



BRIDGING THE GAP

The Quaker Intentional Village Project Newsletter

Issue #5 (June 2000)

News Flash!

During the last week of May a letter making an initial offer was sent to the owners of the Seven Bridges property. We have not yet heard back from them. Meanwhile another property has come on the market, about ten miles east of Powell House. It is located in the town of Canaan with 230 acres of woods, wetlands, fields, and ponds. It has one three- (2 + study) bedroom house plus a smaller unfinished office/garage and three barns. Asking price is \$690,000. (Dan Michaud fell in love with the place.)

Next Meetings:

- Sunday, June 11, 1:00-5:00 at the Harris-Brauns' house in Newtown, Connecticut
- Saturday, July 29, 10:00-4:00, at the Michauds' house in Columbia County
- Sunday, August 27, 1:00-5:00 at the Harris-Brauns' house in Newtown, Connecticut
- Saturday, September 30, 10:00-4:00 in Columbia County, location TBD
- November 3-5 at Sirius Community in Northampton, Massachusetts

November 3-5 Visit to Sirius (a Massachusetts Intentional Community)
We have the opportunity to spend a work-exchange weekend at Sirius Community, an intentional, spiritual community in Shutesbury, MA (www.siriuscommunity.org), November 3-5. Cost: \$35/person* plus 8 hours of work on Saturday, with Sirius Community members. (Something like gardening, chopping wood, stacking wood, washing windows...) Includes room and board. The schedule:

Arrive Friday, before 6:30 PM for supper

Friday evening: Informal sit-down discussion with someone from Sirius

Saturday: Work 9-5

Saturday evening: Informal sit-down discussion with someone from Sirius

Sunday: Worship service, tour of community, and lunch

*Note: It is not possible to accommodate children on the work-exchange weekend.

If interested, please let me know, since space is limited. Thank you!

—Kathleen Flynn ((203)270-9729 or smokey@charter-ne.com)

Community-Supported Agriculture Farms in Columbia County

Recently there were two articles in the *Register-Star*, the local newspaper of Columbia County, entitled "Community-Supported Agriculture Offers Alternative to Struggling Farmers" and "Columbia County Co-Ops Consider Cooperation." Here are some excerpts:

"While agriculture was determined to be of primary importance to Columbia County's economy in the county's recent Patterns for Progress vision plan, much recent news concerns agricultural entities biting the dust. Witness the two Myer farms which recently closed down in Kinderhook and the Hudson Processing Plant shutting down in Livingston.

"But one type of agricultural enterprise is on the increase. Ten years ago, Jean Paul Courtens and his wife Kelley were just starting Roxbury Farm, the county's first Community Support Agriculture group, or CSA. Now there are a total of five CSAs.

RESOURCES: WEBSITES

To find out more about community-supported agriculture (CSAs), including CSA farms in your area, visit the useful AFSIC Web site, brought to you by our government, featuring a list of some CSAs by state, basic info, and a nice page of links.

Alternative Farming Systems Information Center: <http://www.nal.usda.gov/afsic/csa/>

"In a CSA, a consumer purchases a 'share' of the farm harvest before the start of the growing season, and then picks up a variety of freshly picked, organically grown produce each week from June through late autumn. All five CSAs are still accepting members."

"Columbia County's five Community Supported Agriculture groups have common philosophies, primarily that the risks and benefits of farming can be shared by farmers and consumers, but also beliefs in crop rotation, cover crops, seasonal eating and organically grown produce.

"And they cooperate in many ways. Some of them have apprenticed or worked on others' farms, and all participate in a shared apprentice-education program...

"Recently, Marcie Gardner of Chatham invited representatives of all five CSAs...to meet at her house to talk about cooperation [and] outreach.... She thinks there's room for one or two CSAs in every town in the county."

—*The Register-Star*, Monday, May 22, 2000, pp. A1 and A10

CLIPPINGS: THOUGHT-PROVOKING TIDBITS FOR ALTERNATIVE LIVING

The strongest thing community has going for it is not utopian architecture or formal structures of membership, but the invisible architecture of human kindness. Community is about purposeful, personal co-evolution. And in that, there is a lot of hope.

—Albert K. Bates, The Farm

The Process of Moving into Intentional Community and Bridging the Gap
Some people can decide to spin their lives into a 180-degree turn and then do it. Most of us think about how nice it would be to move in another direction but find the effort of changing course subsumed by the forces directing us to move along the current path. One of these forces of inertia is our need to constantly make decisions over and over. Though we often fear we will make a choice that is irreversible, the ironic reality is that much more often our choices last only momentarily. Just as we might choose to go on a diet, we might acknowledge that we want community and its benefits. But as with a diet, where a choice must be made each time food presents itself, we will be faced with many, many choices as we decide to live in community, and it will be the little things that move us closer to our objectives. The key lies in the choices made—each opportunity we have to de-link from our isolationism, or to share and grow in relationships.

Spee and Ellen recently sent out a financial survey. We hope that you will consider using your feelings about money as one tool to help in your search for community. How does the idea of making a moderate contribution to the QIVP project feel to you? Remember, the choice is not irreversible. What about choosing to look around for employers in Columbia County? Or to look at floor plans of what could become your home? Or to try out a recipe for 35 people? Or to think about how the garden would be shared? Each choice can help you understand what may be right for you.

To move into our Quaker Intentional Village is a challenging decision, though not monumental and irreversible. Some of us are ready, while others need to try out the bits and pieces of it that the choices of daily life put before us.

QIVP Queries?

How about if at the end of each meeting we put into the form of a Query issues and discussion we have had during that meeting? These we would all take home with us, and then we would spend a little time at the beginning of our next meeting revisiting the Query. For example, during our last meeting part of the discussion focused on member fees and covering the costs of land, capital assets, etc. Sample Queries might be: Are we building an economy of grace, love and inclusion? Are we non-judgmental while giving each other the freedom to make financial decisions according to our personal situations? Do we help each other lessen our dependence on money and increase our support of family and community members as sources of security and those things that increase our humanity? Do the financial and legal structures being created for QIVP strengthen us as we pursue the five community goals?

—This idea is from Sandy Beer, who attended our February conference with her daughter Carolyn.

Those of you who joined us for our February conference met Sandy Beer and her daughter Carolyn. They were up here this week from Atlanta, on a job interview (the position of Director of Development was open at a nearby private school). We are very pleased that Sandy is actively working to move here and we're hopeful about the interview turning into a job offer!

—Jens Braun

Minutes of QIVP Meeting for Business, 21 May 2000

Note: These are abbreviated minutes. The full minutes can be found on the QIVP Web site (www.qivp.org) or can be requested from the newsletter/Web-site editor, Ellen Harris-Braun ((203) 426-8662 or info@qivp.org.)

Meeting for Business at Powell House in Old Chatham, New York, began with worship at 1:30 p.m. with Eric Harris-Braun clerking and Ellen Harris-Braun recording. Jens Braun later took over recording duties.

Attending were: Jens Braun, Spee Braun, Kathleen Flynn, Ellen Harris-Braun, Eric Harris-Braun, Gretchen MacBryde, Dan Michaud, Eloisa Perez-Suarez, Dee Rossman, Ed Shaw, and Mary Williams, as well as six children.

2000.05.01 The group approved paying for babysitters during meetings with QIVP funds.

Finances: The Finance Committee gave a report on their suggested financial structure so far, which includes buy-in amounts, timing, and rules; loans for land purchase and repayment thereof; donations; financial commitments at various stages of involvement; a buy-back fund to repurchase houses from members who leave the community; and what financial benefits members would receive for their investments. Draft documents detailing these initial proposals are attached to the minutes.

Facts we all seem to agree on so far:

- We need a capital fund and operating fund.
- Members would be assessed a yearly land-use fee.
- The land-use fee would be determined on a sliding scale depending on the yearly income of each member household.

2000.05.02 The Finance Committee will send out the survey, explaining that it is part of a work in progress and that the information gained will help both determine if we can go ahead with the land purchase and give us more to work with in designing the system for buy-in, equity management, and start-up of capital/operating funds.

Spee passed out a formal version of our statement of purpose, a presentation of our agreed-upon Levels of Commitment, and a sheet of Frequently Asked Questions. These, along with information about the Web site and the newsletters, are part of our infant "Information Package."

2000.05.03 Ellen and Eric have set up a Web site with a registered domain name. Eric and Ellen are willing to cover these costs, but the group agreed to pay those cost as an ongoing expense of the project.

Finance report: The bank account has \$1390.60 in it. This comes from 3 full or partial member fees, 5 full or partial attender fees, 5 subscriber fees and the balance small donations. Expenses to date have been for postage, the P.O. box, and as of today babysitting and Web site.

Visiting Sirius: Kathleen Flynn reported on her discussions with Sirius Community and the

options for us to visit them. They have a work-exchange weekend structure in which they would have us arrive on Friday evening and stay through Sunday afternoon. The cost of \$35 and 8 hours of work (alongside Sirius Community members) per person would cover room and board for the weekend. On Friday evening we could have a talk by Bruce Davis (a longstanding member). On Saturday evening we might be able to arrange a talk on financial issues and the structure, for a fee. Sunday would be a worship service and lunch prior to departure.

Dates of open weekends were reviewed and it was agreed that we would try to arrange our visit for November 3-5. Those who wish to go should inform Kathleen by June 15th.

Land Purchase: Jens, Spee, Ellen and Dan met with local lawyer Ted Guterman last Friday, May 19. Ted pointed out there is a formula for number of houses allowed per acre in a residential cluster, depending on the zoning of the land (for Seven Bridges this would be probably 20 homes total).

Ted was the lawyer for an earlier attempt to buy Seven Bridges and has some knowledge of the situation. He pointed out that it is important to get the special permit for cluster housing before actually purchasing the land, because one never knows what actual barriers might arise from neighbors, the Planning and Zoning Board, and other unknowns.

Ted is drawing up a contract and letter of intent to present to the owners for a purchase offer. The letter makes an offer of \$575,000 to the Cheneys.

There was some discussion about items to know ahead of time and the need to have a concept plan to present to P&Z. The lawyer did recommend that we buy the land as a group of individuals.

Sirius Community also provided the name of the attorney that helped them with by-laws and land-trust issues. Kathleen did speak to this attorney and suggests a visit of one to two hours in June, if we arrive with a list of questions, to brain-storm and review our options.

2000.05.04 We decided that we would postpone meetings with lawyers who know about land-trust issues.

Discussion ensued about Dee's e-mail in which she expressed discomfort at taking authority for decisions (i.e., land purchase) for which she has not paid. She does not feel QIVP is ready as a group to make this decision.

2000.05.05 The group sensed the need to allow the Brauns, Harris-Brauns, and other interested parties to proceed with the land purchase (given certain contingencies). The group hopes and expects that others will join in this joint purchase by individuals.

The meeting ended at 6:06 p.m. with a period of silent worship.

Meeting Minutes

Full minutes of all QIVP meetings are made available on the QIVP Web site at www.qivp.org/minutes for your reading pleasure!

Join QIVP and Realize Savings on Essential Yard-Care Equipment!

QIVP Library: Housing Recommendations Wanted

We are starting to gather materials on affordable, environmentally appropriate, esthetically beautiful, energy-efficient homes. If you have books, articles, or other sources of information, would you mind sending titles and authors? We hope to continue building up our library. Send 'em to Jens at sjbraun@taconic.net or c/o QIVP, P. O. Box 114, Old chatham, New York, 12136.

CLIPPINGS: THOUGHT-PROVOKING TIDBITS FOR ALTERNATIVE LIVING

Old Attitudes:

- Planet Earth is essentially a storehouse of raw materials for human use.
- We live in a state of continual conflict with the natural environment. It is good to eliminate or modify all environmental factors that interfere with or are inconvenient to human activity.
- Worn-out goods, left over and waste materials of all kinds should be disposed of in the easiest and least costly manner in areas away from population centers.
- The soil can be kept productive by the continual addition of manufactured chemicals which plants require for growth.
- Life for human beings will become steadily better with the ever-expanding use of fossil fuels and the ever-increasing use of electricity.
- Money is the primary source of personal and social security.
- The production of money is the primary purpose of economic activity.
- The more of Earth's substance that can be turned into salable commodities in order to increase the production of money, the better off we will all be.

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New Attitudes:

- Planet Earth is the birthplace and nourishing home of all living forms, the great community of life. The wellbeing of the human community depends on its ability to serve the integrity of Creation.
- We live in a cooperative relationship with the natural environment. It is good to design our community and livelihood patterns in congruence with the way the natural environment actually works.
- Worn-out goods, left over and waste materials of all kinds should be recycled, processed into non-toxic forms and kept within the manufacturing and agricultural streams to the maximum extent. Any disposal necessary must be done with maximum expertise. The planet is a closed system. There is no such place as "away."
- The soil is kept fertile and productive on a sustainable basis only when it is replenished with naturally occurring materials.
- Human communities will become steadily healthier and increasingly sustainable as we decrease our use of fossil fuels and shift the production of electricity to technologies that do not pollute or poison the environment.
- Family and community relationships are the primary source for personal and social security. The strengthening of social relationships within economic activity is more important for sustaining security than simply increasing the level of money in circulation.
- The sustainable adaptation of human communities to the natural environment is the primary purpose of economic activity.
- The more we concentrate on producing truly needed and useful commodities, utilizing materials already in the manufacturing stream, the more sustainable our communities will become and the better off we, and the whole Earth with all its inhabitants, will be.

—From "Living Wisely With Creation" by Ellen and Keith Helmuth

We might want to think of how we can expand this list with thoughts on child-rearing/schooling, aging/retirement, physical community/zoning regulations, and living one's faith/being practical, among other things.



Old Chatham, New York 12136
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QIVP

We believe community can be a means to advance the following five objectives:

1. To increase the mindfulness, spiritual focus and God-centeredness of our lives by finding and living near others who are like-minded and will reinforce, on a daily basis, our desire to live in worship.
2. To strengthen our family life both by creating a “village” setting in which to raise our and others' children, and by caring for our elders. This includes an emphasis on leaving behind cultural obstacles that interfere with providing the time and energy that healthy family life requires.
3. To examine carefully our participation in the national/international consumer economy and begin to build the critical mass necessary for viable business networks and sources of goods and services more appropriate to our Quaker testimonies.
4. To focus on a lifestyle that is environmentally sound and that attempts to give back to our planet as much as is taken from it.
5. To include a good measure of joy, fun, outreach, and service in our lives as we strive to meet the first four objectives.

Send us ideas, questions, musings, excerpts from thought-provoking articles, clippings, books, Web sites, etc., and we'll share them via this newsletter with others who are interested in intentional community...all to learn how to bridge the gap between conventional American life and the communities we would like to be part of instead.