

## **FIC ORG MEETING AT MICCOSUKEE LAND COOP Tuesday October 26–Thursday Oct 28, 2004**

### **Opening Circle with FIC stories of Org Mtgs 10 yrs and 5 yrs ago**

Centering ceremony with Peggy- the metaphor of the beads on the necklace as individuals connected by the string. We sang Simple Gifts.

**Micosukee 1994 (10 yrs ago):** Laird started the story from ten years ago at the Org Mtg at Miccosukee (Fall 1994). Decision re: FIC logo, first evening soirée for regional networking, walking on the boardwalks; Jenny: most people camped, Jenny was in the kitchen most of the time, lots of time spent talking about an FIC internet presence, Big party with one of the community bands and pizza from the on-site pizza oven. Rose Kelley was also our contact person back then. Jillian and Michael M's first meeting. Lively discussion on who was going to contact the cohousing network; Betty and Harvey wanted to undo "new agey" language in some documents. Geoph saw his first alligator on the boardwalk.

**Sirius 1999 (5 yrs ago):** The Double Bubble—lots of struggle around the primary purpose of the organization, and how much we work outside of the intentional communities movement. One bubble was focused on IC's, and the other was about building community outside of IC's. The last Art of Community happened right after at Frost Valley. Dan and Monique had their first baby while we were there. Nanette was our contact person. Really great Community Center, Stefan came from Ireland, Giovanni from Huehucyotl, Sean Knight from Santa Fe (then from Seattle). Had a fun talent show one evening. Lots of turmoil around a deficit budget. The budget was not approved. Laird and Bill B. presented budget with underwear on their heads.

### **Harvey reviews the agenda for meeting**

#### **Graphic Redesign**

presented by Laird

Proposal from Amy at Dancing Rabbit circulated to Board in August '04. With no response from the Board, Laird is looking for guidance on how to proceed. The proposal is to do complete overhaul of graphic images for our written material. Amy has professional graphic design training. How to fund it— Amy's original proposal was for \$4,500. She's willing to work at about ½ her usual rate (so it would be about \$15/hour). Oversight Cmtee thinks that if we meet our target for fundraising, we could put as much as \$2,500 into this.

Board comments: first impression is that it's a wonderful idea, past experience with the process was that it didn't work to have it be a full consensus on the look, so the Board

may want to trust Amy's skills and maybe Oversight or ERB could have the final approval process. OS proposed how to deal with money, but need a response from the Board for it. Before the new Directory comes out we could use a new logo but wouldn't have to do full job before then, especially since this Directory will be printed more often. Amy has been at DR for 5 months. Laird has seen her portfolio and a number of us have seen her preliminary DIR design. If Board buys in to general design criteria, then a smaller group could be designated and empowered. It's about a three-month project, and Tony figures she'll certainly still be available in that timeline. One option would be to have her do DIR4 cover, and then decide if we'd like her to do the full job. Get input from as many people as possible, but empower a smaller group with actual decision-making power.

**AGREED:** DIR, Cmag and fundraising would be drawn on to create the money, which may mean we have enough to cover the full proposal, or we could leave some pieces out. General support for the idea. Board would like to see portfolio and the general guidelines for design criteria. The final decision-making group would be Laird, Tony, and Peggy.

## **Graphic Design Criteria**

Laird is asking the board to review and approve the work he, Alyson and Amy did on design criteria. This work reads:

Dynamism  
 People friendly  
 Engaged in the world, not isolated  
 Sleeves rolled up  
 Doing good work  
 Building things  
 Not grim, up-tempo  
 Positive feel  
 Informal (not stuffy)  
 Accessible  
 Broad range of appeal  
 Not sloppy, kooky, exotic

Suggestions to add: marketing to Cohousing (informal, yet professional), cohesive between different things (logo, business cards, brochures, etc.)

**AGREED:** Board consensed on criteria.

## **Compensation**

from Personnel Cmtee, presented by Jenny

The issue was discussed at 2 other FIC Org meetings. The first meeting was at Coe College, Iowa in spring 1999. We were anticipating monetary success at an Art of Community in Frost Valley following the fall '99 meeting at Sirius, MA. We were also

anticipating a second successful event at Mt Madonna, California later that year. The coordinator for that event was proposing a higher pay rate than normal for the FIC. Included in that discussion were pay ratios. Another factor for discussing a Compensation Agreement was the introduction of hiring a high priced fundraiser.

**NOTE:** The anticipated success for the 2 events mentioned above did not happen and the org continues to face financial challenges.

At the Coe College meeting we raised base pay to \$8/hr with recognition that it was not a living wage for people in urban/independent lifestyles. We recognized that we are mostly a volunteer organization. We had the stated intent to raise wages when there was ability to do so.

At an Org Mtg at Sunward CoHousing, MI in fall 2000, the Compensation Agreement proposed by Personnel Cmtee was agreed on by the Board. That agreement left openings for other compensation models such as commission based compensation. The agreement consciously did not include pay ratios or a cap on earnings

The ratio discussion included thrusts such as 8:1 ratio as well as the idea that everyone should be paid the same. We came close to agreeing to 3:1.

The purpose for reviewing the background of this issue was to inform people of the past work done on this issue. It is noted that many of the people who were questioning the policy last spring at Highline were not present for those 2 meetings. The issue of pay ratio comes up when commission or special projects are proposed. It could be that we are more connected to the spirit of the agreement than to having specific "rules."

**Task:** Tony will work with Ma'ikwe to write up something to be included that will present the ratio discussion more fully.

## **Budget**

presented by Tony

Cmag and Bookshelf are both showing losses.

Consensus books are on target without any focused marketing.

Development income does not include 10.5 k that is targeted specifically for the directory endowment fund.

Directory 3 is selling as predicted and should run out when the new directory is available.

"Other" income is up due to big sales of mailing lists.

Interest income is from general bank account, but primarily from interest of funds being held in trust.

Loan fund interest is good due to arrangement with the Peach fund.

Office expenses have stabilized and are lower than expected.

At the end of 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter, our income statement is showing a (\$ 2,214).

Borders has reduced their draw and Ingram has reduced from about 2000 to 750 copies of the Cmag. When we ship magazines we record it as income and a debit when we learn

about returns. We have a large negative number because we are finding out about returns from last year when we were shipping much larger numbers.

The same thing happened with another distributor and last year we had to publish a 5th an issue to keep our bulk mailing status that meant a shorter shelf life for the 4th issue.

Both income and expenses are low for Cmag.

Advertising is stronger this year, but not enough to balance out last year's negative numbers. There may be more in the pipeline, but we don't know.

Bills from our printer are low and include a 1k credit for a mistake by the printer.

Cmag has lost money each of the last 4 years. There are various reasons, but each year there is a reason different from the others. The years of profit may have been before we were properly allocating money for office expenses.

Active management of wholesale accounts could help the numbers.

Subscriptions have stabilized at a lower level than in 2000. The higher number could be a result of coattails connected to high directory sales with the new edition.

Expenses for Cmag seem to be under control, but income has been inconsistent.

Controlling Bookshelf inventory has been inconsistent. We have started counting the sales books as having no value. This resulted in the large inventory adjustment. Some of those books will sell and will come back as income. Most of them are single copies and don't make it into the computer inventory.

Bookshelf sales are down.

Selling books at special events are down. There is more competition at events.

We do well when we take books to our own events where there are minimal costs.

Mail order sales are also down this year. We do not know why.

Bookshelf may end up with losses equal to inventory adjustment. We may do fewer events next year and there is not much hope for growth.

We are on target to pay off a couple of personal loans.

Our cash flow is tight because we are paying more money out to pay down loans.

The Peach loan and another 12k loan, both of which have good interest rates, are not being paid down. The interest payments for them are about \$2,500.

Mailing list sales, auctions, and money that we haven't spent is helping our bottom line.

Development has also been a key to helping the bottom line and also helps bring income to other areas such as Cmag. Membership has been folded into development.

## Proposed 2005 Budget

presented by Tony

Bookshelf: the events income is totally dependent on which ones we attend. The proposed numbers are just straight-line extensions from projected 2004 actuals. Not sure whether it makes sense for us to attend MREF next year, given our costs and that other book vendors are eating into profits significantly. Perhaps next year we should not be paying to attend the ABA convention.

Cmag: on wholesale, we think that numbers will bounce back as we get past the returns from the Borders experiment. For subscriptions it's just a straight-line projection from 2004. Other income categories have been left essentially untouched. On the expense side, the only new wrinkle is extra money for illustrations, per Diana's request. Money is being budgeted in 2005 for a Cmag Biz Mgr.

Consensus Books: nothing new; just straight-line projection from 2004.

Development: included is \$12,500 income for membership and \$8000 for unrestricted donations (this is on top of what's brought in for the Directory Endowment).

Dir 3.1: this is selling off the remaining inventory, which should occur in the first quarter of 2005.

Dir 4.1: Projecting that we'll sell 750 copies in '05. Proposing a list price of \$20. Proposing that we'll sell 100 copies wholesale (with this new, short run model we need to manage wholesale pipeline closely, or we'll be stuck with old, unmarketable copies). Tony is projecting print and layout costs of \$12k; if we borrow the money at 6% APR the interest for a year will be \$720. Worried about the low margin of profit on wholesale sales. Are we going to offer pre-printing discount sales? The accounting can be a nightmare. Are we looking at having the cmties buy them wholesale? Yes.

Office: income in this context is pass through from project areas as office overhead. By definition, we make sure the project areas contribute enough money to cover Office expenses. The amount each area contributes is a formula meant to reflect the volume of Office traffic each area is responsible for. Notice that we are now tracking some details by specific activity, the better to manage and adjust. Note that in 2005 there is a sharp drop in depreciation cost: this is because both the Virginia & Missouri Offices are happy with current equipment; expect major purchases in 2006. Note also that Velma's work is expected to run lower in '05.

Other: auction number is soft; mailing label sales is soft. No budget for Cmag Business Manager. Is there a contingency plan in the event that a bona fide Cmag Biz Mgr or Marketing Mgr shows up? That would be handled by Oversight. Right now, there's nothing proposed for the 2005 budget. Ma'ikwe has an idea for Marketing Mgr.

**TASK:** Ma'ikwe will give information about her idea for a Marketing Mgr candidate to Personnel.

Video: Tony & Geoph have agreed on a plan where FIC buys the videos wholesale, in an effort to streamline accounting (which has been challenging and time consuming). Under this scheme, we'll pay for an entire box when we first open it. Sales of the video (both as a cassette and DVD) have been steadily declining. There is not much money here; we just tread water. There is unused money available for marketing the video. : Lotus reported that she has some interest in doing something with that. Whatever she does will be in consultation with Geoph.

Web: income from sale of aliases. This money goes into their own pot, and need not concern us.

Questions?

--Office: How about a raise to our Office workers (Kathe, Susan, McCune, Alline)? The last raise was in 1999. A raise of 50 cents per hour would cost us at least \$1500. There is agreement to put it in the budget and come back to it tomorrow for a final decision.

--Onsite Coord: Do we need money to help get someone to Ithaca to replace Ma'ikwe for the spring org mtg? Tony will add a bit to cover this contingency.

**Note:** Peggy and Jenny volunteered to stand in for Ma'ikwe at the meeting in Ithaca.

--Cmag: the projected loss for 2004 is \$2700, and we expect it to be considerably worse—though not as bad as the negative \$12k we're showing at the end of three quarters. Tony intends to work more closely with Ingram about their draw. Tony, as acting Office Mgr, is making the call on wholesale draws in the absence of a Cmag Biz Mgr. Should we fundraise expressly to cover Cmag's loss? Maybe we should solicit from cmties for that. What is our response to negative numbers for Cmag? This could be serious. It was commented that the major source of this year's problem is emptying the wholesale pipeline from the Borders experiment and that won't affect 2005 numbers.

Are we on top of renewal solicitations enough? Answer: we use a series of four contacts to give expiring subscribers a chance to renew. Perhaps the addition of phone calls or emails would help.

\$200 was added for travel for onsite coordinator.

\$375 was added for each office, which would represent a \$.25 raise.

Event sales for Bookshelf were changed to \$6k and mail order to 11k, which adjusted for not attending MREF.

Management labor was raised \$250 representing the same raise as above

Due to various changes in the office budget, Bookshelf shows a profit of \$102

Cmag still shows 3.5k losses. Numbers changed a bit due to manipulation in other areas.

The summary now shows income 118,018, total expenses 106,832 and profit is now 1,186.

There is an impression that 90% of the fallout from the increased Ingram draw has been felt. Its hard to tell exactly what the results will be as other areas might have been affected by that experiment.

Oversight will discuss Cmag and think about how to help the bottom line.

Would it be in our interest to get some training for our development team?

There is \$60 package available that another organization has found very helpful. It introduces a new and different approach to fundraising.

Some states have free or low cost help/training for non profits.

Laird, while he does not consider himself an expert, is wary of taking on anything new while he doesn't have the time to do what he thinks needs to be done. An alternative would be to send someone else to gather the information and then share it with him.

Kristin Anderson (a first time attendee) inquires as to whether FIC could provide assistance for a fee in assessing her situation. She is trying to start a community in Florida.

**AGREED:** Board consensed on 2005 budget.

### **Should there be Closed Sessions During the Board Meetings for Sensitive Topics?** presented by Tony

Oversight thought it would be good to discuss the relationship with particular people and the organization, and that these discussions would fall into the realm of the board. There could be instances where the board thought that particular individuals would not be nurtured by the organization because it did not seem like a good fit energetically.

There is also the question of whether we want to discuss issues of transparency and disclosure in an open discussion or in closed session. The only closed meetings are with the board after a new board is chosen in the spring of each year and nominating committee meets with the board to bring forward names for new board members. Ministry and Personnel also have closed meetings.

#### *Comments:*

It is good to have closed session not only to discuss sensitive issues but for the board to gain an identity.

Statements should be made to a person's face and not behind their back.

Agreement that statements should be said directly to a person, but it could be better to do it in private session.

Closed sessions could report back to the group.

It could be called something else giving a positive spin such as "clearness meetings."

There is strength to a structure that allows for different structures. A smaller group can be a forum for more open discussion particularly with new people. Some things are easier, more efficient, and kinder in smaller, more discreet groups.

FIC is committed enough to disclosure that it would not be a problem.

Closed meetings are a move away from consensus. It puts decisions in the hands of a few. It could serve to take some of the decision making load off of Oversight and onto the board in general.

Reporting back from closed meetings must be careful to include all of the content of the closed session.

It's good to have the option to do board work in private. Maybe the decision to go into closed session should be made by the full board in open session, before going into a closed session.

Closed sessions are already happening, and this discussion is to surface the reality of what is already going on.

Oversight could offer experience to the board by being involved in any closed board meetings.

Personnel matters could be handled in public meetings by asking the person 'at issue' to leave the meeting during the discussion.

Since this group does not meet but twice a year, there is no time for outside private conversation. So, it may be appropriate that private or closed meetings be held during the limited board meetings.

There's a concern that if people 'at issue' are asked to leave the meeting, then their perspective will be lost.

#### *Suggested Guidelines:*

Notify person 'at issue' before discussion takes place and invite them to represent themselves.

Affirm a policy that closed sessions will be held by the board as necessary.

Closed sessions should be announced, should include constructive content and conclude with constructive objectives, and content should be reported to some extent.

Closed sessions should not be a first step, should be preceded by one-on-one contact with the personnel 'at issue'.

Board should be able to have closed meetings, and invite individuals to sit with them during those closed meetings.

#### *More Discussion:*

The board doesn't consider whether to end relationships with FIC participants, rather the board (and interim committee) talks about how to cooperate with personnel or volunteers who do not perform specific tasks committed to.

It's not obvious which is the highest priority—compassion, transparency, radical honesty, all can be most important at a point in time, for particular people.

This kind of work is so personal that guidelines may be less important than care that is tailored to the personal needs of those involved.

#### *Types of Closed Meetings:*

Personnel issues

Called by someone (not just board members)

**NOTE:** They will not be about Budget or fiscal matters



## **From Good to Great**

presented by Laird, based on the book of that title by University of Colorado Business Professor Jim Collins

How do we maintain a dynamic organization?

Consider the “Hedgehog Concept” from the book, where Collins makes the case that successful organizations should be obsessed with only doing things which are in line with the answers to the following three core questions:

What are we better at than anyone else?

What are we motivated to do?

What are the indicators of success?

We brainstormed the following responses, none of which were chewed on or adopted as “official” board responses:

### What are we better at than anyone else?

Online Directory of intentional cmties

Communicate comprehensive updated info on North American intentional communities

Provide location information on intentional communities

Source for identifying intentional communities

Focalizing segments of the wider intentional communities movement

Building bridges between intentional communities and the wider culture

Representing intentional communities to the rest of the world

Articulate what intentional community is about

Explaining IC lessons as applied to broader culture

Consensus process

Inspiring and sustainable as a social change nonprofit

Being inclusive generalists

Networking burning souls

Inspiring burning souls

Support and care for community activists

Collaboration with other orgs

Bringing a ‘community’ element to an event

Clarity and flexibility in knowing what we contribute

Meeting the hunger for integrated values

### What are we motivated to do?

Have meetings

E-mail communication

Talk about community

Experience community

Experiment with our emotions

Laugh Enjoy Appreciate

Work-Play-Adventure

Share, inspire, and teach about community experiences

Transition support

Philosophize

Helping people do something that's hard

Having quality interactions with community people

Resolving conflicts

Sharing intimate life changes and growth

Experience the overlap/conjunction between service and personal growth work

### What Are The Indicators of Success?

Internal measures:

Number of people at meetings and events

Acceptance and appreciation for/from our bio-families

New friendships, smiles, and hugs

External measures:

Directory listings increase

Budget is balanced or in the black

Number of inquiries and other contacts

Visibility in mainstream media

Number of magazines sold

Subscription renewal rate

Number of website visits

People call us to have our org meetings at their place

Amount of money fundraised

Next generation continues to live in ICs

Estates willed to FIC

People/groups identifying as IC

Calls for us to teach our skills

FIC membership growth

Volume of services provided to intentional communities

Directory Endowment growth

Inspire new communities to form

Wider culture awareness of intentional communities

Non-violent/cooperative national politics

What are other ways to assess our success as a service organization?

### **Scenario Planning**

presented by Laird

Four groups (conveners in parenthesis), based regionally, were tasked to develop each of the four scenarios that we crafted at the spring org mtg—Boil the Frog (Laird), Dog Eat Dog (Marty), Camel Latte (Fred), Phoenix Rising (Ma'ikwe). Each was asked to anticipate and describe the likely characteristics of the following six aspects of society within their scenario: social, technology, economics, environment, politics, and spirituality. Secondly, they were asked to identify leading indicators that would

suggest that their scenario is coming to pass. Thirdly, each group was asked to identify what the opportunities would be for FIC in their scenario.

### Camel Latte

This group met once, at Goodenough's Tahuya Retreat site. Nine attended, including six living in the area plus Lotus, Bill, and Barbara. Fred posted minutes in an email Oct 19. They struggled some to project the economic environment for FIC, though there was the expectation that grant funding would be up significantly.

One consequence of the session was that one participant (not a regular member of our circle) came away with a greater sense of potential for collaboration with FIC.

### Boil the Frog

Laird convened two sessions on this scenario, meeting in two different locations with no overlap of participants (other than himself). See his email of Oct 26 for details. While energy was high and enthusiastic, it was hard to get beyond the first layer of the examination. It was his impression that it would have worked much better if a core group of dedicated people had met multiple times, though it was unclear if he and others could make those mtgs happen given all the other things people are juggling in their lives.

In the mtgs where people were new to FIC, he thought they had a positive impression of the Fellowship's forward thinking.

### Phoenix Rising

There was one mtg of this group. See Ma'ikwe's email report of Oct 26 for more details. It was hard to select predictors for a scenario that hinges on a sudden crisis (the ashes from which the phoenix will arise). How do you know that you aren't in the Boil the Frog scenario?

Our most valuable resources will probably be internal skills (ability to cope creatively with crisis) rather than tangible resources.

How much do we contribute to creating a future vs. responding to the world around us?

### Dog Eat Dog

This group convened during a working session at this org mtg. In an oral report they noted that in the chaos that might characterize their scenario, we may not be able to rely on centralized technologies for communication. We need to move to a more locally self-reliant technology like ham radio.

\*\*\*\*

Where do we go from here? We were somewhat discouraged by the relatively light progress made by the teams since Highline. Can we do this kind of work effectively between meetings? How do we involve many in the organization instead of few?

Interested in getting to the part where we look at FIC's actions and reactions for these different scenarios.

How does this relate to the From Good to Great brainstorms and the question of what do we do best?

*Discussion:*

If there are things we need/want to do regardless of the different scenarios, we can at least proceed with them no matter what.

Worry that we've short changed the process of defining the scenarios. Haven't looked fully at the different facets.

Seems like continuity in the groups exploring the scenarios was low and that continuity would be essential to deepening our planning on this front.

Maybe looking some at how ICs/FIC will react to the different scenarios will help us figure out what we need to explore in more depth as far as fleshing out the scenarios.

Hard to have a regional gathering to discuss these issues without a strong FIC presence. Hard for people unfamiliar with the org to anticipate how the FIC would react.

Results of presidential election may affect how much energy there is to look at different scenarios.

It takes a certain amount of work to organize and coordinate these discussions and write reports and such. It may not be worth our organizational energy to do this at this time.

For Southwest region this process does seem to be synergizing with the energy of the group. It seems to be drawing in more people and keeping energy flowing. But couldn't do it if it wasn't being met with organizational support.

This has been energizing for a lot of people. People seem to like the forward-looking aspect of it.

If not this kind of strategic planning then what do we do? Is there energy for some other sort of strategic planning?

Maybe do it primarily at org meetings. Maybe keep it more focused on FIC than the world in general. The process of exploring the different scenarios was not energizing for everyone; some found it boring. Maybe this is a long-term process and it's OK if it takes multiple years.

Strategic planning could be part of a board retreat.

Maybe continue to ask the questions:

- What is the demand for community in this scenario?
- What will be the demand for the things we are doing now (events, web, magazines, books) in this scenario?

**TASK:** Oversight will discuss strategic planning and prepare where to go next with this at the spring org mtg.

## **Cmtee Reports and Other Initiatives**

We are going to try something different with reports at this session.

Oversight has selected a few reports that seem to need more review and others will be available for review in a designated spot in our meeting space.

*What does the org want to do with the reports?*

The shift to reading them on email is good rather than reviewing all of them at the meeting.

It's also good to be able to review them selectively.

Project reports are more interesting.

Reports that communicate change and reports that are vital to the operation of the org.

We don't need to review reports that have little or no information.

It is good to continue to have all the reports distributed, but we don't need to review all of them in plenary.

### ***Oversight:***

Oversight is standing in for Site and Inreach committee until other volunteers step forward.

We have not decided on 3 or 4 days for our Org Mtgs. Ithaca is not interested in the barter arrangement we usually do. We are considering holding a benefit auction during our Org Mtg this spring. The funds from this auction could be earmarked to subsidize fees for attending the meeting. We are also considering a regional type of gathering.

Laird gave them 10 options for workshops, but they are more interested in charging fees.

Ithaca is feeling economic stress and is more interested in money at this time. Sharing the income from the auction could be an option.

### ***Executive Secretary:***

Press inquiries include helping a reporter find information, doing interviews, providing information, etc. The level of this seems to have remained the same.

There was some concern that Laird's remarks quoted in the LA Times were cast in the negative. Laird's remarks mentioned were chosen from over an hour-long interview.

Laird's mode of operations is not to make only positive remarks.

***Development:***

We are hoping to have as much as 100k by spring for the directory endowment.

This will create a need to manage the investments. Laird will be bringing a proposal regarding this.

We would like to encourage communities to help raise money for FIC. This will be done in conjunction with the release of Dir 4.

Development would like to provide materials for such contacts, but has not had the time to get to preparation of those materials. Personal contacts are always encouraged.

The materials are dependent on graphics development. It is not on top of the priority list.

The top priority currently is the directory endowment.

Laird and Alyson check in once a week whenever they are both in MO.

***Regional networking:***

The event in Seattle used FIC and NICA mailing lists. NICA logo was used in the letter and presentation. About 120 letters and 160 emails were sent out as well as a follow up email with directions. Email was much more effective in creating responses.

There were about 25 participants comprising a diverse crowd. It was clear that the event was a fundraiser for FIC in addition to an opportunity for local networking. Snacks and drinks were provided. There was an hour of mingling followed by a 15-minute presentation from Laird, which was followed by a discussion. A basket was provided for contributions. Fred specifically made the pitch for funds from his position as host, after Laird's presentation. About \$900 was collected including a single \$500 contribution, which was eligible for matching funds from an employer.

Fred is taking over as convener of the Regional Networking Committee. Aron has stepped down. There is hope to energize different parts of the country.

Events Liaison Cmtee wants to know if this is networking or is the intention to create regional events. Previously we have tried to create regional events, which would result in a regional network.

There is an overlap between events and regional networking.

There is talk of creating a soiree in Ithaca.

The committee is still fleshing out its activities and when complete will be reviewed by the board.

***Directory:***

Editing by the administrators has been limited to noting outdated information. There is a question as to how much editing the administrators should do regarding length, grammar, etc.

***Feedback on this use of plenary time to go over selected reports:***

Positive. Good to give time to relevant issues and questions.

Oversight invites further comments on the process.

**FIC Pitcher**

presented by Laird

Who does the Board feel comfortable with being a spokesperson for the FIC at events?

This is different from hosting an event, which is more open.

We continue to want to agree on who can speak to public media for the FIC.

The immediate question relates to potential house meetings such as what happened in Seattle. There is not a set of guidelines for making this determination.

The person doing the presentation would need to be well informed on subjects such as the workings of the directory endowment.

The question is also relevant to regional networking events and community dialogs.

Guidelines for presentation would be useful.

There seems to be plenty of people willing to take on the role, i.e., Geoph, Lotus, Ma'ikwe, Marty, and Harvey.

Do we want to limit the people who will be doing it? How do we determine who those people are?

There is a different criterion for people as press contacts.

It might be helpful to have some training for this role.

It would be good to have handout materials.

Current information would need to be available for anyone filling this role.

There is a difference between talking informally about FIC, and being a representative of the organization, and fundraising. This identifies 3 levels.

Generally good things happen when people try to represent the FIC. Occasionally, there are negative experiences when personal agendas are mixed in or there is incomplete understanding of the FIC.

Laird could share his own template for doing a presentation. What is important to be aware of, what you know, and what you don't know. It's ok to tell people that you don't know something.

People do not need to have up to date information on details, but to generally be aware of what the FIC is doing and planning.

We could develop some kind of training for people to do presentations.

Developing a plan for hosts could also be useful.

**TASK:** Laird will do an outline of "How to Pitch the FIC."

## **Skills Training Proposal**

from ad hoc FIC Culture group, presented by Geoph

Alan Seid is a Non-Violent Communications teacher and was the keynote speaker at New Culture west coast summer camp last year. He's studied with Joe Dominguez, Ken Wilbur, and Marshall Rosenberg. Very inspiring and integrative approach to NVC that is aimed at how to integrate this into community. He and his partner Tricia have lived in community in Washington for a while. The thinking is to offer a NVC workshop that could bring folks in from the local region and work as a very good community tool. Seems to fit in a number of ways with our goals. Of all the NVC experiences Geoph has had, this one was by far the most inspiring and well done. Alan would also be a great person to pull into the FIC circle. He and Tricia have both showed interest in the FIC and would stay for the full meetings. They could also be available to share culture-building work (called Acorn) and some conflict resolution/mediation work.

We are proposing that we do this workshop in Ithaca, but it could also work for LA next fall if that would work better. They like to work on gift economy. We also know there are issues in Ithaca with expenses, so we aren't sure exactly what this would look like logistically, but we are thinking it would be best to happen on a Saturday (mid-board-meeting). Alan has promo materials already, so we wouldn't need to do it from scratch. It would also make sense to market the whole thing (meetings, training, soirée) as a four-day-package of FIC-sponsored events.

Airfare and R&B may run \$1,000. Looking for Board approval and a sense of organizational excitement for it.

*Discussion:*

Question about whether they might be interested in coming to Ithaca, even if we decide to do the workshop in LA.

Like to see that this person is not only good with individuals, but also with groups. What could he offer in one day that we could either take off with it, or get inspired to do more? Bringing them to LA would be less expensive.

More likely to be successful if this is seen as an experiment not a "fix-it".

Is this conflict resolution with an outside mediator or is it doing a workshop together? Or is it a regional event drawing non-FIC folks?

There are some comments from folks present who have done NVC and not gotten much from it. There are others who feel we are already doing a fair amount of this. Sense that working with the particular couple might be a different experience than what folks have had before with NVC.

This may take a while to get logistics set for Ithaca, and would like more time than that direction allows. Anticipate less enthusiasm from the host community at Ithaca, and more at LA. Also Ithaca folks are more interested in a 3-day meeting. LA may be more open to 4 days.

Desire among several people to have Alan and Tricia come to Ithaca first, and then plan a session of training of some sort at LA.



Possible that we could create another location in Ithaca; if it were just for us, we wouldn't have to do it on Saturday, and it might not impact the Ithaca folks much at all. The experience LAEV has had with FIC has been very good, so that bodes well for doing it there. Only hesitation with LA is that we wouldn't be able to do a big thing at their space, but they have a really strong network and media connection to fill a big event if we went that route.

Figure out what we'd like to do in LA, and start working on it now. Include an evening with the FIC or just board, plus a daylong event. If we start that work now, it might help draw them in to Ithaca.

Request to include in that plan an evening of connecting with them in Ithaca.

In the spirit of having a common language, it would be great to have Caroline and Lizbeth come and refresh our already shared skills. It would also be good to have a variety of skills.

**AGREED:** Consensus on pursuing the workshop for LA, and invite them to come to Ithaca as part of that process. Outstanding details are cost and specific purpose, which we want to work on prior to the next org meeting. Communications will happen via Geoph, CC:ing Oversight and Fred.

## **Retreat ideas**

from ad hoc FIC Culture group, presented by Lotus

Researching ideas that we have around values, and how we walk our talk

Skills training (maybe with Caroline)

Long range strategic planning

Sense of potential value to this; how to integrate it into an existing board meeting so that there isn't a separate travel round involved. It could also be in one of our home communities. In addition to being productive, it could also be time to relax and have some fun together. Have experienced retreats that were more relaxing and building bonds between us; with the component of skills training makes it less aimless. There used to be time after each meeting to work on interpersonal stuff, but when we reorganized we laid that down.

Do we give a mandate for ad hoc culture committee to become a formal standing committee, or leave it ad hoc with clarification of their purpose/role? Question about how to include culture committee in agenda planning. Important to look at cultural-level things—ritual, integration of new people, having more pro-active ministry, making space for heart or interpersonal work, skills building. Defining our culture and passing it on to new people. If we have clarity on the purpose of the committee, it will be easier to make sure the needs and values represented by the committee are being included in agenda planning. Plan of how this committee might want to work with the FIC, including the

idea of creating a board retreat that would have more aspects of culture committee values than our usual meetings.

This committee hopes to have a proposal to empower the Culture Committee as a standing committee, guide our culture, and communicate it to new people.

**TASK:** The Culture Cmtee is asked to create a job description (by the interim OS meeting, aprox January 15th, 2005) to flesh out how they will relate to the rest of the org, and any specific tasks they plan to take on.

**TASK:** Jenny will email this portion of the minutes to current committee members to help with the task of creating job description.

### **Gender Specificity in the name -- Fellowship for Intentional Community** presented by Lotus

Some women don't feel included as 'fellows.' On the other hand, coming up with alternative names has been a problem in a previous discussion of this topic. We have a long and interesting history with this name – since 1948.

Would it be a 'big deal' if we change the name? If we did change the name, there should be time to consider some naming options in advance of the final decision. We could hold a brainstorm to create a list of alternative names for our projects.

Unless the new name creates a closer, more descriptive fit, we would be challenging our historical connections to change it from FIC.

We could emphasize our inclusive definition of 'fellowship' by printing an FIC definition of all three words in our materials – brochure, Magazine, Directory.

### **Meeting Evaluation**

#### 1) Closed sessions

They were valuable. There was an ability to speak more freely, express emotions, and realize intimacy in a smaller group.

The closed sessions softened the lines between the interim committee and the board as a whole.

A concern is that those participants not included, receive communication to enable them to feel supportive of what is going on in closed meetings.

The request to include ex-board members in the closed meeting seemed like asking for an ally could have more directly satisfied it.

Old (ex) board members can offer experience and history to closed session work.

In reporting summaries of closed session meetings to the full plenary, the level of detail to be reported can be difficult to discern.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> closed session regarding selection of board members will remain confidential, with the understanding that any personal issues will be discussed with the board prospects involved.

Report of the 1<sup>st</sup> session: Interim committee minutes protocol will be changed to require that those mentioned in a potentially sensitive personal context will be notified in advance of distribution of the edited minutes, but the minutes will not necessarily be edited.

## 2) Heart/Business balance

There could have been more heart time, although there wasn't too much business time either. The check-in could have been more in depth. It would be nice to have an open session or talking circle to hear spontaneous questions and issues. Singing more, especially as part of the opening ritual.

## 3) 3 or 4 Days for Next Meeting in Ithaca

A long weekend rather than mid-week gives outsiders more accessibility.

Four days would give us more time for more heart sharing. And for more inter-personal work.

Three days seems like it gives enough time to take care of our business, have free time, and do heart work. The last 4-day meeting seemed to have sessions that weren't really needed.

Three days works sometimes, other meetings need 4 days, especially if we are doing an event or project.

If we are doing a linked event, 4 days of meetings can extend an already long trip for those committed to doing it all.

**TASK:** Harvey will produce an orientation sheet for emailing to new meeting participants, or handing out.

### *Popcorn style evaluation of meeting*

Internet access

Host community

(Poorly)-cozy lounging furniture near meeting space (naps)

Orientation

More organized reports

Small intimate meeting

Low attendance

Closed sessions process well handled

Seeing the changes to MLC over 10 years

Potluck

Good budget process

Good facilitation

Entire board was present  
Peggy felt good about her 1<sup>st</sup> facilitation in 10 years  
Having Bookshelf on display was effective  
Mosquitoes  
Flexibility in moving into support roles  
Friendly hosts in personal homes  
Swimming Pool  
Lost/stolen purse from Shayna  
Cozy furniture in meeting  
Closer distance between meeting and housing space  
Very comfortable meeting space  
Good sense of humor  
More singing  
Liked Fred & Nancy's songs  
A bit warm