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21st Century Food

by Bill Duesing

Reprinted from the June 1995 issue of PLAIN.

There is a promising path that leads toward feeding ourselves in the 21st century. This path empowers individuals and families, provides healthier diets and addresses large global problems head on.

After air and water, food is our most important connection to the environment. Food is the way we take energy from the sun (and nutrients from the air, soil and water) into our bodies so we can grow, breathe, think, work, play, love and learn. We are solar-powered beings.

Bringing our food supply closer to home is one of the most effective and powerful strategies we can use to create positive changes in our health, in the environment, in our society and on this planet. Growing greens and potatoes in gardens, sprouting seeds on our kitchen counters, stopping at nearby farms to buy milk or vegetables, preparing family meals from basic ingredients and other ordinary acts of feeding ourselves are critical steps to a better future.

By the middle of the next century, the United States population will double and the amount of arable land will be reduced to just over one half of an acre

per person, according to David Pimentel, an ecologist from Cornell University. The price of food will be driven up, and as a consequence, our diets will change.

This was just one of the warnings about the future food supply which came from this spring's meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. Strong demand and resulting higher prices for water, energy, and American grain, as well as a doubled population and a significant loss of cropland to erosion and development, will put a great strain on the earth's productive resources.

Forty years from now there will be only one third of an acre of cropland, per person, globally. Currently, there is just under seven tenths of an acre per person. Nearly one billion people are poorly nourished, and all the world's major fisheries are being overfished. About 35,000 children die every day of hunger and related problems. Four thousand of those are infants who die because their mothers were convinced to give up breastfeeding in favor of using infant formula. The global food system's pressure to eliminate healthy, traditional ways in favor of a new, packaged, processed, dangerous and profitable product is enormous and starts with the very young.

Lester Brown of the Worldwatch Institute believes that crop improvements and new technologies will boost the earth's annual grain harvest to two billion tons. That would be enough to feed 10 billion people at India's nutritional level. This yield would feed less than half the world's current population at the present U.S. nutritional level, or the world's present population (5.7 billion people) at about Italy's nutritional level. The average American consumes nearly 1,800 pounds of grain a year, the average Italian, nearly 900 pounds and the average Indian consumes just 440 pounds of grain per year.

The U.S. diet requires great quantities of grain because so much of it is fed to animals in order to produce meat and dairy products. Pimentel believes that by the middle of the next century, higher food prices and resource constraints will cause the percentage of animal products in American diets to be cut in half, while the percentage of grains and vegetables will increase. He also predicts there will be a much more limited variety of vegetables.

Brown sees additional problems in the rising incomes in China and the rest of Asia, which he fears will encourage more people there to want meat and dairy products. This development will require even more grain. China already imports great quantities of grain.

Some scientists believe that we can feed 10 billion people by the year 2025 and still leave some room for nature if we just develop and implement enough new, high-tech agricultural practices. These would include genetically engineered crop plants (which produce their own insecticides) and synthetic growth hormones for chickens, pigs, fish and beef cows. More synthetic fertilizers, enhanced computer technology and new farm equipment would be required for the few, very large farms which scientists think will produce most of the food.

However, these scientists have little or no idea what the vast majority of humans will do to earn the money needed to buy this food. They have no plan to cope with the negative effects from the global climate changes that are bound to occur from in-

creased energy use by these high-tech agro-factories and an increasingly distant food system. We have been spoiled in this country with plentiful, seemingly low-cost food, thanks to fertile soil, subsidized grains, water and energy, and to our willingness to accept the environmental and social damage caused by industrial agriculture.

On average, Americans spend about 15 percent of their disposable income on food—a much smaller percentage than people in most other countries spend. The poor in this country, however, spend up to a third of their income on food. These figures don't include food's many hidden costs. The food system consumes large amounts of our tax dollars in the form of subsidies for energy, agriculture, advertising, regulation, waste disposal and health care. The system also depends on generous tax benefits. Its appetite for fossil fuel and nuclear energy to transport food, to manufacture and recycle bottles, cans, and plastic-paks, to build and power fancy new stores and restaurants and to market promotional "give-aways" is voracious.

As solar-powered beings, we require relatively little energy. Depending upon our age and activity level, we need between 2,000 and 3,000 Calories (kilocalories to a scientist) worth of food energy per day. This is equivalent to the energy in less than one tenth of a gallon of gasoline, or about one cup. The amount of energy needed to keep an efficient automobile going for four minutes will keep a human going for 24 hours.

The relevance of the term 'efficiency' depends on what is being measured. Compare a supermarket lettuce, grown in an irrigated California desert, with a lettuce growing in our garden. Efficiency is one justification for nearly every aspect of the store lettuce. Labor efficiency is the reason for large-scale farms and stores. The irrigation system, trucks, pesticide factories and applicators, the federal regulatory system, the supermarket's cooling, heating and lighting systems may all have increased efficiency. This efficiency relates to the First Law of thermodynamics which says that energy and matter are always conserved. That is, neither of

them can be destroyed. The miles-per-gallon rating on a car is an example of First Law efficiency—how many miles result from each unit of energy consumed. Improving First Law efficiency is an important conservation measure.

For our future it is more important to consider efficiency as measured by the Second Law of thermodynamics. This law says that energy moves in one direction only—toward being less useful. All the energy in any meal that we eat flows into the environment as waste heat. It is conserved, but is less useful than the food or the sunlight from which it came. That energy's potential is reduced; its disorder or entropy is increased. The disorder resulting from our profligate energy use is rampant and increasing rapidly.

To measure efficiency by the Second Law, we have to compare the amount of energy *used* with the minimum *required*. Using this important criterion, the lettuce in our garden is close to infinitely more efficient than the California lettuce. (Just when I thought we'd hit the low point in efficiency, on May 24, 1995, the USDA proposed the importation of lettuce from Israel, after "efficient" treatment for fruitflies and other pests.)

Using our bodies to tend organic gardens is the essence of efficiency according to the Second Law of thermodynamics. Since all the energy used is solar, the entropy created is within the planet's normal energy flow.

Human beings, in places ranging from the Kalahari Desert in Africa to the Arctic Tundra, and even in our fertile temperate zone, fed themselves within their own ecosystems, using only renewable (solar) energy and their ingenuity. For most of our history, humans have obtained their food from their immediate environment, directly from the plants which collected it and the animals that passed it along, using that stored solar energy to hunt and gather and to grow and raise plants and animals.

Eating came only after this work, plus any necessary fuel-gathering, grinding and cooking. Wastes

were deposited back into the local environment for decomposition and recycling. In many societies, this work not only fed people, but left generous amounts of time for family, community and cultural activities. More nourishing ecosystems were created in the process. The astounding bounty of edible plants and animals that the Europeans found in New England, and the fecundity of the inhabited rainforests were the results of centuries of human interaction with and management of ecosystems.

This brings us to a promising path that leads toward feeding ourselves in the 21st century. This path empowers individuals and families, provides healthier diets and addresses large global problems head on. It involves individual participation in producing food where we live.

This greatly reduces our food system's energy requirements, increases our food's freshness and flavor and fosters holistic interaction with our ecosystem. In addition to gardening, this path also involves eating less meat, cooking more, spending less money in the global food distribution system and giving more to farmers and gardeners in our local communities. Bringing our food closer to home is not only a powerful way to effect positive change, it is probably essential for our survival.

I suspect that if we are to have any hope of feeding everyone on this planet from its available resources, we need to be able to do it almost everywhere, especially in a land as abundantly blessed with resources as this one.

When we realize that we can convert our lawns to valuable farmland, and can produce bountiful harvests using ecological methods, we are well on our way to solving global problems.

Bill Duesing, who lives at Old Solar Farm near Oxford, Connecticut, is the author of a book of essays on farming, ecological concerns and politics, entitled Living on the Earth. See pg. 10 in this issue for a review of this book and of Lester Brown's Who Will Feed China? by Bill Felker.



Common Ground

by Barbara Ruben

Reprinted from the Summer 1995 issue of Environmental Action, Takoma Park, MD 20912.

Fourteen miles beyond the White House and ten miles from the dilapidated rowhouses of Washington's poorest neighborhoods, Pennsylvania Avenue gives way to exurbia's newest pastel housing developments, interspersed with rolling fields. A blue heron spreads its wings against the sky above a seven-acre organic farm plot, where fledgling sprouts of broccoli, carrots, collard greens and beets push through the soil in the late-April sun.

Alesia Dickerson strides down the neat rows, straightening the cloth batting covering the cabbage and broccoli to help protect the crops from an invasion of maggots. Last summer, she worked as a volunteer on the farm, lived in a Washington homeless shelter and could barely distinguish between kale and Swiss chard. Today, she makes \$5 an hour at the farm, lives with her mother and aerates compost like an expert. "I didn't know anything about farming before," she says. "I do now. I like to watch things grow."

The farm is tended by employees and volunteers of From the Ground Up, a project of the Capital Area

Community Food Bank that links sustainable agriculture with low-cost produce for inner city residents. The program also employs two other people living in shelters.

From the Ground Up is one of a growing number of programs that join the environment, access to nutritious food and the inner-city poor under the idea of "community food security." Whether through farmers' markets in low-income areas, community gardens at public housing or community supported agriculture—in which consumers directly pay farmers for a share of the crop—anti-hunger groups, farmers and environmentalists are sowing the seeds for changing the way food is raised and distributed.

It's a coalition of groups that has rarely joined forces in the past. "It's as if the environment is in one box here, welfare and hunger in a box there," says Robert Gottlieb, coordinator of environmental analysis and policy in the Department of Urban Planning at UCLA, whose students did one of the first studies of community food security in the wake of the Los Angeles riots. "Food security is the kind of issue that builds bridges and sets agendas for environmental and environmental justice groups, which have touched on pesticides or farmworkers, but not related to access to the actual food produced."

Kate Fitzgerald, executive director of Austin's Sustainable Food Center, says that she has worked smoothly with local and national environmental groups, but that, "Historically there's been a tension between sustainable agriculture and hunger groups. Agribusiness put forth myths saying that sustainably grown food would be more expensive," she says. "It's prevented a dialog between farm groups and anti-hunger groups."

But that may be changing. The key, says Mark Winne, executive director of the Hartford Food System, is to change traditional views of agriculture as merely a money-making business. "I get the sense sometimes that if agriculture wasn't producing food, it wouldn't make a difference to the [Connecticut] Department of Agriculture. If farmers in the

state stuck to high-end stuff like oysters or mushrooms, multi-million dollar enterprises, people would still say you have farming going on."

As grocery stores flee from what owners consider unsafe and unprofitable inner-city locations, residents are often left with less nutritious and more expensive food. In such cities as New York, Los Angeles and Hartford, low-income residents pay 10 to 40 percent more for groceries than those with high incomes and access to large supermarkets, according to a study by the Community Food Access Resource Center in New York. A national study by the Second Harvest Food Bank in 1994 found that one in every 10 Americans has used an emergency food pantry.

But more than just providing food for people, community food security advocates envision a food system that also nourishes the environment and local economies. For example, the average food item travels 1,400 miles before it reaches a consumer, says Andy Fisher, coordinator of the Community Food Security Coalition, which formed last year and includes a number of sustainable agriculture, hunger and environmental groups. At that rate, it takes about 10 energy calories to deliver one food calorie to the dinner plate. By providing locally grown food, communities not only get an economic boost, but save the energy—and resulting pollution—from trucking food in from across the country.

In addition, the organic and sustainable agriculture practices advocated by community food security proponents reduce the amount of chemicals on food and washed into groundwater. Urban gardening and farmers' markets can also brighten the often bleak landscape of the inner city. "Some people use our farmers' markets as a way to escape the Bronx or Brooklyn," says Tony Mannelta, assistant director of New York City's Greenmarkets, which organizes markets in 20 locations, many of them in lower-income areas. "I've seen elderly people just taking a walk through them, smelling a mound of basil here, admiring the bunches of flowers there."

Although only a portion of the produce in the markets is organic, Mannelta says once farmers get into the program they start using fewer chemical pesticides and fertilizers. Cosmetic perfection isn't required. Customers will tolerate an apple that's misshapen, or even one that has a worm hole," he says. "Chemical salesmen complain about the change."

The farmers' market run by the Ecology Center in Berkeley, California, including one low-income neighborhood, boasts 70 percent of its produce as certified organic, the highest rate in California and perhaps the country, according to its co-manager Kirk Lumpkin. The Ecology Center also forbids any produce grown in soil using the biocide methyl bromide, which has been shown to destroy the ozone layer. Produce not sold at the Ecology Center's and some other markets is donated to local food banks and shelters.

Although farmers' markets around the country are traditionally found in upscale neighborhoods, groups like the Ecology Center and Greenmarkets say they are committed to bringing them to lower-income sections of the city. In Austin, for instance, the only farmers' market was located an hour and 25 minutes by bus from a low-income, mainly Latino community. Last year, the nonprofit Sustainable Food Center organized a farmers' market for the east side, in which more than 40 percent of the population lives below the poverty level.

The Sustainable Food Center also runs a community garden at the site and a food school. "Some of the people will initially look at an eggplant and say, 'I won't eat that. I don't know how to cook it,'" says Nessa Richman, who started the market. The center's education efforts extend to fliers posted at the gardens to inform residents that, for instance, the cilantro has purposely been left to grow wild to attract lady bugs that will eat the aphids preying on other vegetables.

The farmers' market accepts both food stamps and special Women's Infants and Children's (WIC) farmers' market coupons, in addition to the regular benefits. Interest in using food stamps was so high

that in the two weeks after the center put out a pamphlet on the subject, the office was deluged with 7,000 calls for more information.

But it can be difficult persuading farmers to accept the food stamps and coupons—or even to set up a stand in a lower-income neighborhood. At a farmers' market organized by the Ecology Center, farmers have had their cash boxes stolen and once a man confronted two women with a knife. The Ecology Center then provided a cellular phone for emergencies, but no one so far has had to use it.

Greenmarkets in New York offers a \$100 credit to farmers toward renting stall space if they will accept food stamps. But in many states food stamp transactions have entered the high-tech age. Benefits are accessed through an electronic card. But since most farmers' markets have no electricity or even access to a phone to confirm food stamp eligibility, the few farmers who would accept food stamps many times aren't able to adapt to the new system.

Some programs focus on the garden itself as a source of employment and education. The Seattle Youth Garden Works will employ five to 10 homeless youth in organic gardens to raise produce for a farmers' market. In addition to teaching about sustainable agriculture and environmental issues, the program tutors the youth in basic science and math and provides a forum to learn about economic development. "It seems sometimes that recycling and conservation and environmental righteousness are for the rich, and that the poor are people who litter and eat junk food and don't buy recycled because it costs more. And I think that's wrong," says Margaret Hauptman, who began the program. Hauptman says she joined her love of gardening and working with children in planning the program. "I experience a lot of joy and healing working in the soil and I wanted to share that."

The Homeless Garden Project in Santa Cruz, California, employs 20 homeless people part-time in its 5-acre organic garden. Food is sold at a farmers' market and directly from a community supported

agriculture (CSA) program. The Hartford Food System has run low-income community gardens as well as a CSA farm since 1978. The farm provides produce for both middle-income residents and low-income groups, which distributes the food to about 900 of their clients.

"Hartford is radically divided between rich white suburbs and a poor inner city made up largely of Latinos and African Americans. Our biggest education effort is on the local food supply," executive director Mark Winne says. "We have teen mothers who have never seen a carrot growing before. They can't get over that they can eat it right there and make lunch out of what they've harvested."

Winne's group is now studying the feasibility of the Hartford School System purchasing more locally grown food. About 25,000 children are enrolled in the schools, 80 percent of whom qualify for the subsidized school lunch program. Almost no food used now is locally grown, and none of it is organic.

Back at From the Ground Up's farm in suburban Washington, director Leigh Hauter talks about weeding with the Civilian Conservation Corps and Americorps. The acres the program tills are part of a larger sustainable agriculture center owned by the environmental group the Chesapeake Bay Foundation. Farmed primarily for tobacco and corn for 200 years, the land hasn't yet recovered from centuries of monoculture, but Hauter is still expecting a fair crop.

Part of the 45,000 pounds of produce he estimates will be raised will be sold for half price to community groups and churches, which in turn sell the food to their members. When Hauter talked to a church in Washington's impoverished Anacostia, members told him they had been sharecroppers in North Carolina decades before and recalled spreading ashes on the soil to serve as fertilizer, a practice Hauter emulates using lime today. "I think we have a lot to learn from each other," he says. "We teach people that by group action they have power. That lesson is what we're trying to get across everywhere—organize to make your life better."



IMAGO: To Image or To Imagine

by Holly Knight

Despair is the most dangerous of all sins. When despair takes over, all kinds of wickedness follows. So claimed Thomas Aquinas centuries ago. And, indeed, it seems the curse of despair is slowly suffocating life on the cusp of the twenty-first century.

A multitude of modern-day saints and sages—many among the top ten authors on the *New York Times Bestsellers List*—beckon us back to our natural roots, awaken us to the awareness of our larger sense of Self. We read their books, go to their conferences, listen to their audiocassettes. We get moved and motivated to some degree. We recycle our newspapers and glass if our neighborhoods offer curbside service. But can we really admit to ourselves that life in the Western world has really become "reduced to a hunt for consumer goods" as Vaclav Havel once claimed?

As most of us watch our cities become wastelands occupied by the destitute and the violent, we move

further and further away from the everyday reminders of despair. We drive back to our sanitary cul-de-sacs and leave eyesores to self-destruct. The survival of the fittest is really the survival of the privileged.

Once in a while, though, we stumble upon the genuine pioneers of the twenty-first century whose lives and work are forged around battling despair. They are the transformers.

Jim Schenk and Eileen Branigan-Schenk are two former social workers whose work to reverse the tide of despair is one of the most hopeful rebuilding stories of the '90s. Together they cast their vision into a plan that is reshaping a working-class urban community into a model of sustainability, a green neighborhood located in lower Price Hill, where an eclectic avenue of modest older homes line the slopes overlooking the Ohio River in Cincinnati, Ohio. Jim was a Midwest farmboy who trained in a Catholic seminary from age 14 to 23. Eileen was a native Cincinnati, a fifth-generation Price Hill resident and a social worker. They met in Cincinnati in 1968 when Jim went into social work and Eileen became his supervisor. Two years later they married and eight years later they birthed IMAGO, a grass-roots organization whose members are committed to living in harmony with the planet Earth and all her people. Its members envision and attempt to embody lifestyles premised on the sacredness of all Creation. Drawing on Earth-centered traditions, and emerging bioregional consciousness, they are building community through seasonal celebrations, educational programs, and the development of an interdependent urban neighborhood.

"IMAGO" [from the Latin meaning to image or imagine] "began as a search," recalls Jim, who was then executive director of the Covington Community Center. "We had a real sense that people in this culture are not happy with who they are. We worked primarily with low-income people first. We started exploring concepts, ideas. We were looking for meaning and there was something missing. Neither social work nor religion nor everyday life was filling it. There was the awareness that other people

were going through the same kinds of struggles. They weren't happy but felt locked in.

"We started asking why and saw divisions between values and the structure of our culture. At first we thought it was just a divisiveness between people. Then we began to see it in broader terms—that we'd lost our consciousness of our connectedness."

Eileen elaborates, "We began to see the importance of making others aware of the interconnectedness or interdependence of all life forms, the oneness of all creation. We began looking for ways to change our own lifestyle in a way we could reconnect. We began reframing our daily experiences to reflect the sacred aspects of our actions."

And so IMAGO's real emphasis has centered on education and lifestyle change, specifically less consumptive lifestyles, and, according to Eileen, "how particular lifestyle changes can increase our reverence for all of life as well as increasing our respect for self."

On the inside cover of their recently released video, *"Price Hill: An Ecological Neighborhood,"* the producers describe IMAGO as an ecological educational organization that "envision[s] lifestyles premised on the sacredness of all Creation. The ecological neighborhood is part of this envisioning."

Since IMAGO's founding in 1978 Jim and Eileen have built the nonprofit organization to a current membership base of 500 and have remained steadfastly focused on its goal to be the ecological city of the Midwest. Their approach and methodology are echoed by bioregionalists the world over; human beings are not meant to live "above the eco-community," but rather to reinhabit it and to live in place.

"Our thought is there is a much better chance of educating if we can work on a neighborhood basis where we know people," says Jim. "For example, a couple of years ago we ran an energy-audit-and-reduction program on Enright Avenue where we live and were quite successful."

The legacy of IMAGO's legal and political victories over its 18-year lifespan is impressive. Some of their achievements include: planting 2,000 street trees with Cincinnati's Urban Forestry Department; organizing the Western Wildlife Corridor Committee to protect a 15-mile wooded corridor stretching along the Ohio River in Western Hamilton County; renovating an abandoned house into an ecological model; establishing an outdoor ecological learning center; successfully offering professional continuing education classes for nurses, social workers and counselors; forming a food cooperative buying club; and hosting regular workshops for nationally acclaimed teachers such as Thomas Berry, Dorothy McClain, and Sun Bear.

Foundations and grants organizations have taken note of IMAGO's work and provided substantial funding for its programs. Most recently, in the fall of 1995, Cincinnati Gas & Electric awarded IMAGO a two-year \$100,000 grant to help Price Hill businesses, churches and residents reduce their energy consumption.

CG&E spokesperson Steve Brash says the newly funded program is designed to target a single community—Price Hill—as a pilot to find ways to institute neighborhood energy conservation awareness. The goals of the program include reducing natural gas consumption by 10 percent and reducing electric consumption by five percent in both East and West Price Hill. The other winner—besides the residents and the planet—of that kind of energy savings is CG&E, which will avoid the expense of having to build another power plant. If successful, this pilot will serve as a model for other communities to collaborate on similar programs.

Although getting the CG&E grant was a big step for IMAGO, the organization's history of success can readily be documented by the number and sources of its funding outside of its membership dues. Over the years IMAGO has drawn substantial funding from foundations and other grants, including: an Ohio Wildlife Grant for mapping the western Wildlife Corridor; a City Neighborhood Support Program grant through the East Price Hill Improvement

Association for developing the outdoor ecological learning center; grants for the construction of the nature center at the outdoor ecological learning center; grants from the Otto Armleder Foundation, the Kroger Foundation and Monsanto for the outdoor ecological learning center programming; a Kroger Award for a recycling program involving children; and an Ohio Humanities Grant for book discussions.

IMAGO's story is a story of hope. It is a somewhat contemporary version of the David-and-Goliath tale, except that IMAGO is taking on despair not so much like a little man waging a mighty battle against the colossal incarnation of evil, but rather men and women together meeting at the table, bringing their differences and bringing the voices of the silent with them, learning together, searching for mutually beneficial solutions. But perhaps the moral of both stories remains the same: to acquiesce to the brutal and callous forces that run contrary to life is to be an accessory to injustice.

The video, Price Hill: An Ecological Neighborhood, demonstrates one urban community's progress in developing an ecological, green neighborhood. David Haenke, bioregionalist and author of Ecological Politics and Bioregionalism, who reviewed the video, says, "IMAGO's Price Hill Ecological Neighborhood program is leading the way for Cincinnati and the nation. I know of no other effort that can match it in sustained vision, effectiveness and results." The video, a production of the Xavier University Television Center, is available from IMAGO for \$15.95. Individuals and organizations interested in purchasing a video can call IMAGO at 513-921-5124 or write to IMAGO at 553 Enright Avenue, Cincinnati, OH 45205. IMAGO News, imaging a future of cooperation and interdependence, is also available at the same address. Memberships range from \$25 to \$100.

Holly Knight is Director of Public Relations and Publications at Antioch College in Yellow Springs, Ohio.

Community Service Conference

October 18-20, 1996

"The Value and Future of Simple Living" is the theme of this year's fall conference to be held Friday evening, October 18th, through Sunday noon, October 20th at the Outdoor Education Center in Glen Helen, Yellow Springs.

Featured speakers and resource people this year will be Jim and Eileen Schenk, founders of IMAGO, in Cincinnati, and Scott Savage, editor of PLAIN magazine in Chesterhill, Ohio.

The Schenks will show their videotape about "Price Hill: An Ecological Neighborhood" and lead a discussion about how one can improve one's own community. Scott Savage, active in the Luddite movement, will speak about his concerns for simplifying life and the future potential of the low-technology viewpoint.

This promises to be a challenging conference. We hope you will mark the dates on your calendar. Brochures with more details and costs will be available in the summer. See pg. 7 in this issue for more about IMAGO and Price Hill, and pg. 14 for a brief description of the Second Luddite Congress to be held at Barnesville, Ohio in April.



Book Reviews

Who Will Feed China?: Wake-up Call For A Small Planet, by Lester R. Brown; A World Watch Environmental Alert Series, 163 pp., \$8.95. May be purchased from World Watch Institute, 1776 Massachusetts Ave. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

by Bill Felker

Lester Brown's new book, *Who Will Feed China?*, presents the sober picture of a future in which China's expanding population, growing industrialization, reduction in crop land and the corresponding need to import grain will result in worldwide food shortages.

In spite of harsh measures to control its birth rate, China's population is expected to grow from just over a billion to one and a half billion by the year 2017.

Under its current plans for economic development, modeled after the strategies which produced Japan's and Taiwan's phenomenal success, China's arable land is decreasing, eaten up by urban sprawl, new roads, and industrial sites.

At the same time, its yield per acre, which has gone up steadily through the past decades, has now leveled off, and it is not likely that the total output will surpass that achieved at the beginning of this decade.

China prided itself on being able to produce all of its own grain up until the end of the 1980's; however, in 1990, for the first time in its history, it bought six million tons of grain on the world market. Lester Brown estimates that unless some radical adjustment in policy occurs, China will need to import as much as 479 million tons in 2030.

By that time it is estimated that the rest of the world's nations will need to import approximately 200 million tons of grain as well—at least five times the current level of consumption.

Unfortunately, the amount of land available for grain has been falling throughout the world, and it appears to Brown and other analysts that a significant increase in global yield through the use of modern fertilizers is not likely.

In addition, falling water tables are expected to slow the availability of irrigated lands for grain within a quarter-century. At the same time, world grain reserves are at their lowest level in twenty years, and continued demand should keep them low.

The combination of these developments will have major consequences: First, China will soon have the need and the money to buy any amount of the planet's surplus grain that it wishes to purchase. Brown estimates China will require all the world's available surplus well before 2030. Second, the buyer's grain market of the last decades is almost certain to become a seller's market, and the scarcity will quickly drive up grain prices to levels unthinkable just a few years ago. The cost of meat, which is directly tied to grain prices, will also rise dramatically.

Third, barring some scientific miracle, there will simply not be enough grain to go around. By 2010, famine and political instability will ravage less self-sufficient nations. Intense competition will inevitably lead to some countries losing out; most likely those already struggling to feed their people. Small poor nations will be the hardest hit.

Fourth, land and water reserves will probably continue to rise in value, and high returns on yield may eventually make farming one of the more lucrative professions in the world. Forested areas will diminish as the need for cropland increases. At the same time, local production of food will gain in importance as agribusiness scrambles to adapt to the new international seller's market. Fifth, in the 21st century, self-sufficiency in food will be the mark of a prosperous community. Those who invest in projects designed to feed themselves and their neighbors will not only reap financial benefits, but will create models that will promote a secure and sustainable society.

Like Lester Brown's other publications, *Who Will Feed China?* offers hope as well as caution about the future. "Time is not on our side," he warns, but he also suggests actions that can be taken in order to avoid catastrophe, actions such as stabilization of the world's population, protecting aquifers, preventing soil erosion, reversing deforestation, and rationing the consumption of livestock products.

And whether you agree with him or not, Brown has created a most readable and compelling scenario which will certainly be reconsidered as the events he predicted gradually unfold over the next few years.

Bill Felker, trustee of Community Service, is head of the Foreign Language Department at Central State University in Wilberforce, Ohio. He writes an almanac column for various papers, including the Yellow Springs News.



Living on the Earth: Eclectic Essays for a Sustainable and Joyful Future, by Bill Duesing, edited by Suzanne Duesing; Long River Books; 222 pages; \$14, postage included, from Community Service. Ohio residents add 6% tax.

by Joan Gussow, Ed. D.

The 91 essays in this collection cover a wide variety of environmental, social, and political topics. Sometimes lyrical, sometimes provocative, but always informative, these essays are inspired by the organic garden, trees, the sun and a fifth-grade class in Bridgeport. They are informed by the Gaia hypothesis, fractal geometry, and twenty years of living on the Old Solar Farm. They bring down-to-Earth experiences to bear on the global problems and offer practical advice for *Living on the Earth*.

The essays are organized seasonally, with appropriate garden reports and celebrations of the beauty and integrity of the natural world and the changing seasons. When they were aired on WSHU, Public

Radio from Fairfield, Connecticut, listeners praised these pieces as "thoughtful and evocative reflections," and wrote that "they are a welcome bit of clear-sightedness..." and are in "insightful overview of this insanity we call contemporary America." Another listener "loves the comments and the connections of personal actions and their global consequences."

"Duesing is a wizard at making connections....In one engaging essay after another, he models the ways in which the personal is inevitably political if we pay attention to how we are *Living on the Earth*."

Joan Gussow is a professor of Nutrition and Education at Teachers College, Columbia University, and author of The Feeding Web and Tomato Sauce and Agriculture.

Readers Write

About the Importance of Neighborhood

People have asked me why I put so much time and energy into the neighborhood. It's easy to respond. I think neighborhoods are the most important society for us to build.

Our cities and our larger society are getting less supportive and more alienating as time goes on. Support systems are getting cut back, job insecurity is growing, and large forces, like city or federal government, seem impossible for the individual to change. The problems ahead prod us to find a better way. We're being encouraged by our circumstance to take an evolutionary leap now, starting in our neighborhoods, in our human-scale, walking-distance, closest-to-home communities, where we already are.

There's another reason why I'm giving so much time to neighborhood action. Years ago, when I was doing graduate work in Biochemistry, I was struck by the co-operation that goes on in every healthy thing. Look inside any healthy cell and you'll see it.

There are atomic structures that are moving about, and they're interacting and building or changing things or carrying on life in some other way. And it's all happening with remarkable harmony.

Harmony is what you see, not violence, not disruption, not war. There is flow, not coercion, healing, not injury. In every healthy cell, or living body or ecosystem, the parts go about their work together in a harmonious way. Atoms come together with other atoms to perform functions or move about and separate only to join again with other atoms to do something new. It's an impressive "square dance" that keeps going, a do-si-do and swirl and interchange in which food is broken down, energy is stored, waste is removed, repair is accomplished and countless other important services are performed.

That dance, with all its harmony and productivity, is going on right now and always in every healthy cell and every healthy body throughout the far reaches of life. To the biochemist with imagination, observing the interaction of parts in healthy living systems is like observing a successful society in its process. Everywhere parts are working for the supportive system they're in together and the cell, the neighborhood equivalent in a biological society, is the basic unit for it all.

Everything in nature seems to know the dance but us. While life around us churns on in its happy process, we continue on as newcomers who are yet to figure things out. Sooner or later I believe we're going to wake up and get it. It might take a few years, maybe a millennium, but eventually we'll come to understand our moves in this splendid dance. Sooner or later, we'll wake up to what it takes to be a successful species here and meet our needs well together, having a grand time.

Just as the cell is the smallest society of living parts in the biological world, the neighborhood, where it is defined and organized, is the smallest society in the human world. Neighborhoods, to me, are where we learn how to uplevel our society. That's where we can most easily learn how to do well at our life together and lay the foundation for the world we

want to see. Neighborhoods are small enough for us to best learn about relationships and co-operation and about meeting our needs together and the enjoyment that brings. Neighborhoods give us the right size of community for trust to develop and mutual understanding and support. It's in our neighborhoods, I believe, that we best learn the Dance.

Olaf Egeberg, Takoma Park, MD

About the Global Cooperative Society

As you know, several years ago our Co-op Alumni Association launched the Global Co-operative Society as a means of encouraging people to fulfill the admonition to "Think Globally and Act Locally."

I believe you wrote at one time that we must start changing things at the local level before we can go on to change them globally. I agree that motivations can move in that sequence. Though my experience suggests that people are more likely to take action at the local level when they have become aware/convinced that the larger world is in trouble, which then drives them to do something about it in their own backyards. Over the years I have come to believe that the people who become involved in co-ops and credit unions fall into two categories; those who see co-ops as an end in themselves; food, finance, housing or what not and are content to stop there. Then there is the other group that sees co-ops as a means of changing society toward peace, justice, etc.

Those in the first category are likely to tire out and leave the movement [as they] never really saw it as a means to greater glory. The other group stays the course and through thick and thin supports, takes leadership in the movement because it is the way to that greater society.

In the Global Co-operative Society we are trying to help people not just to THINK GLOBALLY, but to THINK *and feel* GLOBALLY, that through membership in a world co-op they will get to know and feel friendship for others, real people out there, not

just vague images. Then from there, and at the same time, begin to ACT, *take steps* LOCALLY to do something about improving our society, in going into the organizations where they are participants and/or members to help extend and strengthen the Principles of *Universality, Democracy, Justice, Service, Cooperation and Environmental Preservation*. When, and as, this happens the sense of spirit of community grows and becomes more pervasive.

As I sit here I am linked with Ernest and Christine and Jennifer Morgan in Celo; with Bruce Thor-darson, CEO of ICA in Geneva; Jay Streeter in Australia; George Melnyk in Calgary; to the Viswanathan Family in Mitrani Ketan (the community in India which Arthur Morgan helped establish); and Ranjith Hettiarachchi from Thailand. [It is] unlikely that I will ever see them but with E-mail we can get together almost instantly to exchange ideas.

Three hundred and fifteen such links around the world are now sharing our efforts to build not just strong co-operatives/credit unions but to take the cooperative philosophy into all organizations. Put these together and you have local communities joined into a world community, without which we will not stand!

To summarize, we hope you and associates at Community Service and others in your area will join GCS so we can work together at both levels—local and world. And then for CSI to become a Certified Sponsoring Organization (CSO) along with others, locally, regionally, nationally and internationally, who have signed on to help move this idea forward. Individuals join with an annual contribution of a minimum of \$1. There is no cost for CSOs.

We see many ways in which we can work together locally and globally to turn this old world around a bit from its present course. We would welcome your sending info about CSI to our membership and in our publication, *Together*, we will be glad to carry info about CSI.

To wind up, have you ever come across the book *The Search for Community* by George Melnyk? I had not known about it. It is truly a fascinating, well-researched piece about our search for community in the western world since the time of the industrial revolution.

We expect to move from here in May to live in an Ashram Community in VA, part of a movement to unify all religions in an effort to bring about a peaceful world. But with ease of communication and travel these days we'll still feel close to all the folks with whom we have lived and worked over the last 60 years. Power and blessings on all of you.

Jack and Connie McLanahan, Richmond, KY

For more information and a registration blank for the GCS, write: Jack McLanahan, 250 Rainbow Lane, Richmond, KY 40475

About Ralph Templin's Work in India

I was interested in Ernest Morgan's comment about my Dad [Ralph Templin] (pg. 12 of the Jan-Mar 1996 issue of CSNL). He has things a bit backward, but is essentially correct about Arthur Morgan's finding traces of his ideas about education in India in 1949-50. The fact is that many educators in India, missionary and Indian, had ideas about community-based education similar to Arthur Morgan's.

In 1932-33 Ralph Templin wrote a paper for two courses at Teachers' College, Columbia University, outlining his philosophy and intentions for a work-study, village-oriented plan at Clancy High School in Mathura, India. The Templins had founded the school in their previous term as missionaries. The bibliography lists six items by or about Arthur Morgan and Antioch College which had evidently been carefully read, judging by the notations. The work-study plan, which certainly incorporates some of Arthur Morgan's ideas, was then initiated at Clancy High School in the late thirties.

The plan drew the attention of a number of educators and village workers in India. A prospectus was sent to the Indian educators at the top of the provincial government's department of education. Gandhi's village workers came to see how it was working. One of the founding teachers in the experiment later went to work with Gandhi at Sevagram/Wardha.... Donald Rugh, a missionary who took over the school after independence, told me that he had heard an Indian educator describe the Indian village extension system as essentially the work of Ralph Templin and William Wiser.

It was not until 1946 that Ralph Templin came to work at Community Service for Arthur Morgan. They may have met as early as 1944 at the School of Living which Ralph Templin was directing 1940-45.

When Templin wrote *The Mission Central School and its Parish* at Columbia in 1933 for two courses under William Heard Kilpatrick (in educational philosophy) and Fanny W. Dunn (in rural education), he cited three influences on his vision of what the school in India should be: a clear sense of what was wrong in mission schools, the year of work at Columbia (the home of progressive education philosophy), and a visit to Penn School on St. Helena Island in the coastal area of South Carolina. The visit to Penn School was inspirational and exemplified almost exactly what mission schools in India should do, especially in relation to the villages where most Christian converts lived. I believe that what Ralph Templin found in Arthur Morgan's writings at that time was essentially confirmation of the progressive education philosophy of community schools and "education for life", and the mechanics for the work-study idea. Later they undoubtedly found much more in common, though coming at it from different backgrounds.

Lawrence H. Templin, Bluffton, OH



Announcements

Northeast Organic Farming Association

NOFA's 22nd Annual Summer Conference, *Living the Good Life*, dedicated to the memory of Scott and Helen Nearing, will be held August 9-11 at Hampshire College, Amherst, MA. Featuring: keynote by Rosalie Sinn, dir. of Women in Livestock Development, Heifer Project International; over 140 workshops; exhibits; children's conference; old-time country fair; contradance; coffeehouse and storyteller; organic meals; camping and dorm rooms. Early bird discount available before July 6. For more information write or call: Julie Rawson, 411 Sheldon Rd., Barre, MA 01005; 508/355-2853.

Editor's Note

Most of the people whose articles and letters appear in this issue of our Newsletter are concerned with supporting local farmers and businesses rather than polluting the earth further by global marketing. Jack McLanahan's concern for the Global Cooperative Society is apparently taking a different approach to world problems. Since he feels organizations and concerned people over the world can meet over the Internet and with E-mail, he is on a different wavelength from the Amish, Mennonite, and conservative Friends and "other unconformed thinkers" who are sponsoring the Second Luddite Congress at the historic Stillwater Friends Meetinghouse at Barnesville, Ohio, April 13-15.

If you know as little about the Luddites as I, you know nothing. I found out they were nicknamed "Luddite" after one of their supposed leaders. In the early 19th century they were workers who opposed the industrial revolution which they saw was going to destroy their way of life. Their spiritual descendants, so to speak, are concerned about our current technological revolution.

Since registration for the Luddite Congress has to be by April 5th, this Newsletter is not coming out in time to give you useful registration information

about it. We do hope, however, that some of our members will attend the Congress and give us a report of it for our July Newsletter.

Death Row

"Jesus's call for us to visit those in prison is clear. Perhaps correspondence can be your way of visiting," says Michael B. Ross, #127404, Death Row-NCI, P.O. Box #665, Somers, CT 06071. "Some death row prisoners have no family or friends to visit or to write to them and are more likely to give up and volunteer to be executed than if they do," says Michael in a letter to Community Service. He himself has some family and friends who visit and write to him. He suggests that if we wish to help anyone on death row not feel alone and lost, we could contact Rachel Gross, Coordinator: The Death Row Support Project, P.O. Box #600, Liberty Mills, IN 46946; phone 219/982-7480.

If you have not seen or read *Dead Man Walking*, see it, or read the book.

TO MEMBERS

We are circling the date of your membership expiration on the mailing label if it is close to being over. We hope that you will renew as soon as it is convenient for you.



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Membership

Membership is a means of supporting and sharing the work of Community Service. The Basic \$25 annual membership contribution includes a subscription to our quarterly Newsletter and 10% off Community Service-published literature. Larger contributions are always needed, however, and smaller ones will be gladly accepted. Community Service is a nonprofit corporation which depends on contributions and the sale of literature to fund its work so that it can offer its services to those who need them. All contributions are appreciated, needed and tax-deductible. Due to added postage costs, foreign membership, including Canada, is \$30 in U.S. currency.

Have Your Friends Seen The Newsletter?

Please send the names and addresses of your friends who might enjoy receiving a sample Newsletter and booklist. If you wish specific issues sent, please send \$1 per copy.

Editor's Note

We welcome letters to the editor (under 300 words) and articles (700-2000 words) about any notable communities or people who are improving the quality of life in their communities. Please enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope if you wish the article returned. The only compensation we can offer is the satisfaction of seeing your words in print and knowing you have helped spread encouraging and/or educational information.

Address Change

If there is an error on your mailing label, or you are moving, please send the old label and any corrections to us. It increases our cost greatly if the Post Office notifies us of moves, and you will not receive your newsletter promptly.

Contents
Printed on Recycled Paper

21st Century Food	Bill Duesing	1
Common Ground	Barbara Ruben	4
Imago: To Image or To Imagine	Holly Knight	7
1995 Community Service Conference: The Value and Future of Simple Living		9
Book Reviews		
<i>Who Will Feed China?</i> by Lester Brown	Bill Felker	10
<i>Living On the Earth</i> , by Bill Duesing	Joan Gusow	11
Readers Write: Olaf Egeburg, Jack McLanahan, Lawrence Templin		11
Announcements		
Northeast Organic Farming Association		14
Editor's Note		14
Death Row		15



You can tell when your Community Service membership expires by looking at the month and year in the upper left corner of your mailing label. Please renew your membership if it has expired or will expire before 6/96. The annual membership contribution is \$25. We do not send individual reminders to renew.

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