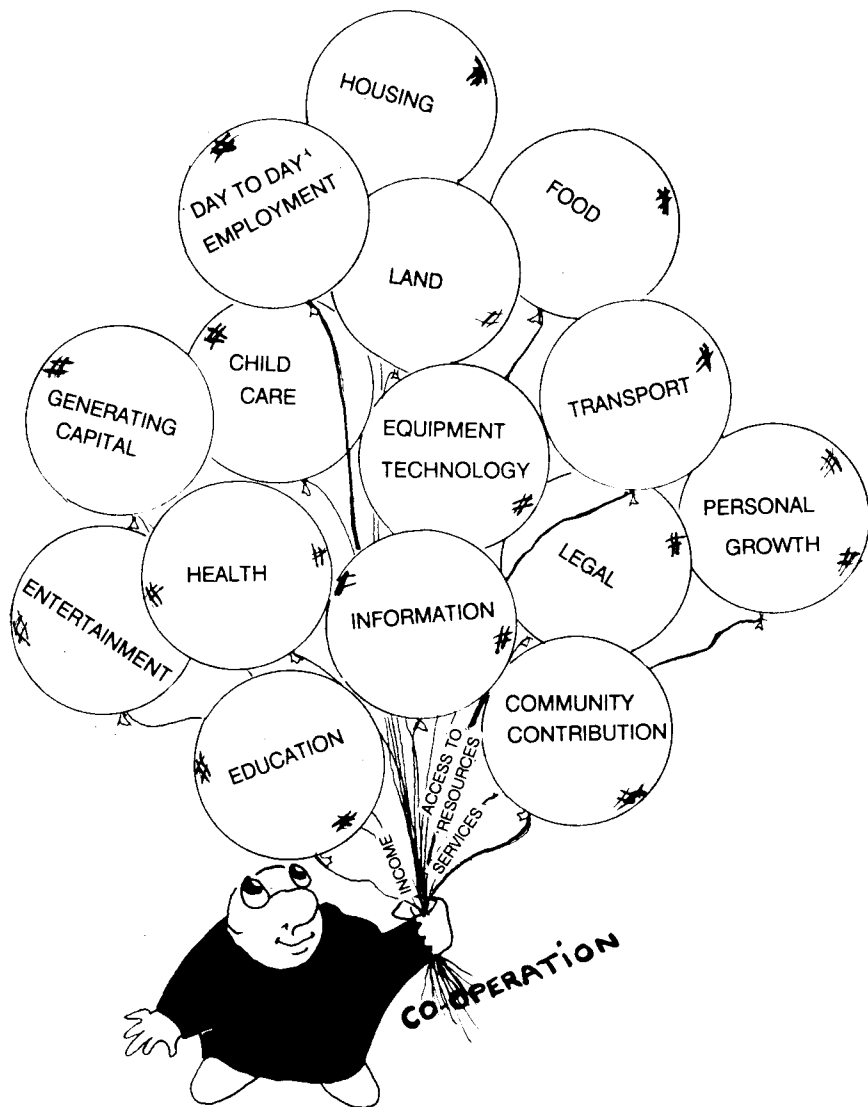


Maleny Co-operatives

A QUARTERLY REVIEW

Volume 1, Issue 2

2nd Quarter 1990



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EDITORIAL

Welcome to the second edition of the Maleny Co-operatives Review. Our first issue focussed on our introductory articles about the existing Co-ops in Maleny. This time we have two new organisations to introduce — Black Possum Publishing Co-op and The Barung Landcare Group. We also have an apology to make — we neglected to include the Prout Community Settlement Co-op on our family tree (first issue cover). This time they're included in a big way with an interesting article.

As well, there are updates on the Co-ops represented in the last issue, and as promised, a contribution on the Maleny Co-operative Dairy Association acknowledging its importance in Maleny's Co-operative history.

We are also floating the possibility of a new initiative — a Co-operative Housing venture. Relevant ideas to date are presented.

By the time this comes off the press we will have had another Co-op Education Seminar and we will bring your feedback in the next edition of your Co-operatives Review.

The Maleny Co-operative Review is published quarterly by a committee comprised of representatives of the Co-ops. Committee members are:

Meg Barrett	Peter Pamment
Jill Jordan	Janel Skrandies
Margi O'Connell	Jan Tilden

Thanks to: Julie Dahlenburg, Wendy Merrill, Sally-Ann Prout, Clarissa Townsend and Andru Martin

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MALENY & DISTRICT



28 Maple Street, Maleny, Q. 4552

Telephone : 942 144

LIMITED

Ethical Investment

◇ by Tony Lillicrap, ethical investment advisor.

This is a new and exciting concept in financial planning. At a time when the health of our planet is being recognised as critical for future generations, the power of investment into socially responsible areas has important and far-reaching effects.

WHAT IS ETHICAL INVESTMENT?

Ethical investment is a term used to indicate that a particular "ethical" criteria is being applied to investment decisions. (Socially Responsible Investment is a term some people prefer to use.) What is ethical to one person may be unethical to another, so "Ethical Investment" is a subjective term to describe how people invest their money in a manner consistent with their principles and ideals.

Investors have a right to expect a good rate of return on their investment. They also have the right to select how their money will be used.

WHY INVEST ETHICALLY ?

Some of today's major concerns include environmental and social issues such as:

- ☐ soil depletion
- ☐ rainforest destruction
- ☐ water pollution
- ☐ development of community-based industries
- ☐ support of local industries
- ☐ wood chipping

- ☐ repressive regimes


- ☐ armaments

Your dollars could be part of the solution to these issues.

We are also seeing a world wide trend in companies being told to "clean up" and pay compensation for environmental damage and for lack of responsibility towards workers, etc. Events to do with agent orange, asbestos and the chlorine spill in India have been subject to very large claims and payments. How much have these claims cost the investors?


If you are interested in the welfare of your community, and the planet, find out how your investments, no matter how small or large, can affect the environment. (This is your opportunity to discover how you can help.)

The Maleny Credit Union is known Australia-wide for its promotion of Ethical Investment.



**WE ARE TRADING IN NUTS
- & SO CAN YOU !**

For more Info:
Letsystem Maleny
Bunya House, 28 Maple St.
Office Hours:
Mon - Thur 11 Am - 4 Pm
Fri 11 Am - 5 Pm
Sat 9 Am - 11:30 Am



Inside Out

Just when members think the alterations to Bunya House have finished (and are looking good), the Credit Union is about to do more. The teller's office is being enlarged to allow room for another teller by moving the wall back to the door going into the 'back' office. The wall between the 'back' office and the office previously occupied by Janice Willetts is being removed totally. The alterations will be carried out during a weekend so that there is minimal inconvenience to members and staff. These alterations, when complete, will create a more efficient work space.

And that's not all !! Not only is the work space being restructured, but the staffing of the Credit Union is also being restructured. The Directors have approved a proposal to alter the management structure from the present two co-managers with an assistant to a management team of three.

The idea for restructuring management came about when Vernetta made known her intention to resign as co-manager. Some members suggested having one manager with a couple of assistant managers. This structure in the one Credit Union usually adopt with member growth. When a credit union appoints a 'General' manager, it is often only a matter of time before that credit union becomes just another financial institution.

By establishing a management team at a time when memberships are over 1150, your Credit Union is ensuring that a co-operative management structure is in place before membership growth gets to a point where the appointment of a 'General' manager would be necessary.

I'm sure that members will join the Directors and Staff in wishing Vernetta the very best in her new venture.



Legislation Update

In the last edition of the Co-operative Quarterly, there was an article about the sub-committees of the Credit Union. Guess what? We have yet another one.

Reading the many notices on the Credit Union's notice board, most members would be aware that the Federal Government has legislated three additional Acts and the Queensland Government has legislated one additional Act that requires Credit Unions to furnish to both governing bodies various reports and information. To assist in a smooth implementation of these Acts, the Credit Union has formed a sub-committee consisting of some Directors and the Management.

The purpose of the sub-committee is to set guidelines in accordance with the various Acts and be available to members for any enquiries, in writing, about these Acts.

The sub-committee is currently examining the Cash Transactions Reports Act regarding requirements for new accounts. The requirements apply to new members AND existing members accounts. Members should note that if there is any change in the signatories of existing accounts, the same requirements as for new accounts apply.

Changes to Interest Rates on Saving Deposits

With the increase in the number of member accounts (over 1500) and the corresponding increase in expenses to administer those accounts, the Credit Union has no option (other than introduce account-keeping fees) but to alter the interest on saving accounts.

As from March '90, the interest rates are \$1.00 - \$1000.00 (minimum monthly balance) 6 % pa on every dollar, and \$1001.00 and over (minimum monthly balance) - 8 % pa on every dollar.

CHAIRBOD'S AGENDA.

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Opened. | |
| 2. Present. | |
| 3. Apologies. | |
| 4. Previous Minutes. | (Moved & 2nd) |
| 5. Business Arising. | (Details separate sheet) |
| 6. Memberships. | (Moved & 2nd) |
| 7. Correspondence. | (Moved & 2nd) |
| 8. Manager's Report. | (Moved & 2nd) |
| 9. Credit Committee Report. | (Moved & 2nd) |
| 10. Financial Sub-Committee Report. | (Moved & 2nd) |
| 11. General Business. | (Details separate sheet) |



C.E.D.A.

Aim

It is the aim of C.E.D.A. to be of service to others so that the long term prosperity of the region serviced by Caloundra City is assured.

Charter

C.E.D.A. operates under a socially responsible and environmentally sound ethical charter in order to assure the long term economic future of the region.

Objectives

C.E.D.A. will lend assistance to any individual, group or organisation involved in the :

- creation of any new business
- support for existing businesses
- development of new industries
- improvement of training opportunities
- creation of new jobs
- which support our ethical charter of social responsibility and environmental sustainability.

What C.E.D.A. Does

- ☐ *Offers a free and confidential one-stop advice and counselling service to new and existing businesses.*
- ☐ *Provides a referral centre for assistance in matters relating to business planning, financing, marketing and management.*
- ☐ *Sponsors community businesses and co-operative activities.*
- ☐ *Promotes new ideas in business through research and community consultation.*
- ☐ *Provides appropriate and affordable business premises through the development of shared workspaces.*
- ☐ *Organises training programmes, self-help projects and special assistance when and where it is required.*
- ☐ *Promotes the idea of "enterprise".*

How You Can Help

- ☐ **By becoming a member of the Caloundra Enterprise Development Agency (C.E.D.A.).**
- ☐ **By becoming a consultant to clients of C.E.D.A.**
- ☐ **By joining the C.E.D.A. advisory group to assist the management in providing a quality service.**
- ☐ **By provision of goods and services in kind to both C.E.D.A. and its clients.**
- ☐ **By provision of office equipment, furniture and building supplies to assist in the development of the Business Incubator.**

Who Is Involved

C.E.D.A. has operated on the Sunshine Coast since 1986 as a voluntary group of business people and community workers concerned about the lack of employment opportunities in the region.

In September 1989 the group incorporated as a non-profit company limited by guarantee and received the state's first Local Employment Initiatives grant from the Department of Employment, Vocational Education and Training.

C.E.D.A. is a partnership of Business, Community and Government whose aim is to stimulate job creation through the development and growth of local economic activity.

What is Enterprise Development?

Enterprise is a group of qualities and skills which enables individuals, organisations, and communities to be flexible, creative and adaptable in their approach to change.

Enterprise Development is the process of assisting people to use their imagination and exercise their powers of responsibility, creativity, management and initiative. These skills are developed in a context of business creation and community improvement.

Want To Know More?

For more information contact Margi O'Connell at the Maleny office of C.E.D.A., Shop 1 "Beechwood Place" 45 Maple Street, Maleny

or by phone on (071) 94 3922.

Also available in Caloundra and other rural towns in the region by appointment



Healing Unemployment.

“The in-born creativity in all people is no mean or accidental thing.

Neglect it or disregard it and it becomes an inner source of poison.

It can destroy you and all your human relationships.

On a mass scale it can ...may it will inevitably destroy society.

On the other hand ...nothing will stop the flowering of a society that manages to give free rein to the creativity of its people— *ALL* its people.

It is the essence of our times that communities should start NOW to lead their people to self-reliance, work enjoyment and creative opportunities.

This is a thing that cannot be ordered or organised from the top. We cannot look to bureaucrats or Governments to unleash this creative power.

It is a job to which we can only *LOOK TO OURSELVES.*”

E.F.Schumacher, author of
"GOOD WORK"



Since the first issue of this joint newsletter three months ago, the Maleny Enterprise Centre concept has made great progress. The most exciting news is that we are negotiating a lease over the old Butter Factory in Coral Street to house the Enterprise Centre's shared workspace. This building has been our preferred option for premises, as it is extremely spacious and consists of areas which can be used for both "clean" (e.g. food processing) and "less clean" (e.g. mechanical workshop) enterprises. We feel it is a grand old building, with great potential!

Currently, it is housing the Dairy Co-op's shop until they complete their new premises next door. Upon completion of the new building, the factory will be vacated, and the Enterprise Centre renovations can begin. It is estimated that this will take place around May or June, slightly later than we had anticipated!

Then the real work begins. The task of renovating the premises to cater for the fledgling businesses that will make use of them; division of the huge space into areas tailored towards the needs of each business, and provision of support facilities from a central reception area. It seems a process that is totally in keeping with Maleny's co-operative nature, and therefore one that is assured of success.

Even though the project has substantial Government funding, it will still require energy from the community for its start-up; for example, working bees that will enable the vision to become the reality. And it will require maintenance energy in the form of the expertise and

Progress of The Maleny Enterprise Centre.

support from those in our community who are willing to share with those who are beginning to learn about self-management.

One of the most important characteristics of a vibrant community is its ability to give of its knowledge freely so that the best that it has to offer is passed on to those who can develop it even more: the next generation.

If you are interested in adding your support to this project in one of its many facets, please contact someone at CEDA, 1/45 Maple St., Maleny.

A Housing Co-operative for Maleny

♦ *Clarrissa Townsend.*

In these times of escalating real estate costs and interest rates, and of the 'haves and have-nots', many people are exploring viable alternatives that combine realistic housing costs, with economic and environmentally sound strategies.

Housing co-operative movements have developed strong followings in Australia recently, with common-equity Co-ops the favored model.

Several Housing Co-ops have started in Brisbane since 1978, and one on the Sunshine Coast started in 1984.

All are running and expanding well, and have good reports. These are non-equity based, where members collectively own the housing project, but aren't entitled to recover any equity should they leave. The nominal rent paid to these rental Co-ops, entitles tenants to full rights and responsibilities. This rent goes to a common pool for maintenance and property purchase.

Generally, Co-ops are based on the premise that housing is a right and necessary for all. Co-operatives work as a whole toward the good of the group, as well as the community.

Non-equity Co-ops try to remove housing from the profit-making arena, therefore becoming affordable by all who enter the Co-op.

Some principles are: 1. to be democratic 2. non-profit (any surplus goes towards more housing) 3. membership is voluntary and non-discriminating 4. they are committed and mutually supporting

The Brisbane groups started with grants from Local Government and Community Housing Program (L.G.C.H.P.), which provided the initial purchase funds with help from members. The tenant is found, using a points system to establish the most needy household in the group. Successive purchases are made as the Co-op expands its financial members. Quite often these Co-ops buy a small block of flats, which then fills the needs of several households instantly, and also accrues surplus funds sooner for the next purchase.

Co-ops can also buy land and build group housing projects. Financial members need not necessarily require housing immediately, but it may suit them to own some "non-interest-bearing assets", which can be called upon in future years. These are referred to as "mutual benefit housing trusts", and are an ethical investment.

It is intended to establish some type of Housing Co-operative in the Maleny area, notwithstanding the Co-ops and Communities already existing. This may either be a rural establishment with a group housing project and an income-producing small crop area, or as a standard equity Co-operative.

Interested people can contact the writer via the Combined Co-operatives Quarterly Review file at C.E.D.A., Shop 1, 45 Maple St, Maleny.

Our Origins as a Co-op Town: The Maleny Co-operative Dairy Association

♦ Jan Tilden

When I first lived in Maleny in 1974, if someone said "You can buy that at the Co-op" no second look was needed to decide which co-op they meant. There was only one - The Maleny Co-operative Dairy Association, which ran the butter factory and a co-operative store. For a city kid gone country, the feelings that attended a visit to that store were important in helping me feel at home here. I enjoyed leaning on the counter in my checked shirt and gum-boots, waiting my turn as I listened to fellow customers exchanging predictions about the weather and other information of interest to farming people. In those days (only 15 years ago!) time seemed less important, so if service was slow it was almost a blessing - more time to soak up the atmosphere and revel in the feeling of belonging.

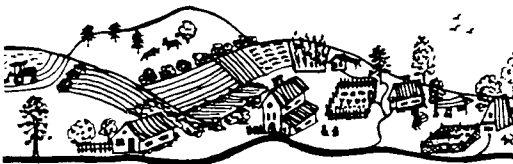
Our new publication - a review of Maleny co-operatives - seemed incomplete to me without some acknowledgement of this first generation co-op. On the advice of George Cassells I approached Mr. Alan Webster, former Chairman of the dairy co-op Board, who kindly provided me with information for this article.

So. To begin with, a rough chronology of events:

1903 - Seven of Maleny's early settlers gathered at the home of the late Joseph McCarthy and resolved to establish a co-operative butter factory on the range.

1904 - The co-op was registered under the Primary Producers Co-operative Companies' Act. The first cream was treated at the new factory.

1905 - The factory was officially opened. It was sited in the main street, roughly opposite the building now housing Frews' Foodstore.



Late 1900s - Maleny butter won a gold medal in London - after being transported by wagon to Landsborough, bogged on the way, unloaded and reloaded in the process. From there it went to Brisbane by rail and to England by sea.

1912 - A more modern factory was erected on the site of the recently demolished produce and hardware store.

1927 - The bitumen sealed road to Landsborough was completed, solving the problem of transporting Maleny butter over a difficult and often boggy wagon track.

1940 - The building now occupied by the co-op hardware store, and soon to become the Enterprise Centre was erected to house what was then one of the most modern dairy factories in the State.

Early 50s - The co-operative produce and hardware store opened.

1951 - The Board of Directors received remuneration for their work, at the rate of 10/- per day. Monthly meetings ran all day!

1955 - The 50th anniversary. Dairying in Maleny was in its heyday. 300 farms supplied milk to the co-op. A commemorative booklet was produced to mark the occasion.

Early 60s - The first departure of the Maleny economy from its dairy base. 5 farms purchased by C.S.R. The School of Arts Committee, as a fund-raiser for the replacement of their burnt-down hall, held a competition to see who could guess what new and strange use would be made of these farms. Two of them were subsequently put under macadamia nuts, and the others resold.

Early 70s - New economic arrangements within the dairy industry, and the change from milk-can collection to bulk vats put some small farmers out of business. Land-owners grazed beef cattle on the former dairy land. "New settlers" started renting ex-sharefarmers' cottages (rents \$0 to \$10/wk).

Mid 70s - Slump in the beef industry. Real estate boom began in Maleny.

1978 - Maleny dairy co-op amalgamated with Caboolture. At that stage there remained



only 76 farms supplying milk to the co-op. Shortly after amalgamation, the Maleny factory closed.

1987 - Caboolture Co-op amalgamated with Qld. Farmers to form Queensco.

1990 - More and more farms are being sold up, often to developers. The franchise area for Queensco now includes the areas formerly covered by Wide Bay, Maleny,

Caboolture, and Booval Co-ops. The milk we now buy in Maleny comes from Booval!

This brief history of the Maleny Co-operative Dairy Association roughly chronicles the rise and decline of the dairy industry in this area. In its heyday, the MCDA was the largest single employer in the town. As dairy farmers, most of the district's residents would have been members, and very active members at that, since their livelihoods depended on sound management of the co-op. There were no problems getting quorums at AGMs, which were lively events by Mr. Webster's account. An average AGM might attract 80 members; more would come if some major change was in the offing. No problems attracting and keeping directors either. Some were happy to stand for more than 40 years!

The Primary Producers Co-operative structure remains an integral part of the dairy industry throughout this country, and as such, it is strongly tied to the mainstream rural economy. The current trend towards amalgamation reflects broader economic necessities such as competitiveness with overseas producers. Small dairy farms, and indeed small dairy co-ops are no longer viable.

Nowadays, Maleny is gaining a nationwide reputation as a pioneer in a *new* co-operative movement. The emphasis has moved back to small and local. Most of the people involved are new to the area, but the spirit of co-operation which gave rise to the Maleny Co-operative Dairy Association in 1905 is still alive in these beautiful hills. Maleny has always been a co-operative town.



What's New at the Co-op?

♦ *Graham Nott*

The most significant change that has taken place at the Co-op in recent times must surely be the new system of classification and labeling of fruit and vegetables. Now all produce is clearly labelled and colour coded according to N.A.S.A.A. (National Association for Sustainable Agriculture Australia) classifications of organic growing. We hope that eventually everything sold at the Co-op will be sold under a green label. The colour code is explained on the chart above the fruit and vegetable shelves. Please ask the staff if you are not certain what the colours mean.

Another recent change in the shop is the introduction of a peanut butter machine, which ensures your peanut butter is as fresh as you can get it. The roasted peanuts are ground while you watch, and you can choose between smooth, medium or crunchy. Not only is your peanut butter extra fresh, but it now costs you much less, about \$1.20 per Kg less than when we were buying it in bulk.

To help you with your shopping you can find a new set of scales hanging just in front of the refridgerators. Now you don't have to guess how much bio- dynamic rice you have helped yourself to, or if you are overindulging your liking for those delicious white grapes, you can be certain you have the right amount before you buy. The scales have been installed for your convenience, however they are not meant to be used as an exact measure for pricing your purchase.

Soon to be seen in the back room to streamline the packing operations is a new labeling machine and scales. Now as quick as a packet

of sultanas, or a jar of olives, can be put on the weighing pan, a label pops out with all details clearly printed. Next packet, next label. This machine will save hours of time at the packing table and ultimately help to save dollars for you on your grocery bill. Not only will this machine be appreciated by the staff but also by our wonderful band of volunteers who come along regularly to help keep the shelves stocked with all the goods we pack "outback". We would like to say how much their time and effort is appreciated by all involved at the shop, staff and directors of the Co-op.

Have you seen what is available from our freezer. Next time you are in have a look, you might be surprised what delights we have for you - "Food for Friends" meals, ice-creams, croissants for you to cook yourself (perfect everytime), frozen free range chickens, "even biodynamic ice", vegetarian ravioli, or frozen mini plum puddings. Have a look!

We hope you enjoy shopping at the Maple Street Co-op as much as we enjoy providing you with your needs. If there is anything you can't find, please ask, it may be just needing to be packed.



Maple Street Co-op Building Fund

After 10 years of operating in rented premises Maple Street needs its own building. With prices rising so rapidly in Maleny there won't be a better time to do it. Our problem however is that, as a non-profit enterprise we don't have any cash reserve. We've looked at a numbers of properties and believe we can arrange a land and building package for approximately \$200,000. We need to raise this through loans from Members, donations and fund raising activities. The Co-op dinner is one fundraising event. We're also working on a lottery. Pledges from members for loans are also being sent out since everyone's financial circumstances are different. Members can name their own interest rates. If you are interested in making a loan or donation please phone one of the directors to discuss the proposal. Current Directors are:

Jan Tilden:	942 575
Meg Barrett:	942 680
Christopher Pollard :	942 380
Sally Ann Prout:	943 316
Greg Viner:	942 803
Allen McClure:	942 809
Debbie Barton:	942 339

LETS TAKE THE CO-OP HOME !

ZAP!

**Professional
Cleaning**

Offices & Houses

Phone: **SALLY ANN** 94 3316

or \$BUNYAS



A Sister Co-op for Maple Street

♦ *Margi O'Connell*

During our "future planning" workshop held last year we decided to "adopt" a sister Co-op in some disadvantaged region as a way of sharing our own good fortune. Not long after I received a letter from J.N.N. an inspirational development project I had visited in India in 1988. We decided to adopt J.N.N. as our annual project dedicated to removing poverty and injustice in the slums of Bombay. They run a women's Co-operative making soft toys for sale in Europe and a school for drop-outs aged 7-20. The school is what we call "alternative". It receives no government support, teaches in the native language and using local experiences as its source material. The standard of teaching is high with many teacher college graduates using it as a "finishing school" despite its low rate of pay.

So many children come to the school that they operate in two shifts — morning and afternoon. When I was there the school was leased in the back yard of a welfare agency and its only buildings were two cow sheds. (Photos of the J.N.N. are on display in the Co-op window.) They have now been offered the opportunity to buy premises of their own and, like us, are calling on people sympathetic to their goals to help where they can. However, in Bombay, land is among the most expensive on earth and, unlike us, they need to raise millions of dollars.

Making J.N.N. our project for the year allows us to share our own good fortune. As well as our tithing, members and customers in the shop can also support J.N.N. through the donations jar on the counter.

Every little bit counts!



Mountain Fare

◇ by Meg Barrett

On the 12th December, 1989, Mountain Fare Co-operative became the state's first Women's Co-operative, when thirty-three women gathered to celebrate the incorporation. Soon after, we moved into our official "home", a shared premises at Beechwood Place, ending a long search for an appropriate office.

The new year has been significant for the Mountain Fare herb growers at Bridge Creek, who have begun marketing fresh organic herbs on a regular basis, as well as experimenting with innovative ways to preserve herbs for the off-season. Meanwhile, "Food for Friends" continues to establish its reputation for fine food, catering for functions as diverse as a political luncheon, weddings, dinner parties, and a weekend for three hundred teenagers. In addition the cooks at "Food for Friends" maintain their superb frozen food lines.

Directors of Mountain Fare were pleased to participate in the recent New Directors' Workshop, organized conjointly by the Maleny Co-operatives. This workshop is yet another example of co-operation among our co-operatives, which is surely a valuable direction for us to pursue.

A Spring Festival for Maleny

◇ by Lillian Okorn.

Mountain Fare's training unit, the Women's Education Service, is involved in organizing a September Spring Festival for Maleny. D.E.V.E.T. has expressed an interest in co-sponsoring the

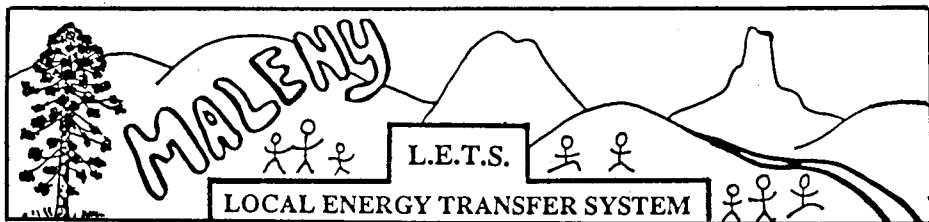
project. The festival will run for three days and workshops will be held on such things as Local Employment Creation initiatives, co-operatives structures unique to Maleny, Land Care, Women's issues, arts and crafts as well as a separate children's festival. Entertainment of a high standard is on the program for both evenings - events not to be missed. Planning is in its early stages but the festival is likely to be held at the Showgrounds in the September School Holidays with camping sites available as well as billeting and the Guest House for people from out of town. This festival promises to be a wonderful learning and fun experience for everyone.

This year the W.E.S. will be offering another two Women-in-Business courses following the success of last year's course. More information to follow.

Christie's Childcare.

Since Mountain Fare first got together two years ago Christie O'Connell has provided the childcare for us. This has been just great for everyone - Christie loves the kids, the kids love Christie and we love the break. Childcare is an important part of all our activities and as we are gearing up for more activities in the 90's we need to secure more quality care like this. So we have helped Christie on her way to a new career - one she's always wanted. Mountain Fare has sponsored her to do a Certificate of Childcare at Maroochydore TAFE. We are also helping her set up a Day Care Service in the children's area of the old Baptist Church in Maple Street. Christie and friends - thanking Jason Bundy and Charmaine Bergann - have fenced in a play area and she now needs donations of furnishing and toys.

The Department of Family services has agreed to subsidise supporting parents who use the service and Christie hopes to open on the 27th of March. Bookings can be made through Mountain Fare on 943922.



The Bartered Bride

Well, everything but. ALAN KERSHAW reports on communities where goods and services are traded.

(reprinted from "The Bulletin")

Part 1.

If Australia's economy ever really sinks, there are pockets of the countryside that reckon they have organised some lifeboats. From Canada they have imported an astonishing scheme which pioneers say is already improving local lifestyles, developing skills, strengthening communities, taking the pain and boredom out of unemployment and cushioning townships from external bumps and thumps.

A non-profit Local Employment Trading System (LETS) ingeniously allows hundreds of people to barter goods and services throughout a community. In the Maleny district, 100 km north of Brisbane, it's building houses where the only cash outlay need be for materials. In Bellingen, on the mid-north coast of NSW, it allows non-monetary trading in clothes, food, childcare, gardening, horse-breaking, car repairs and dozens of other goods and services.

Schemes are springing up in Brisbane, Melbourne, Adelaide, Woollongong, Perth, Fremantle and Sydney, as well as a host of rural regions. LETS seems set to spread

throughout Australia... providing that the authorities acknowledge it to be a genuine regional economic strategy and not some bizarre new form of tax evasion.

Each LETS creates a kind of "brownie points" local economy which transcends the limits of conventional one-to-one barter. For about \$20 a year (to pay phone and computer costs), traders join a scheme, nominate the services they will provide and receive a computer balance of zero units. Monthly newsletters list services available from everyone, along with phone numbers and first names. To request a service, you contact the individual offering it and negotiate payment - in LETS units alone or a mixture of LETS and cash. No one is forced to trade. Each buyer notifies a part-time co-ordinator who "acknowledges" the supplier with the agreed number of units, deducted from the recipient's balance.

The supplier can then seek services from anyone on the list. And so can the recipient. It doesn't matter whether you are "in credit" or "committed" (in debit). No interest is charged or paid on accounts, so there is no point hoarding units. A negative balance means units have been issues to others, not borrowed from them. Because each account starts at zero and equal amounts are added and taken from accounts with each trade, the system stays in balance. Trustees and advisers benignly police each scheme.

After only two years, Maleny has about 240 members and monthly turnover of some 5500 "Bunyas" (its units are named after a

local tree). Annie offers professional typing, Yvonne keeps accounts, David is a driving instructor, Geoff and Francoise do architectural design. Jim and Regine make videos. June, Beth, Paul, Sharon, Ken and Noni offer massages. LETS can also cut your hair, mow the lawn, take you bushwalking, sailing or mountain-climbing, repair a guitar, knit you a jumper... and advise men in child custody cases.

Both Maleny and Bellingen list the gamut of "newage" services. Bellingen's 163 members also trade in eggs, fruit and vegetables, professional fashion and, soon, even bread. Frank McCormick, owner of the town's Good Food health shop, likes the way LETS fosters the local community. He plans to sell some goods soon on a part-cash, part-LETS basis. "More and more things are produced locally, including bread," he says. "This makes it more feasible."

Carina Hack, co-ordinator of courses at nearby Coffs Harbour college of Technical And Further Education, had a LETS handyman roof her back porch. Suzanne Sloan, 29, earns units from massage and word-processing - and spends them on such services as house painting, lawnmowing, child care and art.

Bellingen LETS trustee Claire Hogan, 32, is stunning townsfolk with one-off outfits made by local dressmaker Jacky Flavell. Hogan chose the patterns and awarded Flavell 15 LETS units an hour.

Hogan has also had paving and gardening done, a wardrobe built and a manuscript edited. She says: "A lot of the time, I have to advertise and encourage people to use my services in financial counselling or mediating. When people first join, they're worried that they have to earn LETS units before they can spend them. It's a fear thing that carries over from the Federal currency. But, until people start transacting, nothing happens. One day, I thought, 'This is ridiculous: I'll just go out and spend some'. The same day, the person I was transacting with said, 'I need

some financial counselling' and we did it right there in the park."

LETS, Hogan finds, encourages trust and optimism. "But it also encourages flexibility. People don't necessarily need recognised qualifications. It's experience and competence we're looking for. You don't have awards and unions and things".

The Bellingen scheme is enabling co-ordinator Christine Palmer to buy a caravan for \$3000 cash plus 1000 LETS units. "I don't know if I could afford it otherwise," she reckons.

LETS units have also brought Palmer jewellery and an outfit from Ann Rosewood's Kakadu Clothing. "Right now, we've only got one electrician. And not many of the businesses in town are in it. But it's a very practical thing that works and is building up," says Palmer. "At first, everybody says, 'What if someone spends up and then leaves?' It's certainly not been a problem. We've just had someone leave who was 600 units in credit.

"The idea of being able to go into commitment means that we trust you to honour your commitment to our community. And people do. In Bellingen, everybody knows each other; it's a small community. This is making me love the town I'm living in. It's giving this feeling of safety, because we are in a little way insulated from what might happen outside."

(Part 2 to follow in next issue)



"We have the Knowledge. . . and the trees. . ."

Eden Fruits Nursery is now open at Crystal Waters Permaculture Village

No order too large

Tropical, Sub-tropical fruit trees, multi-purpose trees and natives.

For details and price list contact Eden Fruits, Crystal Waters, MS 16, Maleny, 4552 ph. 944 690

OPEN FRI., SAT., SUN., 9 am to 12 noon

LETSNETWORKING

◇ *Andru & Janel.*

The concept of networking LetSystems can be thought of in a few ways. Firstly there is the networking of information on how and why to use the Lets concepts. This has been going on for a while, and Maleny is often the first contact with LetSystem philosophy for interested people around Australia. We send out 'kits' for a nominal fee to anyone who applies. We also send out a set of discs for running the LetSystem on a Personal Computer. In a lot of ways this is a part of the explosion of ideas being networked around the world to empower the small people on the planet ... which is surely one of the basic ideals of the LetSystem Concept, and we will keep it going!

PEGASUS

We are now linked to Pegasus, and there is an ongoing 'conference' of LetSystems happening on the computer network. Basically this allows us to phone up the computer, read (and get copies of) any article of interest, AND put up articles, or feedback that we have written, to keep the conference going. This is happening (slowly), and anyone interested in reading this information, or contributing to the conference should contact Peter Pamment via the LetSystem. NOTE: there is a LOT more than just Lets Info on PEGASUS!

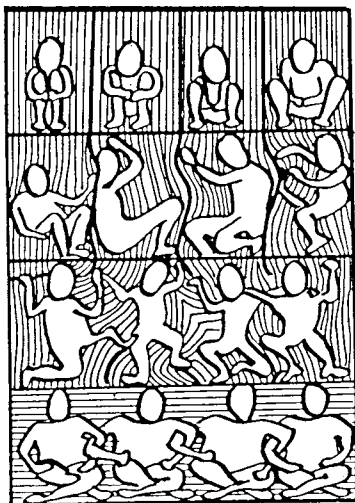
INTERLETSTRADING

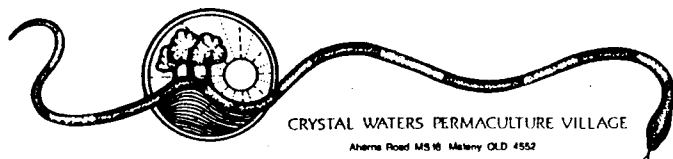
There is an increasing number of requests for people to trade between LetSystems, and while we can see a few ways of doing this, there seems to be some need for doing it carefully. Surely there must be some limit on the flow of energy out of the LOCAL area. How can we implement this? Perhaps there should be a restriction on trading for goods and services that are available locally, and what about pressuring our local businesses to join rather than just going out of the area to get what we want? Also there will be an added workload to keep track of out of area trading, and finding out about any inconsistencies could waste a lot of time and money. Should we limit the trading to only nearby LetSystems or can anyone join in?

So far we have had only requests for Inter-Lets Trading, and no feedback from people who intend to trade **ONLY** locally ... What do **YOU** THINK?

LETS NET GO

Maleny being the starting point for new, untried Lets ideas in Australia, we decided at the last LetsMeeting to give the InterLets-Trading a go. We will pilot a system between the more local Letsystems for a limited time period of six months. This involves Lets Maleny becoming a member of e.g. Lets Brisbane and vice versa, and a little extra month end balancing for the trustees. We are preparing some guidelines for how this trading will work which will be available at the Lets Office soon. We still have to talk it out with the other LetSystems involved, but the movement towards each other has begun. Your thoughts and ideas on this venture are still welcome !





Permaculture ?

◇ Robin Clayfield

Some of you may not be clear about what exactly Permaculture is or what a Permaculture Consultant does. This newsletter is a good opportunity to explain.

To give a classic definition, Permaculture is a design system which aims to produce an efficient, productive, sustainable and ecologically sound integration of plants, animals, people, structures and resources. It is based upon energy-efficiency on all levels and upholds the ethics of 'care of the earth', 'care of people' and conservation of resources.

Design is the key word. Permaculture Consultants will take an idea, a request for help or a conventional structure and, through design, create an integrated, wholistic system, often inspiring a model for others to follow.

Crystal Waters Permaculture Village is a classic example of this. The designers involved took;

- * a request to create a Permaculture on 640 acres of grazing land
- * the idea of sustainable rural village living
- * the building units and group titles act (conventionally the legal structure used in Queensland units and highrises). . . and created the first Permaculture Village in the world.

The Visitors Area at Crystal Waters may well provide another 'classic example'. One idea that the Co-op is looking at at the moment is

'Permaculture Holiday Share' which will take;

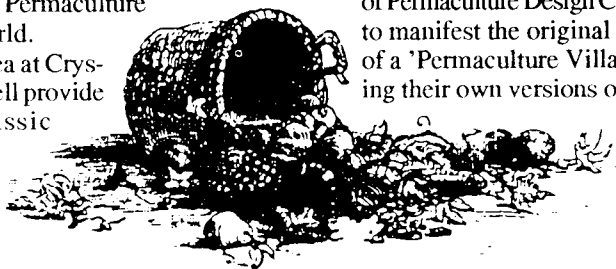
- * the conventional use of 'Time Share';
- * the current need for visitors accommodation;
- * a Permaculture approach;

to create a unique holiday experience where investors will be able to stay in one of a variety of environmentally sound cabins in a bush setting, for two weeks every year for ten years.

Design jobs that a Consultant may undertake include— •backyard design •garden design •farm design •house retrofitting •land searches •community/village design •orchard retrofitting •advice on species •on community development structures •aquaculture design •city farm design— and no doubt some I haven't thought of.

Various Permaculture Consultants may also offer implementation of design, tools and plants to use in implementation, books and resources of interest, Design Courses and Workshops and maybe even a point for distribution of surpluses or seed banks.

There are many Permaculture Consultants and Designers at Crystal Waters and also graduates of Permaculture Design Courses, all helping to manifest the original designers dream of a 'Permaculture Village', while creating their own versions of a Permaculture system and helping other lot-holders with theirs.



Economic Sustainability

◇ Jay Murray-McLeish, Co-op Secretary

One of the major objectives of Crystal Waters as a Permaculture Village is to establish a level of community and economic sustainability. As in an integrated living organism, we as a Co-operative are privileged to host a multitude of both multi-talented and specialised individuals. The skills represented by this community range from base line Horticultural experience to Computer technology expertise.

A team of talented and creative trades people has pooled their experience and resources to collectively and wholistically service both the Community and Bioregion.

The Builders' Co-operative will consist of registered carpenters, electricians, an alternative energy consultant along with landscapers and permaculture designers.

Terra Firma, trading as Rammed Earth Consultants, specialises in pise as the name suggests and operate as a registered company from Crystal Waters. Earth Links are currently in the developmental stages of the formation of a Mud Brick Company and hope to soon service the local Bioregion.

On the horticultural plane, Eden Fruits Nursery, trading in our Village Centre and Earth Care Enterprises wholesale and distribute a wide range of plants and trees. Eden Fruits specialises in the distribution of tropical fruit trees, shelter belt trees in both native and exotic species. Earth Care Enterprises specialise in aquatic plants, tropical root crops and specifically Bamboo. Their skilled teams are available for consultation in design and implementation.

Our enterprising Community shop is once again operational and invites inter community trading both with local and federal currencies thus offering individuals outlets for surplus produce.

To market our Community services, produce and high quality craft items, we are able to utilise the skills of Co-op members with advertising, graphic art, public relations and media skills to penetrate the external markets with ethical produce.

Our Co-op seems blessed to have in its midst so many alternative healers ranging from Spiritual Guidance to Homeopathy and Massage. We hope it won't be long before these souls join together under the one banner, to create a wholistic healing centre.

In order to maintain a healthy balance between functionality and spontaneity, regular "Events" are co-ordinated by our Adventure group which encourages all members to share in sporting, relaxation and group activity days.

Economic sustainability can only be achieved through interaction with the Bioregion. Our scheduled workshops, tours markets, festivals and of course fun will help to integrate the Crystal Waters Co-operative and its members into a well organised, functional team of prosperous individuals.

For information regarding any of the above mentioned skills and services, our Co-op office is womanned on Tuesdays and Wednesdays.



**EARTHCARE
ENTERPRISES**
Based at Crystal Waters

PO Box 500
Maleny Q 4552
Ph 071 - 944650

Permaculture Consultants and
Earthcare Nursery present

PERMACULTURE DESIGN COURSE

- ☐ OCT 20th - NOV 3rd at Crystal Waters
- ☐ Taught by Hans Erken, Skye, Nigel Parratt and Robin Clayfield
- ☐ \$550 cost includes 2 weeks in the Visitors Area and night time activities



Who's Green in Maleny

Why is garbage increasing much faster than the growth of the population ?

One of the reasons is that many people accept shoddy goods that are meant to breakdown after a very short life. This is planned to keep the wheels of industry turning. We have become used to convenience living, instant food, throw away one-use products, and one stop shopping. We need to reduce the quantity of garbage we throw away.

- First re-use every item you possibly can.
- Second save paper, glass, plastic, and metals for recycling.
- Third, become a **DISCRIMINATING** purchaser and buy only what you really need, avoid shoddy goods, throw-away items, overpackaging and so called luxuries.

Below is a list of local businesses that are taking the first small steps towards helping the environment and waste problems. They may only be small steps now but if we all support those businesses and buy the environmentally safe products, who knows in the future these first steps may become leaps and bounds.

GRANTON STATIONERY

- Stocks - recycled photocopy paper, envelopes, stationery sets, school exercise books, writing pads, and lecture pads.

FOODSTORE

- Stocks - 3 brands unbleached toilet paper, unbleached paper towels, Killyptus Environment Safe Insect spray, and Disinfectant, some organic fertilizers and garden sprays. Down to Earth products : biodegradable creme cleanser, toilet cleaner, liquid laundry detergent, dishwashing detergent.

- Recycles - Cardboard for WasteBusters - Caboolture plastic milk bottles.

When interviewed Alison Frew said she is passing onto suppliers the needs of her customers and has been requesting unbleached disposable nappies and tampons. Unbleached tissues will be in stock in the near future. Alison said there is a definite trend towards pump and roll on deodorants and that the **FOODSTORE** would be phasing out sprays as demand lessened.

CHEMIST

- Stocks - does not stock any products with Flurocarbons and only a minimum of products containing Hydrocarbons. All cosmetics are non-animal tested.

•A very organised recycling corner with paper, cardboard, and plastics - separated and going to WasteBusters, bottles to the Scout Group and tins to Lions.

Marek offered to show other businesses how easy it was to set up recycling. His biggest concern is disposable nappies which he is considering to discontinue stocking.

NAGY'S

- Stocks - unbleached toilet paper.
- Recycles cardboard.

Mrs Nagy is aware of the demand for more environmentally safe products but found there was not much available. Storage space was the problem with recycling more.

McMAHONS BUTCHERS

- Using paper bags and reducing the amount of plastic wherever possible.

NEWSAGENCY

- Using recycled paper bags for their packaging.

MALENY CREDIT UNION

- Using recycled paper wherever possible for all stationary and computer paper.
- Recycles paper, cardboard, plastic, and bottles.

MAPLE STREET CO-OP

- Stocks - all products at the Co-op are environmentally safe and recycling is not something new to them. The Co-op has been recycling bottles, jars, plastic bags, and anything else they can find another use for.

Industries Assistance Commission Inquiry into Recycling



◇ by *Pauline Shewchenko.*

Maleny WasteBusters recently made a submission, to the Industries Assistance Commission, for their inquiry into recycling.

The Industries Assistance Commission (IAC) is an independent advisory body. Its main functions are to advise the Commonwealth Government on the nature and extent of assistance which should be given, to report annually on the general structure of Industry Assistance in Australia and its effects on the economy !

The following is a brief summary of the major recommendations which we have submitted to the IAC. We have a copy of the full submission should anyone wish to investigate the supporting arguments more fully.

1. Recycling and processing of recycled materials must be kept, as much as is possible, on a local/regional scale - thus keeping transportation to a minimum.
2. Subsidies must be given to industry to encourage the setting up and purchasing of machinery for recycling.
3. There is a need for door to door collection of recyclables, - and for compartmentised receptacle(s) for easy source separation. Also for research and trial subsidies to assist in setting up a workable system.
4. There is a need for initial funding to set up local Recycling Depots, and assistance with funding for regionally based capital equipment of chippers and shredders.
5. There is a need for financial incentives (i.e. the lifting of sales tax or similar) for the purchasing of recycled products. Also for pricing and taxing policies which favour recycled goods.
6. Government purchasing policies must favour recycled products.

7. Research must be conducted into all aspects of recycling, from grassroots problems to technical limitations. Need to set up an independant Government / Industry funded research facility.
8. Waste disposal to reflect recycling trends - those who separate their waste for recycling gain the benefits from revenue raised through recycling (i.e. lower rates) and those who do not wish to separate (i.e. use landfill dumping) should pay TRUE costs for their waste disposal.
9. Provide disincentives for unrecyclable mixed components and/or excessive packaging and also unrecyclable products.
10. Give products and packaging recyclability ratings.
11. Institute education programmes on recycling, recycled products and waste minimisation.
12. Container deposit legislation and/or incentives to companies to take responsibility for the waste stream they produce through their products.
13. Realistic royalties on virgin raw materials which take into account ALL costs involved in their use. These royalties should ensure it is more economical to recyclable and re-use products than to buy in raw materials especially those from overseas.
14. Allow, under health regulations, food waste to be used in composting programmes.
15. Building codes to allow for the use of second-hand and demolition materials.

The full submission was presented at a public hearing on 12th March 1990. A draft report will be released by the IAC, for public comment, around August 1990. The commission is to report by 28th February 1991.

WASTEBUSTERS Regionally

The hallmark of a useful organisation is the extent of its penetration into the community. Not only did WasteBusters take off with a bang in the Maleny Community, but also in other regions as well. Within three months of the Maleny start-up, 20 other groups had formed along the length of the Sunshine Coast, as far North as Gympie.

Based on this enthusiasm, we formed a regional group, which has been meeting monthly ever since. The aims of the regional organisations are to share information about recycling practices and possibilities, to share resources, and to present a strong lobbying front to Government and Industry alike. Each group is in the process of incorporation as an Incorporated Association; in this way, they will be able to receive grants should they become available, and present a more united front for lobbying.

WasteBusters everywhere are having a huge educational impact. For Example, the Maroochydhore and Coolum groups have been involved in helping Maroochy Shire Council to conduct trials of 1000 households outside the Buderim area. Maroochy will base any recycling strategy on the results of this research.

Other projects that the group are investigating include the purchase of an organic waste chipper which could circulate between groups turning their garden waste into material suitable for mulch or compost. High capital-cost items of machinery such as this would seem ideal to share, since the

likelihood of a single group being able to afford them is slim.

WasteBusters are also in demand to provide their services for waste disposal "events", such as the Maleny Folk Festival and the Surf Life-Saving Carnival at Marcoola. This year, World Environment Day will also have environmentally right-line waste disposal. Although we do not get paid for this work, it is an excel-

lent opportunity for education and P.R.

On the lighter side, Maleny WasteBusters staged a Recycled Raft Regatta on the Baroon Pocket Dam, with a variety of creative rafts entering into the day's hilarity. This is planned to be an annual event.

LANDCARE

Do you care???

Caring and enthusiastic people who want to take some practical steps towards a better environment are needed.



LANDCARE



is more than just treeplanting.

Become a BARUNG LANDCARE member or contact Dean (W: 943922 or AH: 942661) to find out how YOU can best put your skills and interests to work caring for our planet.

Joint/Family Membership (\$15) entitles you to 10 free trees each year, free or discount workshops, seminars, field excursions and walks. Being a member will enable you to be kept up-to-date on Landcare activities.



Black Possum Publishing Co-op

◇ *by John Lamb*

Family greetings from Black Possum to all of our 'fellow members' of Maleny's vibrant Co-operative family!

Black Possum Publishing Co-operative was formed at a public meeting in Maleny on February 8th this year in response to considerable interest among our community (and indeed farther afield too) in the establishment of a community based general publishing house.

Much of the philosophy behind the venture relates to a clearly perceived need to address the difficulties faced by many very talented and creative writers and artists in reaching markets for their work - due in no small measure to the monopolistic and restrictive nature of the publishing industry in Australia.

The title 'Black Possum' was selected as appropriate for such a venture based in the Sunshine Coast hinterland, the title referring to a marsupial native to the region. A Co-operative structure registered under Queensland law was, after careful examination of options, considered to be the most appropriate particularly as co-operation and team effort will be the essence of the organisation. Formal registration is now proceeding.

Subsequent upon the formation meeting the newly elected Board has met with the original steering committee and taken over the reins and a second public meeting has been held for the purpose of reporting Board deliberations to members and to get member input and support. It is planned to continue this practice for the time being due to the many complex issues needing maximum member involvement.

Black Possum's general business plan is to assemble, edit, publish, produce, market and distribute a variety of original material submitted by members including stories, poetry, prose, journal articles, art and graphic art work, photographs, sheet and recorded music, sheet and recorded lyrics, children's yarns, and recorded stories. There are also plans to produce a quarterly magazine which would include examples of some of all of the above material types. Guidelines for contributors are currently being prepared and contribution and payment agreements drawn up. Editorial policy will be uninhibited.

We are fortunate in having among our members a number of folk with considerable experience of writing, photography, graphics etc.. as well as publishing from the industry's 'inside' and we have created several Teams within the Co-op to handle editing, publishing, production, design, sales and distribution and finances. Membership of these Teams is voluntary, non-elected and open to all shareholder members. Experience is not necessary.

Membership of Black Possum Publishing Co-operative is by share subscription, currently at \$10 per share and is open to all adult persons regardless of age, sex etc.. and organisations can also apply to become members. The number of shares which can be held by any one person or organisation is limited and shareholder membership is subject to Board approval.

Our first two publications, collections of poetry by John Wells and Stephanie Bennett were launched at the Poet's Picnic, in Tesch Park, Maleny, Sunday March 11th. Plans are also afoot to design and produce an annual 'Black Possum Diary' containing written and visual contributions and other material from hinterland residents.

Further information :

Secretary:	John Lamb	94 4581
Directors:	Riki Baumann	45 7657
	Jill Morris	94 3284
	Glynis Tap	94 4690
	Larry Ward	94 2933

Barung Landcare

Land! What is it? Is it soil, rocks and climate, or the unique mosaic of plants and animals they interact to support? Is it an area on a map supporting humans through domesticated plants and animals? Is it areas of wilderness supporting a vast diversity of living organisms? Is it political or community territories, or river systems and catchments? In fact its all of these and more! It's a finite, once off, non renewable treasure constantly in a state of gradual change. Until!...

The land "managers" step in. We are all land management decision makers. What we eat, how and where we travel, what we buy or sell, where and how we live, whether we choose to build with timber, brick or steel, cook with gas, wood or electricity, wear polyester or cotton - almost every lifestyle decision we make is a land management decision.

Landcare is a practical means whereby the community can participate to determine its own landuse needs and devise ways of achieving its goals.

Last year, with the very obvious land degradation of slips and erosion that followed the April deluge, enough people decided that it was time to stop saying 'something should be done about this or that problem' and to start taking positive practical steps towards achieving improved land management in our area. Obviously this requires a stock take. What have we inherited? We need the extensive knowledge and wisdom regarding the land from its older managers. Their knowledge of the vagaries of the weather, the history of landuse, prior vegetation patterns, past crops tried, wild fires etc. are absolutely vital pre-requisition to any decisions on future land use. Ignorance cannot be used as an excuse for bad management indefinitely. Much is already known, and judging from the cooperative and caring response of over 150 people with widely differing backgrounds and experience who have joined Barung Landcare Association since its formation in October 89, much will be achieved.

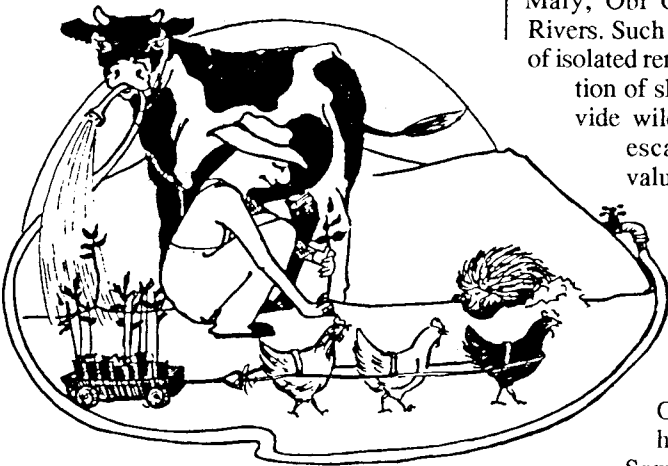
The major concern expressed is in re-establishing vegetation on the steep unproductive and landslip prone flanks of the Blackall Range and the river system corridors of the Mary, Obi Obi, Stanley and Mooloolah Rivers. Such a vision would see the linking of isolated remnants of vegetation, stabilization

of slip prone slopes. It would provide wildlife habitat and beautify the escarpments. Fragmentation of valuable agricultural and horticultural land has been identified as another concern.

Creek bank erosion is a major problem in areas where the natural riverbank has been cleared, with some properties on the Obi

Obi flats and Stanley River flats having 6m shear eroding banks.

Some property owners have ex-



pressed a wish to know the best methods of weed and pest control. Some are interested in establishing forest plots and improving pastures. There is considerable interest in providing corridor pathways and walking tracks.

Obviously the only way many of these perceived needs could be met would be through the cooperation of many landowners and voluntary workers. Funding is essential. Coordinating our voluntary plant propagators (there are now 18 individuals and 4 schools), and keeping them supplied with seeds, potting mix, pots and advice, is time consuming and involves travelling. Similarly, visiting landholders offering planting advice and services, and gathering local knowledge and information, all takes time and money. Specialist skills are required to create a database which will make available the vast array of information volunteered readily on the subject of good catchment planning. Obtaining and coordinating a solid and skilled voluntary workforce, necessitates a sound management structure, and for these reasons we have sought incorporation under D.P.I. landcare constitution or as non-profit association. Our aim is to promote a landcare ethic of long term sustainable landuse in the best way to meet the communities needs.

A venture spanning so many disciplines needs the support of many, and your support is invited, especially at this stage when we are trying to nurture to maturity the Barung Landcare Initiative.

PROJECTS UNDER WAY:

(A) Interviewing Landholders - to determine

- ☐ Significant sites within property worth protecting.
- ☐ Degraded sites requiring attention.
- ☐ Landuse potential of cleared areas.
- ☐ Landcare assistance requirements.
- ☐ Landholder resources and skills available to the project.

(B) Computer mapping database.



A joint pilot Barung Landcare project is underway with inputs from the Department of Geographic Information, National Parks, D.P.I., Forestry, Maroochy Shire Planners, Q.U.T., School of Landscape Architecture, and Planning and most importantly the local residents; The aim is to formulate an agreed catchment plan for the Kondalilla Falls catchment. The first step is to enter graphic information about vegetation, soils, landslips, slope and weed areas, horticulture and urbanization onto the computer database facility offered by Sunmaps, and then overlay future landuse priorities over the base data. If this approach proves successful funding will be sought to continue this work in other catchments throughout the Barung area.

(C) Reforestation training enterprise.



We have just furnished additional information with the hope of securing funding to adequately research the feasibility of using a traineeship scheme. This scheme would provide a skilled workforce to satisfy landholder demand for a bushland regeneration and agro-forestry planting service. Landholders would pay for a group of supervised trainees to provide an agreed service. Initial response from landholders suggests that this could be a viable self-funding enterprise, given the voluntary back up of our Barung propagator network which would provide cost effective trees and shrubs.

(D) Voluntary propagators.



In just four months since our launch we have a small army of eighteen volunteers and four school groups tending rainforest seedlings. About 3,000 of these are ready to be pricked out and potted into the tubes we have just purchased. (We will need extra help with this!) We have purchased a stockpile of pot-

ting mix. The milk cartons kindly collected for us by WasteBusters are proving most useful as deep tubes. On 24th and 25th March we are hosting a two day workshop on Rain-forest Propagation at which professionals will share their knowledge. This was booked out within a few weeks and promises to be invaluable to meet our increasing demand for plants.

(E) Geological tour.



April 7th will see a most informative and educational tour by eminent Geologist Warwick Willmot who will explain the geological history and processes evident in this area - a must for anyone who has an enquiring scientific mind or who has wondered how long it has taken for the present features of our landscape to form.

(F) Wildlife and Botanical Walks.



Frequent walks to familiarize all interested with our local flora and fauna are planned. Exciting spotlight walks have been conducted and have already pointed up a need to find out more about our local wildlife and the effects of the ubiquitous toad !!

Our next meeting will be held on 9th April, C.W.A. Hall, 7:30 pm. All welcome!

Starting a "Community Co-operative"

The PROUT Co-op Experience

♦ *Jenny, Paul, Prabha, Steve, Giita, Michael.*

The PROUT Co-operative is situated in Bridge Creek Road, Maleny. We are one of several 'community' Co-ops in the Maleny area, others being Frogs Hollow (just down the road from us), and Crystal Waters and the Cedarton Co-op. By 'community co-op' is meant a co-operative whose primary purpose is to own land for the settling and livelihood of its members as distinct from a producer or consumer co-op. The PROUT Co-op shareholders are all members of Ananda Marga and management is in the hands of residents on the land, presently three families.

People often ask what the word 'PROUT' means. PROUT is short for Progressive Utilisation Theory, which is Ananda Marga's social and economic philosophy. The PROUT Co-operative in Maleny owes its existence both to Ananda Marga's ideological commitment to the co-operative system and to the foresight of two of our founding members, John and Susan Brinnand, who will be known to many people in Maleny since they were also founding members of the Maleny Credit Union. John and Susan have subsequently left Maleny to work overseas but as a result of their initiative, the present three families (that's six adults and eight children with more expected soon!) moved from Sydney to join the community.

Like any new community we were faced with many difficult decisions. What is the best system for community ownership of land? How closely can we integrate our lives?

TRUCK HIRE

A/H Phone:
Keith
942895



- * 2 ton truck
- * reasonable rates



WASTEBUSTERS

What is the best way to utilise the land we have? We shall briefly describe our approach to each of these questions in the hope that it might be helpful to some readers contemplating community living.

1) For many people, group purchase of land is the only way that they are likely to afford the pleasures of a piece of rural Australia. In Queensland, I believe the best three options for group ownership of land are the Primary Producer Co-op, Group Title and the Community Settlement/Advancement Co-op. The Primary Producer Co-op, is certainly the simplest and cheapest from a legal point of view but it requires that all income earners on the land should be earning the majority of income from primary production. This is a hard way to start if most of your members (like us) have no previous farming experience. The 'Group Title' legislation has been deliberately designed for group ownership but meeting surveying costs and quite stringent council requirements can be very expensive. Furthermore Group Title requires that each owner should have unencumbered freehold title to their allotment, whereas we wanted to maintain the land as a single entity. The 'Community Settlement' option in Queensland is not ideal but it does overcome the freehold problem. The greatest problem to co-operative ownership of

land in Queensland is the requirement for 25 members minimum. But after some negotiations with the bureaucrats we found a way to have two classes of members distinguished by their financial commitment, so it is possible to keep management in the hands of residents. In other words the requirement for 25 members is no longer the problem it was once thought to be. We incorporated as the "PROUT Community Settlement Co-operative" in January 1988 and after 2 years we have not encountered any unexpected problems.

- 2) We initially perceived three options for our community relationships;
- a) individual houses on different parts of the land i.e. leading quite independent lives;
 - b) individual houses but close enough together that we are within "cooee" and naturally able to grow closer together;
 - c) a "group house" where we share meals, bathroom facilities etc. but separate satellite bedrooms around the group house i.e. a more kibbutz orientated community.

We decided upon the second option, since the first did not seem sufficiently community orientated while the third was too much of an intrusion upon the family lives we were used to living. The result works well for us. On Saturday mornings we have collective breakfast followed by a management meeting and on Sunday mornings we have group meditation followed by breakfast. We invite each other to meals on occasions and frequent visits from interstate friends provide yet another excuse for getting together!

- 3) None of us had any previous agricultural experience when we first arrived on our 53 acres. but as any community person knows, living on the land chews up huge quantities of money, so we quickly had to come to terms with becoming farmers and growers. We now have a small herd of cows that supplies our dairy needs. We have planted orchards, put in ponds and dams for water management, purchased bees for honey and pollination, guinea



fowl to control ticks and ducks to control an explosion of cane toads. This last trick seems to be working! Tedious jobs like control of weeds and road maintenance are more easily done co-operatively and joint ownership of farm equipment saves money.

One of us, Paul Alister, recently attended a Permaculture course at Crystal Waters and has started a business growing water plants i.e. water chestnuts, lotus and sagitarius. There is a growing market in Australia for these traditional SE Asian foods. Another of us, Prabha, apart from managing the dairy herd, is also working with the Mountain Fare Co-op growing herbs. Despite of our previous lack of farming experience, it is surprising how quickly one develops a feel for it. However each family still depends on an outside income and this is probably the best way to get started if you don't have money saved.

Now that we feel more established in Maleny, we are turning our efforts to starting a primary school. Many local residents have expressed the great need for an 'alternative' school in this area. Ananda Marga schools are open to all children and their educational philosophy is based on 'Neo-humanism'. The essence of Neo-humanism is contained in two ideas; that this entire creation is a living entity and that the ideals of humanism should be extended to include animals, plants and the environment. Emphasis is placed on developing the students all round personality by cultivating creativity with dicipline, idealism with practicality, self-realisation with social out-look and so on.

We would like to close this article with a mention of other producer, consumer and community co-operatives established by Ananda Marga in many parts of the world. Our biggest project is in Purulia district, Bihar State, India. One hundred years ago this district enjoyed a fertile soil with great diversity of crops. Today it is thousands of hectares of bare stone that alternately flood and drought. The people are so poor that after

rice harvest, women and children scour the fields picking out individual grains of rice from the soil for their evening meal. Ananda Marga's project in this area, known a Ananda Nagar, is attempting to bring some 1000 hectares of land under co-operative management. Development is village orientated and based on permaculture principles which are relatively unknown in India. Already hundreds of small dams and ponds have been constructed to trap surface water and trees and crops are growing where before there was only stone. Bio-gas plants and solar power panels have been installed with the help of Central Federal Government technicians and we have built the only functioning hospital (with operating theatre) in the region. More importantly, small producer co-ops, such as a weaving co-op that utilises locally grown cotton, provide employment for local villagers.

The rapid success of Ananda Nagar is proof of the co-operative system and sound agricultural management but success has not come without strong opposition from the West Bengal communist government. Over the past two decades the communists have used police and hired mercenaries to attack many projects and villages within Ananda Nagar. Many Ananda Margas workers have been killed in these attacks, the most recent being in January of this year. Ananada Nagar is ample proof that the poverty of India is a solvable problem given the sincerity and dedication of those who would attempt to tackle it. By contrast the West Bengal's communist premier and his son have become millionaires in less than a decade, a pattern of corruption reminiscent of eastern Europe. Nevertheless we have great hope for the future of the co-operative system in India and its contribution to the abolition of poverty.

Contact Michael on 943-109 for more information.

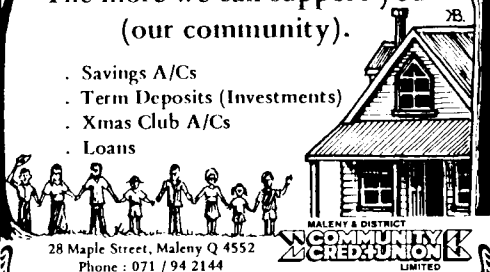


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