

Interview with Planet Janet

Interviewer: Deborah Altus

March 26, 1997

Q: This is March 26th and an interview with Janet.

A: My name then, I went a lot by Planet Janet, and Alice, although I don't know where "Alice" came from.

Q: I'd love to hear a little bit about your background, and some of the events that led up to you living communally.

A: I was born near Woodby [?] Island, this is [unintelligible] ... and then my mom was married to a G.I. kind of guy, and they moved down to California somewhere, and then ended up in San Francisco, and then she got divorced. So I didn't have a dad from the time I was 1 to the time I was 8, and then she got married again. So she worked. After the age of babysitters, I was on my own a lot, especially at about 8. So I went to churches all the time, because they were open then, a place to go inside in the fog, and I really liked the colors, and I was really into psychedelic things at that age, and I had a lot of visions, even as a kid. Lots of them. So I realized there was more to -- then, when I moved away from home, and I had a really good dad, from the time I was 8, till, still have him, got the same one, and he's Mexican, so I learned about other cultures as well as my own. All different kinds of religions. I kind of saw something that I didn't realize until much older -- about how we need to be with as many kind of people as we can, and learn about as much as we can. And then of course, we were all young, and not very many of us had children, so we kind of came together, probably to save on the rent at first. And then just communes started developing. The city ones were pretty city-based, and were more together, as young drugged hippies. But then when we went out into the country, it became, we started dogging [?] our own families, and it became sort of a family kind of, improve the world. A lot of them didn't work out, which was too bad. A lot of them are starting to work out again, which is really good. I don't live in a commune now, but I have a commune-type club, which is called The Community Village. It's a whole bunch of different people come together, who put on one little part of this thing called the Country Fair, which is how a community of different interests can work together for education, which is what we're all doing here on earth, is educating ourselves. From living in communes, I kind of saw that we're all different facets of one big, multidimensional personality. We're all separate, but we're all one. When we all agree, when all the little parts of our selves can sense together, then we'll know that. So I believe consensus is the highest form of government, and that's what the Community Village does is all consensus. I happen to be the president, but that's only in name, we don't really have a president. It's only so we could be a 501C. I wasn't elected, it's like, "You've been here for more than 10 years, you be the president."

Q: So what group did you live with first?

A: Not too long after I moved away from high school, I grew up, I went to high school Polytechnic, which is right in the middle of Haight-Ashbury. It doesn't exist anymore, but it was right across the street from Quizart [?] Stadium, big city high school. So I kind of was there, and I moved in with one guy, and then we needed -- I went away to Europe for a year, and when I came back in '65, there was a bunch of people living with us. We lived in a big -- I don't know if you know about the flats in San Francisco, but they're really big. A lot of them had a lot of bedrooms in them, the older flats. A flat is kind of a house on top of a house, next to each other like an apartment. And we had, so we had four or five people living there, and we started our own little commune there. It was really good. Everybody was different in it. And we worked together real well. But then the big drug busts started happening in Haight-Ashbury, and

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all the way down the hill. So of course we got busted into in the middle of the night, unwrapped all our Christmas presents. Between six people, I think they found a ounce of pot, which seems like a lot now, but it wasn't much then, between six people. So, some bad things happened to a lot of us, including me. I went to jail for quite a while. I was on probation and parole for quite a while after that. So then I moved over -- well we went out to the country for awhile. And we lived on a place called Wheelers Ranch. Which is right down the street from Morningstar. We knew Lou, the guy who owned Morningstar, I think he died recently. I lived down in the east valley of Wheelers. There was -- there are two events there that sort of shaped my life in a strange way. One was the birth of a baby called Secijoyananda [?] Baby. She'd be about 30 now, maybe. When I held her, I just felt like all of the universe at one time. It was very amazing. And we lived down there basically without clothes, no shelter, I had a couple of pieces of clothe tied together for shelter. So after living in the city for 20 years, this was a real back to nature, it taught a lot about nature. Which I enjoyed a lot as a kid, the art of it. Because I spent a lot of my time also in art museums, and wandering around the hills of [unintelligible] ... which isn't as natural looking as it was then. And I really felt that all of the existence was the same, the plants -- that's when I started doing things like petting bugs, and talking to trees -- not that they talked back to me in English, but they did communicate with me -- and things like that. And then the other one was when I was climbing up a hill, I got stuck in the brush, it was like a logging there, because there were logs all on the ground, but you couldn't see them when you climbed up over this ledge. There was all this brush. I couldn't get back down the ledge, because it was too far down, even though somehow I had gotten up it. All I had on was a ragged skirt, nothing else, and a bell, so that I wouldn't frighten people, because sometimes people there were there that were hiding, and you didn't walk up on them, because it would frighten them too much. So I wore a bell. Because I guess I was real quiet, I didn't wear shoes then. And the brush was taller than me, and it was dense. I was walking above the ground on top of these logs that had probably been there for 20 year maybe, and it was all stuck in my hair, and my hair all stuck out like this. And then I climbed up this thing, and I could hear some people, and I saw some people sitting up on the deck up there, two guys. And I climbed up there, and I thought, "Okay, well, I'm half nude, but they're probably just hippies, it will be okay." I climb up there, and they go, "Alice, you're just in time for tea!" That must've been where the "Alice" came from. Then my thought was, "No matter how lost you are, you always find your way eventually." Which really kept me being able to find my way no matter how lost I get inside my head, when you get depressed and stuff. So after that commune, we came back, because a lot of things got kind of strange after that summer up there, the police knocked down a lot of the buildings, and leaders [?] and stuff. So we went back and moved over the Berkeley, and we found an old hospital. We were given the bottom two floors of a hospital, and some other people had the top two floors. And it was right across the street from that big hospital near downtown Oakland. I went back and found it not too long ago, to see how much I remember clearly, and it was still there, everything was exactly the same. Only it was now a business instead of a flat. The bottom floor was big, and you could still tell it was a hospital at one time, because there were these little rooms leading to bigger rooms, it was really strange. It was a hospital probably at the turn of the century, it probably hadn't been a hospital for 50 years when I lived there. And it had a basement room that you went into, and it must've been the caretaker's room. All it was was a kitchen with a fold out bed. And a little tiny bathroom with a shower right over the toilet. The kitchen was really old, and it was 1930's, and I loved it. We'd go down there to kick back, because there was no windows, it

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was absolutely dark. Even during the day. My daughter does the same thing now, and I can't see what she saw in it then, but I really enjoyed it then, too. So, we'd listen to music, and probably did a lot of drugs down there. I pretty much stuck to LSD. I sometimes nibbled on a few other things, but I didn't really like them. The only thing I now do is I still smoke pot sometimes. We'd kick back and visualize, and talk. One day, some very bizarre events had happened. The house had -- there was a man who lived upstairs. Sometimes he appeared old, and sometimes he appeared young, which I know can't be. But he was like into this black magic stuff, which none of us were. And he was very strange, and we didn't want to talk to him or get near him. And one day -- this shaped my life too, it showed me that magic really is real, and all of those visions I had as a child were probably real -- I was there with my boyfriend, and the electricity went off. So we decided we wanted to leave. So we were feeling the wall, and [unintelligible] ... and there was this room, kind of a dark, musty room. We walked further into the room, and it was light. We looked around, and there were these little windows about this high on the top of the room, and outside they were down like this on the ground outside. But they were covered by bushes. So there was this room that we'd never seen that was part of this apartment. This is downstairs, obviously, because it was big enough to be a bedroom and a living room. And we found two boxes of clothing, trunks. [unintelligible] ... fit us perfectly. Old velvets, which were all the trends then. Old velvets, little old ladies' shoes which we wore then too. It was great. Gary [?] and I just dressed all up in them. We loved them. There was also a stairway that went to the 3rd floor. And the man found that we found the room. He had been using the room, for something, I don't know what. Didn't use it too much, because it was pretty darn dusty. So we didn't go upstairs, but he said, "You can't use those stairs." He didn't want us to use the room, and we said, "We rented the whole downstairs. We just didn't find the room until now." Well, not too long later, we think he set a fire, but we can't prove it. In those houses, they had those big furnaces. Shot heat up through these vents. The place started to burn one morning, 6 o'clock in the morning somebody smelled smoke through the vent. And the firemen came, and I ran in the house to get all the kittens out, because the mother cat had just had baby kittens. But after finding this room and seeing this kind of thing, and being felt like I was led to it, and that I was supposed to do something, somehow I was supposed to free something, and I didn't know what, but it could've been groups of souls just waiting there to help me with information, I don't know, but there was something that was just so magical about it.

Q: So what happened with the fire?

A: Well, it didn't burn the house down, it just burned up through the kitchen. The landlord was going to sell the building, so he kicked everybody out except me and my two best friends. We repainted and redid the kitchen and put in a new floor and stuff like that. And we painted up the house. It burnt, and people across the street -- we were surrounded by old folks, which probably wasn't a good idea for hippies in the '60's -- bet they were going, "Let it burn! Let those hippies burn!" But the firemen were all young like us, so it was pretty funny, except when they were yelling at me because I ran back into the burning building to get my kitties.

Q: What a story. Did this group have a name at all?

A: No, not really. Then we moved up, then that kind of commune moved over to another place in Berkeley, changed people, really wasn't any real thing. And then too much weird stuff was happening in

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the city. I had to start having a dog with me to go downtown, things like that.

Q: Because you didn't feel safe without one?

A: Because I was being attacked. I hadn't been attacked, but some guy put his arms around me, and I didn't know if he was going to beat me to death or what, but I broke his arm and got away. There's no thinking, it was pure adrenaline. I didn't know any karate, so I stuck my elbow into his stomach. When he got scared, I grabbed his arm and didn't let go until he broke up. And then I thought, "What have I done?" And he ran away, and I chased him down the block. So somebody lent me their dog, because they were leaving, and I said, "Okay, I'll take your dog for two years, fine." It was the perfect dog, it did whatever I told him. His name was Omo [?], and [unintelligible] ...and they called him my Black Panther Dog -- "There's the lady with the Black Panther Dog!" Everybody left me alone after that. It was a Doberman. By then, I'd had a son, and people said that everything -- there's my oldest daughter, just starts college next week and she's 16! So anyway, so then I went, I said, "I can't take this anymore." [unintelligible] said, "You can leave without Lenny," and I said, "I got this. I don't have any stuff yet." So I stuck my thumb, and came to Oregon. Landed in a place called Tacilma [?]. That was in '70-ish. What we did was, actually, I didn't land in Tacilma, but I went there later, but it's near Tacilma, between here and Tacilma, right by Selma -- Wonder, Oregon. It was a little tiny abandoned town. All the homes around it were abandoned. We moved in, because Oregon had strange laws. So you could take over an abandoned place and lived there if the property owner hadn't done anything for two years. And the property owners were all in California, who had bought it as tax write-offs. So we all moved into these houses that were all ready. Took about two years to catch up with us, and then a lot of people bought the houses we were in. But the whole town was a little commune.

Q: Now, what part of the state is this?

A: Wonder, Oregon. It's between Tacilma, which is almost to the coast, down Southern Oregon, and Grant's Pass, which is on I-5. There's a highway that runs between them. Then we moved to Selma, which is right close to Wonder, when the property started getting bought off. This whole time [unintelligible] ... a grocery store, a tepee, it was really cool. We even had a band called the Miracles of Wonder. This artist girl, her husband was in the band, she's famous in New York, Willie Mendez, I think is her name. So then we, I moved around in that area, lived in Tacilma, went back to Selma. In fact, we had several communes that were interconnected, that we'd kind of go from one to one at different times.

Q: Did any of these have names?

A: I don't think we named them. Just "the communes in Selma?" I don't even know if we called them that, but we were living communally.

Q: Was it a lot of the same people?

A: Yeah. It was all the same kind of group of people. We went from -- different people owned the land that lived on it in the communes, different people. Then I got bored there, I was still single. Then went and lived in the wilderness for a year by myself, with Gina [?], who is now 24, who I have 2 grandkids by. In fact, she just dropped off the grandkids, because she babysits them. Then I got my thumb out again and moved to Wolf Creek. And Gina was 3. I lived in the park for awhile, because I don't mind camping,

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it never bothered me, at least not when I was younger. And then I moved up into some different little communes around there. This one girl bought some more property, and had lots of little old houses on it, and we all moved into them. There were several communes around -- one of them had a name, but I can't remember it.

Q: This is in Wolf Creek?

A: Yes. Wolf Creek has a famous inn, a historical one. Before it was taken back over as a historical inn, it was our little bar and dance hall. It was real nice, wooden floor.

Q: There's one place in Wolf Creek that I wanted to find, I think it's called Lichen Co-op, does that ring a bell?

A: Lichen, yeah, they were out on the west side of the freeway, we were on the east side of the freeway.

Q: Because that's been around since '71, I think, so it's pretty long-standing.

A: We used to go over there, and then we'd hook up with some of those people. And some of those people lived -- sometimes I get them mixed up, because some of the people actually, I know a guy from Wheelers who lives here in town who I met at his -- what's the Jewish holiday where they dress up in costumes? It was the Jewish holiday where they dress up in costumes, and I went there, I went to their party. This woman's husband, who was somebody I worked with, lived there. He was my age, a couple years over. I was really surprised. "Oh, you lived at Wheelers too?" And I meet people out there every once in a while. I'd really like to meet some of my old friends from the hospital. I've lost touch with them, and I've looked with my computer, I've looked in phone books, all over the country, couldn't find them. So if you ever run into Gary Depitrio [?] and George Barbaty [?], I'm still looking for them.

Q: Well, if we run into them with the project, I'll let you know.

A: So now I've been doing Community Village for 20 years. Wolf Creek -- we'd go over there and go swimming, there was a swimming hole that was used in a Mountain Dew commercial once, where you'd jump off into the water over a cliff. Those old Mountain Dew commercials where that's all they did. Then I found out the Crazy Farm, which is just up between here and Wolf Creek off the freeway. A lot of the people from the Selma communes were also up at the crazy farm. In fact, I just got a message on my e-mail this morning, from someone who's living in the Panama Canal, who found me through Wazzo [?], which is some sort of computer program I guess. He sent us a letter from the Panama Canal, where he has his boat, because he has a marina there. And they're from the Crazy Farm, and my husband's from the Crazy Farm, but he didn't know this until after he'd known me for a few years. We were just never there at the same time until later, after we knew each other. We went and we helped build buildings there. The guy I was with, this boyfriend I had at the time, which was not a real boyfriend, just a friend, I was, we were doing, I was working for a company that did light shows, theater lights and stuff, and he was working for that company too, and so I went to a party at his house afterwards. I was just sitting there, and this guy kept staring at me. I said, "You're friend's [unintelligible] ... won't stop staring at me." Later he goes, "Did you ever live on a place called the Crazy Farm? That was Frank from the Crazy Farm. Do you remember him?" I go, "That was Frank?" He used to be my boyfriend. And he goes, "Well, now he lives in New Orleans, and he owns an antique store," right in the French Quarter, right on that

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main street. I've only been there twice, so I don't really know it very well. But he said, "He's real rich too." And my daughter, who was 13 at the time, my older daughter, said, "[unintelligible]" I go, "Yeah, Steve's more fun."

Q: So tell me a little bit more about the Crazy Farm. This is the first I've heard about it.

A: It was just a fun place. I didn't really live there, I just went and stayed there with Frank, because Frank lived there.

Q: What size a place was it? Like how many people?

A: There was about maybe 10 to 15 people who lived there. And some of them came and lived on our place in Selma. So it was a farm, basically what all communes have been in the country have been either farmers, gardeners, artists, basically. They were all into psychic things, typically. And it was fun, it was mellow. There wasn't any like wild parties. Most of the places out in the country, we didn't have big wild parties and things like we used to do in the city. We did have one big party at Selma, but it wasn't at the Crazy Farm. I took pictures of some girls dancing, and won an award as "American Gypsy" pictures. Okay they're just hippies, but I guess they look like gypsies. They were doing the can-can, lots of skirts on the stage, just for fun. I guess they looked like gypsies. So we did things like that. But by this age, we were more into organizing fun things rather than playing with our kids, more than wild partying. The Dead wasn't happening for awhile, and the '80's had terrible music. And the Dead came back about ten years ago, and they were really good, so I started going to some wild parties again, but that's because they had good live music. One thing I learned about living outside is the environment, and how important it was. Because we lived real quiet, non-heavy industrial type lives up there. We didn't have a lot of stuff, nobody had any money, nobody cared about it. I still don't care about it too much. That's why I don't have a house, I suppose. But we do own our own land out at Community Village and the Country Fair. We all own that as a group. Three thousand of us own that, so I guess it's a pretty big [unintelligible] to only have one person live there. We put on a big party every years. We hosted the Further Festival last year. We put on a party, an art show, a place for vendors to sell stuff hand made. Food, music, everything. And I think most of those people are rom communes, or have been in communes in the past. We have a lot of communes in the Village. Alpha Farm is a real big one. They are one of our members. They provided our restaurant for quite a long time, but now somebody else is doing it.

Q: Tell me a little bit more about the Community Village?

A: In the midst of sparkling crystals and through the river of people is a not quiet spot where we don't sell anything, called the Community Village. It's about 8 times the size of this room or more. The whole property, it's about a block in area. And it's all in the woods, little booths that look like they're hacked together out of nothing, but they're actually structurally sound, because the [unintelligible] comes in and looks at them every year. They look like little tree houses, is the effect we're trying to get. You can't see the camping, because it's back behind the trees. We have a health booth, which is all kinds of information about health. Lots of massages going on. Everything's free. They can offer something for donation. If a kid with a rock comes up, they got to take it. Consequently, after one years of some very pretty t-shirts, we don't have them again, because people got really upset when they realized that they had to give them away to all the little kids that asked for them. We have like a spirit booth, which is

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people of different kinds of spirituality kind of things get together and do something. A communications booth, where we have the computer set up -- it's electrical, but it's not plugged in anywhere. And it's not a remote, it's worked by a treadle, I think, from a sewing machine. We have a stage with an arts booth, it's full of arts demonstration. We have a kid corral thing, where little kids can go and play safely, and their parents can check them in and out. We have a plant booth, we have several plant booths, we have a farmers' booth. We have lots of places where you can just sit in the shade and be comfortable, while you're enjoying the fair, for the general public as well as the people who work there. We have shorter shifts -- I probably shouldn't say that, because the rest of the fair might like that -- and we all work together as one community to put it on. It's real special to me, and I've lived it for a long time.

Q: So that's kind of what you do during the years, is plan that?

A: I help plan the Community Village big [?]. I might take a few years off, simply because -- in the rest of the fair, it's elected. In the Village, you select what you want to do. And if two people want to do something, they just have to work together to work it out. Who's going to do it, and who's going to have a pass for it. You need a pass, because it's something, tons of people show up who can't even get in. It's like a big rock concert, only it's not a rock concert.

Q: So you don't let in too many people?

A: Well, this year, we're not allowing them in without a ticket, because it's been causing, just lately, there's so many more people than there were 10 years ago, that show up, that they're not even going to let them on the land without a ticket now.

Q: But if you have a ticket, you can go?

A: Yeah, but you have to buy them in advance now, though. I mean, I love all these people who show up who are basically gypsies, but some of them choose to cause such problems, that we can't deal with their mass numbers anymore. Like fanning out drugs. While some of us choose to take or not take them, we certainly don't want them fanning them out on their property. We don't want them offering them to our kids. That's the parent's role if that's chosen. There's problems with that, I don't want that out in general public, because we even said it's a drug-free fair this year. It's just, magick happens at the fair. You'll suddenly run across a whole band of fairies or elves in the woods. Maybe somebody getting married in a quiet, shady grove somewhere, that all look like elves. It's just incredible the things that happen. There were these people, and none of them are taller than this, and they had this big wedding at the fair, and they all dressed in tall hats and ... and we have a sartre. He dresses up in costume and really looks like one. He swallows, he does swords, and they're real swords. People look at them, and they're real. In fact, if too many young teenagers are hassling him, he can't do it. But as long as that's not happening, straight down, straight up. I've only seen him cancel one show due to loss of concentration from children hecklers. We have this big gypsy stage where they all kind of dance, and people say, "Hold on to your children and your purses, because here come the gypsies!" They're just dancers, but you know. There's a big parade, the [unintelligible] Brothers, do you know them? They're one of the starters of the fair, do their whole thing on several stages. Midnight show, they do it nude with flaming torches -- the public's not invited to that show. Once with a unicorn in the middle, a girl with a unicorn -- these people in California figured out how to make unicorns, how to develop them, it was an animal that was

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developed from other animals, for some use. They brought them to the fair one year.

Q: So when did you first get involved with the fair? Near the beginning of it?

A: The first fair was in 1969. I was still in Berkeley, Oakland really. I moved up here in '70, in Wolf Creek. My first fair, when I was in Tacilma, was in '71, when I was pregnant with Gina. In fact, do you know about the Rainbow Gatherings?

Q: I heard they kind of got their start in this area.

A: Yes, they did, they owned land in Drane [?], that's where their first gathering was. She was actually conceived at the first Rainbow Gathering. And I was pregnant with her at the first fair after I came back from Hawaii. I went to Hawaii for awhile, and lived in a commune there. I lived with Mayor of Kaloma [?] Valley. He had a little commune that was mostly his family and a few other people. I don't even know if he's alive now, but he was a very elderly Hawaiian. He was I think in his 70's. I went over there and camped in the beach parks. Hawaiians at that time, I don't know if they still do, have this special respect for pregnant women, so I got basically anything I wanted. I'd walk in to get some food stamps, and they'd tell me I have to stay in a fancy hotel in Waikiki every month when I come in. Because they don't want me in a cheap place. "But I don't want welfare!" I just wanted some food stamps until she was born. But you have to take all of this stuff. So the chief of police gave me his tent. Because some other weird policemen one night were freaking out, because they didn't want these hippies sleeping on the beach without passes, and they didn't realize that we didn't need one, because we were all given permission from the nighttime watchman. So they tore down all the tents that weren't occupied. They wouldn't make me get out of the tent once they found out I was pregnant, otherwise they would've terrorized us too. So the chief of police gave me a bigger tent, because he didn't want to see me crawl into a tent. Then I met some other young people, and their dad was Hawaiian. He was kicked out of [unintelligible] when the government took over. They were going to give him some new land, so he gave me his old house, which was two blocks from the beach, back against this beautiful -- there were banana trees in the yard. The bathroom was in another building, but that was okay. It was great. So I babysat his kid for a couple hours a day. He had a little baby, because somebody had come from Samoa and married him, just to come to the United States, and dump this kid on him the minute they became a citizen, and split. So he had this little baby, and he's like 70, and didn't know how to take care of it. But that was communal because he owned a couple of the little houses, and then he was going to take, although I came back here, he was going to take the whole group, all of us, to a whole new town, and he would be like a mayor, but not like a mayor that did anything. He was just the oldest man. And he was full of wonderful Hawaiian wisdom.

Q: And there were a bunch of hippies that came and lived with him?

A: Yes. So we just called that the Mayor of Kalona Valley.

Q: What did you do when you came back?

A: I came back to Wolf Creek, and then I lived with Dillon for awhile in Tacilma, and then I left him because -- well I don't want you to put why I left him, I left him because he started drinking, but he's not an alcoholic anymore, so he's fine. He's a friend. He's -- and that's when I came up to Wolf Creek -- no, I

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lived in Selma, then Tacilma, and then I came up to Wolf Creek, a little while after I left. I also lived on Bed Spring Acres.

Q: Is that a commune?

A: Yes -- which is, I assume it's still there. It's just west of Grant's Pass, just southwest. It's one of those little towns with nothing but a little tiny grocery store, I can't think of the name of the town anymore. But Bed Spring Acres is well known in Grant's Pass, I think, because he also ran the dump. And he gave me a little tiny A-frame to live in, \$5 a month or something, and he waved the rent every month for everybody. They called it Bed Spring Acres because the entire land has bed springs for a fence, around the entire thing, and it's huge. It's bed springs that he got out of a dump that he tied together. He also ran the dump, it's just north of Grant's Pass dump. The recycling center was there at the time, this would be the early to mid- '70's, and he'd give us all jobs and actually pay us more than minimum.

Q: So was this guy a hippie himself?

A: Yes, he was an older hippie, and an artist and musician. Kind of the bad image at the time I guess.

Q: And you think it might still be going on?

A: I would guess that it probably is, unless they just got too old and died or something. He was probably no more than 15 years older than me.

Q: I'll have to go check it out when I go down there.

A: Since then I've done a lot of things. I've worked as a school teacher for six years here in Eugene. I haven't just been flaking, painting, and doing visual things. I know a lot of hippies who did nothing, who actually pretty much just took drugs and did nothing, and there are a lot of hippies that sort of changed and became non-hippies, bought into what I call the system -- they'll come back. Then there's a group of people who I think probably learned, and stayed with what they learned, and didn't abandon it just to get something else. And I think they're the ones who can help the world out a little. Not just the United States, and not just hippies -- that name has kind of stretched out to mean a lot -- but, I see a new vision, I see a vision for the world where it's a good place. And people have realized, taken that step where they realize who and what we really are. And when they come to that step, and when they see that, then they realize that all this separate, and all this stuff is unneeded to solve our ecological problems. People won't be out to just get money, -- sure we'll still need stuff, but we won't need as much. We can run it the way it should be run without -- see I believe in government, you participate in any part of the government you want. That [unintelligible] ... what we have in the United States, and pretty much everywhere else that has democracy, is representative democracy, which isn't really democracy. Here, it's -- I don't know if fascism has crossed over, [unintelligible] is when the big business takes over government -- I would say it's a fascist, which is a harsh term, but it really is a fascist democracy. It's still a democracy, but it's a fascist one. Because a lot of people were asleep building their families or whatever, we lost an awful lot that we gained. But one thing, I wouldn't have been in the places I was in if I didn't live with the people I lived with. If they hadn't taken me in, or whatever, at first. And I wouldn't have learned a lot of things, like, basically, because a few people died in a few riots, we won the right to protest. We didn't have that right before. We had it in the '30's, and then they fell asleep in the '50's

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again. I think we fell asleep in the mid-'70's and mid-80's for awhile. I think it's real important. I think people all live as one big community. Earth is just one big commune. I think we need to learn to live in it as one family.

Q: Now, how long, altogether, did you live communally?

A: I wish I could walk my walk as well as I talk it.

Q: It's a challenge.

A: How long did I live where?

Q: Communally, just altogether.

A: I think from about 1966 to about 1981, I lived on just communes, basically. And I think most of the communes started because, "Yeah, sure, come on and live over here. That was the first ones. And then the country ones started because we all wanted to learn how to be in the woods together. Even out in the wilderness, I found a commune. I thought there'd be nobody out there. I went out there to hide from guys. So I had to get by myself. So I went out there -- there were lots of people who lived out in the wilderness, and they had sort of a little community, even though they lived miles apart. They have a little community, and I found it, and I fit right into it. It was a sort of bigger wilderness community. They'd help each other out. "I'll leave you a sack of potatoes behind the bush when I go to the store."

Q: So what did your kids think about this lifestyle?

A: ...she's grown up in Community Village, which is really similar in a lot of those ways. Gina only did when she was young, so she probably doesn't remember too much. Because once I got with Steve, it was love of the lifetime type of thing, and still is. And that was in -- I met him in 1979. And I was going to college then, so I lived on campus housing. Student housing type of thing. I dropped back in to go to college. I never went to college before, because when I grew up, everybody said I was too stupid, and I should just become an airline stewardess. So I grew up actually thinking I was really, really stupid. I wasn't in regular classes, and I thought that I was just hallucinating all the time. But I wasn't. I was just seeing things -- I've learned to control them since then. The first time I took LSD, I said, "Oh, this is just like when you're sick or when somebody dies or something." Because when I hallucinate the most is when people die. Because I grew up in the polio era, in the big city, and one of my good friends on the block died. Another guy had a big limp. That was kind of weird. Now kids have AIDS, when friends die. I forgot what you asked me.

Q: Just what it was like for the kids growing up.

A: But I saw a lot of other kids, who grew up in communes, and they're all really good kids, most of them. Most of the kids I've known had a few hard years in their teen years, and after that, they're just fine. Just like when I was a kid. It's just different problems, well, the same problems, just different stuff around the problems. So I think it affected them really well. I've known a lot of kids that have grown up as Country Fair kids, and in communes that are associated around that, with the Community Village, and they are leaders -- I've seen a lot of people from the fair go on into leadership here in town. One of them's a senator. Or congressman -- Peter DeFazio [?]. Another one is a state senator, or a House

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Representative. I can't remember her name -- Cynthia Rupert [?]. Federal congressional thing. I think, from what I can see, all those kids have done really well. The ones I've seen again. I don't know about the ones I haven't seen again. The kids don't make it everywhere. I'd probably say they had a better chance than certainly kids growing up in a ghetto, and probably many kids growing up in middle America. Because where were the majority of the hippies from at first? Middle America. They weren't from San Francisco, they just came there. Most of them were from the Midwest and the East. So while some of the parents went back to that -- and the kids I see now, will probably go back to that kind of living before long, anyway. Because you can't buy land anymore. It's very [unintelligible], and our kids like [unintelligible name], she'll be off some time later this year, on her own. I'm going to tell you some of the things my kids of done, [unintelligible] ... she chained herself to a gate down at the redwood thing this year, to protect the trees. You know, the big one, the Judy Barion [?] one. Another thing we kind of learned about is the schools. It took me a long time to really learn this well. Kids should be at home, not in school.

Q: That they should be home schooled?

A: Yeah, and a lot of communes homeschool their kids. And those kids all did better. Just went through 4 years of high school in about 6 months. I don't know what "doing better" means, though. For most people, that would be financially. But "doing better," to me, a happy person. A person who's --

Q: Well rounded?

A: Yeah.

Q: What for you was the best part about living communally? What did you like the most?

A: Being with lots of people. I came from a city, went to the country, -- there's another way to be with lots of people, and not miss the best parts of living in the city when you're moving to the country. Having people who weren't vested in you emotionally to talk to about stuff. Like, I still can't talk to my parents. Having people to bounce things off with, which is something really good about the Village. I call up any of my friends in the Village, and we bounce ideas off each other. And they call me, ask for my [unintelligible] all the time. And kind of in a bigger thing, when you're in another country, and you're standing on the corner, and somebody says, "Hi, Janet!" Wow. You meet a lot more people. I mean, you go travelling, and almost every time, I meet somebody I haven't seen for 20 years. It got to be a joke after awhile -- "Oh, Janet's going to go meet somebody that she hasn't seen for a long time. We'll hear it when she gets back." That even happened in Europe. Those street corners. And it gave me a bigger appreciation for a bigger aspect of the world. A lot of communities before the modern world were all like little communes. All the tribes certainly were. All the Indian communities, you can communes in that way. All the little African tribes and things that we see old pictures of, they certainly lived that way. Much the way we lived in the communes in the country. We all had little places where we stayed, where we slept, and we had a community building where we would cook and hang out. The communes in the '60's, we didn't all even have our own rooms, but they were in the city, and they were dirtier, and a lot of people go off and try other things. Like a lot of people, I saw several people in the '60's go to heroine, and I don't know if they ever came back. That really scared me, the heroine. That was one of the biggest, I think, reasons for me moving up there, and trying out [unintelligible] ... that and the fact that there

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wasn't hardly anybody here yet then.

Q: What was the worst part then, the hardest part?

A: It would be bad drugs. Probably the worst part, although that isn't anything against them, I'd say misuse of drugs. Stealing, although that went on mostly in the city communes. Both people crawling in your window that you didn't know, which is a big thing in the cities, people crawl in the windows, climb over the roofs, and crawl in the windows and stuff. And from the inside -- people coming in you didn't know, it wasn't as tightly controlled. I think that's about the worst thing. If somebody was violent, and a few people -- and it always seemed to have to do with heroine -- would get violent, very occasionally. And do things like throw stereos through the window. That was a little hard to deal with. I think that was the worst -- but that was occasional, it wasn't rampant or anything. People borrowing my clothes without asking -- of course, that really helped me out when I had a family, with two daughters. So that was a good lesson to learn, not getting so attached to my stuff. Although I'm really attached to wear my paints are. My little grandson has already learned, you don't touch grandma's paint table. Except when you're just looking at things. So I learned not to be so attached to stuff. I don't like it when stuff is ruined, because it costs money. At the same time, instead of that staying with me for a long time, like something else, it's just, "Oh, well, on to the next thing." Through it in the recycling.

Q: Were there other lessons, things that you've learned from that period of your life?

A: Being able to mediate between people. That probably started my skills. I only have those skills when I'm not emotionally involved, but I find myself mediating a lot. Lots of people come to me for advice. Usually I tell them they have to think it through. Just kind of helping people without telling them what you think they should do. And learning that you should never do that, because you'll probably be wrong. That the world has its own way of letting -- and synergy, not, knowing that the right thing will happen at the right time, no matter how uptight you get, because of all the times that it did, with no effort. And the right person showing up at the right time. Trying to let go. One of the things I learned was I missed this big party once, and I really wanted to go to it. I was -- and everybody else had gone. I was asleep when they left, I think. But then I learned, there was a lot of parties. Just because you missed this one, that means you weren't supposed to be there. Probably wouldn't have even been any fun for you. [unintelligible] ... you don't have to try to go to every one just to have fun. And being here now, and enjoying what you have, not worrying about what you don't have. Things like that.

Q: Any sort of practical real-life skills, like cooking, or things like that?

A: No, in fact that probably went the other way. I cooked a lot as a kid. I became vegetarian. I think most of my friends at those times were, and I became one a little later. Not in the city, they weren't, it was in the country. My mother cooked things from scratch, and we ate a lot of Mexican food, so I already knew how to cook stuff from scratch. And I did a lot of that. I learned how to cook on a wood stove and carry my water, and split wood. I learned it all on my own, I learned that I can learn anything on my own. I can go to the library and get a book and learn how to do almost any skill there is. That's a good thing. I learned to paint from books in the library. And I've sold a logo already, so I guess I'm okay. I'm not great, but I'm okay. You can learn almost anything without any talent, at least enough to get you through it. You can learn how to build a house from a book. I had no organizational skills. I think living with others

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kind of helped me organize things in my mind, before I learned to organize them on paper. Because I grew up with no organizational skills at all, because they thought I was nuts. First they thought I was retarded, and then they just thought I was crazy. They're probably right about the crazy part, but turns out I probably just have dyslexia, because I still do, I grab the mouse with this hand all the time. I got hit a lot when I was kid on this hand -- not from my parents, but the school. Because I used both hands to write. I had a crayon in this hand, a pencil in this hand. It was the '50's, they didn't like that then. Now, they do, actually. So everything but writing, unless this hand hurts, I do it with both. So that's probably what was wrong. This test in college, [unintelligible] ... I can't fill in those forms without a piece of paper, I still have that problem. Yet, I keep the database of 600 people for the Village.

Q: Would you do it again, would you live communally again?

A: Yes. In fact, I'm looking forward to it. Probably in a land situation, where you might have your own dwelling, and maybe a community house. And the community house idea took off from that. A lot of communities, now, have houses that were kind of built by the same people who first built the communes, and the communes kind of separated in Tacilma. Built a beautiful community house and have their own home school there.

Q: So is that something you're actively looking to do now? Or something that you see in the future?

A: In the near future, but I've been studying a lot of plans for houses and things like that, so that I can see what I want when I see it. When I have money. We'll find a way. I've been studying old designs, so that if there's some dwellings on a house, I'll know what's good, and what's not. Old cruddy stuff that we can use.

Q: Do you have friends that want to live communally with you?

A: Yes. A couple have mentioned it, and there's some family members who might be interested, and there's some other people in the community, they're kind of looking for something too. And they're not quite sure if they really want a house for all their life, then have to get rid of it sometime. Because, in the Village, some of us are getting older. There's a couple people in their 80's. And there's a couple people who just -- people age differently. There's one guy who's about my age, but he's closer to -- he seems a lot older, because he's disabled. He's -- and you know, we've been talking about lately, "What are we going to go? We're not going to kick people out just because they're not productive anymore. They would be really cruel after all the years they've been in the Village." Because you have to do something to be in the Village. So we're kind of, "How can we take care of our elders now?" We don't have to take care of them because they don't live here, but we still have to take care of them somehow. I think it's important, -- I don't want all my friends to go and live in old folks home, and I already have one friend who lives in one. She's not old, though, she's 10, 15 years younger than me. But she's disabled, and she started taking heroine for the pain, and she couldn't take care of herself anymore. So she's a mess. I think there's got to be a way where we can take care of each other, as we age, in a communal -- if not some little area where we have land near each other, and one piece of land, where we have some of our things, live communally, because I think it's real important. That way, if somebody loses their job, or somebody loses their income, we're still going to be able to pay our taxes. And that's one thing that I think a lot of communes -- because we've got to worry about the government. A lot of

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communes lately, because they're online, the government has swooped in on them, and taken all their data bases. There's one, I think it's in Coose [?] Bay. Because they bought a warehouse, and turned it into apartments and little storefronts inside, for them. And one was a hemp seed candy maker. Well the government is cracking down on hemp seed growers, because they don't want it, and it's starting to get passed in a lot of states, hemp bills are starting to get passed, and the government does not want that. The chemical companies are probably the ones who really don't want it. So they're going around and busting all the hemp -- none of them are growers at this point, hemp growers, and they're going around and trying to find reasons to bust them. They get a percentage, they probably have some marijuana in their personal stuff. They haven't found any big dealers that way. Because generally, those people don't want to be doing that, because then you lose your hemp business. And they've been stealing their data bases, and finding all the ones through the data bases. And they -- a person who publishes a newspaper in Corvallis [?], they all got busted the same way. Didn't find anything there, but they took all their data bases, and they said that they wouldn't press charges against him if he didn't try to get his computer back. If he didn't make a stink about it. They scared him, said they'd take his land away. They can and they can't. But I'm not afraid of this, because I don't have -- I guess they could take my computer, but we put everything in my husband's name, because I'm the radical, and he's not. And he works for the government. You don't want that in there. No links.

Q: I don't think I have anymore questions, unless you can think of anything more?

A: Being in the woods in a commune put me very close to the logging community and let me see all the terrorism in the woods from the loggers. I'm not blaming the loggers individually, I'm blaming the corporate -- the multinational corporations that own all the loggers now. Most of them would like to go to good practices [?]. Taught me that, living in the woods can show me a lot. I won't say the trees talk to me, because they don't, but they do teach me things. Not with voices, but more, you can see it. I've had a lot of visions with trees there, showing me the vision. Have to be real relaxed -- not drug visions. Like when I was a kid, I had a lot of penicillin when I was a kid though. So I don't know. I can't think of much else. In that one -- that's what we called it: we called it the Thirteen Room House. That was the hospital. The Thirteen Room House. Because when we found that last room, it was 13 rooms. I knew we had a name.

Q: What were the years of this place?

A: This would've been about '68. It was right before People's Park. Sixty-seven, '68, right in there. We lived there when we went to People's Park, or it had just burned down. One of the two -- burnt.

Q: And how long did you live there?

A: About a year. Then we moved to another building, which we gave part of it to the Hari Krishnas, because they didn't have a place to do one of their Sunday things.

Q: And then at some point in People's Park, your picture was taken, and you got in the centerfold of the Paris [?] Match [?].

A: Yes.

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Q: Do you know the month and year of that?

A: We can probably look it up downstairs. People's Park was '68 or '67, I think. Maybe '69. And it would've been I think in the May issue. It was the week after it happened. The week after, because I'd seen it then too, but I hadn't seen it, for a long time I'd forgotten about it. The Park, the thing in this magazine, and I thought some little picture of me in a [unintelligible] ... I didn't really look at it until I came back. But I have copies of it. They're kind of pink and bluish colored, but --

Q: And you're giving the peace sign?

A: Yeah. And you can recognize me.

Q: Were you wearing tie-dye?

A: No, I'm wearing a lime green shirt of the day. Something around my neck, similar to this, I think. I was pretty much the same, thicker and shorter. I'm sitting there with a guy with curly hair and a beard, that was Gary. Black Panther button on. And some people in masks, and that was Serge [?] and Sida [?] there, in the masks, and they became Hari Krishna's later, and some guy whose name I don't remember. We were sitting on a car, and in the background it says "Ten cents wash, five cents dry." I remember that, because I hid in there, I hid in the dryer, because one of the National Guards was after me. The first thing at People's Park was tons of people came in. They kind of separated into two huge -- we're talking like blocks and blocks of people. Telegraph Avenue's pretty big. They separated us into two groups, and then the blue meanies came in. Nobody was doing anything. Everybody was sort of marching and partying, and holding their signs. I had put in the flowers in People's Park, so I felt kind of close that we should keep it as a park instead of parking cars there. And then they went into the crowd like they were going to shoot, and they did. They shot a photographer, his eyes is shot is. This is documented and everything. He was on one of the buildings, they said his camera looked like a gun -- I don't know any cameras that look like guns, and police have to have good eyesight, so I don't think they mixed it up. Besides, you don't hold a gun up like this, which I'm sure the camera was held like this. Then, I don't know if I heard bullets or pelts, but I heard one whiz right by me. And I got behind the car, and I was mad. So the next day, we made some interesting brownies to pass out. Because some of those National Guards were our age. The National Guard were there the next day. It was the blue meanies we didn't like, but the National Guard we liked.

Q: Were the blue meanies just the city cops?

A: I guess. They were the new riot patrol. New riot, blue, and you know the magic mystery tour was out at that time, so we called them the blue meanies, because they looked the same as the cartoon guys. Big riot gear. Didn't have riot gear up until that year, I think. The National Guard came the next day, and so we gave them flowers, and those kinds of thing. But some people were rioting somewhere, I wasn't, I was just walking down the street. One threw one of the canisters at me. And my eyes were red and my face was red until the day after. I had made the mistake of taking some water out of the ditch. It was filled with this stuff. Somebody -- that's how it started, somebody opened a fire hydrant, because it was really hot. And the police came in and started beating him. And that's when the riot started, and that's when they went with their guns into the crowd. They could've avoided the whole thing. So I turned around, my adrenaline took off again, and I threw a brick at him, and hit him. I don't have good aim, I

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don't know how I did it. I was just frightened. And [unintelligible] jumped out, and I took off down the alleys, because I figured they didn't know the alleys, and I went into the laundromat through the alley, and got in the dryer, and just stopped there. They opened the door, and they never came in. So I waited for a half hour and went home. But I had a lot of visions at that Thirteen Room House -- that place was like vision city for me. Some visions that I'd had before when I was a kid, that I realized after this, and that I had again on communes [unintelligible] ... same type of vision, a ball, a floating, gold, see-through ball that comes in. I think it's some sort of soul energy myself. I don't know what it is. But if you look at it or try to talk to it, it disappears. And other people saw it. [unintelligible] ... whole group -- I saw them as a kid, a lot. Or maybe it's just my special hallucination that comes to me. It's not some solid thing to touch. Then I saw them then, that year I saw them a lot, in those few years, and then I saw them again. Music will play, sometimes you hear guitar music first. Other people say they smell smoke, but I never have. These people I've read about, who've seen them. People I read about have seen them too. Have you ever read the Tenth Insider, those series of books? It's, a lot of those people in that story have seen them. Celestine Prophecy. Reading that is like, being then, because of all the things, these are the same things, just coming back and saying, "You were right, you weren't crazy."

Q: Thank you so much for this interview.