Is it free of excessive packaging? Are it and its container recyclable? Are they made from nonpolluting, recycled materials?

This examination is the heart of a resource conservation/recycling program and raises it above waste management. Using materials efficiently once they become components of consumer goods is important, but the fundamental issue from

change their unwanted manufacturing scraps; and when industrialists design products around secondary materials before considering virgin resins or fibers; then we will have fulfilled the promise begun by the recycling collection programs of the 1970s and '80s.

As one organ cannot carry on without the rest of the human body, so recyclables collection cannot succeed without distribution, remanufacturing and sales of recycled products. As a physically complete body is useless without a mind and will, so recycling is pointless without the source reduction element that is the implied goal of all the rest. With public leadership by truly conservative consumerism and pressure on current manufacturers who don't support the aims of recycling, we can reduce the impact cities have on their regions and humanity has on the ecosystems of the planet as a whole. Recycling will have become Resource Conservation and cities will have begun to become Green.

*Beryl Magilavy is executive director of San Francisco Community Recyclers and coauthor of A Green City Program for the San Francisco Bay Area and Beyond.*

## announcement

### Green Belt Movement of Kenya

The Green Belt Movement of Kenya is an indigenous grassroots environment campaign with tree planting as its main activity. Although its objectives are many and varied, trees have been used as the focal point around which other environmental issues are discussed and brought to the attention of the public and decision makers. Trees have become the symbol of hope and a living indicator of what needs to be done in order to realize environmental rehabilitation and conservation and to ensure sustainable development.

The project was developed under the auspices of the National Council of Women in Kenya in 1977 and has grown to become a program that approaches development issues holistically; it endeavors to build on local expertise and abilities and to curb desertification processes in Kenya and throughout the African Continent. Wangari Maathai founded it with the idea of creating jobs and allaying city problems by working with women on positive actions. Since then, over 1000 tree nurseries have been established, producing millions of tree seedlings which have been distributed to small-scale farmers, schools and churches. Other accomplishments include the creation of many jobs in both urban and rural areas, a successful campaign for indigenous trees and shrubs with a survival rate of about 70-80% in the last ten years, involvement of approximately 50,000 women at nursery sites and production of two booklets and several films. If you are interested in supporting the Green Belt Movement or would like more information, write: The Coordinator, Green Belt Movement, PO Box 67545, NAIROBI—Kenya.





# making green city real for new York



graphic:  
Joanna Pertz

JEAN  
GARDNER

**i**nspired by the far-sighted Green City work of Planet Drum directors Peter Berg and Judy Goldhaft, I brought together a small group of New Yorkers with long track records of activism in January of 1989. It was the beginning of an election year for New York City and we hoped to transform frustration over its degraded environment into a campaign issue. Two years later that group grew into Environment '90 (now Environment '91), a coalition of over 250 organizations that include national environment leaders, local grassroots organizers, religious leaders, social justice activists, neighborhood people, educators and concerned citizens.

David Dinkins, the present Mayor of New York City, endorsed Environment '91's *Platform for the Future of New York City* before being elected. He then chose one of our steering committee members, Albert Appleton, as his Commissioner of Environment Protection. Joseph A. Fernandez, the Chancellor of Education, has set up a task force on environmental education in response to one of our Platform planks; a cable TV channel, proposed by Environment '91 to monitor the New York City ecology, is being seriously discussed by city agencies and grassroots groups.

Sounds good, doesn't it? But if you look carefully, all of the above Green City initiatives will take several years before they have a positive effect on the city and its people. A task force report on environmental education must first change educational policy before teachers can learn the subject and educate their students. Hopefully, these students will then alter their present behavior and, several years later, when they become adults, make environmentally-sound political decisions.

What, then, have Environment '91 efforts accomplished to date? Lots of people who care about the city's environment have been scurrying around and many words have been exchanged, either face-to-face, over the phone or by fax. But no physical improvement in the city or the condition of its people has occurred because of them.

The impact of words on the city is becoming more and more negligible. Words don't seem to mean much these days. The inflated promises of advertisers, the false rhetoric of public officials, and entertainment-style news reports have subverted words, made them cheap and slippery. One of the places hit hardest by this doubletalk is the city. Models and visions for solving problems are not difficult to come by, but the actual condition of cities seems to be getting worse.

Despite Dinkins' endorsement of Environment '91's platform, mega-development projects, initiated under former mayor Ed Koch and criticized by mayoral candidate Dinkins, are still going ahead even to the extent of expedited reviews for projects derailed by a recent State Supreme Court ruling. Mandatory recycling is being cut back. The storage in Brooklyn of radioactive and hazardous wastes one block from an elementary school with 1,200 students continues. The Natural Resource Group of the city's Department of Parks and Recreation,

charged with acquiring the remaining natural sites within the city and protecting its plants and animals, is being disproportionately cut back. In contrast to verbal exchanges, each one of these actions affects the city and its people quickly and negatively.

These anti-Green City phenomena make me wonder whether the Green City vision has been effective at all in New York City in the form given it by Environment '91. I'd say no. Besides the above events, there have been many other examples of urban degradation. Within the last year, laxness in overseeing oil transactions in New York City's waterways has resulted in five major oil spills

totaling over a million gallons in the Arthur Kill and the connecting Kill Van Kull off Staten Island. These waters, whose quality had improved since the 1972 Clean Water Act, are now more polluted; birds nesting on islands in this intense industrial area have been killed and small creatures living in nearby tidal areas have been smothered.

Am I being impatient? Perhaps it takes longer than two years to change urban conditions. But how long? According to the Worldwatch Institute, we have at most 40 years to change our ways or face irreversible social and environmental breakdown. At the rate things are changing in New York City, I am not con-

vinced we will make it. All this makes me wonder whether the format—a list of proposed changes to the city's environment—by means of which Environment '91 shaped its desire to make the city environmentally sound, is the right one for this moment.

The Environment '91 Platform was intended as a step towards New York's becoming a Green City. We even developed a 25 page accompanying document that spells out how to implement the Platform. But nowhere in these documents did we deal with the relation between ecology and economics. Yet it is economics that is given as the reason that the mega-development projects are going ahead, recycling is being slashed, radioactive waste is being stored in the city, and the Natural Resources Group is being cut back.

*"Green City plans need to be activated by the reality of economics."*

Economic reality has more than asserted itself as a major and dynamic player in shaping today's city but few Green City visions include it as a determining force. Green City plans need to be activated by the reality of economics. For instance, we all agree that Green Cities must be sustainable, which means that current cities must adjust their economic activity so it does not damage the natural systems supporting them. From a bioregional point of view, this means that the local ecology as well as the Earth's should be the framework for urban economic decisions, rather than the other way around as characterizes the present situation.

But it is not enough to activate Green City plans with economics. We need to implement these plans by making them a dynamic part of the physical reality of our cities. Green City plans, such as Environment '91's *Platform for the Future of New York City*, must move from being inert documents to living realities. I propose a new perspective similar to realizing that the Yin-Yang design, which many perceive to be a static symbol, actually represents a dynamic reality.

To vitalize Green City plans, they must embody the interchange between five crucial forces that constitute changing phenomenon we call home in each bioregion. These five forces are:

- 1** the natural functioning of home (ecology),
- 2** the managing of home (economics),
- 3** the selecting of home management policies (electoral politics),
- 4** the building of home (city construction/architecture),
- 5** and the way we live in our home (life styles).

We also need to explore the connection between existing cities and Green City visions in order to shape and implement actions that subvert present urban conditions. Then perhaps, our words can start to mean something again.

Jean Gardner, Co-Founder, Environment '91

## n.y.c. needs green tv

PAUL RYAN

**n**ew York City's Office of Telecommunications is now deciding how to allocate five city-wide municipal television channels. Environment '91, a coalition of over 250 groups, is calling on the city to dedicate one of these channels to the environment. Here are three reasons why:

**The Seriousness of Our Environmental Situation.** The respected Worldwatch Institute predicted the Earth could only endure another 40 years of overpopulation, ozone depletion, rainforest destruction and global warming. And then? Then we pass a threshold of irreversible environmental destruction. The door to a healthy life on Earth deadbolts behind us. We watch our grandchildren garbage-pick their way through life in ecosystems that are terminally ill. Already there are alarming reports of forest dieback in the Eastern Woodlands from Carolina to Canada. Current crime in New York City is horrible. But what kind of horrible crime would it be to collapse the very ecosystem that sustains our air and water?

**The Nature of Television.** Television enables us to monitor events simultaneously with others. This is what television does best. Whether it's a World Series, a world crisis, or weekend events, television tunes us in to what's happening. The ecosystem that supports this city is an ensemble of recurring events: the ebb and flow of the Hudson Estuary, the cycle of freshwater lakes, the changing of seasons, the migration of birds. A television channel dedicated to the environment would give us all a window on what's happening in our ecosystem. With a shared public perception of the environment in place, it will be much easier for the city government to develop and implement policies that sustain our ecosystem. It will be much easier for urban dwellers to cultivate practices that respect the environment.

**The Nature of New Yorkers.** Most New Yorkers might as well be living on a space platform. There is little appreciation of the fact that we live along the southernmost fiord in the world with a bewildering confluence of geological phenomena. We know the names of cars made in Detroit and Japan but we don't know the names of our native plants. We are strangers in a strange land. We are a muddle of immigrants in danger of melting down into a cultural and ecological disaster. If this muddle is ever to become a gorgeous mosaic, the background color has to be green. A municipal television channel dedicated to the environment could become a forum in which multicultural New Yorkers learn to respect, restore and reinhabit this part of the planet as members of the same human species.

*As of January, 1991, there has been no decision on this proposal but it has a lot of support. The EPA came out against it at a hearing held by the Office of Telecommunications because it challenges their authority; supporters include the Departments of Sanitation and Resources. There is no proposal deadline and funding is still a problem. Interested individuals contact Paul Ryan for more information.*

Please send letters supporting environment '91's proposal for a municipal television channel dedicated to the environment to:  
William Squadron  
Commissioner, Department of Telecommunications, NYC  
49-51 Chambers Street, Suite 720 New York, NY 10007  
Call: (212) 566-4152

Paul Ryan, Steering Committee, Environment '91, (212) 662-8516

*"...the local ecology as well as the Earth's should be the framework for urban economic decisions, rather than the other way around..."*



## reach young people with green city theater

NELSON  
DENMAN

to be ultimately successful, Green City efforts must involve young people. They are the future voters, decision makers and stewards of our cities. The way they eventually assume those responsibilities will reflect the way they have been nurtured and inspired.

There is another reason for reaching out to young people: they have not yet been co-opted. The responses of many adults when faced with a plea for ecologically responsible action are predictable. They rationalize and equivocate in ways we've all heard: "It will increase my taxes!", "I don't want to take public transportation", "Recycling is inconvenient", "I'm too old to change my lifestyle", "Grow my own food? In the city?" Young people, however, are uncontaminated by adult experience. To borrow a phrase of Gregory Bateson, in them, as contrasted with adults, "The processes of ecology are not mocked."

The Green City effort needs to enlist the help of young people because they have boundless energy to commit to this work. They are idealistic and not yet cynical. In the 60s, youth were deeply involved in the civil rights movement. In the 70s, they helped stop the Vietnam War. In the 80s, they demanded that colleges and universities liquidate immoral investments. In the 90s, young people have as yet no compelling, unifying cause [Editor's Note: We've suddenly got one in the Persian Gulf however]. We've got the cause and the cause needs them.

How can young people be reached most effectively? Young people (and many older people too!) will respond viscerally rather than intellectually. Up until now, too little of our outreach has been by means of the arts. We need to broaden our approach. What kids need are ecological heroes and heroines, inspiring role models who raise for them

the stakes of what it means to be truly human. In the Middle Ages the miracle and mystery plays movingly presented the story of Christianity to illiterate peasants. They couldn't read, but they got the message. Similarly, Green City Theater can involve young people in our cause by giving the concepts, in Shakespeare's phrase, "a local habitation, and a name."

This fall in Santa Fe, Chris Wells, regional director of the All Species Project, Ken Cohen, a fine actor, and I set out to establish the foundations of a new mythology. Our aim was to bring Green City concepts alive by presenting them in a visual, dramatic and musical form. We created the musical drama "Upstream and Downtown: Earth Child Builds A Green City" to make them immediately accessible to young people. The appeal of drama and seductive magic of music make reflection almost unnecessary. Intuitive excitement and imagination take over.

In this obviously symbolic drama, a young boy decides to follow a stream to its source. There he encounters a wolf who teaches him about Aldo Leopold's biotic pyramid, the new three "R's" (Recycling, Replanting, Redesigning), and how to live a balanced life. The boy is late for school, but before he leaves, the wolf gives him an "earth suit" and names him "Earth Child." He immediately baptizes the children in the audience "Earth Children." "You've got a job in town!", wolf tells Earth Child. When Earth Child hikes back to the city, cars, toxic waste, deforestation and trash take turns knocking over the biotic pyramid. In each successive scene Earth Child needs help, and it comes in the form of students in green tunics called, appropriately, the Greens.

Students from Agua Fria Elementary build their own biotic pyramid.



photo: Esther Marion

They arrive in response to audience shouts of "Call the Greens!" to clean up the messes and provide ecological alternatives that receive enthusiastic applause each time. Clearly the implicit as well as the explicit message of the play is that cities need help.

The play ends with this song:

### green city

Verse

Walking around the town last night  
I had a crazy dream;  
I dreamt that all the cars were gone  
And bicycles took the scene.  
I dreamt that rooftop gardens  
Grew vegetables up to the sky.  
I dreamt that solar energy  
Cooked my piece of pie.

Chorus

What do we need? (young people yell) Green City!  
What do we need? Green City!  
What do we need? Green City!  
We need Green Cities all around.

I put in a garden  
Down at the local school.  
Trees sure keep things cool.  
We planted some local bushes,  
And we planted some regional trees.  
We've got ponds collecting water  
Attracting all the birds and bees.

What do we need? Green City! (3 times)  
We need Green Cities all around.  
(Copyright 1990, Nelson Denman.)

Nelson Denman, the author of Verde Santa Fe, A Green City Program, is available to consult with groups interested in producing Green City Theater. He can be reached at (505) 982-5723.

## greenplanning in cayuga bioregion

PAUL GLOVER

for many years, ecologists have been opposed because we have protected forests and swamps more eagerly than jobs. Yet Green Cities will be dynamic not only for celebrating trees, oxygen, clear water, delicious food, natural beauty, family, fragrance, color, harvest, texture, poetry, quiescence, sex, love, invention and sun.

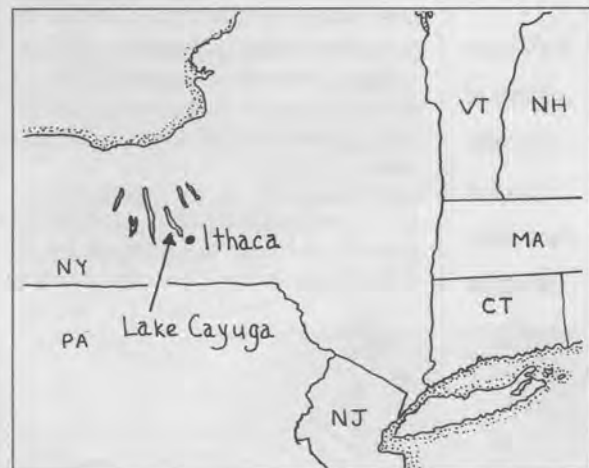
Ecocities will become centers for the creation of wealth which restores the Earth. The Green Cities Movement can already embrace thousands of job initiatives established in hundreds of U.S. communities. There are environmental banks, factories, worker coops, foundations, marketing associations, investment funds, trusts, business indicators, community development corporations, neighborhood organizations, municipal and district regulations, utilities, builders, libraries, warehouses, wholesalers, retailers, candidacies and networks which are

dedicated to job creation and basic production (food, fuel, clothes, homes and utensils) that provide durable and recyclable necessities from renewable regional resources, that clean up water and air, that plant more than is cut, that revive living culture, that offer youngsters positive social choices, that allow citizens to work with enthusiasm and gain greater security.

A metropolis doing all these things at once, maximally, would be an ecology theme park, a fabulous example of what cities must become. Since every bioregion has distinct capacities and limits, bioregional possibilities need to be translated into nuts-and-bolts transitions for each community. This is the role of greenplanning: to systematically and democratically weave nature

into cities and their economies.

I've been compiling a portrait of greened America, to be featured in a forthcoming bioregional report, *Ithaca Money*, showing how natural resources flow through the Ithaca, New York area (Cayuga Bioregion) from throughout the world. It will primarily describe how our region can change to make ideals real. The first report, *Ithaca Power* (16pp. tabloid, full color), relies on diagrams and cartoons to show where all fifteen fuels used in our watershed come from, how they're distributed and used, and how Ithaca could become energy self-sufficient. Correspondence and information (legislation, community successes and experiments, architectural and public works specs, databanks, etc.) that share these aims are welcomed.



map: Judy Goldhaft

Paul Glover studies bioregional economics and metropolitan ecosystems and is author of *Los Angeles: A History of the Future* (Eco-Home Press), available for \$4.50 postpaid from the same address. Copies of *Ithaca Power* are available for \$3 (U.S.) from Greenplanners, 1399 Slaterville Road, Ithaca, NY 14850. Donations to this project are tax-deductible when made to Project Growing Hope/Greenplanners.



portland needn't be a rainy los angeles

PATRICK  
MAZZA

**PATRICK  
MAZZA**

ooking west into the core of Portland from Mt. Tabor, the greenness of the rainy city at the confluence of the Willamette and Columbia Rivers is striking. Several hundred feet below, a tree canopy partially covers the older, single-family home neighborhoods of Portland's Eastside. Across the Willamette, the verdant Tualatin Mountains frame and dwarf the skyscrapers of Portland's downtown. Not far from the city center begins Forest Park, a wild nature corridor thick with trees running many miles north up the Tualatins. The park represents one of the largest natural areas in any North American city. Deer, bears and moose can be sighted there.

East of Tabor, forested buttes pop up from the metropolitan floor. Beyond the urban growth boundary the Cascade foothills rise to the stunning volcanic pyramid of Mt. Hood. Awe and respect are fortified by the vista of Hood's twin to the northeast, cratered Mt. St. Helen's, which recently burped

loopholes exist in the form of a ring of "exception lands" outside the boundary where some development is possible, and there is no growth boundary on the rapidly developing Washington side of the Columbia River. Many question whether Portland can retain its famed quality of life in the face of a one-third population increase. In fact, a strategic planning process being undertaken by Portland's civic leadership, Portland Future Focus, has picked growth as one of the six critical issues facing the region.

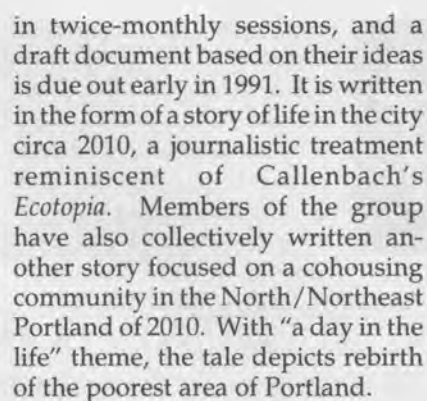
## People in Oregon



With so many elements of a Green City vision present in local policy and political culture, Portland has a claim to being one of the "Greenest" of cities. Yet conventional growth patterns and mindsets are also strong. For example, though elements of city planning are sympathetic to Green ideas, others are stuck in in the industrial-era rut. Some planners are hyping construction of a new freeway around the western suburban ring. That has sparked formation of a citizens' group called Sensible Transportation Options for People. Originally focused on the proposed freeway, STOP is expanding its concerns to transit and land use issues in general.

Suburban growth is also a significant land use problem. It is quickly chewing up forests, wetlands within the growth earcutting and development rapidly suburbanizing the Valley west of Forest Greening to cut off a vital corridor between the Coast Range and the Coast Range park. Local ecology is being backtracked in the way. To preserving places in a growth the Friends and Advocates of Natural Area organizations in 1990. FAUNA broad support among key bureaucracies.

STOP and FAUNA are good examples of activist groups taking the Portland region's existing environmental sympathies further. Any number of other groups are also working on ecological transformation of the area, notably the Friends of Trees, an urban greening group, the Columbia-Willamette Greens and Green City Vision. The latter group has been meeting now since March 1990 to brainstorm a picture of a Greener Portland. A total of around 100 people have participated



The next steps for Green City Vision are finalizing its brainstorm document and becoming citizen shadows for the Portland Future Focus process. When drafts of the Future Focus action plans are released in spring, The Green City Vision group will analyze them from a Green perspective. Members hope to see final plans incorporating Green City ideas, and dealing with crime and education as well as regional growth.

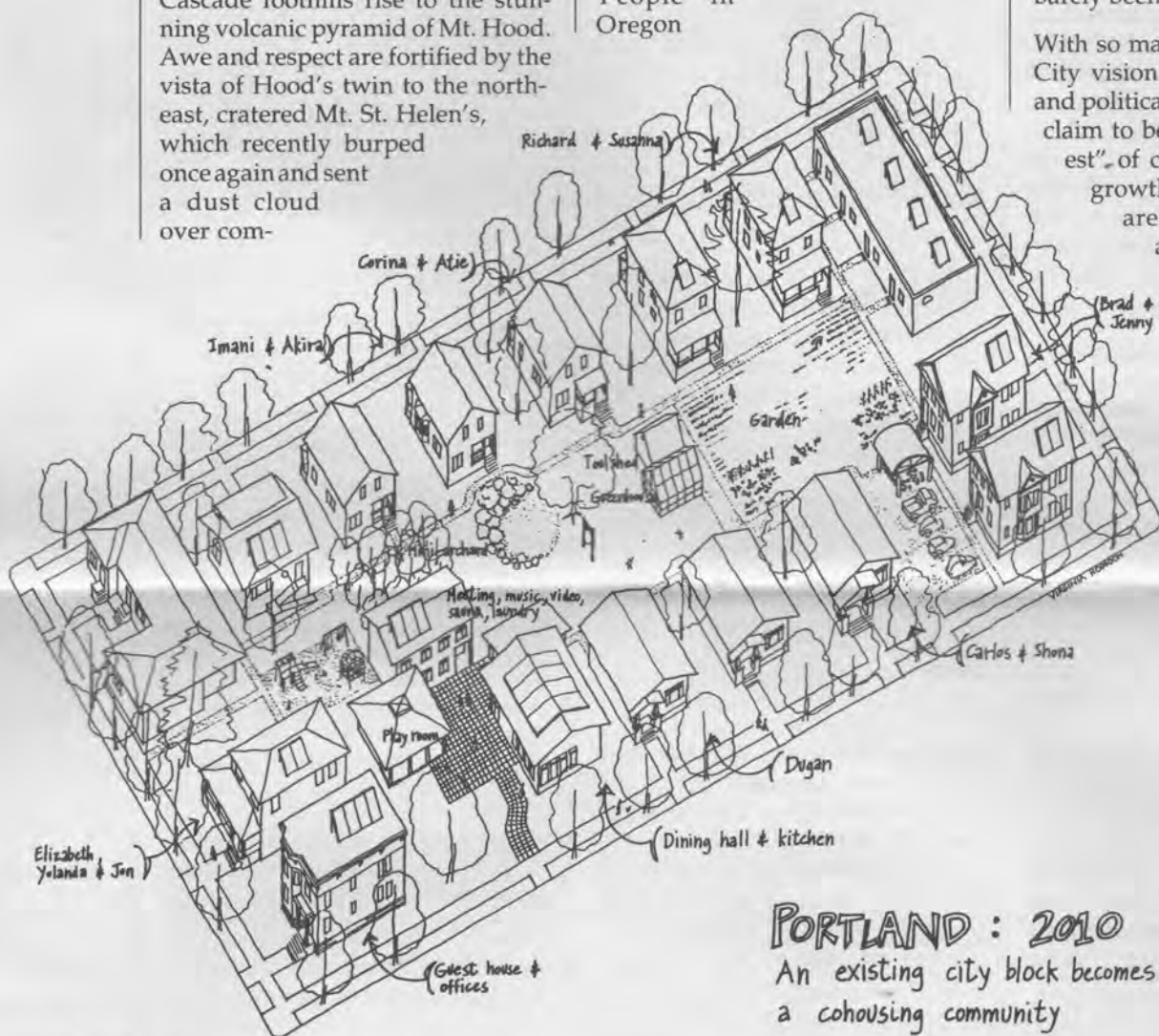
People active in neighborhood associations in North/Northeast Portland form Green City Vision's core. Faced with the spread of crack houses and homegrown versions of the Los Angeles-based Crips and Bloods gangs as well as general impoverishment and disinvestment in these neighborhoods, Green City Vision members view as empty any plan that does not address the need for social justice. While members are mostly White, they see outreach to the area's African-American community as vital. They know they must overcome attitudes such as that of one Portland African-American leader, who when asked to join the group said that Green Cities are fine, but poor people need jobs as well as trees.

The group's brainstorm will contain a section outlining a Green vision of social services which empower through creating new networks among poor people. The document also calls for development of land trusts and cohousing to preserve an affordable housing stock, and formation of worker-owned, ecologically sustainable businesses that could lift people out of poverty.

That different pattern of economic growth is the frontier for urban ecologists in Portland. The regional political culture supports recycling, mass transit, neighborhood power, nature in the city, renewable energy. But Green City also implies a new kind of decentralized, home-rooted, community economics that exists in Portland only in rudimentary form—a worker-owned recycling or bicycle repair collective here, a food coop or two there.

Meanwhile growth threatens to make Portland a kind of rainy Los Angeles. The Portland area is at the crossroads, and desperately needs to begin the shift toward a more ecological economics in the context of growth controls. Whether groups working on pieces of the puzzle can unite and inject a coherent vision of a greener Portland into the political debate will have everything to say about the region's future.

*Patrick Mazza is the Green City editor for The Portland Alliance.*



*drawing: Virginia Hodgdon*

munities to the east. St. Helen's stands as a reminder that one day, perhaps soon, Hood will free itself of the ski runs and resort complexes that dot its slopes. Exploding toward Portland, the eruption could be one of the great natural disasters of U.S. History, because the eastern rim of the urban growth boundary is inside a potential, 100-mile-wide blast zone.

Hood notwithstanding, suburban growth is likely to continue in all directions from the city center. Portland's 1.4 million population is now projected to increase by 500,000 people and an equivalent number of automobiles over the next two decades. The region is already receiving early warning signals in increasing ozone pollution and smog alert days per year; the situation is still bearable, but the trend is clear.

The urban growth boundary could restrain some of the worst effects—as part of Oregon's trailblazing statewide land use laws, it contains sprawl within defined lines. But

major city take their environment seriously. Ideas and policies with a "Green City" ring to them have broad resonance in the regional culture. After all, Oregon not only pioneered state landuse planning; it was the first to mandate beverage container and curbside recycling. To enhance light rail lines (built with funds originally slated for a freeway), regional transit and land use planners are pushing the "pedestrian pocket" concept. Envisioned are densely settled urban and suburban villages, friendly to walkers and bicyclists, mixing homes and businesses, arranged like pearls along light rail necklaces.

More recently, Portland created a bus-only mall through downtown, as well as a fareless square. Tearing out a freeway to create a park along the downtown riverfront, and making a former parking lot into an open public square are other often-cited elements of the downtown Portland renaissance. Beyond downtown, Portland is a city of strongly defined neighborhoods. All around the city, neighborhood associations involve many citizens

*"A different pattern of economic growth is the frontier for urban ecologists in Portland."*





# Can cities really be green?

DOUG  
ABERLEY

Over the last several years the term "green city" has arisen more and more as urban members of the bioregional and other activist movements have focused concern for ecological/political alternatives within the milieu of their own habitats. Those of us who live in wilder places have watched the growth of this agenda with an equal amount of dread and amusement. The dread is that an urban elite will concentrate their attention away from the notion of interdependent bioregions, to a more sinister linkage of preoccupied metropolitan "ego" topias. Amusement stems from the hilarity of the ridiculously oversimplified green city vision. The idea of free flowing urban streams, pere-

grine falcons eating pigeons on skyscraper roofs and basement trout farms as somehow cancelling out the intrinsic ecological weight of the urban fiasco borders on the bizarre.

Due to the attention green cities are garnering both within and without bioregional movement it is appropriate that the concept be looked at in a serious manner. To help start this examination the following questions and brief comments are posed. While there may be some amount of overlap in the questions raised, their purpose is to stake out the borders of what a green city debate must encompass.

**1** Is a "green" city a contradiction in terms? Large cities are the result of those with wealth and power concentrating and exploiting a succession of ethnic, age, or sex-based labor pools. Clustered around this core of disadvantage are upwardly mobile and wealthy classes who support cultural/recreation amenities that cloak the impacts of crime, giantism, conformity and gross manipulation that are the hallmarks of urban existence. There is the very real potential that a green city movement would simply be another narcotic to make cities bearable, while the basic premise of the city as the antithesis to the bioregional ideal is left unexamined. While one may be able to paint a green patina over the *raison d'être* of urbanism, you must always return to the fact that large cities are essentially exploitive.

**2** Is a green city "movement" a diversion away from bioregionalism? The bioregional movement is not quite 20 years old. During this time it has had to deal with a number of forces which have threatened diversion away from a dominantly biocentric and regionalist orientation. The green city idea is possibly a similar threat. The majority of those who are active in the bioregional movement either live or spend most of their time in large cities. It is natural that their proclivity will be to interject an urban bias into their work. This is fine, as long as the fundamental purpose of bioregionalism remains the reintegra-

tion of human cultures back into balance with millions of site-specific natural ecosystems. To pretend that any city with a population of 500,000 or more persons can ever fulfill this requirement is simply ignoring fact.

**3** What economic/social/political debts do cities owe to the hinterlands that allow them to exist? It is nearly impossible to relate the hardship that metropolitan populations have historically visited on rural regions of the planet. Genocide, commodity economies, resource depletion, water removal, flooding, pollution plumes, resort cancers, control of political agendas and capital, stealing of children, and a host of other crimes are the direct result of metropolitan dominance. There must be acknowledgement that this debt exists, and a commitment made to a massive repayment effort. A model for this repayment might be that large urban centers would "adopt" a number of rural regions. Urban residents would assist communities in these regions in the funding and construction of social/recreation/infrastructure amenities that would increase rural quality of life.

**4** What emphasis should be placed on reducing the size of cities so that they are not ecological burdens on the earth? The bioregional movement has always been ill at ease when issues of control are considered. While we all agree that ecological crisis is upon us, there is little agreement on how we should respond. It is relatively easy to prescribe recycling, coops and rooftop gardens. The ground is more thorny when entering debates which would evolve solutions of how redistribution of human wealth and population would occur. Is it totalitarian to limit the size of cities? How would residence in cities be regulated? By internal passport? Or is the answer simply to reorient public funding away from large cities, with a new accent placed on building dozens of smaller centers located more evenly across the land? As existing cities began to deteriorate, would people "vote with their feet" and move to what would obviously be the newer/safer/smaller settlements?

**5** What is the opportune size of a city? There is a rich literature which discusses just what the maximum size for a city should be. The most generally chosen figure seems to be in the 50,000-100,000 range. This number of people creates a density that can support "culture" while not bearing too heavily on its own and surrounding environments. Urban activity at this scale would spread humans into currently depressed regions, revitalizing scores of settlements that offer closer ties to the land and unique rural cultures. The uniformity of massed consumerism would be replaced by a much broader range of lifestyle choices. Small scale settlements would be more accessible to local political control, and being generally newer, would have the most modern, environmentally sound,

support systems available.

**6** Should a bioregionalist live in a metropolis? This is a hard question. Cities are wonderful in many ways. There are enough people jammed together that those of a similar persuasion can create subcultures that reflect political, sexual or lifestyle preferences. This ability to surround oneself with those who think alike is a double-bladed sword. Progressive cultural mutations can evolve. At the same time a comfortable social insularity can blind groups to the real critical issues of redistributing power/wealth and saving the planet. When you live in a smaller place, you tend to mix with those who have a range of beliefs and attitudes. Every day is an opportunity to inform others by example or argument of the bioregional alternative. In smaller places one also is better able to experience the gross inequities of the rural-urban relationship. The hardships of daily life tend to make one very keen for change. In a city, bioregionalists can become isolated in a scene that does nothing more than allow the converted to preen in front of each other. The potential for good intentions to be co-opted is high.

**7** What if city residents had to pay for the true ongoing costs of metropolitan impacts on the land and residents of rural regions? The amount of garbage, nutrient loading, pollution and other negative environmental impacts that cities generate is staggering. The financial costs of catering to the ills of urban populations is equally beyond comprehension. What if these costs were audited and billed to those who wanted to live in a metropolitan setting? Every month a "dis-utility bill" would be served on each urban resident. The billing would be broken down into categories such as Water Debt to "X" Valley, Toxic Waste Dump Debt to "Y" ville, Habitat Restoration Debts to A-Z Species, CO<sub>2</sub>/Ozone/Etc. Loading Debt, etc. ad infinitum. Adoption of this "true cost" system of supporting metro areas would quickly become a powerful incentive for population dispersal.

**8** How many negative impacts should humans bear in order to enjoy the benefits of the large metropolitan centers? There is an argument that says some amount of environmental and social degradation should be endured in return for all the benefits metropolitan environments afford, and that world class hospitals, research libraries, government centers, botanical gardens, zoos, aquariums, museums, restaurants, bookstores, cathedrals, opera, concerts, etc. can only be provided in one or two state/province

centers. This reasoning may have been correct prior to the 1920s, but does not hold up in the 1990s. The use of technology as a force of decentralization would allow hundreds of regional centers of excellence to be located across the continent.

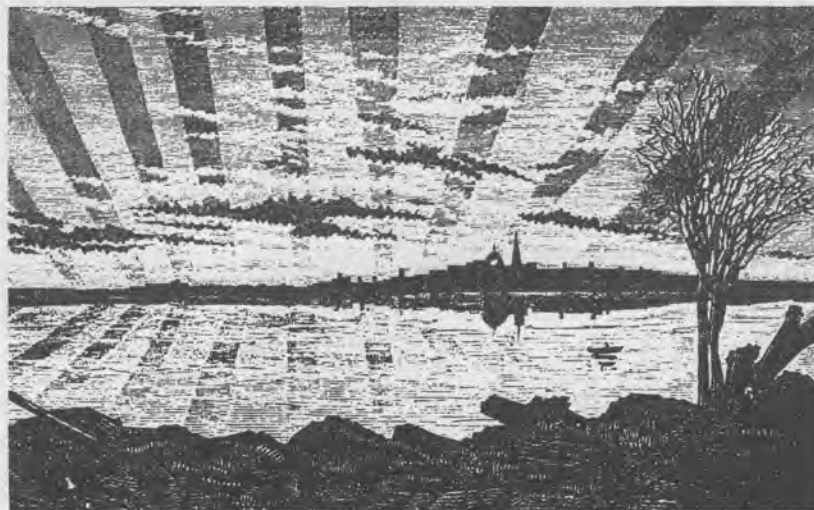
**9** Should cities simply be accepted as the dominant human settlement preference and every effort be made to make them "green?" Should it be accepted as inevitable that metropolitan areas will continue to be centers of power, population, and government subsidy? Should rural regions accept that metropolitan dominance exists, and do the best they can to survive within this constraint? Is greening of the status quo the most realistic option that can be achieved? Is there a realistic potential for metropolitan areas to be reconfigured into locally controlled and ecologically integrated neighborhoods? These questions take us back to the cold reality of 1990s North America. Regardless of the ideal bioregional vision, are we trapped in a situation where the momentum of metropolitan expansion is a juggernaut that is impossible to stop? What good is bioregional prescription when confronted with forces of urbanization that have dominated human settlement preference for 500 years?

There is of course a flip side to the championing of rural regions. Small settlements can be boring, cause waste of energy because of distances that must be travelled for services, they spread rather than concentrate destructive human activity, and harbor a republican boosterism that is the antithesis of the anarcho-environmental ideal. They are horribly set in their ways, are cautious with newcomers and new ideas, and tied to physical and cultural landscapes that defy quick consumption. Regardless of these endearing quirks, smaller settlements are inherently more accepting of the bioregional alternative. The fundamental bioregional qualities rural communities exhibit are 1) they are of a size that allows reduction/elimination of pollution and wastes, 2) they do not inherently rely on colonization of hinterlands for their survival, 3) they have the potential/history of sustainable integration with local supporting ecosystems, and 4) they are honest to the ideals of our bioregional vision.

In light of this first review of issues related to the "green" city debate, we must accept the responsibility of rigorous and continuing discussion.

Doug Aberley is a ruralist and regional planner living in the Skeena River Watershed of Hazelton, B.C.

*"What if city residents had to pay for the true ongoing costs of metropolitan impacts on the land and residents of rural regions?...What if these costs were audited and billed to those who wanted to live in a metropolitan setting?"*







map: Judy Goldhaft

## european correspondence

## LATVIAN GREEN MOVEMENT

Having recently become a member of Planet Drum, I would like to share with you some information about my organization. I am a vice president of the U.S. chapter of the Environmental Protection Club of Latvia, or VAK-USA (in Latvian—*Vides aizsardzības klubs*). Latvia's largest grassroots environmental group, VAK has played a major role in the Latvian movement for political independence from the USSR, as well as in the creation of the Green Party of Latvia. VAK-USA is a private nonprofit organization dedicated to providing assistance to VAK and other Latvian environmentalists, through material aid, translation and dissemination of information, and creation of environmental study and work opportunities for Latvians in the U.S.

The philosophy of VAK and the Latvian Green Party has much in common with the ideas expressed in your literature and in the other works I have read on deep ecology and bioregionalism. This correspondence is particularly gratifying in light of the fact that too often "leftists" or "liberals" in the U.S. seem to have no understanding of the Latvian independence movement: they consider the Latvians more or less fascists because of their nationalism and their critique of communism/socialism. On the other hand, the most vocal support for Baltic independence often comes from "right-wing conservatives" like Senators Jesse Helms and Alfonse D'Amato, whose overall agenda is far removed from that of the Latvian Green Movement. And ultimately, neither the "left" nor the "right" seems truly to understand and respect the real issue at stake for the Latvians, which is not just the redrawing of geopolitical alliances to move Latvia out of the Soviet military empire and into the European/Japanese/U.S. economic empire, but rather genuine self-rule, decentralization, bioregionalism. "Liberals" are constantly arguing that the long-term preservation of some kind of Soviet "union" or "federation" is not only pragmatically unavoidable but also desirable. "Conservatives," meanwhile, are supporting U.S. corporations as they prepare to seize the new Soviet market, with its cheap labor force and lax environmental regulations.

And so I was delighted to read Michael Zwerin's comment in *Devolutionary Notes*, that "left and right is now ceasing to have any meaning whatsoever. We might try and look at the world with another perspective. A horizontal perspective. Big and little." And George Tukul's comment in *RTS #16's Reinhabitation in Hungary* that "a path is opening in Eastern and Central Europe where community memory is clearing itself from the shock of communism and where human needs can be satisfied by the imagination of local culture; it's a regenerative jump... to the Fourth World." Similarly, the Latvian Green Party Manifesto states: "We can foresee that neither production for the sake of the plan nor production for the sake of profit will be capable of solving the modern world's fundamental problems... We must develop a new worldview, a new value system... a new, alternative social model." The Manifesto also argues that "every system is more stable, the greater its internal diversity. Each people's ethnic singularity is a value and a treasure in and of itself... We categorically reject the policy of mechanical mixing of peoples and levelling ethnic uniqueness." When so many U.S. "liberals" link all forms of nationalism with Nazism, it is a real pleasure to see Michael Zwerin argue that "nationalism, once the vehicle of greedy scoundrels, has become... the good fight."

During the past 2-3 years, Latvians have taken advantage of *glasnost* to attend numerous Green conferences and meetings in Western Europe. As long as the political situation continues to move toward greater independence from Moscow, the Latvian Green Movement will continue to forge closer ties with bioregionalists throughout the world. Their mailing address is: Kalnciema iela 30, Riga 226004, Latvia, attention: Valdis Abols; telephone/fax 612-850. For information in North America, contact VAK-USA, c/o Martin Hildebrants, 8303 Haddon Road, Takoma Park, MD 20912, tel. (301) 589-1212.

Katrina Schwartz  
Cleveland Heights, OH  
Great Lakes Bioregion



## european correspondence

## THOUGHTS FROM EUROPE

There is an order. When we watch things grow, watch how they relate to others near them, we begin to understand the order.

Each tree in a forest is an individual, will grow as no other tree. Yet each tree carries the patterns of its species, will grow as that species grows.

Humans too are individuals, yet carry the patterns of their own species. They are not the same patterns, person to person, as they are not the same patterns tree to tree.

A cultivated forest is a predictable forest. Predictability works to the advantage of the few. Politics, economics and religion are the tools humans use to cultivate culture. The culture of the few becomes predictably the culture of all.

Nations cultivate culture, serve predictability, serve the few.

The patterns that humans carry are tribal patterns, the cultures that serve humans best, cultures that emerge from those tribal patterns.

Moving from place to place, a tribe follows its own patterns of settlement, its own patterns of use. The individual, where no other patterns are imposed, will likely follow the patterns of the tribe.

Nations impose patterns. A study of ecology must necessarily include a study of tribal patterns and imposed national patterns.

Bioregion is the beginning. Where possible, tribes sought out bioregions similar to those they had left. Tribal cultures were modified as they integrated with patterns of cultures that preceded them. National patterns were later superimposed by the few who benefited from such patterns.

Each tribe has its own value system, its own organizational principles. The organization of information determines its applicability. Tribal information communicates where it is applicable. The communication of imposed information is of little use beyond a consideration of who initiated it.

We are still attempting to identify the cultural patterns of the large single tribe that entered Europe several millennia BC from an unknown homeland in the east. That tribe, which spoke a language we believe to be the common source of all present European languages but Basque and Finnish, integrated with the tribes then habiting Europe. We are still attempting to reconstruct the patterns of

those tribes, to identify their contributions to the emergent cultures.

It is certain that those who preceded these later tribes contributed to the cultures that evolved, as did respective bioregions. Both urban living and agriculture were in place when the newcomers arrived.

The newcomers—we know them as the Indo-Europeans—included the Greco-Italic, Slavic, Baltic, Teutonic or Germanic, and Celtic peoples. Each have since evolved unique cultural patterns, while all have common earlier patterns, beyond their common language source.

Christianity emerged, an amalgamation of old and new cultural patterns. It was used politically to cohere otherwise divergent groups as nations were forcibly imposed on tribal peoples.

America evidences a continuity of European tribal patterns in its settlement and growth. The imposed single language and dominantly Teutonic culture in America have resulted in an intermixing of genes that at times suggests what the original Indo-European tribe might have been. But America is diverse, filled with tribes from all the planet. They continue to identify themselves. Some continue to function as tribes.

A true planetary culture will replace surface monoculture only as all tribes are able to gather, yet remain identifiable as tribes. Political boundaries will continue to shift until tribal nations emerge.

To incorporate another's lifestyle into our own creates a lifestyle that is as abstract and inapplicable, and as damaging, as the dependency economics of planetary trade.

We must understand from where our own values come. We must identify our own tribes and recreate economies and administrative systems that function to sustain and perpetuate those tribes.

We must, as individuals within our own tribes, learn who the others are. We must understand all patterned use of the planet as that use relates and effects change.

All tribes must continue. Our needs and desires must be our own. There is an order.

James Koller

Poet James Koller lives in Maine and frequently reads in Northern Europe.



Scythian Stag



## THEORY & GUIDELINES FOR HUNGARIAN BIOREGIONAL EVOLUTION

We must optimize cities, not enlarge them, since only oil is able to support the conversion to megalopolis, and is going to disappear sooner or later as a resource. The optimized city should rely on local resources, drastically reduce transportation, and construct from materials of the Earth: stone, earth, wood. It should produce its own solar energy collectors and small hydroelectric water plants. It should produce food by natural means rather than industrial methods.

We know how many condemned conventions, customs and traditions subsequently turned out to be indispensable instead of obsolete. To achieve the goals of frugality and satisfy the new necessities originating from them we must work together. We must become a different type of community system. This community cooperation cannot be permanently realized spontaneously, or by force or market command. New economics is beginning to realize that human society is, after all, not controlled to such a great extent by economic laws, as was previously thought by capitalism and socialism. The creation of infrastructure and national defense—the turning out of which is controlled by money—is responsible for the production of only half of the articles of consumption. The other half, e.g. housework, handicrafts, cooperatives, family maintenance, care for the elderly and home production is not controlled by money. Human society has to develop this latter sector if we are to survive.

But in order to do this nation states and their bickering blocks should be dissolved for bioregions. Namely, the Earth naturally divides into regions based on fauna, flora, climate, soil types, topography and the specifics of human settlement. Between these regions the rivers, watersheds, forests and deserts indicate life borders. Such regions will not be concerned with either creating nuclear arsenals or landless growth and would be exempt from the awful boom fluctuations of the global economy.

Bioregions would not be vassals of neighboring or distant mammoth states. They would be self-supporting and connected by transfer centers, not commerce. They would explore and introduce local-specific procedures and cultural forms taking care that they guaranteed self-reliance, high productivity, low polluting capability and the maintenance of local beauty.

The inhabitants would decide for themselves what they produce on territories used by them (those taken over for the purpose of administration), and what they should consume—considering location fundamentals. The transitional period would consist, for instance, of transnational corporations transforming into loose federations of locally supervised enterprises. All trade ventures would strive toward perfection, rather than over production. In this way they could maintain their local character. The reason bioregions would be concerned only with perfection is because their decisions would be based not on growth-oriented economic criteria, but rather on the criteria of frugality.

We must acknowledge that the problems we need to solve are not independent of each other and/or nicely connecting. There is no next chain link. We are struggling with a coiled up, simultaneous, sequential ball of problems. Their solution depends on what goals we choose. Only those who think in terms of goals are ever able to pick ones that are truly vital.

Géza Szathmáry lives in Budapest.

Translation from Hungarian by Katalin Lázár.

Géza Szathmáry

## REFORESTING BARCELONA

On the first page of the Planet Drum Book *A Green City Program* we read: "Cities needn't be monotonous carpets of concrete and buildings—places such as Barcelona in Catalonia, with its tree-lined central promenade are proof of that."

It's true that in Barcelona's city center we find "La Rambla," a beautiful promenade bordered by two lines of trees, but we can't forget that at one time it was a small river and is now occupied by underground transport and filled with concrete to make automotive mass-traffic possible. We also can't forget that many small towns surrounding ancient Barcelona have been absorbed and converted into suburbs. Until recently, those ancient towns also had tree-lined central promenades; now they are transformed into asphalted streets full of cars.

The municipality is interested in putting in sidewalk trees. We now have more than 100,000 trees of 76 species on Barcelona's streets—this represents six trees for every 100 inhabitants. But all these trees have to survive a very aggressive environment: soil covered by concrete and asphalt and air polluted by car emissions. Shadows projected by buildings also obstruct needed sunlight. All Barcelona's trees appear unhealthy; a great number of them lose their leaves not in autumn but in summer!

Barcelona has a Municipal Parks and Gardens Service devoted to tree care, but I've lived here since the late sixties and have never seen any work to enrich the small area of soil surrounding the trees with organic matter. (The area free of asphalt around the trees is less than one square meter.) On the other hand, every inhabitant of Barcelona throws away .5 kilograms of organic matter per day. This organic fraction of municipal solid waste is mixed with all kinds of toxic wastes, and then landfilled or incinerated to pollute soil and air. Composting only a small fraction of this organic matter would be enough to enrich all the trees in Barcelona.

Another unsustainable practice the inhabitants of Barcelona are involved in is the purchase of exotic species at Christmas, especially small fir trees, to adorn their homes. Every Christmas more than 500,000 fir trees are sold here. All these

trees are grown in a very forced way, using great amounts of chemicals. Some are cut down and sold, others are sold with their roots in flowerpots. After Christmas, these trees are discarded as wastes and finish their lives in a rubbish dump.

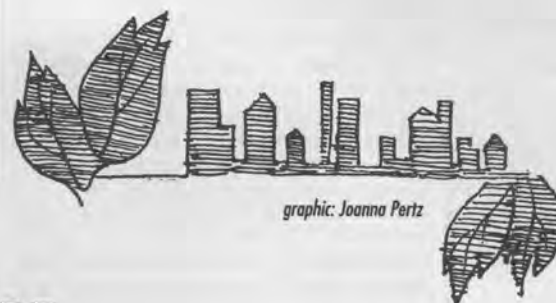
The ecology movement has been campaigning against this practice since the early eighties. As a result, city officials now call on the citizenry to collect these trees. But despite replanting efforts, only a very small fraction of them survive after having been maintained in an artificial environment more than 20 days. The ecology movement is lobbying to transform this wasteful practice into a sustainable one by growing indigenous trees to reforest the country and cities.

For people who consider trees to be sacred beings, it is hard to live in a city whose inhabitants don't take care of them. Only a few people are converting the small area of soil surrounding street trees into small tended gardens. The majority of people now inhabiting Barcelona ignore trees living and suffering on city streets. The greening of industrial cities will only be possible when the citizenry learn to see trees as sacred living beings with just as much right to live as humans.

We must learn to live like trees in a forest. We must also work hard to reforest cities. To do this we need to lift up the asphalt and concrete that monopolize all urban soil, imposing their inexorable dictatorship over people and natural systems. One way to heal this deep wound will be through the reintroduction of the forest into cities—from which they shall never leave.

Josep Puig

Josep Puig works with *Alternativa Verda* and is currently involved in promoting activities and awareness protesting the reenactment of Columbus' voyage scheduled to depart Barcelona in 1992.



## BIOREGIONAL BAIKAL WATCH

In Siberia, north of the Mongolian border, is the most spectacular freshwater lake in the world. Renowned for the purity of its water, it is known as the Blue Eye of Siberia. It is said to contain 1/5 of the fresh water on Earth, more than the five Great Lakes of North America combined. To visualize its equivalent, try scraping out the Central Valley of California to a depth of one mile. Then fill it in with fresh water and leave it for 25 million years with all the mountain streams pouring in, but only one outlet through the Golden Gate. Many strange creatures would inevitably appear with all that time for evolution and Lake Baikal has more than its share, including the world's only freshwater seal. Who knows how or when its ancestors arrived in the Lake? Add to that over one thousand species of fish, invertebrates, and plants found nowhere else on Earth, and at least 1600 other species that do occur elsewhere, and you have the most diverse freshwater ecosystem in the world. Baikal is home to a high percentage of the world's rare or threatened species; the threat comes, as usual, from human activities.

In August, 1990, approximately twenty assorted specialists from the USA and Canada joined a similar number of Moscow-based Soviet experts to travel to Baikal. Believe me, getting there was not half the fun. From San Francisco to New York, to Helsinki, to Moscow, and thence to Irkutsk is an arduous journey. One travels 2/3 of the way around the world to reach a place only 1/3 of the world's circumference distant from San Francisco (where I started the journey). From Irkutsk, a fascinating city on the shore of the Angara River, one must travel by boat to Baikal's north shore. But the day-long journey by hydrofoil reveals endless wild mountains and forests—much of it true wilderness. On reaching the town of Severobaikalsk on the northwest shore, we were met by local people from the North Baikal district and the Buryat Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic.

Baikal falls into several political jurisdictions. The southwest and south shores are in the Irkutsk

Oblast (province) of the Russian Federated Soviet Socialist Republic. The rest is in Buryatia, a self-governing republic within the RFSSR. The Buryats are a Mongol people with the heritage of Atilla and Genghis Khan—whose mother was born near the shores of Baikal. Also sharing the land are the Evenks, reindeer herders ancestrally related to Native Americans. We found them speaking in phrases reminiscent of those attributed to Chief Seattle or Standing Bear.

During the time we spent at Lake Baikal, we worked with the Soviets to reach an agreement on what was needed for its protection. We agreed that all should strive to see Baikal listed under the World Heritage Convention as an outstanding natural site receiving protection through UNESCO. We also agreed on a program for conservation and sustainable development of the Baikal watershed, an area the size of France. To help carry forth these ideas, a group called Baikal Watch was established as part of the San Fran-

cisco-based Earth Island Institute and Center for US-USSR Initiatives. Baikal-based Soviet environmental groups have joined with Baikal Watch in an international coordinating committee. Several members of the USA-Canadian contingent will be returning to Baikal in summer, 1991, to work with the Soviets on direct programs involving land-use planning and protection of nature reserves. Interested volunteers should contact Baikal Watch at Earth Island Institute, 300 Broadway, Suite 28, San Francisco, CA 94133. Tel. (415) 788-3666.

Oh yes, while we were there the new revolution in the Soviet Union was taking place. Democracy was rampant and free speech unbridled. A strong drive toward bioregional decision-making was apparent. One expects new ideas and politico-economic structures to emerge. [editor's note: let's hope they can continue given recent repressive policies.]

Ray Dasmann

Ray Dasmann is a renowned ecologist and bioregional thinker living in Santa Cruz, California.





"Various landforms making up the urban landscape are expressed in sustainable cities and become the basis of land use planning."

Urban areas are those human settlements with a concentration of population and a diversity of subcultures. The aim of urban development should be to promote diversity of subculture and land use. The variety of communities in the bionomy is echoed in a variety of subcultures within successful urban areas. When these areas are made up of self-managed urban bioregions they reflect the mosaic of communities in the bionomy.

Urban life has many advantages. Provision of roads and other services is cheaper in terms of both finance and resource usage and concentration of population allows a greater variety of services to exist. Relative anonymity in cities also allows more subcultures to develop and their members have relative freedom to experiment with new values and behaviors.

The almost universal belief that cities are bad is a reaction to the squalid conurbations created through industrialism and

the growth economy. The resultant pollution, alienation and violence present in cities are not inherent to the concept of large numbers of people living in close proximity. Rather, the social problem is that cities now promote alienation and powerlessness instead of diversity and self management.

Cities do have some inherent disadvantages. There is a temptation to rely on centralized administration and bureaucratization in the name of efficiency. Health risks may be increased as a result of overcrowding and too little contact with natural environments. There is also the possibility of loss of community identity and traditional cultures and cities becoming too reliant on imports to satisfy needs.

The efficiency of concentrated population is enhanced by participatory local government and avoidance of problems of centralization, alienation and powerlessness. A successful city will meet basic survival needs of the diverse sub-

cultures making up its population, without drawing too heavily on its rural base and natural resources. Basic survival needs can best be met by diversity of land use across the whole region surrounding and including the city. Cities have always drained the country of the cream of its talent and concentrated financial investment in urban activities. Decentralization of urban activities to country towns will relieve population pressure on urban areas, as development of vital country towns will make them more likely to hold and attract people and implies an increase in social diversity.

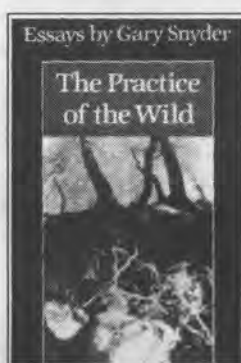
Conversely, a smaller urban population will free more land for traditionally rural activities within cities. Most cities were originally located to take advantage of good agricultural land but urban sprawl has now covered this prime agricultural land with green deserts called lawns. Many dead parks and underutilized land holdings such as church and university

properties will become active by being converted to urban farms or allotments. Increasing housing density will free up further land for agriculture or recreation. Urban agriculture will provide cheaper, fresher food to cities and increase the diversity of land use within them.

Various landforms making up the urban landscape are expressed in sustainable cities and become the basis of land use planning. Firstly, the city will be divided into bioregions based on river or creek drainage basins. Each bioregion will then have control of its own water catchment. Secondly, land gradients will become the basis for demarcating three land use zones within each bioregion. Flat and flood-prone land will include agriculture, steep land will incorporate forestry or wilderness, and mixed use zoning will cover the gentle slopes in between; land use will be sensitive to landforms.

The mixed use zone will include indus-

## reads and reels and reads and reels



### THE PRACTICE OF THE WILD

In the concluding essay of this wonderfully adventurous, instructive, and conceptually important collection, Snyder writes "this book has been a meditation on what it means to be human." That's a sweeping comment but not an overstatement since he means thoroughly human from the grand sense of our entire species down to primary experiences in his own life. *The Practice of the Wild* succeeds in adding some valuable distance to the trail of naturally engaged thought that has led from painting bison on European cave walls through the ever-present perceptions of Lao-Zi to Rachel Carson's vision of our imperiled biosphere.

One solid contribution is the distinction in "The Etiquette of Freedom" between what is meant by the terms nature and wild. Nature is a large enough idea to include "the whole physical world and all of its properties," and from that perspective along with glaciers and swamps, even large cities, highways and nuclear power plants are natural. But they are not all wild. Snyder points out that *wild* is usually negatively defined as *lacking civilization*, but should be appreciated instead for its unique and beneficial qualities in both nonhuman and human contexts. Some examples:

wild animals as "not tame, undomesticated, unruly" can be seen more positively as "free agents, each with its own endowments, living within natural systems;" *wild* individuals may be "unrestrained, insubordinate, licentious, dissolute, loose" from a civilized standpoint but in their terms they are "following local custom, style and etiquette without concern for the standards of the metropolis or nearest trading post. Unintimidated, self-reliant, independent, 'Proud and free';" *wild* behavior that is thought of as "violent, destructive, cruel, unruly" may also be considered "fiercely resisting any oppression, confinement, or exploitation. Far-out, outrageous, 'bad,' admirable."

Why is this significant? For one thing, confusing nature with wildness can lead to overlooking the fundamental role of wildness as a place "where wild potential is fully expressed, a diversity of living and nonliving beings flourishing according to their own sorts of order." It is increasingly urgent to recognize the difference between wild places and those that are human-controlled gardens (or wastelands). Snyder's hope for the future is summed up, "We need a civilization that can live fully and creatively together with wildness."

With this as a theme and a goal, he explores the ideas of wildness and freedom as they apply to living-in-place in "The Place, the Region, and the Commons." Bioregionally inclined readers will find a useful set of firmly put and memorable statements here like, "It is not enough to 'love nature' or to want to 'be in harmony with Gaia.' Our relation to the natural world takes place in a *place*, and it must be grounded in information and experience." And this ringing political credo, "Bioregionalism is the entry of place into the dialectic of history."

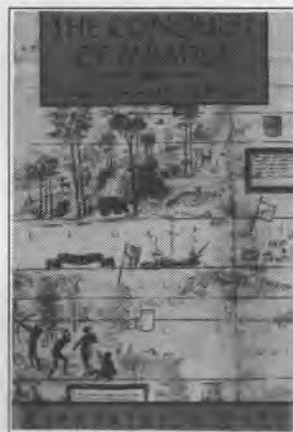
In "Tawny Grammar" these precepts are set in the practical world of teaching and preserving social and cultural values, particularly those of contemporary Inupiaq people on the Kobuk River in northern Alaska. Snyder mixes descriptions of mostly intact wild country with native school stories and accounts of conversations about "the ecology of language" in an engaging diary-like manner that actually demonstrates the wild practice of the book's title.

More levels of practice ranging from logging to Zen Buddhism and multi-species myth-telling are presented in further essays. Although these topics are partially reiterative of his previous work, it is all more definitive, seasoned, and surprisingly intimate in this up-to-date and widely drawn version.

We are in the midst of a civilization crisis over what humans think they need and the terms by which they intend to secure those things from the Earth. It is urgently necessary to review the nature and most essential characteristics of our species if we are going to make saving choices before being forced to respond belatedly and badly to ecological catastrophes. Gary Snyder has undertaken a significant part of this task on behalf of our wild souls.

Peter Berg

*The Practice of the Wild, Essays by Gary Snyder*  
• North Point Press • 850 Talbot Avenue •  
Berkeley, CA 94706 • 189 pps. • \$10.95.



### MYTH OF COLUMBUS VS. ECO-REALITY

Not just another aim at a long-dead textbook hero, this well-timed analysis of the much mythologized sailor Christobal Colón, a.k.a. Christopher Columbus, is adept history with an overdue ecological angle. By chronicling the life of Colón through his voyages and writings and presenting it with a vivid backdrop of both native custom as well as the daily life, influences and precedents being set in Europe's Middle Ages and Renaissance, Kirkpatrick Sale manages to take us on a *real* journey of discovery. *The Conquest of Paradise: Christopher Columbus and the Columbian Legacy* is an incisive, thought provoking and page-turning exploration of the historical, ecological and cultural forces at work behind this controversial protagonist.

So who *was* Colón? His writings were characteristically strained and they were so ignored at the time that many originals were lost. Sale continually reminds us that most of what exists is second or even fourth hand. Nonetheless, he manages an evocative portrait of the famous sailor that's well within the limits of available sources. We are provided with a thoroughly fascinating investigation of Colón as a distinct personality—including his family life, health and reputation as well as his noted instability, obsessions, complaints, millenarianism and deference to divine guidance.

According to Sale (and certainly one of the most compelling ideas in the book for this reader), an important influence shaping Colón was his lack of *querencia*, a Spanish term he may have known signifying "a deep, quiet sense of inner well-being that comes from knowing a particular place of the earth, its diurnal and seasonal patterns, its fruits and scents, its history and its part in your history and your family's." Colón was a man whose incessant restlessness could be traced to the fact that he went through life without a home—a consummate wanderer never inhabiting any environment for long and certainly in no way willing to *reinhabit* any place he may have claimed for the Spanish crown.

Many details still hotly disputed include Colón's actual intentions behind the historic voyage of 1492: whether or not he was sailing for a passage to Asia to meet the "Great Khan" or expected to reach "unclaimed" territory, and even whether he was actually Italian. But the more striking passages of this book describe glaring differences between worlds "Old" and "New." Sale achieves a compel-

ling picture of Columbus' Europe as steeped in the iconography of death, malaise, frequent famine and pestilence. Life was harsh, unpredictable and short on a continent already suffering the effects of war, corruption, deforestation, overgrazing, ecological despoliation and lack of hygiene.

A European cultural heritage inimical to ecological tradition underpins and defends the Columbian legacy; it landed with him on North America's verdant shores as assuredly as did he and his men. This is history given ecological context; not only did the clashing of cultures and attitudes between two vastly different worlds wreak profound human consequences, but the introduction of cattle and other outside species such as wheat, daisies, dandelions and nettles ushered in the beginning of what would be an unprecedented biological assault on and restructuring of local ecosystems.

What I found particularly startling was the fact that the first outposts established by Colón were so ill-conceived as to fall into ruin soon after their inception. Upon returning on a subsequent voyage to Española, he found most men he left had starved to death when all around them must have been the lush fruits indicative of an island paradise. They refused cassava and beans offered by native Tainos and viewed their sophisticated and complementary agricultural techniques without interest. Rather, they chose to forge this "new" land into a Little Spain, attempt to subsist on the familiar and ultimately perish.

Goldlust was of course the motivating factor and would eventually bring rapacious hordes following in pursuit of fame and easy riches. The nadir of which is illustrated by horrific accounts of soldiers "testing" their newly sharpened blades on unsuspecting Tainos and numerous other testimonials to theft, murder and exploitation. I won't dwell on the umpteenth literary passages Sale was able to locate consistently equating the "New World" with an innocent, ripe virgin ready for the taking by the willful and courageous hands of select and lusty Europeans, but I did find it interesting that *exploitation* was a term used openly and without negative connotation in these early days of imperialism.

This is not to say that all Europeans witnessed relentless exploitation of "the Americas" with equal enthusiasm. As a contemporary of Colón's and man of the cloth present during many atrocities committed against the Tainos, Bartolomé de Las Casas chronicled the disastrous effects of the meeting of these two cultures and appears to be the first European to openly question and denounce the tragic results. (Another cleric of the time present at an early settlement observed that grapes would not grow in such climes and argued in a frustrated correspondence that Christianity was perhaps also not meant to flourish there. This was probably the closest these first Europeans came to a bioregional perspective however.)

Other noteworthy examples of outspoken critics include the Abbé Guillaume Reynal, a well known French philosopher maintaining a grave view of the "discovery" in the late 18th Century. Sale summons his spirit for the book's epilogue in which he muses that the "discovery" represented a real chance for European salvation. We are reminded that ours is a history of resisting the truth—five centuries of it—and Paradise was most truly

## announcement

### Torri Superiori: A Proposition for Life

An intentional community is being created in the abandoned medieval village of Torri which lies between the Mediterranean and the Alps near Turin, Italy. A variety of options for participation include contribution of skills necessary to restore the site and run the community, summer work study in sustainable agriculture, financial investment partnerships, or brief vacations exploring the area.

The underlying vision is a multicultural, multi-generational community where residency, culture, work, art, and play mingle to create a unique and transformative life. For more information contact: Sede Operativa: C.so Vittorio Emanuele, 108-10121 Torino, ITALY. Tel. 011/56.10.563-51.72.27

(Thanks to Alessandro Palladini for translation help.)





try; commerce; entertainment venues and religious institutions; hospitals; educational institutions; housing and household gardens; parks, playgrounds and squares. Transport and service corridors will closely follow the keyline contour, making them easier to build and maintain. Storm water runoff from roads could be stored in cisterns under them to provide gravity-fed irrigation water, or channeled directly to agricultural land. Agricultural and wilderness areas will be within walking distance of most households.

Steeper slopes above the mixed use zone will become forestry and wilderness areas. Hilltops will be set aside as water catchments, oxygen farms, sacred sites or for energy-gathering facilities. Any

outstanding landforms, animal habitats or plant associations will be set aside as wilderness, that is, areas of minimum human impact. Examples in Brisbane are the bat colony at Indooroopilly Island, the cattle egret colony at Dobby Swamp, and the mangrove swamps on the bayside. This urban land use pattern will help create cities which provide for the survival of both their human and non-human populations.

The major agricultural zone will be below the mixed use zone where it can easily be irrigated from runoff or floods. Flood plains have better soils and are easier to cultivate than higher slopes, and will be made up of community gardens, allotments, orchards, nurseries, aquaculture systems, livestock keepers

and sporting ventures requiring flat land. Food, as well as timber, fibers, dyes and medicines will be produced here. Household and workplace gardens in the mixed use zone will further increase urban food production.

Each urban bioregion will then consist of medium to high density mixed use urban areas as well as intensively used agricultural land and wilderness. This triple-zoned self-managed pattern will increase urban land use diversity and create a sustainable city. Mixed land use within localized economies will help meet social needs such as identity, autonomy, togetherness, participation and meaning. This is best achieved through cooperative work in localized economies.

A self-managed, localized economy will create enough leisure time to allow cultural activities to blossom and satisfy the need for creative expression. There will be more participation and less consumption of entertainment and an opportunity for the diversity of human potential to express itself. There will be less distinction between cities and rural areas, and more land left untouched as wilderness. Human settlements, both urban



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and rural, will then become areas of cross-fertilization of ideas and subcultures which are essential to human adaptability to changing circumstances.

Veronica Rosalie Martin and Michael John Petter, The WEB, Inc.

This is a chapter from WEB's book *Come in Spinners* by V. Martin and M. Potter. It can be obtained in its entirety from The Secretary, WEB Incorporated, 142 Agnew St. Norman Park, Brisbane, AUSTRALIA. WEB is a membership association whose aims are: "To promote and assist the development of appropriate enterprises for the benefit of the community."



## reads and reels and reads and reels

lost when the opportunity to live intelligently with the land was ignored by the intrepid explorers. "It was there then, when Colón first encountered what he intuited, correctly, to be 'in all the world...no better people nor better country,' and it is there even now, despite the centuries of batterment, for those who stop and bend and open to hear it. It was salvation then, it might possibly be salvation now. Certainly there is no other."

This is a well researched, skillfully written and absorbing account of 500 years of the Columbian legacy. Reexaminations such as this are vital as we approach the mounting hullabaloo surrounding the upcoming quincentennial of a historic landfall voyage that ushered in unprecedented and continued destruction. Colón's is an oft told tale and the celebrants are busy preening for 1992, but *The Conquest of Paradise* succeeds in exposing the depths of a particularly insidious cultural amnesia. The Columbian myth may run deep but native traditions run deeper—making Sale's an increasingly necessary perspective for those interested in illuminating imminent fanfare with eco-reality.

Marie Dolcini

*The Conquest of Paradise: Christopher Columbus and the Columbian Legacy* by Kirkpatrick Sale • Alfred A. Knopf • New York • 453 pps. • \$24.95.



### NOT SO "SIM"PLE CITY

When I was the mayor of San Francisco in 1906, just after the earthquake, it dawned on me that urban management could be a daunting task. Half the city was without power, a quarter had been reduced to rubble, and it took me almost two years to put out all fires. Then one day I decided to do a budget check and accidentally selected a tornado that ripped through the peninsula. Finally, after five years, I was run out of office by a pack of angry citizens led by, of all people, my mother.

This all happened to me in a computer simulation program called *Sim City*, *The City Simulator* that recreates many activities and growth patterns of a developing city. Although it is not billed as educational software, the program's most effective use would be in a secondary school class as a springboard for discussion about government, environment, history, or any subject where the important issue is the confluence of many interacting but superficially unrelated elements.

*Sim City* is an excellent tool for introducing players (students, urbanites, environmentally concerned people) to the complexities and concerns of planning and maintaining a city.

The simulator presents you with various statistics about your city and you must make decisions such as where to build roads and housing, whether to increase or decrease taxes, and how to respond to the various needs and demands of your simulated citizens (also known as Sims).

As typical citizens, Sims move in and out of neighborhoods in response to crime rates, pollution levels and land values. They commute to work, patronize commercial districts and, like any good cliché about the general public, complain about high taxes.

*Sim City* doesn't fall neatly into traditional categories of computer software. You play it, but it's not really a game. You learn to appreciate the delicate balancing act that is urban decision making, but it doesn't teach any specific skills or knowledge. I found disaster options rather boring and the accompanying manual lacking a concise overall description. However, it does include an interesting treatise on the history of cities and city planning. If it were advertised on TV, the commercial would be of the type where kids declare, "We like it 'cause it's fun to play," and Mom intimates, "I like it because it's good for their minds."

A new simulation starts you off with a "live" topographical map and some money to build your city. It's "live" because it enables you to actually see trains and cars traveling on the rails and roads you build. If the population outstrips road capacity you see and hear traffic jams. Planes fly overhead, ships sail into ports, and fires, which can be started by a range of disasters from shipwrecks to monster attacks, spread through the city until their flames are extinguished.

Although there is no stated goal of *Sim City*, building a sustainable city is the only way to avoid bankruptcy or a frontier style impeachment by an angry mob of Sims (would it were so). To do this you must establish residential, commercial, and industrial zones without decimating the landscape or zoning so densely that you generate/contribute to crime and pollution. The Sims let you know when they want cheaper housing or more roads, and you can always look at the latest polls to find out how well you are liked by your constituents and what they feel are the city's biggest problems. As your burb grows from village to town to city, you must build police and fire stations, and you have the option of adding more expensive air and sea ports as well as pricey sports stadiums.

A "Mapping Window" allows you to look at current statistics regarding growth rate, population density, crime, and other relevant information. Using these tools you can build the city of your dreams, but it doesn't come easy. Growth is slow and it is sometimes difficult to understand why certain areas grow fast and others not at all. Creating a city from scratch is the most rewarding way to play as it gives you more of a sense of achievement than does taking on a city in progress.

Seth Tager

Seth Tager is a computing pioneer and veteran urbanite.

*Sim City: The City Simulator* by Will Wright and Maxis Software • 1042 Country Club Dr., Suite C • Moraga, CA 94556 • \$49.95/Mac, IBM, Amiga, \$29.95/C64 and \$79.95/Supreme version with Terrain Editor.



### HOME!

#### A BIOREGIONAL READER

It is a bioregional axiom that the movement is diverse, defined in myriad ways by its varied participants, who develop a practice on their home turf shaped by the particulars of their place. So it can scarcely be more appropriate that a book about the movement is an anthology of writings by several dozen inventors of bioregional thought and reality, published last fall as *Home! A Bioregional Reader*. Here, collected in under 200 pages, are some of the milestones in the continual groping-toward-an-ideology that bioregionalists have engaged in during the last two decades—a sort of Federalist Papers for the movement.

*Home's* sweep is impressive. It opens with a handful of attempts to define bio-region-alism, in which the writers each approach the concept like the legendary blind sages examining the elephant. As in the fable, the descriptions fill in each other's blank spots quite nicely. Here we find Jim Dodge's "government by life" and Gary Snyder's "I'm not going to move," as well as the ever-popular bioregional quiz "Where You At?" (Questions to spring on the unsuspecting at cocktail parties: "From what direction do winter storms generally come in your region? Name five edible plants native to your region and their seasons of availability." And eighteen other posers.)

The next section is one of the most exciting for an empiricist like me. Its writers take the theories of the first chapter and apply them to real watersheds, mountain ranges and archipelagos. The section leads off with Peter Berg and Ray Dasmann in their classic marriage of ecology and politics, "Reinhabiting California," and continues with the haunting essay in two voices, "Future Primitive" from the early Planet Drum bundle *North Pacific Rim Alive*, by Freeman House and Jeremiah Gorsline. Other writings zoom in on the Hudson River Valley, the Haida of the Queen Charlotte Islands off the British Columbia coast, and the San Francisco Bay region. The concluding piece, a song and choreography routine on salmon, leads into the following section on "Nature, Culture and Community."

The bioregional zest for Culture is perhaps the feature that most easily distinguishes it from other persuasions. This chapter does justice to that passion as we see how Indians put a new roof on their council hall, attend Joanna Macy's Council of All Beings, learn about the history of human subsistence in the arid southwestern part of the continent, and

read, yet again, about salmon. (There can be no doubt that the anthology was assembled in Cascadia.)

Finally, the last two sections take the notion of BR-ism even further toward application, first to ecological and social restoration, and then to the forms of government and human organization that emerge from these goals. Pieces by writers as varied as Starhawk and Peter Berg, Murray Bookchin and facilitator extraordinaire Caroline Estes, lend a polyglot air to these sections.

The overall feel of the book is inviting and substantial. Longer articles are broken up with short boxed excerpts of other writings and tasteful art. The collective analysis leaves the impression that bioregional folk have covered a lot of conceptual ground in the last eighteen years, doing the hard work of articulating eons-old wisdom in language that can reach people born into industrial culture.

Now that *Home!* is here, tongue-tied bioregionalists can plunk a handsome volume on the table when asked to explain their twenty-dollar word. We still lack a simple slogan like "of the people, by the people, for the people," but that's all right. It's perfectly appropriate to lay the philosophical foundations before scripting the sound bites.

Seth Zuckerman

Seth Zuckerman divides his time between the Bay Area and Mattole River watershed. His latest book is *Saving Our Ancient Forests to be published in April by Living Planet Press*.

*Home! A Bioregional Reader* edited by Van Andruss, Christopher Plant, Judith Plant and Eleanor Wright • New Society Publishers • PO Box 582 • Santa Cruz, CA 95061 • 192 pps. • \$14.95.

## announcement

### Save Apo Sandawa!

At 10,311 feet, Mount Apo or Apo Sandawa (a Bagobo term for "The Lord standing up and watching over all of Mindanao") is the Philippines' highest peak. It is now being "desecrated" through drilling done by the government-owned Philippine National Oil Company (PNOC) which aims to set up a geothermal plant in the area. In 1936 Mt. Apo was declared a national park and is considered a heritage reserve with outstanding wilderness and unique features. It is still forested with primary and secondary growth vegetation, remains the ancestral home of some 460,000 indigenous people (Lumads) belonging to the Bagobo tribe, contains 84 different species of birds, and is the most important watershed in Mindanao with headwaters of 28 rivers and creeks that flow to various parts of the island.

Although the Lumads have made a "D'yandi," or tribal pact, and vowed to protect Apo Sandawa to the last drop of their blood, PNOC is determined to continue its geothermal project (ostensibly to generate more energy for industries within the area). Kinaiyahan Foundation, Inc. (KFI) strongly supports the Lumads in the struggle to protect their home, and urges PNOC to look for other sites for the geothermal plant. It also demands that the government rehabilitate existing hydraulic plants in the region rather than venture into construction of new power plants.

KFI has worked to stop the geothermal project through consultation and documentation and maintains the Save Apo Sandawa Campaign. It is seeking support for this struggle and can be contacted for additional information and materials by writing: Kinaiyahan Foundation, Inc., PO Box 175, Davao City 8000, Philippines.



# GREEN CITY CENTER REPORT

STEVEN LEWIS

## m e m b e r s h i p

### Planet Drum Foundation

PO Box 31251  
San Francisco, CA 94131  
Shasta Bioregion

One-year membership (tax deductible) \_\_\_\_\_ \$20 regular.

\_\_\_\_\_ \$25 U.S. outside North America\*

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Become a member of Planet Drum Foundation. Membership includes two issues of *Raise the Stakes*, at least one bonus publication, a 25% discount on all our books and bundles and access to our networking and workshop facilities.

This year's special publication is *Ecocity Conference 1990, the Report of the First International Ecocities Conference* containing summaries of all the panels and presentations on sustainable cities.

Help build a bioregional group in your area. We can help by sending a list of Planet Drum Members there. To introduce your friends to bioregional ideas, send us their names and we'll forward a complimentary issue of *Raise the Stakes*. Send us ten names and we'll mail you a copy of *Reinhabiting a Separate Country* for your effort.

Send a report from your region to *Raise the Stakes*, for publication in the Circles of Correspondence section.

Planet Drum's effort to follow-up the suggestions made in *A Green City Program* and open a Green City Center continues to be a major priority. Since the last issue of *Raise the Stakes* there have been several new developments. The second printing of the book, now titled *A Green City Program for the San Francisco Bay Area & Beyond*, is finished and contains a new chapter on "Green City Realities" and a list of planet-wide urban sustainability groups. This new edition should increase the influence and appeal of the green city concept and bring much needed funds into the Planet Drum office. The book's wide distribution over the last year has been extremely heartening. Grupo de Estudios Ambientales translated the book into Spanish for their work in Mexico City and we have just given an option for the publication of a Japanese translation. We are also trying to develop programs for the Center which will be inspirational to folks in other cities.

*A Green City Program* has an extremely broad agenda, offering alternatives to how cities currently/traditionally operate. As a result, the Center's program could go in any number of directions. In order to help focus on specific goals we assembled the Green City Gang (other organizations would call this group an "Advisory Board"). They are friends of Planet Drum who work in a variety of capacities to transform urban areas. Their input helps direct our efforts toward community outreach in order to begin neighborhood-based projects. We

held a "Green City Neighborhoods" workshop mid-February in San Francisco's Mission District where we intend to open the Center. The goal is to get community help to articulate a vision for a sustainable neighborhood, and include the primary concerns expressed by the community. This is obviously a long-term goal and the workshop was a first step.

A tremendous advantage in the bioregional concept, as opposed to most "environmental" thinking, is that we aim for coexistence with natural systems. More specifically, this means addressing the pressing needs of both human and biotic communities. The green city idea will be a reality as growing numbers of people live out alternative urban lifestyles which prioritize sustainability and local self-reliance. For this transformation to occur, these priorities must be applied toward the most pressing issues on the minds of urban dwellers, such as housing, job opportunities and health care.

Although the opening date of the Center has been pushed back because of difficulty securing foundation support (only one-third of the \$100,000 first year budget has been raised so far), we are committed to our approach of acting out the role of a Green City Center and presenting new possibilities for urban living.

Steven Lewis is the Green City Center Coordinator.

## stakes raisers this issue

editor & typesetter — Marie Dolcini

managing editor — Peter Berg

design & layout — Marianne Wyss

art, production & maps — Judy Goldhaft

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distribution — Steven Lewis

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printing — Alonzo Press

photo developing — Chong Lee

Lars Fox — camera work

Greg Gregory — proofreading

Cara Lamb — proofreading

Joanna Pertz — art

Daniel Duffy — cover art

Special thanks to Alessandro Palladini and Katalin Lázár for translation help and to Ken Rice, library angel.

Planet Drum  
staffers enjoy  
open space  
currently  
endangered in  
San Francisco's  
Potrero Hill  
neighborhood.



photo: Shafi Hakim

From eucalyptus trees where kookaburras sing to the Atlantic Coast where lobsters graze in murky depths, Planet Drum staffers have sashayed widely over the diverse bioregional globe since RTS #16.

This past August's gathering of the Turtle Island Bioregional Congress (formerly North American Bioregional Congress) held in the Gulf of Maine along the shores of Lake Umbagog was a chance for bioregionalists from many different places to meet, work, coalesce and celebrate. The Congress was the largest yet and encompassed many newcomers—RTS editor Marie Dolcini included. As her first immersion in congressing, Dolcini oftentimes felt overwhelmed with workshops, committee work, plenaries, outside meetings, regional cultural presentations and incredible meals, but managed to sneak in a rare nap or two and even convince most attendees that her father was in fact not an agent. She found her niche pulling all-nighters with the rest of the hardy staff at the *Voice of the Turtle*, caught the Northern Lights between copy, and earned her turtle medallion as a Shasta representative assembling the Congress proceedings with the "Gulf O' Maine Ad Hoc Editorial Collective." Most memorable moments include gorging on wild blueberries, spotting bald eagles and drinking nettle tea out of Mason jars at the King Farm with the much-loved

## Planet Drum PULSE

Stephanie Mills and selfless conscripts the likes of Tad Montgomery, Frank Traina and the King family.

Two seasons and eight time zones away, PD co-directors Peter Berg and Judy Goldhaft were making their way through Australia. From one gig to the next (sometimes travelling as much as 250 km a day to make over 30 presentations in five weeks), Peter and Judy did their shtick to enthusiastic Aussies. Judy's masterful and brilliant "Water Web" performance (which is now available on VHS—see publications page) wowed them in Adelaide and Peter's insightful and often humorous knowledge of bioregionalism knocked 'em dead in Brisbane. From Australia, the pair puddle-jumped to the islands of Hawaii and Maui for more bioregional rabble-raising. One of the highlights of this leg of their journey was getting a close view of red hot pahoehoe lava before hardening. Look for in-depth information about the trip in an upcoming special PD Pulse.

Back at the Shasta homefront, Steven Lewis held down the Planet Drum fortress. When not hustling for Green City Center money he could be found diligently organizing various workshops. The pinnacle of his great efforts was the

very successful and informative Green City workshop held this February in San Francisco's Mission District. So it is with great chagrin that we announce his departure from the Bay Area back to the East Coast—he will be missed and we wish him well. With Steven's departure we welcome several new arrivals: Lars Fox—industrial music icon—researching Green City Center projects, Cara "a-joke-a-minute" Lamb keeping a lid on problematic paperwork, Greg Gregory acting as all-around office angel and Joanna Pertz doing needed artwork and handling otherwise sticky tasks. A donation of a fax or copy machine and one of those new-fangled computers that even knows how to bake chocolate chip cookies would certainly make their jobs a lot easier.

In the gripe department, we recognize "Sir" is easier to type than "Friends," "Folks" or "Selfless Workers for the Benefit of Ma Earth," but as the official mail-opener, this writer notices a steady and disappointing stream of correspondence coming addressed as "Dear Sirs" or "Gentlemen." Not so odd is the fact that PD is staffed by equal parts male and female. We of the female constitution continue to take this infraction with a grain of salt (and a shot of tequila) and hope it never happens again.

Now that Peter and Judy have returned, they continue to operate at full speed. Peter is teaching a course titled "Eco-Logics/Eco-Nomics" at New College in S.F. and Judy has been performing her "Water Web" to inspired audiences—most recently in Nevada City in conjunction with Gary Snyder reading poetry. Rounding out the staff, and when not hob-nobbing with the wannabe rich, the could be famous, or conversing with ancient astronauts, Crofton Diack finds time to organize the Shasta Bioregional Gathering planned for late summer, 1991 and sponsored in great part by Planet Drum. It's already shaping up to be one heck of an event. Please call the PD office if you are interested in attending.

Our book *A Green City Program* was so successful that it was not only featured in the MAXIS "Sim City" computer game, but actually sold out. It was reprinted in January with new and updated chapters and a more appropriate title—*A Green City Program for the San Francisco Bay Area and Beyond*. Our current efforts to open a Green City Center seem somewhat thwarted due to this darned recession. We leave you with this thought: The Pentagon spends \$1,000,000 every two minutes and it's never too late to donate your tax-deductible dollars to Planet Drum.

Crofton Diack

Crofton Diack is membership coordinator and production assistant for Planet Drum.









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Since 1973 Planet Drum Foundation has been developing and communicating the concept of bioregions through regional bundles, books, and the biannual review, *Raise the Stakes*. We are now working to foster exchange among bioregional groups and projects - the growing number of people exploring cultural, environmental, and economic reforms appropriate to the places where they live.

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*Raise the Stakes* is published biannually by Planet Drum Foundation. We encourage readers to share vital information, both urban and rural, about what is going on in their native regions. Send us your bioregional reports, letters, interviews, poems, stories and art. Inquiries, manuscripts, and tax-deductible contributions should be sent to Planet Drum, PO Box 31251, San Francisco, Shasta Bioregion, CA 94131, USA. Telephone 415-285-6556.

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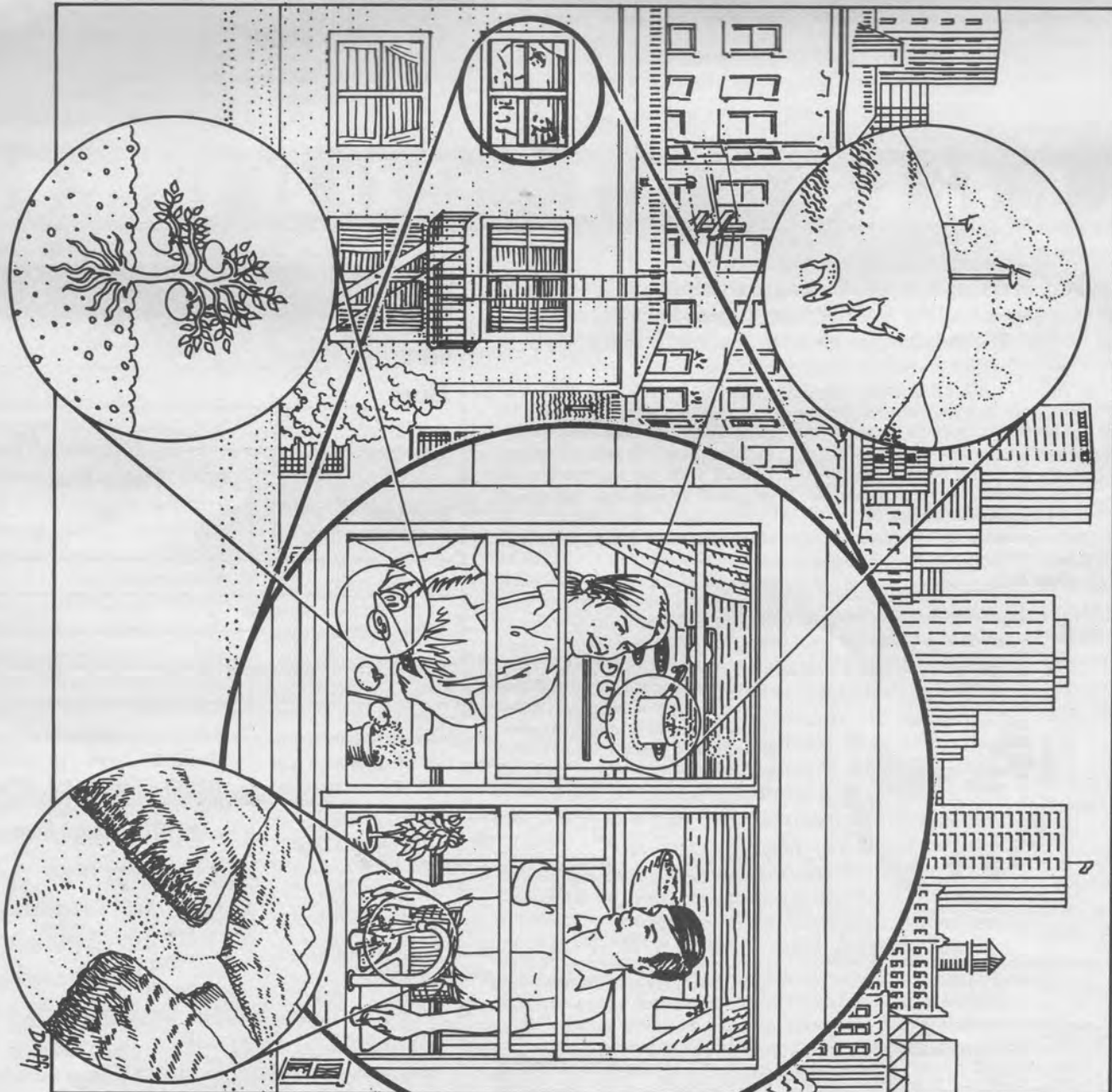
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