

# RAISE THE STAKES

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# EDITORIAL: Open Up Your Tool Kit

by Carli Schultz

With so many societies and places so intimately married to industry and large-scale agriculture that a divorce seems unthinkable, it does appear that we have dug our hole too deep this time, and filled it up to our waists in concrete as well. But there are answers, there are ways out, there are things that really work. The more you know about your bioregion the more you'll work to save it, restore it, take part in and share its wonders with others.

Education is one of the main ways. It is the children who are chalking colored butterflies and flowers upon the concrete. We can run education programs centered on the flora and fauna of our bioregion. Children must be encouraged to dream, create and follow their own paths no matter how far off the beaten track they may wander, considering that the most beaten track is often a ten lane highway with billboards and smokestacks. Because children aren't yet bogged down with the immensity of the planet's problems, their chances of finding beneficial solutions in original directions are actually pretty good.

We can grow at least some of our own foods, and buy those things that are grown locally. By replacing exotic foods in our diets with local specialties we become more authentically involved with our own area, and no longer support mass transport of unripe, possibly mass planted commercial agriculture.

Even poetry is a tool, it may be one of the most

effective ones! When we write poems about the places in which we live, we are already helping to revive those places. Thinking about the natural foundations for our town, our city or our local bioregion and then writing about it increases our knowledge as well as our link to the area. Should we find a tree, sit under it, feel it, write a poem about it? You will find yourself becoming far more protective of it. Do the same for a wilderness area or beach you might visit, and you may find that thoughtless care of these areas will be infuriating and urge you to restore them to their rightful state of beauty and respect.

These tools do not need to be used alone, many are geared for group use. Some bioregional organizations already have huge tool boxes. By becoming involved with others working towards the same goals, you may be less likely to run out of steam as time goes by.

Tools can be real hardware as well, we can remove a few fence posts. And these are just a few

essentials, the hammers and screwdrivers. There are many more tools to use out there to use that aren't in this issue.

In a world of false promises, business scams that falsely assure payoff with little or no work, poorly made products and more infomercials for more stuff you don't need, it is difficult to sift through the junk mail to find meaningful information. People move from place to place so fast they often don't sink in their roots and call an area truly "home." This does not mean we should stop trying, sit back munching potato chips and pass the problem off to our children as something we cannot fix in our lifetimes. The solution begins now. The first step is to search out ways to help. Knowledge and desire are the keys to take the lock off your tool kit. The things that really work are there, waiting to be taken in hand.

## D' Fence

by Jay Baldwin

When cattle were finally banished, we took down the mile of fence dividing the north pasture. A few months later, we deployed the very same wire and posts to protect vernal pools from the assault of feral pigs. For eight years, my wife, Liz, and I were Land Stewards on the California Academy of Sciences' five-square-mile Pepperwood preserve north of San Francisco. Fences were a major part of our work, as we expected—nearly any land restoration or preservation effort involves fencing somebody or something in or out. Where politics and nature must embrace, priorities change. Fences tend to need removing about as often as they need building.

There are many sorts of fence. In our area, most of them are barbed wire (*bob-wahr* in Texas). A barbwire fence is typically five strands stretched tightly on at least three hundred and fifty steel posts per mile. Gates and corner braces are usually wood. Hilly terrain and crooked fence lines require additional bracing to prevent excess tension or useless flaccidity. Rocky soil requires trickery to get posts to stay upright and where they belong.

There is work involved. A tractor with a fencing rig can be employed to insert the posts and stretch the wire, but the noise, fumes and soil-compaction may be inappropriate. Without mechanical aids, fencework is labor-intensive at its most labor-intensive. Metal posts must be whopped into the resisting earth with a weight-plugged length of heavy pipe slid over the post. It's the ultimate "upper body workout." Wood posts go into holes excavated with a post-hole digger, an invention of the devil. Sometimes



Extracting an insolent fencepost with a Handyman farm jack.

LIZ FIAL

posts must be set in concrete. Each bag of dry concrete mix weighs ninety pounds. Water is about eight pounds per gallon. You can imagine how it gets to the site.

Fences are surprisingly expensive. Whatever type of fence you choose should be installed using the procedures established by centuries of experience, preferably augmented with advice from a local sage.

Shortcut methods and materials usually don't last long—I've seen ineptitude punished within minutes. Heed the advice of a fence book, or hire experienced professionals if you're shy.

Fence-removing can be even more work than fence-installing, especially if you save the parts for reuse or recycling, as you should. Fence wire and staples succumb to

an expertly wielded "fence tool"—a combination hammer, pliers, staple-puller, wire cutter, tie-twister that has graced the belts of fenceworkers since the Civil War. Wood fencing can be thumped apart with a hand-sledge and a prybar.

Just about any unconcreted fencepost can be yanked, albeit kicking and screaming, by means of a big farm jack such as a "Handyman." (Concreted posts must be dug out.) Buy about a yard of 1/4" "proof" welded chain with enough link clearance to pass a 3/8" x 3" bolt and (lock)nut to fasten the ends together. Repeatedly loop the chain over a steel post until you have a wad just loose enough to slide to the ground. Pull some slack from the bottom of the wad and hang it on the jack nose nuzzling the post. For wood or other fat posts, drop just one loop and twist it tight using the bolt as a handle. Pick up the bolt with the jack nose. The Handyman develops 7000 lbs. of moxie and lifts three feet—something has to give. Hikers and deer will thank you for restoring fencelessness.

And keep in mind that "good fences make good neighbors" is true: historically, fence fights are almost as nasty as water wars. Before you build or remove a fence, check the law, survey the property line, and assay your neighbor's expectations. The whole idea of a fence is to keep the peace.

A version of this article appeared in *Whole Earth Review*, where the author is a Senior Editor.

### Sources:

**Handyman Jack**—Information from Harrah Mfg. Co., Drawer 228, Bloomfield, IN 47424.

**Building Fences** features complete instructions for building the most common types of fence. It can be ordered from AAVIM, 120 Driftmier Center, Athens, GA 30602.



# Put "BIO" in Front of Regional

by Peter Berg

The steeply sloped, Douglas fir tree silhouetted hills of the Mattole River Valley near Cape Mendocino in northern California bear many of the signs of destructive previous uses that are common to rural places on the Pacific coast. Logging removed most of the forests. Over-grazing by cattle and sheep denuded much of the cleared land. Subsequent erosion choked streams and the river with gravel and silt, vastly reducing spawning runs of salmon and steelhead trout. What's different about this valley is that a sizable portion of local residents have begun doing things in their home places that are nearly opposite of those carried out in the past. Rather than defensively denying the exploitative history of the valley or sadly lamenting its decline, they have chosen to follow an impressive range of paths to start restoring ecological well-being. The Mattole Restoration Council is a coalition of 100 community groups, landowners and individuals who are seeking to restore and sustain the healthy functioning of the sixty-mile long watershed's natural systems such as forests, fisheries, soils, flora and fauna. More than thirty part-time workers are employed in activities that include tree planting, salmon and steelhead enhancement, erosion control, wilderness protection, and research into further rehabilitation. Realizing how long-term their ultimate goals are, the Council's membership also includes educational and cultural support from a high school, theater group and community center. As one measure of success from a Council mainstay, the Mattole Watershed Salmon Support Group has released over a quarter-million salmon and nearly 50,000 steelhead fingerlings since 1980.

Densely populated San Francisco couldn't seem farther away from the Mattole Valley, but here an energetic project of Planet Drum Foundation is devoted to developing similar consciousness about elements of sustainability and carrying out work on them by city-dwellers. The Green City Project operates a Volunteer Network that connects people with over 200 San Francisco Bay Area groups which are involved with aspects of "greening" ranging

from actual chlorophyll-based urban planting to recycling and transportation alternatives. It also includes energy conservation and renewables, wild habitat restoration, sustainable planning, neighborhood empowerment, socially responsible businesses and cooperatives, and celebrating life-place vitality. The Project produces a quarterly calendar of hands-on activities as well as learning opportunities, and distributes a Youth Volunteer Directory for school-age children. Its most remarkable undertakings are "workshop/workdays" when volunteers and members of several network groups spend a weekend morning learning about particular areas of concern and then work together in the afternoon on improvements such as revegetating open space with native plants or painting signs near storm drains to explain that they empty into San Francisco Bay. A hotel for formerly homeless people in the hard-hit Tenderloin District was the site for a recent work party that built planter boxes and benches, transferred a truckload of soil from the sidewalk up eight floors, and planted vegetables, flowers and small trees in a rooftop garden. Residents, volunteers and representatives of several groups were involved in all aspects of planning, building

habitory manner, or remain unadaptive and destructive. As an obvious example, English-style lawns that require frequent watering are extremely ill-adapted to the dry climate of the Sonoran Desert Bioregion of Arizona, but a frontyard with native mesquite trees and saguaro cactus fits inherent soil and water constraints perfectly. Bioregional proponents extend the idea of reinhabitation farther to

megapolis of New York City. As can be clearly seen in these examples, the borders of bioregions are not as hardset as geopolitical boundaries. Nor do they follow the neat straight lines often found for nations, states and counties. Instead, they almost always cross or only partially fill the political lines that are superimposed upon them.

Discovering the place where one lives

**Protecting the biosphere must include protecting all of the bioregions that make it up; we have to save the parts in order to save the whole.**

include securing basic human needs such as food, energy and shelter. Permaculture, or permanent agriculture based on unique natural features, is more suitable than industrial-style monocultural farming. Renewable energy sources that are locally available are preferred over fossil and nuclear fuels. Native or recycled materials are sought for construction and fabricating products.

The bioregional approach isn't a completely new or different way to reside somewhere. In fact, it has a great deal in common with the feelings that indigenous people express about the places where they live.

and settling into it in bioregional terms has generated a diverse array of activities and organizations. They can start with single individuals who play key roles in rediscovering the unique background of a place's indigenous or natural history that may have been lost or changed significantly from a past condition. Individuals then often branch out to form small study groups that combine various fields of local knowledge ranging from geology to weather trends and early settler experiences to gardening techniques. This is vital information needed for creating a holistic composite that differentiates a place-located

sensibility from the orientation toward immediate political issues that has usually characterized environmentalism. Bioregional activities that develop out of holistic approaches proactively attempt to carry out needed alternatives, mainly in restoring and maintaining natural systems, finding sustainable ways to satisfy basic human needs, and supporting other ways to reinhabit places.

Full-fledged bioregional organizing occurs first within a shared watershed. The Mattole Restoration Council operates within a relatively self-contained valley, but other groups such as the Yuba Watershed Institute in the Sierra Nevada foothills are concerned with areas that are connected to several other watersheds. The Institute's focus on forestry

practices and resistance to hydraulic mining on a tributary leading to the Sacramento River system has both immediate local consequences and direct implications for impacts on places as far away as San Francisco Bay.

A number of watershed-based groups have joined in larger organizations or share events together to represent whole bioregions. The Ozark Area Community Congress (OACC) claims the territory of the limestone-based Ozark Plateau straddling the border between Arkansas and Missouri. Feeling that neither state sufficiently preserves the ecology of the region or adequately addresses economic and cultural concerns of its people, OACC has become an interdependent network of groups carrying out needed work to restore clean water, produce food locally, compost wastes, provide alternative health care, preserve wildlife, and work in many other areas of self-reliance. For over a decade the Congress has held annual gatherings to hear speakers, present workshops, share local culture, and adopt positions on relevant issues.

Perhaps the largest geographic area



Planting New Natives

and planting. Several unemployed people were introduced to carpentry and gardening skills during the process (one of them was hired on the spot) and all of the occupants gained access to a secure, flourishing garden of growing things.

Despite their contrasting situations, participants in both the Mattole Restoration Council and Green City Project share a similar perspective. They view all of northern California as a distinct bioregion. Their activities are intended to carry out the work of reinhabitation, or becoming native to the places where they live. Bioregions are defined by unique natural characteristics including climate, landforms, watersheds, soils, and native plants and animals. Northern California, or Shasta Bioregion, is distinguished by elements such as a Mediterranean winter-wet summer-dry climate, the Sierra Nevada and Coast Ranges mountains, the Sacramento/San Joaquin River system and coastal watersheds flowing into the Pacific, and redwood trees. Since people are also a part of bioregions, the ways that they live can either accommodate natural features and harmonize with them in a rein-

Elements of it are also reiterated whenever regionalism occurs on a somewhat regular cyclical basis for subjects varying from architecture and art to history and cuisine. Bioregional aspects can even be found in large-scale centralized planning, notably the sensible albeit only marginally enacted New Deal proposal in the 1930s to separate the United States into major watershed basins for purposes of water and other resource management.

The basis for the current adoption of bioregional thinking is our comparatively recent awareness of urgent threats and limits to the ecology of the planet, and the desire to mitigate and alter practices that have brought earth's biosphere to such a dangerous point. Protecting the biosphere must include protecting all of the bioregions that make it up; we have to save the parts in order to save the whole. This means identifying local natural systems and working to achieve sustainability in places as diverse as the Gulf of Maine stretching across the U.S.-Canada border, Kansas Area Watershed draining part of the Great Plains into the Mississippi, and Lower Hudson Estuary which contains the

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# Organizing in an Urban Bioregion

by Beatrice Briggs

**I**t never occurred to me that applying the basic tenets of bioregionalism to Chicago and its sprawling suburbs would be perceived as a daunting, difficult, probably doomed task. On the contrary, if bioregionalism is to fulfill its promise as a lifeway for an ecologically sustainable, socially just future, then it must make as much sense in urban areas as in the hinterlands. Furthermore, Chicago has been my home for more than twenty years. Where else could I do the work?

What follows is a brief description of some of the things that have worked for the Wild Onion Alliance, a bioregional group started in 1990. These ideas, some of which were inspired by work in other bioregions, continue to evolve. They are offered here as a focus for reflection and a stimulus to action, and are applicable to places very different from Chicago. The gift must always move. So take what you can use, make it better, and pass it on.

Naming a bioregion and a bioregional organization are powerful first steps along the reinhabitory path. I (because there was no "we" at first) chose "wild onion" because the name Chicago is derived from a Potawatami word meaning "place of the wild onion." Botanists, historians and linguists debate the accuracy of this translation (che-cau-gou might have referred to wild garlic or some other source of strong smells), but wild onions are native to this area and, equally important, have taken root in the popular imagination. People are intrigued and amused by the name. Once they hear it and the explanation of its derivation, they remember it.

In addition to being catchy, the name is grounded in ecological reality. The problem was that, at the beginning, I had never seen a wild onion, making it unclear which of the several kinds of allium that grow in this area was the "right one." The more botanically informed of the early Alliance members helped sort out this confusion. Eventually the nodding wild onion, *Allium cernuum*, was chosen as our totem plant and an anatomically correct drawing of this handsome tallgrass prairie native was obtained for the letterhead and newsletter logo.

For the first three years, the map of our bioregion existed only in our minds. The "real" maps stopped abruptly at state or county lines, ignoring the natural and cultural features that spilled over these political boundaries. The map finally created now cries out for overlays, thicker descriptions, more historically informed, nuanced elaboration and wider distribution.

The Wild Onion newsletter, called *downWind*, gives the organization visibility and a voice. It challenges us to articulate bioregional theory and practice in an inviting, comprehensible manner. In the beginning, to cut through the misperception that there was "nothing going on" of ecological significance in the Chicago area, a lot of newsletter space was devoted to a calendar listing of field trips, lectures, workshops, con-

ferences, seasonal celebrations and work days, all sponsored by other organizations in the bioregion. This was a good way to connect with these sister groups, support their work and illustrate the many ways in which people were "being bioregional" without necessarily calling it that. In the interim, other sources for this information have emerged—and we were getting dragged down by the quarterly effort to collect, cull and collate the data. The calendar was recently redesigned, making it more visual, less linear, more seasonally impressionistic, less event-specific.

The newsletter is sent to every environmental organization, nature center and ecologically-oriented interest group in the area, whether they formally subscribe or not. This helps circulate bioregional ideas and language among natural allies and friends. As time goes on, we keep enlarging the scope of the mailing list, adding more of the human-centered citizens and action and peace-and-justice groups, since an important part of what "grows" in an urban area like Chicago is resistance to oppression and injustice.

Field trips are among the trademark activities of the Wild Onion Alliance. Suggestions for where to go arise from the group members. The help of a local guide is always enlisted, someone who lives in the area we plan to visit, or who knows it well. We've looked at practically invisible, pre-historic earthworks, seen blue herons on the Chicago River, visited prairie restoration sites, wandered the Indiana dunes, explored the highest elevation in this very flat land and hiked around the only remaining quaking bog in northern Illinois.

In September '93, as hosts of the Great Lakes Bioregional Congress (GLBC), the Alliance set up lots of field trips to show Congress participants the urban face of bioregionalism. We went to community gardens, homeless shelters, city parks, a hydroponic garden growing herbs for AIDS patients and a cemetery. Everyone returned from these adventures with stories to tell, a transformed sense of the possibilities and problems of city life and new friends. The key is going together as a community. Keep it simple and cheap (our trips are always free except for contributions of gas money to the drivers), and leave time for socializing over coffee, cider or other refreshments before you head home.

One of the ways to keep a group sustainable is not having too many organized meetings. The exception to this practice occurred during the year and a half leading up to the GLBC '93, when we met every month. Now one big planning meeting every quarter is sufficient, and other business is taken care of by telephone or sub-committees. In the beginning, the Alliance chose not to incorporate as a non-profit organization, although that question is currently being reconsidered. As an all-volunteer organization with no large fund-raising ambitions, the Alliance has been content to simply do the work and play of bioregionalism, without the apparatus or reporting requirements that incorporation entails.

The organization has been able to function well without a lot of meetings partly because, from the start, we have used the consensus decision-making process.



*Allium chicagoum* (wild chicago)

Subsequently, several members have sought out specialized training in consensus facilitation and have shared their learning with others. Thus a pool of home-grown facilitators has developed, and as a group have become increasingly skilled at self-facilitation. Using consensus has enabled us to deal with the inevitable personality conflicts and power struggles with minimal disruption of the group's focus. Decisions bind the group together and keeps it on track from meeting to meeting. Good process has helped build an organization with integrity and heart that also gets a lot done.

Hands-on work days keep people from being just tourists in their own land. Since our bioregion covers most of northeastern Illinois, we have not confined ourselves to a project at a single site. Instead, the Alliance offers services, as a group, to other organizations. Functioning as a kind of environmental SWAT team, we have cut buckthorn at prairie restoration sites, bagged pasta at a food depository, picked up trash on the shores of Lake Michigan and the banks of the Chicago River, scrubbed public sculpture in the Loop, mulched trees in Lincoln Park and pulled weeds at the Wooded Island in Jackson Park. These work days build community among members, provide visibility for the Alliance and its ideas and provide a chance to understand and celebrate the scope of reinhabitory activity in our area.

In the interest of right-brain/left-brain balance, the Alliance recently started adding salons, or discussion groups, to its mix of activities. These evening events, held once a quarter, give members a chance to explore the intellectual underpinnings of the heavily experiential work they do. Meeting in a member's home, we discuss a topic which is usually chosen at the previous salon. Someone leads the discussion, based on readings which are recommended in advance, but not required. Emphasis is on participation and thoughtful reaction, not dueling ideolo-

gies. Food to share, guests and a spirit of inquiry are all brought to the occasion.

The solstices and the equinoxes are celebrated with a ceremonial circle, music and (of course) food. The rituals always have some sort of seasonally appropriate, local focus, such as frogs or mud in the spring, wildflowers, berries or butterflies in the summer, prairie fires or harvest abundance in the fall and the deep, dark silence in winter. We follow the basic principles of other earth-based traditions to create our sacred space, but invoke only local ancestors and spirits of the land, rather than the pagan pantheon. Even this non-secretarian, place-based approach is too much for some orthodox followers of more mainstream western religions, so they don't come. That's OK.

Over time, a small group of ritual planners and leaders has developed, as well as a relatively large body of people who look forward to these celebrations. A "welcome, newcomers" part was recently added to every gathering, which is an effective way of continually opening the circle to new people, while reinforcing a sense of community among those who have been together before. Re-inventing rituals so that they meet the spiritual needs of those exploring the brave, new, ecological world is one of the most valuable services a bioregional group can perform.

To borrow a phrase from Peter Berg, one of the first things we did was to design "Bioregional and Wild" buttons. Recently, the Alliance created "Bioregional and Wild" awards, certificates given to people we wish to recognize for "fostering the ecological values of joy and justice for all in the Wild Onion Bioregion." These buttons and awards allow us to promote our message without being preachy or disgustingly self-serving.

Banners, flags and good graphics have also been important elements in our organizing efforts. People respond to beauty, wit and style. Cliché-ridden imagery is boring. No imagery at all is downright insulting. We make our graphics as visually rich as a medieval cathedral, as colorful as a carnival, as celebratory as a feast. Bring on the artists and musicians, mix them with the scientists, policy wonks and just plain folks and let the good times roll.

The Wild Onion Alliance is not a large organization. It has never had more than about 100 dues-paying members. Field trips, salons and work days regularly attract 10-20 people, the rituals, 20-30. Planning meetings draw a hard core of 8-12. We mail out about 500 newsletters each quarter, and rarely have more than a few hundred dollars in the bank. We have excellent name recognition, a reputation for good ideas, followed up by solid work and an enviable esprit de corps. Our organizational structure exists to serve its members, not the other way around. The unofficial motto is "if it's not fun, we don't do it."



# How To Save The Prairie: The North Branch Prairie Project

by Tor Faegre

The North Branch of the Chicago River is a thin sluggish stream running parallel to the shore of Lake Michigan southward until it joins the main river in the heart of Chicago. This waterway originally formed the boundary between the open prairie to the west and closed woodland to the east. Prairie fires, driven eastward by prevailing winds, burned across the open lands until stopped by the river, and so the rich flood plain forests of maple and elm and basswood on the east bank were left to go unburned. The Potawatomi Indians used to camp along these banks, hunt deer in the forests and gather the wild onion and garlic for which Chicago was named—"place of the wild onion."

When the area was settled by Europeans, much of the North Branch was left undeveloped because its low banks flooded every spring. Around the turn of the century Cook County bought much of the acreage for forest preserve. The land was left pretty much alone except for areas that were mowed for picnic grounds and playing fields. The areas that had been prairie either sprouted trees and grew to woodland, or, through mowing, lost their prairie plants and reverted to a monoculture of blue grass. It seemed that all traces of the once vast prairie were gone, but if you looked carefully at the margins between the forest and the mowed fields you might see a few surviving prairie plants.

These plants, big-leaved Prairie Dock, spiky Rattlesnake Master, and the many-fingered Compass Plant stood out from the surrounding flora like creatures from another planet. Their very oddness attracted the attention of a few amateur botanists in the early 1970's. The discovery of a few remaining prairie remnants was the beginning of a volunteer restoration effort that is remaking the landscape of the Midwest. It is also Chicago's contribution to a growing restoration movement that is returning segments of the American landscape back to its primeval state.

In 1975 Steve Packard was cycling along a bike path that wandered through the forest preserves along the North Branch of the Chicago River. His attention was caught by some curious looking flowers growing in a meadow there. As a self-taught naturalist, he knew most of the common plants, but these he could not identify. His Peterson field guide told him that these were prairie plants.

He found a book of photographs of these plants—Torkel Korling's *Prairie Swell and Swale*. Its introduction, by Dr. Robert Betz, sent out a call for help. "Each year many of these prairie remnants are being destroyed. Some are plowed up and planted to crops, others are sprayed with herbicides. Many of the larger prairies are being ruined by overgrazing, the smaller ones by continuous mowing. It is regrettable that so little effort is being made to preserve them. It has been through the initiative of a relatively few individuals and conservation groups that some remnant prairies have been saved."

These words moved Packard to act.

He brought others to the sites and talked with them about the possibility of helping to restore these back to the original prairie. What could be done to help the prairie plants regain their former dominance? To begin with, the sites were mowed. Mowing doesn't immediately kill the prairie, but it cannot survive being shorn forever. He contacted the Forest Preserve officials and asked, "Was it possible to refrain from mowing in some of these places? As an experiment?" The Forest Preserve people stated that there was little worth saving there, "It's nothing but a mess of weeds." But besieged by more letters and phone calls, the officials agreed to stop mowing. Next the volunteers asked if they might pull some of the Eurasian weeds that were competing with the native prairie plants, and cut back the brushy edges that were encroaching on the meadow? Again, they received reluctant permission, but now the Forest Preserve decided to come and to take a look at what the volunteers were up to. Fortunately, they brought Dr. Betz as their "prairie consultant," and Betz dutifully certified it as prairie—degraded prairie, long-suffering prairie, even pathetic prairie—but prairie none the less.

A group of volunteers was formed, the North Branch Prairie Project, to do the hands-on work of restoration. Nine o'clock Sunday morning for a growing number of people meant gathering on the prairie and working together until lunch. It meant learning a few more prairie plants on the tour that followed the morning work. It meant a connection to, and an understanding of, the natural world denied to most urbanites.

After working with the few prairie plants that graced these places they realized how species poor these sites were. A tall grass prairie can have over 300 species and these sites often had less than a dozen. The first step was to gather seed. The volunteers scoured the area for prairie remnants and harvested seed. They mixed the seed according to the type of prairie—dry, mesic or wet. The seed mixes were broadcast on the ground and raked in. For a few years seeding was an act of faith, as many prairie plants don't bloom for at least two years. But there was always weed pulling and brush cutting which had, at least, more visible results. They could see something being accomplished, they could see the prairie being released from its prison of invasive weeds and shrubs.

Seeding and brush cutting were not,

however, enough. Prairies must be burned. It was fire that had kept these areas free of trees and shrubs. To bring fire back to these prairies took a long and concerted campaign, for what official would accept the idea of burning lands so close to city buildings and

Almost all the rest of Illinois prairie fell to the plow.

A good-sized tract of prime black earth prairie just south of Chicago at Markham was turned into a preserve. Another suburban tract, Wolf Road Prairie,

**Professionals alone will never have enough time nor money to keep restorations moving. Each community will have to develop its own prairie consciousness in order to push back the concrete, the factories, the houses, the bluegrass lawns, and the cornfields.**

people? But with persistent prodding city and county officials gave permission, and today every spring and fall volunteers burn the tall grass prairies of Chicago.

Prairie restoration could never have started in Chicago if it weren't for the great tracts of undeveloped land that made up the forest preserves. Chicago is unique amongst major U.S. cities in the amount of land devoted to park and preserve. The largest purchases were made around the turn of the century and became the Cook County Forest Preserve. Farm land, river bottom and woods were bought in such large acreage that the Forest Preserve today totals 11 percent of the land in Cook County. The charter of the Forest Preserve ordered the trustees "to restore and to restock, protect and preserve the lands to their natural state." Since much of the land was old fields, and these fields, if left alone, grew up to become forests, it was assumed that this "reforestation" was in fact "restoration." Open areas for golf greens, baseball diamonds and picnic meadows were mowed and the rest was left to become woodland. This produced the desired park landscape: thick forests as a backdrop for open meadows, just like a fine English landscape (only the sheep were missing). It never occurred to anyone that the natural state of most of this land was prairie. But the stage was set. Land that had once been prairie was set aside before it was plowed, built on, or paved over. Elsewhere in the area a few patches of prairie were saved because they were too wet to build on, or were held as speculative ventures and saved before they were developed. As a consequence, the Chicago area has more sizable plots of tall grass prairie than any downstate county. Ironically, the very forces that built the city—usually so destructive of natural environments—had in this case saved a few.

was purchased by a conservation group. Prairies were planted from scratch on old fields at two arboretums, and in 1977 Dr. Betz began what is to be the largest prairie in the area on 776 acres of old cornfields at the Fermi National Accelerator Laboratory.

The North Branch sites were all owned by the Cook County Forest Preserve. They already had a large paid staff in charge of maintaining the preserve as it was. The North Branch volunteers were not professional environmental workers. Why should the Forest Preserve let this bunch of "prairie-eyed" amateurs do the job of converting woods to fields? The Forest Preserve wasn't convinced of the need for this particular type of "field"—to the uninitiated most prairies look like a patch of weeds.

The volunteers began with a fairly timid approach. They requested permission of the Forest Preserve to let them help in maintaining the "natural landscape," even if there was little of that landscape left. They asked to be given a chance to prove that their methods could work. The volunteers knew that to upset their relationship with the Forest Preserve could mean exclusion from these public properties, so they moved cautiously and kept a low profile. When nearby residents complained that they were cutting down trees that the Forest Preserve was supposed to protect, the volunteers switched to girdling the trees. They cut the bark in a ring around the tree which killed the tree, but slowly so that the neighbors were none the wiser when the tree lost its leaves and seemed to die a natural death.

Had not the North Branch volunteers faced these constraints, they might have looked to the examples of the created prairies of Morton Arboretum and Fermi Lab. The

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"plow and plant" method worked in these places (but then, imagine a group of city environmentalists asking the Forest Preserve to loan them tractors and plows). As it turned out, these limitations didn't stop, or even slow the methodical restoration of the prairies. After ten years of continuous cutting, burning, and seeding the North Branch prairies began to thrive. Shrubby fields dominated by a few monotonous Eurasian weeds began to show the diversity of plants characteristic of a healthy ecosystem. You could see by the variety of flowers that this was no longer a weedy meadow. As the amount of prairie land increased more seed was produced to seed still more areas. Volunteers started prairie gardens in their backyards of the rarer and more difficult to propagate plants.

What seemed like a slow method—seeding into existing vegetation—turned out to work faster than plow and plant, which appeared at first to have an obvious advantage. Start with fresh ground, seed

or transplant prairie plants, weed and sit back and watch the prairie grow. The problem is weeds. They grow faster than the native plants and it is impossible to get them completely out. The North Branch

**[Restoration] meant learning a few more prairie plants on the tour that followed the morning work. It meant a connection to, and an understanding of, the natural world denied to most urbanites.**

method of seeding into the existing vegetation while letting fire knock out most of the Eurasian invaders proved to be the superior method. Called "successional restoration," this method has proven itself in other habitats as well.

The North Branch volunteers have continued to expand their prairie and savannas. Volunteers have taken their restoration skills with them as they move to new areas so that the Chicago area has become alive with restoration projects. There is talk of converting vacant lots into

prairie gardens in order to provide sufficient seed for future large-scale restoration projects. But the bulldozer and backhoe are always out there waiting, ready to do their work. In 1990 a prairie remnant was

found that was about to be swallowed up by a gravel company. The land was too expensive to consider purchase, so it was decided to see if it could be moved. Mechanical tree planters were used to dig up large plugs of prime flora, while the rest was placed in dump trucks and taken to a new protected site where hundreds of volunteers resodded a specially built glacial kame (a small gravel hill). The new prairie is growing and is a very slowly starting to look like a natural prairie.

For the Midwestern tall grass

prairie to survive, it will need more than just a few preserves. A treeless landscape needs a wide horizon and a big sky. Many species need a large expanse for a proper breeding territory. To do this will require the physical labor and vigilance of a large force of concerned citizens. Professionals alone will never have enough time nor money to keep restorations moving. Each community will have to develop its own prairie consciousness in order to push back the concrete, the factories, the houses, the bluegrass lawns, and the cornfields. It is the prairie plants that created this soil, the richest in all the world. We owe it to the prairie to return the favor and help it survive into the next century.

For information on the North Branch Prairie Project and other Chicago area restoration groups contact:

The Nature Conservancy  
79 W. Monroe  
Chicago, IL 60603

## FIRE

Fire is essential for the prairie and savanna. Without fire, invading shrubs and trees take over the prairie, and without fire the savanna becomes choked with shrubs, shading out natural vegetation. In pre-settlement times, Indians lit fires for many reasons—to clear land, to be able to spot game, and as a hunting method. When white settlers stopped the fires the prairies were doomed. Today, prairie and savanna remnants are being brought back to life through the use of controlled burns. The most difficult part of this is political—getting permission from property owners and authorities. The preferred time is early spring or late fall when the grass is dry. The burn crew uses a few tools—drip torches to get the fire going, flappers to beat it out, and water tanks. The early settlers described the great prairie fires with a mixture of awe and fear. We get a small taste of this today with controlled burns.

## ANNOUNCEMENT

### An Alternative to Columbus Day

Indigenous People's Day is a recently created alternative to celebrating Columbus Day, seen by many indigenous people as a shadow in American history. Indigenous

People's Day is a celebration of native cultures and caring about people and the land. It also features multi-cultural group theme art shows within participating communities. The supporters of Indigenous People's Day hope to replace a negative event with a positive one, providing a forum for all people to hear the wisdom of tribal cultures and cultivate native roots and environmental bonds. For more information write to: Barry Finbarr Keaveny c/o Cochise Private Industry Council, 77 Calle Portal, Suite C-220, Sierra Vista, AZ 85635. Or call toll free 1-800-280-0277.

## Put "Bio"

continued from page 2

covered is by the mixture of urban and rural groups who form the Great Lakes Bioregional Congress (GLBC). Coming from places as dispersed as Michigan, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio and Ontario, participants learn about the rest of the Great Lakes Basin and make consensus resolutions on subjects ranging from preventing pollution in this highly endangered area to protecting native burial sites. Represented groups include the Volunteer Stewardship Network which manages 200 prairie restoration sites totalling 27,000 acres of public land in Illinois and oversees 4,000 volunteers replanting native species, Wisconsin's Madison Area Community Supported Agriculture Council of organic farmers who have created a food system between producers and consumers, and Bring Back the Don in Toronto which involves 8,000 city residents who have planted over 20,000 native trees and shrubs to revegetate the banks of the Lower Don River. The extremely active Wild Onion Alliance in Chicago (the word "chicago" is derived from a Native American phrase meaning "land of the wild onion") hosted the last GLBC which expanded the Congress format to include "native guides" who pointed out social improvement programs as well as natural places that still exist within the city and led work parties to pick up trash on the shore of Lake Michigan, assist in cleaning up the Chicago River, and help restore the Miami Woods.

Planet Drum Foundation, begun in 1973 to research and promote bioregional approaches to solving community problems, estimates that there are currently over 200 organizations who call themselves "bioregional." Most of them are in North America but there is growing interest among groups in Europe, Australia and South America. There are dozens of newsletters distributed by these groups and several regularly pub-

## Cities are fast approaching an era when limits on consumption of bioregional resources will play a primary role in deciding municipal policies and practices.

lished magazines that cover local developments and feature working-examples including *Columbiana: Journal of Sustainable Culture for the Columbia Bioregion of the Intermountain Northwest* and Planet Drum's *Raise the Stakes*. Representatives from as far away as Mexico and Alaska have convened at five North American meetings held on both coasts and in the heartland (1994's will be in Kentucky). They are called Turtle Island Bioregional Gatherings because of the use of "turtle island" as a term for North America in several indigenous languages. Participants carry out workshops, cultural presentations and demonstrations that relate to reinhabitation. Formal policy proposals which have been agreed on at past Gatherings cover a surprisingly broad spectrum of issues from forestry and agricultural practices to cultural diversity and urban settlements.

On the governmental level, a bioregional perspective has been incorporated into the State of California's 1991 "Memorandum of Understanding: Agreement on Biodiversity," an arrangement to share territories controlled by several state agencies and federal authorities including the Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management. Realizing that endangered species can't really be protected unless habitats and ranges are preserved, the Agreement stakes out eleven California

"bioregions" such as Northern Sierra, San Joaquin Valley and South Coast that are recognized primarily for specific watersheds and place-related flora and fauna. This is a more limited view than grassroots activists would prefer but there is room for it to expand in Bioregional Councils of local residents. They are specified to work in conjunction with an Executive Council of agency heads to develop policies about natural resources uses. By doing this, the Agreement on Biodiversity gives tacit recognition to already existing watershed groups and facilitates the growth of more in other areas.

The future possibilities for applying bioregional principles, criteria and techniques are extremely promising. Rural areas are currently undergoing a demographic shift from older people with traditional agricultural backgrounds to ex-urbanite "new settlers" who bring interests in preserving and restoring natural features, growing organic foods, using renewable energy, and sharing information that is conducive to reinhabitory living. This is resulting in increased acceptance of relevant bioregional factors in a range of professional fields from restoration ecology to education, architecture and planning.

Cities are fast approaching an era when limits on consumption of bioregional resources will play a primary role in deciding municipal policies and practices. Supplies of pure water and clean energy, and creation

and disposal of wastes are already critical problems in many cities. Bioregionally-rooted solutions such as recycling grey water, retrofitting public buildings for energy conservation and the use of renewables, creation of widely accessible public gardening space, greater neighborhood control over public services, and others cited in Planet Drum's book *A Green City Program for the San Francisco Bay Area and Beyond* can do much to reverse present trends.

The greatest benefit of widespread adoption of bioregional views may ultimately be felt in the establishment of a mutual popular ethos for inhabiting the earth together. "Think globally, act locally" has an immediate and practical corollary in "Think biospherically, act bioregionally."

### SOME BIOREGIONAL RESOURCES

Mattole Restoration Council, P.O. Box 160, Petrolia CA 95558

Gulf of Maine, 61 Maine Street, Brunswick ME 04011

Kansas Area Watershed Council, Box 1512, Lawrence KS 66044

Lower Hudson Estuary, 153 Guilford Schoolhouse Road, New Paltz NY 12561

Yuba Watershed Institute, 17790 Tyler Foote Road, Nevada City CA 95959

Ozark Area Community Congress, P.O. Box 104, Eureka Springs AR 72632

Wild Onion Alliance, 3432 North Bosworth, Chicago IL 60657

COLUMBIANA, Chesaw Route, Box 83-F, Oroville WA 98844

Turtle Island Bioregional Gathering, c/o Learning Alliance, 494 Broadway, New York City, NY 10012

"Agreement on Biodiversity," The Resources Agency, State of California, 1416 Ninth Street, Sacramento CA 95814.



# Where Poems Come From:

## An Interview with Jerry Martien

by Peter Berg

**PETER BERG:** What is the source, or what are parallel phenomena, for the sense of rhythm and repeated images (or variations on images) in your poetry?

**JERRY MARTIEN:** Partly I would say, as Gertrude Stein said: I don't repeat, I insist. But then I would point, not to the rhythms of the modern age and its jazz, but to the astonishing economy of nature, where with slight variations the same form occurs again and again and again.

As in speech, where we are astonishingly

repetitive, getting to the point in an oblique, roundabout way, as if we were stalking the figures of a dream. And listeners, or at least accustomed listeners, have no problem with this—they follow the implies meanings, the drift of sense. Uh huh, uh huh...And then what did she do?

And speech in turn is necessarily, has to be, like life—where we learn by hard lesson that nothing is as easy as it looks, that the way there is never direct, and you're probably not going to get it the first time. The place we live, the people we live there with, what we do—all this supplies not just the meat of poetry, but teaches the bones of the poet how to move. The definitive statement of this was made by Lew Welch: "Language is Speech." Too bad he didn't stick around to see where that perception takes you. Or maybe he did see. He didn't say it would be easy.

**PB:** What is the mental perspective that shapes your perceptions of natural events or characteristics?

**JM:** Simple-mindedness, mostly. And I don't mean the kind you get from doing zazen. Something happened early on—and I think this is common to a lot of kids who grow up to be poets or criminals—a kind of accidental falling out of your family or tribe, where one day they are saying things too weird to be believed, and doing things too strange for words. So you become like the dreamer in a dream, both part of it and outside it, only nobody knows whose dream it is. A person like this tends to want to repeat the obvious, and appreciates the redundancy of nature and natural beings. Tell me again what we're doing here. You're sure this is the combination?

**PB:** You often describe or portray common and universal emotions such as love, sadness, attraction, loneliness and transcendence in a fairly direct or fundamental manner. Considering that these are often the subject of popular music and other widely available cultural forms, why do

you feature them in your poems? What do you express additionally about them?

**JM:** Probably nothing—nothing that hasn't been said. I've often remarked at readings—listening to myself repeating this same poem upon the same occasion, year after year—I'm just another greeting card company. The stuff you used to buy at Woolworth's. Marriages, birthdays, turns of the season, the festivals and holy days—what else is there to talk about?

What you're asking, very politely, is how I can be so unoriginal and corny. It may be that I'm



as emotionally simple—simple feelinged—as I am when it comes to abstract thinking. Because here I'm even more at a loss. The more I see the patterns of our lives whirl by—I'm a grandfather now, you know, the more completely ignorant I feel. But it seems I'm not alone in this, and that people like to be reminded of it—what fools we are, say, when it comes to love and intimacy. And I'll read that poem every April.

**PB:** Most of your poems seem to be place-located, specifically in northern California. What is the significance of this?

**JM:** I think I saw that somebody had finally made a book-title of it: Wherever you go, there you are. And you can't fake it, pretend to be somebody somewhere else, although many people try. It's synonymous with fame and success and power and money. One grows up in the twentieth century in a culture that is usually completely inappropriate to the place you live. This was clear even to a child in southern California after WWII—where the already unreal orange groves were replaced by rows of suburban tv antennas. And how crazy and dislocated this made everyone. How you want to get out and get away—in my case to the east coast, then the midwest, and then back because life in those places seemed even less appropriate. And then here, which was as close as I could get to home. To the now "occupied" country of my great grandparents, who came with the earlier occupation of Alta California. I consider myself an exotic, a kind of live-in exile.

But again, it's possible I've been too simple-minded and literal about place. I was just in Hawaii, visiting friends who used to live here. All of them had become aston-

ishingly fluent in island ways and language, and were quite devout toward its island spirits. They are also conscious of their haole status, and aware that they are wanderers on the earth, displaced persons, like those unfree souls D.H. Lawrence described, who go west and shout of freedom. But those same devoted and dedicated people used to live here, and had developed a very wise and passionate attachment to this region. Maybe because they've known placelessness, there are a kind of people who carry locale with them, who are makers and finders of the spirit of place itself.

In the current issue of "Bamboo Ridge," a fine island quarterly, there's a brief sketch of the life of the painter and writer Reuben Tam, who spent many years of his working life on islands off the coast of New England, in a setting almost the mirror opposite of his native Hawaii. Yet in the accompanying sketches, one feels a tectonic structure beneath his landscape, such as only someone who has seen a volcano at work would understand. He wrote eloquently of the critical importance of place—of the literal islands to which he eventually returned, but also of the dream islands which were realized in his paintings.

In some way or other, we have to lose our place in order to find it. And maybe the most lost, which usually includes the poets, are like difficult, mercurial scoutmasters, pointing at the map and saying, Look. We're here.

**PB:** What are the levels of "us" that constitute the sense of community in your poems?

**JM:** The pronouns are risky. Like Lenny Bruce's Tonto says to the Lone Ranger, "What do you mean we, white man?" For me I think it works because I know who I'm talking to. This is true of the poems that are meant to be read in public halls, or given to friends who are being married, or pinned on the walls of bars. This is one of the great rewards of finding one's place—where you read your poems, and they actually get it. A little of what Neruda must have experienced, when he didn't have a copy of a love poem to read, so 200 people in the audience recited it. It's been a great satisfaction, and it's made me somewhat negligent in getting the poems put into books. So I'm beginning to ask how far from home that first person plural is valid. And whether I'm willing to go there and read them. So far, yes—that this place translates to other places.

And in that sense—of the you for and to whom I presume to speak, the collective participation—the poetry has always tended toward increase and diversity. It appears to be part of getting older, not just for poets but for anyone who goes around hearing and conversing in a multitudinous conspiracy of voices. Lately, the second person singular had been reserved for a particular spirit I've been talking to, sometimes in animal form, who sometimes talks back. And the deeper I dig into the dunes where I live, the more I begin to think of myself as a member of the Union of Pacific Rim Beach Poets. And my landscape poems, they're turning into diagrams of the dream—or under-world, maps of Hades—a place much maligned and misrepresented, like many of the regions of earth. More and more of my audience is moving there, and more than ever needs poetry.

It's as if the poetry has become a tool of recovery, something with which to work toward the difficult, gradual recovery of our full place, with its animals, its angels, its heaven and hell, all of it. And as with restoration work, once begun, it finds everything is connected. Once we engage the spirits of place, there is nowhere to stop till we have redeemed it all. Which is to say, till we have been fully alive here. And have the poems to remind us what that's like.

### DUNE ANGELS

they are to air  
as we to earth  
or fish to the great ocean

the wind invisibly  
moves atoms of rock  
given by rivers  
to the waves  
to wash up on our beach

bringing inland to us  
undulating slow  
dune that stretches  
against an older dune

across the willow swamp  
where the sand spills over  
I can see it from my porch

on sunday mornings  
while the wind is softly  
pushing the earth around  
the young virgins of the neighborhood  
cross the path through the willow  
and lie down on the sand  
and spread their wings

they lightly rise and turn  
to see what brief impression  
they have made on the warm  
sliding atoms of rock

then they dance their shadows  
back into sand  
or sit and talk and let it  
run between their finger-tips

old theologian on the porch  
studies the blowing grasses and flowers  
willow swamp and drifting dunes  
birds of the air and the great  
angel sun himself  
moving their wings against the earth

—Jerry Martien



# Teach Local

by Paul Krapfel

At our last school, 89 percent of the kids thought that investigating a flower for a whole week would be “boring”—for a variety of reasons. Comments such as “It’s not that interesting enough to us to keep us involved.” “What do you need to know about a flower besides it’s beautiful.” “Already know everything about flowers.” “A flower is a waste of time, for little girls, and boring.” “It has no action.” were common. But by the end of the week, 95 percent wrote that it had been fun.

Shasta Natural Science Association in Redding, California is creating curriculums that utilize local species to engage students grades 4-8 in field biology investigations. What is our measure of these curriculums “working?” There is wonderful excitement and comments during the investigations themselves that confirm that we are on the right track.

Our primary goal, however, is to get students to investigate nature on their own because the things we learn best are the things we continue to practice on our own time. What really excites us is seeing large groups of students spending lunch recesses out by their study plots—an area they did not spend recess time at before. The fact that 79 percent of the students report doing observations and experiments at home is promising as well. Or a boy coming up and asking “Are you the people doing neat experiments?” He had heard about them from his friend, the results were rippling through the school. These are our confirmations that our curriculums are working.

One of the reasons we create them is that it gets the kids outdoors. Period.

Another reason is that any curriculum that is distributed nationally must, of necessity, be “generic.” Textbooks will use apples, bananas and roses for much of their “plants” presentation, biology as if it comes from supermarkets. Biology as if everywhere is the same. And yet one of the most profound truths of biology is the uniqueness of each place. We believe that teaching generic biology helps create generic citizens that won’t sink roots deep enough to hold them in place when difficult winds blow. So we, a regional science museum, received from the Howard Hughes Medical Institute a grant with which to teach biology using species that occur locally. Five of the curriculums we are developing are “Autumn Oaks,” “Fabulous Filaree,” “Biological Control of Yellow Star Thistle,” “Ant Foraging” and “Energy Flow through Spring Ponds.”

These are hands-on immersions into the science of ecology rather than the philosophy of environmental education. Our intent is not to convert or elicit “responsible action.” It is to create encounters with the natural world that provide life-long understanding of how nature works. We believe that deep, genuine understanding shapes actions more responsibly than any sermon or consensus we might lead students to. There are no sermons, but there are lots of exclamation marks.

tions and insights from students. “Oh, it’s like the water cycle,” in reference to the flow of material through an oak tree. “It goes round and round.”

A characteristic of this “hard science” approach is that students do lots of math. They measure and then graph, compare and analyze data. Too often in our schools, kids experience math as computational procedures for generating answers. But in these investigations, they experience math as both a powerful tool for discovering patterns and as a powerful language for expressing relationships.

One thing that helps this be fun is that the data has not come disembodied out of a book. The students have gathered it themselves. Each number summarizes a whole-body experience with the world. The students already have a kinesthetic feel for the patterns that the mathematical analysis will reveal. My favorite example of this is “Soil Probe” in which students, ten times, poke pencils into the ground out in the open and measure how deep the pencils went. They then repeat the process ten times in the ground beneath an oak tree. The kinesthetic experience is dramatic and elicits lots of excited comments. This dramatic difference is then captured in the graphing of results. Students learn both that graphs tell a story and that oak trees, in some way, influence the soil beneath them.

A very popular activity involves each student marking a particular “thing” and following it through time. It might be a flower turning into a fruit, a freshly fallen leaf gradually decaying or an ant colony’s use of a foraging trail over a season or from year to year. Marking a particular object focuses the eyes and mind on the transitional stages. Without this focus, we tend to see only the things we already know. The connecting transitions are invisible. Once made visible, these changes are fascinating to kids. They see more connections between parts of their world. Students experience a true expansion of consciousness in that they are growing aware of changes that happen at a rate slower than can be immediately perceived.

The whole class, I suppose, could mark just one flower and observe its changes, but one of the advantages of using locally common species is that material is dirt cheap so each student can mark their own. We are fascinated by how many of the students create a personal relationship with their marked object. We have encouraged this because finding out what has happened to “my” flower is a strong motivation and sharpens the perception. At the same time, I am aware that the classic science experiment involving many test runs is supposed to disallow emotional attachment to any particular case. This might be a good way to do science but it is a horrible standard to impose on young children whose hearts are still open. I wonder whether this image of the scientist as emotionally detached, aloof to the hundred test cases, is one of the reasons so many students lose interest in science. If so, it is a pity because so many great scientists have described the scientific pursuit as an aesthetic joy. Perhaps we need to see these deep bonding investigations as very scientific at heart.

Students realize that this is no contrived investigation with a scripted conclusion. They are working very much with their

own world. The investigation is open-ended and any conclusions will be based on what is really there. Open-ended investigations with non-scripted conclusions put students on the cutting edge of knowledge. It unites students and teacher on the same side in investigating the unknown. This invites both to wonder and ask questions out of pure curiosity. While working in a school with two ant colonies of the same species that were separated by one hundred yards, students observed that one colony was foraging on the food they had placed out for them and the other colony was not. The non-feeding ants were not foraging away from their tree at all. The trails which had been heavily used earlier in the week and which the students had marked were not being used today. Why? This led to a host of speculations, many of which were testable and several of which were not. This situation could not have been scripted.

The second thing that occurs is that the students come face to face with complexity. Students of all ages get excited when they are dealing with the real thing. They much prefer it to watered-down, abstracted simplifications so common to text book science for children. After all, the brain has evolved within the complexity of the natural world. And there is no illusion, such as created by textbooks with their regurgitative questions at the end of each chapter. By the end of the unit, a student knows everything about oaks, ants, filarees or star thistles. The students have learned a lot about scientific discovery, but they have also asked far more questions than were answered.

The third thing that happens is spontaneous outbursts of aesthetic or intellectual delight. They are so pure and uplifting that I think about them a lot. Then I read Henri Bortoft’s essay “Counterfeit and authentic wholes: Finding a means for dwelling in nature” (included in *Dwelling, Place, and Environment* edited by Seamon and Mugerauer, 1985, Columbia University Press) and he expressed perfectly my experiences with these aesthetic outbursts.

“The primal phenomenon is not to be thought of as a generalization from observations, produced by abstracting from different instances something that is common to them. If this result were the case, one would arrive at an abstracted unity with the dead quality of a lowest common factor... In a moment of intuitive perception, the particular instance is seen as a living manifestation of the universal.”

“As an authentic discovery, this moment can only be experienced directly; it cannot be ‘translated’ adequately into the verbal language of secondhand description.

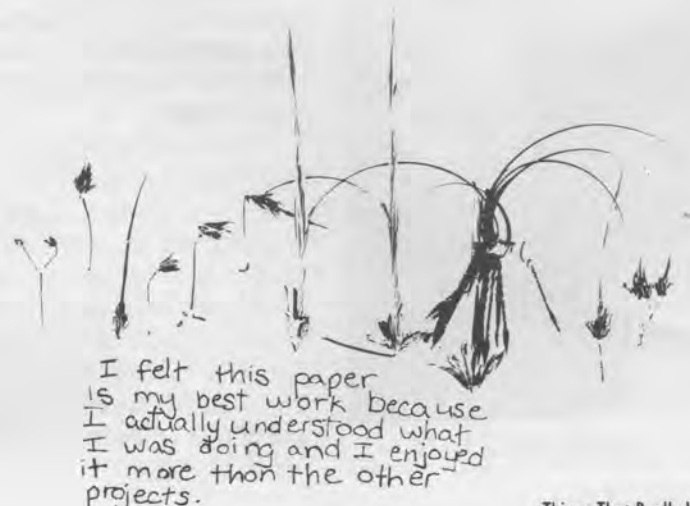
One of the things that intrigues me

with this work is the sense that some of our activities are uniting the hard and the soft, the right brain and left brain, the heart and the mind, logic and emotion. These classic dichotomies that we take for granted don’t have to be dichotomous. There is power in activities that contain the two simultaneously.

Another thing we have discovered is that the best “take” comes from teachers who seek us out rather than from schools where we have been asked to come by the superintendent. Top-down mandates just don’t work as well as personal interest. Also, our curriculums aren’t of interest to teachers (and schools) that are primarily concerned with how well their students do on standardized tests. Localized knowledge will never be tested on standardized tests—for such tests (to be profitable to the developers) must be applicable across the country and, hence, generic. This is one of the many ways our culture discourages the sinking of roots in one’s bioregion.

However, we have been delightfully surprised by how many teachers have stepped forward to field test our activities. They know that kids have an inherent fascination with nature. These teachers have wanted to teach their students about the natural world around them but they lacked the specific knowledge themselves. Most teachers have not grown up in the school community. They are a product of our mobile, rootless culture but they are eager to reconnect themselves and connect their students. Unfortunately, their mobility has disinherited them from the local knowledge. We help give them some of that knowledge. We give them simplified keys to the galls of California oaks, help them identify ant species, and teach them the observable characteristics of the fascinating life history of the dragonfly. One of the “things that works” about these investigations is that often the teacher gets excited and strongly drawn in at the adult level and the students then respond to the enthusiasm of their teacher. One teacher said to us by way of explaining the smudge in the knees of her pants, “I just had to get down on my hands and knees to see what kind of ant that was on the ground. I have never noticed them before.”

Our curriculums may be purchased as they can be completed by anyone interested though they are most applicable within our bioregion. Most broadly, however, we want to help other regions develop their own bioregional curriculums. We are available for consulting with any group that is interested in doing such work in their area.





# Making a Garden of Consequence

by Marie Dolcini

A Sunday afternoon spent at Green Gulch Farm for an open house isn't what you'd call a typical visit to a working farm. Perched along a dramatic edge of coastal thrust traced in tawny uplift and the continent's terminus at the Pacific Ocean north of San Francisco lies one of the oldest Zen centers in North America. It is largely directed by an active sense of in situ, or place-centered consciousness. This is the plucky little organic-minded outpost that could, can, and still does. Over the past twenty odd years it's earned a reputation as an idyllic meditation retreat and Zen practice haven, and one of the finest growers of plants and produce in the San Francisco Bay Area. Director/coordinator Wendy Johnson walks her appointed rounds wearing well-worn coveralls and a quickening smile. As head gardener for the past nine years, Johnson's lived here with her husband for eighteen, and has been very involved in meditation and farming. She's committed to developing organic techniques as an important part of the S.F. Zen Center meditation context, and regards it as a most gratifying

challenge, as well as the topic of her next book.

Johnson was drawn to the art and craft of farming ever since her Connecticut girlhood and considers herself lucky to have been surrounded by beautiful gardens. "It's been my life calling ever since I was little—I think because I love the outdoors and I'm

clearly belongs to the wider community—there's no doubt about it. It has to be taken care of well by the residents, so we've always been interested in alternative energy and renewable resources. We haven't been very successful at those last two so far, because we're pretty avid meditators and a lot of our effort has been tied up. But when you pay

tion. People know us for our cooking, our facilities, and for the fact that we've been committed community members for close to three decades."

As for farm labor, Wendy underscores the teaching role of Green Gulch, "Most people are enrolled in the work program too, so we have about 35 residents and



North Slope

committed to preserving and protecting that kind of land."

Before coming to GGF she was a student for two years at Tassajara Zen Monastery. Or in her own words, "After one year of suffering through the kitchen and other work, I finally got into the garden, which is where I was much more comfortable. I think the original idea for Green Gulch was a place where students could sort of retire—it's not at all that. We're in fact [much more] active as a teaching and meditation center and organic farm." Johnson feels GGF is rather unique from most other Zen centers because it isn't limited to the organizational principle of teaching meditation, but emphasizes extending it into all aspects of life and keeping an open dialogue between groups.

"I think it's been very interesting probably because of its location in the Bay Area—certainly because of its connection to groups like Planet Drum and the folks at Whole Earth."

According to Johnson, "GGF serves the community primarily as a place where meditation is offered on a daily basis, open to anyone who wants to come and sit and look at their life through the channel or vein of just sitting down quietly paying attention to their own body, mind, and breath. That's already a valuable community service. There's also the fact that we are located on a spot of land as beautiful as this one, which

attention to where you're living, you're going to also be aware of what resources you're using, how you can live more lightly on the land. It's definitely something we're working toward."

The beautiful organic farm here continues to "crank it out" in Johnson's words, and provides wholesome produce for the wider Bay Area. "We have our restaurant, a small bakery, we used to have a grocery store—and all are/were located in city neighborhoods where we serve the public. We have some commitment to serving whoever shows up—and that can be provocative, especially in the city. The Zen Center is in a rough neighborhood in San Francisco rife with drugs."

Although GGF sells produce directly to farmers' markets in Marin County and S.F., they also donate a good deal of it as well. "Ever since we began, we've given away a lot of produce to local soup kitchens and to organizations that feed the hungry," notes Johnson. "We should also feed people who don't have the option of going to Chez Panisse, or Greens Restaurant [two renowned higher priced local eateries]. We've been very active in opening and maintaining a dialogue between farmers and restaurateurs, and making good clean cooking a part of what we offer. Greens is vegetarian—we're used to that now, but we opened 15 years ago. It was always committed to good veggie cuisine so people would be inspired, and so it would inspire imagina-

they work in the kitchen, garden, farm, office, meditation hall, and the guest program. We rely on and cultivate volunteers in the garden and it's great—you get a good cross section of humanity, a lot of burned out people who badly need a garden in their life. One woman lawyer came and requested only that she be put with someone to work with who wouldn't talk to her. She made compost and changed her legal practice as a result of being here, so it's subtle."

A fox darts swiftly by during a pause and we take note of what seems an almost insistent harmony, since the quail remain mostly unmolested by predators. "Yeah, there's a lot of Zen calm around here," remarks the head gardener.

When speaking of the connection between agriculture and bioregions as characterized by watershed, soil, climate, native plants, and animals, Johnson maintains that a sense of place is absolutely necessary to the work of Zen practice. "You could say that a meditator can sit anywhere, but anywhere you sit you know something about the place because of the fact that you put yourself down on the earth. When you farm, you're farming in a specific place at a specific time, in a specific context, on a specific scale. I like to think very much about scale and context when I consider this question. What is our context within the watershed? We're a meditation community within the Redwood Creek watershed draining the southwestern slope of Mt. Tamalpais. We're between Diaz Ridge



Wendy Johnson

photos by Marie Dolcini



to the northwest and Coyote Ridge to the southwest. The water sheds down this valley and into this creek. Green Gulch Creek runs into Redwood Creek, which drains the Muir Woods and the waters off Mt. Tam, and opens up into the Pacific Ocean as the southernmost habitat of the Silver Salmon. It's an incredible honor to be in this place.

"We're living in a watershed that's been pretty much undisturbed by the kind of practices you find so much in the northwest part of California and Oregon. That is why Silver Salmon are still swimming up Redwood Creek—because it hasn't been logged and they can still find their natal stream. We have a very intact and preserved watershed, and if you're farming, you want to know that. You want to ensure the stream stays clean certainly of any agricultural residues—even manure."

With regard to bioregional applications currently under way, the re-establishment of a lagoon at GGF is an exciting restoration project. It involves restoring wetland habitat in their watershed and yielding over some acreage. Wendy explains, "There was a lagoon here during the previous owner's tenure. He built up by adding five feet of soil to the lower fields to create meadowland pastures for cattle. Now, ironically, it's coming back around. Talk about the great loop of consequence of cause and effect! And we're being invited to donate some of the land back so it can be gauged out and restored to the lagoon which would be wonderful for the salmon, because it will create a kind of inland estuary. Not exactly a wetland, but pretty close. The question becomes, Are you willing to cede over what would be decent agricultural land (or a larger parking lot in the case of nearby Muir Beach residents) in order to create habitat for birds and wildlife that was changed by human intervention? I look at that as being an agricultural process."

Other bioregional aspects include celebrating seasonal events. "Every winter there is Arbor Day, but here we designate all of January and February as tree planting months where we've been working with our neighbors to revegetate the hills with indigenous trees—either redwoods and fir or coast live oak from seedlings collected from the woods. These practices have been very valuable for us to join the natural cycles of this particular bioregion and watershed; to know when the acorns are ripe, when they're being taken by the jays, when they're harvestable, when to gather, save, clean, glean through and plant, nurse and bring on. To go through that kind of cycle takes a long term commitment, one for the long haul, and interestingly, it coincides, commences and is continued with Zen practice."

"Every year we have certain festivals. At the Thanksgiving Festival, for instance, people come together and celebrate the apple harvest or commemorate the first sowing of seed. Other practices help remind us where we are. We celebrate the summer solstice by standing here and noticing the sunrise at its northernmost point on the horizon, whereas in winter, it's fully in the saddle of that mountain on the shortest day. We mark those points and know that the in-between part is where the sun rises on the autumnal and vernal equinoxes. We watch the cycles and do what we call a walk for the earth when we silently walk the boundaries of the watershed with garden farmers and apprentices every solstice. For me it's absolutely essential. It's good Zen, it's good neighborliness, it's good fun, and good education. And to do it silently is powerful—to really get the tidings of the land. It's not to say, 'Well here we are, the stewards of this land.' Farming

does mean stewarding and taking care of the land, but it also means listening to it, feeling joy, and being honored.

"We also sell and make native plants

Irish and part Yurok from the Klamath River area in northern California—a great botanist and agronomist who helped start the native plant section of the UC Berkeley



South Slope

available. In particular, we're interested in getting the whole range of entry plants for the monarch butterfly to help re-establish them. Our neighbors may be a little suspicious. 'What are the Zens doing?' as they say. But the answer is, 'Today they're offering plants for free that butterflies like.' Then we can have a dialogue with each other."

Wendy cautions, "Gardening is invasive no matter what; it's imposing something. I look at the hills and they've already been changed through grazing and logging. We frequently do walks to look at the natural landscape so that we can remember our source and what's happening. Just looking at those hills now, we can see they're drying out and get some education about how we need to be watering in the garden by watching the patches of grass."

"People are hungry; we know how to grow food. It's a political act, we're committed to it, and we'll take the consequences of watering land and being aware of those people to do it. We have helped to develop beautiful agricultural soil, I know that."

Alan Chadwick and Harry Roberts were the primary mentors and soil gurus here, and Johnson believes the GGF approach comes mainly out of Chadwick's biodynamic gardening work. "He started these gardens in 1971 as a ferociously dedicated British horticulturalist. Alan used to say it would sicken him to see perfectly able-bodied Zen people running to the sound of the wooden mallet calling them to meditation and leaving an old man like him to carry on in the garden—the absolute reverse of the natural order. We also had the great honor of working with Harry Roberts who was part

botanical gardens. It was Harry who told us to watch the hillside until it showed its last spot of green, and to plant in those spots."

"It's important to distinguish between organic farming, permaculture, and biodynamics, because they're all in a way at least distinctly spirited practices possessing certain qualities all their own. I don't like to be too much of a generalist—you can end up with a salad that doesn't have any taste. There's a beet in GGF's salad, it's bright red, and it's the bloody beet of biodynamic inspired horticulture. We're not strictly biodynamic. We're not to the letter of the law because we've been cross fertilized by many teachers. Working with Harry, we couldn't just involve ourselves in the philosophy of biodynamics. But I think the real source of difference came from the tremendous work, involvement, and passion that happens when you garden a piece of land. It takes time away from your meditation. We can't be too involved with one philosophy or another because our primary work is still offering meditation."

Whenever school groups come to GGF, Johnson always gathers them under a live oak tree. "We stand under that oak to remind folks that the native people of this area did not need to farm, and were considered primitive because they didn't. They gathered and hunted and found themselves at home in the place where they lived. I use that as an opportunity to talk about the absolute abundance and wealth of where we are. Our farming has been influenced by this because there's a sense of remembrance and gratitude to those who lived here before us in the recognition and ceremonies of the year."

"When we plowed our lower fields we found an obsidian knife, which indicates trade and commerce between this coast and other people. It's remarkable to hold it and know that stakes were sharpened with it, fish were cleaned, and people handled those tools and left them in the earth."

According to Johnson, current garden manager Judith Lowry of Larmer Seed Company is very interested in incorporating more native herbs into GGF's future planning, but bioregional food plants still remain to be explored. "I'm very committed to designing and establishing a line of native plants you can eat and to revegetate the hills perhaps for food—certainly for forage and for butterfly food. As Alan Chadwick said, 'There's more to food than what you put in that hole in the middle of your face.' Respect, care, and maintenance of the native landscape is very much a part of what we're doing."

"Judith's experimenting with pinole, and what seeds can be ground up and made into food, seeing how those plants grow, and perhaps doing some leeching of acorns to see if they're actually a profitable food plant. Probably more likely is gathering the local wild blackberries and strawberries, or growing yerba buena for tea."

Johnson's future goals include increasing the development and use of alternative energy sources. "We can't not do it because this is more than a public place, it's a place of inspiration and renewal, therefore you can't have propane tanks when it could be done with solar or wind energy."

Wendy Johnson's approach is Zen-influenced, but hardly cloistered. "You don't just do this for productivity. I have a real commitment to working with children and making the resources here available to the next generation. As Alan said, 'When you see the light in their eye, go with it; stop what you're doing and answer questions, work with people.'"

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# GETTING OUTSIDE:

## Notes on an Elementary Bioregional Education

by Jim Dodge

According to the old-line alchemists, the path of learning is marked by increasingly dense thickets of complexity to crack through, steeper mountains to climb, colder rivers to swim. The path, which is not linear, wends something like this: the senses gather information; the intellect sifts, integrates, and extends the information into knowledge; knowledge is transformed through the heart into understanding; and, with the experienced application of soul/imagination/spirit, understanding is refined into wisdom. Wisdom, understanding, and most of knowledge are far beyond the purview of these elementary notes, not to mention my grasp.

Bioregionalism, deep ecology, and other "radical environmental" notions are basically pantheism dressed up for school and taking some science classes. I don't mean that disparagingly. If you accept the pantheist precept that everything from starfish to star is imbued with spirit (or even admit the possibility), and adopt the ancient view—now called ecology—that humans are part and parcel of natural cycles and chains, that our lives and our living are inextricably linked to other beings, to natural processes, and to the larger figures of regulation (like solar income and gravity), it seems reasonable that you might question the prevailing cultural/political/religious values that allow the destruction of natural systems, and that you might even take it personally. Of course, values are learned, and since learning starts with information, the best way to inform yourself about the natural world—the nature of Nature—is to get out in it and draw your own conclusions.

I mean "get outside" in the dirt-simple sense of open the door and go. Twentieth century American culture has been dominated by industrialism, which has generally moved to work ("jobs") inside buildings and lately turned homes into electronic entertainment centers. Simultaneously, the prevailing religious belief—Christianity—has demonized the natural world and its urges, set humans apart as a special creation, viewed the planet as dominion instead of domicile, and located paradise in Heaven rather than Earth, thus available by transcendence rather than immanence, by dying rather than living, leaving rather than remaining. We twentieth century industrial humans spend too much sheltered time, most of it looking at dot patterns on screens and listening to disembodied voices through chunks of plastic stuck in our ears. Indeed, many of us have become essentially burrowing animals, holed-up and hunkered down in what we assume is the safety of our individual space—which, if you've ever land-surfed a large earthquake or hauled ass away from an erupting volcano, is a stunningly vulnerable assumption. Naturally enough, an elementary bioregional

education requires literally getting out in the elements where you live, out in the rain, wind, snow, and heat of it, the loam and mud and rock, the ponds, streams, rivers, ocean, getting wet, dirty, blown and burned—attending, as completely as you can, the astonishing welter, weave and tangle of associations that compose life: mine, yours, alders, and mayflies.

I find four compelling pedagogical benefits in getting outside, the first of which is sheer pleasure. Just as discipline falters without honest desire, learning flounders if it doesn't deliver some basic satisfactions. These creaturely pleasures, to cite Carlo

**The best way to inform yourself about the natural world—the nature of Nature—is to get out in it and draw your own conclusions.**

was invented in the 1970's, consider Thoreau's first sentence from that essay: "I wish to speak a word for Nature, for absolute freedom and wildness...to regard man as an inhabitant, or a part and parcel of

Getting outdoors also offers the opulent opportunity to practice the First and Last Principle of Learning: Pay attention. As most of us learn by surviving the lessons, paying attention is an exacting practice.

Many consider it the art of consciousness, and liken it to dancing, often with thousands of partners as once, often to different songs. To wildly simplify, paying attention requires complete awareness in the here and now, beginning with the senses but immediately involving a dynamic perception of the connections among things, the transactions and transformations, flows, cycles and centerless mysteries. Paying attention is not only the way to avoid fatal or damaging mistakes, but also the primary gesture of respect for what sustains us.

When we get outside and pay proper attention to the natural world, we're immediately rewarded with a heart-felt understanding of both our ignorance and our relative insignificance in the grand concord of existence. Such humility is the most fertile state of mind for learning, and the best temper for teaching.

The final benefit of getting outside is the quality of information. As an old western homily has it, "The closer you get to the source, the less likely someone's crapped upstream." As I've noted elsewhere, high-quality information is direct, resonant and durable. If you seek an authoritative source on whether Stellar jays are imbued with spirit, go out and look for yourself. The quality of our intelligence ultimately depends on the quality of our information, and in this purported age of information, far too much is programmed and screened for us, and comes from fewer sources. The Information Superhighway is a fitting metaphor for what seems to be coming, a prospect as exciting as rush hour in L.A. When they can program the information directly available on a starry summer night in

the Klamath mountains, when they can communicate the nuances of breeze and capture the shifting intensity of the azalea's fragrance, I'd still prefer the original.

For a bioregional education, there are two other senses of "getting outside" that bear mention. The first is getting outside the perceptual sets imposed by a culture inimical to nature, the screens and blinders of inbuilt assumptions and implicit values—like the hegemony of reason over imagination, or the "right" to own land. The second is getting outside the self, especially the egocentric models advanced by modern psychology with their cramped notions of identity.

When the bell rings for school, please hurry to leave your seats and walk out the door.



About to Go by Victor Klassen

Rossi, include "light, air, the joy of having a body, the voluptuousness of looking." The best modes of transport are walking, crawling and standing still. (Crawling is a much neglected mode; for a spirited introduction, see Gary Snyder's "Crawling" in *Tree*

Nature, rather than a member of society.") Some of the better advice I've received—not that I'm an able practitioner—is shut your mouth, empty your mind, and open your senses, which I suppose is just a version of what a young man from British Columbia

told me he'd discovered about walking in the woods: "The more I put between me and the land, the less I sense it." John Muir explored the Sierras with little more than a heavy coat, its pockets

full of hardtack. And while it may not be your idea of pleasurable edification, there are those who find walking a few miles naked in a Pacific coast rainstorm the pinnacle of moral instruction.

**The quality of our intelligence ultimately depends on the quality of our information, and in this purported age of information, far too much is programmed and screened for us, and comes from fewer sources.**

*Rings*, the Yuba Watershed Institute's journal. Thoreau's "Walking" remains an excellent guide to the art of that movement. And if you think radical environmentalism



# C I R C L E S CORRESPONDENCE

## Letter From Kangaroo Avenue

Paul Downton  
"Borrowed Ground"  
11 Kangaroo Avenue  
Ecopolis-Adelaide  
South Australia

30 October, 2020

Dear Mum and Dad,

I know that life back in the old country is still very hard compared with here. As you know (after all it has been on just about every kind of media network you run these days), South Australia has just gone 100 percent solar as of the first of September this year! What an event, and I thought going solar on Greenhouse Alert Day was terrific. The combination of renewable energy generating systems: wind, wave and photo-voltaic, have now completely taken over fossil fuels, and the change over from coal to sunshine has been really quite painless because both sorts of energy have been convertible to good old hydrogen.

I've just seen the local Holden dealer about getting one of those new "Hydro Waggon" for our co-housing group and we've begun planning some workshare holidays in what they used to call the Dead Centre. Since the climate shifted good and proper, Lake Eyre seems to have water in it all the time and a couple of us here are part of the group studying the astonishing adaptation of the ecology there. There are secrets oozing out of that millenia-old mud which none of us could have predicted! Seems that Mother Nature can cope with climate shift much better than her sons and daughters dared to hope—not that that's much consolation to the die-hards who kept trying to grow all the wrong stuff in all the wrong places!

Did you catch that 3-D spectacular when South Australia's solar hydrogen system went fully on-stream and practically lit up the whole country?! Brilliant! There we were, light shows in every capital city like you wouldn't believe, and not one drop of fossil oil or cake of coal was burned! It was really a kind of magic, being able to dance in the streets, in the middle of the night, lights burning bright, and all the energy coming from the sunlight of the day before.

Mind you, it's just as well we can enjoy the streets and the sun this way; from 10 am till 5 pm every day this past summer there has been a virtual curfew. The hole in the ozone layer is predicted to start shrinking (or "repairing" itself, according to climatologists) sometime during the next ten years, but so much gunk was let into the atmosphere in those bad old days (1950 to 2000 as I tell the kids) that we have had to suffer the consequences ever since. Of course it has resulted in some much better outdoor places in the city; parks, gardens and courtyards all link up beautifully and you can walk or cycle clear across the old metropolitan area almost always completely in the shade. I don't think the Councils would have got their act together if there hadn't been that dreadful court case, though. You remember that old chap (he really just looked old) who claimed that as a god-fearing, rate-paying, honest-as-the-day-is-long citizen, he was entitled to walk the streets of his own town without fear of being "burned alive" as he called it? The press had a field day with that one, but I don't think very much would have happened otherwise. The action groups really took off with that and every planning office in every council in Australia was under siege for six months.

Do you remember the Great Recycling Debate? I think that only ended when the action groups kept dumping their garbage over the cars and driveways of every politician and polluter who failed to support

that historic legislation of '92. That really sorted the "men from the boys" and it was, of course, women who provided the lead for the action and put together the legislation. Certainly put the old returnable deposit law in the shade, and now everybody comes to SA just to see how it's done.

Funny, isn't it, how just about every piece of ecologically sensible legislation has turned out to be economically beneficial? But if we hadn't had some really remarkable people really prepared to stick their necks out, nothing would have happened. Most people were far too complacent back then. And if the pollies were bad, the pen pushers were worse! I heard plenty of stories about the self protectionist, steady-as-she-goes bureaucrats who deliberately blocked things.

There is still a lot of building going on around here. The Ecoconstruction teams are busier than ever. Last week the biggest single release of land was something like 500 hectares. Just imagine, 500 hectares of suburban sprawl released back into the cobweb of this region with the whole population of Prospect Village now contained in just 20 percent of the area the old "built environment" used to cover. I remember when words like "terrace," "cluster," "row-housing" and "urban consolidation" would strike terror into the very heart of every suburbanite, but everyone's an urban ecologist now and I don't think I've seen anything quite as beautiful as the latest development down the end of our Avenue. It's a sort of cross between a jewel, a garden and a tent, yet that doesn't do it justice. You need to experience this kind of place, it's such an incredibly pleasant way to live, yet there's still an edge to it—maybe that's what comes from using materials that belong here and responding honestly and directly to the climate and land. Honestly, it makes me feel quite lyrical, even spiritual, but it's all low and middle-income stuff and you can just tell there's no waste in it.

This really is a new country now. It hasn't been easy and the changing climate means we will never be able to relax our guard. Some of our neighbors (overseas and interstate) still need watching. The perils of success, I suppose. But at least the world has got one place where there exists a model of evolution toward sustainable development. We know we don't have all the answers, but at least we're working on them, and we're prepared to share and trade with almost anyone who wishes to.

Mum, Dad, it's been a long time since I was a child, and the world has seen more changes in even my lifetime than anyone could have reasonably expected. But the one thing that remains constant, the really quite incredible truth that I keep going back to and which has kept me going in pursuit of the Ecopolitan Dream, is this: buildings don't make cities, people make cities. Most of the essential things that characterize human behavior remain the same, which is why we still use the Bible, the Koran, the Talmud, classical texts and Shakespeare to teach us much of what we call culture and values even in modern society. And working from that unchanging basis I know that it has always been possible to change what needs to be changed, particularly when bureaucrats and economists and pollies and pundits say otherwise! People shape the world—they are our greatest problem, but are also our greatest resource.

But they must never be allowed to get too comfortable! Hurry on over, we're all looking forward to showing you around the place!

Love, Paul

## Report From a Gathering in Mexico

To: Turtle Island Bioregional Gathering Vision Council

I recently attended the Consejo de

Visiones near Patzcuaro Mexico. I want to give you a brief report of that meeting to bring you up to date.

The gathering was a week-long event similar to our continental gatherings. There were nearly three hundred of us, quite a range of people, including about ten university students and about ten gang members from the city. (Both of those groups appeared to have a very positive experience at the meeting.) We all lived in tents along the river, using ditches artfully rigged as latrines and solar showers. We sat outside on the ground in a circle for meals. The food (cooked over wood fires in a small hut) was scrumptious, the health team was excellent, sanitation was well cared for, and the community spirit was amazingly warm.

There were committees on communication, culture and arts, children, ecology, traditions, spirituality, health and peace. These groups met three times. They are also ongoing in their work.

There were two mornings of workshops. I led a workshop on bioregionalism and facilitation. Rusty Post and Tad Montgomery had given a facilitation workshop at the Mexico meeting last year and people were eager for more. Mexicans are naturally intuitive, and since facilitation and consensus methods give form to intuition, they grasped quickly and used immediately the concepts. It was very gratifying. And their response was positively warm and heartfelt.

Midweek was a day of silence and fasting. The food was raw food all day (a treat, actually, with the delicious mangos, papayas and watermelons). We were silent until after the first meal and at other intervals throughout the day. The afternoon included a walk to Patzcuaro Lake (eleven miles, I think—I didn't go) in ceremonial protest regarding its treatment.

Friday we walked thirty minutes to a nearby village of thirty families where pre-arrangements had been made for our visit. We arrived with flags, conch horns, drumming, singing and costumed indigenous dancers. The traditions committee did a ceremony including dances. We cooked together and shared foods. The health committee set up an informal clinic. The children's committee did dances with the young ones and had a puppet show. Two women from the ecology committee who work with families in their home community shared recycling information. I'm not sure what else went on. Things were happening all over the place. Some of the villagers visited us at our camp at other times, attending meetings and getting care from the health teepee.

During the week there were many ceremonies and drummings and dances, early morning and late night.

A group of people interested in the continental bioregional movement met one evening to discuss the possibility of the 1996 meeting being in Mexico. Alberto Ruz, Cristina Mendoza, Patricia Hume and Lauren and Fabio Manzini asked if we felt their group was capable of hosting a continental gathering. Those of us there from the U.S. who have attended gatherings—Tracy and Shepard Hendrickson, Gwyn Peterdi (from New England and living half each year in Mexico), Pam

McCann (from California and living several months in Mexico) and I—felt that the group is quite capable of sponsoring the event. They have a team of about twenty-five skilled and committed people and have hosted three gatherings in Mexico of about three hundred people.

They would like to have at least a third of the participants (one hundred or more) from the U.S. and Canada. We wondered how many would attend? We discussed the site. They are planning on Morelos, just south of Mexico City where there are camps similar to the ones we have used in the U.S. and Canada at a similar price. They would expect us to work out the printing and mailing of the English language brochure and possible ride-sharing plans to encourage participation from the north.

It is hoped that fifteen to twenty from Mexico will attend TIBG VI where they will show slides of their meetings and invite the group to Mexico for 1996. It is also hoped that some of us on the vision council/continuity committee will go to Mexico for planning meetings if the invitation is accepted (December '94—a t h e beach

does not sound bad at all; their yearly Consejo May 95—at an ashram near Guadalajara; December '95—at the beach again).

I am very positive about our having the 1996 meeting in Mexico. The difference in language is a challenge (my Spanish is less than minimal) but the fruitful benefits of more exchange seem to me definitely worth it.

See you in Kentucky in August!  
Joyce Marshall

## Brand New Newsletter available from Mexico

A new newsletter, *Las Voces de Huehucoyotl*, is being published by Huehucoyotl in Mexico. Huehucoyotl is a living community that has been dedicated to bioregional ways of thinking for many years. To receive issues of *Las Voces de Huehucoyotl*, send a donation and address information to: Alberto Ruz, Huehucoyotl P.O. Box 111, Tepoztlan, Morelos ZP. 62520, Mexico.

## ANNOUNCEMENT

### Redirected War Taxes for Human Needs

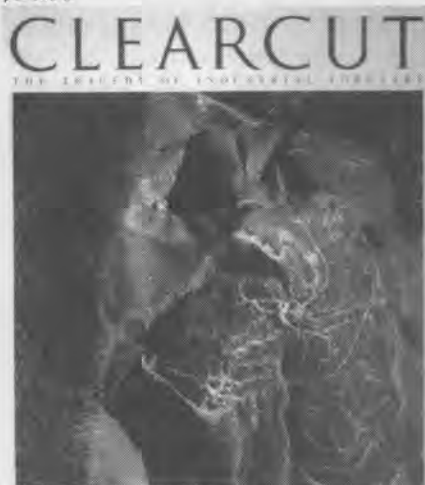
Individuals can redirect a portion of their tax dollars from military spending to education, health care, food, clothing and housing. The Bay Area People's Life Fund (PLF) is a depository for withheld tax dollars. Donating interest from this depository, PLF granted approximately \$8,500 to ten organizations. For information on tax resistance, workshops and the PLF, call (510) 843-9877. For information on national activities, call (207) 525-7774.



# Reads & READS & Reads

## Clearcut: The Tragedy of Industrial Forestry

Bill Devall, Editor  
Sierra Club Books/Earth Island Press,  
San Francisco, CA 94133  
\$30.00



North America's once majestic forests are in a devastating state of rapid decline. The momentum behind the minds and machines of industrial forestry is gaining at a frightening pace, disregarding the gaping wounds created by clearcuts. Evergreens are seen simply as dollar bills, for like all natural resources in a purely exploitative economy, everything is a commodity to be bought, sold and manipulated. The cancer of industrial forestry reflects the "dis-ease" of our society.

*Clearcut: The Tragedy of Industrial Forestry*, is a critical step towards mobilizing the public to defend the forests, by sharing the vivid truths of mainstream forestry practices.

*Clearcut* is not a subtle coffee table picture book to be browsed through casually. This is a powerful plea for activism, with a direct challenge to consider the present crisis, by way of revealing essays and shocking photos of abused natural landscapes. It is an impressive educational document resulting from the passionate voice of gifted educator Bill Devall, who, as editor, skillfully arranges the essays in a manner which elicits attention and a desire to turn the page in awe.

The collection addresses, with appropriate depth and clarity, the critical issues of industrial forestry from an ecologically based perspective. Writers describe the fallacies of clearcutting and the realities of sustainable practices through ecoforestry. Reed Noss provides an excellent overview of sustainable forests, emphasizing the basic requirements of healthy forests: biodiversity and naturalness. Collaborating with Reed Noss, Chris Maser, Herb Hammond, and Ed Grumbine contribute critical essays from the perspective of progressive forest ecologists to support the simple, yet neglected notion, that a healthy forest ecosystem is diverse, complex, uncontrolled and certainly should not be a victim of clearcutting. Hammond makes this clear with his statement that "When examined in a wholistic way, clearcutting makes neither ecological nor economic sense...Without a healthy ecosystem, there is no economy, no society."

The subject matter may be frustrating and depressing, but there is hope that people will demand change. Alternatives exist, as Herb Hammond and Chris Maser eloquently explain, but the implementation of new forest policies depends on communities who want to defend their forests.

The collaborative effort of *Clearcut* can be seen as a metaphor for a healthy and diverse human community. We need the collective strengths, interdependence and diversity within each other to create sustainable communities, and so do the forests.  
—Tricia Dundas

## To Kneel and Kiss the Ground

Beatrice B. Briggs  
3432 N. Bosworth  
Chicago, IL 60657 \$10.00

Collections of essays are always a pleasing change from the more standard book form. When subjects are organized into specific chunks, the variety of subjects itself makes for a varied read with convenient rest stops along the way. *To Kneel and Kiss the Ground*, a collection of essays by Beatrice B. Briggs, brings together birthday party ideas, bioregionalism and yoga in an informative and entertaining fashion. The essays reflect Briggs' life between 1982 and 1993, her founding of the Wild Onion Alliance and helping to organize two Great Lakes Bioregional Congresses, as well as her introduction to and subsequent teaching of yoga.

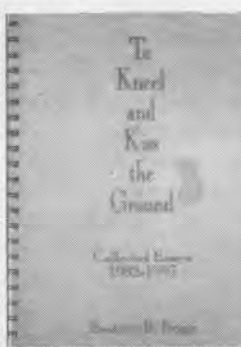
The collection is divided into four sections. "Living Lightly" brims with suggestions to soften our effect on the earth and reevaluate our relationship with it. She covers subjects such as ecologically responsible parenting, energy efficiency in the home, eco-shopping, eco-travel, and environmentally responsible automobile ownership. The essays are sometimes heavy on the heart since depressing facts and figures abound, but these are necessary and make the suggested remedial measures more appealing to those who may not otherwise initially wish to make the extra efforts to live lightly.

Methods for becoming more bioregional in lifestyle are found in the section "Being Bioregional." Briggs uses her personal experiences with the Wild Onion Alliance, an urban bioregional organization in Chicago, to provide first-hand knowledge on shifting into a different way of life. This section is more playful, one essay describes life as a metaphor for a party, another suggesting that one name the monthly moon to be more aware of its presence in one's bioregion throughout the year.

Briggs then shifts gears and draws the reader into the world of yoga in "Yoga for Earthlings," where she explains what practitioners hope to receive from the discipline, and how its purposes vary in the different regions of the world in which it is practiced. She also tells how to run an ecological yoga center, how humans, yoga and Earth are all linked, and how our planet is able to benefit from individuals who practice yoga.

Finally, she delves into questions of politics and spirituality in "Eco-political Spirituality." An essay titled "The Missing Feminine" traces the worship of Mary, which reached its peak in the Middle Ages. It is perhaps the bleakest section to read, from facts about homelessness to a review of a book which is basically an encyclopedia of extinct species.

Briggs' collection makes for a sometimes pleasurable, sometimes disheartening but always intriguing read. The variety of topics gives everyone an idea or topic they may never have encountered before. If life is a party, then being the guests that trash the place is hardly a way to celebrate. *To Kneel and Kiss the Ground* is a subtle but effective push for a more affectionate more bioregional way of thinking about the earth and our place upon it.  
—Carli Schultz



## Indian Summer

*Traditional Life Among the Choinumne Indians of California's San Joaquin Valley*

by Thomas Jefferson Mayfield  
Introduction by Malcolm Margolin  
Heyday Books  
P.O. Box 9145  
Berkeley, California  
\$16.00

California's San Joaquin Valley was, in 1850, still a primeval landscape composed of vast grasslands carpeted in spring with an incredible array of wildflowers. Extensive wetlands fed by sweeping rivers disgorging melted snows from the highest peaks of the Sierra Nevada mountains were also prominent, as well as broad lakes ringed by massive regions of tule marshes and widespread oak woodlands. This rich terrain, perhaps unmatched anywhere in North America, was populated by extensive herds of tule elk and pronghorn antelope, navigated by millions of salmon and trout and darkened above by flights of ducks, geese and wild pigeon. It was also home to numerous Indian nations since time immemorial.

This was the world that young Thomas Jefferson Mayfield entered with his family at the threshold of the invasion of American settlers that would forever change the face of the landscape and the fate of all the beings who inhabited it. *Indian Summer* is the remarkable story of Mayfield's life among the Choinumne Yokuts people for ten years during his youth, and although he refused to talk about his experience until sixty-five years after it happened, his lively recollections are exquisitely detailed.

Former military officer William Mayfield brought his wife and three sons around the Horn to Yerba Buena (San Francisco) and proceeded via Pacheco Pass to the great Central Valley. They headed to Las Mariposas, explorer John C. Fremont's gold mines at the southern fringe of the Mother Lode. Disappointed with mining, they traveled further south, pausing briefly near the San Joaquin River, before proceeding to the banks of El Rio de los Reyes. Known as the mighty Kings River, it carved through the granite Sierra uplift to form the deepest canyon in the United States before splaying out its waters on the valley floor east of the present site of Fresno. In the foothills near the confluence of Sycamore Creek, they encountered the Choinumne people. They were nation classified by linguists as part of the Yokuts language group who populated the foothills and valley floor in the central region of the Great Valley. Warmly welcomed and treated well by the inhabitants, William Mayfield decided to settle in this country and engage in ranching and farming. This was prior to the great onrush of American migration, which resulted in monumentally tragic consequences for California Indians in general. The Choinumne, like other indigenous peoples, were friendly and open-hearted and willing to share the land and its resources for they had not yet experienced the full force of the barbarism which was to come all too soon.

Soon after settling in, Thomas Jefferson Mayfield's mother died. He was just six years of age. As his father and older brothers were frequently away from home in order to tend the crops and animals, a delegation of Choinumne women offered to care for the youngster and he was consequently

adopted and raised by them for the next ten years of his life. He essentially became a part of the tribe, participating in virtually every aspect of everyday life in the village.

What makes this particular account of California Indian life so compelling is because it is based on the experiences of a white man who lived that life rather than the perceptions, however sympathetic, of an anthropologist or linguist. It is the only such accounting that has yet come to light in the annals of California Indian history. Moreover, Mayfield's memories are very rich and vivid, capturing the atmosphere and feeling of being there far better than most ethnographic accounts.

Mayfield's recollections cover many facets of the Choinumne world. He describes in an intimate fashion their language and vocabulary, their houses, tools and clothing, games they played, food gathering and cooking, hunting and fishing, local wildlife, ethics, public life and education, social customs and their relations with other indigenous peoples of the region. Through the entire account, runs an undercurrent which makes clear the harmonious relationship between the people and the land they inhabit. By the time a Choinumne reached adulthood, he or she knew every kind of insect, bird, fish, mammal and plant in their domain. They also had intimate knowledge of every feature of their world—every mountain, ridge and hill, every watercourse, every tree and shrub's location and uses and the habitats of the various animals and fish in the territory. Furthermore—it never ceases to amaze—they could utilize all of this to make a living and a sustainable life without depletion. In modern terms, this would be the equivalent of each person walking around with detailed knowledge of the botany, zoology and geomorphology of the place where they live. Few people living in the San Joaquin Valley today could even name all the plants or birds in their backyard.

Perhaps the most remarkable aspect of this story is that it survived at all. By 1860 white settlers had begun to crowd into the region, and correspondingly the tragic conflicts that ended the way of life the Choinumne and other Valley Indians had known began. Thomas Jefferson Mayfield, now sixteen, went back to live with his father and immersed himself in the rural life of white settlers. Because of the hatred and low esteem in which Indians were held, his experiences of life with the Choinumne were not a valued asset, so he kept those memories to himself. It wasn't until he was an old man that his experiences were discovered by Frank F. Latta, a self-defined historian and ethnographer, who had been gathering stories of Indians and pioneers around the San Joaquin Valley for years. Latta convinced Mayfield to recall his exceptional life shortly before the old man died, and subsequently arranged and edited the narratives, publishing them as a series of local newspaper articles within a year of Mayfield's death in 1928.

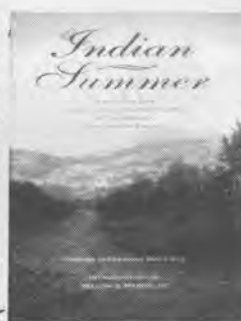
—Vic Bedoian

## The Artist as Native: Reinventing Regionalism

by Alan Gussow  
Pomegranate Artbooks  
Rohnert Park, CA, 1993.  
\$30.00

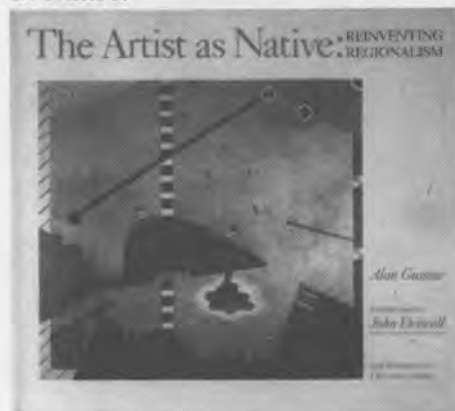
Alan Gussow, ably supported by the paintings and testaments of fifty three artists, is attempting to jolt our preconceptions of what it means to be both native and regionalist.

The book reflects the enormous variety of ways that these artists live and express what is local to them. It is less concerned with





an encyclopedic rendering of vistas, for there is no conundrum attached to the reality of our varied landscapes. Rather, the conundrum revolves around our relationship with it. This is what is reflected in *The Artist as Native*.



Certainly, there are painters represented who are steeped in their surroundings, whose knowledge of where they are has developed through many years of intimate acquaintance. But there are others who are comparative new comers to the place that they witness. What appears to unite this collection of painters is a keen awareness of, and sustenance from, place. This place need not be external. For some of the painters represented, place is remembered and is an "inner source."

To the paintings themselves, there's richness in the stylistic diversity, from the abstract to the photo realist. The range of feelings is equally enormous. For example, David Tiger's *City on the Hill*. Here the shapes of humankind—architecture, rows of harvested fields with hay bails, orchards—all seem in keeping with the vaster landscape beyond. The relationship here shows a portion of landscape tamed, but its tamers benign.

Null Blarney's *Riverside Drive and Park* pictures park trees as flames of green leaping the avenue, nearly touching the curve of buildings as they make their way down to the river that pens them in. Reminiscent of Turner, Richard Bogart's *Slipstream* is an elegiac expression of what he calls place, his sense of place as an "inner source." *Attrition*, by Vincent Smith expresses something of the darker side of city life—an isolated person caught in a grid

while others mock from behind bars. Joseph Oddo captures the light of Northern California as a rowing four pull towards shore in *Four with Coxswain and Coaching Launch*. The dramatic, geometric patterns in Joe Miller's *Screech Owl* shows an entirely different sensitivity to place. Alan Gussow's own inclusion in the book, *Summer Garden: High Heat, High Humidity* is stylistically reminiscent of Kandinsky, but far more inviting: tinges of green sufficiently temper the overall heat of his colors.

Even with the work of Vincent Smith, there seems to be a pervading sense of empathy with place, which is another way the book finds its unity. I recommend this book for the diverse ways in which artists get nourishment from their environment and the diverse ways they find to express it.

—Jeremy Lane

## The Harbinger File

Harbinger Communications, Santa Cruz, 1994. \$18.50

*The Harbinger File* is an invaluable directory of government agencies, citizen groups and environmental education programs concerned with California environmental issues. It describes over 1,500 agencies and organizations in the state of California and is a precious resource for libraries, environmental groups, government agencies and individuals alike. The directory is indexed by subject and includes headings such as Energy, Oceans, Recycling and Water Management.

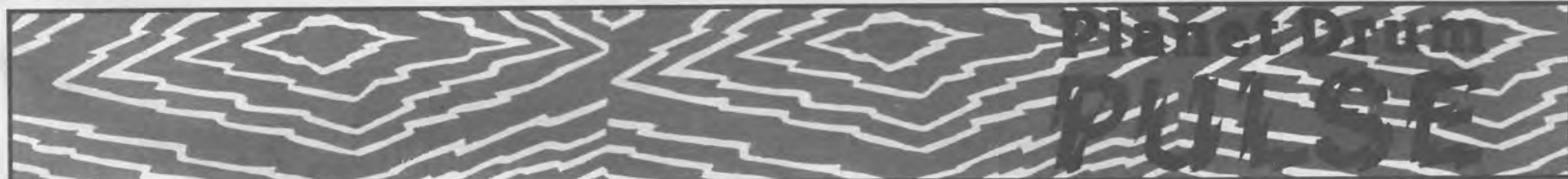
Each entry provides addresses, contacts, areas of focus, services, tax status, publications and much more. The 1994/1995 edition is a perfect guide for perusing the environmental opportunities in the state of California.

—Carli Schultz



photo: Judy Goldhaft  
photo: Sabrina Merlo

Planet Drummers at Carnaval in San Francisco, May 1994



Since the last issue of the Planet Drum Pulse, the office has been jammed full of interns and staff doing all kinds of exciting and difficult projects. Somewhere in our crazy schedules we've found time to have some fun this summer. Sabrina Merlo hosted a barbecue in honor of the summer solstice/full moon for old and new Planet Drum/Green City interns. The staff took a hike in Glen Park's partially native restored area to eat lunch, tell stories and see if any of the native poppy seeds we planted last winter had come up.

Our international visitors have included an attorney studying tribal areas protection from South Africa and two women documentary film makers from France. The latter are doing research on the Digger movement from the early 1960's and its consequences. Part of their research included viewing "Newsreal," a movie made by Peter Berg, Judy Goldhaft and many people. The whole Planet Drum staff tagged along to watch. We loved it!

Among the interns filling the office to capacity this summer is Carli Schultz, a senior from Connecticut College who has taken on the arduous task of editing this issue of *Raise the Stakes*. In the brief periods when she isn't word counting or

editing, Carli sings songs from a radio music show she DJ's in Connecticut that focuses on 80's hits. Charlotte Avant, a senior at Columbia University, has been indispensable in helping Ocean create renewal and belly-up fliers for our members and other graphics such as those for the invitation to the Shasta Bioregional Gathering. Look for yours soon. She has also been working on some art work for *Raise the Stakes* #23. Daniel Belasco, a sophomore from Amherst, has been working on a guide to Green City walks around San Francisco. Maggie Weadick, a senior from the University of Dayton has been doing indispensable office work and will help out Sabrina on the Green City WAYAC project (see Green City update).

Judy Goldhaft and Peter Berg are going to Europe in September. They will travel to Frankfurt and Munich in Germany, Mantua, and the Po River Valley, in Italy, Barcelona, Catalonia and Marseilles, France. They are interested in hooking up with other groups and doing more gigs in other countries as well. If you have a lead drop them a line. Debbie Hubsmith, project-planning and grant-writing whiz of Planet Drum has been hard at work as usual. Projects

are easy to dream up, but Debbie's work these last months has made a lot of them actually take off. As always, Planet Drum struggles financially, but with Debbie's constant work we are a little better off. Ocean Berg manages and updates the membership lists and will send a fall renewal notice soon. Sabrina Merlo is always on the go, please see the Green City Update for exciting details. All three women look forward to attending the August Turtle Island Bioregional Gathering in Kentucky. They will introduce a proposal for the North American Bioregional Association.

Planet Drum staffers have been doing interactive tabling at all kinds of events. At a "Food Not Bombs" rally focusing on feeding the homeless of San Francisco, Peter Berg gave a short and riveting speech that got the whole crowd yelling "GREEN CITY!" Debbie, Ocean, Carter Brooks, Michael Feehan, and Marc Babus peopled the table, talking to the mostly homeless crowd about bioregional and Green City ideas. At the Cal Expo Grateful Dead shows in June Planet Drummers worked at a table for three nights. We discussed Mickey Hart's use of our name (with permission) and got a lot of good response to bioregional concepts. During the huge Carnaval event in San Francisco, the Planet Drum/Green City

staff helped San Franciscans locate their neighborhood before the European invasion utilizing Nancy Morita's terrific "Wild in the City" map.

Once again Planet Drum is sponsoring the Shasta Bioregional Gathering to be held September 15-18 in Mendocino. The event topics will include: watersheds; coho salmon; multiculturalism; jobs and sustainable economies. Join us in the gathering workshops, morning circles, invocations and announcements if you can. Thanks to David Graves for indispensable help with this mailing. For more information write to the Redwood Coast Environmental Law Center, P.O. Box 32, Medocino CA, 95460.

We thank the following foundations and corporations for their generous contributions to Planet Drum and Green City: The Cottonwood Foundation, Levis Strauss Company's CIT Program through the Foundation, Patagonia, Peradam Foundation, Rex Foundation, Tom's of Maine, and the Turtle Island Office.

Planet Drum Foundation thanks the following people for their tireless and generous help. Ajila Hart for bookkeeping, Michael Feehan and Jean Lundgren for tireless all around help, and Liz Aron for indispensable office help.

—Ocean Berg





## GREEN CITY REPORT

*Midsummer has come* to San Francisco but as usual we're still waiting for the heat. Our Planet Drum community garden is looking good (although here in San Francisco, planting peppers is always evidence of just a little bioregional denial). The garden is a wonderful refuge from the deluge of work, phone calls, and Green City activity going on in the office.

Continued exposure in neighborhood papers all over the Bay Area (especially in the suburbs of the East Bay) has pushed us to expand the Volunteer Network and create a serious work force for the few eco-groups working in places like Livermore and Fremont. The Volunteer Network's Green City Calendar has been generating new members while continuing to persuade an ever-increasing number of Bay Area residents that citizen involvement is fun, rewarding and happening.

Some Vancouver, British Columbia residents see the point of all this networking we're doing here in the Bay Area: following Peter Berg's recent visit and lecture, members of the audience are starting Vancouver's own Green City Volunteer Network. Other recent inquiries about the workings of our projects have come from San Antonio, Texas and Raleigh, North Carolina.

Green City's current hands-on project focuses on the Booker T. Washington Community Center in San Francisco's Western Addition neighborhood. About ten young men and women ages 12-16 are partaking in a clean-up/renovation of the Center's potentially gorgeous backyard. Students are learning basic carpentry and organic gardening skills as they install new raised beds to grow flowers and vegetables. We will also go on some great field trips to beautiful farm sites outside the city to make up for the "hard labor." The Levi Strauss Community Involvement Team and Green City interns Maggie Weadick and Liz Aron are lending people-power; Leslie Krongold, a local filmmaker who spent the last four years filming women rabbis, will be documenting the metamorphosis.

Future Green City workshop/workday plans include a massive storm drain stenciling ("Save the Bay—

Don't Dump") effort in mid-September. Collaborators for this project include the San Francisco Volunteer Center, the San Francisco Department of Public Works and a number of local corporations and neighborhood groups. Other brews fermenting in the Green City Project pot include an alternative transportation mural project along the City's auto-dominated Fell Street and an East Bay creek cleanup.

Planet Drum's newest staff member, Jim Corsetti, is gearing up for the upcoming school year by solidifying and expanding our Volunteer Network's Education+Action project offerings. Jim's project includes connecting urban sustainability groups with teachers who are interested in ecology-minded supplementary curricula to bring some hands-on environmental action into the classroom. Lobbying teachers seems to be the most difficult part. Students, on the other hand, jump at the chance to get out and get active. Thanks to Trish Dundas who has helped out immensely with this project.

Planet Drum has also taken on sponsorship of Auto-Free Bay Area's Human Powered Vehicle Project, a future stable of unique human powered vehicles that will be available for special public events and work projects to further our collective vision for this relatively untapped mode of transportation. The project's first acquisition is a pedicab that will feature a mini-library in the cab containing, among other publications, our Green City Calendar.

Green City summer intern Dan Belasco has been expanding on Nancy Morita's famous "Wild in the City" map by collecting resources for a wild habitat walking tour brochure of San Francisco. He'll also be doing computer work for the next Green City Calendar. Charlotte Avant, another intern from the East Coast, is getting more Green City promotional materials together that profile our workshop/workday program.

All this, and we still have time to fend off the bindweed in the Planet Drum community garden in hopes of deep red tomatoes and lanky longbeans.

—Sabrina Merlo



Shafi Hakim

YOU TOO can emulate Planet Drum's happening office staff (pictured above). All t-shirts are black, with the evocative Planet Drum Shaman in white and green on the front, and the intriguing Green City logo in the same colors on the back. Price is \$12.50 plus \$2 shipping and handling. Available in small, medium, large and extra-large. California residents please local sales tax and name of residence county.

### Stakes Raisers

Peter Berg  
Carli Schultz  
Judy Goldhaft  
Charlotte Avant  
Debbie Hubsmith  
Jean Lindgren  
Sabrina Merlo  
Ocean Berg  
Daniel Belasco  
Jim Corsetti  
Maggie Weadick  
Agila Hart  
Alonzo Press  
Typesetting Etc.

Managing Editor  
Editor  
Production Manager  
Art Editor and Graphics  
Proofreader  
Typing  
One-liners  
Office Angel  
Proofreader  
Resident Teacher  
Intern Extraordinaire  
Money Minding  
Printing  
Design/Typesetting

**THINGS THAT REALLY WORK:  
A Bioregional Tool Kit  
Number 23 • Summer 1994**

## Bioregional Directory is Being Compiled!

*Planet Drum Foundation is compiling a list of individuals, publications and groups which consider themselves to be bioregional for a Directory in the next issue of Raise the Stakes. The aim is to assemble a source guide to help facilitate communication and encourage reinhabitory involvement with others in local life-places. Please call or write for information if you or your organization should be included in the list.*

**Planet Drum Foundation, PO Box 31251, San Francisco, CA 94131  
(415) 285-6556 Fax (415) 285-6563, econetmail planetdrum**



# PLANET DRUM PUBLICATIONS

## BOOKS



**Reinhabiting a Separate Country: A Bioregional Anthology of Northern California**, edited by Peter Berg. 220 pps. Essays, natural history, biographies, poems and stories revealing Northern California as a distinct area of the planetary biosphere. \$7 "The Book serves as both a pioneer and genre model...representing a vital and widespread new ethos." —*New Age Magazine*

## Raise the Stakes Back Issues



- **Food as Place: Bioregional Agriculture**, *Raise the Stakes* No. 22 (Winter 1993/1994). Explores the methods and benefits of locally grown foods and gardens. Features include Peter Bane's "A Garden Growing Wild," a discussion of backyard gardening and solutions to the problems that large scale agriculture causes to the environment; Marti Crouch's "Eating Our Teachers: Local Food, Local Knowledge," an essay on the perks of eating native fruit over domesticated, imported bananas; M. Kat Anderson's "Linking Plant Homelands and Human Homelands," a look at horticultural practices, harvests and plant uses of California

Native Americans; Juan-Tomas Rehbock's report on organic agriculture in Argentina; book reviews, Circles of Correspondence and the Planet Drum Pulse. \$4.

- **Bioregional Culture**, *Raise the Stakes* No. 21 (Spring/Summer 1993). What is bioregional culture, and how is it realized? This issue of *Raise the Stakes* describes it as uniquely broad and intimate. Contents include Mami Muller's reflections on the homeplace, and Stephanie Mills' soul-search on the Indian subcontinent. Other essays include a description of the battle of mythologies in the West, a bioregional sense of musical space in Alaska, and a bioregional culture Q&A. Circles of Correspondence features Oak Ridges Moraine on the shores of Lake Ontario, The National Water Center, The InterTribal Sinkyone Wilderness Council, and Oaxaca, Mexico; book reviews: bioregional directory updates; Planet Drum Pulse and Green City Report. \$4.



- **Eco-Governance II: The Anatomy of the Shasta Bioregional Gathering**, *Raise the Stakes* No. 20 (Fall 1992). An in-depth survey and exploration of the first Shasta Bioregional Gathering in northern California from conception to realization including highlights, participant reports and musings. Also sample bioregional gathering observations/outlines from Toronto's first Bioregion Week and the fifth TIBC held in Kerrville, Texas. Inspirational accounts and provocative critiques of the bioregional movement, questioning rhetoric and processes of "comprising." A companion issue to *RTS* #18/19; together they provide an important tool for those planning a gathering in their home region. \$4.
- **Eco-Governance: Bioregional Gatherings**, *Raise the Stakes* No. 18/19 (Winter 1991/Spring 1992). Informative accounts of bioregional gatherings in British Columbia, the Cascades, the Great Prairie, Ozarks, Detroit, the Great Lakes, Ohio River watershed, northcentral Pennsylvania, and Italy. Also features special reports from indigenous groups in the Dakota Black Hills, Mexico, Costa Rica, and San Francisco in response to the quincentennial of Columbus' arrival; Peter Berg on "Post-Environmental Origins"; reviews, including educational magazines; bioregional directory updates; PD Pulse; and news of the Green City Project. \$5.

- **Exploring Urban Frontiers**, *Raise the Stakes* No. 17 (Winter 1991). Surveys unprecedented Green City achievements as well as some common frustrations. Green City planning from Paul Ryan's proposed "Eco-Channel" for NYC to eco-development in Brisbane, Australia. Also an interview with Richard Register on "Ecological Rebuilding and Evolutionary Healthy Future Cities", Patrick Mazza's "Portland Needn't Be a Rainy Los Angeles", Paul Glover's "Greenplanning", Nelson Denman on reaching young people with Green City theater, Beryl Magilav on urban recycling, Bruce Hinkforth's "Cities in Climax", Peter Berg on "Recreating Urbanity", and Doug Aberley's "Can Cities Really Be Green?" Reports from Lake Baikal, Hungary, the Latvian Green Movement, reforesting Barcelona, and Planet Drum's burgeoning Green City Center for San Francisco. PD Pulse, book reviews and more. \$4.

- **Europe Now: The Bioregional Prospect**, *Raise the Stakes* No. 16 (Spring/Summer 1990). Articles by George Tukul on "Reinhabitation in Hungary", Thomas Kaiser's "The Difficulty of Dis-Covering Eastern Europe", Green discussions for reorganizing along bioregional lines rather than as nation-states; new social inventions in P.M.'s "Planetary Wednesday Liberation Movement"; Ruggero Schleicher-Tappeser's "Ten Theses for Regional Ecological Development"; reports on the restoration of prehistoric sites in Catalunya and a glimpse of sustainable agriculture in Neolithic (New Stone Age) France by Marc Bonfils. Includes reports from Seotland, Ireland and the Italian Alps, directory updates, reviews and poetry. \$4.

- **North America Plus: A Bioregional Directory**, *Raise the Stakes* No. 15 (Fall 1989). Features an updated international bioregional directory with listings of over 200 groups, publications and regional contacts. The magazine section reexamines the impact of Columbus' "discovery" of North America. Articles by Kerry Beane, Darryl Wilson, and Andres King Cobos express native perspectives while Kirkpatrick Sale and Peter Berg consider the upcoming 500th anniversary from a reinhabitory standpoint. Also included is Richard Grow's popular and much reprinted essay "Decolonizing the Language of the Ecology Movement." \$4.

- **Borders**, *Raise the Stakes* No. 14 (Winter 1988/1989). Explores the importance of the concept of boundaries from a bioregional perspective. Features include an interview with Malcolm Margolin on "Walking the Border Between Native and Non-native Culture", Judith Plant's account of crossing a national border for the first extra-U.S. NABC, Dolores LaChapelle's "Boundary Crossing" as a way of reconciling wilderness and civilization, Beryl Magilav on returning nature to art and Stephen Duplantier on "Distance Disease." Reports feature the Dominican Republic, a bioregional manifesto from the Mediterranean Basin and Josep Puig's argument for a new border there. Poetry by Jerry Martien. \$3.

- **Nature in Cities**, *Raise the Stakes* No. 13 (Winter 1988). Urban areas don't have to be diametrically opposed to natural systems. Beryl Magilav discusses "Cities Within Nature", urban policy issues

and ecological practices are further pursued in David Goode's "The Green City as Thriving City" and Christine Furedy's "Natural Recycling in Asian Cities." Doug Aberley discusses Native American reinhabitation in "Windy Bay Journal", Brian Tokar reports on the Gulf of Maine Bioregional Congress, and Peter Garland looks at the musical tradition of Michoacan, Mexico. \$3.

- **Open Fire: A Council of Bioregional Self-Criticism**, *Raise the Stakes* No. 10 (Summer 1984). From about 70 persons, guest editor Jim Dodge selects representative gripes from Mami Muller, Bill Devall, Gary Snyder, Kelly Kindscher, and others. \$3.

- **What's Happening to the Water Web?**, *Raise the Stakes* No. 7 (Spring 1983). Highlights "The Water Web" special section with Donald Wooster's historical look, "The Flow of Power", and articles about the Columbia River Watch and terminal lakes. Plus reports from Euskadi and the Australian Big Scrub. Centerfold photo essay, "Songs of the Outback." \$3.

- **Cities — Salvaging the Parts**, *RTS* No. 3. \$3

- **Eco-Development**, *RTS* No.2. \$3.

- Issues 1,4,5,6,8,9,11, and 12 are sold out. We can, however, make complete sets of *Raise the Stakes* available to libraries and archives.

## BUNDLES

**Amble Towards Continental Congress:** A large two-sided poster evoking a bioregional overview of American history since 1492 that includes a map of the biotic provinces of North America. \$4.

**Reinhabit the Hudson Estuary: The Hudson Estuary Bundle.** Essays, poetry, graphics, poster compiled and produced by New York area reinhabitants. \$10.

**Backbone—The Rockies:** A six part Bundle of essays, poems, journals, calendars and proposals about the fragile Rocky Mountains. \$10.

**Watershed Guide & Living Here:** A four-color poster with pamphlet evoking natural amenities of the San Francisco Bay Watershed. \$10.

## PERFORMANCES

**Water Web** is a 20 minute performance by Judy Goldhaft with words and movement that celebrates water and describes our complex relationship to it. Live performances can be arranged through Planet Drum. Script is available for \$5.

## BIOREGIONAL BOOKSTORE

**Proceedings from North American Congresses (NABCs) II, III, IV.** Includes essays, illustrations, poetry along with resolutions from the proceedings. NABC II-\$9; NABC III-\$8; NABC-IV-\$10.

## Membership

Planet Drum was founded in 1973 to provide an effective grassroots approach to ecology that emphasizes sustainability, community self-determination and regional self-reliance. In association with community activists and ecologists, Planet Drum developed the concept of a bioregion: a distinct area with coherent and interconnected plant and animal communities, often defined by a watershed and by the ideas that have developed about how to live in that place. A number of individuals and communities have adopted bioregional stances—they have "reinhabited" their regions, they have chosen to "live in place" with the intent to restore, preserve and sustain their place in the biosphere. How about you?

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.

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.

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Since 1973 Planet Drum 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.

*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, CA 94131, USA. Telephone (415) 285-6556. FAX (415) 285-6563.

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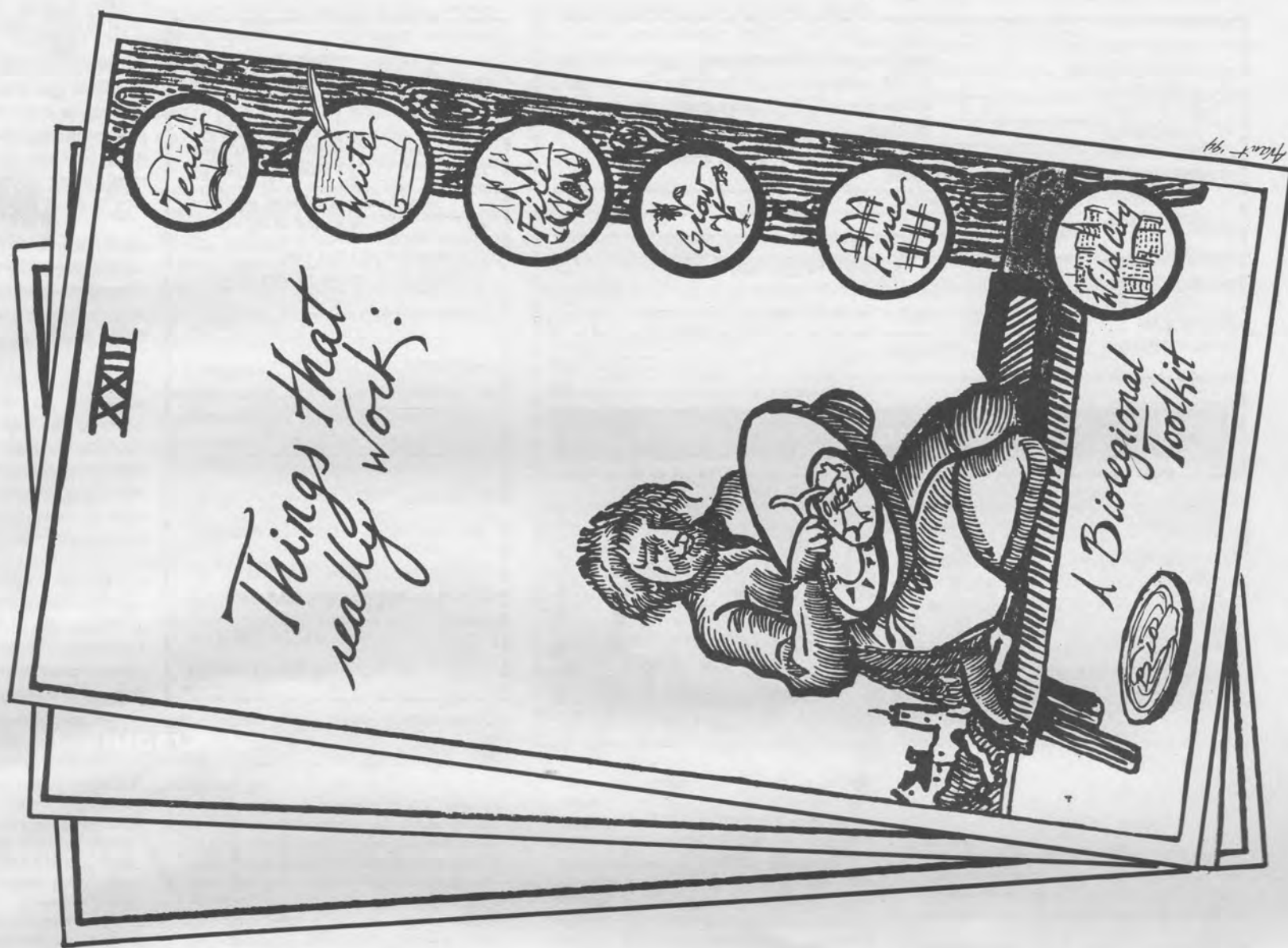


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The Planet Drum Review

NUMBER 23

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