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You Can Build Your Mobile Home; I Did and I Call Mine "Spastayen"

Gordon Yaswen

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THE GREEN

A WORLD-WIDE EFFORT FOR DECENTRALIZATION
AND RURAL REVIVAL



REVOLUTION

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DeCourcy Squire Typifies Youth Resistance and Purpose Today



DeCourcy Squire

Reports of youth resistance seem to some observers remote, extreme, bizarre. But meaning and significance and understanding develop when one involved is known personally. For example, consider the recent experiences of DeCourcy Squire, an 18-year-old co-ed at Antioch College (Yellow Springs, Ohio).

She was one of 85 young people arrested in early December while opposing the draft at Cincinnati's induction center. She received a sentence of 30 days for disorderly conduct and eight months for contempt of court (refusing to walk in or out or to approach the judge's bench) plus \$600 in fines plus court costs. She began a fast on Dec. 8 that continued until Feb. 6 (when she was released), subsisting for two months only on water and vitamins. She felt the court had no right to imprison her for her non-violent part in her act of civil disobedience.

Free Press and Liberation News Service; Young People Create New News Media

A vital part of the green revolution (that trend to life, growth and human development) is free speech. Young dissidents are making a significant contribution in their free press. Hundreds of individuals and small groups, on and off college campuses, produce papers discussing events and issues absent from, or censored by, ordinary air and press media. They are sometimes called the underground press, and they're different in format, appearance and content. An observer not familiar with them cannot correctly describe today's scene.

Liberation News Service

During the big March on Washington in October, 1967, representatives from 300 underground papers (claiming a readership up to two million) formed the Liberation News Service. Similar in method to Associated or United Press, LNS collects news pertinent to change and revolution, for all who wish it. Three times weekly their rainbow-hued mimeographed pages arrive with exciting news, reports and concepts. Green Revolution's stack of these releases now constitutes about a ream (500 pages), and the contents match the verve and life of its colors. Via LNS one has enough detail on dissident action to get the "feel" and extent of today's revolutionary activity.

The status-quo press, for instance, announced the arrest in

Such action can go unnoticed or be shrugged off by many people when seen or heard on some news source. But not when one knows this charming girl, whose gentle manner covers persistence and principled discipline. She has been a visitor at Lane's End Homestead (Antioch is 35 miles) and she introduced me (MJL) at a pacifist training institute where I spoke last summer. It is easy to see why her friends staged effective pleas, pickets and petitions for her release. Some of them published a letter from her to her friend Steve (he served a shorter sentence than she did). Some quoted excerpts here will show her intelligence and spirit:

Dear dear beautiful Steve: I love you so, so much. I can't write you from the workhouse because of ways in which I am non-cooperating. After two weeks of a fast I wound up in Longview Hospital for mental and physical tests. . . . I am being discovered terribly sane and healthy. (I have "beautiful kidneys" according to one doctor. . . .)

The workhouse people, guards, matrons, inmates, etc., were all wonderful to me, and I don't dread going back. . . . I was glad to hear Suzi was out and to find out where you are. The amount of mail I've been getting has been fantastic. My window looks out onto a fantastically beautiful sunrise every morning. The freedom and love it promises are painful.

I am starved for the limitless abundance of space, nature, people, food, occupations, and books—choices that I have out in the free world. I have been really getting interested in anarchist self-sufficient communities, and can hardly wait to take off to one. . . . I want to go experiment in pure living with some of the "revolutionaries" just so that we

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Boston of Dr. Benjamin Spock and four distinguished colleagues for supporting draft refusers. The hard line, with little detail. But LNS brought it alive: told about the crowds of people (700 overflowing the church); wild applause when five others took the arrested leaders' places; 25 instead of the expected five burned their draft cards; a standing ovation from 2,000 at university that evening; etc. LNS showed that it was a second Boston Tea Party, not a mere ripple in the day's events.

In an LNS report of a full speech by Rap Brown, one gets the intensity, urgency and solidarity stemming from black peoples' fear of genocide. (Whites exterminated the Indians; they won't hesitate to repeat it with the black people.) Also from LNS was a report of plans for armed self-defense in ghettos and corresponding government (fascist) control. Also, a report on U. S. government support (via CIA—\$5750 to the publisher and \$2500 to the author) of *Why Vietnam?*, a book defending American policy there.

Disaffection in the Army

Unrest among drafted men in army camps comes through in LNS. An epidemic of spinal meningitis in Ft. Jackson, S. C. (due to crowding, "shots," etc.?) was not feared so much as "orders to proceed to Vietnam." The

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You Can Build Your Mobile Home; I Did and I Call Mine "Spastayen"

By Gordon Yaswen
Box 201, Modena, N. Y.

[Editor's Note: Some months ago Gordon Yaswen suggested in *The Green Revolution* that mobile homes would allow moving from one intentional community to another to find the "right" one. Now he reports on building his own mobile home.]

In the Fall of 1967 I decided I could no longer afford not to build my mobile home. So, on a friend's land, I set about the task with great resolve and humility. I had no car to transport materials, no professional plans to build it by, no experience or skill to build it with, nor any regular help. This was the first roof I had ever raised on this Earth, and my first serious venture with carpentry. I would have been completely helpless without the aid of many friends in many ways.

During its construction I lived in an abandoned chicken coop, slept in a pup-tent, boarded mostly with friends. I was new to the area and it was not easy to scout up the things I needed. I cite all this not to thump my chest, not to point out that the work I accomplished stands as some great performance; I was a novice working under normal or sub-normal circumstances. I wish to thus show plainly what I believe to be so: that such as I have accomplished is quite within the capacity of virtually anyone who wishes to do it.

The Chassis

My mobile home, called "Spastayen," is built on a welded channel steel chassis which I bought (with a decrepit shell atop it) for \$100. I paid \$30 for roadable tires, and another \$30 to have it towed. But even at this the chassis was still a good buy. (Beware the "burned out" trailer; the fire may have warped the frame.)

My chassis has four wheels and one set of electric brakes. With a bit of reconditioning it was like new. Trailer bases can be made of oak or steel-reinforced wood, but I found the cost of additional running gear for such a frame, bought separately, is likely to be easily as much as for a used chassis complete.

The Building

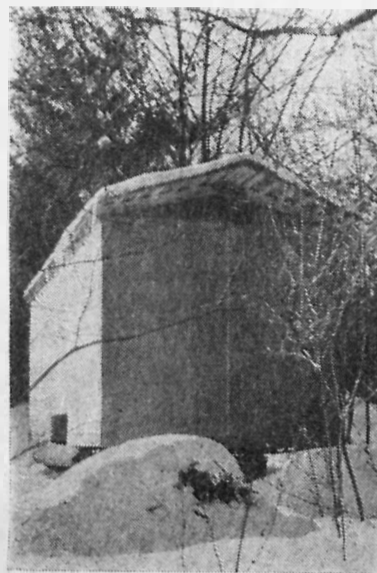
Once the chassis was stripped, reconditioned and leveled on concrete blocks, the actual house-building began. The floor is of glued and nailed "sandwich" paneling, 5/8" exterior grade plywood on top, 1/4" exterior grade plywood on the bottom, and 2 x 2 framing and insulation between. Once the floor panels were laid, the glued and nailed wall panels (uninsulated, unstained, windowless) were assembled flat atop the floor, raised into position, and then both floor and wall sills were fastened to the chassis by the same bolts.

Spastayen's walls are built of 1/4" exterior plywood with 2 x 2 framing. The wood sheathing is heavier than the usual aluminum used on trailers. It was easier for me to work with, provides better insulation, and when stained is more esthetic to my eye. For the roof I decided on a peaked configuration, for its better snow-holding, rain-shedding and insulating advantages over the usual flat or slightly-crowned construction. This at first seemed to be my most complicated design and construction problem, but later was tamed. The pre-assembled rafters (spaced every 16"), of 2 x

4s with 2 x 2 tie beams, were covered with longitudinal slatting, plywood sheathing went atop that, and tarpaper roofing completed it. And that was it.

Moving-In

I moved in promptly in my windowless, doorless (I don't say "portalless") roofed box, sec-



Spastayen and Snow

tioned off a part with polyethylene sheeting to keep in the slim heat of my kerosene space heater, and set up primitive housekeeping. Further building is largely puttering, which I've been doing as I can afford the time and money.

Advantages

This semi-completed product cannot help but exhibit imperfections of workmanship and some haste. My mobile home leaves much to be desired. But it stands and it shelters me, and gives every promise of lasting a good

many years. Moreover, its completion frees me from that weary pattern of expensive homelessness I was in. Spastayen gives me at last some sense of permanence and security, without compromising my necessarily-mobile quest for land (on which, and with people among whom, I can feel at peace).

To date, the project has cost me about 2 1/2 months' steady work and about \$500. This is well under the equivalent of one year's rent for the shabby apartments I am used to living in. I have little doubt that my mobile home can be made quite as comfortable as those apartments, for under \$1,000. An experienced builder could doubtless do it for less. By next Fall I hope to have it completed and comfortable, and should need arise I can easily add collapsible and disposable wings to it.

Meaning

It is not easy to describe what it meant to me to close off the roof and move in. Here at last was a shelter and a room that was truly my own, from which I need not plan on moving and taking my belongings. It was my 33rd move, and I hope I shall not see my 34th for some time to come.

It was an arduous, demanding, educating, thrilling and deeply fulfilling experience. I have the satisfaction that I have in my own life participated in one of the oldest and most significant "dances" of Man. I have raised my own roof to the sky and have sheltered myself from the elements. And I have done so without selling my soul and body in bondage.

This, then, is finally my bit of Space to Stay In—and so I named it.

Theme of May Heathcote Conference Is "Homesteading, A Life Style For Today"

A May conference at Heathcote School of Living (Rt. 1, Freeland, Md.) is in charge of Sonnewald Homesteaders Grace and Tim Lefever. All who want to learn about and improve homesteading techniques should arrive Friday afternoon, May 17, for sessions through Sunday afternoon, the 19th. Cost: \$3 a day plus registration of \$2.

Practical Aspects Stressed

Friday evening, early arrivals will see the School of Living film of ten well-known homesteads (including, in Ohio, the Smarts' Sycamore Hollow and Loomises' Lane's End; Ragged Mt. Farm in Virginia; and Sonnewald, the Rodale Organic Gardens and the Paul Keenes' Walnut Acres in Pennsylvania).

The women will give Saturday morning to milling and baking of bread, sprouting, meal planning and food preparation. The men's projects include repair and maintenance, plumbing and electric installation, and composting.

Assisting will be Jane Preston and Alice Greenawalt in food preparation and yogurt making. Mrs. Greenawalt will also share sewing hints for homesteaders. A. P. Thomson of Golden Acres Orchard has been invited to supervise compost-making.

Saturday afternoon all will share work and fellowship in the Heathcote garden. Questions and discussions are planned for that evening, along with still and movie pictures of gardens and homesteads. (Those attending are

urged to bring their own for this showing.) The evening will conclude with folk singing and dancing.

Relationships and Philosophy

Sunday morning, the group will hear a tape by Mildred Loomis on "Why Homestead?" (with attention to some of the social and personal implications of this way of life).

Don West, director of the Pipestem (Tenn.) Folk Center and editor of *Appalachian South*, has

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IFI Plans Projects In United States

Staff and officers of IFI, international low-credit agency just getting under way to assist farmers and primary producers, is developing plans for pilot projects in the United States. Robert Swann, field director, has outlined a plan for community development and housing for the National Sharecropper's Fund. Ralph Borsodi, founder of IFI, has worked out plans for assistance in cities where summer riots and breakdowns are feared. With Newark, N. J., as a possible setting, his plan includes land purchases, self-help or "sweat-equity" in housing, IFI debenture circulation, etc.

Significant Aspects

In several ways, credit granted by IFI is similar to that of the

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