

Learning Cooperatives Quarterly

The Newsletter of Life-Long Learning

Vol. 1 No. 3

Spring/Summer 2003

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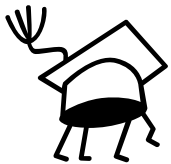
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Ten Websites Every Nonprofit Should Know About

Idealist.org has compiled a list of the 10 sites they suggest every nonprofit in the US should know about. Here they are:

1. At <http://www.foundationcenter.org> the Foundation Center provides information about very foundation in the country. Much of this information is free, but some of it is for paying subscribers only.
 2. At <http://www.guidestar.org> Guidestar lists financial information for 800,000 nonprofits. You can use Guidestar for research, and you can also update your organization's entry there.
 3. At <http://www.idealist.org> Idealist.org has built the leading nonprofit job site in the country. In addition to jobs, you can also list events, volunteer opportunities and internships, and at <http://www.idealist.org/consultants> you can find the most comprehensive directory of nonprofit consultants on the Web.
 4. At <http://news.gilbert.org> Michael Gilbert maintains a great site with daily news updates bridging the online and nonprofit worlds. You can read the news there, or you you can subscribe for weekly email updates.
 5. At <http://www.nonprofitbasics.org> the Center for Philanthropy and Nonprofit Leadership is building a resource center with lots of great information for starting, running and funding an organization.
 6. At <http://www.nonprofits.org/npofaq> Putnam Barber maintains the Nonprofit FAQ â " an older resource center that is special because it is based on actual questions and answers posted by nonprofit managers over the years.
 7. At <http://www.networkforgood.org> people can find volunteer opportunities, and they can also make donations to hundreds of thousands of nonprofits. Most importantly, you can use this site to add a free Donate button to your Web site.
 8. At <http://www.serviceleader.org> you will find a huge site covering every aspect of volunteer management, from screening, matching, record-keeping and evaluation, to legal issues, risk management and virtual volunteering.
 9. At <http://www.techsoup.org> Techsoup has built the leading resource center for all issues related to nonprofit technology. In addition, they offer steep discounts on software for nonprofits, sometimes up to 90% off the list price.
 10. At <http://www.volunteermatch.org> people can find volunteer opportunities all over the country by ZIP code or area of interest.
- In addition to these 10 online resources, [Idealist.org](http://www.idealist.org) recommends <http://www.ncna.org/states.htm> for the nonprofit state association closest to them.

In Times of Drought

Reflections by Zaid Hassan
from the Unfolding Learning Societies Conference,
Udaipur, Rajasthan
18-22 December, 2002.

The view of a parched Fateh Sagar continually tugged at the minds and the hearts of the seventy people who gathered for the Unfolding Learning Societies conference in Udaipur. Even those who had become numb to the dry lake beds examined the landscape with fresh eyes. Why had this happened? Local people, many of whom would be considered illiterate and ignorant, constructed the lakes two hundred years ago, without the aid of large engineering companies. After centuries of abundance how had the lakes now run dry? What human activities contributed to the current situation? The issue of what had happened and what was to be done was talked about from time to time. Fresh thoughts, ideas, energies and a desire to act, to make changes sprang from the sight of the dust outside.

Who were these people? They were a diverse group coming from across India and the rest of the world, including Africa, Latin America, the Middle East, the United States and Europe. They came together to explore their common passion to understand how best to extend ideas of learning from the school to the diversity of life, re-linking learning to real issues. While one would expect a gathering on learning to contain its fair share of academics, welfare officials and administrators, the participants ranged widely from artists, activists, corporate consultants and to many who defied easy labeling. One might be talking to a children's book publisher to discover that he was also a farmer, or to some actors only to find that they ran month-long drama workshops on understanding self, society and education.

This gathering aspired to something radically different, to live a very different set of values than normally found at conferences. These values were an expression of how a learning society might emerge. At its heart was a fundamental belief in the legitimacy of different ways of knowing. Here the operating principle was that each participant was a unique source of learning -- by the sheer fact of being alive.

Conceived at Shikshantar, a not-for-profit movement based in Udaipur, the event was a culmination (but not end) of three years of research and experimentation on what a learning society might be. The conversations built on over forty-five essays from three special publications of Shikshantar's bulletin *Vimukt Shiksha*. As the editor's note in the first publication explained, this work "represents a deep-felt desire to rediscover, regenerate and revalue different ways of questioning, of understanding, of relating, of creating, of living, in the face of larger societal concerns and impending catastrophes."

This work is explicitly not an attempt to define a learning society for the entire world. Rather there was a recognition that there are diverse learning societies in the world. This meeting tried to explore what learning societies might mean in South Asia from diverse vantage points and contexts. Participants from other places helped to highlight the commonalities and differences between different learning societies.

Instead of agendas and timetables the talk was of 'flow' where, as often as not, the entire group determined what kind of space they needed and what times they would like to keep. Instead of keynote speakers, the conference opened with the group all sharing the questions they carried with

...the participants discussed their own internal struggles, on how to rid ourselves of the traps of modern knowledge and how to live with the contradictions of our times.

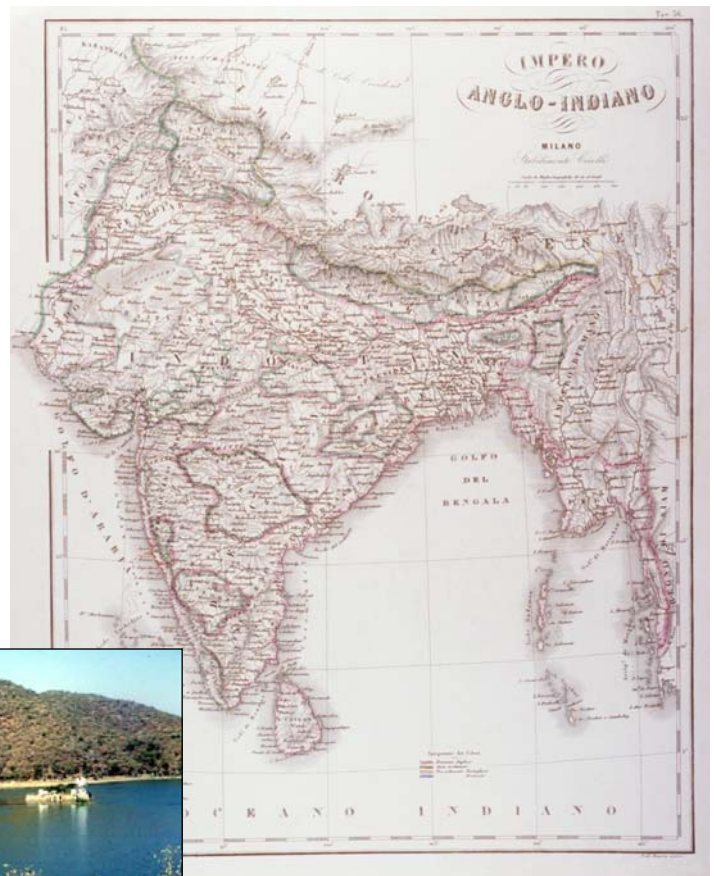
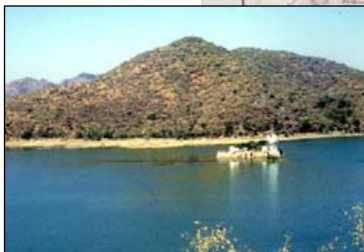
them to Udaipur. This expressed a belief that when such a space is opened we are free to recognize the limitations of our own truth, understanding the complexities of the diverse contexts each of us came from and finally to see our work as experiments to learn from rather than 'best practices' to be replicated (blindly).

In the open spaces of the conference participants talked to each other, explored their work, their personal lives and themes relating to unfolding learning societies. A key difference in the space created was a desire for real dialogue. Too often our conferences are like boxing matches, with each party trying to score points or they consist of a series of long, unconnected monologues with individual egos competing to occupy the space and make the cleverest point. At most conference we are tortured by long, technical speeches given in stifling auditoriums and then are given copies of the same speech. Real dialogue on the other hand requires a different approach. It needs individuals to be willing to expend energy on really listening, it needs a trust in

letting people speak their minds without interrupting, it needs a true commitment to mutual understanding and finally it needs open spaces where people can find air, light and sunshine.

Through open spaces and dialogue a range of expressions was tied together; themes ranged broadly from public and political spaces, to rooftop organic farming to the importance of reflective silence in our lives; media used included poetry, drawing, paint-

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Our Mission

The mission of the Learning Cooperatives Quarterly (LCQ) is to utilize the format of a newsletter as a means to inform and network between individuals, groups, and organizations seeking to create transformation and change in education and learning.

The basic premise of this change lies in the perception that we are progressing towards an eco-society, an evolutionarily new social order or Gaian culture, in which all members of that society have a voice in the formation and maintenance thereof. Through this developing social order, members seek to live in harmony with the world around them, decisions are made on local levels with the consensus of local individuals, and every individual has the right and responsibility to determine his/her own learning processes and vocations.

Learning in such a society occurs at all ages with students accepting responsibilities of a higher order, being problem solvers, participating in democratic discussions and cooperative processes, and initiating their own learning. In order to support this transformation and maintain such a social order, learning techniques that have successfully explored and developed new models of learning and new curriculum need to be encouraged and authors of yet unknown forms need to be given a voice.

As with all societies, parents, mentors, facilitators, and so forth, play a role in passing on the ethical, moral, and social foundations of the society. These may at times be unique to one group or another. LCQ does not promote or endorse any of these. In a free and open learning system, all options for learning and all information are available by choice of the learner. This also applies to articles and news briefs contained herein.

It is the foundation of Cooperative Community Life-Long Learning Centers and the Coalition for Self-Learning that the control of education needs to be returned to the individual learner with support from parents and the local community, and that these processes can best happen in the context of Learning Cooperatives, Learning Communities, and Learning Centers in collaboration with the individual as a self-directed learner.

In summary, it is the intent of LCQ to provide an outlet for authors to strategize, discuss, define and share about programs of learning that promote a transformation towards an evolutionarily new social order, an eco- or Gaian society, through new contexts in education and learning.

In Times of Drought from previous page

ing, theater, dance and music. The use of different media provided the opportunity and recognition that each of us are co-creators of our own unique learning society.

Rather than worn-out discussions about literacy and enrollment rates, the participants discussed their own internal struggles, on how to rid ourselves of the traps of modern knowledge and how to live with the contradictions of our times. They raised questions such as: what is the logic of the dominant system, what are the alternatives to television, where do we find the courage to free our creativities and our intuitive cultures, how to resist colonization vis-à-vis information technologies, what can we learn from dropouts and those outside mainstream systems, and what if we were part of the problem.

The unschooling advocate John Holt wrote that 'Birds fly, fish swim and people learn.' If we're comfortable studying the lives of birds to learn how to navigate the skies, if we're comfortable studying the lives of fish to learn how to navigate the seas, then why not study our lives to learn how to navigate life? This radical idea, of studying the vibrant and dynamic systems of life that surround us, from the lives of our friends to the lives of cities, has been stifled. Instead, we are taught to turn to the sterility of textbooks in order to 'learn.' Don't we learn from everyday from simply doing things, from living in our many cultures? Why is it that all learning outside of the our education systems are perceived, especially by the middle classes, as something with no real value?

A bottle of water sitting on a table, against the stark brown backdrop of the dusty lake beds, symbolized the status of learning in our societies today: a natural resource sterilized and packaged for delivery to those few with the means of grasping it.

If we are to end the droughts that plague our lives then we must protest the packaging of all our natural resources, from water to learning. We must protest the various monopolies that sustain the business of packaging and the marketing of artificial scarcity. In doing so we must demand a very special kind of freedom, the freedom to learn wherever and whenever we choose.

Found all over India, a "pyaoo" is a little stall that people set up to provide water for the thirsty. People set them up because they want to and anyone is free to walk up (without any compulsion, of course) and get a drink of water. The structures are simple and require no vast funds or management and yet they provide a much needed service. Drawing inspiration from such practices, we can continue exploring ways of dealing with our thirst. In doing so we must recognize that thirst comes in many forms and arises at different times. To believe that the only solutions to drought are to package water, then either sell it or force it down people's throats, is a failure of imagination. We must recognize that to drown people in a time of drought is a great crime.

In the face of such a crime it is useless to simply level accusations; few of us are innocent. Rather let us ask ourselves a simple question: what role does each of us play in a time of drought?

27 December 2002, Udaipur.

Author Zaid Hassan (zaid@pioneersofchange.net) was assisted by Manish and Shilpa in writing this article regarding the conference.



Bill's View *Book Review by Bill Ellis*

The Hidden Connections
by Fritjof Capra
(Random House New York, 2002)

This book is about creating learning communities, but that is not its topic. Its topic is networking, or in Capra's words "connections." It's a comprehensive review of all cosmic networks that make up "life, mind, and society."

Capra moved beyond his profession, physics, with "The Tao of Physics" that explored the parallels between quantum mechanics and Buddhist, Taoist and Hindu thought. With "Turning Point," "Uncommon Wisdom," and "The Web of Life," he explored the science-social nexus further by showing the relevance of chaos, complexity and Gaian theories to philosophy and to society. In "The Hidden Connections" he again expands his science-social analysis to link new concepts arising from brain research, genetics, neurobiology, and bioengineering to the understanding of the cosmos and the natural laws society must obey if humanity is to continue to exist.

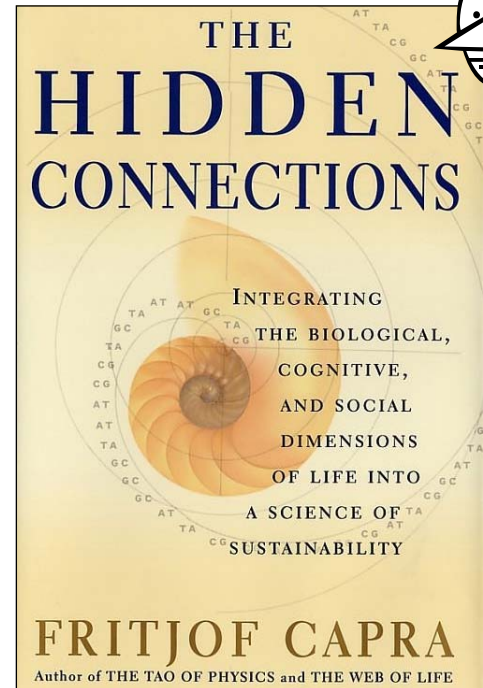
This is a good layman's primer of current scientific breakthroughs and their implications for everyday life. Only occasionally does it become more involved in the intricacies of science than this reviewer thinks necessary to meet the author's goal of "integrating the biological, cognitive, and social dimension of life into the science of sustainability." Two concepts that he seems to consider too lightly are "emergence" and "downward causation." They are particularly relevant to both the brain/mind and the gene/DNA networks.

All steps in cosmic evolution, as Capra clearly explains, result from simple entities linking to create more complex ones.

The emergence of each new entity is the emergence of a physical or organizational form. With the new emergent system, new properties or "qualia" also emerge that are not included in, nor predictable from, the component parts of the new system. Capra uses "sweetness" as a simple example. Carbon, hydrogen and oxygen combine to create sugar. The emerging new physical entity has the emerging new unpredicted property or qualia of sweetness.

In like manner, the qualia of mind, thinking or consciousness, emerges with the emergence of the neural networks of the brain. Similarly, with the networking of genes to produce DNA emerges new qualia or properties that are more than just the connections of genes. It is this whole DNA network that determines the kinds of people we can become. As Capra masterfully points out, replacing one or more genes here or there in the complex DNA chain may, or may not, change that emergent qualia of the person.

The critical characteristic of any emergent complex network is "downward causation." Nobel Laureate, brain researcher Roger Sperry, enunciated the principle that newly emerging qualia of any new complex entity may be partial control over its parts. Sperry suggested that this is somewhat like a wheel. The spokes of the wheel are governed by the wheel, and so are the molecules and atoms within the spokes. More exactly, he believed that the mind is a qualia of the brain. The mind is able to activate neural networks and thereby the body itself, and all the effects that humans have on society.



"Learning" is a hidden connection in Capra's "The Hidden Connections." The book makes much of creation of knowledge. It recognizes that "knowledge creation is an individual process." It is an emergent property of each individual coming from the networks of communities in which the individual is embedded. The value of the book is not in any formula given for creating learning communities. It is in the symbiotic feedback loops it calls for from which learning communities will emerge and that will emerge from learning communities.

Capra sees "a system of education for sustainable living, based on ecoliteracy, at the primary and secondary school levels,... with a pedagogy that puts the understanding of life at its very center; and experience of life in the real world ...; that life, from its beginning, did not take over the planet by combat but by networking."

Hope in Action

June 13-15, 2003

Babson College; Boston (Wellesley), MA

Educational dialog on ways to make a difference in the world, in your community. Keynote speakers include Francis Moore Lappe, and Patch Adams.

To register or download a brochure visit:

<http://www7.mailordercentral.com/conferences/home.asp>

<http://rd.bcentral.com/?ID=825170&s=2753169>

Announcements from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee in Milwaukee, WI.

- 1) Democracy and Education Conference
October 10th-12th, Milwaukee, Wisconsin
- 2) National Demonstration Against the Corporate Agenda for Education
Saturday, October 11th
Bradley Foundation's Headquarters
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

For more information, call 760-477-2024 (code = 180633#).

Living the Change You Want to See

J. Krishnamurti offered this insight into systems, relevant to any consideration of creating new learning systems:

"Most of you are seeking a new system of thought, a new system of economics, a new system of religious philosophy. Why are you seeking a new system? You say, "I am dissatisfied with the old," that is, if you are seeking. Now I say, don't seek a new system, but rather examine the very system in which you are held, and then you will see that no system of any kind will bring about the creative intelligence which is essential for the understanding of truth or God or whatever name you like to give to it. That means that by the following of no system you are going to discover that eternal reality; but you are going to find it only when you, as individuals, begin to understand the very system that you have built up through the centuries, and in that system discover what is true and what is false.

So please bear that in mind, that I am not giving a new system of philosophy. I think these systems are cages for the mind to be caught up in. They do not help man, they are merely hindrances. These systems are a means of exploitation. Whereas, if you as individuals begin to question, you will see that in that questioning you create conflict, and out of the conflict you will understand, not in the mere acceptance of a new system which is merely another soporific which puts you to sleep and turns you into another machine."

I have observed two kinds of Systems since childhood -- Natural Systems and Human-Made Systems. I have spent a lot of time in nature observing trees, birds, mountains, sky, stars, insects, animals, etc. I have come to an understanding that the Natural System is not a system but is a way that enhances life, a way that nurtures possibilities.

I have also spent a lot of time with Human-Made Systems such as schools, NGOs, movements, campaigns, peoples' initiatives, etc. With these Human-Made Systems I realized that they are nothing but the mechanics to control, shape and discipline, through coercion and force.

Questions arose in my mind about whether a new learning system will help us transform our inner being, whether the new learning system will resolve the conflict between an individual and society. History is witness that whenever any new



system is created, within a period of time that system becomes more important than the human beings.

Rather than proposing new learning systems, I am in the process of exploring and transforming myself, in relation to other beings, to unfold the hidden meanings of life and living.

For the past 4 years, Sumi (my life partner) and I have observed Qudrat (our 4-year-old son). One of the important things we came to understand is that Qudrat has his own pace of learning and we have never interfered in this process. Even for walking, speaking, observing things, and doing things with his hands, we have never intervened in his natural ways of growing. We discovered from Qudrat that there is this innate and continuous process of growing and exploring the world in every human being and even parents should not interfere in this process.

What would a new learning system be in the context of Qudrat? He has his own way of learning, exploring, discovering, unfolding his being. And this is not merely an isolated process of growing peculiar to Qudrat -- every child has his/her own process of growing.

Should we seek a new learning system or

should we transform ourselves as co-learners with our children -- growing and living together?

A Students Prayer by Umberto Maturana explores the idea of co-learners:

*Don't impose on me what you know,
I want to explore the unknown
And be the source of my own discoveries.
Let the known be my liberation, not my slavery.*

*The world of your truth can be my limitation;
Your wisdom my negation.
Don't instruct me; let's walk together.
Let my riches begin where your ends.*

*Show me so that I can stand
On your shoulders.
Reveal yourself so that I can be
Something different.*

*You believe that every human being
Can love and create.
I understand, then, your fear
When I ask you to live according to your wisdom.*

*You will not know who I am
By listening to yourself.
Don't instruct me; let me be.
Your failure is that I be identical to you.*

I have come to feel that the deschooled society, a society in which learning is not separated from but joined to and part of the rest of life

In Holt's Freedom and Beyond, which was first published in 1972, he wrote:

"Imagine that I am traveling into the future in a time capsule, and that I came to rest, five hundred years from now, in an intelligent, humane, and life-enhancing civilization. One of the people who lives there comes to meet me, to guide me, and to explain his society.

At some point, after he has shown me where people live, work, play, I ask him, "But where are your schools?"

"Schools? What are schools?" he replies.

"Schools are where people go to learn things."

"I do not understand," he says. "People learn things everywhere in all places."

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Profile on Creating

Creating momentum in San Diego

The Learning Cooperatives Quarterly begins this new feature with this issue. This is a space to highlight those who are moving from discussion to practical application – those who are "doing something."

We will include articles from those starting or continuing learning centers, small or large.

We urge readers to contribute information about your own experiences in starting and maintaining a learning center. Send a writeup to marbleface@aol.com (we're aiming at 100-200 words) to be included. Do not feel limited by the term learning center either – if you have an ongoing or planned activity that is not exactly a "center" but puts some of the Learning Communities ideas into action, we want to hear about it!

Reading how others have made something happen in their communities is very encouraging to all of us and sharing ideas about overcoming obstacles, philosophical struggles, financial issues, the ins and outs of really "doing something" will be a big help to those embarking on the journey to creating a learning center.

If there are two of you, then it is a success and a start.

Since before the birth of our son in 2000, my husband and I have made parenting decisions which have been anything but conventional. So, not surprisingly, when I began to think about our son's schooling, I was immediately turned on to the "home schooling" concept.

I did, though, quickly recognize that if I was going to homeschool (I had not yet been exposed to the concepts of self-directed education or life learning), I wanted community support and involvement. More specifically, I wanted community support and involvement for alternative education in one of San Diego's "best" school districts.

So I began networking. I posted ads on the AERO website, Mothering Magazine boards, San Diego Natural Families and the San Diego Home Education discussion boards expressing my interest in starting a nature-based center which would ignite our children's curiosities and engage families, mentors, and elders in positive expressions of humanity. I made connections and continued the dialog every time I found myself in the midst of a new and receptive audience.

That was two years ago and since then I have organized a nature-discovery group, facilitated a nine week (1 day/week) intergenerational workshop in celebration of the spring season, and

just recently started
SDNaturalLearning@yahoo.com.

I am in the midst of planning a five day workshop at which children, parents, professionals, and community members will collaborate on the design and construction of a children's edible village. I have invited professional gardeners as mentors and plan to include the media at this event.

Earth School of Poway (Poway is the San Diego community where we live) has provided the space, the result of a serendipitous connection I made while on a "bug-walk" at a neighboring preserve.

That's what I mean about continuing the dialog whenever in the midst of a new and receptive audience. My experience has been that if you just start DOING SOMETHING you will eventually have a following. Don't wait until you have a following to start DOING SOMETHING. If there are two of you, then it is a success and a start.

The senior center has asked that we return again this summer and my hope, through all of these efforts, is that the momentum will grow, a following will continue to grow, and people will become so invested that the center becomes an inevitable answer to the needs at hand.

Christy Koppisch
Poway, CA

Change

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"I know that," I say. "But a school is a special place where there are special people who teach you things, help you learn things."

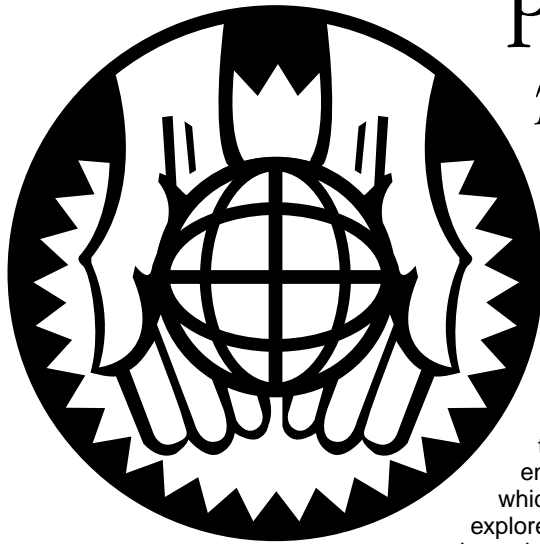
"I am sorry, but I still do not understand. Everyone helps other people to learn things. Anyone who knows something or can do something can help someone else who wants to learn more about it. Why should there be special people to do it?"

And try as I will, I cannot make clear to him why we think that education should be, must be, separate from the rest of the life."

This was my first vision of a society without schooling. Since reading this, I have come to feel that the deschooled society, a society in which learning is not separated from but joined to and part of the rest of life, is not a luxury for which we can wait hundreds of years, but something toward which we must move and work, as quickly as possible.

As parents, we realized that there is no need of any alternative system. The real need is to start living what we believe in. The need is to respect and trust our child's way of growing and learning. The need is to transform ourselves as co-learners with our children. Doing things together with children in day-to-day living is the real need. And that's what we are doing -- playing, acting, role-playing, jumping, dancing, shouting, screaming, talking, touching, observing/watching, relaxing, painting, roaming, running, cooking, working, creating different things, reading together with Qudrat. We have chosen not to divide our learning from living. We believe in learning through life and throughout life together.

This article was contributed by Manav. Manav jeevanpremi@yahoo.com is a life-lover. He has been in the process of deschooling his life since 1994. He is exploring life in many different ways including singing, dancing, acting, playing with children, generating dialogue with youth, reading, writing, playing flute, being with nature, sitting in silence, painting, making meaningful relationships, growing and living with Qudrat (his son, age 4) and Sumi (his life partner). He believes that nothing can be taught, that everyone is a self-learner and a self-teacher.



Profile on Funding

The LIGHThouse Resource Center

by K. SHALLCROSS

The LIGHTHOUSE Resource Center seeks funds for an alternative learning center that serves the Nassau/Suffolk area of Long Island. The center is available two days a week to parents that are involved in the education of their children. The center also offers support for the parents through peer to peer involvement. The center will be available to roughly 100+ families throughout the area.

LIGHThouse is a loosely affiliated branch of the non-secular support group Long Islanders Growing at Home Together (LIGHT). LIGHT offers yearly membership (including paid, reduced and sponsored) to parents who educate their children, or are interested in becoming the main director of their children's primary and secondary education. There is a mix of home schooled, school-at-home, public and privately schooled children, with an emphasis on home schooling.

As one of three founders of the LIGHThouse Resource Center, it is our intention to seek funding for this project for the 2003/2004 year.

Currently, there isn't any structural establishment of an alternative means of education on Long Island that allows parents to be the main director in assuring the community that their children grow up to be an independent and vital part of the Long Island community.

The LIGHThouse will be a key support in the endeavor for parents to school their children in the best interest of the community and child.

A good portion of LIGHT members are parents and/or children that were failed by

the public or private school system. They are left with few alternatives to ensure their children's future is sought with choices in higher education.

The resource center's goal is to create a safe environment in which children can explore their potential via workshops, ongoing classes, one-on-one training and peer to peer interaction.

The center is run by volunteer parents and community members that can facilitate learning in their area of expertise. The schedule is organically balanced to encompass individual learning styles, structural needs and learners of all ages. The LIGHThouse began operation in September during the 2002/2003 school year. Funding for the operation was borne by its founding members. In order for the LIGHThouse to continue to operate and expand its offerings to the Nassau/Suffolk community, it is necessary to solicit funding that will encourage the growth of this center to a solid membership base that

can offset the costs of greatly reduced and sponsored membership slots.

Just after one year, the LIGHThouse has grown 100% in paid membership. By the end of the 2003/2004 year, the LIGHThouse will have a larger pool of finances to draw from as the membership base grows past critical mass (aka the tipping point). Funds will then be available for the following year (04/05) to cover 90% of the center's outreach endeavors.

Our goal is \$3100, detailed below:

Rent Sept. - May:
\$200 x 9 = \$1800
Insurance rider: \$300 year
Educational supplies:
\$900

Kitchen/cleaning supplies: \$100
Total: \$3100

This proposal is being sent as a project of TRANET a 501(c)3 tax exempt organization since 1977 (Tax ID 1-01-0357178).

For information on how to help defray the costs of operating this center, please email kolleen@optonline.net

Got time?



A Coalition for Self Learning is actively seeking volunteers to help with the newsletter and web support of **Learning Cooperatives Quarterly**. Be a part of a project that offers the world a venue to reach the movers and shakers in alternative education, bringing them all together.

Email kolleen@optonline.net or marbleface@aol.com for more information

Announcement from Holma College

A Unique Global Visionary Education for the Emerging Ecozoic Age

Since its inception, Holma College (www.holmacollege.org) has attempted to bring together students from our global village under one roof to embark on an unprecedented visionary education aimed towards the cultivation of personal and global well being. Originally it was assumed that students required a radical change in their modernist worldviews, an undertaking which would amount to nothing less than a one year 'new paradigm' educational journey. During this intensive process, students explored the key values, ways of thinking and lifestyle alternatives that would eventually overthrow their 'old paradigms' and move into the 'new age.'

Over the past two years, the staff and students of Holma College have moved away from this new age lineage and extended the quest for personal and global well being by embracing an Integral approach to education. Largely pioneered by front-line Integral thinkers such as Wilber, Swimme, Gebser, Beck and others, our learning community is poised to move into this newly emerging field. The Integral approach promises an unprecedented comprehensive capacity to weave together all corners of the Cosmos. How might this look in practice? Contact us by email or phone (see our website) for details.

As the founder and his associates originally recognized, the need for progressive forms of global education for young adults is becoming increasingly obvious. In many respects, the standard curriculum of the postmodern university is coming up short in educating students for the creative dimensions of learning and living within our planetary context. For the most part, as most of us know, mainstream tendencies are to channel the instrumental varieties of learning along specialized career lines that feed our dysfunctional global competitive marketplace, ignoring more integral explorations of the greater existential concerns of our time.

...alternatives that would eventually overthrow their 'old paradigms' and move into the 'new age.'

For the first five years, Holma College was largely unknown to the rest of

Scandinavia, let alone the world, marked by the typical grassroots struggles for self-sufficiency. As we move into our sixth year, Holma College is striving to reflect the larger macroshift movements of culture we see in most fields right now through the Integral approach. With a growing awareness of what is taking place with forms of innovative global education, undoubtedly the change from a Holistic to Integral vision has sparked many new developments for us.

For the next two weeks we are running an Internet volunteer workcamp with volunteers from all around

the world who have travelled to our learning community to help us build and design a unique Internet portal. Our plan is to launch this portal on our existing website in a few weeks.

Presently we are looking for educators and specialists with a passion for the Integral approach to learning who might be willing to come to Holma College and teach or hold a workshop this Fall 2003 or for the Spring 2004. E-mail me with a proposal for a course if you so desire!

If you wish to have your organization or school as apart of our network, please email info@holmacollege.org with your idea or if you wish to contact Olen Gunnlaugson, Integral Educational Coordinator, directly at gunnlaugson@hotmail.com.



International Democratic Education Conference



Albany Free School will host the 2003 International Democratic Education Conference (IDEC) in Troy, New York, July 16-24. This is the first IDEC in the United States in the 10-year history of the conference.

The IDEC is an annual gathering of educators and students from across the US and around the world involved with or interested in democratic education. The central themes for IDEC 2003 are to challenge the high stakes testing movement, discuss democratic schooling, and learn about the approaches taken by educational alternatives throughout the US and the world.

IDEC 2003 unites those from diverse areas of education, such as democratic schools, public alternatives, private alternatives, international schools, charter schools, homeschooling, holistic approaches to education, and more. This conference is

as much for students as it is for adults. Additionally, the open scheduling format that will make up a good portion of IDEC 2003 will enable all attendees to put a workshop, presentation or other activity on the schedule.

For more information see: www.idec2003.com

Coalition for Self-Learning Update

Mission Statement:

The Coalition for Self-Learning envisions and co-creates a world of cooperative life-long learning communities.

Composition:

The Coalition is a matrix of individuals and groups, networking freely and acting in concert in mutual support of the Mission Statement.

Principles and Goals:

- (1) Life-long learning communities are diverse, open places where individuals develop meaningful ways to enhance, enrich, honor and celebrate each other, families, communities and society, acting as a significant element in an emerging cooperative commonwealth.
- (2) The Coalition promotes ideas and actions for creating learning communities.
- (3) The Coalition expands and advances the relevance of learning to societal change.
- (4) The Coalition explores, develops, disseminates and implements new concepts for organizational systems that result in the equitable sharing of power and wealth, well-being and self-sustaining conviviality of the Earth and all its life forms.

- (5) The Coalition demonstrates that the Internet is a powerful tool for organizing actions, learning creative concepts and engaging constructive discussion.

Tools:

To aid the Mission of the Coalition, we have developed the following tools :

Creating Learning Communities Website:

www.creatinglearningcommunities.org/

Discussion Lists:

www.onelist.com/community/LearningCommunitiesforConcepts

www.onelist.com/community/CCL-LLCsforStrategy

Books available:

"Creating Learning Communities" (\$21.95 or online) -

"Guidebook for Creating Learning Communities" (\$4.00)

<http://www.creatinglearningcommunities.org/book/book.htm>

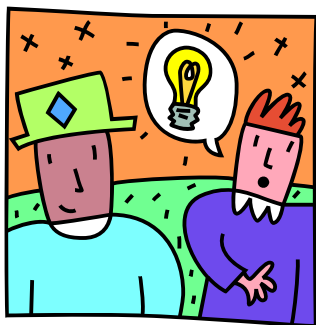
Learning Cooperatives Quarterly:

<http://www.creatinglearningcommunities.org/newsletter/index.html>

Sport Your Support



Show your support for the
Coalition for Self Learning
www.creatinglearningcommunities.org
 by spreading the word.
 Go to www.cafeshops.com/selflearning
 for pricing, info and purchasing of the fine
 products shown above.



Announcing a Thinking Resource for Thoughtful Learners of All Ages

Parent-Directed Education presents an original online collection of non-school resources to improve critical thinking in your own decisions, to inject better thinking into community change efforts and to foster better thinking in generations to come.

From the Introduction to Part One of The Thinking Parent:

"Newborn humans learn to think the way they learn to see and taste and walk and talk, gradually and without instruction.

"But that doesn't mean we can't improve our own thinking, at any age. Better thinking isn't so much a gift as a conscious choice, a choice within the reach of every parent. A choice that empowers us even when watching tv, reading fairy tales, and trying on hats!"

Read on to understand different approaches to improving thinking skills.

Part Two of The Thinking Parent delves into putting better thinking skills to use as you work for change and begins:

"Do you think like a millionaire, or like a deviant -- or maybe like a deviant millionaire?

Whatever your own thinking style, citizenship in today's world will push it to the max.

"The better your own critical thinking process, the better you can face those challenges, from politics to purchasing, career planning to parenting, ethics to entertainment, and everything in between."

Explore The Thinking Parent at:

<http://www.parentdirectededucation.org/thinking%20parent/The%20Thinking%20Parent.htm>

In Brief ●●●●●●●●



Home Educator Conference

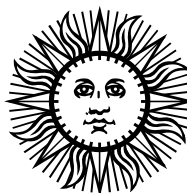
The New England Homeschool and Family Learning Conference is once again going to be in Boxborough, MA on July 18 - 19. Speakers include Mary Hood (author of *Relaxed Home School* and editor of *The Relaxed Home Schooler's Newsletter*), Brian Rohrig (FizzBang Science and homeschooling dad), Alison McKee (her workshops are about unschooling and transitioning to homeschooling), Jane Boswell (unit studies), and I'll be doing workshops on career explorations and learning styles. These are just a few of the speakers. The exhibit hall is shaping up to be the best ever, with plenty of materials for every type of homeschool. For more info, visit www.HomeEducator.com

The Center for Agroecology and Food Systems

Parents and children self-learn together at The Center for Agroecology and Food Systems (1156 High St., Santa Cruz CA 95064 USA; www.ucsc.edu/casfs).

Now the staff of CASFS has made their six months apprentice curriculum available to all learning communities. This guide, "Teaching Organic Farming and Gardening: Resources for Instructors," is available from the center for \$45.00. It can be ordered by e-mail from TrainingManual@ucsc.edu. Support for this self-learning project has been supplied by the Richard and Rhoda Goldman Fund, the Organic Farming Foundation, the Mary A. Crocker Trust, the Arkay Foundation, and the Foxwhelp Fund.

Multi-Issue Learning Communities



One of the most current progressive actions is the rise of "Integrative Programs." That is of groups that recognize that peace, ecology, economics, food, health, education and all other aspects of our culture are so interdependent that no one can change unless all change. Simpol, The Ark, HopeDance, Global Dialogue, Aligning with Purpose, Earth Community, Planetary Vision, and other organizations have set out to transform the

whole EuroAmerican culture as a unit. In the past year or so, other somewhat similar integrative actions have started emerging in local communities across the country. These are "Multi-Issue Learning Communities."

In many small local communities and neighborhoods there were many different people concerned with many different progressive issues. One might join and support the Sierra Club, another the War Resistor League, another the National Aids Alliance, another Willing Worker on Organic Farms (WOOF), another the New Economic Foundation (NEF), and others other organizations for ecology, peace, justice and social change. Members of these organizations found themselves locally isolated and were frustrated that they could not spread their message. So they started self-organizing as multi-issue learning communities.

The motives for coming together were as diverse as the groups themselves. For some it was, like the integrative projects, the realization that the culture was a unit and could not be changed piecemeal. For some it was influence, they saw the strength in numbers and invited others to join them in local protests. For some it was money, they wanted to own their own place to meet, their own library, or resources they could share. For some it has been loneliness, they wanted colleagues to talk to. Others had other reasons to reach beyond their single issue concern.

Their modes of operation are also diverse. Local forums, workshops, local learning circles, joint resources and collective public relations are among modalities of operation. In general, they are co-teachers and co-learners. They recognize that to be effective together they must understand one another's passions. Many have regular weekly or monthly meetings in which they rotate speakers within the group and from the outside. Most have open forums so that mainstream citizens can learn more about progressive ideas. They are, in the best definition of the term 'learning communities,' opening hearts and minds to local, national, international, and global issues.

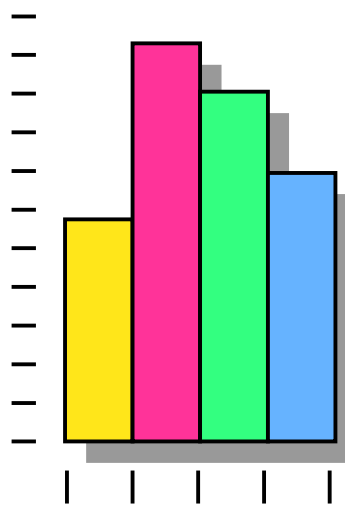
Bill Ellis tranet@rangeley.org

Quality Assurance Program for Home Educators

The Education Division of the American Society for Quality (<http://www.asq.org/>) has developed a program to help implement Quality Assurance guidelines in a home learning environment. The program, called Self Directed Learning, is seeking participants for their second session.

According to James Schoening of the American Society for Quality, "As a participant, you will receive one-on-one, step-by-step guidance (by e-mail and phone) on how to help your child become an organized self-directed learner. This means your child will eventually be able to set learning goals, design learning processes, and consistently achieve objectives. Your child will have these lifelong tools to accomplish any goal he or she sets.

"The approach, known as Quality Assurance, is a proven methodology for optimizing any set of processes. But while it has proven highly successful



in many fields, this project is its first application to self-directed learning by individual students. You will not have to learn much initially about the underlying science of Quality Assurance, just as you don't need to study engines to learn to drive a car.

"You and your child will select a learning objective such as

"Double typing speed," "Complete a set of math units," or "Read one novel a month." You will then define the steps in the process, and your child will follow them and document progress. You'll improve the process until it runs like clockwork. You'll then add a second process for another key learning objective. Eventually, all key processes will be defined and running smoothly. As your child learns this approach, he or she will take control of these processes, start designing new ones, and eventually be managing his or her own learning.

"An initial trial has resulted in a homeschooled child successfully implementing a first process and looking toward others. We are now opening the project to other home-school families and will eventually introduce it into traditional schools. You are invited to join this research project.

"Participation is free, and you

will not be locked into any commitments. We will provide step-by-step guidance that you can choose to follow. We believe you and your child will see benefits early on and will want to continue. Your feedback will help our professional society draft a guidance document designed to help others apply this approach."

The optimum student age range for this first pilot is probably 10-15, but younger children may be able to partially implement the approach. All interaction will be with the parent, not directly with the children.

A paper entitled "Structured Approach to Self-Directed Learning -- Home school Perspective," is available on request. To inquire further, please send your name, e-mail address, and any questions to James Schoening at Jim.S3@juno.com.

Learning Cooperatives Quarterly

GUIDELINES:

ARTICLES

Learning Cooperatives Quarterly invites readers to submit articles for publication.

Articles should cover any subject of interest to groups and individuals worldwide involved in or researching learning cooperatives, learning communities, learning centers and all issues relating to self-learning.

These articles should be no more than 2000 words and should be accompanied by a short biography of 40 words or less.

Learning Cooperatives Quarterly reserves the right to edit for reasons of clarity, but articles will not be edited for content without permission of the author. Please send articles through email to marbleface@aol.com

NEWS BRIEFS

As part of LCQ's commitment to networking, we welcome short updates and informational news briefs from learning cooperatives, learning communities, and learning centers. We also encourage information concerning conferences or other organizational functions and activities that might be of interest to our readers.

Please limit these entries to 400 words or less and include contact information. Learning Cooperatives Quarterly reserves the right to edit for reasons of clarity. Please send news briefs through email to marbleface@aol.com

All material submitted to LCQ are the property of LCQ and may not be published without the editor's written permission.

STAFF

Learning Cooperatives Quarterly is put together by a handful of dedicated people. If you are interested in helping create this newsletter, please write kolleen@optonline.net

