

Interview with Allen Butcher

Interviewer: Deborah Altus

August 23, 1996

**Q:** This is Friday, August 23rd in an interview with Allen Butcher, and I'd just love to hear you talk about your background and how you got involved in community.

**A:** Well, I do have some kind of standard answers to those kinds of questions, and that is that my main interest was always in social change, and helping to encourage change, and the analysis that I had was that much of the world's problems, this country included, was because of the competition, the social structure that is focused on encouraging competition. And that it was destroying the environment, leading to conflicts, and foreign wars, and even causing a lot of problems within families, domestic violence and so on. So the analysis I had said that we needed to learn cooperation. I went to college a couple years in the early '70's, and there was just no one teaching cooperation. I wanted to find it, went to one of the largest campuses in the country --

**Q:** Where did you go?

**A:** Ohio State, Columbus. And, no one was teaching cooperation. So I went to where, I started looking for where to learn that, and the communal societies of, what was then called the Walden II communities, seemed to be the furthest expression of cooperation, and so that's why I went. I first learned about Twin Oaks from the Psychology Today article in '73. I was a senior in high school. I remembered that article, and two years later at Ohio State, I took a summer trip to Twin Oaks, and didn't think to contact them ahead of time. I didn't even know if they still existed, because that article was two years old.

**Q:** When was this, when you went on your visit?

**A:** That was '74. So I guess the article was '72. Because the book, the first five years of Twin Oaks, had just come out. Started '67, that was five years, so that would be '72. So I got there in the middle of a no visitor month, a drop-in visitor. So they let me stay overnight. And then, so while I was there I subscribed to their newsletter, Leaves, and to the Communities magazine, went back to school for another year. The next year I came back to the Twin Oaks conference, which was probably about their third conference or so, annual conference that they were doing. From that conference, then, from there I would travel to East Wind. And actually, some of these people, Art Rosenbloom, and Juble, were at this conference, and that's where I met a lot of these people.

**Q:** Now what community was Juble a part of?

**A:** U and I Ranch. He was getting U and I Ranch started in Missouri. And of course the conference was a real motivating thing for me. There were people from communities all over the country, and different kinds of projects, just the whole conference focused on community, not just Twin Oaks but all kinds. And so that was really an encouragement too. I didn't really need much encouragement at that point, but learning about the movement aspects, that was the first connection. And one of the meetings I sat in on was a discussion about Communities magazine. At that time, the magazine had just formed, or maybe a year prior to that, from a merger of three other magazine. And -- do you know that history?

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**Q:** Not really, no.

**A:** And those three magazines are listed, I have them in the merger list: *Communitais*, *Communitarian*, and I forget what the third one was. But that was something that encouraged me a lot to be involved in movement aspects, was that conference, and seeing how at that time the magazine was supported by a number of communities, Twin Oaks was only one. Later of course, Twin Oaks became the major support for it. So I went to East Wind from there, and East Wind at that time, it had been a year and a half on the land, and they had one ten-room residence, the original farmhouse, and they were building a 20 room residence. That's all there were, and there was 36 people there, something like that. And a lot of invented structures were on the land. So I stayed there 10 days, and that was really good too. Visiting communities at their formative stages is different. It's a small group of people, fairly primitive situation, but with grand ideas. And of course at that time East Wind was talking about growing to 1,000 people. Or 750 or whatever. But yet it was this struggling little community. The winter before that they called the Black Winter, when they had come to the land, bought the land, they had had some money, they ran out of money, and that winter they had no food, and had to go out and get jobs and all that. So I got there the following summer, when they had survived that winter and started hammock business, Twin Oaks had given them the hammock business. So they had just gotten off outside work after that winter when people had to get jobs. Well actually, when I visited, they didn't have the hammocks yet, they had started making the hammocks but they didn't get the big Pier 1 order account that Twin Oaks got a little bit later. But, so I should go back a little bit. I visited Twin ten days, and then took off on a trip around the country, hitch-hiking around the country. And I went through the Northwest, Seattle, and then down the coast to LA, and then --

**Q:** Did you visit communities along the way?

**A:** Some. In Oregon, I stayed at a community. I tried to visit Sierra Gordo, and got this ride and told this person I was going to Sierra Gordo, and he said, "I've heard of it, I want to go see it too." So he was driving over this mountain, and there's nothing on the mountain, Sierra Gordo mountain, there's no community, no buildings, there's nothing. And it took them 20 years to get around to start building something, roughly. At any rate, he knew of a community, and so took me there, and I stayed in this house with a bunch of people, a big old house and a lot of people. So it was your basic country commune.

**Q:** But you didn't go to Alpha?

**A:** No. Didn't go to Alpha. Of course, I had been reading *Communities* magazine for a year at this point, from when I first visited Twin Oaks, so I was aware of a lot of different communities, but I didn't try to get to Alpha, and it just happened I found that community. So that was, one community I visited, and then went on down to San Francisco, and stayed at a collective house in the city for a couple nights. That connection was, when I visited East Wind, there was a woman there from San Francisco, and so she gave me the address and I stayed at her house when I got out there. She was kind of interesting, because, she wouldn't tell me the whole story, but she had some connection with the weather [?] underground. And she wouldn't tell me the whole story, but she evidently was one of the people the FBI had been looking for. I don't know now if it's one of the women that gave herself up, I forget what her name was. She was,

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it was that person or someone else entirely. So we were checked out by different people, we didn't know who they were, but they were coming to check us out. Maybe the name East Wind helped or something. So that was that connection. Then I went down to LA and across to Santa Fe and just visited briefly some people living in a community there, in a house, and continued, and that was part of the problem with that trip, just staying on the road, hitch-hiking 10,000 miles in two and a half months. I really should've spent more time in different places, but I didn't do it. Santa Fe, I really regret not spending more time. New Orleans, and, at Columbus I was part of a runaway halfway house, helping volunteer for that. So one of their staff people had moved to a runaway house in New Orleans, so I had this place to stay there. And then went on East to North Carolina, and then up to Boston, Provincetown, New York City, and then back to Columbus, and I had a job waiting in school and a place to live, and I just said, "Forget this. I don't want to do this. I'm going back to East Wind." So that was 10,000 in 2.5 months. I got back to East Wind, and --

**Q:** Why did you choose East Wind instead of Twin Oaks?

**A:** The main reason, just because East Wind was the pioneering effort, and obviously needed more help, whereas Twin Oaks even at that time was quite well established. That was really the main thing, just that they needed more help. So it was more of an altruistic thing. It wasn't what I wanted so much as where I felt I could be the most good. And I ended up staying there 8 years. Part of it -- well, so in those 8 years, I visited a lot of communities and so on, but what happened for East Wind, part of it was feeling that it would be difficult to start over, to go out to the outside, and that's one of the things that kept me there a long time. Even after I had gotten pretty burnt out. In some ways I was pacing myself, I didn't get involved in the businesses, I was doing a lot of networking and travelling, the co-op movement and so on, but I was mostly worked outside as much as I could, construction and so on, and didn't do office work. I felt that later, I would get into that, be involved in businesses and so on. But several things happened and I ended leaving. One was conceiving a child when the community wouldn't support the child. Gave us a choice of having to leave the community or get an abortion. That's essentially the reason we left East Wind, because of that choice we were given, the community wouldn't support the child.

**Q:** Did that make you angry?

**A:** Well, somewhat. But I had also been pretty well burnt out, and wanted to do something else. But the other thing was, my main interest again was social change, and for a long time I felt that the communal labor credit system was an excellent model, and it is, of an alternative to the capitalist monetary system. The labor credit system is really the only existing alternative to the monetary system. The barter systems, computerized, and so on, they're still exchanging private property. They're not communal structures like the labor credit system is. And that's the thing I really appreciated most was the labor credit system manages the communal economy. And I think that that's one of the main things if not the primary thing that has permitted East Wind and Twin Oaks to survive. They have a system that works, which doesn't depend on any particular leaders or any ideology, it's just an economic system that works without money, that works for a common property system. And that's the thing that's going to keep it going, really, I think. But that's another whole story of what I feel about that, because the communities

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have this concept of total income sharing and very minimal private property, and I don't think that's totally necessary. I think that the labor credit system can exist under its own merits. You can have, you can permit members to also be a part of the monetary system as well -- on vacations they can make money and keep it and so on, as long as they keep it separate, and not put it in the community treasury, it's legal. Whereas, and this is one of the issues I have with Cat, was people in the leadership in the communities would try to, either they didn't understand it, which was probably partly the case, or they wanted to conceal the fact that it wasn't a legal reason for not permitting people to have private money. It was just the ideology of total income-sharing and equality, that they didn't want people to make money on the outside and bring it back into the community. Legally you can do that, and keep the 51D structure, but they're always saying, "No, you can't do that." And that was one of my disagreements with Cat. And we never really talked about it either, but that's what I felt, is that they'd try to keep it to that ideology, and then saying that legally they had to do it, when it wasn't the case. And there were several things. I think part of it though, too, is that they may not have understood, really.

**Q:** Now they're allowing more private property, it seems.

**A:** And Cat is part of that -- she bought a car. But the thing is, it's still an issue. And it always will be an issue and I think they should finally come to terms with that issue. The suggestion that I have, and I told Cat this some time ago, and again, I'd like to do this article for the 30th anniversary, is that the labor credit system is a strong enough system on its own, they don't have to be afraid of it falling apart, or dissolving, if you permit people to be involved in the monetary system as well. I think the two can coexist just fine. Different people over their lifetime, at different stages in their life, sometimes they'll want to be more part of the communal structure, other times they'll want to be part of the outside world more, have more private economy. So to me, it's not a threat to the community to permit people at some part of their lives, they feel like they want to get jobs and careers and be involved in that, I don't think that the community needs to say that either you're a member of the community and part of the total income sharing, or you leave and you're not any longer a part of the community. I think it's possible that they could have an economically diverse community in that sense, where some people who live there could have other jobs and outside income, and donate whatever they want of it to the community, and still be a part of the labor credit system, some part of that, however they want to arrange that. So to me, it could work. That's something that I'd like to see at some point, a community that had both systems, a labor credit system and also a monetary system, work it out such that people have a choice about how much interaction they want to have with the outside world and the private economy, and still be a part of the community. It would be a very different kind of community, it would be larger community, probably. Because I have that much faith that the labor credit system can support itself. I could be wrong too, it could be that people would work more for personal income and not for labor credits, but maybe not. People move to a community because they want to be part of that -- but anyway, that's a whole philosophical discussion that may become more important to those communities in the future, because there's always that trend in every communal society, that trend toward losing that communal intention. Kibbutz is doing it. Koinonia. All communal societies, eventually. But what I think is unique about East Wind, Twin Oaks, and the Federation, is they have that labor credit system, which I think gives them a great deal more strength to their communal economy than any other group,

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certainly the kibbutz. So that's my theory there. Another issue that I had with Federation Communities for many years, was their communal child care program. And that was another issue about leadership concealing information, basically. Cat, again, was involved in that. Cat had visited kibbutz about '75, I think it was. Seventy-four, '75. She was invited by Mordecai Bentov after reading her book on Twin Oaks for five years. So she went and visited kibbutz for several months and came back then to East Wind. And among the kibbutz that she visited was Deganda, which was a regional kibbutz. And Twin Oaks had named their first child care building Deganda, after that first kibbutz. And many of the kibbutz, but not all of them, had communal child care programs where they had children's houses, where all the children stayed in one building, and then adults would come and take care of them, and the professional child care people were called metas. So our whole child care program was designed based somewhat on behaviorism that Skinner had talked about, but largely more from the experience of the kibbutz. When Cat was there, she learned, when she was at the kibbutz, she learned that Deganda never did have a communal child care program. That first kibbutz, others did, but Deganda never did, and didn't while she was visiting there, but she didn't tell anybody that when she came back, because she went along with others to preserve that communal child care concept. Whereas a number of people over the years, and it was written about many times, that a number of people had wanted children and adults living together in group houses. And a lot of people had left the communities because they couldn't get that, they were pushed out of the communities. There were four people, two men, two women, who were close friends at East Wind, whose names, Larry and Peg and Mark and somebody else, they had advocated when East Wind was just starting a child care program, they had advocated that concept of children and adults living together in a building, it would be their residence where they would live. And then other people at Twin Oaks, they had what they would call a large planning process around social issues, they didn't call it social engineering, it was social planning, which they had done in the early or mid- 70s. And they had talked about that too, some of those people. Jerry -- Jerry was committed to the communal child care program, and one of her comments; I was jumping ahead, I left East Wind, lived two years in the city, and then moved to Twin Oaks. While we were at Twin Oaks then, we started to hold child program process, where we had Caroline Estes come and be a facilitator for this process that went on for months. She was there for some of the big part of a week or two, and had different groups, parents groups had meetings, child care workers had meetings, and then the less involved people had meetings, and it was just this long social planning process around child program. And Jerry had told us then, but one of her comments was, if the communal child care program had wanted, worked for, I think she said a couple years, or six months, a short period of time, the problem with it was that the workers were never long term. The problem was turnover and the metas. The idea was professional child care workers, but because of turnover, people leaving the community, or people choosing other work within the community, there was just a lot of turnover in the care providers, and that was the main problem why it didn't work. So it just turned out that the parents were the people with the longest term commitment to the children's lives. So then after that, however long Jerry said it did work, for the next 20 years, community was saying one thing, and doing something else. Basically saying they had a communal child care program, and having a communal building, but yet in practice, the parents had most responsibility, and most interaction with the children. And over the years then, eventually, most of the control, and most of the responsibility, even though we still said we had a communal program. And

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that's why we finally did that process, to finally clarify what was going on. When that was going on, I went through the archives and found all this stuff that had been written during the social planning process, where some people had talked about that, of having what I then coined, "child-adult residences," children and adults living together. I think I coined it, I don't know if maybe it was in somebody else's writing. So that's why I began advocating, because I had already had that experience at East Wind, of people who wanted that kind of lifestyle, relationship with children in the community, and had already been forced to leave. So that was one of my goals, was to change East Wind's child program. It was obvious to me that one of the best ways to do that was to go to Twin Oaks, because East Wind was following Twin Oaks for the most part. So Twin Oaks had to be changed before East Wind could change. And that was one of the reasons -- there were other reasons for going back. When we had been forced to leave East Wind or get an abortion, we lived two years in the city, and then went and joined Twin Oaks, and the goal there was, my daughter's mother didn't want to live in community, so the goal was to go back to community, and I could take care of our daughter in community, and she could leave. And that's essentially what happened. But another one of my goals was to change that child care program, because it was a real problem. People would come to the community, have children, be part of the community for awhile, and then they'd leave, partly because of that communal child care program. And so I felt that one of the important things for the survival of this community was to change the concept of child programs. And so that's essentially what we moved toward, and what Twin Oaks is developing now, with their new building, finally, is child-adult residences. So that was a change that I advocated and worked toward, and it took them, what, I left 7 years ago, and they just finished this building. So it took awhile.

**Q:** Now, until now, the children have all stayed in the commune?

**A:** Well, no. That original social planning that went on in the '70s, put out that idea that for the first 5 years they'd live in the children's building, and after they're five years old, they can get a room in adult residence, or share a room. And then of course Tooplo [?] was built with a child wing, so Tooplo had its own -- Tooplo was basically a child-adult residence too, but that was something different, that was an anomaly, that was a small living group that decided to have children. And they weren't really integrated that well, but it was a step in that direction. And other residences had rooms for children too when they were older, particularly as teenagers, but the theory was still communal child care. And they talked about having an older children's building and so on. So they had sort of had this compromise, where older children can have rooms in adult residences, but it wasn't that ideal of childadult residences, where all the adults in the residence would help child care for the children that lived there. I don't know if they're doing that in the new building or not, but it's much more designed for that. So that is the model of the social structure that I felt that our communities needed to pioneer, needed to build as a model, and now they're finally doing it. Now the kibbutz movement, as they move to a more privatization, they went straight from the communal child care program, straight into family apartments, and just totally ignoring the middleground, which is child-adult residences, group residences with children and adults. And they just totally ignored that, same way that they totally ignored the labor credit system. So the privatization of kibbutz is just going from one extreme to the other, not recognizing the possibility of a middle range, and I think the great thing is that Twin Oaks is

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now developing that, as far as the child-adult residence is concerned. And to me, that's the great thing after 30 years, we finally have what I think is an excellent working model of a social structure in a communal society. To me, that's a very significant thing. It's taken 30 years to do that. But to me that's something that I think could be really advocated, they've finally developed an excellent model for extended families in the communal society, and I don't hear them doing that. And probably because they don't recognize -- well, some people must recognize the significance of what they created. They built the building, after all, they designed it and built it. But Federation communities were never that good at explaining their innovations to the outside world. To me, the labor credit system is such an innovation, and they don't focus on that in their outreach at all. Same thing with this extended family thing, they could, great opportunities there for doing outreach and movement building, if they focused on those things. But anyway, so that's what the article that I wanted to do, would do, is talk about those things. Another one, I think, East Wind is finally getting around to -- East Wind is quite a different situation, because being in the Ozark Mountains, there are no building codes. We used to joke, you could live in a cardboard box in the Ozarks, and no one would care. Twin Oaks, of course, has zoning like crazy. So East Wind was able to avoid putting in a sewage treatment plant, whereas Twin Oaks was forced to do it. So then they've been able to experiment with alternative sewage systems. What they have now, they've created one artificial marsh to deal with grey water, from sinks and showers and so on, from the residence. So now they have instead of using septic tanks or leach fields, in their newest child-adult residence, they finally built one, after Twin Oaks made they change, they now have that extended family kind of child-adults residence also. They now have an artificial marsh that takes in the grey water from that building. So they can build one of those for each building now, that they put showers in and so on. And they also now have built their first composting toilet, which is this big fiberglass thing, in a structure all by itself, not connected to any building. They don't have to buy all this fiberglass, they can build them out of concrete. I used to have a design -- but now that they have experience with these composting toilet, they can start building these [unintelligible] residences. So they finally have a good model of sewage systems. They put composting toilets attached to buildings with grey water, artificial marsh or constructed wetlands, with marsh plants filtering the water and purifying the water before it's released -- cattails and hyacinths and so on. So there are some good innovations that these communities have come up with, and they could use these in their outreach, if they wanted to. Twin Oaks, of course, doesn't really need to, because they usually have a waiting list now. East Wind could take advantage of it, though, because they have 10 empty rooms or so. So I still feel that those communities have a lot of potential for growth and development, and have a lot of things, are excellent models in some ways, to be advocated. So I still think a lot about them. I visited East Wind a couple of months ago, and I want to support that. But the other reason why I left, going back to my original reason for joining, was social change. And it became clear that our communities weren't growing that fast. Twin Oaks is now 100 members and East Wind's 50 -- that's after 30 years. So, they've done some really good work, they continue to grow, but not as fast as they wanted. So my goal being social change, I wanted to look then for a form of community that was more appropriate to the American temperament, or to the mass of people in this country. And so I started looking for a model of community that was more of a balance of private and common property and ownership. That's where I started thinking about how the labor credit system is strong enough that it doesn't need to be threatened by people all having the

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freedom to go out and be involved in the monetary system as well. But then I also was chosen as a delegate to the International Communal Societies Association, the conference that was held in Scotland in '87 or so, in New Lannark.

**Q:** Oh right, Robert Owen's industrial community. That must've been wonderful.

**A:** So, I'd already of course been connected with -- okay, I should go back, no, let me finish that thought. I was saying that I was looking for a form of community that was more of a balance of private and common ownership. Because of this, being aware of the international movement, and these conferences, and then I went to that one in Scotland, and heard a presentation about community movements in Northern Europe -- Denmark, Holland, Sweden, and so on --

**Q:** Oh, and you learned about cohousing.

**A:** They didn't use that term, of course. And each of those countries have a different name for their movements. I don't remember what they all are now. Centrovonen [?] in Holland, Bofschown [?] in Denmark, and others. Different movements. Out of that conference too, there was some written material. So I was starting to learn about these community designs in Northern Europe. And then in '88, a year later, the cohousing book came out. At this point, before that, I was thinking, "I'm going to have to design this perfect community that's going to work in this country, I have to design it and build it myself." And so I was planning to leave Twin Oaks and create something. At that time, I was looking at using the resources of that area, Charlottesville, there's a lot of communities in that area with that network, develop that community with the support of different communities in the area. Twin Oaks has almost daily trips into Charlottesville, and so having a house in the city could be helpful, and the dual membership provision that Twin Oaks has, outside work, not outside work but, if we start a community in the city we could be dual members of Twin Oaks and the urban community, and also, I forget. There was different ways to put it together. So I was looking at creating that. And while I was at that conference in New Lannark, they had a television talk hostess, invited some of us to go to Glasgow and tape this television thing, and I have the tape here, if you've never seen it. I talked there about starting a community outside, starting a new community. It was a wonderful thing, it's a good tape. But at any rate, so I was talking about that, and then at that conference I was starting to learn about this, and a year later the cohousing book came out, and I said, "Well, this is it! I don't have to design it, this is it!" This full-color expensive book about cohousing, I said, "This is exactly it. I need to get involved in this." And basically, I'm still in transition now, from that rural communal to urban collective, cohousing being a form of what I call collective communities.

**Q:** What year did you leave Twin Oaks?

**A:** Seven years ago, so '89.

**Q:** And did you go from there to Evansville?

**A:** Straight to Evansville.



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**Q:** So you had worked out at this job with Don Pitzer?

**A:** Yeah. Well, on the way there I stopped in Ontario, and there was at that time, a fourth world conference. And there was another fourth world conference that I went to in San Francisco when I visited Charista, which was before I left Twin Oaks. But any rate, so when I went to college there, signed up for communal studies in Evansville, he got me a \$900 scholarship, paid for a couple classes, part of a semester, and also I started working for him as a student through the student work thing, ten hours a week in his office, and then switched over to the school of nursing instead, just because of the conflict that developed there. So when the cohousing book came out, I said, "Well, this is it." So now, here I am in Denver, jumping ahead again, but, partly came here because cohousing is going strongest here in the Rocky Mountain Cohousing Association, which I am treasurer for now. Of course the other reason was that Mike Cummings inviting me here to be a part of their political science program, which I'm not going to do, as it turns out. That's how that happened. Cohousing design I thought was the excellent model that would work for this country, and it is growing. It's probably the fastest growing aspect of the communities movement today. And it's just, what cohousing represents is, you know the community movement, '60s, '70s, before that, '80s even, later, we all had to build things incrementally. We had to make the money first, even though we had strong enough businesses, we could have borrowed money, we basically had to make money first to build the community. And most all the communities grew that way, historic communities -- not all of them, but some of them -- in the '60s and '70s and so on. They were incremental growth, pretty slow. It took us decades, 20 years, to build a substantial community of 50, 100 people, at a comfortable standard of living. But now cohousing totally takes advantage of resources of the outside world, the capitalist system -- 30 year mortgages, professional builders and developers, working with city zoning agencies and county zoning and so on -- and they build now in the space of two or three years what took us two or three decades to build. So the communities movement is accelerating on a scale of 10. Moving 10 times as fast as it did before, through cohousing. And it's just really incredible, how this concept of community is becoming mainstream. People -- and there's a lot of reasons for that, and we talked about this too, going back to the beginning of the revitalization of the Fellowship -- we're getting a lot of tails of different stories interwoven here. But that's cohousing. We talked about this when we were starting the Fellowship. One of the reasons for restarting the Fellowship was recognizing that the '90s was going to be a period of growing interest in the communities movement, and we needed to be ready for it, otherwise it would be a lost opportunity. We figured that the '90s would be a period of growth just partly because of cycles -- the '60s, and '70s, and then '80s was a quiet period. So just, historically things go in cycles, and community movements go in cycles, and I did that one thing about looking at waves of communitarian movements in this country, you can say there's roughly five of them or so, but each was closer than the one before, the time period was shorter. So after the '60s, there's bound to be another one. We figured '90s would be the time for a number of reasons. One was cycles. Another was the ecological and economic reasons, although those haven't come out quite as bad as we expected. Part of it too was that a lot of the '60s generation were quite young when they started those communities, and a lot of them had negative experiences, and more or less given up on the idea. And so now they've got their careers, they have children, they've bought their houses, they've travelled around the world, and hopefully for a lot of those people, a lot of those same problems, they still have those ideals, and now they've done all those other things, many people would

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be returning to those ideals of cooperation and caring, ecological lifestyle, and so on. And so we need to be ready to be able to -- those of us who've stayed with it have some really excellent models to show to the world, and we needed to be able to communicate what's been learned about building community, to people in the '90s, both the Baby Boom generation, who now may be willing to revisit those issues that they'd been interested before, as well as the newer generation, many of whom would also be interested in community. We need to be ready with good information about the models that have survived. And that was the reason for redoing the Directory, and revitalizing Communities magazine again, because these are the tools that we would use to communicate with people, to encourage the movement. And that's precisely what's happened. In addition to the cohousing movement, which is a form of community perfectly suited to American temperament and mass society, in that there is no common ownership in cohousing, it's all sharing private property, as opposed to something like Twin Oaks, where there's very little private property, it's all sharing commonly owned property. A very different form of community, but again, at least a form that's more appropriate to this country. And part of my theory too in making this transition, is my interest is still in that communal economy, that communal system. But one of the reasons for getting involved in the cohousing movement is whatever form of intentional community gets to be widely known -- and I think this term "cohousing" is going to become a household word eventually, maybe in five years they'll be all over the country. There's nearly 20 that are finished in the country, and another 10 under construction, and another 100 groups around the country that are planning cohousing communities, and that's since '88. I don't know when the first one was finished, '90, '91 maybe. So there's 20 something communities in that movement in five years, which is -- I don't know any other movement that's grown that fast. So, there's fantastic things going on in the communities movement today. And a lot of it -- another thing about cohousing communities is that there's a lot of people with this ideal again, but some of them have never lived in community, and don't understand it. So having an association like a fellowship of people living in communities, even though they're very different kinds of communities, and a lot of them don't even want to associate with communal structures, the experience that we have is helpful to them. And so we are finding a lot of support, and that's another one of the reasons for coming here, because RMCA has these national conferences -- it's to be able to make that bridge between the cohousing movement and the older intentional communities movement. So there's a lot of fascinating things going on in the intentional communities movement that a lot of people really aren't quite aware of. I focus on these things a lot, as well as create a whole classification structure and definitions for terms and all this stuff. But as part of that analysis too that I looked at, the question is, "What is the future? What's the form of community that is most likely to survive and grow?" and so on, cohousing is good, but another wing in the movement is what I call the economically diverse communities, which are groups where, such as land trust communities, where there's a mixture of common ownership and private ownership. Again, Twin Oaks is strictly communal, cohousing is strictly sharing private property. In the middle range you have what I call economically diverse -- some private, some common ownership. Land trust communities are those that have land that's owned in common and maybe buildings, or both, and then but everything else is private property: private income, vehicles, furnishings, and maybe the houses are owned privately too. Another form of mixed economy is like Koinonia and Ganas, where there's some people live communally in a core group, and there's other people part of the community who are not part of

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the communal structure. [tape ends] ... is the largest segment of the movement. I do that analysis in one of my booklets, *Classifications of Communitarianism*, where I plotted all these communities on this graph, basically, that showed forms of ownership of property, economics along the top of common-owned, private, and mixed-economies. And most of the communities were in that middle section. There are very few in the private, sharing private property, until cohousing, and now there's many. So that whole wing of the movement has just taken off like crazy. Where there were very few communities that had that structure before, cohousing, usually condominium format, which is strictly private property. And they can't even select their members, it has to be a market. So it's very fascinating how that's developed. Of course it came from Europe, initially, but I'm not sure that they used quite the same kind of ownership structure in Europe as we have with the condominium format. So that's how I view the movement, I guess, and my interest was -- whatever kind of communities develop, I feel, will help the communal structure eventually, because those communal communities have grown so slowly, one of the things that was needed was for this idea of intentional community to become more widely understood or accepted, and that's exactly what the cohousing movement is going to do. It's going to make the idea of community more understandable to people. You talk to people in the outside world about communities or communes and they think sixties. It doesn't exist anymore. Those were all negative experiences. Things like East Wind and Twin Oaks are very positive models, very excellent, but yet people will not be able to see that, they'll just have those negative connotations. Something like cohousing, which will have a very positive view by most people because of its structure, because it's middle-class, because it's private property, so on, greater prevalence of that form of community will help, at some point, the communal communities be better accepted. And so, although I've left those communities and am not working directly for them, although I still have a lot of interest and do some writing about them, working with the cohousing movement, I think, in the long run, will be very beneficial to the communal structures as well, the Federation communities. So that's how I view what I'm doing, and how I view the movement, really, is that thanks to the work of the Fellowship, in part, we're helping to help many people find communities, and helping communities to develop. The whole movement, which is what we planned, really. But going back, again, --

**Q:** Do you want to talk about the Federation?

**A:** Yeah, I'm going to go back as far as I can. And this is one of the things I want to do too, is -- one of the booklets I have talks about the history of community movements around the world. And I've also written different things too that I want to put into it. And this is what I intend to write about as well -- basically the history of community networking. Not particularly communities, but networks of communities, the regional networks, the affinity networks, and so on. Continental networks and global networks, international networks. And there's a lot of history there. There's a bunch in here, in this book, *Alternative Americas*, that is basically lost except that it's here. And a lot of movements like that -- the Quaker communities that actually started the fellowship in the '40s, this whole back-to-the-land movement that *Alternative Americas* is about, and school of living came out of that. Those networks that started in the '50s; and then of course the kibbutz movement which had quite a large influence. In the '60s, there was a lot of communities that began not just in this country, but around the world, Japan, Europe, and elsewhere. And they began, '60s, early '70s, I forget, mid-'70s: the International Communes

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Movement started a network of communities, they called it Communes Network, in England, and then they expanded to all of Europe. And living at East Wind, I was aware of them through Communities magazine at Twin Oaks, really. And we corresponded with them. So I was aware of this community networking that was going on internationally in Europe. And there's a lot of material available about that, that Twin Oaks had gathered. And when I became the library manager at Twin Oaks then I took a lot of it to Don Pitzer, the Center for Communal Studies. So it's in his archives now, much of it. Although I have some of it here, and I've written a lot about it too, taken excerpts from those. And there's a lot of good stories in those too. So after Cat had written that book on Twin Oaks and been invited by Mordecai Bentov, she came back and she and Milan, and their talking about the value of the kibbutz federations, and how that helped their movement so much, we talked about developing a similar thing here, at least Milan and Cat did, to begin with. But Milan's idea, I believe, and I don't imagine he's told you this, so this is just my concept of Milan's thinking, and he -- this may not be what he was actually thinking, but it's what I perceived, and what he had said too. His reason for starting the Federation -- and it's interesting, in the recent issue of Communities magazine, about the 20th anniversary of the Federation, in this recent issue, saying how Cat helped after she came back, it sounded like Cat started the Federation, but she didn't, actually. It was Milan that started it, and the reason that Milan started it was because in his discussion with Cat, his question was "How can we get money from the kibbutz? How can we help our communities to become as closely associated with the kibbutz movement as possible, make ourselves look like the kibbutz movement as much as possible," -- and maybe that's part of their reason for being attached to the communal child care program, "such that we could get financing from them to help us build?" Of course East Wind was struggling at the time, this was '75, they'd been in it 2 years at that point. And so my understanding of the reason the Federation was begun was entirely to try to get funding from the kibbutz movement, because they had a lot of money at that point in time. They lost a bunch later on, but at that point in time they had a lot of money and were interested in encouraging kibbutz-like communities around the world. And there were programs in Japan and Australia, and Milan's idea was to become associated with the kibbutz here in America. Because their movement was not strictly Jewish. It was this socialist concept. And so it was a good idea. But that's the reason for the Federation. It wasn't the idea of networking East Wind and Twin Oaks and other what we called at that time Walden II communities. Because we already had the joint hammock business, which was all the connection we ever needed with Twin Oaks, really. And then there were problems, and again, Milan probably didn't tell you about that, but Milan was really the business type, he really knew how to grow a business, and wanted to expand it, and wanted to sell more different kinds of hammocks than Twin Oaks was willing to sell. And so at one point East Wind broke off from the joint hammock agreement. You see, we started making hammocks. We learned from Twin Oaks. They came out and taught us, built jigs. And then when Twin Oaks got the Pier 1 account, they farmed out some of the production to East Wind. And so then we started the joint hammock business, because we were making hammocks for Twin Oaks. And then that's when we got off outside work. So, that was winter '74. But Milan wanted it to grow bigger, he wanted to sell more different kinds of hammocks, different models, different accounts, and Twin Oaks didn't want to do it. So at one point then, we quit the joint hammock agreement, and started East Wind hammocks, totally separate. Or else we did that in addition to the Pier 1 hammocks, because I think we continued to do Pier 1 because Twin Oaks couldn't handle the

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whole account. So we started our own line of hammocks, and there was this thing going on between Milan and their hammocks people, this confrontation meeting that happened at East Wind, and so on. And eventually then, they came up with a compromise, I don't understand the details, it's probably recorded somewhere, where we basically rejoined the joint hammock agreement, and then we were East Wind hammocks of Twin Oaks for a long time until eventually we dropped that, and then we were finally Twin Oaks hammocks again. So we already had the closest association that mattered, really, with Twin Oaks, through that joint hammock business. We had a shuttle that took people back and forth between the communities. There was no real reason to do the Federation for ourselves. The only reason was, because in Milan's analysis, and Cat, that the way to get money, to associate with the kibbutz, was to create a federation as they had. Made it look like it was not just one community, it was a movement over here. No one talks about that, most people don't understand that. Milan probably didn't tell you, and he may or may not say that that was the reason. But I distinctly remember him talking about that --

**Q:** Did the kibbutz ever give you money?

**A:** -- twenty years ago. What they did do was they gave us money for some of our members to go and visit and live on kibbutz for awhile and learn from them. Of course, all the people we sent ended up leaving, eventually. Very few people made a lifetime out of those communities anyway. So they got that much. That was \$1,000. But that's not what we wanted. Milan only agreed to that because that's the only thing they could get money for, was for people to go visit kibbutz. We wanted money to build industries, to invest, buildings, industry. But we never got that. So anyway, that's the reason for the Federation.

**Q:** I had no clue. But then, it must've taken on a different purpose after it got going, because obviously it's still going and it seems to be important.

**A:** Well, there's some other things to say too. Milan was active in the Federation for a number of years, and it was helpful to some degree. The idea with the Federation, really, was a way to help new, small communities to get started. And the idea was that they would grow to get big like East Wind and Twin Oaks. The Federation was never successful in doing that. It could do something to help little communities, particularly with outreach and recruitment, but no other community has grown to the size of East Wind and Twin Oaks. So it's basically failed at that mission. There's some other things to say too.

**Q:** Well the FEC provides the opportunity for work exchange, doesn't it? It seems that's important.

**A:** Yeah, but we were doing that before anyway. That labor exchange agreement is something else again. Whether you keep track of how many hours people from one community do in another community or not, that's separate, really, from the Federation. One of the things, back at the first meeting -- and again, people tend to say that Twin Oaks started the Federation, and the first meeting was really at East Wind. We actually had Avarhamusuer [?] of kibbutz movement actually came to that first meeting at East Wind. The second meeting was at Twin Oaks. And this was one of the things too, that it wasn't -- see Milan and Cat didn't really put that out, what the reason for them starting the Federation was. They put an ad in the Communities magazine about starting the Federation, and basically invited all communities to come to it. I don't know if we can still find that ad. But the

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impression was that we were starting an association of communities abroad. That was not it at all. When I first got there, joined in September or October, within a couple of months, I proposed to the community that we deal with this outreach issue, and divide up between three different managerships. We were talking about the Federation at that point, so I proposed we create three managerships -- a federation managership, which was the delegates; a public relationships managership, which would be just dealing with the local community, public relations with Ozark County; and the third one I called "networking," which would deal with all other kind of movement and community outreach. And so I proposed those three forms of managerships, and then I would be the networking manager. So this was the first few months after I was there, I guess. And so I was given this new network managership, so I was involved with a lot of things, from the gatherings that were going on in the Ozarks at that time, they had regular gatherings, and other communities in that area, there were quite a number, U and I Ranch being one of them, the largest other one really. So I was involved in that, and also the co-op movement, we started buying food from a food cooperative that was at a warehouse. And I was involved in that, and became much more involved, eventually. And in addition, an international communal network, ICN, International Communes Network in Europe, things in that I was involved in, networking, plus I did some presentations about communities and so on. So when we did this beginning of the Federation, my thought was this would be open to all kinds of communities, and so we had a number of letters come to us because of that ad in Communities magazine, from people from very different communities that wanted to come. And so I -- Milan didn't write back to them, because he didn't want them, and I didn't understand that, he just wanted the what was then called Walden II communities. So I wrote back to them and said, "Sure, come." So here come some of these people to this meeting, and it had to be explained to them that, "No, we are a network of a specific kind of community," and those people then left the meeting. And then when they left, we were all sitting around the table and they said, "Well, who invited these people anyway?" Someone said it, it wasn't Cat, it was Henry or somebody, and Cat points to me, sitting at the table. Which was true, I had written back to them, but no one else had written to them, and it wasn't made clear what was going on in the first place. So anyway --

**Q:** So was this around '75?

**A:** Yeah.

**Q:** So in '75, Twin Oaks and East Wind were still identifying themselves as Walden II communities?

**A:** Well, let me think, was it '77? We could find out of course what the date was.

**Q:** Well that's not as important, I was just wondering if you were still identifying yourselves as Walden II communities.

**A:** Right. Until then. It was Milan who came up with the term Federation of Egalitarian Communities. So Milan finally got that whole movement changed. Milan has a massive impact. And he evidently tell you all that, but he changed the whole name of our movement, he changed the whole focus. Of course, again, Walden II, we were saying one thing and we were doing another. We weren't Walden II communities. We had given up behavioral engineering years before that.

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**Q:** Yeah. I got the impression a lot of people at Twin Oaks and East Wind were pretty antagonistic toward Skinner and behaviorism.

**A:** Behavioral engineering in general.

**Q:** So that's why I'm surprised that this network would have been of Walden II communities.

**A:** First of all, in order to be associated with the kibbutz movement, it had to be communal. Like a kibbutz. That was the main thing. And also it would be easier to have a tight network if they were communities that had all come from the same source, in that case Twin Oaks. And most all the communities were -- Aloe, North Mountain . .

**Q:** North Mountain came out of Twin Oaks?

**A:** ... Shannon Farm. Yeah, from a conference, a Twin Oaks conference.

**Q:** Shannon wasn't in that specie was it?

**A:** No. But they came out of Twin Oaks conferences.

**Q:** Okay. I see what you're saying. So what communities were part of the first FEC? Los Oconos was, wasn't it?

**A:** No, they came, when did they come? I don't think they came to the first one, it was later. It was Twin Oaks, East Wind, Aloe, North Mountain, Dandelion.

**Q:** So, okay, I know Dandelion and Aloe sort of considered themselves Walden II, but North Mountain did too?

**A:** Well they were communal, but they were not behaviorist. But they were communal and they were associated with Twin Oaks, so. And basically they came because one person there was really interested. So that was it, one person there was able to get his community a part of it, and when he quit coming, that was it. I forget his name now, but anyway. So that's really how that happened. There's more details ... I can't recall now. So from the beginning, my idea was a larger network organization, which was not what the Federation was doing, so I was more or less at odds from the beginning. But over the years then, we sort of gave up on the kibbutz as far as financing was concerned, and the Federation kind of continued because people wanted to maintain that connection. There was, the main value of the Federation became outreach and recruitment. It could do, rather than every community doing their own thing, it was more efficient for the group to do it together. So that was the main thing. And also there was that concept,... so I guess that was one of the main things that helped the Federation continue, was the idea that it could help small communities grow. It never quite worked out that way. It probably helped some, but none of them ever grew to be the size of East Wind or Twin Oaks, which is what we wanted. So anyway. But over the years, a number of people in the Federation, a couple different times, wanted to see the Federation grow to involve more communities. And they were always frustrated by that -- they'd put out mailings and notices in Communities magazine, and it didn't work, more communities never really joined. There weren't that many communities that had all the aspects of the Federation communities, and so it couldn't grow. And so they talked about changing the criteria of

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membership to meet more communities, and having different levels of types of community involvement and so on. So I still had the idea of a larger community movement networking. For one thing, Communities magazine was dying. Twin Oaks had taken it on and ended up doing almost all the work for it. Over the years, other communities quit, and Twin Oaks was subsidizing it with all their labor. And it barely paid production and distribution costs. And so Twin Oaks at some point gave up the magazine and it moved over to Stell, Charles Betterton [?] took it on, with his ideas of encouraging the movement out of Stell. I'm sort of getting ahead again, I should go back.

**Q:** You were about to talk about the beginning of the FIC, right?

**A:** Yeah. There's some things I left out, I should go back. Okay, so Mordecai Bentov, then, in Israel, planned a conference in Israel, and International Communities Conference, sort of. And then there was the whole rivalry between - the kibbutz movement was very strong, massive, 20,000 people or something, no that's not right. I forget. And then there was the International Communes Network in Europe, which was a countercultural kind of whatever. And that network was dying just as Mordecai Bentov started a conference. Milan went to that, Milan and a few other people from our communities went to that conference, and we had the proceedings from that here. But that was a goal of mine too, I had sort of wanted to go to that conference, and ended up not being able to do that. And Milan came back from that, but I guess that was pretty much the beginning of the end of our kibbutz connection. Some years later, then, Yalkov Voleck [?] started the International Communal Society Association, which we mentioned the meeting in Scotland and so on. I guess that takes care of that. While I was at East Wind as a network manager, I was starting to learn about more and more kinds of communities, and began learning about the emissary communities. And then, an emissary community in Chicago, in Lombard, planned a conference in Chicago, and were inviting -- of course, emissaries had been involved in a larger networking also. They had gotten involved in Earth Communities Network in the Northwest. And saying that they're going to be a support network involving many kinds of communities, and then ended up trying to take it over, or have the primary influence, and of course Betty and Caroline have a lot of experience with that and were quite put off by the emissaries for the way they tried to take over an organization for their own design. And I guess it must've been about the same time as the emissaries were trying to do larger networking, that this group in Lombard did this meeting. So I went representing East Wind and the Federation, and that was my first contact with emissaries and with Stell. And I did this presentation, explaining our planner-manager form of government, and people at Stell were saying, "Well, that's just like us! A lot of the same concepts!" Of course, they weren't communal, but lot of the same concepts. And it was there that I met Charles, at that meeting. And a couple years later, or one year later, at the 10th anniversary of NHCSA at New Harmony, you went there?

**Q:** No, my first meeting was the one at Yankton, around '88 or '89.

**A:** That must've been -- well I left East Wind in '83, it was before Elaine was born, so that was '83, it was the 10th anniversary in New Harmony, so it was another five years until you came around. But you've been living in a collective house.



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**Q:** Right, and I visited East Wind, but you had already left at that point. I visited there in '85 or something like that.

**A:** How about that. So I met Charles first at that emissary conference, which was before I left East Wind, which was '82 or '83 or something like that, and then I met him the next time in '84, at the 10th anniversary at NHCSA in New Harmony. And there we talked and we found that we both had an interest in a larger communities movement. And he had already at that time in '84 had conceived the idea of, I guess he had gone to one Fellowship meeting at that point, FIC in the East, and conceived the idea of turning the Fellowship into a national networking organization. The Fellowship had started in the '40s, late '40s, and in the '50s, someone had donated 6 or 7 thousand dollars to them to start a revolving loan fund. And through the '80s it dwindled down to where the main thing holding it together was that revolving loan fund. The trustees of that had to come together. I don't think it was tax-exempt, maybe it was non-profit. But at any rate, they were managing that loan fund, so the people who were managing that had to come together twice a year, I think it was. So they'd meet on a Sunday morning, and then Saturday evening would be a social event, and that's what the Fellowship became. And the Fellowship has an interesting history too, even in the '40s and '50s. Initially it was a networking organization, for all kinds of communities. And an interesting that happened with them was, it started out of the Quaker communities in the East Coast. And then after it was going for awhile, the Bruderhof moved up this country from Paraguay. Being Christian, they got involved in this network right away, and sort of drew other people from other communities into their network, because they were quite a large network when they came up. One of the communities was called Macedonia, in Georgia I think, and they had a wooden toy business. And most of that community moved right into the Bruderhof network, and that's where they got their wooden toy business. But they did a lot of that. They pooled people from other communities and just consumed other communities, and a lot of people were kind of unhappy about how they effected the movement, in that sense. For awhile they were a part of the Fellowship, but then they decided they didn't want to be a part of any network that wasn't Bruderhof. And so this seems to be a recurring history of community networking: some people come together, start a networking idea, all kinds of communities, and then some large movement would come in and take it over. The Bruderhof did that with the Fellowship the first time around, or tried to, until they said that no, they weren't going to be associated with other communities other than communal Christian, and when they pulled out that was basically the death, falling asleep, of the Fellowship. Same thing happened with the emissaries, when they came into the Earth Communities Network in the Northwest. For awhile they were helping it grow, and then they tried to basically take it over, make the network associate with its own concepts of spiritual community, and then many of the people in the Earth Communities Network dropped out, and that was the end of that network. So this is a reoccurring thing in community networking, some large movement would come in and take it over. The same thing happened with the International Communes Network in Europe. The kibbutz movement was so much bigger than any other movement in that network, kibbutz did a conference and the ICN never met again. It's interesting how that happened. So now we have the Fellowship. It's dormant, except that it's come down from just being a social event, accompanying this loan committee meeting. Which at that time, initially, it was called Homer-Morris fund. And Homer-Morris wasn't the guy that donated, they just named it after him, because he was somehow influential. So now you had the Fellowship, and here comes Charles Betterton with this idea of

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really growing the community network. And he had a lot of organizing skills. And probably still does. So he came into it, and I had talked with him -- as far as I know, and it would be good to get this information from Charles too, have you talked to him?

**Q:** No. I went to Oakwood Farm, but he wasn't there when I was there.

**A:** It would be good to get the very beginnings of the Fellowship from Charles, to understand at what point -- now I suspect it had to be after I met him -- he probably got some of his ideas from the emissaries, were doing this network thing, they did that conference, and so they were trying to get involved with a larger community network. He may have gotten some of his ideas from them, about expanding the network. On the other hand, he could have easily developed them himself, because coming out of Stell, Stell of course was losing their spiritual leader and founder, so Stell was opening up. So maybe it came from his own resources of trying to find another reason for Stell's existence, beyond their founder and spiritual ideals and so on. So, but it would be interesting to get those details from Charles, I want to do that for the writing I want to do, just to be clear. So at what point from that emissary meeting in Chicago, when was the first Fellowship meeting he went to? And when did he conceive the idea of beginning network? Because he also went and talked to Don Pitzer in Indiana about developing their Center for Communal Studies with some of those same ideas. What was the timing with all that? How did that all come together for Charles? There's three influences -- Communal Studies, universities, the emissaries, and the Fellowship. But any rate, so it was his idea at first, the use the Fellowship as a means of growing a network. He also thought of using the Center for Communal Studies, but that didn't work out. So I met him then at that 10th anniversary, and he'd probably already gone to at least one Fellowship meeting. And then I moved the following year to Twin Oaks on the East Coast, and now I could start attending Fellowship meetings. Now East Wind had already borrowed money from them from that revolving loan fund. So we were aware of the Homer-Morris fund before. There's a lot of interesting anecdotes. But Milan had gone to one of the meetings too, because he was trying to raise money for businesses wherever he could get it. And we did get the maximum fund, \$3,000 or something, whatever it was. Piddling for us, you know. And so Milan had gone to one of the meetings, and I talked to him about it, and he said that he wasn't impressed, it was just a bunch of old people. He didn't think much of them at all.

**Q:** So was the first resurrecting of the FIC meeting at Stell? I know there was an early one at East Wind too, but maybe that was the second one?

**A:** If I remember correctly, it probably was at Stell.

**Q:** Then I guess the second one was at East Wind.

**A:** It's kind of hard to remember. I have to go back to the first meeting that I went to ... was at Brinkwella [?], and actually Harvey Bakker was at that meeting too. He didn't say anything, and I couldn't remember him for awhile, but we should talk to Harvey too and find out when he first started going to those meetings. Because I wonder if that was the first Fellowship meeting he went to or not, the one that I was at. But basically Charles and I went there presenting this idea of growing the Fellowship into a larger networking organization. Of course I had started with that idea back when the Federation started,

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and now here was Charles, and he and I, we found we had this ideal in common. So, and Charles was really good at deferring to me a lot too. I think he really appreciated having someone else that really shared that ideal. And so it really felt like we were on an equal level with that. But you know, it's hard to remember exactly what happened. There was that meeting with Harvey and Charles and I, and the next meeting must've been Stell. Anyway, another thing that happened then was, the same year or near that time, I was living at Twin Oaks now, and Seven Oaks, in Virginia -- are they still there? Do you know that community?

**Q:** Yeah, I don't know how much it is a community anymore.

**A:** Yeah, it's a pathwork center, they do seminars and stuff. They were a community to a degree there, and a woman who was working there called together a meeting of people in community and interested people in '86, or '87 maybe.

**Q:** Oh, was the start of Intercommunities of Virginia?

**A:** No, that had started many years earlier. That had started back when Twin Oaks was doing the conferences in the '70s. That was the start of the revitalization of it. Intercommunities, and I've written this history up too, had started as, well I have the years -- '72 or '73 -- again, out of Twin Oaks conferences. A number of communities have started on their own, but also inspired by Twin Oaks in that area, quite a few. And I've got them listed, I think. So they started having gatherings. And that became Intercommunities of Virginia. And they went and incorporated as a nonprofit corporation, and they started out as labor exchange as the big thing that got them going, and then the gatherings that they did. And then, they had a lot of ideas. They bought a bus, I forget exactly where the money came from, but the idea was to be able to transport people from community to community, and it was used for different things. They gathered up people from different communities and went to hear Ram Das [?] in Charlottesville, and took at least one or a couple different beach trips. Used the bus for a few things. And then they had newsletters, a lot of that given to the Center of Communal Studies, down in their archives. And then they had ideas -- they researched group medical plans. They talked about short-wave radios. There was also a meeting the Intercommunities had with Urban Collectives in Washington D.C. A joint urban-rural meeting that happened, just one, and they talked about ways of working together, worker brigades -- the idea of people in the city coming out to the farms to help raise food. That happened for a little while, and the communities would sell food to the co-ops in the city. So there was a lot of ideas, and all that was in the early mid-seventies. But that organization died. They had a whole dues structure and it grew quite large for awhile. Why did it die? Probably a lot of things. The bus, they couldn't afford. They were trying to raise dues for the bus, like 50 cents per member per community, something like that. And some of the early stories of people, you know, the communities were just getting started then. And when they met they were talking about having to sit outside on hay bails, because they had nothing else. They had no building big enough to meet in, in these communities, other than Twin Oaks, of course. So it is interesting, and a lot of that is written and available. But that network began to die. At the same time then, Milan was proposing the Federation, just when Intercommunities was going dormant. And Twin Oaks basically -- it's interesting, because you can see the names of the people that are involved in Intercommunities at Twin Oaks, Glow and, oh I forgot his name now. This

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person, who I can't remember his name, he was one of the first delegates to the founding meeting at East Wind. So basically Twin Oaks changed its focus from Intercommunities to the affinity network of the Federation. And once Twin Oaks left, the network died. That and the bus probably killed it. And they burnt out on doing newsletters, and they just gave up the nonprofit status and died. So then when I joined -- that was late seventies, early eighties, I have a summary of that history I could give you -- and then when I joined Twin Oaks, this person at Seven Oaks, Susan maybe, did this gathering. I think this was -- did she do one the year before? Yeah, this was the second one, and that would've been '86, I think. So when I went to that, a lot of people from other communities were there, and I of course was familiar with Intercommunities of Virginia, I knew about it when I first visited in '74. So I talked to the people there about, "Let's start an association and make it the reincarnation of Intercommunities and call it the same name." And so that's basically how Intercommunities of Virginia was reformed, was at that conference, I brought that history and talked about it. And the people said, "Yeah, let's meet again." And Seven Oaks never again did anything like that. But we were able to carry on the network, and we grew it. One of the people there at that meeting from Shannon Farm was Dan Questionary [?]. And so there, at that meeting, I then talked to Dan about, not just Intercommunities, but also about the Fellowship. And so he and I then travelled to many of the meetings, went to the next meeting at Stell. So I brought Dan into that. And I also told Laird about the Fellowship, and Charles Betterton. And brought him into the organization. And Laird brought in Betty and Caroline. And there were a number of other people that I told about it and brought into it over the years: Ben Litman, and others, first learned about the Fellowship through me telling them about it. So that's how that happened, basically it was Charles, and then I came on board, and then I brought in other people, and they brought in other people, and that's how the Fellowship grew. Evidently Harvey made it on his own. So Harvey was there, but I don't remember him saying anything, but he was definitely a part of it from the early stages too. And basically we were able to do it correctly, rather than any one movement -- now this is interesting, because the Federation, as well as the emissaries, got involved. The emissaries were helpful, they contributed a fair amount of money, and continued to have people active in the Fellowship. The Federation probably, though, has contributed considerably more money and labor. But basically either it's in the Federation's nature to not be domineering, as earlier the Bruderhof and emissaries had been, but also I imagine the emissaries had learned a lesson from their experience. And some of the same people who had that negative experience with Earth Communities Network became involved in the Fellowship, and there was a whole issue that Betty and Caroline had with the emissaries that had to be worked out too, because of that prior history. But the Federation has been very supportive with money and labor with the Fellowship, yet it has resisted doing the mistake of the other communities in communal networking. So we've done really well with the Fellowship, except that they're now going through a restructuring process, because they have the same core group that's been carrying on for eight years or so. And they need to get beyond that. But basically we've learned how to do community networking, it's taken awhile. And so that's an obvious thing, and that's where, back in the '80s, when we started talking about the Fellowship, mid to late '80s, we were talking about the '90s and how it was going to be a time of growth and we needed to be ready and to these things like the Directory, and take on the magazine. The movement is actually doing quite well. We've learned a lot, and we've made some good decisions and have been managing around the movement pretty well. There's current challenges, things are definitely

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expanding and growing, so I think, to me I have a really positive view of the movement and what we've been able to do.