

Maleny Co-operatives

A REVIEW

Volume 2, Issue 3

Spring 1991



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EDITORIAL

The editorial team is heartened to see that the theme for this edition of the Co-ops' Review, "Community Enterprise", has moved the pens (or computer fingers) of some new contributors. We thank you for your efforts and hope that you will continue to write for the review. Of course we also thank ourselves (the editors) for the contributions that we regularly make.

The theme for the next edition, due out in November, is "Achievements for the Year". The deadline for contributions is the 14th of October. This theme will give us all a chance to reflect on our successes, congratulate ourselves for them and perhaps set some goals for next year. We hope more new people will be encouraged to write. From now on, we will also be accepting "Letters to the Editor". Publication of these will depend on their length and the availability of space, so please be as brief as possible in getting your message across (limit 200 words). Happy reading (and of course writing)!

The Maleny Co-operatives Review is published by a committee comprised of representatives of the involved groups.

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Letters to the Editor

As a relative newcomer to the co-operative scene in Maleny, I am puzzled by the ethos which seems to surround the role of co-op director.

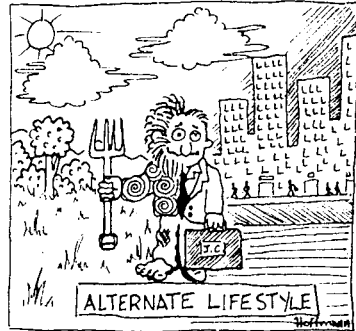
Everyone is in hearty agreement that payment of workers for the total number of hours they work is a laudable aim and there is (rightly) concern to avoid exploitation of workers. Yet similar aims and concerns do not exist when it comes to the work of directors. In fact, for reasons which I have not been able to ascertain, the concept of payment of directors is anathema. There is usually much tutting and head shaking at the mere mention of such an outlandish proposal, which seems to slot in somewhere between being "not nice" and unethical.

Why? The Act recognizes the payment of directors' fees. I know that similar co-ops outside Maleny are quite prepared to acknowledge the work of their directors in financial terms. So I would be really pleased to be filled in on the reasons why Maleny directors are expected to shun any suggestion of recompense for their labours.

To my mind, as the Maleny co-ops become large and prosperous and the work of being a director becomes more onerous and responsible, payment of fees to directors seems quite equitable. Such fees would go towards meeting small but cumulative out-of-pocket expenses that directors inevitably incur. Further, fees, or a commitment to their payment in principle, both recognizes the work done by directors and also allows a level of commitment and expertise to be expected from those who take on these responsible positions.

Meg Barrett

One Year down the Track



• Ann Jupp

Observations on life in Maleny, those enterprising Co-ops, Lets in particular.

Just over twelve months ago I arrived in Maleny- burned out from a stressful job and lifestyle, dreaming of a "retirement" growing vegies, getting healthy, and watching the lovely Maleny sunset.

Enterprise is the theme of this Co-ops' Review and I have to pay tribute to the Maleny Co-ops - all of them - for the way they get you involved, very subtly "suck you in", even. Now one year on, I have to say that I'm enjoying life immensely, working as hard as I ever did, and have still to find time for the relaxation and fitness I sought - and rarely have time to watch clouds and sunsets!

All I had heard about LETS was from Jill, and in the busy-ness of working life in Melbourne I had vaguely thought "This would have worked beautifully in the community of Eltham (where I lived) several years ago", when it was still an outer, ruralish suburb, before it was invaded by trendies. Now everyone there is so busy earning their money that the personal and community values have been lost along with dirt roads and a little

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shopping centre where everyone knew each other, and you didn't need to lock your car.

Computers I had avoided like the plague!! Another yuppie toy that I didn't want to play with. I had been working at the Royal Women's Hospital when they went to computers to record the very natural event of birth. Bizarre! As student midwife, I was exempted from the problem of learning how to put in the statistics of my deliveries, as they had a wealth of senior staff supervising who all seemed to get a kick out of operating the dreaded machines. All you had to do was play dumb to avoid it completely. Around this time my son was bringing his work computer home and not only fed data in - all incomprehensible to me - but also played games with it. I resisted his urging to play Baseball and the other sport and games with him. My excuse was that the mechanical American voices were too off-putting, and I wasn't into learning the rules...my story when faced with card and board games as well. Guess I'm just lazy!



Here we are now, more than a year into Maleny, a town I felt I knew from the many visits over the past ten years. A place I'd always known I'd live - some day. Comfortable, accepting, alternative, a great climate and a place which encourages creativity and most of all being. A few vegies are grown but not much time is actually spent in the garden. Thanks to Maleny's soil and weather

things seem just to grow by themselves. I have, however, learned a heap of new skills. Soon after arriving I met the Bridge Creek Herb Gardeners, just as they were about to disband! So I inherited a flourishing herb garden which no one had much energy for. Soon after this I got involved in the LETSsystem, which has now become a bit of an obsession. From the early days of being trained and learning the rudimentary beginnings of putting through acknowledgments on the computer - I clearly remember the absolute terror of being in there, on my own for the first time with the terminal! - I'm now in there boots and all. I keep finding myself volunteering for things, too. And I'm spreading the word, putting people in touch with each other via a rapidly expanding LETS Network, doing copies of our software to enable new LETSsystems to get off the ground, and even learning to use the wordprocessor. And meeting so many stunning people through being in the office one day a week. Earning and spending Bunyas and keeping the energy flowing.

I've become involved with Mountain Fare, too, and am on a regular packing team at the Maple St. Co-op. And have a regular job as probably the best qualified, least experienced housekeeper/cleaner a guesthouse could find - partly paid in Bunyas.

The new skills I've learned in the past year have been staggering. Marketing parsley, potting and selling herbs for Markets, computers, public relations, tractor driving, lobbying, serious recycling, meeting procedure (consensus, of course), interior decorating, waitressing, and now branching into writing. Maleny Co-ops, I don't know how you did it - changing the dream of a hermit and getting me so involved. It really was very enterprising of you !! And I do love a challenge.

MALENY & DISTRICT



28 Maple Street, Maleny, Q. 4552

Telephone : 942 144

LIMITED

Enterprise, Ethics, Terms & Personal Loans

• Peter Pamment

In recent times your Credit Union has been discussing interest rates in depth. The members forum in April formed part of this process and the directors have had many discussions, including a special meeting on just this topic. In the past the MCU has had a policy of trying to keep interest rates as stable as possible and offering loans at fixed rates. This was seen as offering the best service to members in days of high and rising rates. In the current environment of falling rates and more unpredictability there seems a need for a more flexible rate policy.

Your Credit Union is one of the ethical financial organisations. With the increasing emphasis of high ethics in both business and personal actions, as well as the principal of social justice being more generally accepted, the MCU has decided to implement new loan types and term deposits that more reflect its ethics. The expanding "ethical investment" area, with the introduction recently of the ACF Green Bonds, shows that people are concerned about how and what their savings are doing. The MCU can continue to be a forerunner in this area.

In the area of term deposits, the new MCU policy is for rates to differ only for the length of time of the deposit. That is, no different rates for large sums such as over \$20,000 or \$50,000. As we still need to attract large amounts in order to service

loan requests, the term rates are set at what is required to attract the larger amounts. This effectively means that smaller investors are being offered slightly higher rates than in the past. We feel that we should not discriminate against members who may be worse off (financially anyway!). In reality a small investor may have all their nest egg with us, an important amount to them in their life situation, whilst a large investor may have only a portion of their wide portfolio invested with us. There will also be a reduction of 0.25% in the rate for term deposits where investors request monthly interest payments by cheque, as this involves a cost to the MCU it's only fair that a reduced rate applies.

For new loans it is felt that, in principle, interest rates will be variable. However they will only be changed if there are large rate changes in the outside market which force the MCU to make adjustments in order to remain viable and also to enable it to continue to offer loans to members, without generating a long waiting list. The exception to this is that a ceiling would apply if rates ever went too high and hindered the ability of members to repay loans. While rates are going up members want their loans to stay fixed, but when they go down they want them to go down too! What we need is stable policy (unlike the current banking system) that is fair and just to current borrowers and new borrowers alike. The MCUs'

financial and social responsibility will always take top priority.

Loans interest rates are based firstly on the risk factor, that is what security is being offered, and secondly on the purpose of the loan. There are now a number of different loan rates depending on the risk and how important the MCU sees the purpose in fulfilling personal and ecological objectives.

The rates effective from Mid July are:

Motor vehicles	21%
Gas vehicles	20%
Personal Loans not MV	19%
Ethical Project Loans	18%
Community Land/Housing	18%
Mortgage Land/Housing	16% (Var)

The mortgage loan rate is variable in that it will change more often to enable the MCU to offer the lowest rate possible for housing loans. The other loans are personal loans with a loading or a discount depending on the purpose of the loan. The discount of 1% on ethical projects or enterprises and community housing will be made on application to the directors. The definition of what will fall into these areas is difficult and is of course subjective. The directors will assess each application on its merits. Perhaps we are opening a "can of worms", but we feel that we can do some chewing so as to make our community an even better place on the planet.

Finally it is hoped to be able to offer members with current personal loans at 21% the option to renegotiate their loans in line with the new rates sometime towards the end of the calendar year. The exact timing will be announced at the AGM on October 14th 1991. Members with mortgage home loans can renegotiate to the 16% variable loan rate now.



Is There A Voluntary Art Organiser Out There??

- Jan Maskall

We have all been enjoying the C.U. members' art display in the Credit Union Foyer which Ursula Thiessen has been organising since June last year. Since then we have had a delightful surprise each month when the next display appeared - and we would like to keep this "tradition" going! Anyone who would be interested to take over this exhibition organising from Ursula, please see the staff at the MCU.

Wanted: Directors

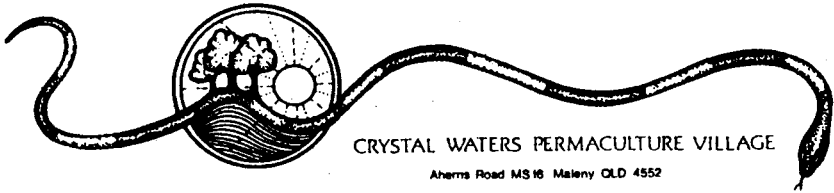
- Ray Passmore

The Credit Union is interested in increasing the number of directors on the Board. The position of director is on a voluntary basis, and usually, once accepted, the position is held for two years.

The directors meet once a month, although they are sometimes required to attend an extra two or three sub-committee meetings per month. The directors are responsible for the "behind the scenes" decision making that allows the Credit Union to run smoothly as possible.

Any member of the Credit Union is eligible for the position of director, and as I look through the "friends of the Credit Union" book, I see many people who would like to join staff or help out in other areas. Becoming a director could be another way of becoming involved with the Credit Union and helping your community.

Interested persons should contact the Credit Union for more information. Past directors are also welcome to apply.



Enterprising Good Times at Crystal Waters

• Skye

To me, there is a difference between enterprise and investment. One involves putting up your own time and money to back your own creative idea, while the other is essentially cashing in on someone else's ideas and efforts. While both activities are necessary, I find the enterprise process more interesting and exciting. Here at Crystal Waters we have many enterprising people and activities. I wish to mention, briefly, but a few.

Crystal Cuisine is a loosely formed group who work together to cater for the many courses and workshops that are held here at Crystal Waters. Their reputation for good food and friendly smiles is spreading rapidly. Recently they have started a *Saturday Nite Cafe* (held on Saturday nights yet!) which is proving to be popular with both Crystal Waters residents and Maleny people. In addition to a yummy meal, each night features a different activity, from circle dancing, to trust games, to musical performances, to educational games, to joke nights. For your night out with a difference, contact Robin (944707) or Karin (944666).

The Chai Tent is another loose group of co-operative minded entrepreneurs who are primarily dedicated to supplying a

relaxed, comfortable and musical alternative to the booze halls at the Maleny Folk Festival. This year will see a bigger tent again. Drop in and share a cup of chai, say hello to the chai tent gang (they're the ones with bags under their eyes, a weird sense of humour and a look as though they haven't closed the tents or run out of chai for the whole festival).

And how could we forget *Feral Productions* (alias Ma and Pa McLeish) - the best party throwers this side of Aherms' Road. Those who attended last Saturday's Performance Cafe will surely nod with approval. And who could forget the *Rhythm of Life Workshop* last Easter. If you're into music and/or dancing you'd better book now for next Easter's Rhythm of Life - rumour has it there won't even be standing room!



Maleny Credit Union AGM

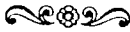
Monday 14th October

7.30 pm

Blue Room

Bring a Plate





Envisage the possibilities. (Believing it's possible creates miracles.)

Now is the time to start.

Trust yourself and others.

Evaluate (Keep track of how you're progressing.)

Release everything that has no relevance for the future. (ie. Give up the old to make way for the new.)

Plan (Write down your goals and visualise them and/or create a business plan.)

Reward yourself (because you deserve the best).

Imagine (Vividly imagine what it is that you want.)

State of mind (Go forward with hope and caring.)

Enjoy what you're doing. (It makes all the difference...and know that you are the key to your own success.)

Robin Clayfield

'Australia's future depends on our ability to be fully aware of our position on the globe, the forces that drive our economy and how to harness them, and the need for continuing research and development.

The pattern of employment will have changed greatly. Technology changes will eliminate drudgery and the length of people's working life will increase. New techniques will demand greatly increased knowledge and skills, so education will become prolonged and re-education routine. There will be little or no demand for unskilled labour, and what there is will be the province of those who cannot learn to do more difficult tasks. This will create social change that will increase demand for higher quality in writing, theatre, music and for adventures of the mind.'

Source: Sir Oliphant, M. Australia's driving force? Greed. 21c. The Magazine of the Commission for the Future, Autumn 1991, p.72.

MALENY
SPRING WORKSHOPS

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60 Workshops
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<p>THE ENVIRONMENT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> PERMACULTURE PLANT IDENTIFICATION ORGANIC GROWING SPIDERS <p>HEALTH AND WELL BEING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> FELDENKRAIS HOMOEOPATHY TAI CHI FOREIGN TRAVEL <p>ARTS AND PRACTICAL CRAFTS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> DRAMA LIFE DRAWING CARTOONING ANYONE CAN SING <p>COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10 WAYS TO RAISE FINANCE LET'S COMMUNITY PUBLISHING 	 <p>Costs:</p> <p>\$65 - 2 Days (6 Workshops)</p> <p>\$55 or \$40 - 15B (6 workshops, booked on or before 18/9)</p> <p>\$50 or \$35 - 15B (Concession or student, booked on or before 16/9)</p> <p>\$35 - Day 1 (3 workshops)</p> <p>\$35 - Day 2 (3 workshops)</p> <p>CHILDCARE</p> <p>\$15/day - Under 5yrs</p> <p>\$15/day or \$30/ family/day - 5-12 yrs</p>
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For further information contact:
Meg Barrett (074) 942 480
Ann Sage
(074) 942 619



The Maleny Spring Workshops

• Meg Barrett

Last year, Mountain Fare hosted the Maleny Spring Festival. This year, we've changed the name to the Maleny Spring Workshops. 'Festival' was an inappropriate term conjuring up expectations of fun and frivolity - and we certainly don't want any of that. This year, we'll focus on the serious business of education and enlightenment.

The nineties seems set to be a decade of expanding opportunities and the Spring Workshops are aimed at giving participants a taste of the myriad therapies, skills, services and ideas that are available to us. For example, try our workshops 'Eating Your Way to Enlightenment - A Guide to Personal Growth' or 'Macroneurotics and Being Obsessive About Food'. We'll again feature some of the popular workshops from last year such as 'Brahms Flower Remedies' and 'Manifesting Reality into Dreams'.

The organisers are delighted to say that newly elected Alder-One Jill Moredone will again present the Consensus Revision Making workshop. Unfortunately, owing to her busy schedule, the workshop will be conducted before 8.00am by telephone.

Another of our local high fliers, Margi O'Channel will demonstrate her amazing ability to link up with beings from afar (some as far as Caloundra).

Alternatively, experience the joys of Chai Ti, an extremely gentle martial art, focusing on delicate wrist and finger movements involved in raising a utensil to the lips. Finally, don't miss I-kid-o where you can learn not to take anything too seriously. See you at the Spring Workshops, if we manage to manifest them.

§	Mountain Fare AGM	§
§	Sunday 29th September	§
§	6pm at Malcolms - BYO	§

An Interview

Founder member of Mountain Fare, Karen Syrmis, and current director of Mountain Fare, Prabha Demasson, have recently formed a partnership to run the restaurant known as Malcolm's. Both have gained considerable experience in the food industry through managing Mountain Fare Catering. Mountain Fare is extremely proud of their combined efforts in identifying the opportunity, negotiating a deal suitable to their circumstances and establishing the restaurant. We now wish them every success as they leave the nurturing environment of Mountain Fare and step into the 'real' world.

The following interview was conducted by Sonar English.

Q. Prabha, what is your motivation in working in such an intense industry?

Prabha: For us, it means we do the cooking and deal with the catering jobs as they come up. This (the restaurant) is something we've never done before so it will be intense. But also the fact we are

offering something different, vegetarian food, is what's needed in this area.

People are changing their diets for moral, ethical as well as physical reasons. We are just catering to a need - we are at the right place at the right time. The emphasis that we have to put on this business is that we have to manage it really well. All the research I've done says that businesses fail because of lack of managerial skills. For us that is a learning process too.

Q: How do you feel that being a woman and a mother of a large family affected your final decision to take on the restaurant?

Prabha: After cooking at home and always making money from home and having to do that, I realised I needed a break. Creatively I needed an outlet where I wasn't going to be interrupted constantly. I could do something my way for a change. It is an important thing for me and it actually gives more quality time in my home life.

Q: What are your plans for incorporating bunyas into the restaurant?

Prabha: The idea we are working on is to have a bunya dinner once a month, like a family night where people can come and have a dinner for say 70% bunyas and 30% cash, which would cover our cash cost. Of course we are going to be looking for gardeners and vegetable growers. We really want to encourage people to grow things for us rather than having to buy from the markets.

Q: What are your aims for the restaurant?

Karen: To be the best vegetarian restaurant in south-east Queensland and to develop the art gallery. That is really important.

Q: Who will have the art gallery?

Karen: Our husbands, Steve and John. Both are artists.

Q: What do you enjoy about the chaotic restaurant business?

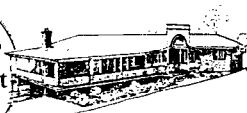
Karen: I enjoy that it is vegetarian. I enjoy it because I'm a woman and I'm in business. I enjoy the way Prabha and I get on. We really work well together and I enjoy that experience. I really like waitressing as well and telling people what's in the food and how healthy it is. It means a lot to me to be a vegetarian.

Q: Any future plans, goals or dreams?

Karen: I'm realising one of my dreams in life now, so that is a real buzz. Other goals. I don't want to let down on my parenting. I want my parenting to stay good. The family is important to me.

Q: With your dreams of running a restaurant coming true, are you having fun?

Karen: I'm having a ball. I get tired because I haven't worked full time for seventeen years. The body is taking a little while to adjust but I'm happy with the way things are going.



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To Smile Or Not To Smile

• Gayle Butson

Isn't it wonderful to be greeted on the street, in a shop, home or park with the warm smile of a friend, or the reserved but willing smile of a stranger. Working at Maple Street Co-op offers me ample opportunity to share smiles with sundry strangers and friends. Obviously there are days when my smile needs encouraging, as do those of others. There are expectations people appear to have, of myself and other Co-op workers, that do, at times, make it difficult to keep our smiles in place.

I would like to share two *incidents* that have recently tested my ability to keep a smile in place. The first incident was with a customer who isn't a "regular" but also not a "stranger". Among her items of shopping she wanted a jar of honey. I reminded her of the 30 cent *levy*, seeing she forgot to bring her own jar. This she brushed aside but when, at the end of the transaction, I asked if she wanted a bag, she scooped up her purchases and headed for the door saying "No thanks! I've already had to pay for the jar." Well at the time, I was too stunned to reply quickly enough that I had, in fact, forgotten to charge her for the jar. But was she implying I was also going to charge for the carry bag? Her tone indicated that this was the case, so I wondered if anyone had ever explained to her the history of the 30 cent *levy*. I would like to share what

knowledge I have of the events leading up to the current system, for the clarity of all those who may be in the same position as the above mentioned, unsmiling customer.

Ever since I first became involved with the Co-op (initially as a volunteer packer) there has always been a policy of bulk buying, where possible. This offers the Co-op's customers two main advantages, the first being a lower price for the product, the second - it gives us the opportunity to govern the packaging our goods come in. Well the obvious choice for items like cashew paste, oil, olives, etc. is the wonderful glass jar or bottle. So for a very long time people have had the opportunity of bringing their empty containers into the Co-op with the knowledge that we will put them to good use. That's all well and good, but that is where the story begins for the "Staff".

One of the staff spends some of her time, each week, sorting the containers that are deposited at the shop. Certain items we can't use because of their size, shape, lack of appropriate lid or any lid at all. These are removed to the Scouts' Glass Recycle depot. Others are put aside for people who supply us regularly with jam, pollen, goats' custard etc. Then we are left with the containers with potential.

To use any containers for selling foodstuffs, there are certain laws that apply for the safety of the consumer. The Co-op is obliged to respect and work within these laws. We are not unique in

the fact that we recycle/re-use containers for selling our products. Most restaurants and cafes re-use their cutlery and crockery, so they also have the responsibility of cleaning these items. When a restaurant is popular, it usually hires a dishwasher during the hours when they do their *biggest* trade. We have relied on volunteers (who are scarce) or the staff has had to keep up with the demand.

The containers have to be squeaky clean, inside and out, no labels, no price tags, no writing - just pure, clean glass to look through, and of course an appropriately clean, tight-fitting lid.

As the Co-op is being used by a *wider* number of people these days, the shelves empty quicker and we need to pack and restock more frequently. We discovered



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The Enterprise Centre Maleny

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that a lot of our staff hours during the week were spent at the sink getting glass containers to a state where they could be used. So we started encouraging people to clean up their containers before bringing them in. Each container needs to be de-labelled, scrubbed (in really hot soapy water), rinsed thoroughly along with its lid, then dried completely before replacing the lid. This could be done as each container was emptied, or as a separate job when you have collected a box full. We have had a good response to our request, and we do thank you.

But the second part of decreasing our time at the sink was to encourage customers, when wanting honey or similar bulk items, to present us with a jar appropriate for this purpose.

This has not gone so smoothly. People seem to find it really difficult to remember to put their empty jars into their baskets - there are some who can't remember the baskets. Yes, it is difficult at times to be organised, especially for something as simple as going shopping. We're still trying to break the habits of old, where we went to the shop with nothing but our money or bankcard, where everything on the shelf is packaged in appropriate (or not so appropriate) amounts, the people at the check-out counter place all your purchases in a bag and you return home. When all your items are unpacked you discover that the pile of packaging far exceeds the amount of goods you just put in your cupboards. Well isn't this story one that we want to change the ending of. Isn't this why We started recycling containers - to take back some control over the packaging we purchase our goods in. The issue is not only to re-use containers where possible, but to do our part in preparing them for re-use, not to leave this up to others. Old habits are sometimes hard to drop but new ones can

take their place. Before leaving the house to go shopping, even if not intending to buy a great deal, collect your basket, bag or box, put a jar or bottle into this and place in the car. Or leave these items in your car - who knows when the urge to shop may come upon you.

The staff decided at a meeting that maybe a *levy* on each jar would be a deterrent for that infamous lapse of memory. We started at 10 cents, which seemed to have little effect. When we put it up to 30 cents the ripples started, and even though it's been *over a year*, we still have customers who "resent" this. We don't wish to be seen as the ogres in the shop, but it's really difficult to smile at a customer when hearing for the umpteenth time that "I left my jar on the table" or "I brought a whole box of clean jars in 'just the other day'". We don't actually "need" the 30 cents, what we're aiming for is for the staff to be able to use their time and energy on other projects (that you can't assist us with so easily) that will make Our Co-op function more *efficiently*.

I hope you have persevered, I didn't wish to be so long-winded, but I did hope to be clear. So onto my second "grimacing" experience. Most of you would be aware that we recycle plastic bags, and we have recently had a window display that tried to express the condition in which we would prefer to have them dropped off at the shop. You see, we are not agents for Wastebusters, though we certainly support their efforts. It is much more convenient and time saving if we are given only plastic bags that can be used. Bread bags with mouldy crumbs in the bottom are not re-usable, nor are bags with holes in them. We, for convenience at the counter, sort bags into different categories. One day while I was occupied with this task, I encountered a "soiled" nappy. I'm sure this was not a deliberate

act, but it is indicative of the fact that some people still confuse what they present to us (to re-use) with their rubbish. Another area for re-education - I personally put my soiled plastic bags through the washing machine with my clothes. I know of others who rinse them in the sink when doing dishes. Ideally I try not to use them for most items, but sometimes it's unavoidable. But whatever your leanings, remember, one way of supporting your Co-op is to do these tasks at home.

If you have a container that you put plastic bags in after use, please make it a habit to turn them inside out, check for holes and possibly keep another container for the ones that are obviously unusable and deposit these direct to the Wastebusters' depot.

Thank you to those who have persevered with my ramblings. I hope to be able to greet you all with a smile in the future.

Maple Street Co-op AGM

12th September

7.30 pm

Blue Room

Bring a Plate



COOPERATION: the conscious or unconscious behaviour of organisms living together and producing a result which has survival value for them.



Enterprise - A Hard Act To Juggle

• Bob Sample

It seems that we live in a culture where most of us become manipulated by an economic system. This system takes hold of us at an early age and many of us can escape it only when we die.

We are taught to believe when very young that satisfaction with our life depends on attaining or retaining a certain standard of living. To do this we must have a regular and probably increasing flow of money or income.

Despite the fact that Australia has an abundance of land which is a national natural resource, we are forced to pay ever increasing prices for the smallest piece of land on which to build a dwelling. Despite chronic unemployment in Australia, we import from other countries ever increasing quantities of products to meet our needs.

Despite fertile agricultural land and farmers in financial difficulties, we import ever increasing quantities of food products. The quality of foods we buy continues to decline while the price increases.

During the 1960s and 70s many people in the "developed" countries decided to turn away from the mad consumer society. "Voluntary simplicity", "back to the earth" and "self sufficiency" were the catchcries. For a few lucky people, this has worked but for many, the dream has become a thing best forgotten.

We need money for many of the "necessities" that don't come from our gardens. We need time to fulfil the commitments we have. So it's back to town to find a job or we simply rely on unemployment benefits which provide only a minimum standard of living.

For our dreams to have been realistic, we needed skills and background experience that we just didn't have. It required much more than articles in Grass Roots or Simply Living. No doubt our ancestors had these skills and experience one hundred years ago. However we have long been urbanised and divorced from "self sufficiency".

Many people see the Maleny area as one where they can live and perhaps achieve a different balance. Perhaps Maleny can give the chance of a healthy and unpressured lifestyle and at the same time give the chance to earn a reasonable income.

Perhaps Maleny can allow us to earn an income not tied to the restrictions of a 9 to 5 job five days a week. We may even be able to earn income performing work that we like and in which we believe. Perhaps we may even be able to determine how long we work each week and when we start and finish. We may even be allowed to share jobs. For quite a few people this is becoming real by way of self-employment.

However the path of self-employment can be a difficult one. We have not been taught how to cope with the many challenges of small business. Statistics tell the story. Over eighty per cent of small businesses that begin trading are no longer doing so five years later.

Behind the statistics can be much heartache, debt and unpaid work. Yet there are the success stories, those that have made it and done well. People that have worked hard and have been

rewarded. People who have achieved the lifestyle that they wished for.

If Maleny is to become a community which is financially viable for its residents, we need to develop our enterprise culture. We have many organisations which work in this direction. We have our food co-op, our land co-ops, our credit union, our LETSsystem, our Wastebusters and so on.

The Enterprise Centre Maleny project aims to directly assist people start up their own businesses and to help them become established. It aims to provide affordable work areas, shared reception and secretarial services, and assistance with business management advice. The services it offers are not restricted to single person businesses. Community groups are valid ways for people to start up businesses. Co-operatives or partnerships may be formed.

For all who aspire to an income and independence by way of their own small business, the challenges should be understood. If they are, and plans are made to cope with them, then finance and fun can be a great combination - albeit a hard act to juggle.

By the time you read this article Maleny will have seen the old Butter Factory building converted to quality premises for up to twenty small businesses. The project is a far sighted one where the major benefits will be long term ones.

Perhaps by the end of the century it will be possible to look back and see the important place the Enterprise Centre Maleny project has played in the creative work done in our district. We have the talents; it is a matter of applying them within an enterprise system.



Caloundra Enterprise
Development Agency

C.E.D.A. NEWS

• Ginny McCaw

Well finally the move to Caloundra has been achieved and we are at last in operation mode! As the "new gals" on the street our first two months in the "big smoke" have been mostly taken up with meeting the key business/industry people and getting a feel for the city and its citizen.

Margi O'Connell as usual has done the impossible, achieved in two months what the average "exec." would have taken two years to achieve - broadened the horizons of all she has met and fostered the co-operative spirit in the city centre - so much so that we are now holding a half day **Ideas Generation Workshop** once a month and in early August will be holding an **"On Farm Value Adding" Workshop** specifically aimed at small crop producers on the Sunshine Coast.

Of course all this could not have been achieved without the support and co-operation of the Enterprise Centre Maleny team (the office you have when you are not in the office), the Credit Union for their ever present willingness to assist us in our logistical banking transaction traumas, LETS for understanding that you can be in two places at once and the morale Maleny is known for. Thank you!

Don't forget - Margi O'Connell is in Maleny every **Wednesday** to meet with our Maleny clients. Please ring me on **919122** to make an appointment and of course we still trade in Bunyas.





The Diary Experience

What do Black Possum members get from working on the Black Possum Diary ?

- Elsie Brimblecombe and Lesley Singh, both members of the 1991 and 1992 Black Possum Diary Teams.

As the second Black Possum Diary goes to press, it's worth looking at what Co-op members get from working on the project. Most of the people who worked on it last year have chosen to be involved again, and several new people have added their skills and energy, so something good must be happening!

Remuneration

This year, sales of Black Possum Diary 1992, due for release in mid-September, are expected to provide some remuneration for the members who worked on the Diary Team. Last year, except for the typesetter and the printer, no-one was paid for their efforts. Although some members again do not wish to receive payment for their contribution, the Co-op is moving significantly closer to its aim of providing a business structure which fully remunerates all who participate.

Building a sense of belonging

The production of the Diary involves

many meetings, particularly from April to September. We have no office and meet in members' homes, sharing an enjoyment of one another's company as well as the work involved in creating an anthology of original art and writing.

Through working together, we have made firm friendships and developed great respect for one another. For some, new to the district, it has been a satisfying way of cementing a sense of belonging.

Recognition

The Diary is a vehicle which shows not only the talents of local writers and artists, but also the editorial, design, layout, production and marketing skills of those who produce it.

The rewards from working on a project such as this come from the mutual recognition by fellow-workers of the skills and commitment each individual brings to their work, and from the pleasure the Diary brings to its contributors and its readership.

Personal Growth

Black Possum takes its educative role seriously. The friendly, caring work environment offers a safety-net where

people can hone their skills, or do things they have never done before. Somewhere close by, is a Co-op member with more experience willing to guide and support, or perhaps just believe it can be done!

In comparison to last year's experience, the production process has improved considerably.

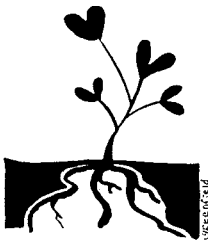
And, by working together to create something new, something unique, we learn a great deal more than mere publishing skills. We learn about ourselves and others.

Conclusion

The Diary is fulfilling many needs of the Black Possum membership. We also believe it fulfils needs of people far beyond the Co-op. Its community emphasis heightens everyone's sense of belonging. What new threads we weave throughout the Range and Sunshine Coast, when we place the words of a poet from Nambour with the pictures of an artist in Peachester!

The publication of local writers' and artists' work recognises the talents and visions within our midst.

In a modest way, a Black Possum Diary brings some of the pleasures of our culture into people's lives.



A MOVEMENT WHICH
SINGS WILL NEVER DIE.



A Non-Profit Enterprise?

• Dean Cameron

Barung Landcare is a not-for-profit association dedicated to the improvement of our land. Faced with a large amount of work to do - repair, education, trials of new methods and better management techniques, motivation and mobilisation of concern (much of which requires funds to do) - how does a community group come up with the wherewithal?

The traditional way (and one likely to continue), is for a few dedicated people to donate large amounts of time, energy or money towards the goals. Provided these individuals can maintain this effort and the goals remain unachieved, they will beaver away at it for surprising length of time, often drawing in other like-minded, unsuspecting individuals. If these people continue at it long enough they eventually come to see their mission as a job too, and legitimise this by seeking a survivable income. This stage usually coincides with the realisation that they are in for long haul. The initial burst of sacrificial enthusiasm turns to a calculated strategy for sustaining the momentum.

If the task has a discrete and foreseeable end, cake stalls, donations and fundraisers of various kinds are a possibility. This is enterprise in its simplest form. Contemplating the prospect of cake stalls

ad infinitum is enough to make even the least pragmatic person question the cost-effectiveness of the enterprise. Sooner or later those doing the bulk of the work will need to be rewarded. At this stage the enterprise will need to pay its own way as well as providing funding for the original objectives.

A dilemma can arise at this point - do we conduct an enterprise which is very profitable but unrelated, though not antagonistic to the goals of the organisation, or one which may be more or less profitable but promotes the objectives of the group. The answer to this may depend on how much scope there is for offering goods or services which promote the goals of the group. With creativity, new services may be discovered which can cover cost at the same time as promoting the primary objective. Another factor to consider, in looking at running an enterprise for the benefit of the community, is whether the skills required to run the venture exist within the goodwill network of the group. The one thing a community group doesn't want is a liability that no one is prepared to take ultimate responsibility for. Despite what many will say, I consider a business-like rigour needs to be applied whether a co-op, worker owned company, Pty Ltd Company or some other form of incorporation is adopted. Full accountability must be a priority. In the case of Barung Landcare, we are fortunate to be affiliated with a nationwide movement promoted and supported at all levels of Government. We have formed an alliance with Landcare Australia (a stock exchange listed public company) and this enables approved projects to receive tax exempt status for donations made. But although we welcome donations, we see our enterprise activities, (initially based around producing seed and seedlings for

the reafforestation market and planting services) as our main source of future income.

We have been operating an enterprise arm for three months and this has been more than paying its way already. Cash flow is our biggest problem, but we are accumulating a valuable stock of seed, seedlings and plants ready to sell for broadscale planting.

We are fortunate to have a pool of reliable volunteers and it is hoped that the future will see employment spin-offs for more of these volunteers.

We have lobbied councils and they are now becoming aware of the good work we do. We hope this will bring tangible benefits for our enterprise. We have applied to Caloundra City Council to request the use of appropriate land for a nursery base and this looks promising.

We also hope to act as the supply depot for the trees distributed through council at rate time. This will ensure income for us and appropriate trees and shrubs for this area, an example of enterprise working to promote overall objectives.

In summary if you have an open ended task without an open-ended budget, have a good look at community advancement enterprises.

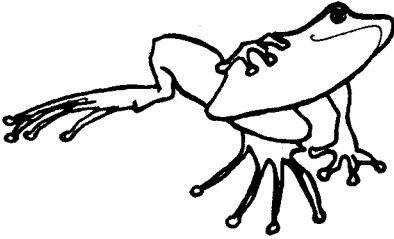


Barung Landcare 2nd AGM

30th September
7.30 pm

Uniting Church Maleny





Community Enterprise At Frogs' Hollow

• Jan Tilden

Between 1984 and 1986, I visited a number of "intentional communities" as part of a study I was doing. One thing that all of these communities had in common was this - they had all ended up less communal than they set out to be. Frogs' Hollow (aka Manduka Co-op) was no exception. In the beginning, for example, we shared household facilities and had communal meals on a regular basis. These days we all have separate self-contained dwellings and eat together, as a group, only on community work days.

There is a sort of centrifugal tendency in new communities. People start out with high ideals about sharing and co-operation, but the inevitable tensions of living with a group of others who they may or may not know, most of whom they have probably never lived with before, tend to compromise any initial commitment to communality. Typically, communal meals and shared work-spaces give way to self-contained housing; the sharing of vehicles and tools is dropped in favour of private ownership and so on. Peter Cock, a Victorian sociologist who studies intentional communities has labelled this disappointing trend "the drift towards rural

suburbia". It is a situation that certainly leaves communities vulnerable to comments like "Well what is so alternative about this anyway?"

I think there is another way of looking at it. It is hard to imagine the results of putting ideals into practice until one actually tries to do it. Some deep-seated aspects of mainstream socialisation do not fit well with ideals such as sharing, co-operation and consensus, which we desire to enact, in our daily lives, as members of intentional communities. If, in the initial phases of community life, we overestimate our ability to transcend the private, individualistic, competitive aspects of our upbringing, then naturally some adjustments will have to be made "on the ground". Hence the tendency for people to move apart early in the history of any community.

I see no problem in setting out with high ideals, in fact I think it is desirable to do so, provided the community is able to accommodate, both ideologically and physically, the resulting tendency for its members to move apart. Surely this is better than setting our sights too low? Once people have settled into a level of communal interaction that they are comfortable with, be it meals once a week or monthly working bees or whatever, then they have the opportunity, from a secure position, to begin to take risks with being more communal again - if that is what the group wants.

Well, so my *theory* goes. It is a positive way of looking at what, on the face of it, seems like a fairly disappointing situation. Unfortunately, I had never seen any indication of this "moving back together again" that I imagined could be possible. For this reason, some recent developments at Frogs' Hollow have been heartening. I am reporting this in the hope that others

experimenting with communality, and experiencing the centrifugal tendency, may be encouraged by our experiences.

One of the problems associated with any attempt to reverse the trend towards privatisation in communities is the fact that, once physical structures that encourage self-contained activity are in place, it is very difficult to go back to being more communal. Houses are hard to move. In about 1983 a friend and I visited "the old Crystal Waters" and noted that one focus of interaction was the community shower. On returning to Frogs' Hollow we built a communal shower. As a ploy to bring people together, it enjoyed limited success. Many community members already had their own private shower facilities, and on a cold night, it wasn't worth the trip to the community shower, no matter how good the company there might have been. These kinds of factors can limit the opportunity for community members to move together again, even when the interpersonal difficulties that drove them apart have been largely sorted out and community relationships are good.



So what has changed at Frogs' Hollow? Ironically, the new developments in our community are at least partly related to an influx of funds in the form of compensation for land resumed for the Baroon Pocket Dam. But that is not the whole story. I can remember a time in the history of the group when such an "improvement" in our bank balance would

probably have driven us even further apart, because we wouldn't have had a high enough level of trust among ourselves to cope with it. It is challenging to be confronted with a situation where the group, as a whole, is quite well off, while most of its individual members are still poor, in financial terms. We decided, over a series of meetings, to use the money to develop our community in two ways. The first was to provide, on a *communal* basis, certain facilities that we had all been doing without for some time. This has now materialised in the form of a "shared work-space" - a large and very respectable looking farm shed, with multiple car parking bays, a communal laundry, and a workshop for members to repair their collection of aged and break-down prone motor vehicles. No more trips to the laundrette with huge basket loads of washing. No more scrabbling around under cars in the wet grass searching for the bolt which you were *certain* you weren't going to drop (otherwise you would have put something underneath to catch it).

The community was able to pay some of its members to build this shed. An interesting precedent was thereby introduced. Previously, we have always worked for Frogs' Hollow for nothing. Would we now expect to be paid for everything we did? A policy had to be worked out to decide what constituted paid work and what would continue to be voluntary. Again, this was challenging. It was something we would not have been able to do in the early days of our life together as a group. Each success reinforces our feeling of achievement and our sense of how far we've come.

Another way in which we decided to apply our group funds was towards some joint income earning project. This is only just starting to come together. None of us

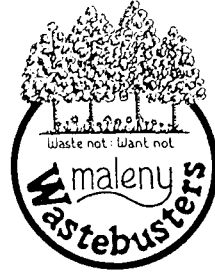
wants to get into it just yet. We all have other, more individual, goals for the time being. Nevertheless, we have agreed in principle about what we want to do as a group venture, and the steps that we need to take now, to make it possible. Exciting times.

Recently I discussed my theory with another sociologist interested in intentional communities, and cited these new developments at F.H. as evidence that the centrifugal (outward moving) phase could indeed be superceded by a phase where groups begin to take risks towards moving closer together again. He said that he had seen a similar trend in another community of about the same age as Frogs'. Of course a sociologist likes to have her theories born out, but my interest in this one is more than academic. It gives me a good feeling to see us meeting these new communal challenges with such a spirit of solidarity - not to mention my pleasure at the fact that, next time my car breaks down, I won't have to brave sun, rain, grass ticks, sinking jacks and suchlike trivial annoyances to fix it.



There are two ways of escaping our...automized routines of thinking and behaving. The first...is the plunge into...dream-like states, when the codes of rational thinking are suspended. The other way is also an escape - from boredom, stagnation, intellectual predicaments, and emotional frustration - but an escape in the opposite direction; it is signalled by the spontaneous flash of insight which shows a familiar situation or event in a new light, and elicits a new response to it...it makes us "understand what it is to be awake, to be living on several planes at once."

ARTHUR KOESTLER, *The Act of Creation* (1964).



Maleny Enterprises, Model For Other Towns?

• Denise Sawyer

"Local enterprise" seems to becoming a catch-phrase lately, as does the word co-operation. These terms are not only to be heard in Maleny, where, born out of a desire and need for economic and social well-being, we have embraced them, but from politicians and government departments.

We have recently been visited by heads of government departments and people employed by government to examine our co-operative models, to see whether they can be applied elsewhere in Australia to reduce unemployment. One of these visits was from the Deputy Director (Commercial Division) of the N.S.W. Registry of Co-operatives.

The N.S.W. Department of Further Education and Employment and Training Division are promoting local enterprise creation programs. One of these concepts is called (quote) "Managed Workspace". It is the same concept as the "Maleny Enterprise Centre" model. That is to provide a means for small enterprises to combine together to share premises and services in a new and original manner. It provides "big business" help to small firms, by providing a range of support

services normally only available to large organisations, while retaining the efficiency and personal relationship of working in a small concern.(unquote)

Another scheme is the 'Self Employment Development Program'. This program is designed to assist locally initiated projects with an ongoing local community involvement. It all sounds just like Maleny doesn't it?

The Federal Government is allocating five hundred million dollars (\$500,000 000) this financial year to provide training programs to assist people to enter the work-force and enable transition into new areas of employment.

With all these schemes and initiatives it would lead one to believe that the Government is on the right track by encouraging local development and enterprise, and stemming the drift to the big metropolises in search of work. I find all this information, personally, very encouraging, as just prior to finding out all of this I submitted a report to the Commonwealth Employment Service. The purpose of this was to outline Wastebusters' history and activities, substantiating the need for Government to recognise the value of supporting and encouraging organisations, such as ours and others of a similar nature, to achieve a status of long term self sustainability.

A Morning [or day] In The Life Of A Wastebuster...

• Steff Bennett

The last article written for the Quarterly was to do with dedication to co-operatives costed out by right brain dominance. Try as I may I still can't get away from that. You could say "It's a calling".

Now this calling is a croak. Imagine with me please, the most wintry of mornings; of a kind where the mist rains heavy on the Hinterland. It feels about 6 degrees in knee-boots, sox, 2 jumpers, a jacket and St.Vincent's 1970 jeans. It's a sunday and I'm following my religious ritual. I'm about to wastebust myself out - cross over into the nether world of garbage.

As well I've collected yet another of my species of like right-brain dominance. Her attire's in uniform to my own with the exemption of gloves and the addition of thermos coffee and yesterday's cheese sandwiches...

We sing, "The tip is my castle - I shall not want... it leads me to the aroma of stale grog bottles sometimes bagged for the bottle-o! It lays me to resurrect the bulging mulch heap, mixed plastics, rusty roof iron! It soothes me to anticipate how the multitude [I jest! a section of these] shall rise up bearing gifts of poison, food scraps, out-dated newspapers and left footed things all mashed up as one!"

The carpet snake, fred, has grown accustomed to this part-mortal hymn. Not so the goannas, both take up residence in the shed that acts as an office and/or psychiatric shelter. That shed, dear reader, is meant for screaming in when you've been abused by people - left brainers - who refuse to pay tip-fees; those



WASTEBUSTERS AGM

Monday 23rd September

7:30pm Blue Room.

Bring a plate & enthusiasm

who think recycling is kid's stuff.
Someone once said I was a tip-poet. I
liked that. Balancing on the edge isn't
easy. It gave me a shove enough to write
on a more serious note:

*The last landscape
lay down its head.
The watercolours
of the body fled,
consciously dissolving -
knowing her dead.*

*As wildfowl still bustled.
As cattle grazed.
As tree-shade expanded.
As the snake slept.*

*Who is to blame?
Who wrote, who authorised
the suicide note?*

*The artist could tell.
He went down with her.
If it helps, they - both
of them - were laughing.*

Affluence comes from what's known as
the balanced (left) side of our grey matter.
I suppose I'm saying ... Give me more
abstraction. The garbage will then gobble
the garbage out and I won't have to face
these pesticidal sundays resting on
someone else's terms. Meantime, "The tip
is my castle - I shall not want ..."

You learn to accept the irony of it all.

To Direct, Or Not To Direct

• Denise Sawyer

Wastebusters have recently found our-
selves in a situation which could happen
to any board of directors it would seem.
We have been caught short. To explain

this riddle I offer the following
explanation. We had two of our directors
resign simultaneously. Feeling pleased to
find two more people that were not
already over-committed with
responsibilities (we hope) we invited them
to our next board meeting to be appointed.
As it turned out one of the current
directors was unable to attend. It also
turned out, one of remaining directors had
submitted a letter of resignation on the
day. This left three directors in attendance
at the meeting, hence no quorum to
appoint the two new members. With only
four appointed directors, the minimum for
a quorum, it is not that easy to get
everybody required together. We are in
that predicament at present, our scheduled
meeting has had to be postponed. So a
word of caution, it can make life a lot
easier if you are able to communicate your
intentions of resignation or non-attendance
prior to a meeting commencing, if you
happen to be in a director's position.



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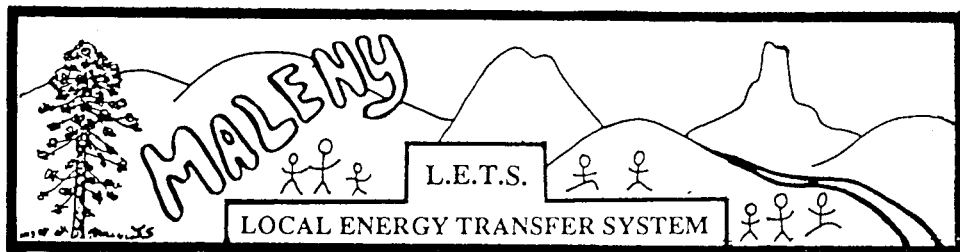
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Some of the services we offer to our members :

- Telephone answering service, 1B/call
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- LETS Checkbook 1B + 50c



LETS look at Economics and Enterprise

• Janel Skrandies

Economics - how can the current material welfare of mankind be viewed ?

On a global scale, western style:

The primary motivation in our economic system is to make profit (the surplus left to the producer or employer after deducting wages, rent, cost of raw materials, etc.).

We are intimately connecting profit with progress.

The decision making about how resources, as well as the goods and services that are produced, are being used is in the hands of the largest profit-makers.

In this process considerations about ethics and ecological impact of economic decisions are a side issue as free marketeers and entrepreneurs chase the almighty dollar.

The most important motivations in this game are: to cut costs ruthlessly, to go only into highly profitable ventures at the expense of less profitable ones, to achieve the highest possible profit margin. The next step is that companies who know the rules grow bigger, and spread around the globe with diminishing sense of responsibility to local communities, workers and the environment.

Our society's resources are the free gifts of nature, such as land, forests, minerals and human resources, both mental and physical. We do produce commodities out of those resources which belong to us all. But in order to be sustainable at all .. we need to stop talking about growth of Gross National Product (GNP) .. and start to distinguish between the kinds of growth we want ..(1)

What kind of growth do we want? The GNP is a confusing figure made up to measure a nations' wealth. The kind of growth it promotes is bigger-is-better. Macroeconomics seem to work against microeconomics, multinationals against local businesses. We can establish the emphasis on local trading and enterprise once again, regaining a link to undertake projects of importance to local people. If *Economics* is about the material welfare of mankind, then the production, distribution and consumption of goods and services, are the areas we shall have a say in as a local community. This applies not only in the production of the commodities we want and need, but also in the way we satisfy our wants and needs in consumption.

Enterprise can mean taking the development of the economy in our own hands on a local scale. In Maleny a creative pool of people and tools make

previously unconventional approaches like LETS or CEDA, Maple Street Food Co-op, Mountain Fare Women's Co-op, Crystal Waters Permaculture Village etc. possible as innovative schemes. Offspring of those parent organisations show themselves in The Maleny Enterprise Centre, Crystal Cuisine, Earth Care Enterprises, Herb-It, Wastebusters, Malcolm's Restaurant, Mountain Fare Catering, Barung Enterprise Arm, to name just a few. At the same time several others are in the process of being born.



Conserver Economy.

If *working economically* is the efficient use of income and wealth, we shall have a part in it and play a significant role in avoiding waste or extravagance.

By concentrating on the local environment in producing goods and using services, we are likely to be more aware of the impact we are creating. To keep our basic elements of life like soil, water, air, raw materials etc, intact we have to look at making the right decisions. Eco-tax (ie taxing industries for repair costs on the environment) can be a bridging solution, to make up for damage already done. To ensure survival we need to think and act in terms of "cyclic economy" (production and consumption with an eye on reuse/less use) and "soft chemistry" (chemistry with

least unwanted impact on the environment).

Energy wastage is one of our offences against nature, our living space. In a country like Germany the level of energy efficiency is under 30%. Of industrial energy sources, up to 95% are not renewable. In the usage of the energy carriers (Uranium, Fossil Fuel) up to 100% are turned into waste products (Nuclear Waste, Co₂, NO_x etc.).(2)

Energy usage has to be more efficient to save energy wherever possible. One of the solutions is to tax energy usage highly, another to reduce the energy consumption.

Local trading can play a specific role in a conserver economy by providing shorter travel distances for workers, consumers and for the products of farmers and industries. This kind of autonomy would reduce our resource consumption and the pollution of our living space. Think globally, act locally.

How can we change these money/profit orientated attitudes into one with a social conscience?

Decision making about the direction the economy takes can be ensured if a many local people work for regionally situated and owned businesses, small businesses with shared facilities or community-owned enterprises (co-ops, worker co-ops). This way the community can exercise a choice over the goods and services it produces. Local wealth exists in the skills and special produce and products of the region. Consumers and producers being in closer contact with each other, a flow of needs, wants and satisfaction are in better connection.

We need a business incentive in a recessive economy, especially in the rural areas. LETS can be one of those helpful tools to support starting up small businesses and local enterprises by providing low advertising costs and an

already established network of potential customers. Even established small businesses realise that attracting more customers, even for less cash but with an additional Bunyas income, is an added bonus for their turnover.

The unemployment rate in rural areas is around 10% (in cities around 7%). The LETSystem can open up new avenues for skills and professions un-used through longterm unemployment. We can create an opportunity for those people to get back into the workforce with a slow start and to find self-confidence once again.

In the future the economy of pure profit making has to be replaced with one that recognises although the true importance of activities which are part of our well-being (which aren't accounted for in the GNP), such as domestic work, volunteer activity, self-sufficiency, repairing things instead of throwing them away, growing things, child care and all the things we do for love rather than for money.

The people that operate local enterprises, business people and producers are more in control of their resources, ensuring decision making with an eye on a safer and more sustainable future.

Breaking down the habits of exponential growth and throw-away-consumerism will be distressing but the earlier we start the easier it can be.

At the local level we can start to act with a social conscience, cutting down on the philosophy working for profit alone. *Bunyas* and *LETS concepts* can help to open up our minds to a different approach to values.

(1) SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: DOUBLETHINK OF THE 1990'S-Dr. John Young, from Community Quarterly, No.19, 1991, Winsor, Vic

(2) Dieter Teufel (Biologist, head of the Institute for Environment and Prognostics in Heidelberg, FRG.)

From the article: Vom Leben uberleben Lernen. (To learn survival from life itself), page 42-45.

Nature, Das Umweltmagazin, Nr.1, January 1990.

InterLETS Trading Update

• Andru



Some 10 months ago we decided to start InterLETS Trading on a trial basis, with a review in 6 months. The only restriction we originally made was that InterLETS trading should not exceed 10% of our total system trading. We sent letters to 4 other LETSystems (Brisbane, CrowsNest, Rockhampton and Richmond Valley), and waited.

Although some members started trading immediately, it took a few months before trading became significant. On average InterLETS Trading is now around 3% of LETSMaleny's total trading, well under the 10% we originally stated. This was not without incident, in that we recently had two requests from people 'leaving the area' to transfer fairly large balances (one plus and one minus!) to another LETSystem. Either of these trades would have pushed the monthly InterLETS percentage to around 20% of total trading.

We are now InterLETS trading with 4 LETSystems, one of them being our close neighbour LETSHINE on the Sunshine Coast (Rockhampton has not joined the network). This has lead to some new considerations, because with the closeness of LETSHINE, the potential amount of InterLETS Trading is greatly increased.

Another point that was not very up front was the choice we made to join only systems close by with whom, there was a possibility of trading occurring both ways. This has recently been challenged by requests from LETSystems in Victoria to join us in InterLETS. People who come from far away to do courses offered locally in part Bunyas, are an obvious legitimate request for InterLETS.

All these points were discussed at the AGM and we came up with some

guidelines for limits to growth of InterLETS.

WHY? I hear you say ..

Why not let the InterLETS Trading go as far as it wants?

The "L" in LETS stands for LOCAL!

Our LETSystem was set up to support local people, and stimulate trading and use of local resources. When people from Nambour rang up to join we told them "make your own LETSystem", and it has worked! Support of our local economy comes from keeping the energy directed locally.

How will it affect our Local LETSystem?

If suddenly we can get a dentist on Bunyas in Nambour, we will stop hassling our local dentist to join; the pressure on the local businesses comes from the desires of our members to use their Bunyas locally. But also the ability to import goods and services on Bunyas might also stimulate local people and businesses to join.

How do we balance the ins and outs?

The strength and vitality of the LETSystem concept comes from stimulating those around you. In a bonded area no monitoring of the flow is necessary because it all goes to build us all up. InterLETS is different, energy could flow out or into our area from another to the detriment of one or other area. This very ability of money to suck all resources into the city is one of the prime motivations for a LETSystem.

Who oversees the InterLETS trading?

With the simple two way InterLETS we have now, the trustees of either LETSystem can monitor the flows in and out without much difficulty. In a freed up SuperLETS who can do that, or if no one does it what will happen then?

What will the TAX Dept think?

At the risk of being boring I want to

point out that in ALL our dealings with the government, the fact that Bunyas are not tradeable outside our local area is one of the strongest arguments in our favour. With InterLETS we cut one of the 'legal' ('moral') branches we are standing on!

OKOK What are we doing about it then?

Well we are continuing the trial pretty much as it is now. We discussed the 'leaving the area' question at the AGM and passed the following motion worded in keeping with our emphasis on personal responsibility rather than central control.

"Encourage people to zero their balance on leaving the area, and discourage them from taking Bunyas with them to another System."

Also to allow the flexibility needed for people trading with a local InterLETSystem (eg LETSHINE), we decided that we would encourage people who did this a lot to join the both systems. This ties in with our previous pressure on remote people to form their own system, because there is already one!

Allright then! What can you do?

We suggest you consider the following points before you InterLETS trade:

- Are the goods or services available locally?
- Can you hassle a local supplier to join the LETSystem, maybe you can do this as well as the InterLETS trade.
- Can you help to create the resources in our local area?
- What effect is the flow of energy into or out of our area going to have on our local community?
- Is it healthy, sustainable in a ecological/economical way?
- Can you get what you need through the nearest InterLETS system? Many transport costs are hidden eg petrol, vehicle maintenance, and the air we breathe.



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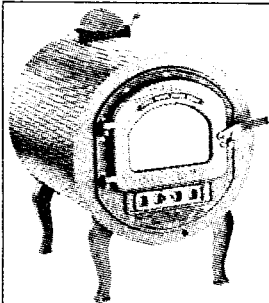
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