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Homestead Marginal Land?

Ben Russell

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Letters To The Editor

To Would-Be Homesteaders To the Editor:

After reading Mr. Potter's fine article in March *Green Revolution* on free land, I would suggest to would-be homesteaders (or anyone interested in justice) that he first take a free correspondence course in Fundamental Economics from Henry George School, 50 E. 69th St., New York City.

Next secure employment in, and move to, an area less thickly populated. Husband might have to change his vocation. If he doesn't know a construction trade, it might pay him to become a carpenter, electrician, plumber, etc. He could use these in developing his own homestead.

And eliminate unnecessary expenditures—study School of Living literature, learn where to homestead, find congenial folks, study nutrition, learn how to grow and prepare nourishing food, save on doctor and dental bills. Mother and children learn to sew, repair, cook and garden.

To Mr. Potter I would say that those who hold title should pay the economic rent of land to the county. This is the community-created value in land over and above the least productive land in use. [Such holders of land should not pay a low 1% land tax (rent), but all of it.—Ed.] And remove taxes from buildings, products and wages. The government taking a large percentage of ground rent will force land prices down, eventually to zero.—Ralph Hite, Box 406, Dugger, Ind. 47848

Aloneness vs. Loneliness

To the Editor:

In his article on Going It Alone, Paul Salstrom used the word "alone" but stresses "loneliness." Aloneness is not an experiencing of isolation and emptiness, which loneliness is. And loneliness need not occur in the backwoods. It can and does often occur in the city, among crowds of people. "People" need not be the answer to loneliness, and they are not always the answer to enjoying the precious experiencing of aloneness either.

A second point worth thinking about is Salstrom's lead remark about the lack of stimulus in the backwoods. That could be mostly a matter of conditioning. Some of the most deeply contented people and children I have ever met are those raised in rural areas. They have an abundance of stimuli in their natural surroundings. They find their world in that blade of grass, in that grain of sand. But it is probably incorrect to regard that experience as stimuli-response. From Paul Salstrom's remarks, it appears that he is looking for distractions, for pleasurable excitements, and is trying to derive contentment from the outside in. I'm thinking of people who don't rely on the exterior stimuli to attain contentment. That kind of contentment is not a pleasurable reaction. It's a state, deeper, more basic.—Jim Deacove, Hillsburg, Ont., Canada

"Man" A Vegetarian

To the Editor:

I would like to comment on an item in the January issue by Dr. Ruth Rogers, in which she is quoted as saying: "Do eat fresh meat, fish and eggs (unless you are a vegetarian)."

I don't understand this. Man is biologically not a meat-eating animal. Man is a primate, which means the first order of animals. He is related zoologically to the chimpanzees and orangoutangs. The next time you visit a zoo, just ask the zoo keeper what he feeds these fellows? Steak? Fish? Eggs? I doubt it.

So, my conclusion is that we human beings are all vegetarians by nature. Of course we have been lied to since the minute we first opened our eyes and have been consistently told that we must have "meat" (dead animals) for protein and strength. A gorilla can tear a lion limb

from limb; where does he get his protein? Because of this propaganda by the slaughterhouse interests, most people think that flesh food is a basic necessity and therefore Man is omnivorous (derives sustenance from the plant and animal kingdoms).

But we shouldn't validate truth by what most people do or think. We must look around in Nature, of which we are part and parcel, and figure out how we are supposed to fit into the picture.

My convictions are that Dr. Rogers should investigate this important question. But at least she did give us vegetarians some recognition. In general, though, her rules for health are very good.—David Stry, Director, "Villa Vegetariana" Health Resort, Cuernavaca, Mexico. K-70

15 Buyers for 2 Cows

To the Editor:

In March 1967 an ad appeared to sell a couple of cows. No less than 15 automobiles took hopeful buyers to the woman's place. Evidently more people want a family cow, are willing to accept the responsibility of caring for it morning and evening (giving up television time?) and are preparing to be in some degree independent of the frauds of governmentally-protected monopolies. Are people waking up to the stupors of the entertainment world?

Or did the milk strike scare people into producing their own milk?—Royal Rood, Detroit, Mich.

With or Without Free Land

To the Editor:

I enjoyed Rose Smart's article on "determination to homestead even without free land" in May issue. Thanks to her for that forthright and invigorating rebuke to those who complain instead of making the best of reality.—E.F.H., New York City

To the Editor:

Methinks the lady doth protest too much. From the tone of Rose Smart's article on overcoming their homesteading difficulties, one senses some resentment against the work and the hardships in it.—G. H., Carmel, Calif.

To the Editor:

As to Rose Smart's article responding to my concept of free land, please bear in mind that I did not suggest that homesteads could not be developed except with free land. By inferring that I did, she sets up and knocks down a straw man when she declares that free land is not necessary for setting up a homestead. I agree with her. But wouldn't free land make it much easier?

The time may come when mounting taxes and prices of land will make rural land uneconomical to work. Unless present trends are curbed, homesteading will become an unsatisfying and unrewarding experiment. Meanwhile homesteaders can give some thought to the long-range solutions available through teaching the concept of free land. Let's not evade the central problem of poverty, tyranny and wars. These will eventually, unless checked, counteract and destroy the effort of detachment from government that homesteaders want to achieve.—Louis Potter, 19 E. 82nd St., New York City

To the Editor:

I read *The Green Revolution* diligently, and consider the article by Rose Smart, in the May issue, one of the most important things you have ever published. If that doesn't eradicate a lot of doubts and misgivings about homestead financing, I don't know what will.

The Smarts have well demonstrated, by their own practicality and resourcefulness, what can be accomplished when the will is strong enough. By giving their experience such prominence *The*

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Green Revolution has rendered its readers a highly valuable service.

I warmly commend the work you are doing and am 100% in sympathy with School of Living philosophy and objectives. You are entitled to a rich measure of encouragement.—David H. Smith, 717 E. 18th, Sioux Falls, S. D.

Homestead Marginal Land?

To the Editor:

Any really productive land, or land near trading centers, carries a high price tag, or high rental value. And we have a tax structure that confiscates the returns of labor and capital. Taxes take the lion's share of production. So the loss of freedom occasioned by our system of private land ownership is compounded by levying taxes on production. (We could do away with private appropriation of land values—that community-created fund—and use this as a base for taxation.)

Perhaps the most practical way out for the homesteader is to move out to marginal land, where both cost and production are low. He should be able to keep a higher percentage of the value that he creates than he does in most conventional ways of making a living. And of course the creativity, health, communication, beauty, happiness of our way of life are nontaxable. For the prospective homesteader I see no simple, easy or immediate economic solution.—Ben Russell, 4337 Raymond Ave., Brookfield, Ill.

College By Correspondence

To the Editor:

Eventually I think men and women will outgrow their need for degrees. Such a symbol is artificial, misleading, unfair and undemocratic. In the future, it will probably be relegated to the limbo for curiosities. But for the present we are living with the unfairness that results from a system that designates those with degrees as "superior" to those without them.

If we are to have this misleading intellectual "caste system" why not make degrees earned by home study as respectable as those earned by resident college work? Would colleges have any complaint about this? Bonafide correspondence courses could be administered by resident colleges, with properly supervised tests given periodically at the colleges. Thus a student would have a choice how he earned his degree—by home study or by resident work. Isn't such an idea more democratic and more fair than the present system?

I think it would take more real scholastic ability to study and get a degree on your own than it takes the average college student, who is often spoon-fed and coddled by teachers. And how many young married couples are trying to earn a vaunted degree by resident college work and also trying to maintain a home and raise a baby or two? Such home life is hardly home life at all—they are conformists to the educational lie that tells them their degree is more important than establishing a home or raising children properly.

Wouldn't it revive both home life and education—and be an inspiration to young people—to see their parents working on degrees at home, and studying

right along with the young folks? And wouldn't this give an equal opportunity to learn (and earn a bonafide degree) to literally hundreds of thousands of people who could not attend a resident college?

Not all would get their education by home study. Some people can't break from having a teacher show them, praise them, etc. For these there would be the resident colleges. But for true scholars who can teach themselves, home study courses would be a godsend. Resident colleges would have some genuine competition. I hope too for the day when some major college (or several) will open a School of Living on the campus and have a home study section and teach the most important principles and practices of Borsodi and the School of Living. Let's have degrees in home study like Bachelor of Science of Living. Then homes could become real Schools of Living.—William C. Lloyd, 310 N. Broad, Burlington, N. C. 27215

Change "Homestead" Law

To the Editor:

Your readers should know that there are a tremendous number of sites on the public lands in the western states that would be suitable for subsistence homesteads. Most of this land is administered by the Bureau of Land Management (USDI) and the Forest Service (USDA). The right to homestead on Forest Service land was terminated by a law passed in 1962. It still is possible to homestead on BLM lands that have not been withdrawn but this right is impeded by considerable bureaucratic red tape. In the words of the bureaucrats, it is practically impossible to homestead in the 48 contiguous states. Of course it is the selfsame bureaucrats who are making homesteading practically impossible.

The country's land laws are being reviewed by the Public Land Law Review Commission. This is probably the only time in our lifetimes that there will be a comprehensive review of our public land laws and any Green Revolutionist who would like to see them changed would do well to express his views to the Commission's Chairman, Congressman Wayne N. Aspinall.

Here is an opportunity for would-be homesteaders to make their views known to the federal government. If enough of them do so, free land for homesteading could change from a dream into a reality.—Willard E. Pratt, 68 East 12th, Arcata, Calif. 95521

City Family Adjusts

To the Editor:

Since our visit to Lane's End Homestead in 1966 our ideas on homesteading have grown increasingly stronger, on our rented homestead. Both of us have made many adjustments. When we moved here I missed the city very much. I was so used to strolling down streets past shops and to the park four blocks away. We sometimes spent our weekend shopping for something fake—just shopping, so long as it took up time and somewhat entertained us. At first I didn't know what to do with the solitude of country life, or what to do with my new-gained time. But now that has changed; I hardly want to go to town, or find time to go, once a week for needed items.

We are busy at gardening this spring. We purchased a 14-year old tractor to plow it; we've irrigated beets and carrots by pumping water by hand. We had a joyous time roaming through a near-by wood for leaf mold; we've put 5 truck loads of manure on our garden. With newly gained experience I expect to be very busy freezing as well as canning the harvest. A lot of our work becomes wonderfully confused with play. My son says, "Come on, Mommy, let's play in the garden today." We learn a great deal from neighbors, books and trial and error. I enjoyed planting my seedlings in the warm spring soil. I go out eagerly to look over my garden while the family still sleeps in the early

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hours—a cooing mourning dove is my only companion.

We have lots of fruit—delicious blueberries and grapes; and four apple trees. I'm looking for an electric flour mill—a second-hand one would do. Where might one be available? Also wheat within 100 miles of us?

We're elated every time *Green Revolution* comes (send us extras of the May issue). Keep the interesting items coming from the Knoess family. Enclosed is *The Oracle* from San Francisco with a discussion by Watts, Leary, Ginsberg, Snyder, spokesmen for the young hippies on dropping out of this sick society. A GR original. My husband still commutes to Chicago, a big drag he hopes to quit some day soon. We got caught in the rat-trap of the big consumer. Now we have to pay the price of clearing up our debts before we can get our own homestead.—Doreen Geary, Rt. 2, Box 378, Chesterton, Ind. 46304.

Needs Two Books

To the Editor:

Can anyone help me locate two books recently recommended to me? They are: *Camping and Woodcraft* by Horace Kephart and *The Book of Country Things* in the original edition (or *The Grandfather's Book of Country Things* in paperback). I'd like to borrow or secure a secondhand copy. Any good literature on simple rural crafts and home production will be welcome.—Ferdinand Knoess, Pennington, Minn.

Self-Made Librarian Search

To the Editor:

Under 25, I've been working on a Ph.D. in molecular biology at the University of California at Berkeley, but the atmosphere here opened my interest in libertarianism, economics, history and psychology, where my education was lacking. So I've opted out to educate myself in those disciplines and libertarian activism. I've not lost interest in scientific work but would only want to work in a private business or research, or teach in a private school. While the people in my department at the university were not bad, and some even were nice personally, it did begin to get depressing being constantly around irrational welfare-state mentalities. Also, it de-

(continued on page 3)