Interview with Becky Armstrong
Interviewer: Deborah Altus
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Q: December 6, 1995, in an interview with Becky Armstrong. So, Becky, could you tell me just a little bit about your background? Where you were born and raised?

A: Well, I was actually born during World War II on a military base out in California but I grew up in the Midwest, in Indiana, about 100 miles south of Chicago in farm rural farm area. Went to a small school, very middle class, very white, very middle America Indiana. I just read in the kids' history book that Indiana had in the '20s when the Ku Klux Klan had its new resurgence, Indiana had the largest membership outside the south, half a million members card carrying members, which didn't count all the lazy racists who just didn't bother to join but, so, that was where I grew up and I would say I grew up on America and apple pie and patriotism and doing the right thing and, pretty much, I believed all that stuff about equality and America being the hope of the world and all that kind of thing. So, it's a big shock to me when I found out what was really going on in the world and, especially, in this country and I think I felt initially, I thought, well, something must be wrong, you know. The criminals have stolen the country and we should do something about it and I began to see more that there was the whole structure was not created with equality in mind. That was more of a fantasy that people had than a reality. So, I guess I was sort of disillusioned for a while. The '60s happened and there was such a feeling of intense community all over, wherever you went. I spent the years from about 1964 until now just experiencing different kinds of community things, just small groups of people that I would live with for periods of time. I travelled around a lot. I met Irving in New York in 1966 and he was just fascinating to me. He had such a perception of the world about the way people related to each other. This was the thing that really struck me and I think that's the thing that drew most of the people here in the '60s was his focus. I mean, he, obviously, was a very central, charismatic magnet for most of the people who came here during the late '60s but his focus was on personal human interaction and how important that was in life, in personal gratification of life and enjoying your life and being having a joyful life and, also, in altering the way the whole world worked that that was a really important thing. So, I guess, all of us sort of had some innate agreement with that philosophy. So, we were attracted to him and to the community, plus it was very energetic and there were lots of during the '60s, everybody came through here. I mean, people just like going back and forth, back and forth. There were people on the road all the time. Hundreds of people would come here. On a holiday weekend, a hundred people would come to visit for the weekend and there would just be nowhere to put all these people. They would come from the city. They would be hitchhikers. People that Irving knew in the city who would come up regularly. They were like the regulars who always showed up on every holiday weekend. Great mobs of people on the move and the hog farm bought the Earth People's park up by the Canadian border. The whole herd of them came through here. I mean buses. But, so, there was like there was a lot of excitement. People were in the exciting time. We weren't very political. I guess I had already reached the conclusion by the time I got here that political action wasn't going to make a big difference and that marching in the street was not really going to be a very useful way of changing society but we really needed to get down to things a lot more intimate and that was sort of what the focus was here intimate relationships.

Q: Can you describe a little bit about how you met Irving and how you came up here? How you got to come up here?

A: Well, I was living in New York and I lived in Manhattan. I was living in I guess, you could say we were crashing there. I had come to New York with this rock band and they had a recording contract with Commasutra (?) Records and, so, we were just kind of crashing with people in the city and we were living in this apartment in Manhattan, this actor this part-time actor, like all actors there and he was letting us live there and they would play music downtown at a club where they played and they practiced in the Commasutra Record office down there on Broadway and we went to lots of parties and we did things and it should have been very exciting but it was extremely boring after a while. I got really tired of it. All these people were very hip but they were just like everybody else that I had ever met. They had the same societal attitudes about human relationships, about men and women and the way they should relate to each other. It just was it just seemed very tedious after a while and I felt like I was missing out on something. Anyway. So, one day I was wandering around in the park and I met this guy and he began talking about the lower east side and I hadn't been down there. So, I went down to the lower east side with him and we wandered around down there and saw all the wild looking stores and people. It hadn't built up to the peak it had later on in the '60s but it was already the sense of what something was going on down near Tonquin(?) Square Park and, then, he said, "I want you to meet my friend, Irving." So, he took me to the gallery, which was on East Fourth Street and it was just like a little door in a big, brick wall. You'd walk along the street and there was this solid brick wall and there was this door in the wall and I think there was a window and it might have been painted over but it was like you couldn't really see what was inside but I went inside and there was Irving and he was so he immediately came and began talking to me and asking me about what I'd like to do in the world and just was very extremely charming and, then, he urged me to come up here and he showed me this flyer he had. I don't really I don't have any more of those around but he they advertised for it said free Vermont mountain vacations.

Q: Wow.

A: It was like a way to attract people to come up. It was one way to make money. I mean, nobody had any money in those days and that was one way to make enough money to make your living expenses was to there are a few little cabins around here and he would, like, get people to donate money to stay in them for a weekend or a few days or something and that would provide living expenses. So, I came up with him. I drove up with him. He came to the apartment where I was living and on that weekend and he pulled up out front and he had two old cars full of people young people and everything's tied to the fenders and [unintelligible] boxes of stuff and he I rode up here with him and all the way up he talked about, you know, the Dow (?) and Tantric (?) Yoga and all kinds of folk, you know, things that were so interesting to me that I was just I felt completely transformed in a certain way. I got up here and there was barely anybody here. There was just a couple of people living here besides his kids and his wife and the family but I stayed here for a couple of weeks. He went back to the city and I, actually, stayed up here with the kids for a while and, then, I kept coming back and forth all through the rest of the summer. I kept coming back and forth and visiting with them and staying up here and, through the winter, I lived down in New York, and continued it through the next winter. I lived in New York City and

I, basically, had kind of moved into a different mode of existence and I was living down in the lower east side. [Unintelligible] were kind of living with some hippies down there but I continued to visit Irving. They went to Florida in the winter. So, he was gone through that winter and, then, in the spring, I met up with him again and that's I came up here a few times and, then, I went out to California. I was in I lived in San Francisco in '67 and '68. Then, I came back here. I pretty much travelled around the country. I went to Florida. I was all over the place and, finally, in 1969, I came back here. I always kind of thought of this as my home after I had been here. It was interesting [unintelligible].

Q: That is interesting.
A: Much more so than my own home. I mean, I never really thought about going back there to live or to stay, though I had some very close friends there. I just never thought about returning. I always thought about coming back here. I did come back here a couple of times. On one trip back across the country, I came and stayed here for a little while but, in '69, I came back here and stayed permanently and, at that point, there were about 25 people living here that were not part of Irving's family hippies [unintelligible] dredged up from all kinds of places, a lot of them from Florida. A lot he has a he had a cabin on a lake in the Ocala National Forest. Now, we have three or four of them, now, but he in the winters, he would go there and spend the winter there. The main reason he did that, initially, was, well, the major reason was because it's cold here but and [unintelligible] he never sent either one of his children to school. His kids didn't go to the public school. They didn't go to any school and he educated them sort of at home. They just talked of things that he knew, which was, actually, quite a lot and that was a way of avoiding the authorities was to just not stay anywhere for more than six months. You were not like really a citizen of the state and they didn't bother you. So, he was always whenever they would get too close, he was always just leaving. So, that was what he did and that was the other thing, I think, that attracted me to Irving and to the community was the relationship he had with his kids. When I met him when we first came here, it was so clear to me that he related to them as complete human beings. He respected them completely. He didn't condescend to them. He wasn't like [unintelligible] them. He was truly listening to them and responding to them just like he would to an adult and I was extremely impressed by that. William was 14, then, and Lady Bell (?) was 16 and they did what they wanted and he and they told him what they wanted him to do. They said, you know, "Irving, do this and, Irving, do that." And he would say, "Okay. Alright. Alright, I will." And he did. But it wasn't just that he was it wasn't just that he was going along with them. He, truly, was relating to them and I could sense that was what was happening. So, that was a real shock to me and I was very impressed by this and this, as we grew older here and began having our own kids, this was this became a very integral part of our philosophy. It's hard to say where it kind of originated, probably partially when we started out here with this when there was a pretty big mob of hippies living here; we had this kind of taeniae: everything for the newcomer. Make the newcomer comfortable and give them basic security and treat them as an honored guest and not give them a hard time because it was scary for people here. There was a lot of energy flying around and there was some vile things going on. So, it could be kind of scary for people. So, we tried to make them comfortable and, from Irving's point of view, a child was the greatest newcomer. They were they needed the most protection and the most understanding, the most love and the most caring. You had to treat them with the greatest respect and I think all of us agreed to that. We were all pretty much in

agreement but treating children this was a just a natural extension of our philosophy about the way humans should treat each other, that anyone who would abuse a child was a monster. There was just no second choice if we would take a child and injure a child or, you know [unintelligible] the little Hitler's of the world.

Q: Yeah.
A: It's interesting. I just read there's a some woman has just written a biography of Albert Spear, which I [unintelligible] where she traces some of his behavior to his upbringing. His parents used deprivation, which was very popular in Germany during the time that time similar to Hitler's childhood deprivation was as a method of correcting behavior. Physical punishment and deprivation, which is the exact opposite of what we use. We use praise and abundance. We try to give them like abundance to make them feel as good about themselves as possible. This is interesting. Anyway. So, I think that that was something that attracted me also. Very different from my upbringing where kids were not real people. They weren't really people. They were like problems or they were, you know, like awards that parents had for whatever, that they had done well. Their child proved it by doing something that validated their choices and, so, that was sort of the view of children that I had when I came here from my own childhood. So, that was a big that was an interesting thing because it is so clearly connected to the whole new hippie idea of brotherhood and, so, it's interesting to me to see how many hippies and communities and places where we would go over the years, the '70s and the '80s, had this rude, perverse ways of dealing with their kid. They sounded just like my mother. I didn't see much difference in the way they treated their children, you know. Do what I say. Do it now. They would hit their kids. I mean, I thought people who believe in non-violence, how can they hit children?

Q: Yeah.
A: I mean, how can you hit a child if you believe in non-violence? They wouldn't hit another adult because that was like politically incorrect but you whacked the kid because that's the way they learn. It's some perverse thing. So. That was where we that's sort of how it all evolved here.

Q: Can you tell me a little bit about the background of the community? I guess did Irving and his family buy the land up here and build some cabins?
A: Irving and Barbara bought it. They were living in New York. Irving had worked during the depression, Irving worked for the what was it called? Roosevelt's thing, the, I don't know, some writer's project. Irving was a writer and he wrote various things. He went to Cornell. He graduated at 19 from Cornell. Actually, he started out I think he got a degree in Physics but, then, he switched to English Literature or something. Anyway, he became a writer. He wrote a lot of things. He, actually the final thing he did was, I don't know, he's written a lot of things after that but he wrote a translation of Hamlet in Modern English. Very interesting and tried to get it produced a few times in New York and something always went wrong. There was always something going on. Around I think when did he write that? [Unintelligible]. So, around World War II, he'd written this little where is that? Actually, I think I have this [unintelligible]. I can give you the … a bunch of our anti-childbeating propaganda here…

Q: I would love it.
A: . . . which I'll give you. But this is a reprint of a little thing that Irving wrote. This is called "William "Bernard Shaw's Debt to William Blake," which he wrote. He was very fond of both Shaw and Blake and he wrote this and he sent this little essay he'd written to Bernard Shaw and Bernard Shaw just loved it. In fact, he thought he said, "This is the best thing about me anybody ever wrote." And he was he really like Irving's writing and he wrote him a letter in which he said, you know, "When I'm dead, this young man will still be remembered." He compared Irving to he called Irving the "Beethoven of modern writers," basically.

Q: Wow.
A: And he was very now, he sent him the letter and told him that you could use this to get your "use my letter to get your things published." So, that's so, then, Irving tried to do that but, then, Shaw also had thought the same time decided that he the [unintelligible] would come out in support of fascism or something. Anyway, they that was so, suddenly his it wasn't any his name was no use in getting this published because he was he blackened it for everybody. But, anyway. So, other things kept occurring. When it would just about to look like he would be able to get it produced, it just didn't happen but slowly I guess, some period after the war, Irving began to not be so interested in writing and I can kind of understand that. I mean, having lost my interest in music and gone to something else but he became interested in human drama, real drama, rather than invented drama. He still liked reading but he didn't write much and he sort of that was his interest changed and pretty much remained that way all his life after that and they but, anyway so, they were living in New York and they wanted to get away from the city and they came up here and he found this property for sale and he bought it and I guess his idea was to get away from all these people in New York but, then, they all followed him up here and, so. So, that was sort of how the thing grew in the '40s. I don't know too much I mean, if to find out what it was like here in the '40s and '50s, you would have to talk to Barbara.

Q: So, she's still alive?
A: Yes. She lives in Florida right now. I mean, she's here in the summer. In the winter she remarried and she's … the man she's married to has … is crippled. He was injured in an automobile accident and he's half his body's paralyzed and, so, he doesn't get around too much. So, in the winter, they go and stay in Florida in near Ocala.

Q: She must be fairly old.
A: She's fairly old. She's in her 70s, late 70s.

Q: Oh, yeah. Not as old as I thought. Okay.
A: Well, she's in her late '70s. She's getting on there and, so and she could tell you more clearly, maybe, what it was like. Lady Bell might be able to. I'm not sure. I mean, she was just a little child, then.

Q: Do you think Barbara might be willing to talk to me if I were in the Florida in her area or something?
A: It's possible.

Q: Is she the type of person I could . . .
A: Yes.

Q: . . . call and say, hi?
A: Yes, you could.

Q: Okay. Alright.
A: Yes, you could. In fact, Don wrote a book about his life and he's written a couple of books about spirituality and things. So, her husband would [unintelligible] and he wrote a short piece about Quarry Hill in there and, probably, some of them he got from her. I, actually, haven't even read it. So, I don't know what it says.

Q: But . . .
A: Oh, but here, wait, wait. You know what? There's this, too. We started this organization called Free the Kids here, which is sort of to try to help people deal with their problems with children. I mean, we're trying to think of ways that people can cope with the fact that they have a hard time with their kids. One of these, these are, okay, okay, I'll just give you all this stuff. Here's these are some of our newsletters and there's those.

Q: Oh, great. Thank you.
A: And here's some more of them. Some more. Here, you want a bumper sticker, too? There you go. Here's some more that . . .

Q: Thanks.
A: . . . Brian Rose delivered to me. This is a little pamphlet you don't need all of these here, there's one. There's a little pamphlet that we bought from this guy who wrote it about spanking and we just bought that from him and we pass those give those out to people. This was a bunch of the people went to New York and presented a thing about our point of view about children to the it was to the Journal The Institute of Psychohistory. They had some kind of like thing going in New York and a bunch of people went down there and presented it and I think this was the thing they presented and I think that this tells a little bit about Quarry Hill, also, but, anyway, you can have one of these.

Q: Oh, thanks.
A: Is this the same thing? Yes.

Q: Okay. Thank you.
A: You can have that and, too, I'm not sure if that gives some Brian says it tells about the history of Quarry Hill but I don't see how it does but . . .
Is your community's official name called The Green Mountain Educational and Cultural Trust? No.

Q: No. That's something else?
A: What is that? Oh, no, the Green Mountain Educational Cultural Trust is a big, non-profit corporation, which funds the school and Free the Kids, which is an organization that just all we do is publish this newsletter and, sometimes, donate money to different causes. In fact, you were going up to Island Pond, right?

Q: I'm not, actually . . .
A: Oh, you're not going there?

Q: . . . though, I'm going to meet the Island Ponders in Bella Falls.
A: Okay, because we actually gave money to this guy who was like in a battle with them in Rolland (?). A couple of years ago we donated money to him and took a bunch of literature over there to him to help him get his kids away from them because his wife had taken the kids and they were the kids were appealing to him to save them and he . . .

Q: Really?
A: . . . had to take them to court he went into court and he was like desperate and they so, we sent him money and, also, literature that documenting that beating children was bad for them in case anybody didn't really know that but, evidently, this is something that requires constant reiteration and proof. You have to keep proving to people, oh, it's bad to beat up children. You know, they don't like it's bad for their health and their psychological growth is stunted by beating them and to you know, I mean, documentation was really required and he it was but, so, we do things like that sometimes but, generally, we just, you know, we send money to starving kids in Africa and things like that, too, but that is just a you know, as the years went by, economics sort of made it important to clarify things. So, we have a corporation Lyman (?) Hall is a corporation that owns the property, all of the property here. Barbara I think that Barbara was a Hall but, before she married Irving Fisk (?), her name was Hall and, so, one of her great ancestors was Lyman Hall.

Q: I see.
A: I believe. Anyway, that's how the place ended up being called Lyman Hall.

Q: And, then, do individuals own houses?
A: No. All the houses everything is owned by Lyman Hall. He's no longer with us. He was a governor of Georgia in 1775 or something like that. So, he all the whole property is owned by this one, big corporation, which has a number of people who sit as a Board of Directors of the corporation, which, essentially, is just a big headache for them. The corporation employs one of the people who live here. Pays them to take to do all the bookkeeping, figure out how much money we have and whether how much it's going to cost to fix the pump and plow the roads [unintelligible]. So, he makes all those decisions about that kind of stuff.

Q: So, do you pay some sort of rent or tax to live here?
A: Yes. I pay what we it's rent. I pay like a rent on my house and that money goes into the general coffers and that all that money, then, is divided up to pay for the upkeep of the property and to pay the taxes and to . . .

Q: But you don't pool your incomes or anything?
A: No.

Q: No.
A: But we do people who do have larger incomes will make larger will make donations to the community in one way or another. If someone there are a few people who have relatively large incomes and they donate money both to the community at large just to make things work, you know, like or they loan money to the corporation to fix things that needs to be fixed or, sometimes, just give money outright if there's a need on a per need basis rather than just in general but everybody puts in money on a regular monthly basis.

Q: Do you share much? Like, do you share meals or . . .?
A: Sometimes. I mean, you're here in my house. I have a little house and my daughter lives here with my granddaughter and my son lives here and I live here. At various times, I have like mobs of people who eat here but nobody ever else occasionally, there's been another couple or two or three people who lived in the house, also, but other houses have are much larger and we have every kind of different kind of living arrangement. We have people who have only, just like this, where they just have a single family living in the house. We have houses that have two or three families of parents and children living in the house. We have a couple of duplex kind of houses where they have like they're built together and they're separated like with a wall and there's one group of people living in one side and one people group living in another. We have one house over here that has three men living in it and their children, who live with their mothers in various places, have rooms there and live there with them, occasionally, just sort of back and forth but there are just those three guys who live in that house and one of them is a father. The other two are just single men.

Q: And, then, you have a community center?
A: That big building there.

Q: That's that big building?
A: That's, also, where we have a school. We do a school there. We have schoolrooms that we use for schooling.

Q: Oh, so you have your own school? From K through 12 or what . . .?
A: K through 12.

Q: K through 12. So, your son goes to that school?
A: Yes. He'll graduate this year.

Q: Wow. So, when I drove in, was did I pass the school on my right?
A: No, that's something else. What you passed on your right there's a big house. . .

Q: There's a colorful sign and a big house on the right?
A: Right. And, then, just past that house is that little building. That's a dojo they're building.

Q: Oh, okay.
A: My son and two or three of the other kids are passionately committed to martial arts. He does Aikido and different kinds of other martial arts and he trains every day. He does this stuff constantly. So, they're building a dojo up there because they're going to be doing this here.

Q: So, was that sign that said something like Majiwa?
A: Majiwa.

Q: Is that part of the community?
A: Yes, it is. It's another it was like a neighbor lived there when we first moved, this man and he died and his family sold the property and one of the women who had money bought that property and she lives up there and four or five other people live up there, too, and her children two children hers and one of the other women and her son live up there. He named it Majiwa. They just said, "What shall we call the place?" Well, see, we always called it Grasseys (?) because it was old Mr. Grassey owned it but it didn't seem reasonable to keep calling it Grasseys. So, she said, "What shall we call it?" And he said, "Oh, call it Majiwa." And, so, that's why it was called that and, then, on your left, as you were coming in, you saw there was like a little . . .

Q: Trailer.
A: . . . a trailer there and there's another those are that's part of the community, also.

Q: Oh, okay.
A: A family a man and his wife live there. They have a baby and he has two children from his first marriage, which live there part of the time with him and part of the time up here with their mother and there's also another teenage girl, who's not part of their family at all, is going to move in there next week and live with them. She can't get along with her mother. So, she's going to go live with them.

Q: How many people live here?
A: About 100.

Q: Wow, it's big.
A: Yeah.

Q: And you said there are around 30 kids?
A: About 30. I can lose track sometimes but it's hard to once I counted and there were 30.

Q: And is that included in the 100?
A: Yeah.

Q: Yeah.
A: So, anywhere between 100 about 100 people. So, I would say there are between 70 and 80 adults and 20 and 30 kids. I think there's sometimes I think in the school we have about 20 kids. We just bought lockers the other day and we needed to buy 16 lockers, I think about, and some of the older kids didn't need them. So, I think that means there's around 20 kids in the school.

Q: Do you have any kids from the outside areas that come to the school?
A: Right now, we have one boy. He's German. He's here just for one semester. A friend of the community who kind of comes and goes and lives up the road talking about he contacted with Manuel but Manuel wanted to come to the United States. So, he came here and he lives here with us until Christmas until right after Christmas and he's been going to the school here. We had last year and the year before that we had one girl who transferred up here from the local public school because she didn't like it there. We've had we had a girl from Montreal, who came here one summer and liked it, and came back the next year, went to school for a year here.

Q: But it's mainly your own kids?
A: Yeah. Almost exclusively.

Q: And, then, the teachers are people who live near the community?
A: They're all the parents of the kids.

Q: Would you describe it as an alternative school or . . .?
A: I think so. I mean, it's strange enough that you would have to say it was alternative he would say. I mean, we, you know, we teach the usual subjects and more so. We probably kind of overdue the amount of stuff they have to do sometimes but . . .

Q: Do you teach there?
A: Yes. I teach social studies. This year I'm teaching American History and a course in American Government and the Constitution and, sometimes, I teach science. One year, I taught second grade math.

Q: What age level do you teach?
A: Generally, high school but I can also sometimes, I teach junior one year I taught junior high. I liked that. So, I teach right now, I'm going to graduate school. So, I'm kind of crunched and because I'm getting toward the end of it and, so, I'm kind of busy.

Q: What are you studying?
A: I'm going to Dartmouth. I'm just doing their Master of Arts and Liberal Studies program.

Q: Oh.
A: And I'm writing something. I don't know what, yet. I'm going to write something and but, normally, I teach a lot more than that but I've been pretty busy. So.

Q: Well, I'd like to get back to the early years some.
A: Sure. Right.

Q: And when you met Irving. I'm very I'm intrigued by Irving and wondering how you might describe him. Was he like a beatnik or a hippie or would you apply any of those labels to him?
A: Well. God, I wish had a [unintelligible] that I could show you. He looked a little bit like Albert Einstein. He wasn't quite he was about the same height as I am, maybe not quite as tall. He had he was kind of balding on top and he had this shock of kind of white hair that stuck out around over his years, around the back of his head and he was a staunch vegetarian. He wore plastic shoes or canvass shoes and he wore kind of nondescript, baggy clothing. He never got kind of dressed up too much. Well, once in a while, if there was some [unintelligible] reason to do so he would. But he spoke with, you know, he was an amazing speaker and storyteller. He could just captivate an audience telling a story and he knew a wealth about things and he had a way of telling stories that appealed to the people he was talking to. He knew how to get people's attention. He spoke he was an extremely well-educated person. He knew a lot about a lot of different things and his interest in stuff was unending. He was constantly interested in something new, even, I mean, up until the last year of his life he was, you know, delving into something new all the time. He was a tinkerer. He had these old, rattly cars, which he constantly kept running with Band-Aids and baling wire and he was poor. He didn't have money. He didn't seek any. He kind of thought it was to even like to even try to get too much money and he lived here just kind of by minute to minute. He truly was a person who was willing to live in the moment not think about what the future was going to bring. So, in a way, I guess, it was because it's so difficult to describe in words some the charisma that someone has. I mean, not everybody has this and, so, when you meet somebody that just kind of like is who has so much charisma, it's a little difficult to describe it but he was the drug that attracted people to the community in the early in the late '60s. I would say, by the early '70s, the community itself had become a magnet. The group of people there were 25 people living here like permanently in 1970. We had two or three kids but we're still just a kind of like a band of random hippies that got [unintelligible] and there was an enormous amount of energy. Of course, there's a lot of motion going on in the country, too. People were on the road a lot. So. But that was another thing that we'd draw more people. So, I would say it's sort of a toss-up. The ones who came in the mid-70s to the '80s were attracted by the other people who were here rather than just by Irving but, the early group, we were very much attached to him. He was the main focus for us.

Q: Would you describe him as a leader here?
A: Oh, absolutely. Absolutely. Yes.

Q: And was . . .
A: He was a father. He was like a father figure. I mean, when I came here, he would take us to town and buy me a hot fudge sundae at this place in town, you know, I mean, and no money at all. Absolutely none and no way of earning any money. Here was a real millionaire. I mean, there was no way I mean, even if I had wanted to go get a job, there was no way.

Q: So, how did you survive, then?
A: He supported us all.

Q: He supported you?
A: He supported every single one of us.

Q: And how did he get his money?
A: By renting out these little cabins . . .

Q: By renting out the cabins.
A: . . . for $15 and getting people to donate money, a few bucks here and there, and, if any of us could or any people came here who had any money getting them they would just at that point, we did live communally. In the late '60s, we lived completely communally. Brenda's house is over here. It was this old, old farmhouse. It was about 200 years old and this building was not here. None of these buildings were here. That was there. His cabin, which is right up there, was there and a couple other little cabins. The ones on except for his and the farmhouse, none of these other places even had electricity. There was no bathroom. We had an outhouse. There was no running water. We had a spring up in the meadow there with a hose that ran all the way down here into the farmhouse. That was where we got that was the running water.

Q: Did you have electricity?
A: Yes. There was electricity. There was lines around [unintelligible] up but it was extremely rusted. The house was really, really old and there was an attic and there was a small upstairs where Barbara lived and Irving lived up in his cabin most of the time and, sometimes, when it was really cold, he would live in the farmhouse, too, but we all lived in the attic.

Q: Wow.
A: We all lived in this one attic and there were a few little outbuildings just like you could live in while it was cold.

Q: Now, how many people were there that lived in the attic?
A: Well, I would say at any one time there might have been 15 or 20 people living in the attic.

Q: Wow.
A: And he put we had the [unintelligible] wall to wall beds and we would hang things around in there. There was like another little place where people could sleep under the eaves just at the top of the stairs and there was one large bedroom downstairs. That was actually Lady Bell's bedroom but she wasn't here all the time and, you know, people shared her room with her. When I I spent sometimes, I would live in there with her.
Who was that?
Lady Bell.

Q: Lady Bell. Okay.
A: You know, and we just shared our space and we, sometimes, would all sleep like five or six in one place, in one bed, because guests would come and, so, we would have to make room for them. Where were you going to put them? You know, we had no room in the Inn. So, we'd have to like scrunch up in one little place and, then, guests would come for the weekend and we were going to make them comfortable.

Q: Would you eat vegetarian meals?
A: We did. It was not a rule. There is no real dogma about things like that here. The only rules we have are against violence, which, then, translated into not beating your children, committing violence against them. But the only rule Irving had was that no violence. No one's allowed to hit anybody and he was a vegetarian but his son, William, didn't want to be a vegetarian and, so, he ate whatever he pleased and that's pretty much the way it always continued here. People I would say we were about 80% vegetarians, now, and the kids probably more. Some of them are even vegans. They're much more rigid about things in some ways. But he was a vegetarian but, also, we ate whichever was the cheapest food. He would take we would do weekly shopping trips and we would go to the we called the "day-old bread store," which was the "used bread store" is what he called it and we would buy bread for .10 a loaf and sweet buns and we would find bananas that were kind of brown and get those really cheap, tons of those. Those go a long way and peanut butter and jelly. Lots of grains, buckwheat, groats (?), things that had a lot of carbohydrates, rice. For many years, we lived off the wild stuff that grew around here, too, in the summertime. We almost made the milkweed extinct around here eating it.

Q: Did you have gardens, too?
A: We, occasionally, had one big garden we tried but it was difficult to like legislate this bunch of hippies. We were not back to the earth people and most of the people didn't want to work in the garden. They weren't interested in gardening and they didn't know anything about it, either. So, occasionally, somebody who was really into gardening would come along and they would try to grow food. Barbara was a pretty good gardener and she would try to encourage people to do so but you know, we really didn't have any real survival skills.

Q: Because these were a lot of urban like New York City people?
A: Well, no, actually, we didn't have any we only had one man here who came from New York City.

Q: Oh.
A: I was from the Midwest but I grew up on a farm but I wasn't interested in gardening. I never was you know, because I was a kid. No one ever thought to like instruct me on how to grow anything but I guess I don't know. But we had people from cities and, yeah, they were middle class, you know, suburban kids. They didn't know how to do anything and it got to be wintertime. We never even put a piece of plastic over a window or anything. We didn't know what to do. The house wasn't insulated and it was cold.

Q: Oh, man.
A: But, in general, generally, what we did here was we would pack up in November and we would go to Florida, all of us.

Q: Really?
A: In a big caravan. Yeah.

Q: Wow.
A: We have Irving had a cabin in the woods in the Ocala National Forest, which he bought in the '50s, I think. He, somehow, discovered that the let's see if I can remember how that goes. He discovered that the some politicians there had were making available lots, quarter-acre lots on these lakes in the Ocala Forest, National Forest there, to be leased out to people for, I don't know, some pittance, you know, like $10 a year or something like that. So, it was a secret deal. Mostly, it was being used by, you know, good old boy the good old boy network and Irving found about it. So, he leased a lot there and built a little cabin. Once he had his lease, he published this information so that people would know what was happening, which made him very unpopular. He had to hide out from Florida for a year or so after that. He built this little cabin and he was very unpopular there because he was a very strange guy. I mean, that wasn't all that good a beginning right to start out with but, then, suddenly, in 1968, he shows up there with 25 hippies and that made him even more unpopular. They were very I mean, they're even more provincial there than they are here in Vermont. So, the people are just like horrified and, eventually, one summer, someone burned the cabin down. So, then, we had to go got into this big battle with the state down there. Actually, it was with the federal government. They didn't want to issue him another building permit. We went down there and tried to rebuild the cabin and they kept shilly-shallying around about giving him the building permit. Like, they were saying one of them was saying, "Well, we can't do it because of this." And another was saying, "If you don't build the cabin right away, you're going to lose your lease." So, I guess, they thought they could just bully him but that was completely it was just impossible and, so, he sued them in federal court. The Federal Park Service, the Marion County Police Department and somebody else I can't remember who else for conspiracy to deny him his civil rights, which was very popular at the time. It was like 1970 or something. It was a very popular idea then, denying someone their civil rights was very . . .

Q: Yeah.
A: . . . especially conspiracy. That was even better. So, we were that was one of the times Irving wore a suit. When we went to federal court, he got all dressed up. I think he wore a tuxedo, in fact. He and William, both, wore tuxedos. So, we spent that winter camping out in various places down there in tents all winter long, fighting this during this court thing. Eventually, the Forest Service gave up and said, "Okay, okay, here's your building permit." So, then, we built the cabin and on [unintelligible].

Q: And is that's not where Barbara's living is it?
A: Yes.

Q: It is? Oh, okay.
A: Well, she's not living in that cabin. She's living in the one right next door to it, which is years later, we bought another one that was on the lot right next door. We now have three or four cabins on that lake that various people have bought over the years from people who wanted to get rid of them and a lot of people when my oldest kids were young, we used to go down there a lot in the winter but, eventually, I don't know, I got tired of going back and forth and, also, I kind of like it here in winter and the kids started you know, the school became much larger. When we first started the school, say in the late . . . [TAPE 1, SIDE A ENDS] [unintelligible] can tell you much more about that very first group of kids and, so, they their education was done, initially, in a much, much less structured way. There were not like these regular classes that they went to. Well, later on in their education, when they were getting into junior high school, I think we that was when we first started having much more regularized classes but the initial beginning was totally casual and, I guess I felt like, you know, that was the best way to educate them was in a much more less direct way but, as they got more of them, they became a social force of their own as kids and, then, they look around. They say, "This is not the way that you should be educating us," since we teach them that they should tell us what to do. They said, "We don't like the way you're doing this. This is not like they do it in, you know, rock-n-roll high schools, not like this at all and you've got to do it better." So, we tried to structure things in a way that they can relate to better and, so, now we have a much more rigid structure for the school which may or may not be good. But I think they all came out reasonably well-educated. A lot of them have gone to college and graduated and went on about their business or they're doing other things that they're interested in.

Q: Did you have like, in the early years, did you have chores or housework or things that you were expected to do?
A: We tried. We had, oh, yeah, we had well, when we first started before we had any kids, we would have a dinner schedule. People would take turns making dinners and people got wood. The men got the wood. The men shoveled out the outhouse. The men did all the shitty work. I remember once going to this in the early '70s, I went to some gathering up north and the women were very horrified that we had this kind of sexist division of labor and they said, "Don't you get to use the chainsaw?" And I said I have absolutely no interest in using the chainsaw. I mean, I don't want to do any dirty, heavy, hard, dangerous work, you know, we allot all nasty jobs to the men and they just do it. That's, you know otherwise, they get into big trouble but, so, I guess, mostly, the women made dinner but men made

dinner sometimes, too. I remember William making some horrible thing once in a freezing cold kitchen but it was well, see, some of the women didn't do anything either. I mean, it was mostly through people had a certain kind of drive to create organization in a kind of way and, if they wanted us to have food, we had to go shopping and, so, we would take get on the shopping list. Sometimes, I would be the shopper and I would be driving off to do the food shopping in a little car. I would have to buy enough food for 50 people . . .

Q: Right.
A: . . . and put it in this Volkswagen with two other people and, probably, a couple of hitchhikers as well. So, they we had different ways but I was kind of driven to do that job and, eventually, someone else would take over that job and, then I can't really remember how we got dinner made. We made dinner somehow. Somehow, we managed to have dinner and we must have had a list. I do remember that the garden list didn't work because nobody wanted to do that. It didn't seem primary enough to people's survival. It was too far removed from their concept of survival. Dinner's more immediate. You can see that if you don't make it you can't eat it. That's very clear. There wasn't much else to do. I mean, as far as we had to keep the floor clean [unintelligible] people sweep, not make [unintelligible] messes. There was an ironclad rule no one, no one, on pain of instant electrocution was allowed to leave a dirty dish in the sink. Irving said, you know he used to have this sign over the sink, "This is the holy of holies," because that's where we would brush our teeth, also. There's no bathroom. So, he'd have to come in and brush his teeth. The last thing he wanted to look at was garbage in the sink when he brushed his teeth. So, the sink must remain pristine all the time.

Q: That's what the sign said?
A: What? It said, "This is the holy of holies."

Q: Oh, it did say that. Oh.
A: It said, "This is the holy of holies. No dishes in the sink." And there was another sign I remember there was another sign there next to the room. It said one sign that said, "Sweep the floor." And there was another sign that said, "Do not touch my blue broom. Anyone who touches this broom will be instantly electrocuted." And right next to that was another one that said, "Sweep the floor." Sometimes, it was a little confusing. I mean, we understood. You were supposed to sweep the floor but not steal the broom.

Q: Was it Irving's broom?
A: Well, in the sense that he bought everything.

Q: But, I mean, was that his sign about not to touch the blue broom?
A: Yeah, he would put those signs up because people would take the broom. Someone would take the broom out of the house and, then, you couldn't sweep the floor.

Q: Oh, got it.
A: So, that was there that anybody who steals this broom was going to be killed right away but there were rules like that but they're not exactly dogma. Those were kinds of like survival rules that he made and people obeyed those at their own whim.

Q: Did you have meetings?
A: Not really. We were a family. He was our father. We had confrontations. We had dinner together every night. We all ate together, which is, I think, a primary experience for people. This is what really builds community, eating dinner together and we were together every night because we had to that's where food was prepared and the food was put on the table in the living room and everybody would come in and get in a line, get their food, sit around and eat, Irving also, and we would hash over things sometimes and Irving would orchestrate these little psychodramas of his about the way people were interacting with each other. We would also meet up in his cabin. We'd go up there and hang out in his room in cabin. He had a little cabin that had a tiny, little space like an entranceway. It was about half the size of my kitchen and a bedroom that was about 2/3 the size of this room with a low ceiling and that was his room and we would hang out in there. The bed took up the major part of the room and there were a couple of chairs and his desk and his typewriter in his chair and we would all just crunch in there and sit in there and hang out all night and talk and he would tell stories and confront people about the way they were interacting with each other and try to get them to come up with ideas of ways to or he would suggest things for them to do to make things work better and that's what we did all the time.

Q: Was there any drug use?
A: Oh, yeah. It was 1968.

Q: So, a lot of psychedelics and stuff?
A: There were a lot of psychedelics. Not everybody did that.

Q: Yeah.
A: But . . .

Q: Was Irving into it?
A: He was, yes. He was.

Q: So, would you trip together? Is that sort of a group . . .?
A: Not really.

Q: No?
A: Irving was of the Stanisloff-Groff (?) school of psychedelics. I don't know if you're familiar them.

Q: No, I'm not.
A: No. Actually, he never had, actually, heard Stanisloff-Groff but he believed very intensely that I would say Aldus Huxley was his kind of his focus for psychedelics. He believed that psychedelics were an opening door into another state of consciousness and just like that people needed to be guided. He didn't he was completely against kind of free form wild drug taking, which led to chaos and confusion. He thought, if people should take psychedelics, they should do it in a very controlled way. They should have a guide who dealt with them just like they were dying like he would read the Tibetan Book of Dead to someone as they died and, as he died, Alan did read to him from some of these things when he was dying. But that's how he thought it should be done. That people should prepare to trip. They should be thinking that they're going to have a particular kind of experience, that it shouldn't be taken lightly. It was very serious and spiritual and that this was something that should be controlled but he also liked to have a good time, too. Fun having a good time and having fun was the primary reason for being alive from his point of view. So, yeah, there were lots of people I mean, as I say, herds of people came here from all over the world, all over the country and everybody seemed to be taking drugs. That seemed to be the thing that everybody did all the time.

Q: Was there a lot of artistic expression as well?
A: Well, people did do things. I mean, they wrote poetry and they painted and they did drawings and played music but it was much more impulsive and spontaneous. I don't think, except for maybe I think there wasn't much structured production during that time. People were very did spontaneous people did a lot of drawing and things but it was all impulsive and spontaneous without any thought for production. Nobody had like a collection of paintings [unintelligible] or anything like that but, now, I mean, you go see any of these artists now, you can see they have like studios and they have these whole collections of their work. Things were much more chaotic, very unsure of who you were going to be in the next minute. So.

Q: And how long did this communal period last where you lived in a house and ate together because you said, once you had kids, you kind of broke up into households?
A: Well, just until about I would say it lasted maybe five years. Is that right? Well, '68, '69, '70, '71, '72, my baby was born in '73. We were still eating communally when she was a baby. Maybe longer. I mean, it could have been almost ten years. I'm not sure.

Q: But a good part of the '70s, probably.
A: Well, at least the beginning part. I mean, '67, '68, '69, '70, '71. My daughter was born in '73 and I know when she was a baby we were still eating in the house communally and but shortly after that I mean, she was born we had quite a few kids by that time, right up to it was by the time she was born, we had about ten kids seven kids right after she was born. There was a little boy born the following year. So, we had about seven or eight kids right then and they were we'd also built more outside structures a few outside structures for us to live in. They were just like these tiny little cabins we were living in with the kids and, so, they would have their own spaces and they began to want things

individually. They did not want to everything the same way. They didn't want to eat the same thing. So, it became more complicated. [TELEPHONE RINGS]

Q: I think you said the kids were eating what they wanted?
A: They wanted to do things differently. I mean, it just was more difficult to do everything in this uniform way when you have all these individualistic kids and were trying to raise them to do to be self-directed and, so, I would say, by the time we'd gotten started doing the school; we were sort of like losing the communal meal thing.

Q: When did the school start?
A: It was like 1978. I think that's right. That sounds about right. Officially, that would be when it was started but there was still it was completely home study those first years. We just did people taught their kids at home individually and we didn't have any real structure. A few and it slowly grew into one person saying, "Well, I'll teach these two kids and these two also and I'll do this one thing with all of them." I mean, that's how it sort of grew that way. Also, we probably still continued to have communal meals but more and more people began not participating. I would say that's possible. I can't remember too clearly, but, also, we had this old house and I'm not really good with my memory's not that great but, eventually, the house became too dangerous to use and we had to close the house down. Now, that changed things, not having that center. Then, we started building this big house up here. It took us years to build that. Forever to build that. We started out with the basement, which just a basement and it was just two rooms with a roof. We used one of those for a school room. That was one of the first things we used it for and, then, the other side was like a garage for fixing cars and, eventually, we got a building built up on top of it but it took probably ten years to do all that. So, for all that time, we didn't have a real center and people were still coming and moving in here and living here. So, their whole concept of the community is different and the only real central place that we had to continue meeting was at Irving's cabin, which we did do. [Unintelligible].

Q: When did he die?
A: 1990?

Q: Oh, so about five years ago?
A: 1990. Yeah, I guess.

Q: Did the group have any sort of central ideology or religion or spirituality?
A: No. No, not at all. Very diverse group of people.

Q: How about Irving and his family? Did they follow any sort of teachings?
A: Well, Irving no, not at all. Irving was interested in all religions and he knew a lot about the eastern religions and he used to talk a lot about Hinduism and Buddhism and Daoism and Confucius but he could also quote from the Bible and knew a lot about religious thought. I think he was probably mostly partial to Buddhism but certainly didn't follow any kind of ritual or regime. He didn't care for that at all.

Q: So, the community had not rituals? Would you celebrate any of the holidays or . . .?
A: Yeah, we celebrated the 4th of July because everybody would come up here from the city. We celebrated Labor Day for the same reason and Memorial Day for the same reason because these were like long weekends when all these people would always come here. We celebrated eventually, when we had lots of kids, we started celebrating Christmas because they all discovered Christmas but we never, you know. Mostly, we just kind of got sucked into the same usual holidays that other people have because that was when we were available to celebrate.

Q: But no pagan celebrations like equinoxes or solstices or anything?
A: Last a month or so ago, we had a bunch this shaman came up here and they had some kind of pagan thing over there at Madge (?) [Unintelligible] a fire over here, you know, but not normally, no.

Q: Did the group have any sort of common vision or any articulated goals or [unintelligible]?
A: Self-exploration.

Q: Self-exploration?
A: I think so. That's what we spent most of our time doing. So, I guess that was the goal.

Q: But there was there any talk about trying to save the world or create a new model of living or anything like that?
A: No.

Q: Did you try and live lightly on the earth in the way that you were living? But, just because you didn't have much money, you had to live pretty cheaply?
A: Yeah, we were pretty light on the earth. We were just we dug you know, we ate milkweed and our day lily roots and buckwheat groats and we cut trees for firewood or bought seconds from the [unintelligible] mill that they would deliver here on a day-to-day basis for firewood but, no, we didn't, you know I mean, not initially. I mean, later on, people began to more conscious of pollution. We have our recycling center here, [unintelligible] and people are interested in these things. You saw how many cars we have. [Unintelligible]. We had one car; I mean, initially, one car. I didn't even have a driver's license for about the first ten years that I lived here. Well, at first when I first came here I had one but I soon lost it because it just expired and I never renewed it because I never had an opportunity to drive. So, I didn't need it.

Q: Wow. What have your relations with your neighbors been like?
A: Well, you saw you didn't see many did you when you came in here? We don't have very many neighbors. We have some . . .

Q: Well, when I was driving up Quarry Road, there are some houses along the way.
A: Down there, along that road, but they're so far away from here they're hardly neighbors. We have we know some people locally. Well, Lady Bell and William grew up here. So, they knew some younger

people here who they know still. I know pretty much most of the a lot of the local people in town. Now, I would say about 15% of them are completely accepting of us and the rest of them are wary to hostile still.

Q: And was that true in the beginning, too?
A: Oh, it was even more so then. It was probably only like 1% of them were accepting and the rest of them were more like and maybe 10% of them were wary and the other 90% were hostile. They were sure that we were just like this must be the sign of the antichrist here. They had tried to drive Irving off before because he was Jewish, probably. I mean, that was his interpretation because they also were hostile toward these Jewish people who lived down the road. But, after we were here, they once a group of people once drove by and shot out the windows. That was in like the early '70s, mid-70s, a truckload of lunatics shot out the window of the house. We would have, at night, occasional drunks driving by and yelling and, if they were really drunk and really brave, they would drive all the way up the driveway but never any besides that, I mean, there were a couple of times when there was some kind of rough confrontations. But, in general, it was just this kind of icy horror of us when we would be in town. But, I have to admit, we didn't make any attempt at all to like moderate our behavior to the sensibilities of the local people but I must say, they didn't either. I thought they behaved kind of appallingly also and none of them it never even occurred to them that they should change the way they behaved so that I wouldn't be offended. So.

Q: Yeah.
A: We didn't, no, and we were notorious and we probably still are even though there has been nothing ever happened. I'm sure they all thought that something would, eventually.

Q: What were attitudes like here toward sexuality?
A: Well, I'm not sure what you mean?

Q: Well, did people live in like monogamous couples or was there more experimentation?
A: Well, there was a lot of experimentation but, yeah, everything. Both. People who came here a lot of people came here married and broke up their marriages and, then, found other partners or experimented with various people and, then, settled on something else. There was a lot of different kinds of experimentation. That was the main thing I was what I was talking about when I said that Irving was focused on people's human interactions, the way they treated each other, the way they related, the way they saw each other, kind of jealousies that drive people and their feelings of inadequacy and desire for things that they don't have or people that don't have what they imagine they need. So, he tried to get people to confront these things, not just like quietly by themselves but like right in a human psychodrama where you say what you felt to other people and they would say what they felt to you. It was like a huge encounter session that lasted for about five years.

Q: Wow.
A: So, different kinds of relationships came and went and there are a lot of people here who were like married or semi-married and have children and are no longer together. So, there are a lot of like what you would call, in a normal situation, broken homes but, in this case, the homes are only just broken like this. There is like one person here and one person there and the kids live kind of within the community and they can choose where they want to live and they move back and forth. Most of the relationships, though not all, are amiably relationships, very friendly.

Q: Was there acceptance of homosexuality?
A: Not as much as there could have been. Irving was kind of a homophobe, I would say. He was [unintelligible]. I mean, he came from an era where he I don't know he had some phobia about it. But, in any case but not no, I mean, he, basically, accepted it verbally. I think he I would say this is my impression of him but he never there was no like rules about it. No one certainly said you can't have a homosexual relationship and there have been homosexual people who came and went through here. The unfortunate part of our situation was our isolation. I mean, this was the advantage and our desire but, also, it kept us separated from the general society which was more than was probably good for some of the kids would have wanted something a little more but yeah, no, there was no prohibitions about anything except violence.
Q: And leaving dirty dishes in the sink, right.
A: And leaving dirty dishes in the sink.

Q: And touching the blue broom.
A: Well, that was like removing the source of the cleaning of the floor was . . .

Q: Right. Got it.
A: . . . or anything else. I mean, something that was necessary for functioning here should not be taken outside and left on the ground.

Q: And did everybody take the prohibition against violence seriously?
A: Yeah, I don't think anybody really wanted to be violent. So, I mean, there was no if someone came here and they were just like had a, you know, they were a psychopath, we would have found some way to get rid of them.

Q: Sure.
A: But nobody really wanted to be violent. So, yeah, they eventually, later on, when a lot of these relationships kind of like built up and people had these very powerful personal relationships with other people, sometimes things got very volatile. So, that was when it became much more necessary and I think it may have actually had a fine, a $5.00 fine, if you hit somebody. Generally, the person that was being hit was somebody who had a personal relationship and there would be a fight and there would be a somebody would get punched and, then, you'd say, "Okay, you have to pay $5.00 because, you know, nobody likes this. We cannot do this." So. And, then, we still have that. There's still a $5.00 fine.

There's not much hitting that goes on these days but that's probably we can still call upon that if we wanted to.

Q: And the kids know all about this?
A: We kind of brought this up a few years ago when there was some of the boys were fighting a lot. I said, well, you know, we have you know, we do have a $5.00 fine here? And they said, no, they didn't know that and I said well, you know, I mean, so, who's talking. It's not written down anywhere. There's no like list of rules. I mean, the dishes in the sink, none of this is written down anywhere. So, there hadn't been any hitting. There was no reason to bring it up. So, some of these kids had lived all their lives and never even heard this. This is a pretty non-violent place.

Q: Yeah, that's good.
A: Yeah. This is not a kind of place where people do violent things.

Q: So, can you tell me a little bit, about what's different now compared to the way things were when you came here?
A: Everything. Everything.

Q: Yeah, it sounds like things are pretty different.
A: Everything. Well, the whole world's different.

Q: Yeah. But what, for example, what do people do who live here? How do they make their livings?
A: Well, let's see, I can start there's William, Irving's son, who never went to school, he got a Masters from UBM in Computer Science and, then, he went to New York and worked for IBM for he just left there, finally. He got sick of living in New York and he has his own computer programming business which he hires people from a couple of the men here who taught themselves computer programming work for him. In Rochester, they have this business and they do computer programming [unintelligible]. They built some kind of program that types within the line which they I don't know they write programs for strange things for people that, you know, that then they have to orchestrate. So, there's we have an attorney. He's the he actually he's now he's also this is strangely enough; he's now the town's attorney also. That was always curious for me. Like I say, one of the men is like a financial consultant. He does all the books for the community. The German [unintelligible], he's the man who lives over here. He's a nurse in the emergency room over in Millbury (?). We have a number of people who are artists. One woman who runs the Artist Guild in town and she's an artist. She does [unintelligible]. We have a few people who teach. I teach here in the school.

Q: And, then, do the parents who have kids in the school pay to send their kids there?
A: Not really. We just we have a grant to run the school from the Green Mountain, whatchamacallit Educational, or whatever it is.

Q: Educational Trust I think?
A: It's so long I can never remember what it's called.

Q: Green Mountain Educational and Cultural Trust.
A: Yes, that's quite a mouthful. We call it GMEC.

Q: And is that actually kind of a subset of this community?
A: No, it's an educational corporation. I mean, it's whole purpose is to direct monies to educational purposes, one of which is the school and one the other is the Free the Kids newsletter.

Q: Right. But it's all within this community?
A: Oh, yeah, yeah.

Q: Yeah, that's what I was wondering.
A: Absolutely. Yeah, yeah.

Q: Yeah, it's not people outside of Quarry Hill Community, yeah.
A: No, not at all.

Q: Okay.
A: There are a few a people who are independently wealthy from inheritance. There are God, [unintelligible] over there there's a woman who works for one of the woman works as a she's a secretary for Peter in his law office. There's a man who has a sign business. He started out carving wooden signs and now he does like these big plastic molded things. There's a man who works here as a he's a bike mechanic. People who just get like all kinds of odd jobs who work this kind and that kind. They'll just do like regular minimum wage jobs wherever they can get work. There are people there's a guy who's an electrical engineer. There's you know, it's very diverse.

Q: Yeah.
A: There's a woman who runs a business. She sells like gift kind of items. She has like kiosks and malls (?) from all over the place and she hires people to do work for her during the Christmas season and there's another woman. She just had a baby, so she's not she's just taking care of the baby but she's a psychologist. She was working as a, you know, and there's a couple of people there's another man who works as a . . . [TELEPHONE RINGS] If you come back another time, she will talk to you.

Q: Oh, that'd be great because I may make another New England trip. That would be wonderful. So, there's all these people here doing all these different things. Do you do stuff together?
A: Yeah. I mean, there are this group of [unintelligible] people who work the school and we do that every day, five days a week, you know, generally that much. We have regular meetings for various things. We have school meetings which are focused on the kids in the school. We have general meetings which are focused on the entire community and, then, within those, when we have those

meetings sometimes they're over issues that people are very upset about and there's some kind of, you know, like commotion to be discussed. Sometimes they're just like the regular structural organizational type meetings and which point we all the things that need to be taken care of we don't do this very often, so this is a lot and, then, we break up into like committees. People volunteer to be on this committee or that committee and, then, they get together and they try to make something happen. Like, last year, I was on the farmhouse committee and, so, there were five or six of us and, so, we walked around the farmhouse, this building which we call the farmhouse, and looked at it and said this is what we have to do to make it look better. We have to fix this. We want to repair that. We want to finish this room, do this, do that and we all took a different thing and, then, we tried to get this to happen. I would say about 2/3 of that stuff got done over the year over the winter. So.

Q: Do you eat together or do you have potlucks?
A: We have potlucks sometimes. We have lots of birthday parties. When the kids have a birthday party, everybody comes. We have other parties, occasionally, people's other people's birthdays.

Q: Since Irving has died, has anyone else assumed a leadership role?
A: Not like that because it wasn't like a kind of thing that he assumed. It was like there he was and it's sort of like a magnet doesn't like decide to be the way it is. It just is that way.

Q: Right. Okay.
A: He did what he wanted with his life. He did what he wanted to do. He didn't do this because it put him in a certain position or because he wanted to be in that kind of position. He just lived his life the way he wanted to live it and that included a lot of interaction with other human beings, us in particular.

Q: Yeah.
A: But it wasn't something that he consciously planned and, so, nobody else could really do that. Everyone else is just living their own lives, too, the way they want.

Q: Yeah. Has the character of the community changed without him around?
A: Oh, absolutely. It's not nearly as much fun.

Q: Really?
A: Yeah.

Q: Wow.
A: He made life so much more fun. It was so entertaining. He was such a wonderful person and it was so much fun to listen to him and to talk to him. If there were real if you had really intimate problems, you could go and talk to him about them and he always had some really bizarre suggestion and it's difficult, especially for some of us who are older. Aging here is not so easy without him around. I mean, he was a great example of how to go on living your own dreams, not to say, oh, now I'm 40, I've got to become a productive member of society. He'd say, "Well. . .

Q: Yeah.
A: . . . keep living the way you want to live."It's not a mistake to live the way you want. So. So, for some of us, it's a little more difficult in that sense because there's always doubts [unintelligible], you know, I mean, I don't think I, particularly, have too many but some people do have doubts. Well, maybe I could have had a different kind of life become an astrophysicist or something, you know, in the astronaut program. I don't know. So. But it's not as much fun.

Q: Do you see yourself staying here? Growing old here?
A: Sometimes. I don't really think about that too much. I mean, the only time I really think about it is when someone else is talking about it.

Q: Yeah.
A: I mean, I have one old friend who will say, "What are we going to do?" His grandmother had just been put in a nursing home. She's like 110 or something.

Q: Oh, my God.
A: And he'd say, "What are we going to do when we're 110?" I said, I'm still thinking about what I'm going to do when I'm 55. I don't know if I'm going to live to be 110 and, you know, I'll take care of you when you're 110. Don't worry about it. It just but, so, then, sometimes I think about, you know. How will we get along? What will we do?

Q: Do you have older members right now like who are in their 80s, 90s, anything like that?
A: No. Just Barbara. She's in her 70s.

Q: Okay. And does she come up here in the summertime?
A: She comes here in the summer and leaves in, usually, November, the beginning of November.

Q: So, you're like the oldest member?
A: I, at this point, except for Barbara, am the oldest member?

Q: Wow. Yeah.
A: Alan is a few months younger than I am.

Q: For some reason, I had this impression that there were a lot of older people here?
A: Well, the rest of them the majority of the people are in their mid to late 40s and, then, there's another group in their late 30s and, then, there's another group in their 20s. We have like I mean, there's a bunch of people who there's a bunch of young people in their 20s who either live here or come here who are attracted both by the community and by our older children.

Q: What is your membership policy like? Like, if I wanted to join, what would I have to go through? There needs to be a space available, I assume?
A: We would say, okay, well, you know, we would take you around and show you what the place looked like and say, you know, like this is what we have for you to live in. Can you deal with this? This is our main problem right now is housing. We don't have room. We now have bathrooms, which is nice. It's, actually, wonderful, but . . .

Q: When did you get flush toilets?
A: Oh.

Q: Is it recently?
A: Five years ago.

Q: Oh, okay. Actually, 1990.
A: Just before Irving died.

Q: You would use outhouses?
A: Yeah, outhouses.

Q: Did you have showers and hot water and stuff?
A: Yes. We had water and we had a pump. We just didn't have a sewage system and we didn't even have that for a long time. I mean, it wasn't I can't remember when we first when we got the pump. Let's see. Maybe like I had paid for [unintelligible]. So, that must have been like around 1975 that we got the pump. I would say it was somewhere around 1975 we got the pump. Before that we had had a pump that we tried pumping water up from the brook but that really didn't provide very much water. That provided water to the farmhouse and we put a shower in the farmhouse, then. That was like in the early '70s. I remember that. Then, we put in a real pump where we drilled down and, then, we had water lines ran from that pump to the farmhouse and to the houses that were nearest to the farmhouse. So, at that point, we began to we had running water in a lot of the near the houses that were right around the central area here.

Q: How did you bathe in the early days?
A: We had in the first days, when it was warm, we would bathe in the brook. We also used to bathe in the pond but that soon like screwed up the pond but we also had a huge bathtub, which we had a big iron bathtub, which sat right out here under the trees behind the farmhouse and we would fill that with the water and bathe in there and, when it was cold, at night or in the wintertime, we'd bathe like in like a big galvanized bucket in the farmhouse in the living room by the stove where it was warm. Just bring buckets of water in there into the [unintelligible]. But, in the summertime, when it was warm, usually in the brook. We would bathe in the brook. [Unintelligible].

Q: So, life was pretty rustic.
A: Very rustic.

Q: Yeah.
A: I mean, for a bunch of, you know, middle class, suburban kids, it was very different.

Q: Was it exciting? I mean, did you view it [unintelligible]?
A: Oh, absolutely. It was like heaven. It was completely heaven. I mean, even when there were icicles hanging in the kitchen, it was okay. There was something I mean, because the whole point of being alive here was that examination of self which is not your body or your mind. That was the whole drive. So, that was something we were busy with all the time and that wasn't rustic. That was something that was very, very intensely ordered.

Q: And it was nice to have that balance, then, between that self-exploration and the rusticness?
A: Well, I think we could have probably done well with a little less rusticness but, you know, that's just the way it was. In Florida, there was not even any electricity. We just had kerosene lamps and, then, when the cabin burnt, in the winter we lived down there in tents and we lived in the woods in tents and they cooked outside the whole winter long.

Q: Wow.
A: This was a group of 25 or 30 people and our main attraction was to each other, not to the external world and we, you know, we were intensely committed to this kind of self-exploration and that was the main thing, but, you can see, of every stranger who'd come here, it was great. One of the reasons we have this thing, everything to the newcomer was because a strange person coming into this very volatile and rustic environment would find it a little rough going unless there was a lot of special considerations given and they were always treated very kindly, given lots of attention, kind of guided and shepherded through because we were always wanting new people to come in. We were always looking for new people. We spent a lot of time wandering around the streets looking for new people. When we were in Florida, we were always looking for new people. I mean, it was easier to walk around and look there because it was warm but, obviously, you weren't looking in the streets of Rochester for new people. But we did find Peter here but not in Rochester but he's the attorney he was he's from New Zealand and he had just graduated from law school and he was making a tour and he was wandering around the United States I guess this must have been like 1973 or yeah, '73 and he was looking for wanted to see some American communities and he was in Vermont and he ran into somebody and he can here and never left.

Q: Wow. That's great. Do you still seek new people?
A: Yes, if we could find more new people. We would be much better at it if we had places to put them.

Q: Yeah.
A: We talk about that and we've had several meetings and discussed how to make it possible. Right now, the main thing that we can do we get Antioch (?) students who come here and help us with the school sometimes, which brings young like teens into this kind of situation. We just prefer our teenagers. It's difficult. There are not a lot of people out wandering the world now looking for communities.

Q: Are you listed in the Directory of Intentional Communities?
A: We are. We are.

Q: I would think that would bring people here.
A: Yes, well, that's not so wonderful as you might think.

Q: Oh, really. Oh, dear.
A: We have talked about removing ourselves from that but it was too late. It had already been published. I don't know. It just that didn't pan out that well. I mean, we get a lot of people are looking for some kind of specific spiritual gratification and some of them want to be told what to do, some of them want I mean, it's not so bad as it was five, ten years ago but people would come then like in the mid '80s, people would come here and they'd look around and say, "Wow, you're doing this all wrong," you know.

Q: Oh.
A: "This should be done this way," you know. "There's nothing utopic about this." You know, my response is always, you know, like, oh, go to hell, you know. Who cares about that? But that was they're looking for they wanted some kind of structure. Things are different because '60s people [unintelligible] freedom.

Q: Yeah.
A: In the '80s, they wanted to be taken care of and, you know, it just wasn't as heavenly here as the people thought it should be. I don't know. It just [unintelligible].

Q: [unintelligible].
A: We aren't an intentional community for one thing. Most of the communities in there are intentional communities. They were created with a purpose. They seek members who have a certain point of view. They want they know I mean, it's very homogenous what they're trying to create and this was a very unintentional community. We happened almost by accident.

Q: Yeah. What has been the glue that's kept it together for almost 50 years?
A: I have no idea.

Q: Irving?
A: He's not here.

Q: Yeah, but, I mean, he was here until 1990.
A: I don't know. Nobody knows. I mean, even when he was here, people we had a couple different people who came here and attempted to do studies of the community and commitment here, trying to figure out what connected everybody. We don't really know. My feeling is that it's the freedom that people have here to be themselves, who don't have to feel like they're not making it somehow. The only rigid rules we have are about violence which extended to the children. But, like all rules, when you extend it to something, it becomes expanded.

Q: . . . would go to Twin Oaks on your way to Florida?
A: Yeah, it's in Virginia. So, it's like halfway between here and Ocala and we would stop there. I don't remember how we met them first but we would stop there, sometimes, and spend the night on the way down because we would travel like non-stop or sometimes it would take four or five days of non-stop driving at the speed we would go, four or five cars but, once I spent about a week there. They had a completely different view about the way children should be raised there. It's very interesting. I think I mentioned this to Tim because I was would be very interested to know about to talk to some of the kids who were raised there about how they felt about the way they were about this. I mean, those kids were happy. There was no doubt about that but they had this very strange arrangement where they put all the kids in one house. They had a kid house and that's where we would stay when we would go there because we had kids with us. I mean, there was no forcible like separation. It wasn't like, if you went there and you had a kid, your kid had to be like locked in a separate or anything but, I mean, they were not lunatics. They were just they just had this idea that kids should live separate from their parents. I don't know where they got this idea. I have no idea how this came up. They had a very different kind of thing because it was kind serendipitous just as they were forming the community, the patents on those hammocks went out and one of them picked up the patent. So, they had a readymade like piece-work assembly line business for all these hippies to do to make money. So, that was good for them. That kept them that gave them some structure but it also helped form their community at work structure, the worked hours that they had to put in. So, they had a lot of rules there.

Q: So, would they welcome you to . . .?
A: Oh, yeah, they were very friendly. I mean, yeah, they didn't feel like we were like a cancer or something that was going to come in and pollute their I mean, they weren't that uptight about their structure. They insisted that people do work and do things and we kind of like envied their ability to get people to do things because we were completely inept at it. We couldn't get anybody to do anything, especially ourselves. I mean, it was just like but, at the same time, we weren't interested in having such a rigid structure. We could see that the whole reason that we couldn't get anybody to do anything was because we just weren't willing to do that.

Q: Were they using behaviorism at that point and still following B.F. Skinner? I mean, that was their original idea.
A: They talked about oh, is that where it came from?

Q: Uh-huh.
A: They talked about B.F. Skinner. I think I actually once, when I was there, I think I read Walden when I was there, Walden II while I was there.

Q: Walden II.
A: I remember that now. Yeah, I did.

Q: What did you think of Walden II and B.F. Skinner?
A: I barely remember it. I thought it was kind of strange.

Q: Oh, okay.
A: It was almost like science fiction. It was science fiction. Fantasy. Living in a community with people, I could see the reality of human relationships in a community. So, it didn't make too much sense to me.

Q: Yes.
A: But their thing was very interesting. They made that kid house a wonderland. I mean, I remember this one kid had this bed. It was like all built in and it was like a little cubbyhole you could get in. It was kind of like an had an opening like this. It was cut in this shape it was in like a shape of something, like a fish or a boat or like a Viking ship or something. It was so neat. The whole place was fantastic and they had they didn't live there by themselves. They had adults lived in that house, too. They had people who cared for the kids in the house who wanted to take care of kids and some of them were those kids' parents were living there. But they were the ones who wanted to take care of the children and that was their job in the community and, so, they took care of all the kids and they played with the kids. They made the kids have fun. They did things with them.

Q: Did your kids come with you on these trips?
A: Well, the time that I stayed there long enough to spend there, yeah, my daughter was with me.

Q: And what did she think of it? Did she have a good time?
A: Yeah, she had fun. I mean, she just ran around and played. I mean, she didn't have she was too little to have any sense that this was, you know, that there was anything different about this place. It was just a neat place, a kid's house. It was a big house. They ate by themselves. We didn't think you know, I didn't think it was such a great thing. I guess, somehow, I thought they should have more choice in the matter but that's why I would be really interested to talk to some of those kids to see how they felt about it now. Anyway. So. See, we one thing I didn't tell you about. When we started having kids here, my daughter I guess it was around 1975 because I think my daughter was probably around two years old. Yeah. And the first thing that happened when we started having kids is that we discovered it's a lot

of work to have children and we had this philosophy that the kids should have whatever they wanted. Children shouldn't be just left to cry and suffer and they shouldn't be abused in any way. We considered that abuse. So, that added a lot of pressure to the job of taking care of children also. And, most of the people didn't want to have anything to do with these kids. I mean, they just would say, "I don't know anything about babies," you know. I didn't know anything about babies, either.

Q: Yeah.
A: But I had one. So, I had to take care of her and, I mean, I loved taking care of her. It was like being in a whole new world. I mean, I felt like my life my life was changed completely by this child being born. I just became like a child myself in some ways. I just played with her all day and all night. It was all I did was play with her and it was like a yoga in a way just like kind of letting your ego go and just focus your attention on this child. So, anyway, there was this small group of kids people who were industrious and did a lot of the work and some of them began helping with the kids. They had this drive to play with the children, probably sort of like the ones who at Twin Oaks did the work there but, so, but then it began to be a little bit intense because the ones who really wanted to help with the kids ended up everybody wanted them help me, help me, help me, help me. Pretty soon, we had seven or eight kids and it was just like too much. So, one woman, who doesn't live here anymore. She said, "This is ridiculous. Anybody can take care of a child." And, you know, a whole bunch of us, especially the men, said, "Oh, no, no, that's not true. That's not true." And, then, she said, "It is true. You just need to do it and you do it, you get better at it. Nobody just knows how to do it automatically. It's just something you work at. It's not like learning to play the violin or something. Anybody can do this." So, she insisted and we discussed that and we signed this childcare sharing plan. It was called the Kid's List and what we would do was each week someone that was someone else's job. They would go around with the Kid List and get people to sign up on it and that was obligatory. Everyone had to sign the Kid List. You had to help with the kids and the driving force behind that was the women, the mothers. They said, you know, they would come after you and just harass you if you refused to participate. It was just like psychological abuse if you didn't agree. So, most everybody did. Some people complained about it but they did it anyway. So. They would I can't remember how we it was some mathematical way of dividing up. You would say like we had to divide it up so each mother had help with the child four hours in the morning and four hours in the evening. So, it was like an eight hour thing.

Q: Is that right?
A: It sounds right and, so, from I can't remember what the hours were but it was like I think it was in two blocks of four hours. So, a person would be on with a kid for four hours and depending we'd divide up the number of time blocks amongst the number of people, including the mothers. They would be in the pot, too. Everybody's name would go in the pot. We'd say, okay, that means everybody has to do this many four hour blocks of time and, then, everybody would just sign that many blocks of time and sometimes people you know, as kids got older, they would sign up to be on someone else's kid, play with someone else's child so that their child would have more attention from other people and they would have more space away from their kid, too, [unintelligible] fresh. Anyway, so, that's how we did it and everyone had an equal share. The mothers and the single people. Everybody shared the number I

think that's the way it was. I can't remember but I think that that's how it was. Like, if it turned out that you had to do four four hour blocks a week, that's what you signed up for and that's not very much. That's like that's not even every day.

Q: Yeah.
A: So. And that's how we developed this child rearing system and a lot of the men all the men had to do it, too. So, they participated very intensely in the rearing of all the children. There were a lot of men present in their lives from the very beginning and I think this is very important. If you examine some of the societies where there's very low instance of violence, two things stand out: the lack of militarism and the presence of men in the child rearing systems. So, our kids are pretty non-violent and it isn't because they're threatened or forced or penalized. They do fight. We do attack each other, little boys especially, who punch each other occasionally and there are a couple of little girls who are very fierce, too, one in particular. She was going to go to visit with a friend of hers from public school and I was really terrified that some kid will offend her and she'd punch him, you know.

Q: Oh, gosh.
A: It's just she's extremely fierce. So, I mean, she grew up with an older brother who's kind of rowdy. So. But, in any case, in general, they don't fight. We don't have this they don't have they yell at each other. Occasional kids had a psychological difficulty for some part of their young life and was kind of loud and rough but there's been very, very little violence and almost I mean, it's almost amazing how non-violent we all are, considering the fact that they're all kind of like siblings, too.

Q: Yeah. That's great.
A: So, that was very important and we held that Kid List. We still had the Kid List when my son was born. It was 1978 and, then I don't know how long we had that Kid List. It began to kind of fade away. As the main core of people the first group that first group of 25 people we were kind of like a core as our kids got older and were no longer in need of this kind of child care, we began to withdraw from that. I moved from doing that into the school. I started putting my time into the school, instead. Like, in 1980, I was teaching in the school. So, I wasn't helping with the young kids so much. I had my own son, of course, but I things had changed and I'm not I can't remember exactly how it all came down then, but that did change.

Q: So, now, parents have responsibility for their own kids? There's no sharing?
A: Well, there's not any real sharing like that. Just recently we had two kids have just been born this year two babies and there's another woman who's pregnant. She's going to have a baby next summer and they intend to form some kind of child share group because most of them some of them, like a couple of them, were present from the earlier group and participated in the earlier child sharing group and, so, they would like to try to do something like that again when these younger kids are born. The driving force behind that was the women wanting this to be this way and, also, the philosophy that women couldn't a woman could not raise a child properly without help.

Q: Yeah.
A: And it was just too much for them to be expected to that and the kids needed so much attention. They really needs lots of attention and the only way to provide that and to treat them the way they deserve was to do something where they got lots of attention. So, I guess when that force kind of abated, then, we lost the Kid List.

Q: Have kids here been born by home birth?
A: Both of my children were born here in this house. Well, actually, my son was born in this house. My daughter was in a different house.

Q: With a midwife?
A: My son was born and there were two midwives here. My daughter, there was nobody here.

Q: Wow.
A: She was just born here. That was kind of silly but, you know, that was I we were very ignorant. We were very ignorant and I there were no birthing rooms in hospitals, then.

Q: Yeah.
A: I was horrified of the idea I might one of my another woman had just had a boy a few months before my daughter over in the hospital in Millbury and had not had a very wonderful experience there. I was not looking forward to it and I had been reading a lot of books and I read this book I don't remember what it was called and the very last part of it . . .

Q: Spiritual midwifery?
A: No, no, this . . .

Q: No.
A: . . . was way before that.

Q: Something else. Oh, okay.
A: It was just some other silly book but it was at the very end, it had this little like epilogue thing sort of that said like "emergency childbirth" and, so, I thought it said, if you are out in the woods and you go into labor, you're all by yourself, you should sit down, lean back against a tree, I mean, and it was like a page and a half and I said, this whole book telling you how to have a baby and, then, here they tell you this is all you really all you really have to do if you can't do anything else this is just the baby just happens. So, I thought, well, this is ridiculous. Why should I go through all this torture in this hospital if that's all there is to it. So, I just quietly decided I wasn't going to go there and I didn't but and some of my the people here delivered the baby but we were lucky. We were all very silly in some ways but we had a lot of fun.

Q: So, it was your first baby that you did without the midwives?
A: Yes.

Q: And the second baby you had two midwives?
A: The second baby I saw a midwife and she came here and they both came here and delivered the baby here.

Q: Have a lot of the kids here been born at home with midwives?
A: A few. Oh, let's see, maybe not that many. I guess Adam (?) was born here. Who else was born at home? Not too many.

Q: What do you thing about the home birth experience?
A: Well, it was fine for me, I mean, because nothing went wrong but I've been present at the births and now that they have birthing rooms. The birthing rooms are wonderful. They're so comfortable. They're so luxurious. You have all these, you know, like comforts and luxuries and you have all these people taking care of you. If anything goes wrong, you have all this stuff to help you and I would never recommend anybody just did it at their house when they could go somewhere like that. Of course, you have to go there while you're in labor which isn't so wonderful but . . .

Q: A number of the women I've talked to have described home birth as a real sort of empowering feeling and that it brought their community close together. Did you have any experience like that?
A: No. If you think do you have any children?

Q: No, I don't.
A: Oh, okay. Giving birth is a very personal experience. It doesn't have anything to do with anybody else at all. I mean, you are so you and that baby there's like nothing else going on in the world when you're actually giving birth. You can't possibly be like conveying things to other people at the same time unless you're like I don't know. It doesn't seem likely to me. It's the most self-centered thing that you could possibly be doing because everything's your whole body is involved. It's like completely physical. It's very powerful, very personally uplifting. I think it's like a tremendously wonderful experience but I don't know I think that the births the women have had that I've helped a lot of women have I've participated as like a, you know, partners with a lot of women who had babies in birthing rooms. I don't know, maybe a dozen since my children were born and the ones that went really well were very empowering for everybody. The ones where they had difficulty were very stressful for everybody. People I'm connected to some of those children very powerfully but I'm also connected very powerfully to some children who's births I wasn't present at. I think that your connection to kids is more bonded through just like through your connection to adults. You have some chemical or psychic connection when you meet somebody. Wow, I like this person and the same way with kids. So. I think it was kind of scary for the community in fact. I mean women may find this all very smooth and wonderful but a lot of people are terrified by the idea that women are having babies right there in the community and that something could go wrong and that was the sense I got from it. I don't know that that was any there

were a lot of people here. When I gave birth to my son, there was like tons of people in the house. People were wandering in and out of the house. That was kind of a drag. Finally, one of the men here I had deputized him to be the doorman. I said, if things get really crazy, I'm not going to be able to deal with this. I just want you just to throw people out and tell them they can't come in here. That's it.

Q: At one point, he finally said . . .
A: "Enough."

Q: Yeah.
A: "Get out."

Q: Yeah, yeah.
A: "Don't come in here. Stay out." And that was because I had anticipated that.

Q: Yeah.
A: That they would be insensitive to what was happening. So. With my daughter, we kind of did it in secret. There was just five or six people there and they all helped deliver her and they didn't know what they were doing either. They were completely terrified. I don't think any of them would consider it empowering. They would probably consider it the most terrifying experience of their lives. They were happy that everything went okay but [unintelligible]. But, yeah, it was better than people have weird, mixed reactions to birth, also. It's not a it's a very powerful time, very traumatic for some people. Most of the women now that I talk to prefer not to have a baby by such a circus.

Q: I'm sure that's true. I can understand that. Yeah. This is as a wrap-up question. This may seem like kind of a simplistic question but I'll ask it anyway. Would you describe this community as successful?
A: Well, yes, because well, as I've said, we're not an intentional community. It's sort of like, if you like, if you were on a big ship and it was sinking and you found yourself on a lifeboat with a bunch of strangers you didn't know and you just sailed forever on that boat, as long as you were still on the boat and you were living, you would probably consider yourself pretty successful. You don't really know how you're going to end up or how it's all going to happen but it's unintentionally, you've become a community and the society we are living in is definitely a sinking ship. We don't have we didn't get together and say let's build a new ship. We just all ended up on this one and we're still going. We're still going. We don't really know what the end result will be. We don't have a goal that we're trying to reach. We do small things to try to change society. We focus mostly on kids, you know, changing the way people treat children, which I feel is the real thing wrong with the world and but that's not the primary preoccupation of everybody at this community. I mean, this is something that we some of us are very committed to but we don't spend all of our waking moments thinking about it and trying to do things and some people think about it very little at all. Like I said, I try to describe all the kind of jobs that people have. People have individual lives now, which are [unintelligible] separate from this community. So. [TELEPHONE RINGS] So.

Q: Is that it?
A: Yeah. I don't you know, it's hard to say you're not as I said, you know, I think that's as clear as I can that analogy is about as clear as I can be.

Q: And you feel good about your time here 30 years here?
A: Yeah.

Q: Yeah.
A: Yeah.

Q: It seems like it.
A: Yeah. I've had a very interesting life here. Like I said, I don't have a goal we don't have a goal. So, I can't say whether we're getting close or not because we don't know where we're going. I think some communities that did have very definite focus didn't survive.

Q: So, you think maybe the fact that you didn't have a clear vision or goals or something had been to your advantage?
A: Well, I think we all have personal vision which we shared in common but we didn't have a goal for the community. We have like mundane goals.

Q: Yeah.
A: To make things better and, sometimes, we think about starting workshops or doing some kind of institute or doing some kind of school or I mean, we talk about these things but these are more on the mundane level. I don't think and we talk about the community's survival and part of the way that we've tried to make things to keep things together is these meetings, everybody getting together and talking, planning, sharing work but we have a core of people who take care of physical existence of the community.

Q: Well, great.
A: How many things are you going to be doing?