

# **FIC Organization Meeting**

## **Pearl St Co-op**

### **Austin, TX**

#### **Oct 24-26, 2007**

#### **Opening Circle**

Bead Ritual

Shared stories from Org meeting 5,10,15,20 years ago.

Fall 2002 – Goodenough/Tahuya, WA

Fall 1997 – Sunrise Ranch, CO

Fall 1992 – High Wind, WI

Fall 1987 – East Wind, MO

#### **Budget – 07 Actuals thru Sept (Tony)**

With Budget Summary Handout

FIC is showing a little bit of a loss in the operating budget due to lower donations this year, so far. Though we've had more donations than ever, most of it is targeted. Unrestricted donations are down, due to a strong focus on targeted fund raising. We now have more ongoing benefactors that we know well enough to ask for specific donations.

Fundraising for the second volume of Geoph's video has raised ½ of the \$30,000 needed to finish it. The \$5,000 needed to support his final life expenses and retiring his debts was raised within two weeks of initial requests. Love for Geoph and his sense of mission are widespread. All of this fundraising for his last expenses and the video project came since he was first diagnosed in late June, and before he died last Monday afternoon from pancreatic cancer.

Web site income is up, selling more advertisements online – classified ads and Directory ads. Interest income is up. Directory 4 sales are up, due to a donation for placing Dirs in libraries.

Bookshelf budget figure is based on increased mail order sales, while sales at events are down – though some events are coming up that may boost that. Last year's cohousing event was not repeated this year. There are annual events planned in the future.

*Communities* magazine (Cmag) sales are up this year, due to some grant support. Normal income flow also looks good, both subscriptions and wholesale. Back issue sales are doing well. But advertising sales are down, at an alarming level. Big ads and color ads are doing well; there may be an accounting anomaly, because staff does not think ad sales are down – they are befuddled by the low figures reported. This will be reviewed.

Cmag expenses are up, like proofreading. The half year report was right on target. The increase is at least partly due to some proofreading personnel and accounting shifts. Photo editing expenses will even out by year end; the editor does not want to be paid for his ongoing work until December. Fulfillment and renewal expenses are higher also, due partly to more accounting accuracy.

Looks like a \$12,000 operating loss for Cmag for the year, though \$10,000 was budgeted. It may be a little better than that.

Office expenses: MO office is coming in under budget & VA office just a bit high. Office supplies are double what is budgeted because some development supplies are included, which will be shifted. Also, some long term office equipment is included; postal costs are up. Missing mailings have required some process changes to more expensive postage.

Sales of Geoph's video are slowly eroding, which makes sense as this 1<sup>st</sup> video is five years old. When we finish production of the 2nd video, sales of that sequel should boost 1<sup>st</sup> video sales also.

Overall, labor costs are down. Reporting of labor hours has been lagging, and some projects have not been done due to labor shortages.

In summary, cash flow looks good. There may be more of a loss than predicted, but it will not be a significant problem.

### **Budget 2008 (Tony)**

Handouts are 2008 profit/loss summary, Cmag budget, and balance sheet.

Cmag projects about a 5k loss.

There is a significant increase in income resulting from: raising sub rate from \$20 to \$22; increasing cover price \$.50, and increasing sample rate.

We're projecting an increase in subscriptions based on the increase from 2007 and are carrying forward that 5-10% level of growth.

That gives us about 72k income.

We didn't include corporate sponsorship which we don't know the likelihood of success and which could fit in the development area.

We need to follow up with Patricia regarding advertising revenues which seem to be low for 2007 and resulted in lower projections next year.

Laird and Parke will talk about raising cover price to \$7 rather than \$6.50.

Contract is projected at 30k without knowing who those contractors will be.

Photos and articles have some allowance and may be covered by leftover money from grants.

Promotions money does not include continuing Utne Reader ads, but does include phone marketing campaigns.

We will likely get a grant to do another Cmag conference.

The 5k loss projection is somewhat optimistic and is much better than our recent years.

Last year we used 8k of grant money, which is not available this year making these projections look even better.

Bookshelf is reliant on Coho event and Art of Community in Albuquerque.

We are expecting unrestricted donations to decline as reflected in the budget.

Video sales are projected to continue to slowly decline.

Website income is increasing modestly.

“Other” income includes auction income at events.

“Other” expenses includes newsletter.

Peach Fund and loan fund are balancing each other out and accounted for in the budget, but we need to keep in mind that we have a 30k debt ongoing.

We are not paying debt interest for the first time.

The budget shows a profit margin of \$755, which is less than 1 percent, but we’re happy to see a positive number.

The Walnut Street Coop loan seems secure. Harvey and Bill are on their financial advisors committee.

From the balance sheet:

Our total equity has increased to close to 70k from about 8k in 2004.

### **Budget cont’**

The Cmag expenses were misstated.

Not all of the money from the Cmag grants was spent and can be allocated to different expense categories. \$3700 was found.

There is also the potential for \$2500/year for 2 years for conferences which went in both expense and income categories.

The bottom line for Cmag is now about a 5.8k loss.

The operating bottom line is now at \$274.

### **Diana Christian and her work with Cmag**

We started with Tony honoring Diana Christian for all she has done for the magazine, editing for 14 years. Tony chose a bead (translucent with many elements) for our story necklace honoring Diana’s contribution to our mission.

Laird: We selected DianaC from a pool of perhaps 4, interviewing at the 1993 Celebration, met her for the first time there. Didn't need to have her hand held. "A one-man gang" – advertising, editorial content, had to learn the movement and make the content. All volunteer. Held it together single-handedly.

Jenny: Red bead represents DianaC's passion for community

## **Cmag's scenarios**

Background: Cmag rarely paid for itself. Can/should FIC always subsidize it?

4 scenarios:

1. Modest Growth – strive to break even in five years

Budget \$10k in the red this year

Business Manager replaces Managing Editor, Advertising Manager. Editor supervises production. Telephone campaign to potential advertisers, other initiatives

"Moderate Risk" – nothing may change

10-15% growth in subscriptions

"Corporate sponsorships" – unexplored avenue. Especially for online. How about ICs as sponsors?

2. Aggressive Growth

Circulation 30K, like Yes magazine.

Spend 10k on pro marketing study, lots of board-level process around "who is our target audience"? Who goes on cover, who are articles written for? Intuition: community where they are and seeking communities.

"I feel like we've been flying blind... and we don't have the money to do it"

High risk requires a lot of money up front.

Huge potential profit: Could pay off handsomely, with \$50k/yr return after 5-7 years

Staff: Separate business and marketing person, \$8k/1<sup>st</sup> yr. Job: facilitate study, realignment of the organization; focus on making all this stuff happen.

Envisioned large loan (pretend coming from PEACH): \$75,000.

20%, 50% growth in first few years

Increasing marketing efforts, sales up 20%/yr

Improved content, look, and feel – 10%/yr starting 2010

Larger professional content budget: paying authors, photographers.

(Handout to be reprinted, with many changes from what was sent to OS/board before today)

3. Online only

Slate mag = example

Very cheap. Off-the-shelf platforms.

Online advertisers aren't going to give us much \$ because we don't have much record of web traffic. Low translation from print to online subscription. So really no revenue for quite some time.

Costs: \$70k -> 32k

Not recommending.

An entirely different animal.

Factors in subscriber liability/reimbursements

4. Close the magazine

Two different dates: end 2007 could cost up to \$17,000, after spring 2008 \$30k (3/31)

5. *Not explored: how to sell the magazine*

**Comments:**

Loves the aggressive growth scenario, but "wow, that takes a lot of balls"

Intriguing but scary

Challenging assumptions around lack of readership on current site... if we integrate articles into current site, can build on history with 1300 visitors/day to family of websites.

We could choose to generate more revenue on our website by selling more ads. Hopeful that as we bring cmag online it will bring traffic to the site. Challenging issues of integrating ads in a positive way as they relate in the magazine. Right now creating 320 pages of content a year, 25%ish ads – would we still produce as much online? By producing less we might be able to have a smaller staff or lower staff cost. A very different animal than cmag is now – we might lose the concept that it is an "online magazine" – blogs, video, text, stuff updated daily, monthly, quarterly.

Adding up losses historically: \$50k. We don't like to look at that. We have an emotional attachment – keep going despite in the red every year. To look at dropping it is an effort to be responsible. Running on Heart.

Consider benefits that don't show up in the numbers. For fundraising, for directory, membership, etc. How about FIC as corporate sponsor? We gain a lot organizationally from the magazine, including benefiting from ads in the mag.

I have a different analysis of numbers. Yes, negative \$50,000 over past 9 yrs. But this is not a loss. \$ went to produce the mag. We spent \$10 net to produce mag. We budgeted to spend \$7K to have website. Accepted this as budgeted "loss," i.e. we spent money to produce something. This works because on the plus side there is \$50K in memberships and \$60K in development and other amts from directory sales, etc. so we are taking \$ in from some sources and spending it to produce the mag and the website. Symbiotic. Ask this question of FIC: do you want to spend \$10K/yr to produce mag, or on something else? At first we thought it might make money. Then we realized it might not. So, do we want to spend \$10K/yr on what the mag does for us?

What does balance sheet look like?

Increasing net assets year to year. Used to be above zero and we had the loan fund. Now close to zero if not loan fund. Some steady spending on cmag. Big losses have been on events. We don't book keep "house ads" for Cmag on the website or for FIC in the magazine. All a family, all cover costs of our office. We have moved to a place of being conscious of both the financial and energetic costs of the magazine. Here we're being intentional about our relationship with the magazine.

Could someone else make it more profitable, effective than we could? Things within our culture that prevent us from being effective?

In my community, the worst thing you can have is a member who feels trapped, has no exit strategy. For us, might be the best way to explore the other options.

"Yes" magazine started by InContext mag people, a lot like Cmag. We're an org that's about cooperation. Perhaps some kind of cooperative relationship with an existing magazine that is doing better... mentors? Partnership? Out of the "grow/fold" scenarios box. Emotional attachment is a good thing, like being a good parent. We may be blind to what we are doing, maybe being involved w/another org could be good.

If you look at our "traditional" (non-web) publications, bookshelf, directory... does that overall package lose money?

Donations, membership has kept us afloat. Directory has generally made money. Cmag has generally lost. Bookshelf lost a little. Consensus books made a little. If we were just a publishing house, without a tangible published product ("money for nothing"), we wouldn't have a viable business or would have had to do different things to stay viable as a business.

Magazine is slow food. Web is faster food. Not junk food. Pacing: if we didn't have it we would be missing some energetic in the world.

We don't give benefits to members for their \$30, but charge less for a subscription than it costs to produce the magazine. Magazine could be an educational/outreach arm... it's a way that we serve the people that it's our mission to serve. Don't look at it as a loss. As long as we have a bottom line that brings in enough to support it.

How does magazine fit into our whole package? What hole would it leave were we to not have it? I was part of a magazine that was sold, losing money. We have 1300-1500 subscribers = not much value. So don't put much energy/resources into exploring that scenario. Not much value in selling.

Unless we think that someone else can do this better, selling it is just about mitigating losses, small hope. Feels more like closing it. Can't imagine who would take it on and blossom.

I feel like I'm sitting in the same discussion we had in 1992, we didn't take on from strictly monetary we're going to make money. Served our mission, we serve the people who we presumably represent. I don't see any difference. It is good to have the argument over again. Once every 10-15 years is often enough.

Dan: The shortfall we are assigning to the magazine is what catapulted us into direct fundraising, successful. Before that the loan fund. We are doing better than it looks like. It doesn't feel to me like we're looking at the financial discussion in a healthy way.

We made a choice to use a mgmt style that is cost-centered accounting. Newsletter part of membership. Magazine: seen as separate entity. A useful tool. Turned corner in bookshelf, more solid footing. Bottom line of organization has to be black. 15 years ago: we thought we could turn it around. Analogous situation: we are now with cmag where we were with bookshelf. Promotion vs. Mgmt experience. We have done a lot of experimentation... many things we didn't ask Diana to do.

Tomorrow: Look at what we can do with 1 and 2.

Appreciation for Tony: help lift cloud of confusion, see pathway through that, for how we are fulfilling our mission

Thanks Parke for all this work, very professional

### **Cmag budget considerations for different scenarios**

Parke supplied a handout, revised from what was previously emailed. It features different scenarios of a budget analysis: data common to all scenarios, Modest Growth, Aggressive Growth

1. Modest Growth scenario Five years to balanced budget. Subscriptions and wholesale numbers are based on 2007 projections. Ten percent growth a year. 25 percent commission to the advertising manager would get incorporated into the flat-rate business manager job. Editor salary is down 5% because it would be less than current combined editors. The historic Editor salary was based on including supervising and the role changed to not include that function. Printing and postage increases are things we can't do anything about. A 3 percent annual increase in staff pay is factored in.

Subscription income historically has been up and down, leading to questions about whether growth projections are realistic. This year is expected to be 15 percent higher than average. Will require significant effort, doing something to create that growth. Concern was expressed that \$1,000 budgeted for promotion will not be enough resource to effect change.

This scenario assumes a 50 cent (8%) cover price increase, 5% increase in distribution revenue the first year, and assumes the business manager will be more aggressively managing distributor relationships.

Is a net gain of 1,000 subscriptions over five years realistic? Tony reports that the 2000 Cohousing issue had an increase in subscriptions, but not the 2005 issue. The 2000 directory had “coattails” in terms of subscriber gain. “It is not necessarily hard for us to find 2-300 subscribers, but getting them to continue is the challenge,” he noted. We have not dedicated the resources to follow up with subscribers who fail to renew or perform detailed analysis.

Parke said that if Cmag staff is more focused on running the organization in a more professional way, it can be more focused on not dropping the ball. “When I was hired there was not a lot of maintenance on the business side.”

Possibly more collaboration with cohousing magazine and Coho/US and its outreach

2. The Aggressive Growth Scenario is designed to spend a lot to get to profitability in just three years.

3 years to profitability

Assumes \$15k grants over 2 years

Aggressive corporate/community sponsorship \$1k

Big loan \$75k – from PEACH?

Assumes big bump – staff side distributors, subscriptions. 2-3 yrs enormous growth.

100% growth in 2010, based on major marketing study, using contacts through directories/FIC membership base, spending more on promo, pro content

25% increase wholesales each year of this effort. Starting 2010.

FIC membership – all new 1 yr free subs. Follow up to renew each successive year.

Plus invitation to all current members

2008: all print Dir purchasers get comp year and letter

25% 1<sup>st</sup> yr, 50% next 2 yrs.

Increased marketing efforts raise subscription sales

Getting into places like Borders we lose \$ because of low sales per location.

This year’s phone campaign: calling independent bookstores, food coops, and the like.

Target audience, talk to them about their interest in carrying the magazine.

Tony: 800-1000 directories sold a year. 3-400 members. Some overlap. If we gave every one a free copy, half would have to renew to make those #'s.

Ad volume/rates: combined rate half that of subscriptions. If subs double, ad revenue up 50%.

Concern: risk without demonstration that we can maintain modest growth.

Continue to have ad mgr earning 25% commission

Add Business Manager, \$10k, really manage mktg survey, redesign efforts, promo efforts, a lot more aggressive



Expense side: photo/illust up 400% for articles, photos. Major writer in 1 issue or spread out. Largely new money.

Printing expenses go up in proportion

Print ads for outreach: \$1k at first, up from there

Online ads: make some investments

Marketing study

Consulting strategy & design

What do we need creating? Logo, etc.

Get some done pro bono?

Complimentary copies: assumes giving away \$4k worth first year = 2k mags. (Directory, members, etc.)

Vendor outreach: what we did this year, going directly to stores likely to carry our mag, asking them to request from their distributor.

Distributor outreach: phone calls, mailing, gen. exp.

\$21k mktg exp 1<sup>st</sup> yr because of study.

Fulfillment: labor for processing orders. Up in straight line with income.

Postage/shipping ditto.

Misc exp: paying back loan is biggest exp

Assumes annual staff mtg

Shocked at how fast FIC starts to pocket \$21k-50k a year

2009 -\$5k

By the end earning back investment from 1<sup>st</sup> 14 years

Eventually pay for itself at moderated level, more deficit years, would take longer.

2012: \$83k cumulative. \$50k profit in 2011. Then we pay off \$75k loan, so looks lower.

**Comments:**

More comfortable w/aggressive scenario if we had modest growth scenario together already

A qualitative product and hang onto subscribers. Can't read last few issues, quality of type. Typos. And formatting. Typesetting issues. Design, photos look good. Don't have a problem w/layout in general. No problem w/copyediting. Not a professional product.

We don't have outside expertise except what staff happens to know about what readers need, and what kind of design elements matter to our target audience. Debates among production staff.

Errors in executing design choices. Inconsistent.

We don't have much staff in place now. New/interim staffers. Not confident in core staff to produce a quality magazine.

Folks are interested in the more aggressive scenario, not really ready. There are things that need to happen before that. When might we be ready, how will we know? Add a time element. Plus: investigating grants: funds for market studies and business planning, more intensive strategic planning support for nonprofits.

It takes money to raise money in development. It takes money to run a good magazine. In order to get what you're looking for with that kind of confidence in ourselves, we will have to invest a significant amount up front.

Staffing elements. Keeping staff close to what it is doing now except business manager position. This requires at least kicking up layout salary/investment.

It will likely take money to professionalize the magazine in the ways that you describe. It's a lot about personnel. In running a search for photo editor, found there are a lot of people out there with experience hungry to do something that aligns with their values. You'll always run a risk of staff departure if you're paying sub-market rates. Diana chose her friends = complicated personal relationships. Challenging to give negative feedback to your friends. Professionalizing the hiring may make a big difference.

Things to ponder:

What's the opportunity cost of Cmag? What are the synergies?

Appreciating Parke's professionalism that allows us to have these conversations.

### **Cmag, cont.**

Harvey summarizing last session: we don't have a "status quo" to maintain. New staff and shifting organization. Question really is how much money, energy attention we are going to put into the next phase.

We could look at the modest growth scenario in terms of what we have now that we like and what can be tweaked. Need to ask folks, "What do you think we should do?" as way of reading the room. The world is very different than it was 15 years ago; unclear what our organizational support for supporting print magazine; this is a board level issue and not what we asked Parke to present on. Can we ask, "What do we want to do in the next 5 years?"

What best preserves the essence of what is good about Cmag? How much of our resources does it make sense to put into a print mag? And what is it about it that makes it worth it? Round robin.

### **Comments:**

Like to see magazine continue. It's a niche. Like it in paper form (bedtime reading).

Great resource. Don't see it as a mag that the aggressive plan is appropriate for. Feel pretty convinced that this is a good thing to have/support. Should continue it, and we need to upscale our staff in its ability to produce a more professional product. The level of mistakes needs to come down. There is a place that only this magazine answers. If we listen to our community visitors, there are many who read it and we would be remiss in not filling this need. Some people really prefer hard copy in hand. Mag continues to serve org and mission pretty well. Worth spending \$5-10K/year on it, but better if we didn't have to. Hoping to find ways via grants or other to put money into marketing. Non-\$ org resources drain has been worse than financial drain. If we could spend the 10K and it would run smoothly, that'd be great; or if it made \$ and took our time, great. Both losing money and being a drain at the same time is hard. Need to get things moving online with similar content development. Within 5 years, that may have to be our primary direction. Ideal would be to use Cmag to leverage the other areas. Visual expression: convergence of our history, the structure of the org, etc. Many different parts of the org function as islands. Need to be able to combine resources internally, or we will continue to struggle. At that point, we could say, "Imagine a world without Cmag... then what?" Very excited about this phase of Cmag... new staff, new business planning and marketing savvy piece. Also, keep the "slow food" version of communication about community. Need to explore how to enrich the website to reach a larger niche, and how we piggyback things like ads in Mag also going online.

#### Summary:

Interest in continuing Cmag, and also moving toward more web presence.

Budgeted \$10K loss that is being balanced by \$10K in fund raising. Need to develop more of an "out" in web. Direct relationship between fundraising success and Cmag success. What happens if we have a year that we don't do so well on fundraising? What's plan B? Feel more hopeful for Cmag's modest growth expansion. More willing to take the loss, while we become more solvent, and we may be willing to continue to invest that \$10K per year in it. Supportive of continuing Cmag, though it has taken too much of our organizational resources, and this time is needed for web, CCWYA and events, as our growth spots. If we can't make that shift, that's a problem for us. More excited about web and events potential for making money.

General sense of consensus on: Keep Cmag, essentially pursue the modest growth scenario as Parke presented it, run more smoothly without so much of Laird and Tony's time. Strengthen the web branch of it and know that in five years it will look different.

Need to consolidate and solidify the modest scenario before we can seriously consider the aggressive growth one. Also some desire to explore the aggressive scenario a bit more to understand what might be easier to implement sooner that would have a payoff on its own and is not expensive to pursue.

Parke's assessment is that we can currently attract, but might not be able to keep, high quality staff members. Question to Alyson: what would make a difference to you, knowing that money's tight? Made a big difference to have costs covered for the org

meeting. It's hard to work with such new and not so highly skilled people. More inspiring to work with others who were highly qualified and excited. Overall look is the weak point. Having good support from the organization is really helping. Having Laird and Tony there is helping, too. Fun and easy. Helpful to have a structure, creative freedom might be nice for someone more experienced. After a few years of modest growth scenario, that could be the time to pursue higher salaries, more assertive growth, etc.

Lots of ways to approach it— resource use assessment? Staff development? Marketing? Not sure which one to pursue; some are board level issues and some are the kind of things that we might want to hire someone really good to do for us. In some ways a good step might be to consolidate jobs, reduce the overall spending, writing job descriptions... not sure if investing in a Biz Manager, or in improving the product, or taking the money and putting it into things we think will definitely pay off.

While Parke and Alyson are here, we can ask, “What really needs to be covered. There's X \$ on the table to cover those things, good quality production, good morale... what will build excitement to be part of that team.” We might even be OK with saying, you can pay yourselves more, but you need to produce a good magazine and not lose money.

How committed are we to 80 pages and quarterly? Bulk mailing rates require quarterly as a minimum.

Suggestions to go to a committee slot looking at the magazine, what we want the team to be and how are we going to get it. Guidance from the board on how much we can lose, what you need from us, and then have the staff flesh it out.

Alyson, Parke, Laird, Tony, Marty and possibly Ma'ikwe to sit down and bring something back before the end of the org meeting.

### **Events (Ma'ikwe)**

Looking at having an Art of Community event in Albuquerque in spring 2008 very similar to what we did in Seattle. Full 2.5 day conference from Friday evening to Sunday afternoon.

Strong Permaculture scene in New Mexico. Looking to consider the theme as “edges” in the permacultural sense of the interaction/interface between two things.

Event would be at UNM. Somewhat Institutional but will work for us. Meals would be primarily at local restaurant which makes it easier to organize. One catered banquet.

Profit sharing similar to last time. Eight core profit-sharing positions where staff can get compensated as we are making some profit. Egalitarian profit-sharing within that group of 8, based on hours worked. Possibly have sponsorships be handled on commission.

### **Events Budget for spring 2008**

Risk money \$1700 for venue and publicity that could be lost if event cancelled.

Fixed expenses that don't get committed until just before the event - \$7000 ish

Other expenses relate directly to number of participants so scale with registration.

Committee not sure of ticket price yet. Would be sliding scale. Low end \$80-100, high end \$125.

Income also from sponsors and orgs having tables/exhibits. A small grant has been applied for with the McCune Foundation.

Seattle Event had about 200 paying attendees, but Seattle is a larger market than Albuquerque. Less competition in terms of other events like this. Strong Permaculture community.

3 scenarios:

Bad: low attendance (75) – lose \$4000

Good: medium – make \$3500

Better: high – make \$16000

Break even is 125 attendees.

With a higher low-end sliding scale these numbers look better – at \$95 break even is 105 attendees.

Not sure whether we want to have price lower in hopes of more attendees or price it higher and have lower break even.

We would also have scholarships and volunteers could get in free.

AGREED: Sense from the board is that this range of prices is in the proper range to meet our organizational values or could be a bit higher and still be OK.

### **Protocol for Events Fund (Ma'ikwe & Peggy)**

Protocol for using money from the events fund (currently \$5000) – at what level can the team start spending money on an event.

In general we would want to see:

Venue

Team

Budget

Theme/Constituency

The team seems happy with that.

Do we want to see some amount of “local risk taking” or are we OK with FIC taking the whole risk.

Want to allow Events Team to have enough autonomy to execute events without too much process. Just want to get the basics from the team so that we know they are on track.

AGREED: Protocol for release of Events Funds — Board or Oversight (or a designee) shall approve release of Events Fund when the Events Team has prepared a reasonable venue, core staff, budget, and a theme/constituency.

Are we ready to approve release of funds for Albuquerque?

Good venue  
Good team being developed.  
Budget still needs work.  
Theme/constituency is OK.

In general we are a little behind on getting this event ready.

In general we would prefer things to be together a bit more to meet the protocol? In this case I feel ready to release the initial risk money.

We could release just the venue money now and have OS approve money later once things are more in place.

The key is that we want to see that we really have an event.

AGREED: Board releases funding for the venue reservation. Further release is delegated to OS pending a more complete budget.

### **Emerging Electronic Technology (Tony)**

Tony is going to present the technology and also there will be discussion of how much energy we want to devote to an effort to take advantage of these resources.

- Social networking — my space, facebook, tribe.net,

These sites allow someone to post a page about themselves and their interests and create networks of friends which can be used for connections around common interests. It could be called “community where you are”. Different sites allow more defined searches.

We could use similar techniques on our site. We could allow individuals to have their own page where they express their interests and facilitate people networking around interests.

The existent sites can also be used as promotional tools for our site or community in general by creating a site for “community” and create a network of “friends”.

Del.icio.us, dig, hugg, stumbleupon

These are shared bookmarking tools that can use the views of others to help determine which websites are most useful for particular searches.

These tools are accessed and used in a variety of ways.

The more people that indicate a preference for our site through these tools the more others will be turned on to our site.

These are valuable not just for promoting our website, but also other sites and articles related to intentional community.

You can create a feedback loop, with attention creating more attention.

- Video — YouTube, etc.

With the more ubiquitous broadband presence, this becomes a viable option to reach people. 1 – 10 minute videos are easily seen.

Digital cameras and some cell phones have capacity to record videos which are qualitative enough for this function.

- Blogs — short for web logs

While there are lots of personal diary type blogs, there are also commentary blogs which are personal perspectives on anything — such as community.

Can be used to

- > Post content

- > Get publicity, traffic

- > Comments can be made on other peoples' blogs

Blogs can also link to our site.

- Search engine optimization/ranking

We are the first option for some searches such as “intentional community”. For other searches we don't come up as high as we would like, such as “ecovillages”.

We would like to rank higher on a wide spectrum of search queries related to our mission and to the information we provide.

Search ranking includes having a good site. It also takes into account how many other pages link to a particular site. So, the more links to our site, ic.org, the higher we will rank in searches. Links through paid advertising doesn't improve rankings.

Finding our site through searches and selecting the site from search results has little effect on search rankings.

The org could start a blog in addition to individuals being able to start a blog.

Blogger.com will provide software which can easily allow someone to start a blog. Posts can be any length.

How can we participate?

Short bios of board members and imps on the website.

Are there other parts of our website that could take advantage of this technology?

Should Laird blog on his road trips? It could be used as a way to communicate to others in the org which others could use to get a look into the workings of the organization and of communities in general.

Should it be a personal blog or should it be part of an org blog?

Should it be representational of the org?

It could represent him, the org, Sandhill, his consulting business, etc. which would not be under FIC review with links to and from the website.

Laird could start blogging and we could review it and decide if the org wants to support it.

These tools reach the younger generation as well as others who are interested in networking around serious interests.

Should the org have a blog?

Should we hire someone to blog or make videos or organize those things?

The website could have a section "bloggers in community" with whom we could create mutual links.

This is a different form of word-of-mouth advertising/marketing.

Giving something away for free is a way of attracting people to be more interested.

Commenting on targeted blogs and leaving website links can be very effective in bringing people to a website.

If we focus energy in this direction, we shouldn't abandon other, more traditional ways of getting our message out.

Orgs can also have myspace pages.

We can try ways to get community people to contribute videos that can be posted, such as some kind of contest for the best community video.

Reaching key communicators through electronic media is effective in spreading information through subsequent word of mouth and personal connections.

We could find out if there are people we know that are blogging and get them to link to us.

We could also get people to share relevant links to community oriented media that they find.

### **Personnel (Jenny)**

The board approves Harvey to join the Personnel Cmtee that includes Jenny and Caroline.

The board approves Peggy as new onsite coordinator.

### **Reports**

Nominating cmtee notes that there is a dearth of available candidates for board membership which is a reflection of the inability of the org to attract new participants in recent years.



Tony notes a few of his tasks that he would like to be relieved of: directory production, some technical web related functions. Members of his home community had expressed interest in helping, but that has not manifested due to time restraints. It seems like we need help from outside the org to fill these roles.

Regional networking committee report:

They have worked with Tony on developing a regional network website which will be complete by the next org meeting. NICA has developed a website that can be used as a template for other regions.

The number of Bioneer presentations doubled this year to 2. The Powerpoint presentation did not get completed and will be a focus for next year.

They want to have more presence in regional events such as Greenfest which will be in about 4 locations around the country. They will use the event in Seattle as a test to see if they want to participate in other locations. The other locations are Chicago, DC, and San Francisco.

They are requesting that FIC be responsible for entry fees for a presence. They will also be trying to place speakers at the events.

They will be working with trying to promote org sponsored events by organizing locally before the events.

A lot of the material they were planning on using for promotion was in Geoph's custody and needs to be recovered.

They are requesting a budget allotment of \$400 to help support local groups' presence at the Greenfest events.

**The board approves this request.**

There is a request to the committee to be aware of the presence of events in the southwest in advance of the planned Art of Community next spring in order to promote the event.

Evaluation

+	Needs change
Pull together	Small cozy mtg space
Meals donated	Better food
Good internet access	More attention to facilitation
Tech conversation	Imprecise use of "we"
Inclusion	More team building
Orientation of new people	More time for small meetings
Cozy space	Need to better recognize what is plenary material
No dramas	Reports
Singing	Not clear when new people can contribute
Time circling around Geoph	Better to have event before the meeting
Good snacks	Student coops not a great place to meet – less contact with hosts, scattered housing

Great party	
flexibility	
Good to have staff present	
Hostel flexibility	

**Closing Circle**

Bead was chosen to represent our fall Org Mtg at Pearl St Coop. A bone (vertebrae-like) chosen by Alan Robinson, Administrator for College Houses at University of Texas. Great supporter and host of our fall FIC Org Mtg in Austin.

Bead was chosen for Geoph. A white opaque with white waves and red specs chosen by Laird.