

ECOCITY AND BEYOND

# EDGES

NEW PLANETARY PATTERNS



SOHAIL INAYATULLAH  
**The Urban Imagination**

**CHICAGO: Local Voices in City Politics**

**TORONTO: Healthy Cities Project**

**HONG KONG: Indigenous Architecture**

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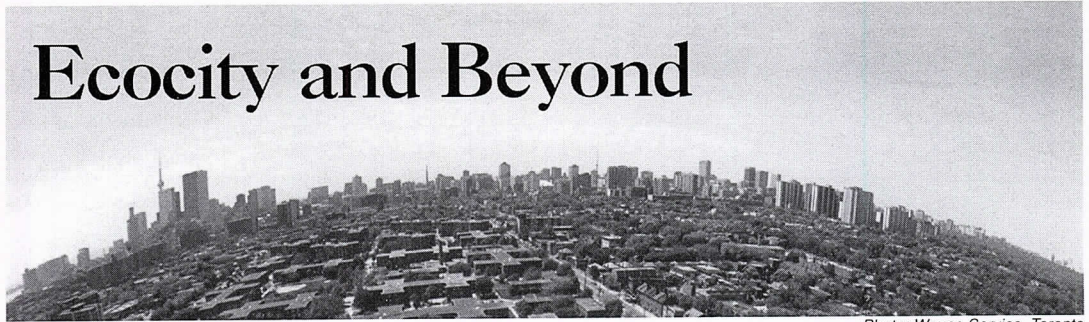


Photo: Wayne Service, Toronto

*Social and ecological degradation in huge urban areas will stop only when people in local neighbourhoods stand up and be counted. This neighbourhood democratization can have dramatic and beneficial effects on the nature of the city itself.*

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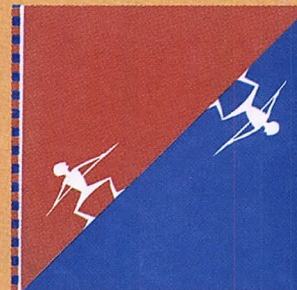
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# EDGES

NEW PLANETARY PATTERNS

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## *Editorial*

During my recent trip to the island city of Hong Kong I was impressed by the wealth of the most densely populated area of the world. But it seemed that every square foot not on a mountainous incline was being used for apartment buildings, high rise condominiums and other forms of human habitation. With so little land to work with, there is literally no place to go but up. And with no place to expand, it will take a great deal of ingenuity and social cooperation to solve the various environmental and lifestyle problems that are already there, let alone future ones. We in the west should take careful heed of how they do it.

In the western world the idea of the ecocity has begun to take root, notably in Berkeley, California where two international Ecocity Conferences have been held. All people want their cities to be more liveable and "ecocity" conjures up images of green space, clean air and fresh water, though we're just beginning to figure out how to get there. While most people can easily imagine the environmental side of the ecocity, few understand the actual practice or grasp the necessity of the neighbourhood-based participation that will help us move us beyond the idea itself.

In this issue of *Edges*, we explore the ecocity and beyond. Sohail Inayatullah makes an important case for increasing, not decreasing, the complexity of the city. Thomas Berry raises the important question of limiting the size of the city. Jim Troxel shows us an experiment in local participation in Chicago, the birthplace of several North American grassroots movements. Trevor Hancock from Toronto explains an international effort to promote local participation in urban health care. Sam Smith from Washington, D.C. creates a scenario of neighbourhood self-determination in seven key areas of city life. Examples of urban gardening, housing rehabilitation and environmentally appropriate architecture help fill out the picture.

The tragedy, on all sides, of the war now raging in the Middle East is forcing us to try to understand our cultural differences and how we can live together in spite of them. The June 1991 issue of *Edges* will be devoted to understanding multiculturalism.

*Bill Staples*

Bill Staples



## City as Planetary Pressure Cooker

I suppose that throughout my life I have assumed that urbanization was a necessary evil and more evil than necessary. My image of the city was a dirty, noisy, impersonal, dangerous place, filled with evil characters and dark alleys, rather nasty and brutish at best. Of course, there were also a few attractive features about cities. There were more entertainment possibilities: more museums, famous institutions, international conferences, and so on. But the bad far outweighed the good in my mind.

How surprised I was when I learned that, in the developing world, the average city will hold one-third of the nation's population and produce two thirds of the GNP; that cities are the locus of creativity and innovations in all fields of endeavor; that in cities birth rates go down and literacy rates and standards of living both go up; that, in general, cities are more alive, interesting, multi-faceted and fun.

Cities are not evil. Cities are good. They are the locus of possibility for millions of people to live a healthier, longer, happier life.

But this is not to deny the problems, the challenges and the tragedies in the cities. Urban poverty is growing as fast as cities are growing. There is no money to maintain infrastructures; land and housing is too expensive to acquire homes. Municipal governments are unclear on how best to manage this vast urban sea of humanity; and there is pollution of every kind. The city is home to violence, drugs, homelessness and AIDS.

But still, cities are good. Why? Because cities are the result of the human desire and drive to associate, to interact, to create together, in short, to be social. Cities are sheer potentiality—a challenge to human ingenuity, to human problem-solving and cooperation in

dealing with complex mega-problems.

And what if we perceive the city at different levels of reality? What do we see and what would we do?

At the sensory level, the city is concrete, glass and steel. It is cars and buses and subways; it is apartment buildings, shops, skyscrapers and houses; air pollution, garbage disposal, water, electricity, gas, telephones; TVs, radios, computers; schools, museums, streets, lamp posts; children playing; rats, taxis, ferries, helicopters, and so on. It is also our sensing all of this and our feelings about it—our seeing, our tasting, our hearing, our touching, our smelling of the city: of beautiful art *and* squalid slums; of bland *and* spicy foods; of baroque music being rendered at a concert *and* of people cursing each other in an argument; of perfumes *and* car exhaust; the tactile contact of the soft skin of a baby *and* the experience of being pushed and shoved on a bus.

Michael Ventura writes about the city as Psyche—the externalization or projection of our unconscious realms. The city is also the new forest, the new jungle, the new swamp—a place where we must confront the challenge of survival against the wild forces of nature. We fear the city. We dread what lurks in its shad-

ows. We hurry from place to place hoping to escape being hurt. We become callous. We stop looking. We assume the worst of people. We also find companionship, our very own sub-group and even love. In the city the planetary ecology of cultures is bubbling in a pressure cooker. We turn a corner, and we are in China; we turn another corner and we are in Italy; another and we are in Puerto Rico; another and we are in Kenya. The swirl of races, languages, foods, values and lifestyles is overwhelming, then intoxicating and enlivening.

Augustine writes about the City of God. Urbanization may be the trend toward that ideal. Peter Russell sees the emergence of the Global Brain. Cities may be the nodal concentrations of that nervous system and intelligence. Pierre Teilhard de Chardin has written about the *noösphere*. Urbanization seems to be accelerating that phenomenon. Maturana and Varela have outlined a cognitive biology of “bringing forth a world together.” The city may be the most intense locus of that process of knowing that we know. From an evolutionary perspective, we see urbanization as the natural agglomeration of human cells into community, then into megacommunities.

---

*We work for each other; we serve each other;  
we eat each other's food; we dance to each other's music;  
we honour each as other and as neighbour.*

---

The New Story is emerging within cities—how do we earthlings live together? We work for each other; we serve each other; we eat each other's food; we dance to each other's music; we honour each other as the Other and yet as neighbour. The global village has become a global city.

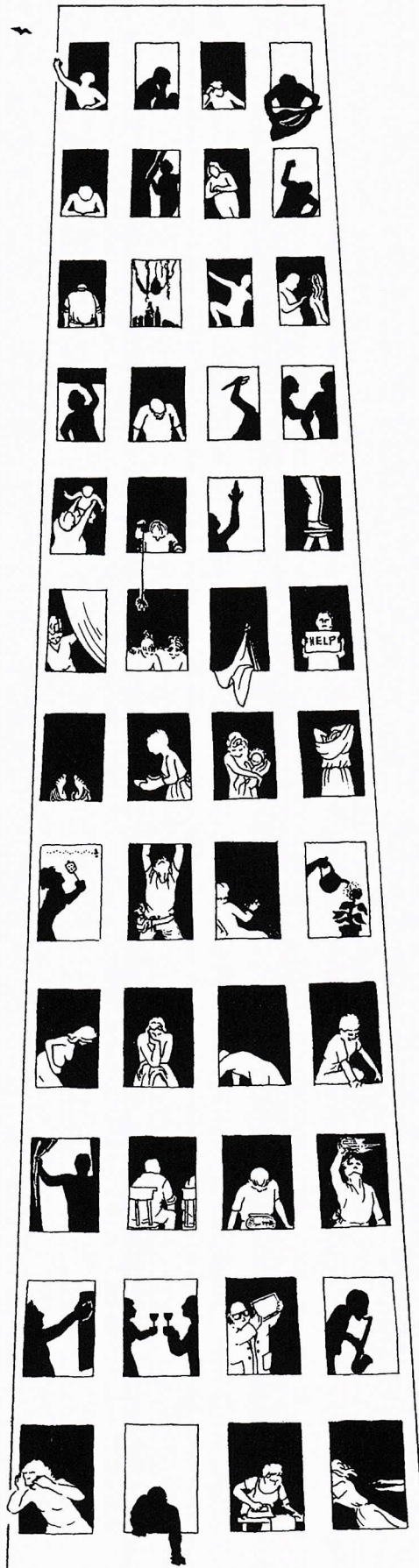
The Gaia Hypothesis of Lovelock and Margulis presents the the earth as a living organism. Cities may be earth's mechanism for regulating human activity to care for the whole organism. The Form of Centredness expresses itself in galaxies, solar systems, planets, cells, atoms, and human settlement, with the City as Centre.

The city is at-home-ness, at oneness with our being, with our essence, which is radical sociality and radical individuation. In the city, unity consciousness is promoted by proximity and pathos. You are me and I am you. We are one. I am the homeless man sleeping on the street. I am the woman bus driver who is yelling at her passengers to "move it on back." I am the mayor delivering a difficult speech about the lack of municipal funds and necessary city employee cutbacks. I am the Korean grocery store owner proud of the beautiful rows of fresh vegetables and fruits. We are One—the one without a second—the unity that is Self, that is Being, that is Spirit.

We do live in the City of Men and Women but we also live in the City of the God and Goddess. ❖

—Rob Work

*Rob Work works with the Urban Management Program arm of the UNDP (United Nations Development Program). He lives in New York City.*



## *Ode (Owed) to the Farmer*

In the late horizon, large  
silhouettes appear still,  
buried above ground.

Yesterday, the barn owl laboured  
over its domain,  
bales of hay and animal dung.

Houses lean on crutches with clap  
boards over their  
mouths and eyes, mute and blind,

Standing opposite green, plump  
fields overrun by chemicals,  
bankers and choking vine.

The late summer winds chase  
away the last smells of  
weekly slaughter.

Broken spirits surrender to  
changing times ahead,  
forever mirrored

In tractor's rust that shimmers in  
dead, winter grass,  
reflecting the moon's maturity,

While princely generations forfeit  
their hopes and dreams  
in the face of this absurdity

That jaded politicians should  
deprive ordinary folk of  
an honest day's work.

These dispossessed stewards of  
their proud estates,  
turn to drink, suicide or to  
becoming clerks.

—A City Slicker

## Green Reductionisms

**F**or some time, I have been having a conversation with myself on the topic of a balanced ecological perspective. The environment ranked as the No. 1 issue in Canada for quite a while. There is no doubt of its importance (although, at present, it seems to be on a plateau): the phenomenon of climate change is real, as are the polar ozone holes, the pattern of using up the legacy of resources for future Earth citizens, the waste crisis, and many more. And, yes, let me state now that I am a confirmed recycler, composter and push-biker. But some things rankle. If one of the marks of an educated person is a history-long, world-wide view of life plus the capacity to operate out of tensional values where “right strives against right” and where both light and shadow have the capacity to transform, then some philosophies of the ‘green’ movements, to me, do not qualify as educated, however avant garde they may appear. And if the green movements are after more converts to the ecological cause, these reductionisms may prove to be their Achilles’ heel.

The city is the place where green reductionisms are likely to be felt most. And the irony in these well intending and passionate reductionisms is that it is the urban poor—“the underclass”—who are most likely to suffer from them.

The new dedication to preserving “natural” resources is real and well-founded scientifically, and more and more people are enlisting in the ranks of those who believe our children deserve a viable future on the planet. And rightly so. But the increasing sentimentalizing of nature, rural life and

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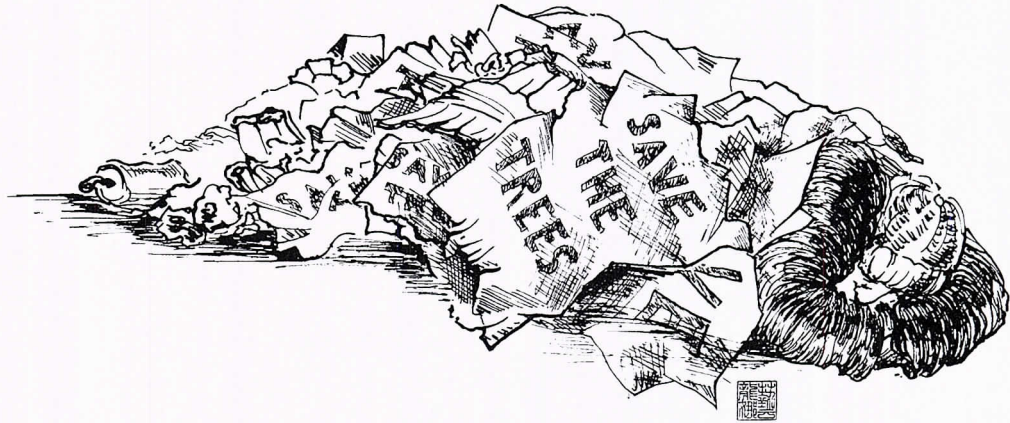
*Devotees of nature  
may find themselves  
hating not only the  
city but the 20th  
century itself.*

---

wilderness easily leads nature lovers to downgrade the value of the urban, even to spurn its chaos, its noise, its rapid pace, its ever-expanding technologies. Soon, these devotees find themselves hating not only the city but, like Patton, the 20th century itself.

Deep Ecology has provided a service to us all in focussing attention on “the commonwealth of all beings,” and questioning the anthropocentrism by which humans assume they have final control over other beings. We are beginning to see ourselves as humans in partnership with the rest of creation, rather than lords over it. But exaggeration easily creeps in. The sudden excess of devotion to the cause of “nature,” “wilderness,” trees, greenery, and the “save the seals/elephants/whales/dolphins (fill in your own) campaigns perhaps have been in part responsible for relegating the cause of social justice to the back burner. One hears less often of “saving the urban poor”—lately relegated to “the underclass.”

Those who cannot tolerate trees, greenery, parks and natural beauty in the city or country are few and far between; we have come to depend on them as the lungs of the city for cleaning our air, for our refreshment, re-creation and even inspiration. But in the aesthetic mindset



of “green sensuality,” urban renewal means simply more parks, more trees, more pleasant spaces, perhaps since these salve lately acquired green consciences. This proclivity can easily conflict with the budgeting of space and money for low-cost housing for the poor and essential social services. It would be a pity if the poor got squished out of the urban picture by the double whammy of green consciences opting for more green spaces on the one side, and the developers with their passion for high-rise condominiums on the other. Then, indeed, shall “the poor be always with us”—on the streets.

Another instance of unexamined aestheticism can put the poor on the streets—the passion for gentrification. Now, gentrification does have positive results: it can create spatially pleasing neighbourhoods and bring more people, tired of the suburbs, back into the inner city, which, in some places has had to rely lately on skyscrapers and parking lots for its night-time population. But the aesthetics of gentrification can also mean that an upgraded inner city building becomes the home for two professional people rather than the dozen or so that the rooming house sheltered. Again, aesthetics win over social justice.

The most extreme mindset is environmental purism. Its ethical skin scrubbed clean, its primary integrity blazing white, it would banish corpora-

*continued on page 42*



# LETTERS

## More on Columbus Day

I loved the piece (September 1990 issue) entitled "A 500th Columbus Day Ritual." In fact, I sent a copy of it to the *Lakota Times* newspaper out of Pine Ridge Indian Reservation. As a result of fuelling interest after reading this, I was happy to be able to be in solidarity with you, together with Russell Means and Leonard Crowdog as they headed the Denver Columbus Day Parade. Thank you.

Mary Ellen Turner  
Englewood CO, USA

## Enjoys the Variety

I have just read the September 1990 issue and would like to do two things:

1) Subscribe! I really enjoyed the variety of issues you treat and the way in which you present information. Please sign me up for one year. 2) Get from you the entire James Hillman interview script.

Suzanne Flatley  
San Francisco CA, USA

## The Hope of Yuppies

I am head of circulation and interlibrary services at the University of Guelph and am widely sharing your wonderful magazine. Keep up the good work. Your magazine is the hope and path for many of us yuppies.

Patricia Hoek  
Guelph, Ontario

## Hillman Interview

*Edges* is such a breath of creative, practical, here-and-now, future-oriented fresh air that I have found myself wanting repeatedly to voice enthusiastic agreement and support for many, many articles; most recently, for example, "The Wisdom Project for Homeless Women" in the September 1990 issue. Ironically, picking up that number again has propelled me to my computer to share my very strong disagreement with an excerpted interview: "James Hillman Revisions Therapy."

The interview raises many disturbing questions while shedding no new light:

1. that someone of Hillman's "professional stature" could respond with such apparent disdain to one of the cutting

edge issues (a major underlying contradiction, if you will) of our violence-ridden times: revisiting and healing and learning from the abuses of childhood;

2. that Hillman would dismiss the enormous healing that is taking place across the continent through the simple act of non-judgmental listening, provided through the peer group settings that grew out of AA: ACOA (Adult Children of Alcoholics) in its many guises;

3. that Hillman would make no mention of the ground-breaking and brave research of Alice Miller;

4. nor that of Eugene Gendlin, whose Focusing groups and process are another simple yet highly effective form of peer listening/support;

5. and finally, that the title would be so untrue: Miller, Gendlin, and the groups that Hillman dismisses are the ones *revisiting therapy* and, they're doing it by looking around and asking: What works? What doesn't? Why? A significant thing that distinguishes all those peer groups is their commitment to authentic partnership: with no gurus and no fees they produce ongoing results.

I add brief excerpts from Alice Miller's recent book, *Banished Knowledge* (Doubleday, 1990): "How does it happen that confusion turns into clarity, fear of pain into freedom to experience feelings,...? None of this happens by an effort of will, by sermons, with the aid of theories, and least of all with the aid of medication. The effort of will can lead to even more clenched despair, moralizing to more effective denial, while medication and drugs can lead to the causes of suffering remaining forever unknowable.... To many people it seems easier to take medication, to smoke, drink alcohol, preach, educate or treat others, and prepare wars than to expose themselves to their own painful truth."

She tells of her long search, not only as an analyst but as an abused child, for a practical method "that would provide access to the injured child in the adult without blocking the child's language with moral, pedagogic demands." She found what she was looking for in a simple four-

part reflective method developed by Swiss therapist, J. Konrad Stettbacher: "1) describing the situation and one's sensations; 2) experiencing and expressing emotions; 3) querying the situation; and 4) articulating needs. Since this sequence follows a natural pattern of healthy human self-defense and self-protection, one might wonder why this pattern remained undiscovered for so long. It is in the nature of child injuries that they destroy this natural, innate capacity, so the possibility of taking the four steps must be rediscovered...so that the vague history of childhood, with all its crass and subtle abuses, acquires clear contours in the adult's consciousness and ceases to block him with guilt feelings."

Lucille Tessier Chagnon  
Willingboro, NJ, USA

## More on Hillman, Please

I thought the Hillman interview by Michael Ventura was first class, but I would like to read the whole text. Could you please send the full text of the interview; check enclosed to cover the costs.

Muriel Montgomery  
New York, NY, USA

*There were many more such requests for the full text of the Hillman interview. Copies are still available.—Ed. ❖*



Photo by Wayne Service, Toronto

# *The Urban Imagination*

SOHAIL INAYATULLAH



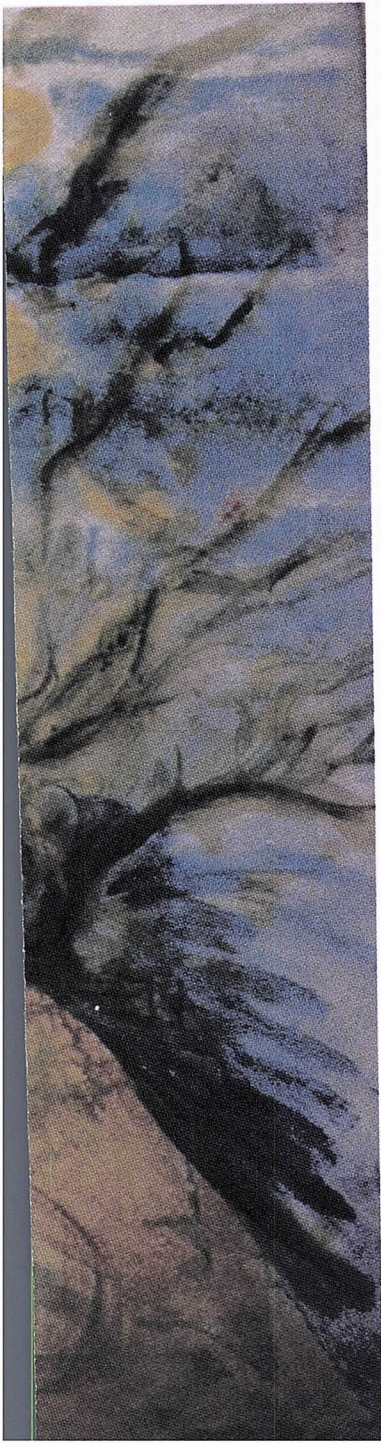
*The order and chaos  
of the city  
mold the minds  
of its inhabitants.*

**M**odern American cities are largely defined by energy systems and by consumption patterns: the car and the shopping mall. American cities exhibit expansion and decline, unlike Asian cities which continue to expand, and European cities which, because of high energy costs, have found ways to retain the ancient city in new development. American cities emerged as part of America's colonization of the frontier, while Asian cities have historically been the focus of polity, economy and culture. In recent US history, the construction of the city has gone through various stages, from the City Beautiful (designed around large government buildings) to the City Efficient (concerned with sewage systems, water and other basic needs) to the City Radical (the city and its social and human consequences).

In the emerging postmodern view, it is not only important how the city appropriates wealth but also how the city obscures its location in our technocratic discourses. In this view the city is not constructed as a place that creates policy; rather the city is in itself a policy, in itself a way of organizing the world, indeed, of knowing the world. The city, then, more than anything, is a space, a configuration of power, values and, more importantly, of ways of constructing the world. However, more often we see the city as a fixed place that produces politics—in places like city hall or in ghettos—instead of a place that is politics.

Having a magnificent city is among the prerequisites of modernity. In the linear theory of social evolution, a city must have:

- a sports stadium (to show that humans as producers of games have been transformed into consumers of sports—that is, money is now involved and victory over other nation-states near and far is possible)
- fine roads (preferably without cow dung lining them)
- a university (where universal and hegemonic knowledge displaces shamanistic folk wisdom)
- and grand shopping centres (replacing the unmediated marketplace of sellers and buyers with mediated shopping malls wherein city spaces becomes merchandising space representing affluence and “choice”).



The city is then the official tribute to the dominant way of understanding the world: through exchange and capital at present, in other epochs through religion and priests, and through expansion and military power. However, in all eras the city represents humans and their efforts to conquer and dominate the environment.

### The Modern Asian City

The city is a category in the march of time, and in the city, time itself changes. Cities speed up time; indeed they are designed so as to catch up with those who are ahead in time. Village time is slow time, seasonal time, mythological time (remembering when the great forefather was alive), ancestral time. Village time is also future generational time; land is scarce and the livelihood of future generations must be planned for, thought about. Of course, the traditional plan has been to move to the city to a place where time is faster, where there are not only more people but more activities, where generation of more wealth is possible. In the city, time is planned time, it is organized time; seasonal time, mythological time and generational time have less currency. To mobilize, organize and "laborize" large numbers of people there must be agreement as to time; thus the clock, not the moon or the sun or the leaves falling off the tree.

The city, then, is an apt metaphor for linear economic development. Just as in modernity the village must be transformed into the city (but parts of it miniaturized either in the museum, or in the fables of writers), so third

world nations must be transformed into modern nations (and their exotic or primitive culture miniaturized for display).

Each third world country aspires to this vision. Pakistan created Islamabad to be its modern city. Islamabad, with the aid of the interventionists of history—the Ford Foundation and other liberal escort agencies—was entirely planned. There was to be a residential area, a university area, a diplomatic area, a bureaucratic area, and a retail area. However, no place was planned for the poorer classes, for they would not be needed in this technocratic enterprise: instead of sweepers (a central job in Pakistan's hierarchy) there would be vacuum cleaners. But the enormous size of Islamabad's houses,

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*In walling out  
what the dominant  
culture fears,  
the city robs itself  
of the Other.*

---

the dust that is Pakistan, and the cost of vacuum cleaners compared with inexpensive labour led to a high demand for sweepers. With no place to live, sweepers built their own houses with dirt and mud. But these *katchi abadis* (soft residences) were an eyesore to city planners; so, remembering the medieval days of the fort, a *pucka abadis* (hard wall) was built round the sweepers. Even Islamabad, which attempts to escape the poverty of Pakistan, finds that this other existence re-emerges within its centre.

Islamabad is also interesting for another reason. It has no culture, no history, no sense of place. There are no bazaars or Moghul architecture as in Lahore; there are no places to consume high art and fashion as in Karachi; there is no feeling of identity. And yet how can it have culture?—a city creat-

ed by technocrats and midwived by bureaucrats who desire to escape, to but reinscribe their walls of bureaucracy onto the city. But culture can be thought of as other than history or place or community; culture is also, as Ashis Nandy writes, resistance. The village sweepers in Islamabad are that resistance, the hidden culture that cannot be extinguished, the counter culture to the official culture of diplomats and bureaucrats. And yet, as the rest of Pakistan disintegrates from ethnic and geopolitical battles, it is Islamabad that remains secure and safe—for now. It is disconnected in time and place; thus, the attraction to Islamabad—and naturally the repulsion—one might feel.

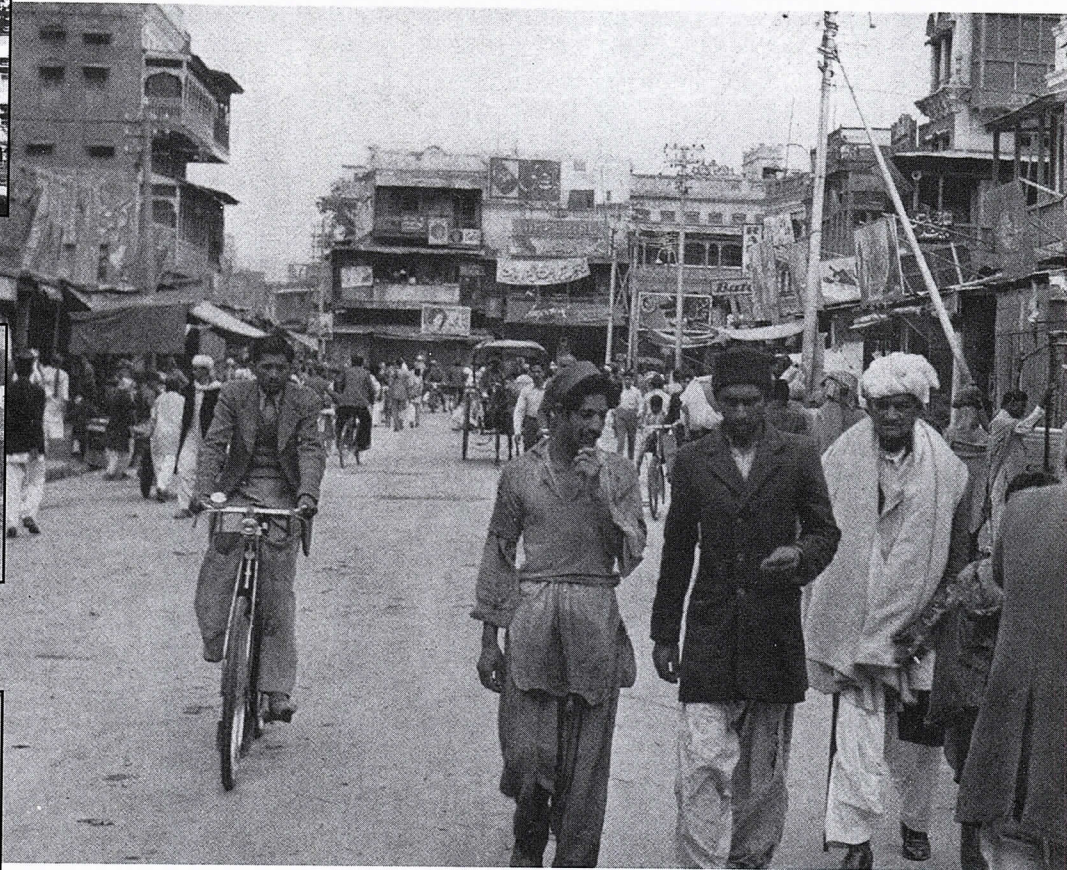
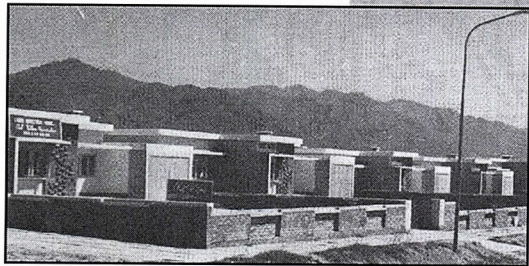
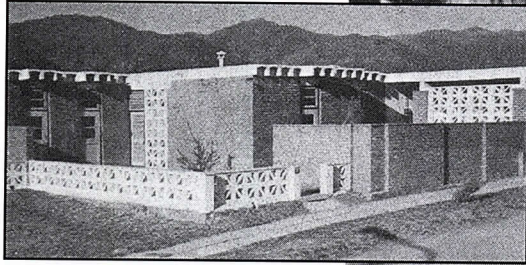
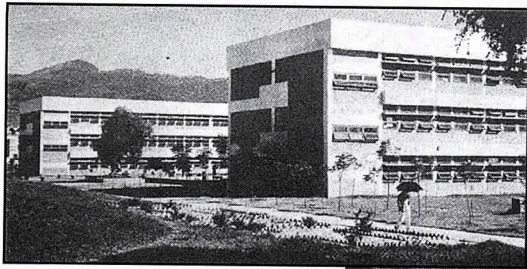
Singapore, too, is a city which has managed to claim entrance into the modern world, largely through its Pacific-Rim-generated wealth. Under the leadership of the stern father Lee Kwan Yew, it, too, has managed to domesticate culture; it, too, has managed to create a replica of the scrubbed-clean house, one where diversity and wildness all but disappear. But this is too harsh. After a few weeks in South Asia where the wildness of warring ethnic groups, of water shortages, of electric brownouts, of traffic anarchy, of roads not numbered sequentially, of living by bribery consume one's rationality, Singapore appears as a modern haven. Confucian culture with its respect for authority and its hierarchical relations are indeed welcome when compared to the democratic anarchy that is South Asia. South Asian cities have more freedom (driving on any side of the road is optional for, while there are laws, there is no way to enforce them); but Singapore is more efficient.

Contrast this with rapidly developing third-world cities: Los Angeles, or New York, or London. Reversing traditional patterns, these cities have the core as low-wage, labour-intensive and the outskirts as high-finance-intensive. These latter-day cities remind us that cities, like civilizations, do decay and disaggregate; that history is not linear but full of reversals and betrayals, cycles and seasons. The linear model of modernity cannot explain the decline of the city except by blaming



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*of Hawaii, and judicial planner Phil McNally provided useful comments to an earlier draft of this article.*



Left: Islamabad in 1966 showing, from top to bottom, government offices; middle-income civil servants' housing; higher-income civil servants' housing. Above: Street in Rawalpindi, the old city near Islamabad and home to many sweepers.

an infestation from the outside, from the barbaric. But cities can have many ethnicities and be rich, as Singapore shows us; and while race is a predictor of poverty, it is not a cause of poverty or decline. Rather, these factors must be placed on the hierarchical structure of capitalism itself—for example, real estate speculation and trickle-down theories. It is not immigrants who cause the decline of a city but rather the association of certain spaces with low-wage labour and the inability of government to provide these sites with the necessary infrastructure. Part of this inability can be explained by the actual poverty cycle in these low-income areas and part by the way in which city leaders mentally construct these sites as places of and for the poor.

But this decline of the city was not the vision of the modernists. The 1964

World's Fair did not imagine multicultural cities; rather, the city was the site of efficiency and technology. The Jetsons best exemplify this vision—the high tech one-culture model. The Fred Flintstone vision is remarkably similar although set in pre-historic times. Contrast this with the movie, *Blade Runner*, which extrapolates present-day Los Angeles and ends up with an unruly city with multiple cultures (human and android) and high technology. This vision is far more likely than the vision of the future as an electronic cottage, the electronic village; the future will more likely be the electronic city, the Losangelization of the world.

### The Spiritual-Ecological City

Alternatively, there is the ecological vision. Here, the city is designed for

low-energy use; the car is made problematic as it damages the environment. In addition, size and distance are critical. Ivan Illich, for example, has argued that after a certain velocity in transportation systems, social justice and equity decrease. Eco-cities are thus designed to create possibilities for closeness, wherein the group (kin or work) is the prime unit of identification.

Ananda Nagar represents a recent exemplary design. Designed by P.R. Sarkar on an ancient sacred site where individuals gained enlightenment, this is an ecological city intended to regenerate the rural economy. Like other intended communities it is self-sufficient with its own education, soft energy paths, and economic wealth-creation projects. It has sanctuaries for animals and rare plants. Instead of

huge dams, shallow ponds restore the environment. Streets are named after scientists and philosophers: Einstein, Gandhi, Tagore, Shakespeare. This is an example of a city that *is* culture: it represents spiritual culture. It is different from cities developed by other social movements in that it is meant to revitalize an impoverished area by cre-

ating self-reliance and self-sufficiency, solving the problems of water and poverty, instead of finding a home for a monoculture of those with a similar worldview—although certainly the city is a monument to its founder, Sarkar. Moreover, this city is connected to history even as it creates an alternative vision of the future for India and

other peripheralized places.

Historically, Indian villages were ecologically sound as the local village government controlled the environment through community management. When this responsibility was transferred to the British government, the bureaucracy developed centralized rules to control the common areas,

## DOCUMENTARY VIDEO ON HOUSING RIGHTS AND NATIVE PEOPLE

# Wigwams and Flophouses

CATHERINE MACFABE

*The use of the tent and wigwam should be discouraged as much as possible and every effort should be made to induce them to abandon their old habit of life and adopt those of the white man.*

—Deputy Superintendent-General of Indian Affairs, 1879

Personal perspectives from members of the native community give some insight on the challenges of coping with the city:

*What I want to say right now is important for people to understand: whatever happens to the First Nations people in this country is all going to happen to everybody else...if you've got no home, you're out there wandering forever—and eventually disappear.*

—young man

*They believed that the land was for everybody, and that whoever walked on it had as much right to walk there as another, but not to own it, to say—this is mine, you keep off. There were always log, stone, sod and hide houses. The land, mother earth, provided these things. Even an animal has a right to a shelter, so why not native people? They were put on reserves...land that wasn't good for anything else...just a form of concentration camp.*

—elder

*We grew up in a log house...squared timber, whitewashed, pretty small, 20 by 18 feet or so, no insulation upstairs. The heating system was just a cookstove with an additional box stove in the winter. Water...had to be hauled about a mile. Not much has changed (in reserve housing) except the style and type of material...nothing frivolous.*

—elder

*I'd like to get a place, but nobody will have me. When I can sleep a bit, I sleep, not that it does any good.*

—homeless man

*It's kind of hard...if it rains you have to find shelter. You spend the day trying to get comfortable for the night. The only way I could make myself comfortable to bear the night was by getting money for booze. A doorway is good...keeps you warm and out of the wind. I didn't want anyone to find me...all I want is a little peace and quiet. Some good places are old cars, stairwells, parks, parking lots inside and outside...That's one thing that people have who live on the streets—their independence.*

—homeless man

*Do you know how it feels sleeping outside? It's freezing cold (angrily). I want money...and I want a home.*

—woman

*Many people do work, but you don't see them on the streets. There are about 30,000 native people in Toronto...only about five per cent of them are on the street.*

—elder

*How can you expect people...to just come in from the reserve and go to work? It's not that easy. You need that background, that security, and you need to get everything in place, and then send me out to look for a job. There's your little bag all stuffed with clothes, and you're supposed to be all fresh-faced and cheerful to go for interviews. Where are you supposed to live in the meantime but at a hostel? And some people are up all night talking to themselves or swearing at you or hitting you or taking your shoes...and you're supposed to go out and look for a job as if your life was normal?*

—outreach worker

They come with hope, and they find little but despair. The belief that life will be better, that jobs and money are in plentiful supply, has always drawn people to the city. For members of Canada's First Nations, the promise of the good life in Toronto is all too often a false one. The 35-minute video, *Wigwams and Flophouses: Housing Rights and Native People*, prepared by Anishnawbe Health Toronto, shows the effects of the disillusion-

taking away power from the community and granting it to those far away. Ananda Nagar is among the strategies to recover rural values and to develop forms of community management useful to people, whether they live in Detroit, Amsterdam or Calcutta. For example, voted the best in the world, Calcutta's subway system—in a city

where nothing else runs—can be explained, if at all, by the pride and the sense of collective ownership citizens have in it.

### Global and Local City Spaces

While efforts to create new cities built on history and based on community self-reliance are laudable, the city

still exists in a larger political economy. When localized, capitalism might be protected against, but the juggernaut of modernity is difficult to vanquish until the city itself becomes an alternative policy and becomes part of a larger civilization. This is the classic tension between globalness and localness. Cities show this tension and have the possibility of creating a new space wherein they are locally managed within a context of a global design. But we should not forget that this was Pol Pot's brutal design as well. The history of creating intended cities as a response to modernity or as an attempt to transcend modernity is ripe with failure. In addition, the necessary process of design often places the "city" in the hands of technocrats such as land zoning planners, and not in the hands of culture or spiritual consciousness.

Finally, even as part of ourselves might wish for cities like Islamabad, we realize that such cities are only possible with the removal of certain classes. For one cannot escape history, and one cannot escape those who the city displaces, namely, the other classes and, more importantly, the spiritual and ethical discourse that the city attempts to remove from our creations and understandings of the world. While we all want the *City Efficient*, we are forced through the social and economic consequences of city design to remember the *City Ecological* and the *City Spiritual*. The city might attempt to wall out what the dominant culture fears, but in its creation of physical and intellectual security, it robs itself of the Other—an Other that eventually finds some way of re-entering the minds of those in the city, often through various forms of cultural resistance. In contrast, community-managed and ecologically sound cities are faced with the larger forces of modern capitalism and with the lure of city lights.

Cities, then, are representations of various theories of modernity and they also create theories. Cities do not create culture or public policy; rather, they *are* culture and policy. City spaces are but the concrete manifestations of our paradigms or our imaginations of the real. ❖



ment and struggle that confront native people when they arrive in Toronto.

Though many find jobs and dwellings, too many men and women, both young and old, find themselves with nowhere to go and no one to turn to for help except the overcrowded and underfunded hostels. The problems are compounded by the pervasive racism that prejudices their intentions and character. Groups like Anishnawbe Health are working with what resources they can find to provide some of the basic needs of food and shelter, and to put individuals in touch with a network of other First Nations people. This sense of community helps to create a level of security and a base from which people can attempt to build towards the self-reliance and dignity they thought they would find in the city. Many people remain on the streets, finding themselves having to look forward to a mat and a sandwich in a public washroom converted to a temporary shelter. Such an assault on human dignity demands to be ad-

ressed at the highest levels of government and society.

Even on the reserves, housing is only of the most rudimentary nature. Materials are often of inferior quality, and the basic infrastructure of water and sewage is seldom available. The waiting list for even this low level of housing is long, and money is always in short supply. The opportunity to improve living conditions is rare.

Through the firsthand comments and experience of the homeless and the poorly-housed native Canadians who speak in this film, the bleakness of their situation is poignantly made. Despite their hardships, though, they have retained their pride and dignity, refusing to give up their quest for an equitable role and place in Canada. ❖

*This video was viewed courtesy of Jim Wemigwans, a volunteer with "The Patrol," Streetwatch Toronto, which checks on the safety, health and welfare of street people. Wigwams and Flophouses may be viewed by contacting The Power Plant, Harbourfront, Toronto, Tel. (416) 973-4949.*

# Limiting the City

THOMAS BERRY

*At what size does a city stifle culture and creativity?*

Until the beginning of the 19th century only two or three per cent of all people lived in cities of any large size. Ancient China did have some large cities equivalent in size to European medieval cities. But one must remember that there were only two to three million people in all of medieval Europe. India in its most creative period was known as a country of 600,000 villages with few cities at all.

For creativity to take place, cities do not have to be very large. There were possibly only 60,000 people in the city of Florence, Italy, in the time of Dante and even then Dante protested about the homogenization process that seemed to be going on in large cities. To support art and creative processes a certain size of city is required, but the development of folk art and folk music does not need large cities.

Huge megalopolises or metropolitan areas are a relatively modern invention. Ecological refugees are flooding to some third world cities, such as Mexico City, making them enormous. By the turn of the century it is possible that as many as 50 per cent of the earth's population will

live in very large cities. Of these 30 very large cities in the beginning of the next century, perhaps only two will be in western industrialized countries.

The Taoists in China were very clear about the idea of limits. Even though there are no limits to qualitative development there are, however, limits to quantitative processes. The development of music and knowledge, for instance, can be infinite, but a certain mass is required. It was already clear to the Taoists in the fourth century BC that the size and growth of cities was becoming counterproductive. Taoists wanted small villages located close enough together to be able to hear the dogs bark from one village to the next. But Taoists also had a critique of technology to go along with their theories on size. There is a wonderful story about this by Chuang Tzu.

A traveller was walking along an elevated road in the middle of a farmer's field and saw a peasant carrying a bucket of water and sprinkling the water by hand on the ground. The peasant walked back to a well, drew more water and sprinkled it again on the ground. The

traveller said, "You are wasting a lot of energy by sprinkling the water on the ground in that way. You could dig an irrigation ditch and then construct a simple well sweep from a few pieces of bamboo. Then you would be able to water ten or maybe a hundred times as much ground. The way you are doing it now is just making trouble for yourself."

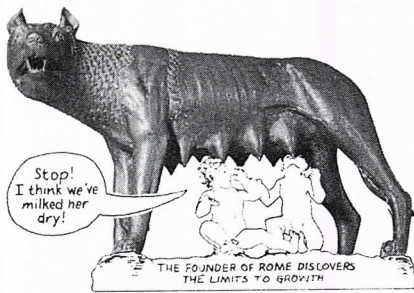
The peasant looked up from the field and said, "You are absolutely right. I am making trouble for myself. But I have been thinking about this and if I have a machine to water my fields then I am going to have machine troubles. And if I have machine troubles they are going to preoccupy my *hsin*." *Hsin* is a pictograph that refers to heart or mind. Human beings were considered to be the *hsin* of the universe, or the heart or consciousness of the universe.

The peasant continued, "If I have a machine troubles then I am going to have machine *hsin*, and if I have machine *hsin* then the spirits will leave me. So it is not that I don't know about this type of technology, but I would be ashamed to use it."

This little story is a very early critique







of technology. It is a very perceptive critique about the second causality over-against the primary causality referred to as the Tao. The idea was that the secondary cause, the human cause, or phenomenal causality needs to be immediately responsive to the sensitivities of the natural world.

The Chinese people seem to have a greater overlap between the *genetic coding* which we are born with and the *cultural coding* which we invent. We are genetically coded to have a transformation of our cultural coding. For example, we are genetically coded to speak. We have no choice about whether or not we can speak. But we are free, however, to decide how we will speak. We are not free to think or not to think, which is a genetic coding. But we are free to structure our thoughts, which is a cultural coding. We are genetically coded to live in a society, but we are culturally coded to create that society in a way in which we want to live.

It is this cultural coding that shapes our human qualities. This cultural coding is a community process. It takes place within an enormous variety of cultural possibilities. There is a vast efflorescence of languages, and language is one of the most magnificent and diverse things that humans create. On the North American continent alone, at least a thousand languages were developed.

The Chinese were always very interested in how this cultural coding was related to the genetic coding. For instance, what does a child do before it thinks? What does a human being do just before it thinks? Humans are very different from birds or animals, because we are genetically coded to think. But since we are able to think what we want and to structure our thoughts (our cultural coding), the Chinese were interested in what we must do just before thinking.

The relationship between how cultural diversity takes place and human fulfilment is linked to how large a community is necessary to transform the cultural coding. For instance, is human fulfilment necessarily related to indus-

trial society or to technology? This is, in fact, hardly likely.

What I am currently suggesting is that the cultural codings of what I call the "classical civilizations" are no longer able to deal with the huge issues that are now before us, such as enormous global population and environmental degradation. That is why we find ourselves in such serious difficulty. Both villages and cities certainly are necessary for the elaboration of human thought. But there is a question about limits. Everything needs limits. A certain volume or quantity must be attained before certain qualitative advances can take place. But it has always been recognized that the tendency of metropolis is to turn into necropolis. Metropolitan centres tend to turn into cities of the dead. It has happened over and over again. After cities reach a certain size, dying sets in and a new type of pathos is created.

Technology allows us to transcend the basic biological law that every species should have opposed species and conditions that limit it so that no one species can overwhelm the others. But with technology humans subvert the population limits of the planet; we can put off death, we can preserve life, we can take over the planet. We can allow our cities to pour concrete over more and more agricultural land; we can subvert the biosystems of the planet in a way that nature is not capable of dealing with. This is why we need a new cultural coding and a total restructuring of our story of the universe and our vision of the future. ❖

*Thomas Berry is an historian of cultures with special concern for the foundation of cultures in relation with the natural world. He has been active in various ecological and bioregional movements since the late 1960s. Since 1970 he has been director of the Riverdale Centre For Religious Research in New York. The following is a partial transcript of a talk given by Fr. Berry at a weekend seminar in March 1990 sponsored by ICA Canada. Tapes of the entire weekend are available.*

## By the year 2010, half the world's people will live in cities.

- Largest urban area now in the world: TOKYO-YOKOHAMA (28.7 million)
- Second largest: MEXICO CITY (20.1 million)
- Third largest: SAO PAULO (17.9 million)
- Fourth largest: NEW YORK (17.5 million)
- Fifth largest: OSAKA-KOBE-KYOTO (16.9 million)
- Sixth largest: SEOUL (16.4 million)
- Seventh largest: tie between BOMBAY and MOSCOW (13.3 million each)

By the year 2000 the urban population of the developing world will be almost double the size of that of the industrialized world; by 2025 it will be four times larger.

58 of the world's hundred largest metropolitan areas are in the developing countries. Nine are in China and another nine in India.

Slums and shantytowns are growing at twice the rate of cities as a whole.

## Cities with the highest living standards.\*

At the top:

- MELBOURNE, Australia (3.1 million)
- MONTREAL, Canada (2.9 million)
- SEATTLE-TACOMA, USA (2.4 million)

In second place:

- ATLANTA, USA
- ESSEN-DORTMUND-DUISBURG, Germany

At the bottom:

- RECIFE, DHAKA, KINSHASA; LAGOS; BUCHAREST; and YANGON (Rangoon).

\*Indicators include public safety, food costs, living space, housing standards, communications, education, public health, peace and quiet, traffic flow and clean air.

Source: Population Crisis Committee, "Cities: Life in the World's 100 Largest Metropolitan Areas," 1990, Washington D.C., quoted in *The Christian Science Monitor*, 11.12.90, p. 12.



# *Saving Urban America from Itself*

## **Seven strategies for local self-determination**

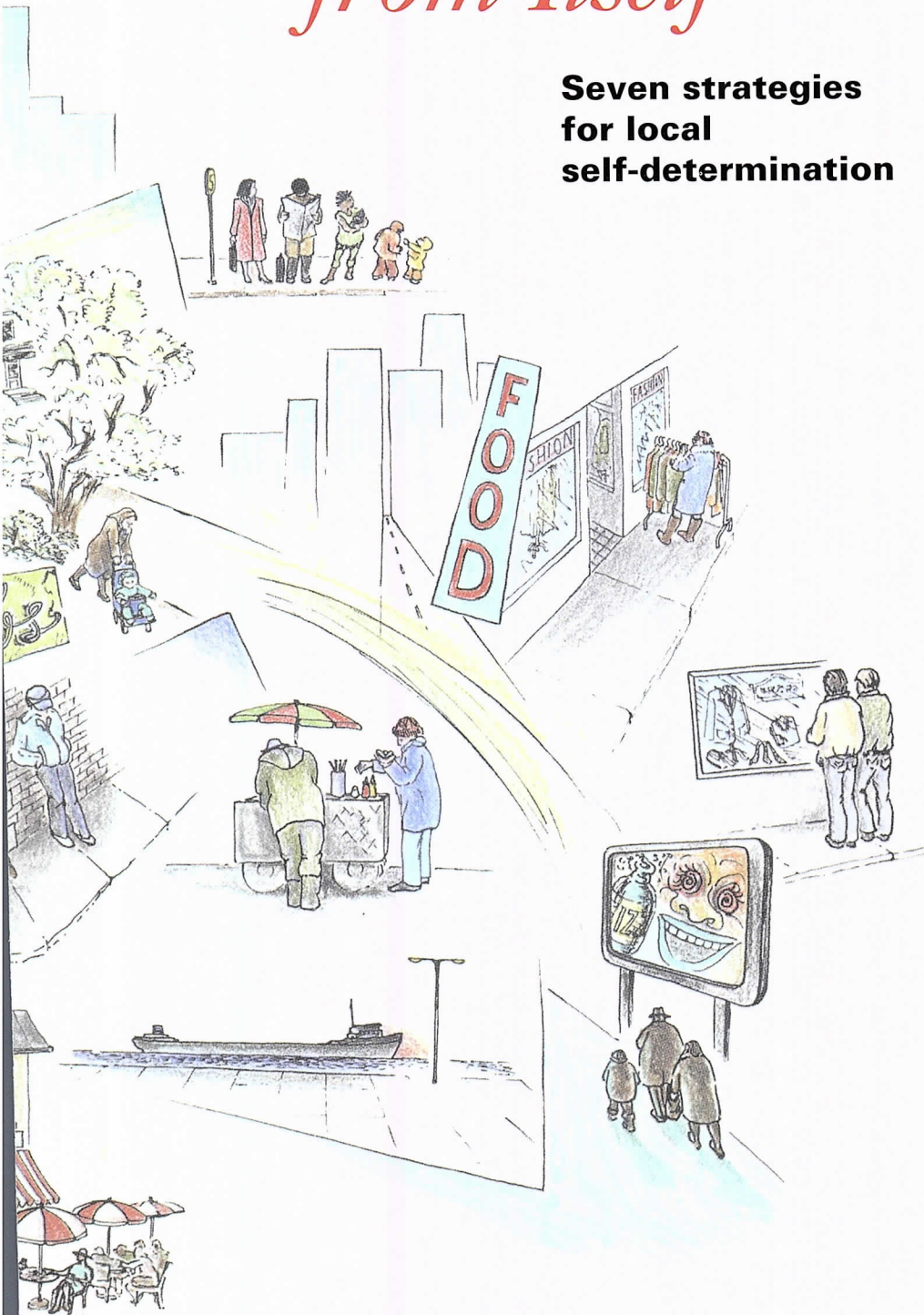
SAM SMITH

**T**hat cities have problems is nothing new. As a 19th century book put it, "Great cities must ever be centres of light and darkness; the repositories of piety and wickedness; the home of the best and the worst...." Architectural critic Charles Lockwood quotes a declaration from New York City's mayor in 1839: "This city is infested by gangs of hardened wretches" who "patrol the streets making night hideous and insulting all who are not strong enough to defend themselves."

The question has always been one of countervailing virtues and faults, but what is happening now suggests a new stage in American urban history: the growing perception that big cities are not worth the candle. The commercial advantage of the city has been eroded by the suburbanization of business, the communications advantage eroded by technology, and the cultural advantage by television, film and tape.

The changes in the city have been a long time coming. The streetcar and then the automobile destroyed the compact city in which people lived and worked within walking distance. In its place came suburbanization with the husband leaving the neighbourhood for employment and the wife staying home, creating finally what one writer described as the modern centaur, half woman, half station wagon. These changes also reflected low energy costs and what we now know was a dismal lack of understanding of environmental impact.

Pedestrian malls are a nice example of the vanity of planners' dreams. Designed as the downtown alternative to suburban shopping centres, the malls looked right, but worked far less successfully. Says urban development consultant, Lawrence O. Honspun Jr., "The problem wasn't that people wanted to walk in the street; the problem was that downtown was inconvenient or became inconve-



nient." So now some cities are "restreering," ripping up the malls, including Kalamazoo, which once called itself "Mall City."

There is almost a manic quality to the efforts of city planners and politicians to save their turf. Yet for all the motion there is little change. Outmoded zoning principles remain firmly in place. There is an enormous lag between social development and urban development; in no major American city today have the vast social changes of our society made a strong impact on the way the city works as an organism. And cities continue to make their choices in the traditional manner, well described as "decide, announce, defend."

Even in progressive political circles, relatively little thought is given to changing the nature of the city itself. Progressive urban politics is still largely the politics of money, of subsidizing survival, and of mitigating damage. But such politics implicitly accepts much of the status quo in cities that have become little more than mega-ghettos in a largely urban country.

Edward Woodward once speculated that eventually there would be no one living in our cities except corporations. It's not even clear that they will want to remain, given current trends. Fortunately, however, there is a growing movement of thinkers and activists who are putting their minds to alternatives and, as they do so, they are creating a new image of the city and how it might work, an image that is not a gossamer ideal, but a highly pragmatic vision. It is a vision we will either choose to follow or face an urban future in which we will watch old videos of *Max Headroom* and wonder why we didn't do something while there was still time.

### Back to the Neighbourhood

Neighbourhood government offers an



*Sam Smith, editor of The Progressive Review, has written on American political and social issues for numerous publications since 1957. He was named best political columnist by Washington's City Paper in 1988.*

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*The larger the jurisdiction  
the greater the tendency  
to deal with problems  
by means of money  
and bureaucracy.*

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antidote to the chronic gap between government and governed. There is, after all, little reason to cling to the notion that the solution to our problems is to spend more money on the form of government that has increasingly shown its incompetence. To say that because the crime rate is rising sharply, we should double the size of the police force that has been unable to cope with it, to reward with more concentrated power a city government that has spent decades on absurd, disruptive and cruel planning, to continue to vest the

power of educating our children in an administrative system that appears to lag as far behind the human intelligence norm as the children it miseducates do in reading and math—surely this can have little logical justification.

Neighbourhood government is another way. It is not some

utopian scheme but a pragmatic approach. It is, in fact, contemporary large city governance that is utopian in that there is no empirical evidence that it works. It is under this form of government that we generally find the worst crime, the worst education, the worst health, the worst pollution, and the highest unemployment. The larger the jurisdiction the greater the tendency to deal with problems through the application of money and bureaucracy. Imagination narrows into a budget item; the specific offspring of the budget item becomes far less important than the fact that it costs  $x$  dollars.

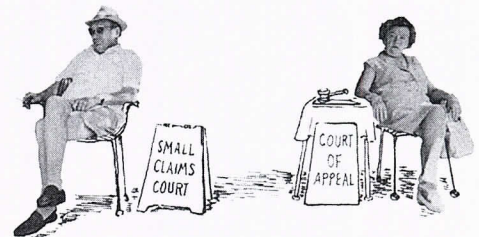
Small government works differently. It tends to pay more attention to detail and substance. I recall attending a PTA meeting to discuss the chaos produced by major teacher reassignments. It did not take long before someone pointed out that while we must deal with city-wide issues, we must also continue to teach the children no matter what happened. A committee was formed to seek volunteers to help fill in the gaps caused by the transfers. But nobody volunteers to help the city's school superintendent. Big government doesn't work that way.

Neighbourhood government is also pragmatic politically. Most political dissatisfaction comes from the inability of residents to make their concerns felt at city hall. Problems are specific; big city

government is, by nature, general. If you don't fit the average of the generalized model you get left behind.

One way to quickly and dramatically shift the power in a city away from city hall and to the neighbourhoods is to create neighbourhood commissions along the ideas of the model used in Washington, and then give these commissions much more power, including discretionary authority over, say, their proportionate share of one per cent of the city spending. In Washington, DC, that works out to about \$1 million for a community of 25,000. Each community could decide for itself how the million should be spent: how much for police, libraries, housing, education and so forth. There would be mistakes but you can almost guarantee that there would be extraordinarily imaginative successes as well. And the mere process would make everyone think harder about how we spend money in the city.

### Bringing Justice Home



The decline of the older city is intimately related to the problem of crime. One need not get into a chicken-and-egg argument to recognize that the failures of urban policy contribute to crime and crime contributes to the failure of cities. The question is how to interrupt this destructive cycle? The conventional answers—more police and more prisons—not only haven't worked; they are beginning to bankrupt a number of cities. As with the economy and the environment, we have to engage in lateral rather than incremental thinking if we are to come up with solutions that will really make a difference.

There are a number of things that could be done, but none are more important than restoring the community to the focus of our attempts to obtain social order. Most law and order stems from personal and community values or peer pressure of one sort or another. Yet our prescription for law and order in the city tends to ignore the role of the communi-

*continued on page 20*

# Indigenous Architecture

*A new breed of architect is using indigenous architecture to promote energy-efficient design.*

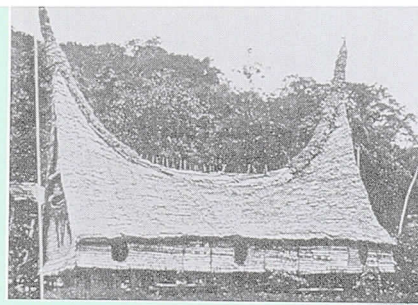
TAO HO

There is today a “universal” style of architecture promoted by big business and corporations, which has little to do with the terrain and the climate and everything to do with inflated egos. Air-conditioned office buildings in New York, Tokyo, Taipei, Beijing, Hong Kong, Bangkok or Paris all look the same and share the same shortcomings. The huge square glass structures, which are home to most multinationals, are supposed to look clean and uncluttered as befits the professional organizations that inhabits them. Such buildings express the unconscious urge amongst corporate executives to seek symbolic representation for their corporate image: the pure, clean and simple geometric forms of the universal architectural style are seen as the right corporate symbol for the late 20th century.

Although most Asian countries are still “developing,” the universal architectural form has overtaken much of the wisdom of indigenous architecture, and the ill effects of universal architecture suffered by the West are being repeated in Asia.

Today’s architects place too much emphasis on superficial styles, and not enough on regional climatic factors and heritage. Achieving energy-efficient designs is more meaningful than the creation of superficial architectural identities.

Most modern buildings are energy wasteful—they are not designed in response to environmental factors. The four sides of a smart-looking office block with its glass-curtain wall are designed the same in spite of the fact that the penetration of the sun on the four sides of the building is different. Furthermore, in the



*With only 2 poles holding up this roof, local materials are saved. The resulting steep slope provides excellent runoff for rain.*

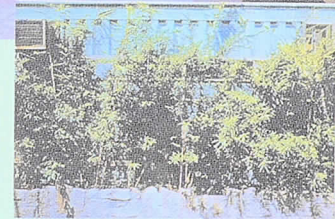


design of the typical office building, the interior lighting layout often ignores the natural light coming from the external wall.

There is an urgent need for education in the importance of energy conservation through mass media and the schools. Legislation on energy-efficient design is important but not enough. Incentive schemes can be introduced for those developers who incorporate energy-saving forms and *bona fide* energy-efficient devices, such as sun shades.

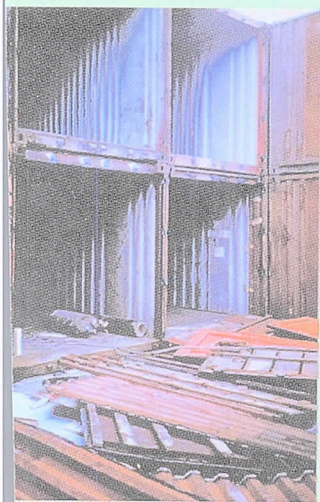
If we are going to experience a better, longer life in the future, we will have to move towards a low-energy-oriented society. In this respect, the ancient intuitive wisdom of the Asians for harmony amongst Heaven, Earth and Man might help to shape the future of humanity.❖

*Tao Ho is a Hong Kong architect, artist and sculptor with award winning designs and constructions all over East Asia. As Governor of the Friends of the Earth in Hong Kong, Tao is a strong advocate of the ecological balance that must be held between nature and man-made structures.*



*Above: The new office entrance courtyard with sculptures made by Tao Ho from the construction scraps.*

*Below: A wall of plants enhances the exterior. Seen from inside, the plants modulate sunlight and heat with a decorative play of light and shadow.*



*The new offices of TaoHo Design were built out of old shipping containers.*

## SAVING URBAN AMERICA

continued from page 18

ty, using as its surrogate vastly over-extended police departments and courts.

There is no substitute for organic social order, as even totalitarian countries have discovered. To create this organic system of justice, we must return to the community and build our justice system out from it.

More and more cities are moving towards this concept, calling it "community policing." Recently, even as mainstream a figure as Matthew Crosson, chief administrator of New York state courts, called for the creation of community courts in neighbourhoods to handle minor crimes. The proposal was in a legislative package presented in December.

It should be noted, however, that neither the current view of community policy nor Crosson's idea of community courts go far enough in bringing the community into the justice system. For the system to really work, both police and courts not only have to be *in* the community but *of* the community as well. The power as well as the structure has to be in the neighbourhood.

Another critical justice issue, in the wake of what a British publication has called America's "decadent neopuritanism," is the extraordinary amount of money that has been spent to exorcise cities of sins that have been characteristic of urban areas since the first city was built. These include prostitution, drugs, gambling and pornography. A policy that treated such issues primarily as health and social problems, and of containment rather than eradication, would not only have immense economic benefits to cities currently groaning under the costs of the futile "war on drugs," but would free up the resources needed to deal with serious crime and with the social conditions that encourage personal excess of all kinds.

### Ending Economic Bussing

The city is changing whether we do anything about it or not. For example, Walter Truett Anderson, who writes regularly on future trends, thinks the skyscraper may be on the way out, a vic-

tim of changing workstyles, new communications technology, worsening urban congestion, and general inefficiency. Anderson quotes British management consultant Bruce Lloyd: "What are all these buildings for? The ego trips of top management." Lloyd points out that office buildings are not subjected to the

same kind of cost-consciousness applied to other assets. They are occupied less than 20% of the time in a year—substantially less if you include time spent on running the building, purely social activity, and time workers spend "on the road."

Other factors that are contributing to office obsolescence include working at home, the impact of computers and fax machines and the development of ways to keep businesses working around the clock. For example, Anderson notes that in India young technicians "spend their working day hooked up via satellite to the AT&T master computer in North Carolina, 'debugging' the programs that run America's telephone system. Because of the time difference, they are coming to work just when the Americans who do the same thing in North Carolina are quitting, so the work goes on steadily round-the-clock."

The high-rise office building is merely the symbol of a profound misreading of urban economic needs, based on a couple of ill-founded theories:

- Bigger is better.
- Office buildings are the best and quickest routes to a better tax base.

As Lloyd's analysis of the high-rise indicates, offices are inefficient physical assets, yet they have been the *sine qua non* of every self-respecting mayor of the past few decades.

American cities badly need a better economic mix—more retail and light industrial rather than office space; and more small business rather than big business. Big business is not an efficient job producer. Over the past five years, for example, DC's top ten private employers have added a grand total of 771 new jobs, or about 2 per cent of all new jobs created during the period. Small business, on the other hand, is more labour-intensive and less prone to achieve efficiency through automation.

Some of the most efficient job produc-

ers in a city are not only ignored; they are discouraged. For example, if all of Washington's taxi drivers or street vendors worked for a single company, it would be the largest firm in the city. You'd never guess it from public policy, which is far more concerned with the regulation of these activities than with the encouragement of them. They are treated more as a nuisance than an essential part of the economic life of the city. Thus, two of the few industries anyone in the city can enter without the vagaries of "personnel procedures" and without a college education are actively discouraged.

### Changing Zoning Laws

To bring significant change to the cities and suburbia of America, nothing is more important than a revolution in our concepts of zoning. Though introduced early in this century as a reform, zoning has often been manipulated to provide vast profits for a small number of developers, or to serve the cause of social exclusion. Current zoning laws generally are blithely indifferent to decades of accumulated ecological knowledge, to the changing status of women, to the need for new economic opportunity and to the ghettoization of the city. The bias against the mixed use neighbourhood, home employment and technological experimentation and innovation—and in favour of a socially and economically unsound emphasis on single-family residential living—is one of the major obstacles to creating better urban living.

### New Housing

Not everyone who leaves the city wants to. In many cases the cost and availability of housing provides the impetus. Among the factors that have raised the cost and lowered the availability has been gentrification. The gentrifiers not only upscale the housing stock, they require more per capita space than did former residents. For example, houses that previously housed boarders or large families now



**URBAN FAUNA** There are six major animal species in Washington, DC: dogs, birds, cockroaches, termites, rats and human beings. Of these only the last is endangered. Dogs run wild in packs in some parts of town; starlings and pigeons resist the most technologically advanced techniques of eradication; roaches and termites thrive despite extermination service contracts; and the rat has responded to the best efforts of the Department of Environmental Services by producing a mutant strain resistant to all known poisons. But the human is in trouble.

One reason is that the ecology of the urban human remains little understood. We now comprehend the hazards of blithely pouring DDT over crops, slashing through tree-lands, or fouling the air. But we still act as though we can, without penalty, wipe out neighbourhoods, force mass migrations, rip out favourite meeting places for people, or tear down centres of communications, culture and commerce that are as important to a community as a marsh is to a flyway.

contain only one couple.

One of the simplest, cheapest and quickest ways to counteract this trend is to change zoning laws to permit auxiliary apartments in single-family zones. In cities like Washington many of these apartments exist illegally, supporting the thesis that one of the best places to look for new ideas is in the underground economy. If normally law-abiding people insist on doing something despite the law's prohibition, it's at least possible that the people know something the law doesn't.

The advantages of such apartments include lowering the effective cost of housing for the homeowner, increasing the supply of housing, providing for a social and economic mix within neighbourhoods, allowing voluntary individual care to replace some of the need for social services (e.g. the young apartment dweller helping the aged landlord upstairs), providing neighbourhood-based economic opportunity and increasing the number of eyes on the street. Another alternative is to encourage developers to build two- and three-family homes rather than single-family

dwellings.

A more radical approach is cohousing—individual homes clustered around a large common house with such facilities as a dining room, children's playroom, workshops and laundries. The houses typically have their own kitchen and are otherwise minimally self-sufficient but the emphasis is on communal facilities. Each cohousing plan is worked out with intense participation by future occupants. There is no single plan for these projects; they are designed for specific and changing needs and hospitable to spontaneity, thus avoiding what Chesterton called "the huge modern heresy of altering the human soul to fit its conditions, instead of altering human conditions to fit the human soul." The idea was first developed in Denmark in 1972 and there are now over 100 cohousing communities there and in the Netherlands. The cohousing approach has been used for condominiums, cooperatives and non-profit rental housing.

Adherents see a number of advantages to this approach—among them a balance of privacy and community, a safe and supportive environment for children, a practical and spontaneous lifestyle, and environmentally sensitive design. The idea also offers security, the potential for higher densities, and the resulting decline in need for transportation. The authors of *Cohousing* point out that "the scale of cohousing communities—15 to 35 dwellings—makes them ideal for urban infill sites or for conversions of existing buildings."

### Growing Things

There is plenty that can be done with existing housing as well. It can be made more energy efficient, but we can also pay attention to such formerly seeming frills as rooftop gardens. Landscape architect Theodore Osmundson noted at the 1990 International EcoCity Conference in Berkeley that normal development and paving allow no water to be absorbed into the ground, and the heat generated in the summer and escaping in winter put additional strains on the energy system. In Germany it was found that since WWII hard surfaces in the cities have quadrupled, significantly raising temperature levels and contributing mightily to pollution. Berlin and some other German cities are now requiring the greening of new building roofs with slopes between one and ten percent.

Contradictory as it sounds, agriculture and wilderness are also an essential part of the new city. Not only do they contribute to ecological balance, but they also fulfill social and economic ends. Much as the separation of work and community has created numerous urban costs and tensions, the separation of food growing and its consumption has been expensive and counter-productive. Both separations were rooted in cheap fuel, which we can no longer expect. Ideally a city should be surrounded by a beltway of agricultural land rather than a beltway of concrete. While this is no longer possible in many older urban areas, what agricultural land exists should be rigorously preserved. Smaller and newer cities should plan for where their city's food will come from as carefully as where their residents will work. Farmer's markets, with their lower transportation costs, reduced packaging and fresher food, need to be regarded as essential rather than merely quaint. The demand is clearly there, as can be seen every afternoon at an organic farm north of San Francisco, where Federal Express trucks line up to receive produce packages to be delivered to New York City restaurants the next day. More thought to the interrelationship between city and farm might lessen the need for such extraordinary measures to obtain the basic substances of human existence, which, after all, are required even in citadels of commerce and culture.

*continued on page 27*





# Urban Gardening

*Growing Food and Confidence*

*The Garden Club at 171 Front Street E., Toronto, in its first year. A dozen people carried up 10 cubic yards of soil by elevator to fill these used pickle barrels. About 56 types of plants are grown. Photo: Andy Tough*

CATHERINE MACFABE

**“W**e wanted to give the residents some leisure activities to get them involved and out in the fresh air. And to do something with a barren place. The rooftop had broken beer bottles and garbage everywhere, but now it is very attractive. We wanted vegetables, not flowers,” says Martha Smith, in charge of community gardens for the Metro Toronto Housing Authority’s (MTHA) recreation department. “It was therapy for us all.”

MTHA and FoodShare Metro Toronto worked together to assist residents of a

16-story apartment to create a community vegetable garden on the roof. Located at the corner of Shuter and Sherbourne Streets, in the heart of Toronto, the building is owned and run by the MTHA. A community kitchen, housed on the main floor, provides nutritious meals to the residents who are mostly seniors and disabled.

FoodShare Metro Toronto provided seeds and plants; MTHA, the soil and the advisory staff, and its outreach worker, Christine Mourre, guided the garden project in 1990.

“At first people were skeptical,” she says. “They thought we were crazy.” At the end of the season, though, a garden party celebrated the success of the project. Many of the residents had never had fresh garden-grown vegetables, and others hadn’t had them in years. Some residents recalled their childhoods on farms. Everyone was very excited about the results.

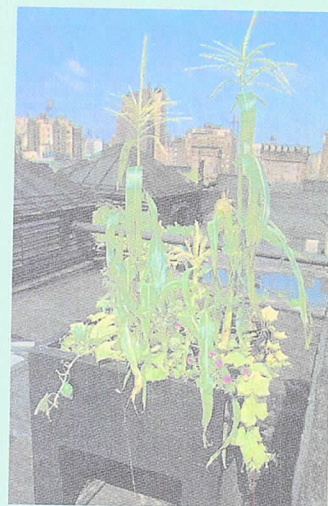
“We carried the earth and peat moss for the concrete planters up the elevators in bags,” says Christine. The planting and maintenance of the garden was done by ten volunteers from among the residents. The plants needed daily watering because of the bright sunlight, and most work had to be done in the morning before it got too hot to be out on the roof. Those plants needing less light were put near the wall. The gardening process was almost completely organic.

Ursula Lipski, a community outreach worker at FoodShare, spoke of how it got going: “The first year, 1989, FoodShare’s gardener, Beverly Hine, helped MTHA’s gardeners to determine what soils and plants would work in this setting, and recruited the residents to help. In 1990, everything was more or less in place. FoodShare helped gather the seedlings and plants, and had staff available to work with Christine. The Parks and Recreation Department has often helped, as well, with roto-tilling, and with composting and fencing materials.”

“The arrangement depends on the community,” says Ursula. Some of

FoodShare’s gardens are run solely by that organization, while others are joint projects. A preliminary step is to go door to door with flyers explaining the aims and methods of the community garden concept. Once set-up is underway, FoodShare assists in obtaining land and equipment. “A lot of what we do is to provide support—information, moral support, problem solving.” FoodShare workers also help groups in their dealings with a variety of organizations and levels of government.

“In 1990, we planted a test crop with a lot of different things, just to see what would come up. We even had raspberry bushes,” says Christine. This season, they will plant three or four of the most productive vegetables, like tomatoes, beets and beans. The garden will be continued each year, and most of the produce will go to the kitchen to supplement the rest of the food used, though it by no means will eliminate the need for substantial donations from other sources).





The key to these gardens is that they are community-based projects. Food production is really a secondary benefit. The primary benefit of the community garden is the emergence of a social support network. The garden breaks the isolation that all too often pervades modern urban life. It is the first step into a larger possibility.

A City Home building near the St. Lawrence market is another building with a community garden on the roof. The MTHA is also assisting with a community garden in North York, as part of an apartment and townhouse complex. The tenant association there, which has a well developed community, is making this garden happen.

"Some people live in a community and only know a few people," says Ursula. "The gardening group finds that it increases their awareness of the other people and their resources. The individual gains confidence. The little successes lead to the confidence to make a first business call, for example. And that is very exciting to see."

Sometimes it can be difficult to pinpoint the benefits, she notes. The "soft data" is important, but people tend to get caught up in the numbers game.

"Food is a way to bring people together. It's something concrete, something people have in common. Then they can go beyond it to other aspects of their lives. Soon, people begin talking about community issues such as child care, security, the isolation issue."

About ten of these commu-

nity gardens were begun by FoodShare in 1990, meeting with varying degrees of success. In some cases, interest seemed to decline after the initial enthusiasm. People are often surprised by the amount of work they are expected to do to get more food, especially when they see the inequity of the wealthy who have more for less effort. Ursula asks, "Is it really fair to expect poor people to work extra for their food?" Furthermore, it comes down once again to the women having to provide for their families. And often they just don't have the time or energy to do that additional work. These are very real questions, and can't be ignored.

The groups that failed tended to be made up of individuals who worked in isolation from each other. The successful groups were those that had regular contact with one another. They met at a central gathering point, acting as a community agency, and providing a warm atmosphere, a place to go.

A group of about 20 women

and their families in Thistletown, Etobicoke, is a good example of what can happen. This group works so well, says Ursula, that every year they have to find new volunteers because members start to feel so good about themselves, that they go out and get jobs, or go back to school.

Realizing that their contact with the various groups was too superficial because of staff limitations, FoodShare has decided that each of their two outreach workers would meet with fewer garden groups but

on a more regular basis. Their aim, and that of the MTHA as well, goes beyond simply offering technical advice; their intent is to help foster a sense of community that will continue to flourish once the gardens are established. Once these groups are going strong, they could themselves help guide and advise new groups. The potential, given the needed staff and other resources, is so much greater than simply the provision of food. In fact, one could say, nourishment of the human heart is the best harvest of all. ♦



*A Toronto apartment dweller experiments with tomatoes and lettuce in his rooftop container garden.*



*Gardening in Thistletown has brought people together, creating confidence and community spirit.*



# THE HEROES OF REHAB

*Indianapolis: A nitty-gritty drama of bruises, bank loans, and blessings.*

MOLLIE CLEMENTS

*Little reported local heroic deeds by small groups of people are making things happen in America's urban local communities. In the South Bronx, on the west side of Chicago, in St. Louis, in public housing and rundown communities, self-reliance and self-confidence are winning the day and making miracles happen. In this real-life drama, on rehabbing in the Fountain Square Parish on the south side of Indianapolis, one more community shows the way.*

## **Act I Researching the Facts**

Two women enlisted the help of local youth to go block by block through the neighbourhood, noting the address of each boarded-up house. They counted 114 in the mile-square area. The next job was to investigate the available 1980 census data. It turned out that 46 per cent of the 4670 houses were rental; 84 per cent of all the houses were valued at less than \$20,000. Median family income was just over \$10,000.

Further research by the local Southeast Multiservice Centre and Health Centre revealed that the Fountain Square neighbourhood on Indianapolis' near south side has three times the county's median of aging adults and three times the number of children. Forty-five per cent

of the youngsters drop out of school before finishing; more leave in the eighth grade than any other. Gang activity is on the rise. More than 20 infants out of a 1000 die each year; others are malnourished and roach-bitten. Thirteen fifth and sixth graders in the local elementary school were pregnant in the last school year.

You look around. It's summertime: kids are everywhere, on skateboards, bikes, throwing footballs in the street. Old people and young families sit on porch swings. Several young men drink beer together in a yard. As you drive through the narrow streets you have to dodge the men tinkering with their cars, trying to keep them running. You see a legless man in his wheelchair; he had been working under his car when another car tore through and

crushed his leg. Older people walk slowly, slowly to the grocery store or the variety store, or to the bank, or more likely the retail store that occupies half a block, selling clothes,



*Young John Hawkins, 6th grade pre-apprentice, has become an accomplished spokesperson for the program as well as a good mower.*

furniture, books, odds and ends. You see a declining neighbourhood, roofs sagging, gutters hanging, walls needing paint, paper in the windows for curtains or even for glass. But also you see flowers, and here and there a well-kept home, with a fence around it and bolts on the doors.

You listen to the stories. One father hauls trash while his wife works part-time at a fried chicken place—four school-age children and never enough money to make ends meet; low rent—\$225 a month. They have been working on the place, slowly fixing it up, so the cold won't come through the cracks in the door this winter. Paint for hauling away has put some life on the walls; plastic flowers decorate the table, tastefully done. Ah,



*Purchasers of the second and fourth gut rehabbed houses, Marsha Jones (above) and Chris Taylor (left), busy at work. Chris got a new global perspective when she received a scholarship to attend the Space Between program in Peru.*

but now that the house has been repaired, the landlord is increasing the rent. They must move. Where will they find another house this big—for this rent? The one they find is a little smaller, a little more run down, and just two doors from the local brothel.

### **Act II Creating the Core**

Two-dozen people from a declining United Methodist Church (UMC) congregation are meeting and listening to an 85-year-old former missionary who has come back to the community where she grew up. Finally, she asks: "Can we address the housing needs of our neighbourhood?" They ponder. Someone suggests a model. Organize volunteers from all over the place to rehab the boarded-up houses. Let the families who are interested in buying a home be a part of the volunteer force. Their work will be their down payment. Go for a grant to hire a construction supervisor. Let the churches organize it, provide hot meals for volunteers and pray for the renewal of community.

The decision is "yes." Soon, three other churches join in, two Methodist, one Roman Catholic. A little later a neighbouring United Church of Christ sends a roofing crew, then a sponsor to the board.

Two homes become the places of strategy: one is the kitchen table of the retired missionary, Helen Fehr. Here, day after day, small groups meet to keep the dream alive, to talk over problems, to pray together, and to laugh. The



other place is the meeting table of ICA Indianapolis with its consensus methods and its role as an invisible though integral player in the rehabbing program. ICA member, Jesse Clements, becomes director of the project as it incorporates as the Fountain Square Church & Community Project. His wife, Mollie, pastors the two local Methodist churches already involved. Together with Helen Fehr, they form a team to lead the various fronts of community renewal, backed by a core committee of around a dozen people meeting weekly.

### **Act III Plans and Money**

Now funding efforts begin to bear fruit: McCormick Seminary in Chicago provides \$2,500 up front for a community housing forum to involve the neighbourhood. The forum births a formal neighbourhood association and a summer youth corps for involving area youth in community renewal. Next comes \$20,000 a year for three years for administration. Programs are defined: abandoned houses will be gut-rehabbed and sold to participating low-income families; there will be essential repairs to the homes of elderly and low-income

families to keep their dwellings up to code. Local youth will be trained in skills as they help with community renewal.

### **Act IV The Happening**

Now the work begins. Jesse Clements oversees administration and construction, including volunteer work crews. Kevin Ogle is a fulltime carpenter and a good leader. Ron Stuckey, a VISTA volunteer, becomes the purchasing officer and bookkeeper. Two interns are sent by the UMC Board of Global Ministries, and Juanita Bryant, a volunteer from North Carolina, becomes office manager and heads up the volunteer program. The volunteers keep the work rolling. Last year, they put in 800 hours a month. They come from urban and suburban churches, small ones, big ones. They come for work camps of a week, or they come for the Saturday work day—the big day of the week. They also come from service clubs, from universities, from schools.

The chaplain of De Pauw University, Fred Lamar, seized on this project as ideal involvement for his students. Between 25 and 100 come for one Saturday a month to work



*Before and after pictures of 908 Randolph—dedicated October 21, 1990, and now occupied by a new homeowner—Chris Taylor and her two sons.*



on the gut rehabbing or on repair of elders' homes.

Probationers from the criminal and civil courts come to work in lieu of going to jail. Some continue to come after their stipulated hours are completed.

People want to come back. They like the spirit of joy among the workers, although the work is often hard and dirty, like tearing down a burned attic and putting it into a dumpster. But people can see the results of their labour; they can work side by side with the family that will be moving in and their neighbours. A hot lunch is served at one of the churches. After lunch, some are assigned to other small teams. Everyone takes pride in producing fine quality work, and making the houses a place of beauty.

Where did the money come from? The seed money launched the project and has underwritten costs when there have been cash flow crises. A bank adopted the project and offered no-interest loans up to \$22,000 for acquisition and rehab materials. Once one loan is repaid after the sale of a house, another loan is made. Other banks now look to participate.

The City of Indianapolis granted nearly \$70,000 for gut rehab, elders' repairs and administration costs. \$40,000 came from the State of Indiana for donor tax credits. Local churches bring money



*Students from DePauw University do whatever is needed, from building a new fence to digging trenches for sewer lines or finishing indoor painting. And they smile as they work.*

for materials and give through pledges. Support comes from more than thirty urban and suburban churches. Local businesses donate materials such as bathroom fixtures.

And what of follow-through on the buyers? Non-material support comes from a mentor system behind the scenes. Members from the core committee are each assigned to a buyer family; each mentor stays in touch with the family to waylay crises, to access resources from the community, to encourage and support. The mentor assignment carries through for two years after purchase.

To buy, families have to get their credit in order. To assure the banker, they must show proof of stable income, suffi-

cient to pay the mortgage. At least one family member must go through homeowner training consisting of twelve three-hour modules on managing finances, maintaining property, nurturing family solidarity, and sustaining good neighbour relations. In addition, the family must work at least 350 hours on the project. Most of them put in many more hours than that. Once they get started, they can't stay away.

### **Act V Project Fruition**

A new formula is emerging. The price for a house in good shape has fallen from an average of \$38,000 to \$28,000. Sweat equity covers the down payment, and closing costs are folded into the mortgage. As a

result, paying a monthly mortgage for a rehabbed house costs less than renting a dilapidated house.

Four houses a year are gut-rehabbed and at least ten homes a year receive major repairs. Attractive, energy-efficient houses are being produced at low cost. Despairing families are given dignity. A bridge is being built over the widening gap between American inner city and suburban realities. Houses restored to usefulness and beauty are a blessing to new homeowners who have begun once again to dream. Intergenerational trust has been renewed. Youth are resisting the pull of gangs, staying in school, and being recognized as leaders. Elderly people faced with eviction now have a place to turn; their homes are repaired and they smile.

And now energy is rippling across the neighbourhood—other houses are painted, windows washed, gutters repaired, siding installed, gardens planted. Residents see that it is possible to work together, to support each other, to make a good environment for individual families and for their whole neighbourhood. Community is becoming real. ❖

*For more information contact Jesse Clements, 3038 Fall Creek Parkway, Indianapolis, IN 46205, USA. Tel. (317) 925-9297.*

## SAVING URBAN AMERICA

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### Getting There is Half the Problem

I once asked a transportation consultant to name the single most efficient mode of mass transit. His reply: "Stop people from moving around so much."

Nothing we can do with mass transit can match the effect of lessening the need for people to travel. One study, for example, has found that doubling the population density of a city reduces annual per capita auto mileage by 25 to 30 per cent.

On the other hand, high-tech mass transit projects can have deceptive results. When I suggested two decades ago that Washington's new Metro system would increase street traffic, the notion was typically considered bizarre. Sixty-odd miles later, it is an indisputable fact.

The reasons for this seeming contradiction include the basic fact that a subway, unlike streetcars or buses, does not compete for space with automobiles. Further, subways encourage new development, but only a minority of commuters to that new development use the subway. Hence, almost inexorably, the subway makes matters worse.

Fortunately, the experience of San Francisco and Washington, as well as the mind-boggling capital expense of heavy rail, has taken the bloom off the subway fad. More and more cities are renewing interest in streetcars or "light rail." A subway encourages "nodes" of development, often a considerable distance apart. The economics of subway development are such that true neighbourhood facilities are shunned in favour of regional or upscale attractions. Thus one ends up with numerous miniature downtowns but no place to get your laundry done. The trolley, on the other hand, disperses development, costs less for proximity to its route and physically takes space from the automobile.

Even the humble bus could be a much more effective part of the typical city's mass transit mix. Exclusive bus lanes can easily be created on major arteries, especially if they are counter-flow lanes in which the bus lanes run in the opposite direction of the automobile traffic. Cars tend to treat such counter-flow lanes with considerable respect. Buses could be made more efficient by giving them priority (through the use of flashing stoplights like the ones on school buses) pulling in and out of bus



stops. Buses could have zappers to control signal lights. And buses could have exterior bike racks to encourage multi-modal use. With reasonable effort, urban bus transportation could become as least as good as it is at your average airport or theme park.

The bicycle is another greatly unused form of transit in this country. According to V. Setty Pendakur, a professor at the University of British Columbia, China in 1985 had about 300 million bikes and 1.2 million cars. In the US there were 103 million bikes but 139 million cars. The average occupancy of a bike in India is greater than the average occupancy of a car on the Bay Bridge. Yet here we still regard the bike as a recreational vehicle.

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*Subways encourage new development, but only a minority of commuters to that new development use the subway.*

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In fact, the bike is an extremely efficient way to move people around. Through any given amount of space, you can move about twice as many people per hour by bike as you can by car, and more than 50 per cent as many by bus.

Yet not only do we not recognize the bicycle in urban planning, we discourage it both here and abroad. Pendakur reports that the US is giving China \$10 billion in aid for car-related projects in

Shanghai. Yet only two per cent of all trips in that city are made by car; 43 per cent are by bike. Under the plan, bikes will be taken off main roads to give more room to cars. Further, 83 per cent of the World Bank's urban transportation lending is for car-oriented projects. Pendakur has a different vision:

We can reduce, cut and curtail the land allocated to the car. We can make car owners and users pay the full cost of their vehicles, including direct roadway and parking costs, environmental costs, traffic control costs and policing costs. We can also encourage passive and positive modes of transport, both walking and cycling. We can redesign cities for new modes of transport. We can stop sprawl and bring the suburbs into the city. We can support public transport. Most of all we can boost the bike. As long as we think in terms of paying the full cost of the mode of transport used, the bicycle will come out on top.

Among the recommendations of AC Transit planning manager Ron Kilcoyne, is the idea of changing traffic engineering from a radial to a multi-destination orientation. He reports, "About 75 per cent of trips are non-work, yet transit is largely oriented towards work trips."

### Transforming Places

Among the revolutions in thinking that has occurred among those in the forefront of the new city movement is a respect for density. Challenging the stereotype that density produces diminished quality, two Austrian scientists pointed out to the EcoCity Conference that per capita energy use in a low-density city is twice that in a high-density city. They gave some reasons: "In high-density cities, heat can be shared across the walls of different housing units, reducing the energy use for heating. When distances are short, bicycles can be used instead of cars, and a high density area can more easily maintain adequate ridership for public transportation, using up to three to five times less energy than single-person autos. With shorter distances for distribution, pipelines for sewage, gas, water, etc. can be shorter, and energy needed for pumping is reduced."

Denmark has taken the idea much further, creating whole ecovillages, described by Floyd Stein, a Danish architect, as "more of an idea than a place." Some of these intentional communities have been laid in a spiral form, giving a design that is both compact and dynamic. But whether the product of hip

continued on page 42

# Local voices in city politics

*Cooperation is replacing confrontation  
in Chicago neighbourhood politics.*

JAMES TROXEL

Sociology professors used to tell us that “demography is destiny.” While the urban centres of the world are still defining the economic and cultural standards of living, politically the world is still organized on an agrarian pattern. International development agency programs are biased toward the rural. Provincial and state government realities—created in an agrarian age when ownership of land formed the basis of citizenship—still define the dominant political framework. “Upstate” is pitted against “downstate.”

The recent problems of the American city have given rise to a new sociological vocabulary: the “new urban pover-

ty” of the “permanent underclass.”

The challenge to governing the 21st century city seem insurmountable. Are our future cities even governable? Or does a new polity framework need to be built to view urban issues from a different perspective? Can we redefine the borders of our political imagination in order to gain fresh insight?

I believe so and want to share some working urban solutions that we’ve assisted here in Chicago. They could turn out to be elements of the new polity framework of cities. There are five:

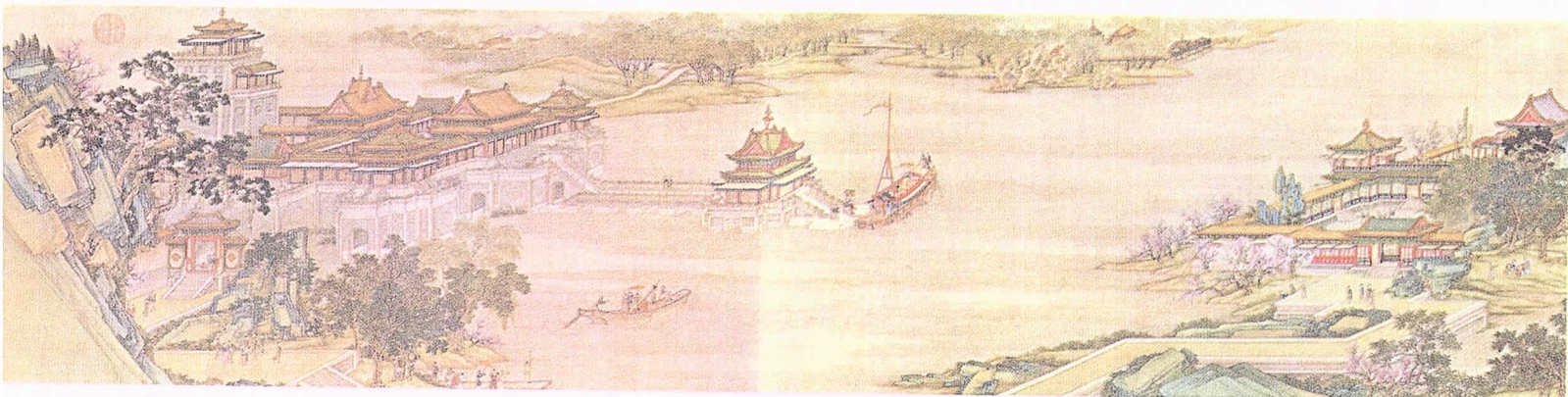
- an increase in participative democracy at the local level—the neighbourhood
- the formation of coalitions of successful neighborhood ventures
- the increase in authentic citizen participation formats
- the recovery of the role of the public servant within government
- the pressure for regional models of the polis.

## I. NEIGHBOURHOODS TAKING CHARGE

I learned a very important lesson about sustainable development in the Fifth City community on Chicago’s west side many years ago. We were working with the owner of a small grocery store trying to increase its sales. It had plenty of customers but they were buying only about \$1.60 per visit.

We believed that if we could get the customers to buy more by reducing the cost of each item, overall sales would go up. So we worked long and hard to get the store into a cooperative buying program. Finally we succeeded and waited for sales to go up. The per visit purchases did increase, but the store wasn’t doing any better. Why? Fewer customers were walking through the doors. Where did the customers go? Most had been loyal from the store’s opening.

It dawned on us as we looked around the neighbour-



hood. By the time we got the new pricing strategy in place, fewer people were actually living within proximity of the store. What had happened? Over the years the community lost population as the large apartment houses slowly went into decay. How did that happen, since the buildings were largely government subsidized? Since the subsidized rent payments in turn supported a government-backed mortgage, when the government was slow to pay, repairs came slower and mortgages fell into delinquency. It was a strangely closed system: the government defaulted on the government, increasing the numbers of homeless. This pattern has happened too often to count. But why couldn't the tenants pay the rent themselves rather than relying on subsidies? The loss of industry meant fewer jobs—leaving fewer incomes in the community.

To put it another way, we learned the symbiotic relationship among the various sectors of the community: the stores need the customers, the banks need the deposits, the home owners need the mortgages, the families need the jobs, the people need the products and services. Promoting the idea of shopping locally, banking locally, employing locally, lending and borrowing locally will do a great deal to improve the economic self-sufficiency of the neighbourhood. When this cycle of funds is jeopardized, local communities suffer from forces beyond their control.

Fortunately, in Chicago we've been able to conserve the outflow of funds in many neighbourhoods. Working closely with Chicago's Department of Economic Development, we have assisted about 70 local development organizations—merchants associations and community-based organizations—to begin to formulate strategies to counter these adverse trends. We develop within these neighbourhood groups a capacity to think strategically about their areas. The foremost strategy in nearly each case is to build a stronger bond between the retail commercial sector of the

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*Citizen input should initially focus on city-wide concerns before looking at the parts.*

*Otherwise attention will focus on getting a bigger piece of (a seemingly shrinking) pie.*

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community and the residents—its natural customer base. Call it a localized version of “being close to the customer”; it has paid off.

There is also a new awareness of the interdependence between the industrial and educational sectors in finding effective micro solutions to macro problems. When the business leaders got on board the education reform wagon in Chicago, the legislative package was easily passed. Its major provision has been to create locally elected local school councils (LSCs) to decentralize the oppressive school bureaucracy. Last spring, staff of the ICA assisted 29 such LSCs in forming their school improvement plans. “School-based management” is fast becoming another way for allowing local people to solve their own problems and to control their own destiny. Business leaders are banking on this approach because they need an employable workforce in order to remain competitive in the global marketplace.

The good news is that success stories of local groups abound in Chicago and elsewhere. The key has been the use of highly participative neighbourhood democracies. To be optimally effective, they need to encompass all sectors within the community.



How do isolated success stories coagulate to reach some form of critical mass to make a long-term difference on a much broader scale?

## II. THE NEW COALITIONS

With the political expectations of successful local efforts on the rise, community activists want more responsiveness from city government; they will not tolerate patronizing efforts by city officials. Chicago neighbourhood groups banded together to educate and support themselves, and to advocate new city-wide policies and programs. Currently coalitions of groups are forming around issues like housing, jobs, recycling, school reform, day care and economic development.

One group we've worked with for the last ten years is the Chicago Association of Neighbourhood Development Organizations (CANDO). CANDO represents nearly 100 local groups trying to strengthen their neighbourhood economies and the city as a whole. We've facilitated their annual Board retreat almost every year since they began. CANDO is considered by some the strongest such group in the US.

Two years ago CANDO took an innovative but dangerous new step: to advocate a sophisticated ten-point political platform to implement programs that supported neighbourhood development. The platform included an economic development bond, a general obligation bond, a community land trust, the use of government employee pension funds to back neighbourhood projects, the strategic use of new taxing districts, and the floating of federal entitlement dollars as a financing tool. CANDO members met with their local aldermen, held neighbourhood rallies and initiated a public relations campaign. Their main concern was to assist in clarifying the values that guide Chicago's development and to make the case that the neighbourhoods deserve as much attention as the downtown "Loop."

"Has CANDO become a political party?" "Does its leader want to become mayor?" These are the kinds of questions observers ask. They are natural questions, especially when

seen from the old adversarial paradigm that has permeated the relations between City Hall and the neighbourhoods since Saul Alinsky's early community organizing efforts. But these questions miss the point.

Coalitions of neighbourhood groups form a valuable counter-balance—an alternative polity—to the established structures and can hold them effectively accountable. These coalitions are not in themselves the new urban political paradigm, but they provide a portent of the future. Empowering local people at all levels of the political process and unleashing this new energy into channels of expression are shaking the old foundations.

Can this new energy be mainstreamed into the political process through citizen participation avenues?

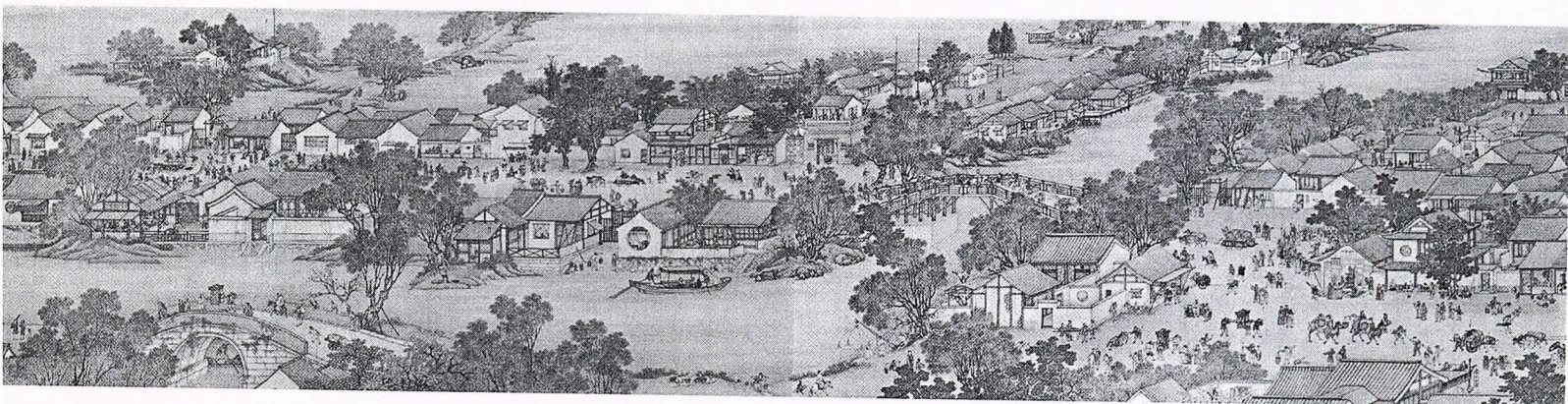
## III. CITIZENS FORMING PUBLIC POLICY

In the 60s, citizen participation became one of the hallmarks of the new government assistance programs. For every program, a "citizen advisory board" seemed to come into being to monitor it. Formal public hearings to review major development plans became common. It appeared as if the old adage, "You can't fight City Hall," was crumbling.

However, too frequently, these citizen groups were bankrupted by the process, coopted by political forces, or mesmerized by the complexity of the bureaucracy they were charged to monitor. The political equation merely added another subset; the formula stayed the same.

Authentic citizen participation, however, can make a difference, as we observed during the administration of the late mayor, Harold Washington. Encouraged by increasing numbers of community planning efforts, city planners embarked upon an innovative attempt to create a master development plan. The process peaked with a citizen conference of 300 people that ICA facilitated. An initial draft of the plan had been created. The conference was to ask the participants to confirm the overall goals of the plan, to infuse the goals with suggested specific accomplishments, and then to envision implementation possibilities. The participants af-

*The regional approach  
is the leading edge  
of the urban polity  
agenda.*





firmed five goals:

1. increase job opportunities
2. promote balanced growth (between downtown and the neighbourhoods)
3. assist neighbourhood development
4. encourage cultural development
5. provide quality education.

The conference exposed an intriguing public planning and policy question—how does the city balance locally initiated plans, proposals and implementation with a more comprehensive view of development plans? How can the city deal with raised expectations resulting from real citizen participation? One aspect of the issue is clear: while the experimentation with how to tap people's wisdom and input will continue, an educational component is needed so that participants can consider the ability to deliver on those expectations. One of the things we learned is that, to create a context, citizen input should initially focus on city-wide concerns before looking at the parts. Perspective is required. Otherwise attention is focussed on getting a bigger piece of (a seemingly shrinking) pie.

Another important element of citizen participation is to insist that people also struggle with how to implement their proposals, so they experience the incredible complexity of large urban structures dealing with those proposals.

The bottom-up approach to planning puts pressure on the upper levels to respond. There are always frustrations along the way: cynicism about local people's capacity to build realistic models, difficulties with ineffective "Robert's Rules of Order" meetings which kill the spirit; the persistence of backroom deal-making, the presumed adversarial approach to dealing with people who have different opinions. But common ground is being found, and many experiments have proved that one of the keys to urban polity is increased citizen participation at all levels of city planning.

But will the public servants, especially the bureaucrats, give way to increased citizen and community input or will they succumb to their fear of a sense of loss of power?

#### IV. RECOVERING PUBLIC SERVICE: WHAT OF THE BUREAUCRATS?

The 1980s witnessed a decreasing support of cities by the American federal government. No one felt the "doing more

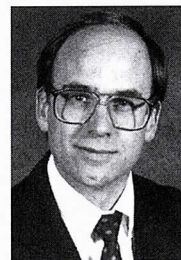
with less" stress more than the dedicated city workers themselves. Many times the reduction in the funding of social programs led to an increase in the complexity of administering the fewer assistance dollars. When that happened, the number of program administrators sometimes increased in inverse proportion to the number of program beneficiaries. Something was wrong with the way government was doing its business.

But there are some indications of wanting to do things differently. A couple of years ago we were asked to train city employees to facilitate six citizen input sessions on the city's Capital Improvement Budget. These funds are used to keep the city's infrastructure functioning. Funds are supposed to be used equitably around the city, with some targeted to where they get the most bang for the buck—for example, big ticket items such as O'Hare Airport, one of the city's biggest generators of tax revenue and jobs.

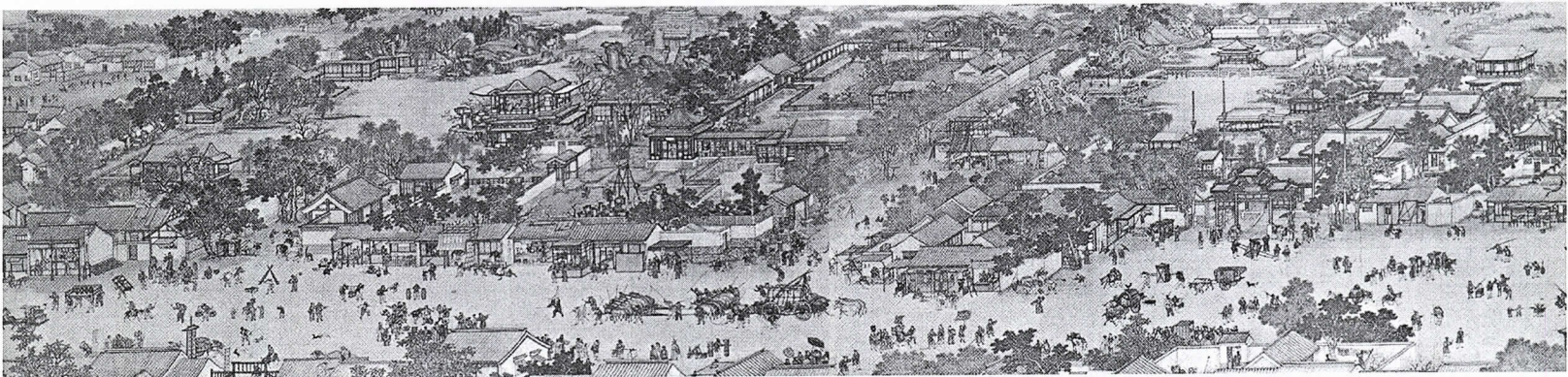
Apprehension sped through our veins. I had trained some city government people who had become pretty good facilitators, but never crusty veterans of Streets and Sanitation or Public Works. These guys were engineers who dealt with "hard" issues, leaving the "soft" people issues to others.

The first session was held on the west side of Chicago (God, why the west side first? Doesn't everybody know they demand the most because they've been left out the longest?) Just to compound the "expect nothing" sentiment, a couple of elected aldermen showed up. No way this thing was going to work, right?

Wrong! Talk about non-defensive openness! No ques-



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tion was trite. No idea was stupid. Everyone had a chance to talk. Questions were answered without evasion. The public servants listened more than they talked. When it came time to evaluate the meeting, several facilitators spoke of how these meetings had changed their view of their role in government.

Transformation of public service organizations and the people within them is another key to transforming urban polity. Renewal may be pressured from the outside, but finally comes about from within. Unless those involved in the day-to-day implementation of public policy see their role as guardians of the public will, structural change will not long endure.

We experienced this when we were asked to work with the Children and Family Services Division of the Department of Human Services a year ago. This is the agency responsible for funding most and licensing all daycare, Headstart and preschool centres in the city, some 200 in number. The agency was formed during the Model Cities era of the early 60s and many have been there since the beginning. The cynicism attributed to bureaucratic lethargy had set in.

We held seven sessions to give each person a chance to vent frustrations. Then we facilitated a planning retreat for the agency; people were beginning to see something new was being called for.

It was at a follow-up session two months into the plan that we began to notice real changes in people. There was a liveliness we had not detected before, cheerfulness in their participation, hopefulness in their anticipations, a buoyancy that made them want to work together. Director Maria Whelan said that we had “exceeded all expectations generally associated with notions of strategic planning and moved toward what can only be described as transformation.”

The task is to rebuild and reform our principal public social support systems—our public schools, our public housing and our public welfare system—by cultivating a sense of home for the future in the people who work in those agencies.

But is this enough? Isn't there something more that needs to be done to reform urban polity?

## V. REGIONAL RECONCILIATION

Several years ago the daughter of an Australian colleague miserably failed a simple geography test. All she had to do

was to draw the borders of the states of Australia on an outline of the country and then to name them. When she turned in her test, the teacher could not believe her eyes. It seems my colleague's daughter had indeed divided the country into areas, but not into states; she had divided Australia into areas around the major metropolitan centres and named each by its largest city.

When the teacher asked her where on earth she had got that idea from—since her map obviously wasn't the way it is—the student replied that her Daddy had said that was the way it was going to be!

The idea of the region seems simple: overlay political form on what already exists. But “turfism” runs deep in the human psyche.

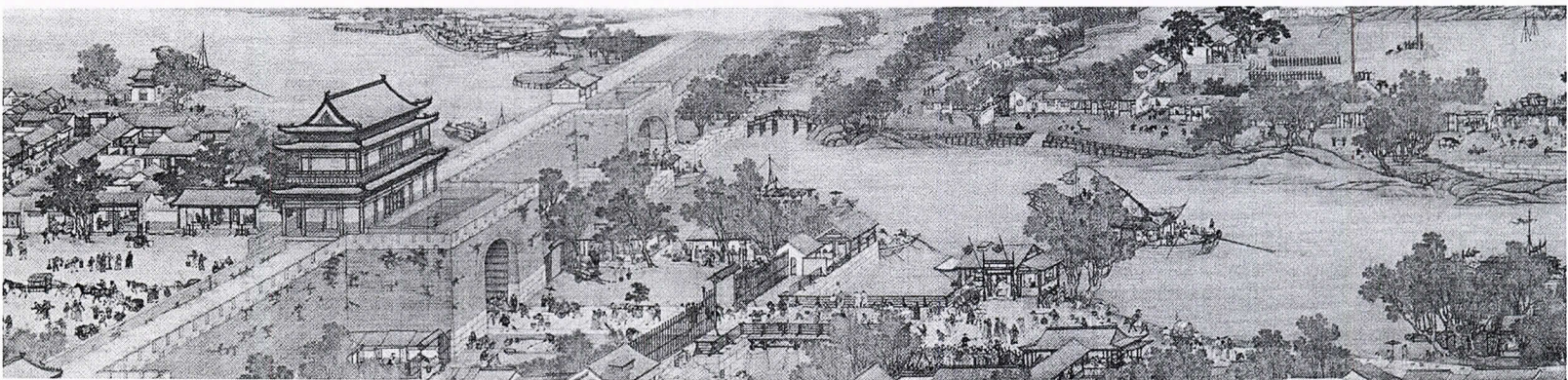
Structurally, we can image the contradiction as a mismatch between increasingly regional economic and environmental interdependence, on the one hand, and the fragmented and entrenched political jurisdictions of municipalities that make up a region, on the other. After all, isn't demography destiny?

The fact of an accidental historical boundary is absolutely meaningless in terms of how a metropolitan area needs to operate. Echoing Thomas Paine, Don Perkins of the Civic Committee of Chicago has said that “to have all these governments where everybody is protecting their own little turf means they are going to hang separately because they don't hang together.”

Celebrating regional interdependence and championing the cause of equitable distribution of the resources to care for a metropolitan area's human needs is the place to begin. Suburbanites are becoming increasingly clear that they can't thrive if the inner cities are failing. A recent news poll shows suburbanites are ready to pay more taxes to help cities. Currently cities have to pay a disproportionate amount to support the infrastructure used by the whole region.

One illustration is the funding of public schools partly from property tax revenue from existing municipal districts. More children in the city have to get an education on fewer property tax dollars than children living in the suburbs. There should be a metropolitan public school taxing body that collects and distributes revenue equitably across the whole state.

We have had the privilege of facilitating planning ses-



## Rural-Urban Mutuality

Instead of pitting the urban against the rural in some antagonistic false dichotomy, we could consider a model of a whole system of human settlement—the *urban-rural spectrum*. The urban-rural spectrum is a macro-ecology of density and sparsity, of vegetation and concrete—a natural flow of goods, services, information and people back and forth over space and through time, each needing the other, each serving the other, each needing to be careful of the special reality of the other. Rather than an either/or, “us and them” modelling of reality, we can envisage a “both/and” model: the marriage of sea and shore, of rock and sand, of urban and rural.

Of course, this macro-ecology faces many challenges: how does the countryside feed the city; how does the city provide seasonal jobs for the countryside; how does the rural area provide recreation and natural beauty for the city dwellers; and how does the city offer opportunities for cultural activities, international interchange, excellent medical and educational facilities to the country folk?

What we see in many instances is in fact a blending and overlapping of who is who. In Venezuela, where I have worked for some time, villagers from the country also have a small home in Caracas in the barrio. In the city they find work when there is no cacao to tend; they earn additional income which they take back to their village. They love their villages because of the slow, quiet, natural way of life. They also like the city for its opportunities of income generation and self-improvement. Likewise, the city dweller is also a naturalist at heart, leaving the city on weekends and holidays to hike, fish and farm. The urban-rural relationship can be seen as mutual, symbiotic, dialogic—a reciprocity, a dance back and forth, to and fro, a yin and yang, night and day, male and female.

—Rob Work, excerpted from his working paper, *Human Development and Urbanization: A Planetary Perspective*

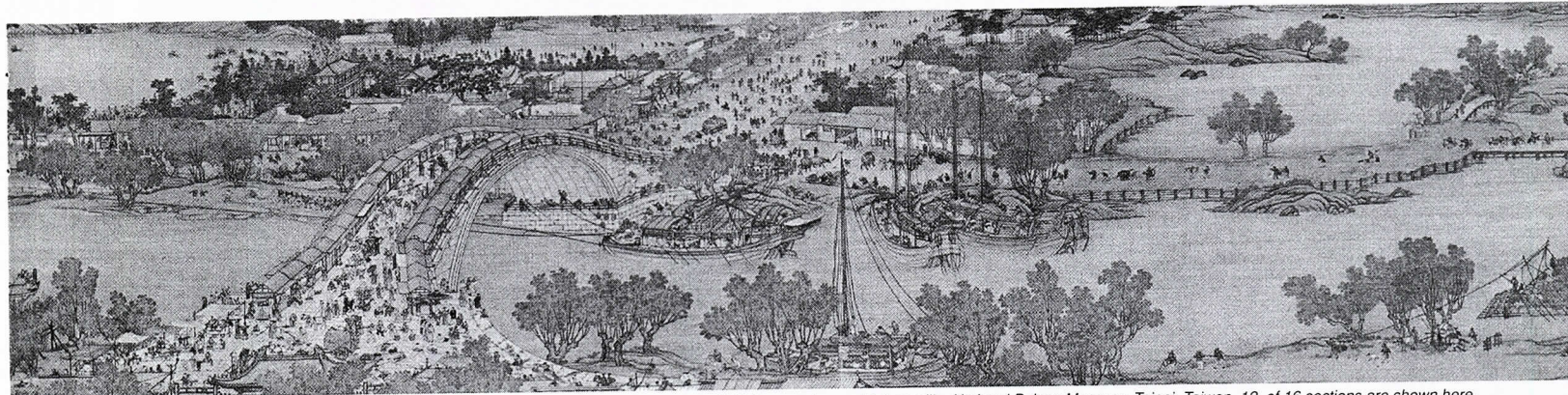
sions with several regional “mayors and managers” meetings in the Chicago metropolitan area. These cover, for example, the northwest suburban communities, the south suburban, and so forth. While we have detected a willingness to plan and coordinate together, that willingness seems to be restricted to a small area rather than the whole metropolitan area.

Imposing a regional polity structure—even if it were accepted—would not deal with the issue. What regional polity structures do exist—for example, the regional transportation authority—are driven by economics. A deeper motivation must be tapped for new political alignments or regional taxing bodies to make sense.

Political realities follow the collective public imagination. New images of regional interdependence need to be championed. Redefining the “city” to include the entire urban region was perhaps the most significant proposal to come out of a summit of 35 urban mayors meeting in New York this past November.

In our opinion, the regional approach is the leading edge of the urban polity agenda. While region-wide problems have become fairly clear, they have yet to crack archaic boundaries. Will the problems of crime, drugs, housing and other urgent issues need to become even more acute before suburbanites themselves call for more comprehensive solutions? Or is some more subtle shift underway that will make old jurisdictions simply irrelevant? Will air pollution standards require a tough regional agency? Will regional non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other cross-boundary coalitions emerge?

Our experience in Chicago tells us that reconciliation is the political strategy for the future of the metropolitan area: reconciling the city with the suburbs, downstate with upstate, the community activists with the established leaders, the local citizens with the public servants, the whole with the parts, the past with the future. Only a whole systems approach can bring about a new urban polity. Much more experimentation in new forms is needed. ❖



A City of Cathay, 1736 (Ch'ing dynasty), handscroll by five court painters, 35.6 cm x 1152.8 cm, colour and ink on silk. National Palace Museum, Taipei, Taiwan. 12 of 16 sections are shown here.

# The Healthy Cities Project

TREVOR HANCOCK

Many would be surprised to learn that the greatest contribution to the health of the nation over the past 150 years was made, not by doctors or hospitals, but by local government.

—Dr. Jessie Parfit

*The Health of a City: Oxford 1770 to 1974*

It is customary to equate health with doctors, hospitals and the health care system, but in the past ten or fifteen years, we have come to recognize, or rather to relearn, that a community needs much more than a good health care system to be truly healthy.

When we ask people what is important for their health, they are likely to talk about family, friends and neighbours, having a good job, and living in a good neighbourhood. In the last 150 years, health improvements have come with cleaning up the environment, getting clean water to people, getting rid of waste safely, upping income and living standards, providing good housing in well planned communities, and making sure people have access to inexpensive, safe and wholesome food.

Municipal government plays a very important role in many of these areas. So do provincial and national governments; but local government is closest to the community and perhaps, more than any other, understands the community's problems. Local government can encourage and support local participation by involving citizen groups and neighbourhood associations in identifying local projects; engaging business, labour, the United Way, church and volunteer groups; establishing health goals for each



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*Utopian or essential?*

*City dwellers define the community they want.*



*From Future Lab 1990, a congress for and by children at the Munich Town Hall. World Health Organization Healthy Cities Project: a project becomes a movement, Copenhagen, 1990.*

local government department and asking them to identify how they can best contribute to health in the future; getting kids thinking about the future of the community and looking at how to make the community more healthy. Ultimately, a community's health will only improve if the community itself, through its members, increases its control over the determinants and prerequisites of its own health.

The Healthy Cities Project was born out of two recognitions:

- much of what makes for healthy people and healthy communities is not within the jurisdiction of the health care system or the public health department,
- local communities and local governments can play an important role in creating a healthier future for us all.

The Healthy Cities Project originated in a 1984 workshop on Healthy

Toronto 2000. It now involves communities all over Europe (where it is sponsored by the World Health Organization) and in Australia and the USA. In Canada, the Canadian Institute of Planners, supported by the Canadian Public Health Association and the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, has developed a Canadian Healthy Communities Project in the hope that municipal governments will join with urban planners and public health professionals in a project to make our communities, towns and cities more healthy.

## Utopias and Realities

The Healthy Cities concept challenges cities with two seemingly simple questions: What is a healthy city? And how do we get one? The first question takes us into the realm of utopias; the second brings us face to face with reality.



## Have you heard?

Utopian thinking has got what the Americans would call “a bum rap.” Somehow, the term has come to mean hopelessly idealistic, airy-fairy, “pie in the sky” thinking that ignores the “real world.” That is because we have misconstrued its role. Good utopian thinking provides us with a beacon to light our way forward and a goal to strive to achieve; it tells us what we would like the world to be like, as opposed to what we think it will be like.

In government or business institutions, utopian thinking is more often referred to as “visions,” “preferred outcomes,” or “scenarios”; but this technical jargon is merely shorthand for utopian thinking allied to a clear, pragmatic process of planning strategic action, of figuring out how to get from here to there. For, as John Naisbitt, American futurist and author of *Megatrends*, has noted, “Strategic planning is worthless unless there is first a strategic vision...which guides every step of the process.”

A *vision* is just that: a visual image in the mind’s eye of what it is like when everything we wish for has come to pass: in this case, our city or community as healthy as possible. A vision is developed most easily in small or even large groups using *guided imagery* in which people are led or guided to see in the mind’s eye how things could be. Used in Toronto for the first healthy city vision workshops in 1986, this process has been subsequently used all over the world.

The process uses small-group drawings to combine individual visions to form a commonly shared vision, then converts it into a story or scenario describing it in easily understood, everyday terms. It is important that workshop participants come from all sectors of society and are a good mix of the different social and ethnic groups in the city.

It is also important that each community or city go through this exercise for itself and not just adopt some other city’s vision. Every community or city has its own understanding of what health is in its own situation.

We are standing on a huge vibrating ball of sound. It is so loud we cannot hear it, but everything on planet earth is affected by it. Scientists, musicians and acousticians have all been speculating about the tone, the keynote or the vibratory standard, of the earth.

Heaven knows that there are few agreements as to which note sounds the earth’s key. Even though it is made to sound simple by musicians like Paul Winter who thinks the earth vibrates at D-flat, it is a complex question. The sound of the earth is not like your bathroom where there is a constant acoustic field for shower singing. The earth is surrounded by different atmospheres at different latitudes. The acoustic response is actually different at each sunrise, sunset, noon and midnight throughout the earth.

So, what’s new about the earthly “music of the spheres”? There is speculation that when a physical body is out of resonance in brainwave patterns with the atmosphere of the earth, physical ease in sleeping and working is not likely. Laurie Rugenstein, a music therapist in Boulder, Colorado, is experimenting with a sonic table that tunes up the brain waves with octaves based on the electromagnetic field around the earth.

According to the Shumann Effect, the earth’s frequency is about 7.82

cycles per second. This is curious because this is the frequency at the cross section between the alpha and theta brain waves in a state of deep relaxation and sleep.

Futurist Barbara Marx Hubbard has a vision of a planetary experience in which a tone will vibrate throughout the earthly body aligning the human family in harmony. “Each person will be oriented by a sound frequency as iron filings would respond in a magnetic field. We will be harmonized by the tone of the earth. In that field, each of us may experience from within the spirit, God. Our inner voice will sing...each in its own language, of the mighty work of humanity at one with God.”

Barbara and her partner Carol Rosin have invented a world attuner. It is a pitch pipe in harmonic resonance with the earth. They aim at a world event in which 50 million people sound this tone together in a day of “World Attunement.” For more information on Barbara’s attuner, call Island Pacific at (206) 376-50045. Toning, singing and this little instrument are good ways to celebrate and harmonize on Earth Day, April 22. ❖

—Don Campbell

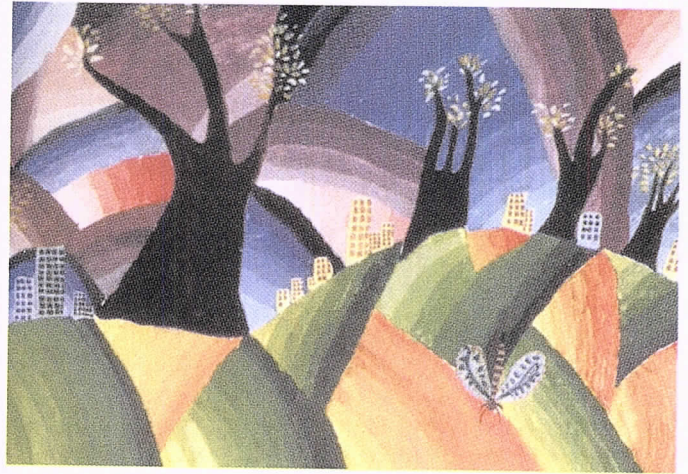
*Don Campbell is Director of the Institute for Music, Health and Education, P.O. Box 1124, Boulder, Colorado 80306. Tel. (303) 443-8484.*

Health-improving strategies—the “reality” that utopian visions can lead us to—run the gamut from political, social, environmental and economic changes to community empowerment and personal action. Toronto provides an example of the application of the Healthy City concept in Canada’s largest city. In 1986, the City of Toronto’s Board of Health initiated a “Healthy Toronto 2000” strategy. The committee went through a process that included vision workshops with department staff and community members, a comprehensive environmental scan, the development of a widely distributed issues paper, a series of public reviews

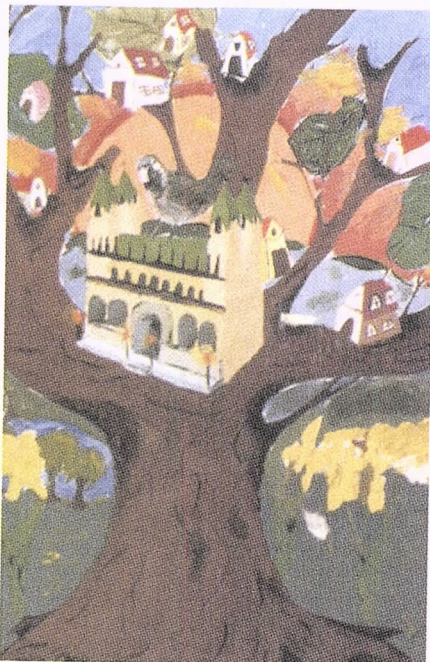
and hearings, and a final report outlining major issues, strategic mission and priorities and recommendations for action. This process took two years; the final report—*Healthy Toronto 2000*—was approved by the Board of Health in late 1988 and unanimously by City Council in early 1989.

The report recommends two parallel strategies: the first for the city as a whole, the second for the Department of Public Health. Each strategy encapsulates a set of health goals. The overall goals for the city are:

- to reduce inequities in health opportunities



From a national drawing contest in Pécs, Hungary for children (aged 6-14 years) on the theme "Health and my city." WHO Healthy Cities Project: a project becomes a movement, Copenhagen, 1991.



- to create physical environments supportive of health
- to create social environments supportive of health
- to advocate a community-based health services system.

The goals for the Department of Public Health were intended to bolster its role in the broader city-wide initiative; specifically in disease prevention, health protection, promotion, education, and the collection and analysis of health information.

It was deemed essential, no matter what the program, that particular attention be paid to the needs of the most disadvantaged and vulnerable groups in the city who experience the greatest health inequalities. All programs are to ensure that their activities are socially and culturally appropriate and relevant. A com-

munity development approach should facilitate the strengthening and empowerment of the community.

The city-wide strategy has led to the setup of a Healthy City Office with a full time staff of seven, including a policy analyst and two community workers. The office is not part of the Department of Public Health; instead it is managed by a multi-department steering group and reports directly to the City commissioners.

### Three Major Concerns

Toronto's Healthy City Project has three main concerns:

- equity
- participation
- sustainability.

*Equity:* Every city has dramatic health inequalities. The poor and disadvantaged experience more ill health and die younger than their wealthier fellow citizens. They do not have equal access to food, shelter, education and literacy, safe environments, good working conditions, or adequate income. No city can consider itself healthy in the face of hunger, homelessness, unemployment, poverty, illiteracy, or the exploitation of workers in dangerous and unhealthy environments.

In the face of these issues, Toronto has set up FoodShare, an agency developing self-help alternatives to emergency food banks (e.g. food buying clubs and community gardens), and a Food Policy Council; passed several tough environmental by-laws; established an Environmental Protection Office, a Labour Development Institute, and a Women and Work Institute; started an internal "Healthiest Workplace

Possible" project; and set up several innovative housing programs, notably "Street City," where homeless people have literally built their own housing inside an old Canada Post warehouse.

*Participation* is the key to any Healthy City project: not only for the obvious democratic reason, but because those who participate creatively in the decisions which shape the conditions of their lives will be more healthy—they are empowered people. The Toronto project is seeking a wide variety of ways to increase people's participation in and ownership of this city-wide project—in effect, to turn it into a movement, as has happened elsewhere in Canada and Europe.

*Sustainability* is shorthand for environmentally sustainable economic development—"a form of development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (World Commission on Environment and Development). Imbalances between environment and economy affect the environment's ability to support life. The concept of sustainable development challenges us to distribute economic benefits equitably within and between nations so as to ensure health for all.

Now, cities are where most of us live; they contain a concentration of the intellectual resources needed to take the leap to sustainable development. Cities also make excessive demands and create excessive impacts on local, regional and planetary ecosystems. A city that is not striving to be sustainable can hardly call itself a Healthy City.

*continued on page 43*

## Tokyo, the Liveable City

The city planners of Koto-ku, a neighbourhood in Tokyo, Japan, got together to create their vision of the liveable city. It is no easier for planners to agree on the future than it is for other local residents. But as planners they have a good sense of what is really possible. At least three items of their 24-part vision seem bold enough to be relevant for other major cities. Here are some particularly exciting ideas.

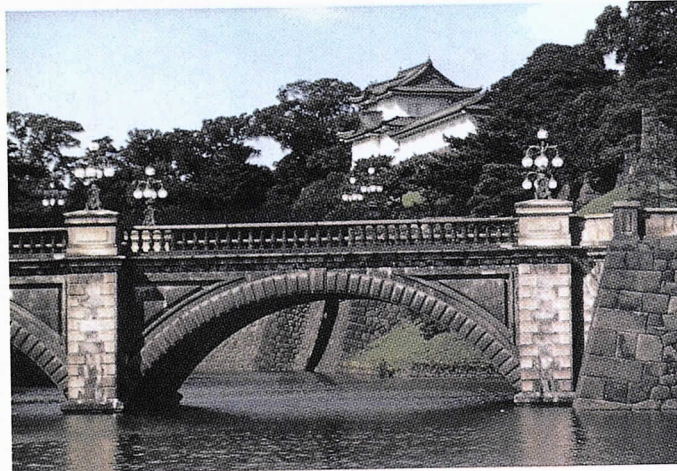
### Move parking lots underground

Part of their vision of safe and convenient roads for cars and pedestrians was to move parking lots underground and create green parks for people above them. This move would create small parks throughout Tokyo and would help reduce noise pollution and general stress levels, giving the population places to stroll, enjoy lunch and relax.

### Replace concrete walls with hedges

To improve the environment and create a richer, greener town, they want to replace the concrete walls which separate older traditional family homes with hedges. The security once provided by the walls is no longer needed; hedges could provide the necessary privacy, allow the area to breathe, and help moderate the temperature. Such a move, on a mass scale, would occasion immediate physical and psychological relief.

### Town making in the Edo tradition



Traditional architecture in Tokyo. Photo: Lukas F.K. Hsiao, Taipei.

Parts of the city have some traditional Edo architecture. The 16th century Edo era was a time of great community and, to recapture that community spirit, the city planners thought to bring back the Edo style. In addition, they want to set up a petting zoo, clean the river, open the schools for multi-purpose activities, and create a 24-hour nursery system. They also envisage a space communication centre, the revival of back streets, a five-day-a-week school schedule (reduced from the normal six-day school week) with classes in international relations.

—Shizuyo Sato, Tokyo

*Ms. Sato is an ICA facilitation and planning consultant who works with various government departments in Japan.*

## Step Over The Green Line

In the beautiful hills of Wales,

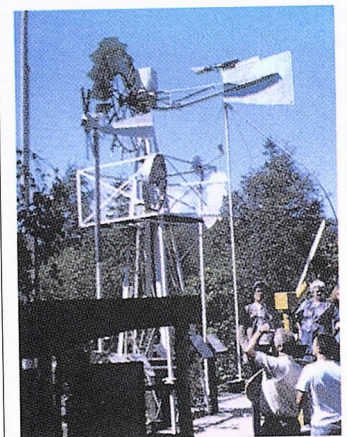
visitors can discover a sustainable future at Machynlleth, 280 kms from London. “Step Over the Green Line And Leave the British Power Grid Behind,” says the sign that greets a visitor to the Centre for Alternative Technology—a miniature world of green living. The world of coal and nuclear power generation disappears as wind turbines, solar panels and water wheels supply all the electricity and heat requirements for the community of 40 full-time residents and 55,000 yearly visitors. Since 1975, the centre has been a model of alternative living possibilities: organic gardens, highly insulated homes, ecological displays, solar panels, wind turbines, a well stocked book and craft store, and a fantastic vegetarian restaurant—the Egon Ronay. All these have offered visitors inspirational examples of what they can do for themselves.

The best way to see the

Centre is to arrive just after opening at 10 a.m. when it is not too crowded, and then wander through all the displays at a leisurely pace. This gives you plenty of time to read all the display notice boards, try the hands-on experiments, take pages of notes, have a lunch, browse through the bookstore, and let the kids play in the playground. Four hours later you emerge with plans on how to superinsulate your home, recycle all waste products, generate your own electricity, and grow that organic garden that has been swirling round in your head.

The Centre for Alternative Technology (Canolfan Y Dechnoleg Amgen) has been promoting and displaying sustainable technologies for over 15 years. For further information the Centre can be contacted at C.A.T., Machynlleth, Powys SYN 9AZ, UK Tel: (0654) 702400

—Michael Szuta  
St. Catherines



Wind energy at the Centre for Alternative Technology, Wales.

## Carrot Common Mall

Carrot Common, in Toronto, is not an urban vegetable garden, but it is a garden of earthly delights. In this retail mall on Toronto's ethnic Danforth Avenue you can get locally designed clothing, have your sore neck looked after by a chiropractor, get a small business loan from the credit union, find a hard-to-locate book or magazine from the book store, see a Chinese herbal doctor, stop for a rest at a cozy coffee shop and then stock up for the week at the largest natural food store in the city. The entire mall is a very friendly place and people who are interested in a healthy life style are attracted to shop and to work there.

A big part of the attraction is The Big Carrot, a cooperative health food store that is one of a very few worker-owned retail outlets in North America. Since 1983 The Big Carrot has helped fill the increasing demand for top quality organic produce. In 1987 the store, bursting at the seams, acquired a share in a lot across the street. With the help of David Walsh, an innovative Toronto financier, a mall was built and tenants found to make Carrot Common a wholistic service centre with a leaning toward non-traditional medicine. In the Common there are specialty gift shops, an acupuncture clinic, a monthly magazine, a yoga centre and much more.

Store Manager Daiva Kryzanavskas said that The Big Carrot works hard to sustain its homey atmosphere.



The worker-owners try to accommodate all special requests, and customer service is second to none. They purchase direct from farmers who deliver eggs, meat, fruits and vegetables and a large variety of other organic produce from far outside the city.

Occasionally they invite the Kawartha Farmers Coop to set up their own sales stall in the common area of the mall, creating the atmosphere of a farmers' market. "On Saturday mornings the store turns into a giant meeting place with lots of parents and their kids coming to shop and to discuss their personal and common affairs with other clients and shoppers." The fact that many of the shoppers are preferred shareholders who helped with the expansion, enhances this cultural aspect.

Each of the separate businesses in Carrot Common has its own clientele, but when visiting Carrot Common, one experiences a sense of camaraderie and a "we're all glad to be in this together" feeling. As an example of the vari-

ous interests in Carrot Common one need look no further than the Big Carrot's financial statement. From the net profit 10% goes to charities, 10% to help finance other co-operative projects, 10% to business expansion, and 70% back to the members. In this way the worker-owners have helped finance educational projects in the Caribbean and worker coops in other industries.

Carrot Common is only four years old and there is still lots of room for growth. Daiva said, "Since each business in the mall has its own purpose and clientele, it is sometimes difficult to find anything common between us all, and there is no one place where new shoppers can get a complete picture of all the services available. I really hope that we might be able to do something about that in the future." The dream of finding a neutral, caring meeting place is a common dream among many urban dwellers, but Carrot Common has an enviable record in helping it to come true.

—Bill Staples, Toronto

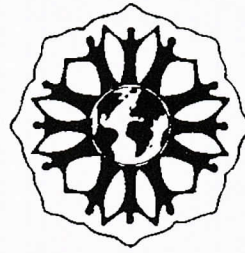
## It's All a Load of Rubbish!

I know it's Friday when I walk out my front door and see the three-tiered recycling crates dotted up and down our street. Yellow for glass, aluminum and certain plastics, light green for mixed paper and dark green for newspaper. And if I walk out my back door, I'm confronted with our new composter delivered free by the city to encourage me to compost my garden waste.

This is because I live in Seattle, Washington, home to one of the most innovative waste reduction and recycling systems operating today. Instituted in 1988 due to skyrocketing landfill fees and community resistance to garbage incineration, Seattle's recycling program is already more than halfway to achieving its ambitious goal of recycling 60% of its garbage by 1998. The American average is around 17%. Due to the intensive recycling efforts, about 1,100 Seattle households generate no waste at all.

But why have 82% of Seattle's eligible households signed up for recycling and why do 10,000 have compost bins? Is it just Puget Sound's strong environmental ethic coming of age? That's part of it for sure, but there's more to it. Seattle Solid Waste Utility, the city's self-sustaining "enterprise fund" which operates the recycling program, provides key economic incentives to entice citizen participation. For instance, a 19-gallon mini-can





## The Global Family Update

Newsletter of the Global Family available from:  
112 Jordan Avenue  
San Anselmo, CA 94960  
Tel. (415) 453-7600

for general garbage collection costs \$10.70 per month. A 60-gallon container costs \$22.75.

Like any innovative social program, this one has had its teething troubles. Ironically, one of the major challenges the program faces is selling its recycled waste. Market prices for recycled material fluctuate greatly, especially for newspaper and mixed papers, much of which is sold to Asia. However, two of the Northwest's largest pulp and paper manufacturers have plans to produce recycled paper products.

Another hitch in introducing the system has been its effect on small, private recycling companies and charities, some of whom have been put out of business. The city has tried to assist these operators by offering them contracts for apartment building collection and advertising their services as part of the total recycling effort.

Known most for its curbside recycling, Seattle's waste reduction program currently has 14 separate projects in operation and more on the drawing board.

These include systems to recycle more difficult items such as disposable diapers, hazardous household waste and latex paint. A key target is to promote recycling in every office in the city. Another pilot scheme charges residents by the pound for their garbage. A scale and optical scanner attached to garbage trucks weighs the amount of garbage collected and bills the household, in the same way that water and electricity systems do.

Perhaps the key to Seattle's successful recycling program has been the strong element of volunteerism that underlies the whole operation. An active and ambitious corps of volunteers, "Friends of Recycling," is working door-to-door to increase sign-ups and spread the word. As Utility Director Diana Gale says, "Our recycling program is a success because you [the citizens] are making it work and you continue to ask us for more services and advice on ways to reduce waste." Utopia? No. Ecotopia? Maybe. The future? Surely. ♦

—John Burbidge, Seattle

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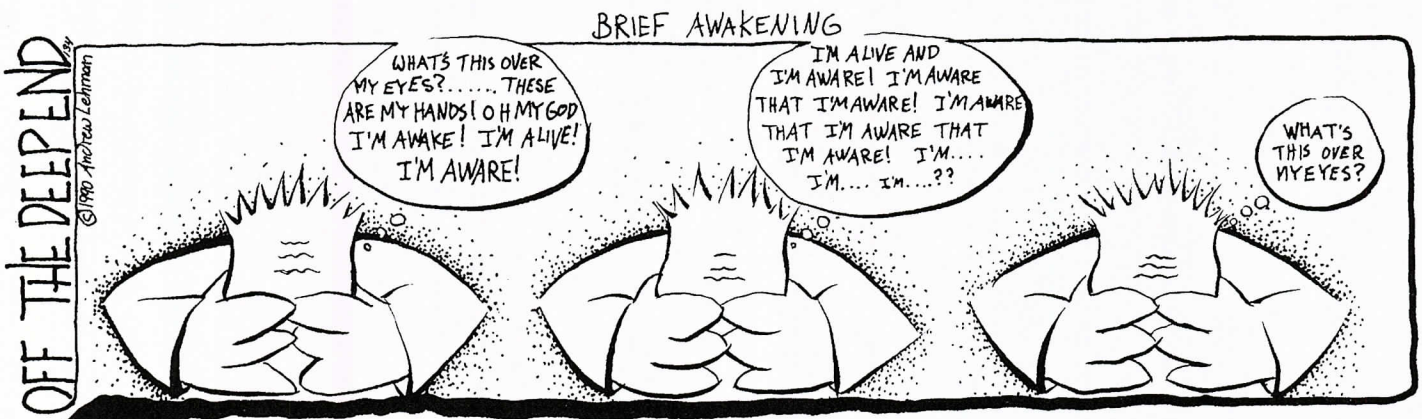
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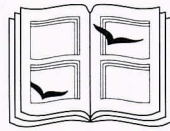
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## Good Reading

### **ON THE BREATH OF THE GODS A Spiritual Journey to Inner Worlds of Beauty, Danger and Endless Adventure**

by Ariel Tomioka

A Helios House Book, co-published with The Pythagorean Press of Australia and New Zealand, Carmichael, CA. Paperback, 265 pages. Can\$13.95, US\$10.95.

“How real are you?” Ariel Tomioka is asked by the guides of the inner dimensions. That question takes her on a “spiritual journey to inner worlds of beauty, danger and endless adventure.”

At the heart of the vivid personal message she shares with her readers is this statement: “You were made in the image of God. You are a creator. The masterpiece of your creating should be your Self—the individuality that is you. From that center, much can be done to bring more truth and beauty into this world. This world badly needs your contributions. The people who are so anxious to transcend this world only add to its terrible burden of passivity and self-loathing. Spirituality will not result from this denial of our humanity; it will come only through the full flowering of that humanity.”

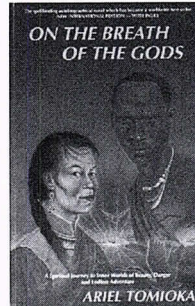
Ariel shares her own life journey to be

a creator. Her own inner wisdom grows as she looks at the feminine/ masculine currents in her life and learns from the ancient wisdom of other cultures. Spirit guides enable her to explore through dreams and visioning the negative and positive forces which hold back and release self-mastery.

Each chapter involves every day life activities, journeys into other times and places, and personal life applications. Lively conversation between the author and her inner guides examine and interpret these experiences.

Ariel explores in depth the feminine/ masculine forces as they manifest themselves in an individual, a marriage, a culture, a parent; in life goals, sex, mythology, wealth, poverty and in the task of becoming a spirit warrior. She dialogues with Jung on the *anima/animus*. She experiences the gifts and weaknesses of both of these forces and is called to integrate them within herself. She discovers that the future is relying upon a new paradigm of male-female integration. The spiritual nature of relationships is at the heart of these profound learnings.

Her explorations lead her to encour-



ters with dragons, blue herons, bears, eagles, a beautiful swan and a rabbit. She dialogues with King Arthur, Adam and Eve, Zeus and Pandora, Beauty and the Beast, and rulers of both negative and positive forces. She looks deeply at her life with her husband and her teenage son. She looks again at her childhood with its pain and joy. She

looks at the brokenness of her first two marriages. She risks herself in unknown spirit realms and dares to affirm her commission to write this book and to follow the path of the warrior.

I personally experienced this book as very challenging. In the first instance, each chapter is so vivid with sensory thrills that each is a pure joy to read. On the other hand, flashes of insight catch you off guard. Simple statements audit a life time! You find yourself savouring, rereading and applying each chapter to your own life, so that it takes courage to keep reading. You are as much on this adventure as the author is. It is strange how a book that is so personal can be so universal. Thank you, Ariel, for allowing us to travel with you “On the Breath of the Gods.”

—Jeanette Stanfield

### **POWERSHIFT Knowledge, Wealth, and Violence at the Edge of the 21st Century**

by Alvin Toffler

Bantam Books, New York, Toronto, London, Sydney, Auckland; 1990. Hardback, 585 pages. Can\$27.95, US\$22.95.

With this work, Toffler completes his trilogy that began with *Future Shock*, continued with *The Third Wave*, and now concludes with *Powershift*. To say that *Powershift* is a well-researched book is an understatement: the reference section is 100 pages long. The bibliography covers 592 books, to say nothing of other sources.

Toffler’s latest thesis is simple: “We are at the edge of the deepest powershift in human history.” Power is shifting at an

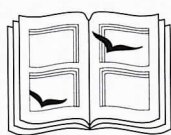
astonishing rate from its established centres as a result of the new role of mind which is changing the way wealth is made. Now, wealth, rather than overt violence, is more and more used to impose will on history. The coming struggles for power will be about the control of knowledge, which is replacing capital and substituting for resources, energy and the power of finance. Toffler footnotes that a “power shift” is a transfer of power; while a “powershift” is a deep-level change in the very nature of power.

It is important to note that “knowledge,” for Toffler, includes not only information and data, but images, imagery, attitudes, values and other symbolic



products, whether true or false. On a triangle of wealth, power and knowledge, the knowledge factor is pivotal. Today, Toffler continues, force and wealth depend on knowledge (“a fighter plane is a flying computer”) While force and wealth may be the property of the rich, knowledge can be grasped by the weak and poor as well, and is becoming the most democratic form of power; hence, it is a threat to the powerful who want to control it.

Toffler contends that “black holes”—great sucking power vacuums—are opening up in the world system. Power is shifting at such a rate that world leaders are being swept along by events rather than imposing order



## Good Reading

them. Smokestack, rust-belt industries are declining. We are witnessing a new system of wealth creation totally dependent on the instant communication and dissemination of data, ideas, symbols and symbolism—a “supersymbolic economy”—and a leap toward a revolutionary new system of production. For example? “In Texas, billionaire Ross Perot is building an airport to be surrounded by advanced manufacturing facilities. As conceived by him, planes could roar in day and night, bearing components for overnight processing or assembly in facilities at the airport. The next morning jets would carry them to all parts of the world.”

*Powershift*, as the title befits, is full of “from”s, “beyond”s and “to”s. Here’s a set from his description of the economic shift. “The shift from smokestack money to supersymbolic money (electronic blips whipping round the planet); beyond mass production, markets, and distribution toward customization, niches and micro-marketing; beyond the monolithic corporation to new forms of organization; beyond nation-state economies to operations both local and global; beyond the proletariat to a new ‘cognitariat’; from an emphasis on raw materials to marketing and sales contacts; from the hardware capital of assembly lines and machines to the software capital of ideas in employees’ heads; from an emphasis on mechanical skills to a valuation of cultural and interpersonal skills for service and care; from the exclusive control of information by manufacturers to control by retailers and customers; from manufacture to ‘mentifacure.’” Enough!

Nations brought up on mass democracies responding to mass input are giving way to a highly charged, fast-moving “mosaic democracy” corresponding to the rise of mosaics and niches in the economy. Politicians must respond to hundreds of groupings in their constituencies. In politics, too, information is critical; much of politics is conducted according to the rituals of “guided leaks,” manufactured disinformation,

back-channelling, need-to-know, and massaging the message. Computer data is massaged to provide data ammunition against opponents. Against this backdrop is the rising pressure for information over against the cult of secrecy.

As could be expected, this is at the top of many bestseller charts today. The work has many gifts: it offers a grand synthesis of many social trends, especially in business and national and global politics. It proffers example after example of the exponential rate of change. It is well argued, systematic to a fault, with one chapter leading logically into the next. It is cogent and forceful to the point where the reader may tire of an endless string of “tearing,” “ripping,” “exploding.” One might wish for a few more “emerging”s and “unfolding”s and “spiralling”s. I can hear some readers murmuring, “But this tells only part of the story.” And that is so. *Powershift* deals with exactly what its title

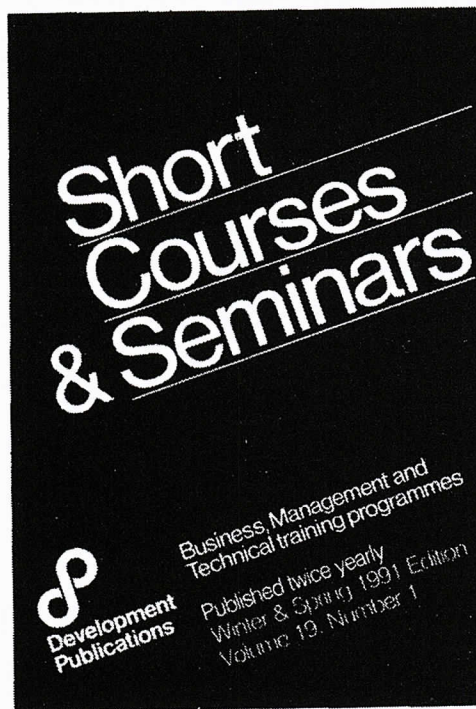
says: the trifold shift in knowledge, wealth and power and the relations between them. Toffler has been criticized for writing a book that corporations will want to buy. At the same time, there is a larger story emerging than this book deals with.

Toffler writes of the indicative of the 90s: his point is not whether such and such a trend should be happening, but that it is happening and that, to live as a lucid one in the world of the 90s, one had better be aware that this is the kind of world we live in. He leaves us with one final caveat: the importance of recognizing both the power of chaos and randomness and of a modicum of order. So, he warns in his closing admonition, beware “surplus order.” Those governments, authorities, and individuals who will do best in these whirlwind times are those who practice the light touch. ♦

—Brian Stanfield

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## SAVING URBAN AMERICA

*continued from page 27*

capitalism or ecological visionaries, these new villages challenge many of the assumptions of the city and suburbia. Paolo Soleri, the architect and philosopher, says, "Suburbia, epitomizing dispersion, consumption, waste, pollution, isolation and parochialism" is "fundamentally the nemesis of the urban effort."

One doesn't even have to create a whole new village to start building the ecocity. It can happen in the most run-down neighbourhood (a lesson learned with the vest pocket park movement in the 60s and then forgotten) or in the most bland suburb. Architect Peter Calthorpe, for example, has come up with the idea of "pedestrian pockets" which he describes like this:

A balanced, mixed-use area within a quarter-mile walking radius of a light rail station. The uses within this zone would include housing, offices, retail, daycare, recreation and open space. Up to 2000 units of housing and one million square feet of office can be located within three blocks of the light rail station using typical condominium densities and four-story office configurations.

The suburban shopping mall can also be transformed, as happened at Mashpee Commons on Cape Cod. The parking lot at the end of this mall has been turned into a semicircular plaza with columns and arches, part of a plan to convert the shopping centre into a town with pedestrian streets reminiscent of old Nantucket.

### Taking Back the City

The new city could be a new community, an ecological community based on cooperation before profit, liberty before sterile order, and justice before efficiency. The point is not to get pretty cities or cities that will salve the conscience of Sierra Club members resident therein. Human ecology also includes economic survival, it includes security, it includes happiness and it includes place. As Shakespeare said, "The people are the city." It is well past time for us to seize it back. ❖

*Abridged with permission from The Progressive Review, 1739 Connecticut Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20009-8922, USA. The Progressive Review, a subscriber newsletter, is published approximately nine times a year. One-year subscription \$13. Two-year subscription \$23. Single copies \$1.50.*

## MUSINGS

*continued from page 6*

tions, manufacturing, technology and urban culture from the face of the earth and replace them with green swards where eco-purists can live like the manorial lords of old. Confronted with chaos, dissonance and the many shadows of the urban scene, they aspire to a moral purity that has no truck with tradeoffs between the environment and people, between nature and culture, or between economics and politics. No paradoxes for them! Such purity does environmentalism and humanness a grave disservice, and may prevent environmental movements from ever becoming a political force. And again, the poor are likely to be scraped off the earth to make room for

the green swards and eco-medieval manorial lords.

And yes, I am aware that there are those in environmental movements and organizations who are daily putting their lives on the line on behalf of the future of earth and its species. And for my part, I admire them; future generations may hold them to be ecological heroes and saints.

But to be truly effective, many elements in this movement will have to move beyond angry purism, sentimentality, aestheticism and a growing eco-medievalism to a love of this world as it actually is, and to a sense of justice, which, as D.H. Lawrence put it, is the second greatest sensuality (the first being a sense of truth). ❖

—Brian Stanfield



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For further information, contact:

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## HEALTHY CITIES PROJECT *continued from page 36*

The principles for building healthy and sustainable cities are no great mystery. The urban challenge is not one of scientific or technical knowhow; it is much more the social and political application of answers already known to us. This has stalled us for many years. How do we change the social and political values and summon the social and political will to shift from our current environmentally unsustainable form of economic development to a sustainable form?

It will take the expression of political will and commitment, the establishment of intersectoral mechanisms to develop healthy and sustainable public policies, the involvement of all sectors of the community to achieve a common goal, and the mobilization of the energy, skills and resources of the city's peoples, organiza-

tions and businesses.

Though currently neglected, business and industry must be partners in this project. They have the energy, financial resources, entrepreneurial skills and political power, if these can be harnessed. One of the most important tasks for cities, therefore, must be to create forums or "round tables" that bring together business and industry, government, environmental groups and the community at large to develop comprehensive strategies and immediate actions to make cities as sustainable as possible as soon as possible.

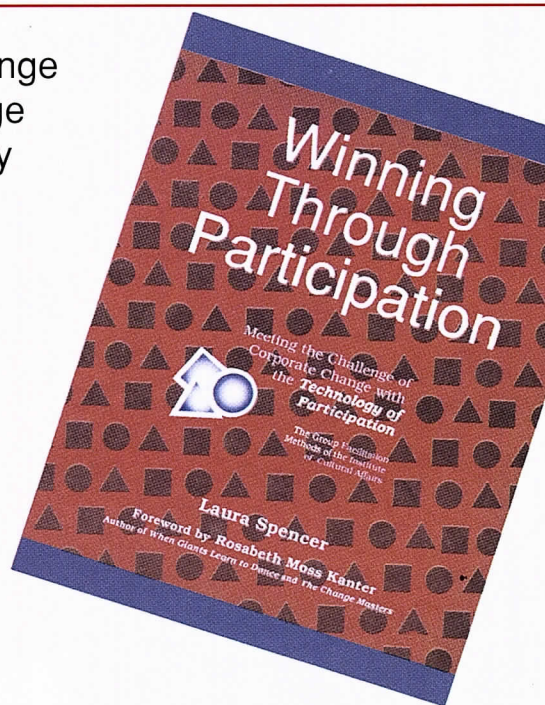
In the next few years we must ensure that our communities are equitably sustained, vitally participative and environmentally sustainable: that is to say, healthy communities and cities. ♦

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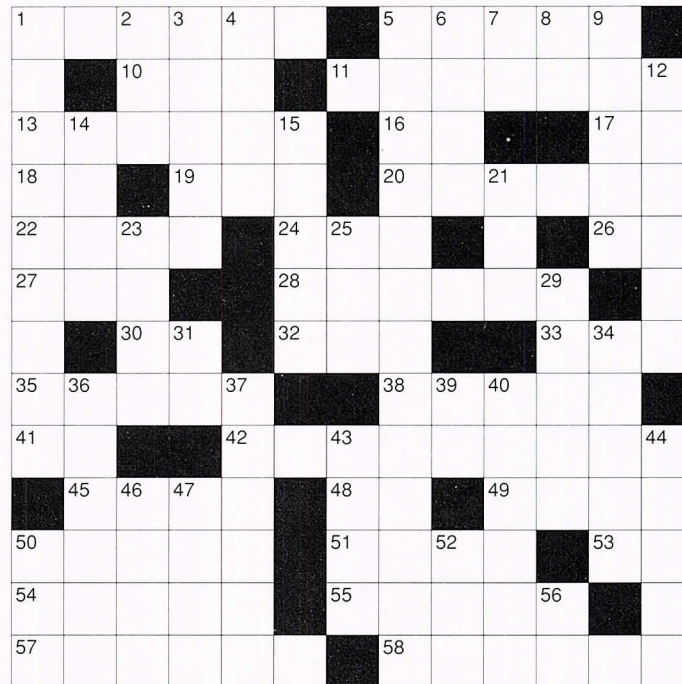
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CENTRAL AMERICAN Youth Summit in Belize from June 17 until July 8, 1991. Write ICA 22421 39th Avenue Southeast, Bothell, WA 98021-7941 USA

## Planetary Crossword

by Sheighlah Hickey



### ACROSS:

- 1 puts up a cloth
- 5 complication
- 10 a donation for the poor
- 11 places or relaxation
- 13 work belonging to the muses
- 16 exists
- 17 prefix meaning early
- 18 old latin
- 19 ordinal of n
- 20 fertile developed land
- 22 to refer
- 24 \_\_\_ one; alas
- 26 promissory note
- 27 small asiatic deer
- 28 an underground passage
- 30 see
- 32 old Tokyo
- 33 consume
- 35 head cooks
- 38 characteristic of the city
- 41 yes (Ger.)
- 42 grew
- 45 introduce the second element in comparison
- 48 natural exclamation

- 49 any fixed light heavenly body
- 50 any matter, affair or concern
- 51 the source or origin of an action, quality
- 53 Sun God
- 54 brownish crystalline compound of iodine
- 55 capacity to act

- 57 worsted yard
- 58 to form in the mind

### DOWN:

- 1 government by the people
- 2 abbr. antiaircrafts
- 3 a level of development
- 4 give forth

- 5 people living near one another
- 6 plural of os
- 7 to perform an action
- 8 a prefix meaning original
- 9 to soak in liquid
- 12 fourteen line poem
- 14 a medley
- 15 a piece of personal property
- 21 Rural Electrification Administration
- 23 operating at a distance
- 25 what a cow chews
- 29 to ferment
- 30 the (French)
- 31 derived or coming from
- 34 a short distance in space
- 36 Goddess of love, joy, mirth
- 40 denounces
- 43 find fault with
- 44 to flow off gradually
- 46 conceal
- 47 in a new way
- 50 sesame plant
- 52 have an obligation to
- 56 Queen and Empress (abbr.)

ANSWERS ACROSS: 1 drapes, 5 nodus, 10 alm, 11 resorts, 13 mosaic, 16 is, 17 eo, 18 ol, 19 nth, 20 garden, 22 cite, 24 och, 26 PN, 27 roe, 28 subway, 30 lo, 32 edo, 33 chat, 35 chers, 38 urban, 41 ya, 42 increased, 45 than, 48 ah, 49 star, 50 thing, 51 root, 53 Ra, 54 idel, 55 power, 57 crewel, 58 design. ANSWERS DOWN: 1 democracy, 2 AAS, 3 plane, 4 emit, 5 neighbourhood, 6 ossa, 7 do, 8 ur, 9 steep, 12 sonnet, 14 olio, 15 chose, 21 REA, 23 tele, 25 cud, 29 yeast, 30 ie, 31 of, 34 anear, 36 Hathor, 37 single, 39 re, 40 bastes, 43 carp, 44 drain, 46 hide, 47 anew, 50 till, 52 owe, 56 ri

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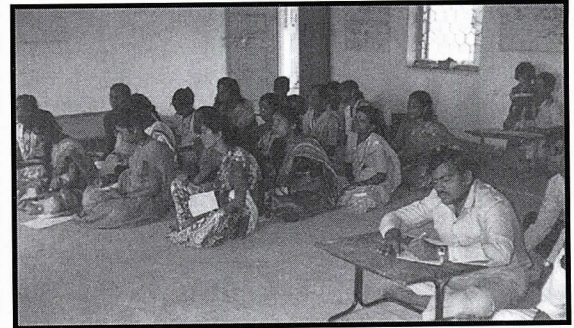
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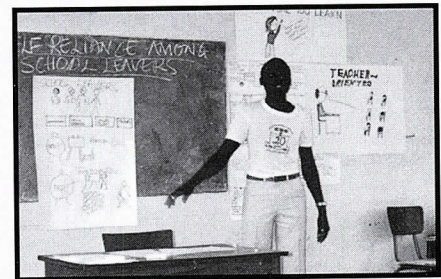
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