

2006 FIC SPRING MEETING

MADISON (WI) COMMUNITY COOPS

Friday, April 7, 2006 – Sunday, April 9, 2006

Opening Circle @ 9:10 am, Tony Sirna (Dancing Rabbit MO), Facilitator

The Four of Cups – making our dreams and visions come true

The Bead Necklace remembers 1986, 1991, 1996, 2001 & 2006

Presented by Jenny Upton, (Shannon Farm VA)

1986 vision meeting at Tangy Homesteads, Philadelphia.

Agreed to call for re-organization of the FIC

1991 at The Vale of the Tanager, Yellow Springs, Ohio

Followed by visit to Communal Studies Association mtg at University of Southern Indiana in Evansville and historic New Harmony community

1996 at Grow II/Ganas in the Catskill Mountains, NY

Varied emotional experiences, deep work with FIC reorganization

2001 at Earthaven, Black Mountain NC

Conceived the idea of a free, online Directory, requiring endowment funding

Housekeeping & Other Announcements by Ma'ikwe and others

Marty questions whether Saturday night event food and drink should be funded by donations from participants, or common FIC funds

Agenda Review

Raines requested agenda schedule change on Saturday morning – achieved

Nominating Committee

Committee members Marty, Ma'ikwe & Harvey will develop a slate of nominees for the FIC board.

Aging in Community

Laird reported on community initiatives for seniors, Second Journey and Silver Sage are two such projects. Raines says Neshama and Zev have announced an Elder Cohousing Network that would offer an option to “for-profit, institutional” senior care. Two recent articles in the NY Times and another in AARP magazine (circulation: 36 million) have provided extensive coverage of this niche. The 1st senior cohousing has been built already – Glacier Circle in Davis CA, a block from Muir Commons which was the 1st cohousing built in the USA. Raines notes that senior cohousing may offer better kids facilities and guest housing, in order to attract their grandkids and family visits.

What should the FIC be doing in this arena?

Ganas NY has taken in two senior parents in their last months. Shannon Farm VA members are talking informally about building senior housing, though financing will be daunting. Alpha Farm OR has always envisioned itself as intergenerational. Two elder parents were there for their last five years, and their remains

are now in the Alpha cemetery. Seniors don't have to live last years warehoused in a medically oriented "institution."

Songaia WA has a younger member who was initially concerned about the care taking needs of senior members. Now, she's aware that seniors often have more time for community administrative work and childcare than she does. There is a growing sense of mutual care. Songaia does planning workshops before planned surgeries to develop care and support schedules.

Retirees and prospects whose children have left for college are now more likely than in the past to look for intentional community. Ma'ikwe says that Urban Ecovillage NM has 50% of their inquiries coming from senior seekers. Of course, seniors with money are no problem in dues paying communities. Low-income seniors can be a challenge, how do we respond? "Building Community Where You Are," and aging in place concepts that FIC promote can point the way.

Caroline says that Alpha members brief each member-prospect over 40 about the very challenging cultural prospects of moving from mainstream culture to Alpha Farm. The intentionally (and unintentionally) developed sub-cultures present in each self-consciously unique intentional community can be challenging in the extreme for some people. Sub-cultural adaptation can be the most difficult aspect of joining intentional community, even more so than financial issues.

Regional Networking Committee (RNC) Report (Fred Lanphear)

COMMITTEE: Fred Lanphear, Raines Cohen, Craig Ragland, Ma'ikwe Ludwig, Vince, and History

A year ago in Ithaca the RNC was created. To encourage IC formation at local and regional levels, info-gathering, making use of FIC resources. One of our main strategies: review, assemble, disseminate packet for use by Local & Regional Coordinators (LRC's).

We [RNC] identified a lot of local & regional networks, potential partners.

After our last meeting in Los Angeles, we conducted a conference call and learned how to use a Wiki site (participatory website), and subsequently used that to collaboratively produce this manual.

By The Book

Handout: Local & Regional Coordinators Manual, draft of April 8, 2006

Our goal today: conceptual review, not final approval. Input on our next steps. RNC would like to start selective dissemination to test whether it will successfully empower people to use FIC resources.

Mostly the packet is drawn from existing FIC materials, but pages 9 through 11 contain new content, guidelines for LRC's on effectively using existing resources. It's about how to expand and extend our connections locally, with people on the ground making connections.

We reviewed the document, discussing where [RNC] found some elements. Harvey proposed reviewing each element to make the process as transparent as possible, with actual implementation steps clearly spelled out. Ma'ikwe asked about selection of LRC's – we will discuss it in our committee slot this weekend. Laird asked for guidelines as to when to consult with FIC, how much latitude do they have as FIC ambassadors?

Next Steps

Fred mentioned additional resources needed: revised organization chart, separated-out documents, an FIC packet of materials in need of updating and expansion. The working session on promotional materials should help with this.

Fred expressed excitement about the work Tony has done to regionalize the website.

Fred asked for more input both here and directly via the Wiki. Field feedback will be crucial.

Welcome to WikiWorld

A separate thread arose about the nature of Wiki'ing, not part of the main discussion.

Geoph described a Wiki as an interactive site that you can make additions or changes to, and it tracks the change history over time. You can subscribe to pages or lists of changes for the whole Wiki, and easily compare versions and revert. Your committee work can evolve. Tony added: it lets groups of people collaboratively add and edit documents, without being in the same place. Raines commented: tracking the whole history, and reverting pieces is powerful, but it can be disorienting for someone accustomed to finished/polished web pages, without the context. Our current Wake is open (not password protected).

COOLER: Ma'ikwe asked about ongoing training resources related to Wiki procedures.

Carol speculated about the nature of writing online and off: how would Jefferson have Wiki'd his edits to the declaration of independence, would it have been too wordy? Ben shared his experience: success comes from having someone responsible for creating a final draft. Fred's experience in corporate writing and collaboration has found otherwise: in this case, our collective work.

COOLER: Ma'ikwe flagged it as a larger issue for the organization, to be discussed later.

Possible Uses for Larger Donations (Laird Schaub)

Handout: oversight committee email of 3/12/06 by Laird, "summary of response to Christmas List request", based on board and staff requests in response to a query.

Laird reported on the history of donations and discussions on how they could be allocated that led to these responses. We're looking at getting a check in the next couple of weeks for something over \$20,000, all earmarked, largely to support the major overhaul of Communities Magazine; already-planned allocations include discrete tasks, including design overhaul and independent website, Photo Editor Susan Patrice. Donor Molly Morgan doesn't want her name published. She's interested in funding a lot of the smaller items on this list, and looking at seed money for events, not in constructing a building in Missouri.

Laird asked for comments on items listed here, or additional items.

Tony reminded us that the website budget allocated this year is \$4,000 rather than the requested \$10,000, with the gap promised to be made up through fundraising, and Cmag website being part of the work plan.

We looked at choices that would improve work conditions, short of construction of a full building.

Carol framed the question as one of internal vs. external priorities, FIC capacity-building/infrastructure vs. events and the website, operating on a large scale. Marty suggested a summit with other organizations.

Ma'ikwe framed the Q as broad v. deep.

Vince speculated that more web investment could lead to greater connections, more people at events.

Marty suggested that the website has existing people and priorities in place.

Fred suggested that strategic planning could inform priorities.

Laird noted that money is more of a limiting factor for the web development than other areas that are not yet ready for action, like the summit.

Ma'ikwe said she's interested in events coordination roles, limited because she lives in a city, needs longer-term employment.

Carol asked that we as a board decide whether we are of multiple minds or be more specialized/more broad. The website gets many thousands and thousands of hits; how many of them end up in community? Or are we interested in inner work? Or getting bodies physically into communities. The mindset and energy around those are really different. Where do we want to be putting concentration or splitting it? _ From Ganas notes that the website is about focusing attention, a major source of interested people visiting. Harvey commented that our events strategy 'til now has largely been about creating richness of community activity at other events, rather than doing it all ourselves.

Laird reminded us that this is about building a relationship, keeping the donor in the loop, participating in the process. She is planning to attend the fall 2006 Art of Community event in Seattle.

Tony asked people to recognize that they are pushing buttons around compensation issues, 75% of time being donated thanks to rate subsidy (\$10/hr vs. \$75-100 market rate). “There are people who would do it if we had the money” is a trigger in this context, given the skill levels.

Harvey asked that we remember that we’re all basically volunteers, including those who are ‘paid’. We have an organization with complicated finances.

TASK: Laird to talk with the donor, using the guidance provided here.

COOLER: Discussion of office facilities issues.

REPORTS

These are not all the reports; just those the board felt needed sharing.

Community Magazine Summit (Laird)

Changed the focus of the magazine to reflect a shift in focus of the organization: community where you are.

Each incoming article will be screened for various target populations, with the aim of addressing each in each issue.

Therese has joined staff to help with photos; Susan is also using calibrated equipment and the printer has come to talk to the staff to help images look their best.

Magazine has been losing money – over \$10K in the past 2 years. Goal of new changes is to make it profitable again in two years.

New subtitle: “Life in Cooperative Culture.”

Rollout of new changes has been gradual due to availability: already have ad in Utne Reader and new paper, but new cover won’t debut until fall.

Tony: redesigned magazine Web site will look like a magazine site but also like part of the ic.org site.

New magazine should be available in time for the Art of Community event.

The Art of Community Northwest: Co-Opportunities for Sustainability (Fred)

Flyers were distributed: event will be at Bastyr University, Kenmore, WA, September 8-10; “It looks like we will have the whole campus to ourselves that weekend.”

Campus offers vegetarian and vegan meals, reflexology department, and other amenities. Participants will be responsible for their own breakfast, so only 3 meals will be available for purchase along with registration fee. \$45-\$75 plus meals; scholarships and sponsorship opportunities are available.

Ma’ikwe: Striving for more participatory activity this year. Possible interactive art projects, lots of multimedia equipment in rooms, workshops for kids.

This event will follow board meeting Tues-Thurs at Songaia.

Event uses main FIC bank account, but Tony doesn’t foresee any problems.

Most of energy so far is going into programming and Web site; little has yet gone into marketing & promotion. July 1 is cutoff date for canceling reservation without penalty, so pre-registration will be available through June.

Laird: expect half of registrations to be less than two weeks in advance... July 1 is too soon to expect people to pre-register.

Minimum attendance is 250, no problems expected meeting minimum.

Tony wanted to see new budget with fixed costs of event (approximately \$4000) reflected.

Fred did not feel this was necessary given the escape clause in the contract. Contract must be signed by April 17.

Rains: book sales at event may be subject to Washington State sales tax.

TASK: Fred will look into possible sales tax liability and ways to reduce insurance liability.

TASK: Tony will create a cleaner URL for the event Web site.

AGREED: Board will review contract, sign when satisfied, and pay \$500 deposit to Bastyr University.

Burning Man: (Rains)

It has recently been discovered that cockroaches confer among themselves before acting in ways that affect the group. So does Burning Man!

There is potential for FIC and Burning Man learning from each other's experiences.

Unfortunately there's only a week between Burning Man and FIC board meeting.

Rains offered to coordinate carpooling, etc. for any FICers who want to attend Burning Man.

Missouri Office Changes: (Tony)

Susan is leaving; Kim Scheidt of Red Earth Farm will assume Susan's position and possibly some other responsibilities later.

FIC bought a new computer for the Virginia office; their old one has been shipped to MO office.

Newsletter: (Jorge)

Maybe a May 15 issue, then resuming schedule of 5 weeks or so before org meeting. This will be first issue since summer 2005.

Regional Networking Committee had talked about newsletter as a vehicle for regional communication. Future issues will try this out.

Personnel: (Jenny)

Committee wants pictures and bios of board members for the Web site. Details will be forthcoming.

Budget (Tony presenting, Harvey facilitating)

End of 05, Q1 06

05 isn't too bad considering the Cmag numbers, which had a 13k loss.

Bookshelf lost \$100

Good news were development and directory 4.1

It turned out pretty much as projected from the last meeting (LAEV) nor from the interim meeting in February 06.

Things look very good with an 18k profit projected, but we have not gotten some bills including a printing bill and a 3k bill from TO.

We also haven't gotten Cmag returns, in other words, the data is incomplete.

But we do have good numbers for bookshelf, which had its highest web orders in years. We are 25% above projection and we haven't done any events yet.

Cmag is showing good subs.

We are not sure if the new initiatives are showing results.

Consensus books are losing sales. We put no energy into marketing this, but sales seem to decrease.

We don't lose money, but we are not taking advantage of the opportunity.

Development is doing well. A couple of large donations have come on the books this quarter. They are earmarked to support development, which effectively frees up other money.

Directory sales continue to be strong and we have ordered a new printing based on the strong sales.

We had a labels sale which is in “other income.”

Expenses are as expected.

We have not been billed by Tony (about 2k) or by TO as yet.

Tony would like to pay off the PEACH loan, but does not feel like the money is available.

We have a good cash position right now but that money is earmarked for other things.

We owe PEACH interest on the difference between our loan from them and the loan we have made to them from our loan fund.

All areas are showing profit except bookshelf, which is -\$2.

We are showing 18k profit projected for the year, but we will wait before getting too excited.

Cmag:

Subscriptions are at 7k, which is high, and we are not sure why we are having this result.

Ad sales are also doing well. Patricia Greene is now doing ads and is billing promptly. It will be interesting to see if income goes up relative to the number of ads. Ads rate were increased and that might not be reflected in the budgeted number.

We haven't printed an issue yet this year, which will result in an imbalance in time available for the issues assuming the next one, comes out on schedule.

There was a new layout person and a new ads person both of which contributed to the delay in getting out this issue.

We got results of the Cmag survey, which are available, online.

The donor has made a contribution to help the shortfall but primarily the initiatives are geared to bolster the future of the publication.

Bookshelf:

High mail order, low event due to not having done an event yet.

Inventory has not been reconciled and adjusted.

Management labor is low.

We are not expecting to do events where we have to pay to be present, but rather do events where there are not expenses other than the labor to prepare the inventory for the event.

We expect to do better than the budget because of events we are scheduled to do.

We have limited our titles to a core set of titles.

Katie also has the ability to edit the online offers as opposed to having to go through Velma.

Video sales, even after 4 years, have remained steady at about 1k/quarter.

Some of the income is still going to pay off original loans. \$1 is earmarked to promotion, which could be used for production.

There is \$1700 in the marketing fund, which would fund production of a segment. We can suggest to Geoph to consider this.

The Ron Miller donation is due 7k in June.

Money that comes in at org meetings is covering our expenses.

Tony looked at the budget for the fall '06 event, it looks like we'd be okay even if the event fell apart and didn't happen. Overall attendance and budget projections look fine, especially given NICA's generous offer of front funding, so it seems fine to give it the go-ahead, that our risk is minimal. If new unforeseen expenses materialize, the committee needs to be on top of keeping the FIC board informed.

APPROVED: The budget and plan for the fall '06 Art of Community event, and Tony is authorized to sign the contract with the venue.

Oversight evaluation (Fred facilitating, Laird presenting)

Prior to organizational restructuring there was some frustration in the lack of turnover in the administrative committee.

Restructuring gave rise to the creation of oversight, which would have 3 board members. The OS also consists of Laird as exec sec, Bill as treasurer, and Jenny as a cluster rep from Personnel.

There has been some variation in the composition of OS. Elph, Jillian, DianaM have been members, but there has not been turnover since Marty came on about 3 years ago, so we wanted to check in as to whether there is an organizational issue.

Differences from the earlier incarnation are frequent conference calls, which are open to all board members and the prompt distribution of meeting minutes.

Another difference is that there is more imp participation from org members not on OS.

Laird feels like he gets support from OS, which is of high value to him. He does not feel like he needs to be careful about what he says or how he says it.

Laird is directed by oversight more than people, particularly imps, in the org realize. This results in blame for discontent being aimed at Laird rather than OS where it is misplaced.

A lot of basic work was done in the first 10 years by the admin team and it seems like a natural evolution that has taken place to where we are not struggling with many start-up issues.

Caroline reengaging after 3 years observes that she is a bit concerned about the org becoming complacent in how things are done. There needs to be ongoing reevaluation of how things are done. Turnover in the team is careful to evaluate and to do effectively. We need to be aware of becoming too comfortable in how things are operating.

Expanding org focus into coho and now trying to expand into "community where you are" gives fresh blood to the org.

Tony is "ready, willing, and able" to step down from OS and focus more on implementation. He is concerned that some of the things he brings to the mix may be hard to replace including some of his perspectives and financial and technical knowledge. He looks forward to having more time freed up by not having to go to meetings and participate in phone calls.

Harvey is somewhat ambivalent. He is challenged by the amount of volunteer work he does. He took a break in the first couple of years of OS, but it has been a big part of his life and would miss the participation. He would step aside if someone said that they wanted his slot, but enjoys the participation.

Jenny wonders if someone other than herself could bring more to the position.

Marty sees value to the org in having turnover, but is not inclined to ask out of the position at this point.

The driving forces to change the composition are willingness to make the commitment, people looking to step down, and people looking to step up.

There is a good working relationship with Laird, but fresh blood is valuable.

Tony prefers to take a break, but is willing to look at whether his pieces can be replaced.

Laird has no concerns about getting support from any board members who might replace Tony. However, Tony brings a dynamism that might not be replaced. There is concern whether his intellectual activity would be replaced.

Personnel issues take up about 25% of Oversight's time.

The AC dealt with personnel issues to a great extent. The need for this energy has reduced in the last few years.

Does Jorge have interest in stepping into an OS role in place of Tony?

Jorge thinks that he could do that in a year from now. He is not sure how available he is now. He wants to set up the newsletter in a way that the responsibility can be transferred and feels like he needs a better working relationship with Tony. He is willing to work on moving to that place.

Jorge feels like he started in the org working with Bill and attempts to work more with Tony have been lightly initiated and have not produced the kind of results yet that he would look for in order to replace Tony's expertise. Tony feels like generally it has been easier for him to do the accounting than to transfer this responsibility. The issue is doing financial analysis. If he did not need to replace Tony's financial analysis position, he would be willing to step into an OS role.

Jorge thinks it would be good to have someone from the Seattle area on OS because of the perspective brought from coho.

Fred does not feel ready to take on participating in OS.

Caroline has a lot of confidence in nom com to make good decisions. She intentionally stepped off the board to give others the opportunity to join. She would be prepared to serve on OS, but would leave it up to the board to make the right decision. She would be willing to serve, but does not have a sense of the need in regards to the balance of OS due to her not participating on that level for the last few years.

Strategic Planning (P: Laird)

When we got here we narrowed our focus to two things: Building Community Where we are, and Events. There are short-term plans already underway with traction and resources and people underway in development and website design. With that in mind, we had at least one working section on each of those topics.

Events Committee [EvC] (Harvey)

We discussed how to plan in this area where it's been a challenge focusing consistent energy on traditional events. We came up with:

- Continuing to collaborate w/other orgs

- Trying to springboard from the current event to generate some event energy in the future using Fred, Ma'ikwe, possibly Craig's energy, knowing that they would not necessarily be the onsite people. Ma'ikwe suggested developing an event in Austin, Texas a year from this fall. (i.e. Fall 08) as we firm up an organizational meeting there. There's a number of cohousing communities, student co-ops; another liberal University town in an uncertain political state. Caroline agreed to talk w/folks who put on Oregon Country Fair; Geoph will talk w/some folks he knows; maybe also some Rainbow folks if we can find some strong current connections. We haven't really written down what it would look like to continue collaborating w/other orgs, but as we create an inter-org summit that might be a spot to develop collaborations.

We are looking at re-staff the (fairly dormant) events committee with Harvey, Fred, and Ma'ikwe. Experience plus consistent participation in the organization, credible folks stepping forward. Assigned to develop its own job description (reviewing the existing one from 1998), including identifying stock materials to be present representing FIC at other events, plus working w/regional networking committee to identify people and areas that might have FIC activities.

Raines added Burning Man to the list, volunteered contacts there, plus OCF.

DECISION: Board authorizes new committee – for now it is ad hoc: Harvey, Fred, Ma'ikwe, Caroline (as convener).

We don't have a five-year plan for events; the committee is looking for input.

Ma'ikwe raised the question of an anniversary event five years from now.

Tony wants to make sure whatever plan we create includes sustainable funding. Challenging now in a no-risks-allowed planning-constraints environment. We've tried partnering with other events, having our own events in a regular way (esp. in conjunction w/org mtgs). How do all those interact, what are we aiming for? What capacities are we trying to build in our organization, both financially and in terms of skills? Focusing on type of program we'll have in five years, not just type of events.

George envisions synergy with Cmag in planning, themes.

Raines raised questions around granularity; Fred linked that concern to models with easy micro-event repeatability for momentum building.

Tony hopes not to create bureaucracy that adds layers of approval to people taking advantage of opportunities – maybe it's a different committee that attends other events. Is it worth funding? This should be part of the strategic plan.

Ma'ikwe suggested a set of linked/structured goals in terms of number of events we participate in, and the promotion strategy around it.

Marty convened community-where-you-are. We had an opening/brainstorm discussion. We talked about what we could learn from existing projects, and how to partner with them, build the skills that we have. Another thrust is to see what kind of projects we could initiate with the assistance of local people in neighborhoods. Take things that we know that promote community (more than just potlucks) and promote them on the website. We hope both to learn from people doing local community development – what they know and what we can do to help them, and put out what we know to help people more directly. Start presenting us as a group that's interested in this area.

Task: Marty to distribute notes to people present at the meeting.

Several people present discussed pursuing aspects of working with existing communities/initiatives.

As for creating web content, we can create a place where the world can share in the creation. Possibly Wiki format.

We hope to build on what the Regional Networking Committee has started, in terms of identifying local resources and Wikis. Harvey is looking at converting existing (workshop) resources.

Web Team Five-Year Plans (Tony)

Raines, Tony, and Vince talked about the difficulty of five-year planning in the rapidly changing world of the web. We developed goals: to have a dynamic website that allows users to participate in discussions and share information with each other. A vibrant community that people want to interact with on a daily or weekly basis: for people in communities, seekers, and communitarians. Evolve from our current largely one-way communications channel (model: Cmag) to a Wiki, forums, discussion lists, groups, blogs where people can post, contribute, and build on interesting content. Not just somewhere you visit when looking for information on community. Some of the challenges in getting there are not just technological; getting enough people contributing with a high-enough level of quality is important. It's not clear how much of that energy would need to come from our current ranks and how much would easily be drawn; what would be needed to jumpstart and maintain it in ongoing fashion. Q's arise about moderation. We discussed getting people in the FIC (staff, board, key people) to post to identified sections (the web equivalent of columns), and alternative ways of getting people represented. Not blogs for everybody, but for people in the movement, giving them space to contribute. There are ways now to do a "feed" (aka RSS, or Really Simple Syndication) that allow people to subscribe to get information updates without having to go to our website.

Right now our website is primarily a way for people to get information about communities. Many people create connections and networks in a sense of community, online. The more we do these things; you do begin to create a sense of community in a group of people actively involved in doing that. That's not the primary purpose; it's mainly a means to an end, helping people make connections in a real-world sense or information sharing. While Tony is actively managing technology of the website, we don't have anyone in the FIC actively producing content or moderating/editing/reviewing flows, keeping their finger on the pulse of content that is being added. It basically creates the need for a position that could be on the level of editor of Cmag – it could require that much time and require that level of expertise. Requires response, writing content, having mediation-type energy. Different from the technical person who's installing software and making sure the back end works. It's less work than writing it all ourselves. We may find that this isn't successful, because people have different priorities or use existing other sites to meet their needs. Some parts are live now (i.e. editing directory entries, posting events and ReachBook entries); others could be 3-6 months or more. Perhaps some board-level discussions could be carried out there instead of in the 'all' list. For instance, Cmag marketing discussion. News coverage discussion.

The Newsletter is a highlight, snapshots; the website is a continuous flow. The newsletter is about board to membership communication.

Ideally people active in the FIC will participate in adding content to the site, either he or herself or being interviewed about what's new. As activists in the communities movement, we have stuff to share. It can be just a tiny bit at a time.

Other five-year planning areas:

Dan asked about fundraising, Sunrise Credit Union clients, development contacts; perhaps they could do outreach on our behalf.

Regional Networking Committee (Fred)

We've shifted a bit. On Friday we presented an LRC manual - for Local & Regional Coordinators. For people on the front lines of the FIC, doing outreach. We already knew the materials needed to be edited and approved.

We want to back up and do this in phases/stages. We want to get some material out there, perhaps more abbreviated, and get this into the hands of people who are already doing the work, "Community Connectors", distinguished from LRC's.

We want to get a field manual together that will allow us to get this thing launched in June and into the hands of some people we've identified. And we're looking for more.

We want to tie in with our strategies of having events, for example Austin in fall 2007. We have a contact person there, would be great to work with him, providing him with a way of using our resources/materials to get other people excited about it, part of a team. Even for the fall event, someone in British Columbia that the AoC team would like to work with.

Here's some ways of getting other people knowledgeable and excited about it.

In this next month we'll work on revising the manual we gave you on Friday, to make sure the language is clear, that this is for community connectors, not FIC representatives. A cover letter will talk more about intent and how to use it.

If by June we had at least one FIC piece like a flyer that could go with this, that would help. We'd like to migrate our WIKI to the FIC site, and do a newsletter article about this whole grassroots push, citing the Northwest as an example, tying to the AoC event.

The goal is to develop over time two levels, including people officially designated.

[see our cmttee Wiki for names of particular people in the northwest, Austin, DC-area, etc.]

This is to field-test our packet, and ask them to contribute in more people.

George asks the board: could this be a focus of the newsletter - end of May?

George also is excited about regional networkers leading in org meeting preparation when one comes to the area.

TASK: Update the LRC manual, and get ERB approval (RNC)

TASK: Approve the initial distribution (ERB)

TASK: Migrate the Wiki to ic.org (Tony)

DECISION: Go forward with launching the Community Connectors program

Office Climate Improvement (Jenny)

TASK: Check in with the staff working in the office (Personnel)

There may be issues of priorities, what areas \$ expenditure would make a significant difference. Climate control? A perception of some, not all that it's an issue.

FREEZER: As FIC becomes more visible; we may need a more presentable office. [George] Ma'ikwe had sought grant funds, dropped that project; saw no energy around it from Oversight when last asked.

New Board Selection (Nom Com - Harvey)

3 board member terms expiring: Jenny, Fred, and Jorge. All have responded positively to renewing their terms. No new candidates surfaced. We have not checked in with Peggy yet (per org std of checking in after a board member misses two meetings).

TASK: Talk to her this weekend or next weekend in Albuquerque (Ma'ikwe for Nom Com)

DECISION: Jenny approved

DECISION: Fred approved

DECISION: Jorge approved

History: people would join our board and disappear. We wanted a participatory board.

Jorge joined a year ago, tentatively. Feel tremendously comfortable and happy with my contribution and dynamics.

On-line Directory Ads (Tony)

Planning sidebar ads for directory listings and searches (not individual entries). Looking for feedback on method, price.

The expectation that communities actively seeking members, workshop participants, attention. Products discouraged - the goal is to provide a service to seekers.

The average classified ad in Cmag runs \$25-50 per issue. Display ads cost \$90-400. Print directory ad was \$100-\$500 in Dir4. Google has a method where you pay per click, with a dynamic bidding system, \$0.01-\$100. Songaia was paying at one point a few hundred \$ a year on click advertising.

Tony's thought: \$100 a year for first year, not knowing yet how effective. We will track how often people click on the ad, how frequently each directory entry generates a visitor to a website.

George: Perhaps sliding scale? The communities that need people the most tend to have the least amount of money.

Each advertiser will get a monthly or quarterly report on the number of clicks or views

Probably quarterly with discount for a year sign-up.

Tony's hoping it will be mostly automated. McCune will still need to process the order and credit card: \$5 worth of office labor. Perhaps set up recurring charges. Perhaps review process so they don't say anything offensive.

Probably show just five per page, and rotate randomly.

Networks as well as communities could advertise.

The ad will link to their directory listing. Craig suggested it could go directly to their website.

Flat rate supported vs. per-click billing.

Per-click: you pay for success. By the head. Perhaps with a minimum \$5-10 fee.

90% of site traffic is in this area. Intended to be targeted. perhaps start flat, go per-click as automation makes it more practical/efficient.

FIC Logo (Laird)

18 month ago we agreed to put together a Design committee to work with Amy Seidmann (Dancing Rabbit) to create a unified look for FIC materials. She's gotten involved in other FIC projects, including now doing Cmag layout. We're looking for input and bringing the board up to date.

Copies of logos/art being developed were circulated, with history.

Attempts were made to bring in other design consultants, informally.

Anything we do needs to work as B&W, large and small scale, plus color.

Laird's sister did some, and Amy did some more recently.

All is abstract, not intended to be representational.

We haven't opened up to outside submissions, but anything's possible.

Comments:

Strong negative reaction to abstract designs.

Hexagons: most positive of the bunch: an open circle, people being included. Be careful of interpretations of exclusion.

Strong positive to abstract design, especially text "for" in italics.

[not attempting to summarize all the comments in the minutes]

Conclusion: Not easy to find agreement on direction.

Warmth, home symbolism

Dynamism

Symmetry

There's dwindling hope that everybody will go 'wow' at the same time.

Carol: You don't put choosing a color in a committee. People need to let go of strong attachment to aesthetic and/or work w/a different group of people.

Laird: Difficult to move forward.

Tony: 3 of us on the committee, haven't found 1 person we could trust. This is difficult, regardless of how you make the decision. We're not attached to any particular aesthetic, but are looking at the result.

Harvey: People having honest reactions to symbolic content of these designs. None of the symbols we have so far has any coherent reaction.

Meg: Looking for symbology of inclusiveness, shared space, shared lives. Abstract more effective in the long run.

Steve: 3 experiences w/logo/image design, committee hodgepodge, great logo by sheer luck, naming that was iffy but stuck.

Moving a little bit, 10% closer.

Would opening it up to members help? Worth waiting for? Perhaps not sufficient response.

Ma'ikwe: I've always hated our logo, any improvement is better.

Raines: Perhaps ask for contributions of the story.

Jorge: Maybe someone from Ganas.

At this point not sure the current group is the right one to be making this decision. How can we best move this process forward? Do we need more or different energy on this committee?

Tony's proximity to Amy is useful in terms of consulting with her on this. Most useful when he can relate to her what is or isn't working about any particular design. Are making some progress in refining the design criteria and analyzing the effects/impact of different designs, what evokes which results.

Q: Why is the time pressure so strong here? A: We are in the midst of an effort to coordinate all the visual aspects of the org's materials, and having this piece in hand is important for that process. The fact is that, as it stands now, our old logo is undesirable enough that some folks don't use it in a general way.

Q: What is missing from the process as it is now?

If someone now came fresh onto the committee, it's possible they could bring new insight into what's going on and how to move past that into a more productive mode. Harvey is willing to be in an advisory consultant type of a role for the logo phase of the redesign process—what are the missing elements? What is the common ground?

There's been an issue of getting feedback from the broader group in a timely manner. Might be more flowing and productive if the group were able to get together for a design intensive that might result in a clear review and subsequent direction for the design process.

Laird and Tony willing to sit down with Amy to look at progress and the process, see if they can come up with some more

Peggy's been less available lately. A related question is whether it's better to keep her on the committee.

Should Harvey join in the process to help facilitate and focus the process?

Amy is not necessarily adept at isolating issues and focusing the conversation to resolve the issues.

Perhaps Harvey should join Tony and Laird on site to try and bring some resolution.

Harvey could go to Sandhill/DR in mid-May to have a concentrated session.

Proposed that Harvey serve as facilitator with Tony and Laird to help reach a decision.

Jorgé is willing to help fund the mini summit.

Introduction/acknowledgment of Lisa and Belden Paulson, who helped host the FIC at High Wind Community in Nov 1992.

EVALUATION

- + Decentralized meeting spaces = met more MCC FOLKS
- + Food great
- Too much food
- Too little heat
- + Grand mansions to sit in
- + Living room setting better than with table in the middle
- + Evening events good at outreaching to host folks
- + Good hospitality
- + Stimulating environment
- 3am visitors
- + Ear plugs an ongoing part of our supplies
- Need more clarity about how'll we want to present reports
- Parking
- Trouble to follow just where we are in a conversation
- i.e., clearer facilitation
- Low attention to the spirit dimension
- Energy in general lower this time
- + Maximal open meetings (few closed sessions)
- + Hosts very flexible (could ask anybody about anything)
- Need somebody in charge of fun, singing, etc.
- Coord with airport luggage delivery
- Nametags would be helpful
- Reestablish the “org box”
- + Lakeside setting
- + Madison's a nice town
- Agenda setting process barely keeping up
- Minutes coordination needs improvement
- Themes for org meetings could be valuable
- + Good mobility
- + Officially approving an event (1st in several years)
- After ministry the energy was heavy, need more of a heads up/explanation afterward
- Need tighter presentations (have gotten a little sloppy)

Report from Board re Oversight

OS stayed the same, with the addition of Caroline (will replace Tony, who is staying on in an advisory capacity) plus George will continue as a clington, probably taking over for Tony a year or so down the line.

Harvey, Jenny, Marty are now the Exec Committee.

Steve McClure, from MCC, chose the bead to represent our time in Madison. It was a butterfly. He said it symbolized new awakenings and emerging friendships with FIC.