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How Can We Prepare for Community Living?

Gordon Yaswen

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Fund Drive Begins, cont'd

mitment to libertarian ideals. To implement these ideals a School of Living Center is a vital necessity. Your proper share is whatever you can muster. Your contribution will be evidence that your commitment to a libertarian way of life is more than lip service.

A School of Living Center can help to stem the tide of conformity and centralism which threatens to engulf all of us. Let each and every one of us stand up as individuals and as members of the School of Living to be counted in opposition to that threat. Send pledges and contributions to: Building Fund Drive, School of Living, Brookville, O. Can you do it immediately? Very soon? Before Aug. 27? — Leo F. Koch, Stony Point, N. Y.

Kern to Help with Center

Ken Kern (trustee, homesteader, surveyor, architect, builder), writes:

"I am excited to learn of the proposed Mill purchase. From what I read, you made a terrific deal: seems that \$15,000 is a low price for all that you are getting. It would cost many times that much out here in California.

"I definitely want to help with the program, and will spend at least a week at the new center in August, helping perhaps with preliminary surveying, topography mapping and general layout planning. I would certainly like to see a dozen or so potential homestead sites available there for 'faculty' members; I should think one-acre sites would be sufficient.

"Some sort of leasehold arrangement could probably be worked out; there definitely should not be outright sale of the land to such holders.

"I'm looking forward to seeing

you again, and many School of Living members and friends." — Ken Kern, Oakhurst, Calif.

Suggests Financial Arrangement

Eleanor Woods, Blue River, Ore., has given much careful thought to the developing new School of Living Center in Maryland. Frequent letters from her have shared detailed and penetrating suggestions on education, community, and financing. On the latter she wrote, June 7:

"I should think the cost should be paid off as quickly as possible so that we do not have to pay interest. Actually, \$15,000 should not be so hard to collect.

"If 250 people gave \$5 a month for only one year we would have this property free and clear! After that we could take our time about constructing the necessary buildings for school and staff. In fact, building from local materials a la Kern should serve as projects on which we can all learn, and thus be more equipped to teach others. The School will then be able to offer housing free to its future staff. Staff members would be those qualified and willing to work and teach their particular skills.

"Regarding division and use of the property, it seems to me the best, simplest, and most obvious thing to do is to have the entire land, buildings and improvements belong to the School as a whole. I think this would make possible everyone giving what he can afford, rather than having a few people sink their life funds into it as an 'investment,' and being disappointed if things didn't go the way they wanted them to."

[Note: Other members and trustees will be heard from next month.—Editor]



Vardis Fisher
Self-Portrait at 70

Letters To The Editor

New Harmony

To the Editor:

Last summer we searched the Bemidji, Minn., area for a homestead. We rode, slept and ate in a 1951 delivery van bought for \$125. Despite three flats, ignition trouble and other malfunctions our venerable wagon did the job. I had a winter job in Gary, Ind., at \$3 an hour, and waited and worked out the eight dreary months until May Day 1966 when we pushed off for our homestead (named New Harmony).

We have quite a lot of land, and the surroundings offer much more. We intended to get a much smaller holding but ended with buying 157 acres of woods, cleared land and lake. It's an ex-farm with a barn and shed, which we fixed up for a cabin, and we got it for only \$15 an acre. With unexpected financial help we were able to buy and start on our goal this spring. We've cleared, planted and mulched. A neighborly farmer gave us 100 bales of spoiled hay, lots of milk and advice!

People are important to us, and we have land, space and goals to share. We are young and hope eventually to have a community of people interested in essential, simple living join us. We invite interested people to write, visit and plan with us.—Ferdinand & Rebecca Knoess, Pennington, Minn.

[Ed. note: We plan to carry a full story, with illustrations, of the beginning of New Harmony. Here is a couple with ideas, determination and energy; we want to see them succeed.—MJL]

Return to Idaho

To the Editor:

In 1962 we began our homestead here in Idaho, and after a year of effort our isolation and loneliness prompted us to seek a better place, better people, closer relationships. For three years we have searched—living much of the time in association at the Kern homestead in California. We have learned much, increased our skills. (Besides homesteading skills, Don learned surveying and Annerose learned nursing.) We've met many wonderful, sociable, well-read, community-loving people and are still alone. We have realized more about ourselves and our incurable willingness and drive to live on our own beautiful 80 acres. We have come back to the only place which seems to give us any hope for realization of at least some of our life's dreams. Our knowledge of nutrition, gained by reading, visiting, trading recipes and trial and error gives us more appreciation for the fine soil and virgin environment of this place.

We are living in an old log cabin built in the thirties. It's inconvenient to carry water, wash by hand, battle with rodents and ants, but we take it all gladly for it is our own place. We've come to hate renting, leasing and all the restrictions on creativity and expression that go with it. We are collecting material for our new house and out-buildings. We would like to exchange ideas on all phases of homesteading, especially with readers in a climate like ours—

Giants of the Earth, the Fishers Homestead an Idaho Paradise

By Mildred Loomis

Vardis Fisher, the famous novelist, and his wife, Opal Laurel Holmes, are giants of the earth who homesteaded 23 acres near Hagerman, Idaho. To people who wonder why, "of all places," they live in Idaho, they send a brochure. The fantastically lovely scenes shown from their area and the description lead us to call it "Paradise."

"In April 1940 the Fishers bought the 23^{1/2} acres of mountainside, springs and falls, and wasteland. Their buildings, of lodgepole, erected by them, are a modest 2-bath cottage, a small guest house, 2 single garages, small shop, and a small barn. They have put 26 years of hard labor in the place—a water system, walks, walls, roadbed, plantings. Nearly all the visitors from the East have thought it very beautiful. If the Fishers had had the money they could have made it much more impressive—for instance, there could be as many fountains as the owners wish to have, and more waterfalls could be brought out of the mountainside.

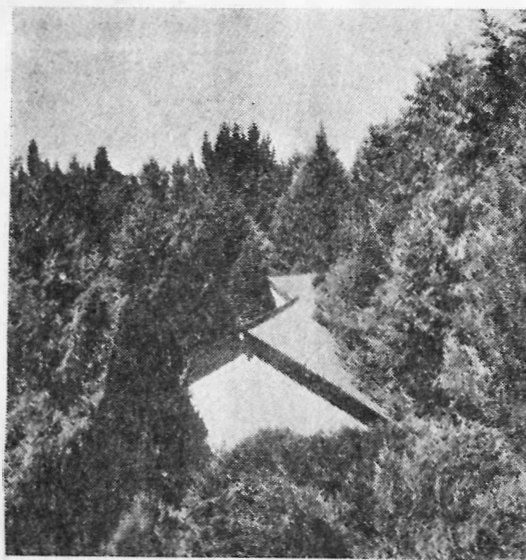
"Nothing is more unusual than the climate, perhaps the mildest in its latitude in the northern hemisphere—milder than Boise's famous climate, 100 miles west; much milder than Salt Lake

City's over 200 miles south. More than half the winters in 26 years the Fishers have been there have had practically no snow; in severer winters it did not reach a depth of more than 4 or 5 inches. It's a dry climate, with some autumn rain and a prevailing western breeze. Even in July and August sleepers want a blanket over them. The months of December and January are cold, with temperatures now and then falling to zero, rarely below. The autumns are long Indian summers to Dec. 1. Springs come early; farmers are often in their fields in February. The elevation is a little more than 3,000 ft.

Vardis Fisher has written more than 30 novels of tremendous emotional power and extraordinary learning. While novels of any author do not appear frequently on my reading list. I greatly regret that it wasn't until a few years ago that I came to know of Fisher's novels. His *Man of the Mountains* and *Orphans of Gethsemane* have shown me that he is a man attuned to nature and to liberty; in fact, a *Man*, whom it has been our loss not to know much longer. Mr. Fisher has contributed important ideas to recent issues of our *A Way Out*, and we're proud to have him as a friend of the School of Living.



A lovely small waterfall, fed by a group of springs.



The Fishers planted thousands of pine and spruce on a wasteland. Their homeplace is now being engulfed.

3,000 ft. elevation, 30 below zero at times.

We still feel isolated from like-minded people and we welcome visitors, single or married, young or old, and particularly folksingers. We are open to and searching for new ideas, discussions, projects. We'd appreciate sharing books with others.—Don & Annerose Rollins, Rt. 2, Box 149A, Rathdrum, Idaho 83858

Dandelions to You

To the Editor:

We like *Green Revolution* and if other readers are like us everyone must read it very eagerly. But we especially appreciated the February issue with its statement on Moral and Withholding Action. I gave that copy to a friend hoping to win another supporter of the green revolution. Here's our renewal and a contribution.

You are doing a very great work. Over many generations it

The Green Revolution

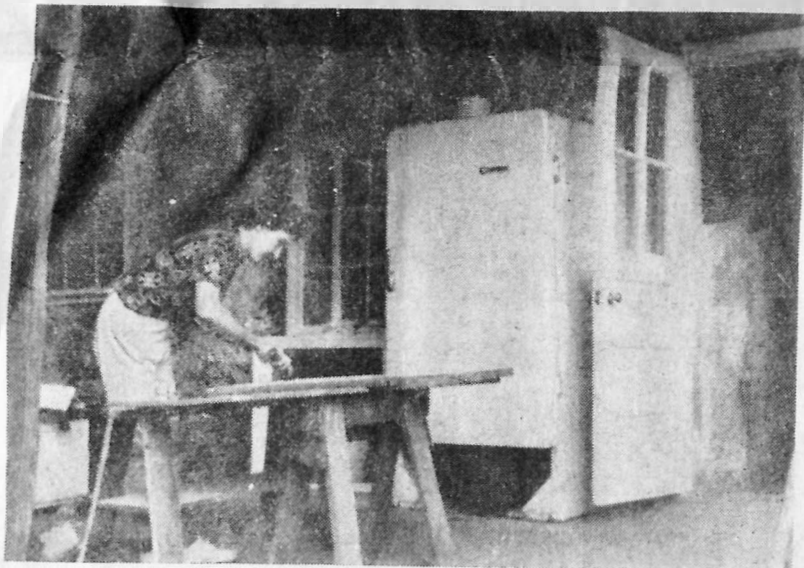
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Sophie Rainer putting old window frames. New door and window bring more light into general living room.

How Can We Prepare For Community Living?

By Gordon Yaswen

339 E. 94th St., New York City

There seem many people desirous of withdrawing from the urban-mass society onto exurban land in intentional, self-sustaining communities; and I for one am fairly certain that we will, within 15 years, see the number of such communities easily double. We in the School of Living should take little credit for this when it comes; Johnson and those who think like him are seeing to it for us. Therefore the problem is not so much "will we"; but where, when, and how we will. It is my impression that few are ready now for such a move, but I believe preparation must now be going on nonetheless, even before tangible communities are in the offing.

I am aware that some people would consider such advance preparation needless. I, however, feel that the problems which face a group of people seeking self-sufficing community are frankly tremendous, as is borne out by the high mortality

rate of such ventures. Therefore I would wish to solve as many of those problems IN ADVANCE as possible, so that when the community actually forms, its members can turn their full energies to those multitudinous problems as will inevitably remain. I am not much intrigued in Man's present reaching out for Outer Space; but I am profoundly impressed by the thoroughness and methodicalness (as well as with the ingenuity) with which He approaches the awesome dilemmas that that reaching presents. Before any system, no matter how insignificant, is installed in the finished space vehicle it is thoroughly tested in as close to ACTUAL CONDITIONS (with all their foreseeable events both planned and unplanned) as is possible on Earth, and it is so tested not merely once, but possibly over hundreds of hours. I admire this kind of not only pre-thinking but pre-doing, and I think it should be applied to the preparation of intentional communities as well, which are far

(continued on page 4)

To Florida and Back, Part IV—

Melbourne Village Is A Unique Community, Now 20 Years Old

By Mildred J. Loomis

Melbourne Village, a planned community that grew out of School of Living ideas, deserves a much more adequate report and history of its nearly 20 years than I can give here. Close association with it, and several visits there over the years, make it a much appreciated and familiar place to me.

History

Back in 1934, Mrs. George H. Wood, Miss Margaret Hutchinson and Miss Elizabeth Nutting, all three of Dayton, Ohio, became interested in productive homes and small community development as a way of reconstruction from the Great Depression. Ralph Borsodi became consultant to the Liberty Homesteads, an experimental project at Dayton in which the three women were involved. While not completely "successful," this project convinced the women that decentralist activities are more efficient and satisfying to participants than highly centralized ones. They continued to study and plan toward a community of which they could become part.

Some friends from the Dayton project joined them in planning, as did a realtor, a landscape architect and legal experts. In 1947, in Dayton, 21 persons became members of the American Homesteading Foundation, and took steps to purchase 100 acres near Melbourne, Fla. Members paid a membership fee, which entitled them to a plot of land (one to two acres) that they could use in accordance with

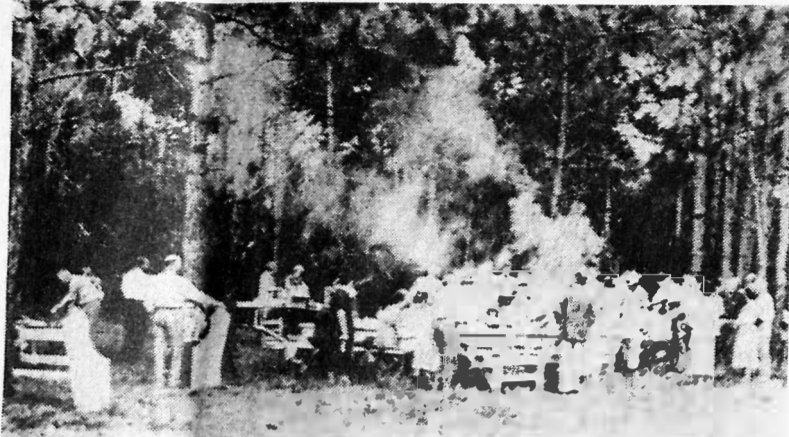
stayed; Elizabeth Nutting (president of the Women's Guild), busy at the finest earthworm and wheatgrass project I have seen, from which she daily takes the restorative wheatgrass drink to four aging friends. Bill and Helen Newcomb, two of the first homesteaders, are now selling real estate instead of milking goats, but brother Ralph is taking prizes in producing flowers and citrus and other fruit.

We much enjoyed visiting the 4-acre homestead of the Van Attas, a new young couple with four teenagers. They have a first-class citrus and peach orchard and a large vegetable garden, tomatoes carefully guarded from January frosts. They built their first home, which now provides rental income; and are now completing a large, lovely ranch homestead, replete with teenage projects and activities. Mrs. Marian Van Atta has written their story, *Homestead on the Missile Range*, and we hope to see it a popular book on the market soon. Mr. Van Atta (as are heads of other, younger families) is employed in nearby space work.

It was a delight to see the Mel Manthy homestead. Ten years ago this site was a series of rock piles and scores of potted plants nestled in this part of the Florida "jungle." Now it is a beautiful brick-stone-glass home, with attractive art and craft touches, and plantings indoors and out. Each home we visited—that of Bill Reece, Charles Haines, and others—was charming, personal and functional. While the homesteads do not look like those in the temperate zone, they are



Melbourne Village Homestead with Surrounding Citrus Grove



Melbourne Villagers Picnicking in Their Large Hammock

Why We Dance and Why We Don't

By R. L. J. Fahey, Editor
The Early American
Oxford, N. Y.

Today's popular fad dances are the subject of much controversy, centering around the erotic movements of the Twist and its variations. What is overlooked is why our culture lacks the richness and variety in popular dancing that other cultures have had.

In less technically advanced cultures, men experienced the gamut of emotions in their struggle for survival. In love and hate, peace and war, birth and death, they were filled with emotions which compelled them to dance.

This is not the case today.

When, for example, does a person have an emotion strong enough to compel him to dance today? When his child is born in the security of a sterilized hospital? When God sends rain after a month of drought? When his son returns from a journey across the United States by jet? When a battle is won in Vietnam?

Life Not Fully Lived

In each instance the individual is glad, of course, but this short-lived feeling comes nowhere near the brimming emotion of joy. In each case too, the individual is only partially involved. He lives his life up to a point and then lets the specialist, the machine, or an artificial environment take away the verve of complete involvement in life. Spontaneous dancing can't exist in a culture that promotes inanimate security.

American Dance Background

The Puritan movement initiated in England was unique in its condemnation of all dancing, not even recognizing the "purity" of the ancient Hebrew dances so often mentioned in the Bible. This Puritan view dominated much of our new nation until the pioneer movement began. Spontaneous dancing might have grown out of the pioneer movement had not industrialization curtailed the growth of the rural communities.

As it was, the settlers quite naturally developed a community social dance, the square dance, which expressed the harmony of families (the couples) cooperating together in the community (the square). Square dancing not only represented community life but also made community spirit more intense.

Effects of Industrialization

Then, toward the end of the last century, community spirit diminished because of the work and interests that industrialization promoted outside the home town. As life became more complex there developed a superflu-

ous diffusion of interests and dancing soon expressed the only strong feeling that remained, that of the mating urge.

Symbolic of the underlying change in society, a couple danced alone, isolated from the other couples on the dance floor. This form of the mating dance (mainly the waltz) still persists today, but the new forms, grown out of the jitterbug, are more prevalent.

Dancing Today

Just as every popular dance reflects some of the stronger emotions toward individuals and society, today's dances are no exception.

Unlike the waltz, which emphasizes the harmony and oneness of love, the new dance styles emphasize only erotic love—the attitude projected by the entertainment media. The general conditions of boredom and impersonalness in modern life make society receptive to this attitude.

While this display of the erotic remains obvious, there are other trends in society explicitly expressed in the popular dances.

Individualism in Dancing

A striking feature of the Twist is that it is essentially a dance for the individual rather than for the couple. There seem to be two feelings that this individualism indicates.

The first combines the lost sense of community, which causes a person to feel like an isolated island, and the inward revolt against standardization and conformity. An unnoticed and unloved child expresses this same emotion in his disobedience to his parents in order to get their attention.

The second feeling expressed is the contemporary emphasis on the equality of the sexes. No longer is it possible to distinguish special parts for male and female in these dances. Similarly in society, men have been losing family leadership and have been feminizing their attitudes. And women, while not yet leaders, have gained significant independence.

(It is worth noting that in the prosperous twenties the Charleston and its variations were popular. This was also an individualistic dance and the two trends toward conformity and feminization—Feminist Movement—were intense at the time.)

This analysis of dancing in America is not intended to condemn the modern fads; rather, it is to show the psychological losses suffered for the gains of technical progress. The health and depth of our emotions, as indicated in our dancing, seem to point to the need of living a more basic and natural way of life.

School of Living Meetings Planned

July 2-4—Homestead Festival and Ohio Regional Meeting, Smart and Loomis Homesteads. Write to Rose Smart, 4998 Twin Creek Road, West Alexandria, Ohio.

July 5-Aug. 5—Intensive study for 8 to 10 qualified persons of Major (End All War) Problems of Living, at Lane's End Homestead. Mildred Loomis, discussion leader. Also training in writing, group process and personal dynamics. Students will maintain themselves in our building. Fee, \$10 a week.

July 16-17—Bay Area School of Living meeting with Pres. Leo Koch, San Francisco, at Friends Center, 2160 Lake St. (at 23rd), Contact Pat Herron, 600 Stanyan, No. 11, San Francisco, for further information.

Aug. 6-7—Los Angeles Area School of Living meeting with Pres. Leo Koch, at Anderson Research Center, 437 N. Kenmore, Los Angeles. For further information contact Paul Marks, Chm., Box N, Los Banos, Calif.

Aug. 24-28—SCHOOL OF LIVING ANNUAL MEETING AND WORKSHOP. Come early, set up camp, and assist in work and renovation projects.

Sept. 10-11—Michigan Area School of Living meeting, near Traverse City, Mich.

How Can, cont'd

more important to Man's future well-being than is the Space Race.

But what can we prepare without knowing specifically for what we are preparing? First of all, we are assured of needing capital for initial investment, and still more of the same for helping to sustain ourselves, at least over the first few, highly critical years of adaptation. A practicing homesteader would be better qualified than I to estimate how much this should be, but I assume a good \$2,000 for each individual. We also should, ideally, somehow assure ourselves of ACCESS to still more money, over the ensuing years, in the form of salable skills. What constitute such skills, I would frankly be interested to list. Perhaps other readers have suggestions. It is crucial, however, that potential communitarians begin soon to amass such skills, whatever they be.

Secondly, experience in primitive living (i.e., camping) could never be less than invaluable to a homesteading enterprise. I would suggest that, not only could such educational camping activities be carried out individually, but that interested parties could experiment with living and working together even before they acquire land. They might perhaps spend a period of a summer camping together on state or Federally-owned parklands, while they also work out some of the aspects of their proposed community, to be founded, perhaps, the following spring. This would constitute a cheap and simple method of assembling and pre-testing a group, while training and honing them for their future venture.

(to be continued)

Publications For The Homesteader

Go Ahead and Live!, M. J. Loomis and others, \$4, School of Living, Brookville, Ohio 45309. Herald of Health, Lamoni, Iowa.

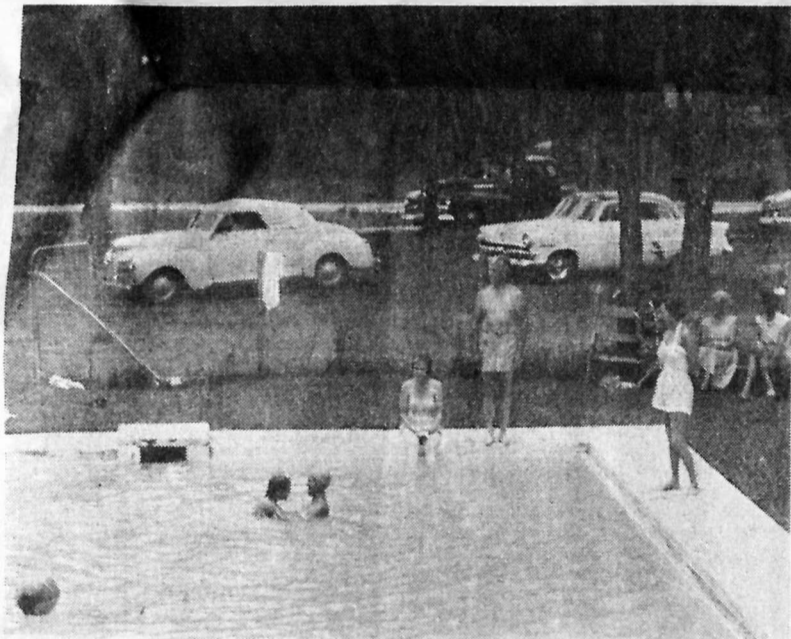
Peace of Mind Thru Nature, \$1. Backwoods Journal, Paradox 5, N. Y. \$2 a year, sample 35c.

Hygienic Review, \$4 a year. Herbert Shelton, Editor, Box 1277, San Antonio, Texas.

California Homeowner, quarterly, \$2 a year. 1561 N. Gower, Los Angeles 90028

Dairy Goat Journal, monthly, \$2 a year. Box 836, Columbia 35, Mo.

American Rationalist, \$4:50 a year, liberal religious viewpoint. Box 742, St. Louis, Mo.



Melbourne Villagers in One End of Cooperative Pool

agreed on restrictions and gave them the right to participate in committees, annual meetings, etc., for determining policy, to use the roads, parks (in Florida, called hammocks), the swimming pool and community house, and participate in clubs and activities common to the whole membership. As the years went on, membership grew, more land was bought, participation flourished, problems developed and were solved, and a miniature, intimate kind of community life developed.

Comparison

I hadn't been in Melbourne Village since 1956. How had it changed in 10 years? To my delight, hardly at all. The wide approach, still simple and lovely, the attractive small bulletin board announcing village activities, were the same as ever. Nice, citrus-shaded homes, no crowding, no billboards or signs, no commercialism. Yes, there were more homes, some 300 (on new land), as against about 100 ten years ago. Yes, a beautiful new residence-like community hall was there, all paid for and much used by the members.

Here were the original homesteaders—Virginia Wood, in whose comfortable house we

all, in my opinion, achievements to enjoy.

Younger Evaluation

During our two-day School of Living conference, we heard the history, problems and goals of Melbourne Village. Some of the younger conference attendants said, "From what we can see, it's too much like the 'outside.' Isn't it really a part of The Establishment? What we'd prefer is a community where its residents are much more concerned with vital and deep interaction, and arranging their lives freer of the status quo."

These young people were not yet 30 years old. The founders of Melbourne Village are 75 and 80. This community is an accomplishment of a type; a challenge lies with the younger people to show what they can produce and achieve that is better, worthier, more human, by the time they are 75 and 80. Wish we could be around to see it.

Ken Kern, author of The Owner-Built Home has finished writing it (we will print the final portion in October). He is now working on The Owner-Built Homestead, which we plan to print from month to month.