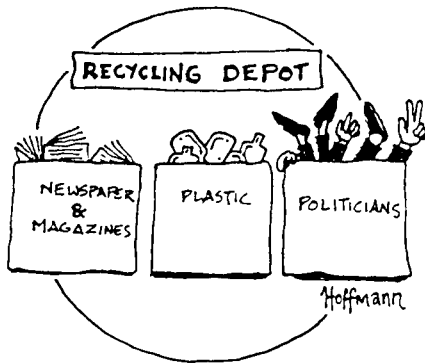


Maleny Co-operatives

A REVIEW

Volume 4, Issue 2

Easter 1993



Recycled Promises



Recycled Thoughts



Recycled Ideals

Letters to the Editor

To The Co-op Directors

I have been frustrated by what I perceive as restricted views during my campaign for the Greens. Green organisations such as the Maleny Credit Union, Maple Street Co-op and LETS have a policy of across-the-board "NO POLITICS". Common comments have been "if we put your poster up, we have to put up other Parties' posters".

The Green Campaign sees education as important as winning a seat. Therefore I invite you to explore the NO POLITICS issue further. Co-ops, Credit Unions and LETS are political. They usually also visibly and actively support petitions e.g. No Dam and they positively discriminate against non-ethical issues e.g. Bring Back Hanging.

The Queensland Greens openly promote LETS (p.23 of Green Policy 1993), Ethical Investment (p.9) and encourage the establishment of worker co-ops (p.10). If other parties supported these issues (which they probably don't), their posters could go up too, whereas it's all there in black-and-white in the Greens' 1993 Election Policy - together with promotion of self-esteem, childcare, job sharing and pollution taxes.

I think I would be correct in saying the Greens are the only party around Maleny that have the following paragraph as the beginning of their framework in their Economic Overview:

"The economics of the Greens recognises the intrinsic worth of all living things and their interconnectedness. Human Progress should not be at the expense of abundance

or diversity of plant and animal life".

Your choice may be to stay firm with your NO POLITICS decision, yet hopefully with deeper exploration there will be a more sound explanations for this decision.

To sum up, I feel we sometimes become paralysed by fear of what other think. I would be happy to meet with Directors of OUR organisation (MCU, Co-op and LETS) to discuss these issues with Greens policy in hand.

I feel passionately that Co-ops, LETS and Credit Unions are "GREEN POLITICS IN ACTION" - so why hide it? Yours truthfully,

Chris Gwin

Lot 46, Crystal Waters,

MS 16, Maleny 4552

Ph. 944-743

Fringe Members!

The Parable of the Blind Ants

• Jan Tilden

Once upon a time there was a colony of ants. These ants had many characteristics both admirable and not so admirable. However, for the purposes of this tale, three of these are important. First, they were very intelligent - for ants; second, they were insatiably curious and finally, they were blind.

One day, some scouts from the colony came upon a pile of strange objects. After a great deal of walking around and feeling and checking with each other, they were able to ascertain certain matters of fact. The objects were flat, rather hard and

more or less four sided, except that, with rare exceptions, the sides were not straight. Rather, each one contained within its limits either a deep, round, narrow mouthed bay or a strange, narrow necked isthmus.

This pile of objects sparked the curiosity of several generations of ants before someone hit upon the idea that the objects, if laid side by side, might fit together to make a larger flat surface, owing to the great similarity in shape between the bays and the isthmuses. You will appreciate what a task this was for the ants, considering that they were blind and quite small in relation to the size of the objects upon which they were working. It was a matter of crawling around the perimeter of each, carefully measuring and memorising the exact shape, then painstakingly seeking out the corresponding shape and organising the teams to drag each object into place. The whole endeavour took a great deal of communication and co-operation among the ants. Sometimes there was competition, when ants would refuse to share information about the pieces they were working on, and that made the whole process even slower.

There were certain ants who made it their life's work to extend the flat surface formed by joining the objects. It was considered to be a very high calling indeed and only the most intelligent ants were encouraged to take it on - and then only after many years of training.

Now it happened that a certain small percentage of ants were dimly sighted. Every now and then one or more of these would take it upon themselves to point out to those diligently toiling to extend the flat surface that there were marks on the objects upon which they were working. Some even had the temerity to suggest that these marks might provide extra clues to how the objects should fit together, since there seemed to be certain patterns in the marks. Indeed, perhaps the marks

had some meaning.

But the ants whose job it was, generation after generation, to extend the surface ever closer to the horizon, scoffed at any such ideas. For a start, they did not really believe that some of their kind could see. Since they themselves could not, they had no concept of sight or how to interpret such a phenomenon. They pointed out that since it was possible to put the pieces together without any reference to marks, which might or might not actually exist, then they ought to continue to do so. They made a rule that only information discovered by touch could be used to join objects together. In time they came to believe that, because the objects could be put together without reference to marks, it was a sign that the marks did not really exist, except in the mind of the lunatic fringe.

Generation after generation, the ants continued to labour away at the problem. The few dimly sighted ants began to perceive that the marks they could see on the objects did indeed have a pattern which related one object to the next and to the one after that and so on. They even began to suspect that each piece might be part of a meaningful whole which was greater than the sum of the parts. Because the ants were so small, however, and the surface so large, even the sighted ones were unable to see that it was a picture of "God".

Maleny Creates Spies

• Brian Day

Last year I was dead for a while. During that "time" I went into the Light which was ever expanding. There I met God and Goddess. She is my Mother as He is my Father. They are Partners. She said, telepathically, that She is omnipresent in our emotions.

This piece is dedicated to Her.

The work of Elisabeth Kubler-Ross demonstrates that men and women emote in the same way. This makes sexism, heterosexism and ageism problematic. Riane Eisler has demonstrated that the way to a creative society is by partnering relationships not dominating ones. This makes the patriarchy and racism problematic.

And the Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion states "Caring, holism and ecology are essential issues in developing strategies for health promotion. Therefore, those involved should take as a guiding principle that, in each phase of planning, implementation and evaluation of health promotion activities, women and men should become equal partners."

So I propose that a healthy community would be one where emotional, spiritual, physical and intellectual parts of humanness were given equal value ie the components would be partners. In our present communities emotions are generally denied expression. In terms of the values I have proposed this is unhealthy.

The most commonly denied emotion in organising communities, according to Ernest Becker, is the fear of death. So a healthy community would encourage the expression of this fear. This would make bureaucracies problematic.

Living in the Light encompasses death and is about movement and change. So stability and sustainability are problematic too.

What then can we do about it?

Well, a community-based, co-operative health centre seems to me to be a solution. We could fill some of the gaps in the current attention to health so that health becomes a personal ability and an asset to be contributed to community well-being.

I don't have any problem with allopathic medicine: if it weren't for doctors and nurses and hospital staff I wouldn't be

here to tell my story. So I would see the community health centre and the medical establishment as partners.

We could site the centre with the Maple Street Co-op and include a couple of rooms to teach emotional expression.

With the current fad for acronyms we could call it the SPIE (spiritual, physical, intellectual, emotional) centre. And Maleny could become famous for creating SPIES around the nation.

Lunatic Shopping

• Doro

When I came to Maleny about three years ago I thought I'd better do the right thing and join the Maple St. Co-op, to support local producers of organic foods. My initial smug feeling gradually changed as I shopped there. Progressively I noticed strange items on the shelves. They were not even Aussie, never mind local. There were Chinese cabbage and gooseberries from China. From Belgium came Brussels sprouts. Kiwi fruit from N.Z. Jerusalem artichokes and Jaffa oranges from Israel. Japanese grapefruit, Russian garlic, Valencia and Seville oranges from Spain, Tahitian limes. The list goes on. You've seen them. You know them.

However I'm confident that the situation was corrected at the recent Futures Day. But seriously, isn't shopping a headache these days: all the things we have to check for. My list goes:-

- * Is it organic and free of artificial colouring and flavours?
- * Is it salt reduced, low in cholesterol, but high in fibre?
- * Does it contain added sugar?
- * Is it low in fat, and then only unsaturated fats?
- * Was it produced in Australia, by an Australian-owned company with only Australian materials?

- * Is it in a re-useable container or recyclable package?
- * Were recycled materials used in its production?
- * Did animals suffer in its testing?
- * Is it non-pollutant and biodegradable?
- * Is it dolphin friendly?
- * Is it unbleached?

I often go to town with a shopping list and come back home not having bought one item. They either didn't conform or were not worth buying.

MALENY and DISTRICT

COMMUNITY CREDIT UNION LIMITED

38 Main St., Maleny, Queensland 4465



Fringing on Lunacy

• Peter Pamment

Since the last newsletter the Credit Union has been a hive of activity as the staff and directors try to come to terms with all the new legislative requirements. The main one of raising our capital adequacy to above the 8% level is still the hardest. We have had to develop a plan and budgets to help us get to the target. The bottom line is that we need to make about \$100,000 profit for both this financial year and about the same next year. This profit margin is about three times what we worked towards in the past. We have also looked at other areas of income, one area, insurance, is detailed elsewhere in this issue.

The other major requirement under the new prudential standards is that all our

policies and procedures have to be in a documented form. In the past most major policy issues have been set by the directors in the form of board resolutions recorded in the minutes. Now we need detailed documented policies and set procedures to ensure that policies are followed. The procedures are basically a detailed "risk management" policy and procedures. Every system and procedure must be defined and detailed, right down to who is looking after the teller's cash when she goes to the loo!

As you can guess, this is an enormous task and we are only part way through. We are required to have these documents in place by June 30th this year. All this extra work by both staff and directors has put great stress on everyone - so it's "be kind to CU staff and directors time" till we have completed all these tasks and got out from the lunatic fringe!

One other area that we have found quite difficult is having to quantify some of our policies. In the past things have been done in a certain way, as it is always the way its' been done, or certain policies have not been clearly defined and we have been inconsistent. Having to write down policies, and rethink what and how we do things, has of course brought out different points of view both within and between staff and directors. We are having to resolve all these and finally decide on an overall position that is acceptable to all of us. Not always easy and also very time consuming, but a very worthwhile task for the future of the Credit Union.

The two major issues that directly affect members at this time are that first, we have had to increase loan interest rates to achieve our budgeted profit target for the year. Due to all the extra work our budget has blown out a bit, mainly in the wages area. We had hoped to work within the margin set when we reduced rates towards the end of last year. Due to the extra costs, we can't do it and have had to put

the rates back up again. We regret this, but the MCU must have the 8% capital adequacy by June 30th 1994. We have no choice in this matter. Secondly, the state supervisory authority has requested us to consider adhering to the 10% of capital limit on size of loans until we have more of our new policies, procedures and increased capital adequacy in place. This means that currently we will only be accepting loan applications up to about \$20,000. It is hoped that this situation will be reviewed later in the year.

Finally it's not all doom and gloom, just hard work. When we have completed all these tasks and increased our capital, the new look MCU will be in a much better position than it ever was to offer new and better services to members and to be far more competitive (ie cheaper loans etc.) than we have ever been. As we grow and change through this transition period we will continue to evolve into a community organisation that better meets members needs and aspirations.

A Letter to Current Loan Recipients of the Credit Union.

As a current loan recipient, you are aware of some of the stringent measures the Credit Union has had to implement in order to comply with the new financial requirements which all credit unions, Australia-wide, have to meet.

We are anxious that, in meeting these requirements, we do not lose the features that make the Maleny and District Community Credit Union unique in the Australian financial scene. Among these features are:

- member control
- a commitment to the local region
- a policy of lending to less advantaged groups
- ethical policies
- a sympathetic and co-operative

relationship with you, our clients.

We are seeking your co-operation with regard to the repayment of your loan. Quite a few members are late in their repayments, sometimes routinely, by a day or two. This action is in fact a breach of the loan contract. Consequently, we ask that members avoid this practice and, where applicable, bring loan repayments completely up to date.

Every loan even slightly in arrears contributes to an overall significant cost to the Credit Union. We are seeking your co-operation in this matter, so that we may avoid the automatic imposition of penalties prevalent in so many other financial institutions.

If you are already up to date and always make repayments on time, be assured that we appreciate the correct handling of your loan. If not, we thank you in anticipation of your favourable response.

Yours in co-operation,
Directors of the Credit Committee.

An Open Letter to All Members of the Credit Union.

As of 17 February, 1993, Paul Harper-Green Insurance Service has been operating from an office within the Credit Union building.

With the new legislation introduced in June and our need to increase capital adequacy through increased profits, Paul has entered into an agreement with the Credit Union to lease the office space, use the electronic equipment and provide for the insurance needs of our members. In return for this, Paul has agreed to split the profits from sales of insurance (after expenses) with the Credit Union.

It is expected that overall proceeds to the Credit Union in the first year of operation will exceed \$30,000.

This is a very positive step towards

increasing Credit Union profit to meet capital adequacy. It will also create further employment in the community in the future.

The sale of insurance is not limited to members. Therefore it is expected that a large income from people who are not members will be generated.

Talk to Paul about your insurance needs. When your insurance renewal notices arrive, why not ask Paul for a quote? You don't even have to wait for a notice. Paul can organise the transfer of your existing insurance, including refunds!

Your support means a brighter future for your Credit Union and the community.

Directors: Peter Pamment, Meg Barrett, Bill McDonald, Ray Passmore, Paul Harper-Green, Kainy Trudgian, Derek Sheppard
Co-Managers: Bob Smalley, Julie Park, Judy Williams.
Secretaries: Jan Maskall, Vernetta Love
Phone: 074 - 942 144



Landcare and Lunacy

• Jo Ferrier

The following is an expose of different varieties of lunatic approaches to caring for the land. To address these psychologically dysfunctional attitudes we must first be able to recognise the different types that exist.

A common or garden type of lunacy is the "kill-it-if-it-moves" "chainsaw-it-if-it-

grows" syndrome. This is overkill and reflects a basic fear of nature, and belief that the land has to be conquered. Its fundamental problem is one of alienation where humans ensconced in the post industrial age of consumerism feel separate from the life systems that support them. It also reflects an outdated belief that the natural resources of the earth are infinite and that whatever humans do to such vast natural variety will have minimal impact. This syndrome is manifested in a number of ways and is usually closely allied to technological "toys for the boys" such as bulldozers and chemical sprays.

Maniacal lawnmowers who unleash their lunacy on the neighbours at uncivilised hours are the suburban equivalent of this syndrome. In severe cases the only known cure is mangulation by lawn mower blades. Acreage dwellers display this syndrome with a similar obsession for brushcutters. In subtropical climes on basalt soils, where kikuyu flourishes, such as on the Blackall Range, these ailments reach a state of near mass hysteria, especially in the summer months.

Allied to the "kill-it-if-it-moves" syndrome is a type of megalomania, where the fundamental impulse is for extreme power over nature. All other life forms are seen as expendable in the exercise of this power. It can be evidenced in such human foibles as clear felling of forests, and the dumping of toxic wastes at sea. The impact of this disease is awesome when combined with technologies such as atomic bombs and chemical warfare.

Another common dysfunctional attitude is apparent when the land is viewed as a commodity. In these instances it is seen as a consumer item, no different to the house or shed that is built on it, or the tractor that works it. It is viewed as mere capital able to be traded, sold, cut up and divided as if it were a piece of cake and not part of a complex living system. In

this illness it is believed that its true value can be set by the forces of the market. This is a modern delusion that reduces the natural wonders of the earth to its value in dollars. This is madness. The land that feeds us clearly is not, never has been and never will be just another commodity. Because this is an illness functioning at the level of society, as well as an individual level, landholders who value their land for its true worth inevitably find that their land management decisions are effected by the reality of a marketing system that treats the land as a commodity. The caring landholder must continually balance the madness of the market against his/her long term plans to maintain the sustainability of the land.

There's also the "pop-a-pill-and-fix-it" syndrome. This is where complex problems of the land are treated as if they can be cured by a simple fix. Symptoms of unbalance in the health of the land, such as monoculture weed infestations, are not treated in a wholistic manner, but trigger an attack of the illness. Chemical "pills" are sprayed to treat the symptoms and the cause is not addressed. Temporary respite is achieved, much as an aspirin stops a headache, until the next attack occurs.

A psychologically confused state of mind arises when individual land ownership is extended to individual ownership of land degradation problems. Land degradation is a community problem that extends beyond the boundaries of any one property. The community as a whole must own these problems if they are to be addressed, especially when market forces mean that individual landholders may not be able to afford the cost. In reality the community already pays the hidden costs of land degradation.

The ailments described above are but the tip of the iceberg when dealing with the lunatic approaches to land use. The concept of a lunatic fringe implies

madness on the edge of society. Often the real lunacy is so common as to constitute the norm. In parts of Australia conditions for landuse are so harsh that only a lunatic would consider it.

President: Jo Ferrier

Vice President: Mal Thompson

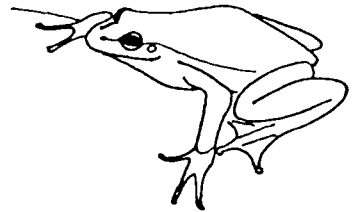
Management Committee: Harold Hopper, Jane Skrandies, Gillian Ainscough, Bill Hall, Denise Irons, Lexy Forbes.

Secretary & Treasurer: Lexy Forbes

Advisors: Ashley Sewell (Forestry Dept.), Sam Brown (SEQ Landcare Coordinator).

Co-ordinator: Lexy Forbes.

Phone: 074 - 943 922 (Tues & Thurs)



Lycanthropic Fringes

• Amanda Wilson

The theme, 'From the Lunatic Fringe', brought many visions to mind. Firstly I thought of the array of 'nutters', 'flippers' and generally disorientated folk who have found their way to Frog's Hollow over the years. Believe me, we have had our share!

Maybe they were drawn to the sharing, caring communal lifestyle and people there, or the beautiful enveloping forests and waterholes, but I tend to think that the large number of Psychologists, Counsellors and Health Workers living at the Hollow was the main drawcard. They knew in their deranged states, that they

would be helped along the path.

But, the main thing that keeps coming to me on this theme, is that, I am living on the Lunatic Fringe, Maleny! I see an Asylum brewing.

I came to Maleny because I fell in love, not with the area, but with a person living here, but the beauty of Maleny and its surrounds quickly grew on me.

In those days, when there was only one Co-Op in town, the Maleny Co-Operative Dairy Association. Due to our isolation, in geographical terms, we pooled our transport resources and helped each other with getting to Namba and back for supplies and to do the washing. I remember doing my washing in a cement mixer in front of a Maple Street business one day, as the thought of the trek to Namba was just too much for me!

Kawana had no Big W and Caloundra was a sleeping geriatric giant, and if you wanted anything unusual, or different in the food lines; wholemeal flour (it wasn't stocked anywhere in Malenhole!), lentils, tempeh, tofu, or tamari for example, these were foreign words in Maleny, Nambouring was the place to go.

We all lived on the Fringe in those days, not many people seemed to live in town, there were lots of empty houses and hardly any young people. Old Cow Bails and empty Share Farmers cottages were spruced up and re-vamped. High rents were paid for such accommodation, \$5:00 and rarely \$10:00 per week. Locals were bemused by these Lunatic antics and later by the Hippie Food Shop, where these Fringe dwellers would loiter for hours (nothing had changed here!).

And the Fringe grew and continues to grow. Like-minded people gather and grow in number, leaving the fringe and becoming the core.

Many people, drawn to the warmth and acceptance of locals, left the increasing madness and bustle of the cities to join the alternative fringe of Maleny and districts.

Maleny, it is said, is a fringe suburb of Brisbane, that enormous suburban mass that has sent its tentacles in all directions. The Sunshine Coast only 14 years ago, was a string of slightly glowing lights on the easterly horizon. Now the lights have joined to form a brilliant ribbon, reaching past Maryborough to the north and Tweed Coast, to the south.

Once each place was situated on the fringe of development, and grew and joined perimeters and became One.(big mass)

As I live on the perimeter, the fringe of a smallish town, the hinterland towns are on the fringe of the bright ribbon, the Coast. We are all entangled in Big Fringes, not all Lunatic! It's the fashion.

After living what seems to have been forever, without a light on the horizon, I now see the loom of the town lights in the night sky. Suburbia is twinkling down on me.

Sometimes I fret and think about moving 'out bush' to the desert where suburbia will not find me, a feeling I share with some of my fellow Frogs, but in doing so, I would become part of the spearhead of the very growth and development I sought to flee.

So the fringes are growing and as for the Lunatics, they seem to move on, but for the looming fringe on my horizon. I have a penchant for wearing fringes on my frocks, and we all know that, "Buffalo Girls Go 'round the outside, 'round the outside, 'round the outside". So I'm on the fringe and it will be a long ride!



Mad About Fringes

• Gary Blisner

"Louts are more comfortable in a Holden Gemini, these days, than in their

lunatic forbears' position of dodging falling trees of such massive size that their likeness will not be seen by any young lunatics again. Those same louts will inevitably attract cattle ticks, as they frolic in the grass, showing the diverse nature of the lunatic fringe and the complex relationships that exist between them. - Cut!" Filming stopped and David and the crew bumped their way back into town. (Do they really want to keep these funny little country roads, including the potholes? They're very quaint I suppose, but they are terribly dangerous you know!)

These words roared around inside my head as I tried to fight away images of the whole of the Maleny Plateau occupied by lunatics, just like over in Barbaquearea, on the Sunshine Coast.

I admired the pleasant breeze as we made our way back to Nagy's. A few strands of my travel rug played with the wind as I considered the many fringes I had seen that day. Some of them being quite exquisite, my favourite being the glorious manfern frond we all sat under momentarily. "I love fringes - I've got a collection you know - I'd better get going now, it's time for me to count my fringe collection"...."I say! is it full moon tonight? Naa, tomorrow, I think."



**Black
Possum
Publishing
Co-op**

Lunacy

- Mary Garden

Lunacy has always been connected with the moon (the word 'lunar' means 'concerned with the moon'): connecting with our feelings, our instinctual bodies and the tribal sense of 'being a part of' rather than shining as an individual (sun energy). So 'being a part of' requires us to be in touch with our feelings and where we connect. Which is why we need our magical folk festival. There's nothing quite like a bit of wild dancing, drumming and passion erupting to get us connected with each other again and with our own bodies and feelings. The perfect antidote to frazzled co-op directors who so often get to feel over-worked, over-committed and spending much too much time at meetings, thinking, talking, reading, sitting at computers ...

Here's a beautiful story I discovered recently (which I have reworded) which makes me wonder at times whether we, up here in 'Paradise', are really doing things so differently!

"There was a fellow who dies and finds himself in a beautiful place with flowers and trees, virgin rainforest, sparkling clear streams and rivers, no dams, clean air and sky. He looks about and thinks 'Gee, I must have been better than I thought I had been. Here I am in heaven. Far out. But I need a place to live'. Instantly his dream house - a solar-

efficient, mud-brick house -materialises in front of him. As he enters he sees the decor he has always dreamed about -- the house breathes of naturalness and harmony. Sitting down he thinks 'Wow, but I'd like something to eat' and there on the table before him manifests an array of healthy foods -- fresh raspberries and cream, mango lassis, salads, rennet-free cheese. He relaxes back feeling at last a sense of peace but then he thinks 'I'd sure like to hear some music' and at that very moment Tony O'Connor's mystical music of bush-sounds drifts through one of the mud-brick walls. He sinks back on the natural cotton futon lounge and sighs, 'What heaven this is'. Lounging about like this for a few days he feels so relaxed and comfortable but then he thinks, 'Oh wouldn't it be nice to share this heaven with someone' and in through the door walks his perfect, astrologically harmonious, healthy-looking, sensuous soul mate of a partner. They drift into each others arms where they remain almost inseparable for several weeks.

One after another his desires materialise but then after 6 months he notices that while he is getting all he wants in this perfect, ecologically stable, harmonious heaven he doesn't really feel very fulfilled. His mind still holds fear. He still remembers cats on the earth and regrets not having killed more of them whilst he was there. He is still angry at his wife who walked out on him because she said he was such a workaholic and out of touch with his emotions. And then as he surveys all the beauty around him and how at home he feels, a feeling of panic arises and he becomes paranoid that his beautiful lover and house might disappear. Another couple of goats milk lassis, another few weeks in wild, erotic, tantric lovemaking, another few hills appear outside his window covered with rainforest and teeming with wild-life with no cats, and he begins to question how useful all

this manifestation is to him. None of this has taken him beyond his desires, his dreams, his fears, his rage. He has not begun to deal with the place within him that only gets comfortable when it gets what it wants and gets rid of what it doesn't want. He has not touched the yearning that at times has made his life such pain and suffering. In fact now he feels as though he's feeding this root by the escalation of all his desires. He begins to wonder whether there might be some place in the universe where he could work on this vacuum he's begun to feel inside of him, this awful feeling of meaninglessness and loneliness.

After a while he goes to the head-women and says .. 'I'm sorry. This might sound a bit ungrateful. But I think I'd rather transfer to hell.'

She turns slowly, with her third eye ablaze and sighs deeply,

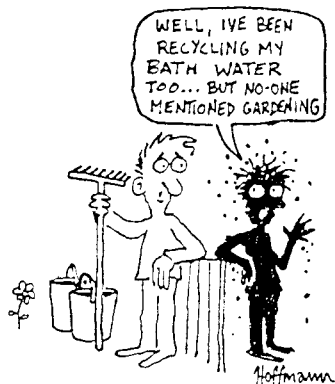
'And where do you think you are!'

Directors: Rosmary Allan, Beryl Muspratt, Alf Ashton, Bryan McLennon, Mary Garden.

Secretary: Jean Elder

Treasurer: Paula Grimaire

Phone: 074 - 941 021





Profile of a Mountain Faerie

• Alice Hungerford

On the frontline of the lunatic fringe of co operatives can be found a group of heavy-footed and sometimes hairy-legged women. Ambidextrous and multi-talented personalities, these unique beings dare to tread the fine edge of lunacy, at least fortnightly, in the name of Mountain Fare.

Some people wonder if we meet together in order to escape the madness in our daily lives, or perhaps it is to create

another very different kind of lunacy (magic), that only comes when women join together with co operation and purpose.

Women have always been very good at cleaning- cleaning up messes. Especially cleaning up other people's messes. There is no doubt that the past 2,000 years of patriarchal planetary management has been a complete failure- in fact, a very messy failure.

Once again, women are taking the lead to show that a simpler, cleaner, sustainable and more caring world- is not only a lot of fun- but its healthier for us AND our children! Mountain Fare is part of that movement, which grows in strength and courage every day.

It has been said we are a bunch of funny women doing funny things. From adolescent to aged, we are all very different. Indeed our diversity is one of our many strengths. We dare to be lunatics and take action. As well as our fortnightly meetings, we cater, sell herbs, educate, evaluate, participate, support each other, and mostly enjoy ourselves in the doing.

Recent activities include a mob of us going to Brisbane for the Qld Women's Health Forum, participating in International Women's Day celebrations, running workshops on Meeting Processes/Consensus, and "Where I Stand on Feminism", and some outstanding herb stalls at the Maleny Markets.

Events to look forward to, include a number of guest speakers, the Herstory of a singular Mountain Faerie, Spring Workshops, Community Projects, an evening meeting on 21st April, and a whole lot more.

Directors: Lyn Blunt, Annah Evington, Meg Barrett, Nora Julien, Ann Jupp, Karen Syrmis, Helen Clark.

Treasurer: Nora Julien

Secretary: Ann Jupp

Phone: 074 - 942 619





From The Lunatic Fringe at The Witta Depot

• Robert Lyndon

It all began around the time of the National Easter Folk Festival. There I was at the Maleny Showgrounds, with my head stuck inside a very smelly bale marked "Aluminium", when I suddenly stood upright and asked my fellow workers around me, "What's an intelligent person like me doing this for?" I realised, too late, what a silly question that was! Peter responded very diplomatically, "Well, we'd better let you answer that one!" So, here I am, trying to answer it. Could it be that I, and others Wastebusters are from the Lunatic Fringe?

I mean, who else would work out in the sweltering sun while all their friends were in the nearest swimming hole? Who else would be up at the Depot at 8 o'clock on a winter's morning, just in time to see the westerly wind rip a door off one of our sheds? Who else would get out there in the rain, and in the early days with mud up to their elbows, to help people recycle? Who else would face irate members of the public when they find they can't dump a

truckload of commercial refuse at the tip, or that they actually have to pay tip fees? And who else would gather up plastics worth only 5c a kilo?

Then there's our Directors. Perhaps you've seen a bleary-eyed Director or two wandering around the town in a daze, on the second Tuesday of the month, after a meeting that went on late the night before. And they don't even get paid for it! They're even trialing TWO meetings a month! Could it be that these meetings are the workings of the inner sanctum of the lunatic fringe?

Dare I even mention the Wastebusters' Dishwashing Service at the most recent Folk Festival? Talk about the Lunatic Fringe! The scene in the kitchen was one of noise, confusion and chaos as Wastebusters and volunteers worked eighteen hours a day over a steaming hot sink, rushing around taking orders and making them up, yelling to be heard over the music. They mounted a bucking Ag. bike and wrestled it through the crowds, managing one or two spectacular crashes which might have been mistaken as part of the Street Theatre. Several of them break out in severe rashes at the sight of a sinkful of dishes and some may be in need of post-trauma therapy!

But perhaps we're not as loony as it seems. We are part of a Co-op which is doing something positive for the environment. We might not be paid much, or have the best working conditions, but we believe in what we're doing.

Lunatics? Not us!

Directors: Robert Lyndon, Nigel Parrett, Marjolie Schouten, Rob Swain, Kim Rosenberg, Ross Walker, Russell Carter.

Secretary: Kim Rosenberg

Treasurer: David Barnes.

Phone: 074 - 943 922



Education and Training: An Investment in the Future

• Derek Sheppard

I've finally finished reading a most interesting book: "The Co-operative Way: Worker Co-ops in France, Spain and Eastern Europe" (ICOM Co-Publications, 1983).

This may be strange to a number of you reading this.

Unfortunately, I have fallen into the habit of only soaking up current affairs information and spending the rest of the time "doing" things.

The book reviews worker co-ops in Europe, the reasons they were established and how they operated up until 1983. The reviewers particularly focused on France and Mondragon in the Basque Region of Spain.

For those of you who haven't read the book, I suggest that you do so, as it is essential reading. It gives a good historical perspective to worker co-ops. As it is stated in the foreword, "many lessons can be learned from the paper by Antoine Antoni secretary general of the French Confederation of Producer Co-operatives (SCOP) for forty years."

Antoni puts forward a number of tenets relating to membership, workers, management, capital structures and so forth. Importantly, and it is worth remembering and reflecting on his following words of wisdom:

"A co-operative is not a business like

others but at the same time it is subject to the same economic constraints. A producer co-op which is an economic failure is automatically a social failure. A co-op which is solely an economic success is of no social interest. Our kind of enterprise is at present the only one which can achieve a balance between the economic and social aspects, between quantity and quality. A real co-op is one which, by means of collective management, is able to build up acceptable - sometimes even harmonious - social relations on a solid economic foundation." He goes on to say:

"Dedication and realism are the two prerequisites for a successful co-op. They demand of us both ideological commitment and commercial hardheadedness. A co-op member who neglects the opportunity to ensure the prosperity of his co-op jeopardises the co-operative cause, however unselfish and loyal he may be in other matters. A member who forgets the social objectives of his co-op betrays it, whether consciously or unconsciously."

Obviously, these could apply to any co-op or for that matter credit union.

One of my concerns of late has been the amount of on-going training and education being undertaken in formal or informal ways by co-ops that I am involved with in Maleny.

I believe that one of the most important ways to ensure that there is a continuing and increasing pool of potential workers, members, co-ordinators / managers, volunteers and directors is through proactive training and education. In Maleny there appears to be informal education through letters and articles in this Review and the Range News. Informal on the job training takes place. Periodic education takes place through workshops and Mountain Fare Spring workshops. In addition, information as distinct from education, takes place in a variety of ways - mostly informal, through

word of mouth or by way of periodic newsletters.

Currently, there appears to be no formal budgeting for training and education. As Antoni indicates and we all know, a co-op is like no other business. To know why and how our particular co-ops were established and operate requires a dedicated program.

As confirmation of my own gradually evolving and developing thinking on the subject, Antoni says:

"... a co-op director normally considers it one of his (/her) prime responsibilities to provide the co-op with the most up-to-date equipment and to maintain and improve the equipment with dedication. No one would deny that the people who devise, use and manage the equipment are more important than the equipment itself. These same directors who lavish so much attention on the equipment and tools are sometimes less concerned about the selection, training and promotion of their colleagues and their future successors. In this way, they are taking on a serious responsibility for they are confronting their capitalist competitors in the arena of investment in plant and equipment, which is in their competitors' favour, and refusing to join battle in that of improving their workers, which is more favourable to producer co-ops. Now if we fight capitalists on their own ground with nothing but capitalist weapons we will be beaten before we start. Our unique but crucial asset is human capital. It must be made to bear fruit.

In producer co-ops preparation for administration and management is governed by two principles peculiar to this type of enterprise:

- every worker in a co-op must be considered as a potential director or board member;
- the training of administration and management personnel must be considered of prime importance and be

given absolute priority."

On the job training passes on information about current practices. It may or may not convey all the required information because it is dependent on the trainer and whether there is supporting written material. For a trainee to be empowered they need to know that the work, although undertaken in a particular way in the past, can be improved through constant ongoing review by the trainee working in conjunction with others. It is not always the case that on the job training passes on this method of empowerment since the trainer has generally been doing the work for some time and may not see the need or reasons for improvement.

The introduction of new and improved practices is partially dependent on training and education off the job. The French and Basques were fortunate, through the sheer number of organisations involved, to create training centres. Maleny co-ops are not in the position to do that, but there is a capacity, I am sure, for local co-ops to devote funding in their budgets to training and education. The most efficient way of doing this is by all the local co-ops jointly funding a trainer/educator probably in a part time capacity. This might be through Mountain Fare because of the educational role it has adopted.

Co-operatives are the way of the future. To continue to improve and harness as much as possible of our human potential we need to focus more on our individual and more particularly collective development.

If any readers wish to discuss or progress this subject further, I can be contacted on telephone no. 94 3532 on some nights during the week.

In Memoriam

On the 26th of February, the Maple Street Co-op lost a very special member,

Ivy Francis Boon, who died after a long struggle with cancer.



Ivy Boon was a "local" in the truest sense, born at Belli Park, Eumundi in 1926, working with her father on the farm at Cooloolabin and never seeing town until she was sixteen.

In 1949 in Yandina she married Keith Boon and lived in Conondale thereafter, yet because of her great capacity to love people and understand human nature, her horizons were very broad. She would welcome any person who came to visit her home, taking them as she found them and not prejudging.

Through good times and hard times she was always there for her husband and family, a person of great inner strength and resourcefulness.

Ivy was a gifted water diviner. She loved planting and looking after trees and she used to hug the trees to feel their strength. She was deeply spiritual, placing great faith in God and the universe. Her rose garden and walking and fishing were really important to her. She liked catching eels the most.

Those who knew her will remember and miss her generosity of spirit, her clear insight about the world of feelings and her love.

Directors: Jenny Law, Vivienne Prescott, Derek Sheppard, Jan Tilden, Louise Kay, Owen Hutchison, David Bromet.

Secretary: Nora Julien.

Co-managers: Francoise Leduc, Gayle Butson.

Phone: 074 - 942 088

THREATENED SPECIES NETWORK

The Aboriginal Approach To Conservation

• Jan Tilden

One of the questions I constantly ask myself as the Co-ordinator of the Threatened Species Network in Queensland is why we, the European settlers in this country, have such a bad record of species conservation. Why are we so hard on the environment? Why is it that since we arrived in this country 20 species of mammals have become extinct - about half of all the mammal extinctions in the world over the last 200 years?

Some of the answers, I think, lie in the way we use and own the land. We divide it up into little squares on the map and exchange sacred bits of legal paper which allow us to feel that we have the inalienable right to do just what we like with the land and all that lives on it, including wipe things out if we happen to find their presence a tad inconvenient. As far as what the next door neighbour is doing with his or her land, we don't take much notice unless it happens to inconvenience us. If we did, the neighbour might get a bit annoyed. "Hey Mr Smith, about that thing you have just planted in your garden. It has the potential to become an environmental weed. Don't you think you had better pull it up?" What do you think the response would be?

As well, we lack a sense of personal responsibility for the many species of wildlife that surround us. I once had the slightly outrageous idea that everybody

should have a species of animal or plant named after their family - so for example you might have *Mopsus tildeni* (that would be a species of jumping spider) or *Dendrolaga smithia* (a tree kangaroo). Now I imagine I would be quite concerned about my jumping spider and you about your tree kangaroo and we might keep up with news of how they were getting on out there in the world. We might go to places where we knew they lived, just to see what they looked like or to reassure ourselves that they were still there. If they should be threatened with extinction, we might be a bit more inclined to take it personally and do something about it instead of just raising our eyebrows and saying, "Oh dear, species extinction is a problem isn't it."

The Aboriginal people of Australia had, and in many cases still have, an entirely different attitude to land ownership and species protection. Their approach to both of these issues was inextricably linked with their religion and their sense of personal and group identity. (Incidentally, I'm aware that I am speaking in the past tense. I must apologise if I offend anyone with this. It is just an indication of my ignorance - my understanding of aboriginal culture comes from anthropological sources which tend to refer to the past. I don't know to what extent these traditional approaches to the land and its wildlife still survive.)

This is my understanding of how the system worked. First, each person had a totemic animal or plant. The decision about which species was chosen for a particular person was made when the mother of the baby first felt it quicken inside her, at the time of "spirit conception". Every feature of the landscape was related to a particular species, so it was the mother's geographical location at the time when she first felt the baby move that determined its totem. Perhaps, when the baby kicked, she

was collecting food in a gully that was created, during the dreaming, by the water dragon ancestor. The kick was a sign that the water dragon spirit from the place had entered the child, so that baby would have the water dragon as her totem. Her duties as a member of the tribe would then include looking after the water dragon and its habitat. She would not be able to eat the water dragon (that would be akin to eating a sister) although others of the tribe could eat it. When she grew up she would not be able to marry a man whose totem was water dragon - such was the seriousness of the religious commitment to this particular animal.

This gave each individual a personal responsibility for a particular species. Of course not all species would have been used as totemic animals, but with the requirement to protect the species habitat, this responsibility for one species would also ensure the safety of others.

The aboriginal system of land use also worked in favour of species conservation. While each group had a territory within which it obtained its food, the land that was regarded as their land (collectively, not individually mind you) was the land for which they had religious responsibility - again the emphasis, in comparison to our approach to land use, was on responsibility, not rights. This land was criss-crossed by dreaming tracks, representing the paths the ancestral spirits (in the form of animals) took when they were creating the earth during the dreamtime. The dreaming paths cross territorial boundaries, as do the totems which are associated with them. So the path of the ancestral water dragon may follow a particular gully, cross a range of mountains, pass close to a particular tree and so on. Some dreaming paths can be traced from one side of the continent to the other. The effect of this is to create a network in which each and every prominent feature of the landscape has a

group of people who is personally responsible for its ongoing existence.

This is why aboriginal people are so scathing of our European approach to conservation. It is totally alien to their perception of the world to set aside little scraps of land here and there and call them National Parks while exploiting and destroying the rest of the land on the basis of a totally arbitrary set of divisions and subdivisions which recognises no logic in the natural landscape. To the aboriginal people all land is sacred. Having to settle for the preservation of a few sacred sites is, in our terms, like agreeing to let the church be destroyed in order to save the altar.

To my mind then, what is needed among non-aboriginal Australians, if we are to turn the tide of environmental destruction in this country, are ways of looking at the land as a whole and taking responsibility across the boundaries of what is ours in legal title. One recent development which has the potential to do this is Integrated Catchment Management, where all the land owners within a particular river system co-operate to manage the land. A river system is chosen as a basis for this approach because it is something that does not stop at the property boundary. People living downstream are affected by the land management decisions of those who live above.

The threatened species network has the potential to add the other component that is lacking from our approach to the land - namely, individual responsibility for particular species. In other States, network co-ordinators have helped to set up "Friends of..." groups, so in Victoria you have "Friends of the Leadbeaters Possum" and in WA, "Friends of the Mallee Fowl". This may not be as effective a way of protecting an animal as having a group of people who regard it as their brother or sister, but at least it is a step in the right direction. Following these examples, I am

hoping later in the year to begin setting up "Friends of ..." groups in Queensland. Anyone interested in more information, please contact me at the Enterprise Centre Maleny on 943922.

THREATENED SPECIES NETWORK

Jan Tilden

C/- Maleny Enterprise Centre

23 Coral Street.

P.O. Box 465, Maleny. Q. 4552

Phone: 074 - 943 922



Dam Update

• Peter Pamment

By the time you are reading this, we hope to finally have the discussion paper on the water appraisal study for the Sunshine Coast area. It has been delayed yet again, but we are assured that it will appear mid March after many delays. The community has been given three months to comment on the report and give submissions. Anyone interested in helping or having any ideas are asked to contact the Committee. Following the community consultation period the DPI will form a strategy group to work towards any firm decisions. Hopefully we can have input into that group as well.

The Committee will also have a general meeting of the community in late March to review the last year and to decide on the future role and direction of the Save The Upper Mary Valley group. Now that

the appraisal study is close to being released, we need to have a firm plan of how the community will approach the future.

It's very heartening to see the general community acceptance of changing attitudes to both water, sewage and to water re-use. The recent "Water Management Conference" organised by the Sunshine Coast Environment Council was well attended and gave the community the opportunity to discuss the issues with Council engineers and other experts.

The move both here on the Sunshine Coast and from all around Australia for long term sustainable solutions to water supply and sewage treatment, water conservation, together with the general river catchment management policies being developed, all lessen the need for new dams and give hope for the future of the Mary Valley.

Save The Upper Mary Valley Committee

Alf Ashton

MS 16, Conondale. Qld. 4552.

Phone: 074 - 460 940

CRYSTAL WATERS PERMACULTURE VILLAGE

Ashens Road MS 16 Maleny QLD 4552

The Lunatic Fringe!!

• Denise Soya

On the edge of civilisation, on the edge of somewhere deep in the Mary Valley by the waters crystal, under the shade of a spreading sally wattle exists the stamping ground of THE LUNATIC FRINGE. Mind you, as the moon waxes and wanes, the activities of said fringe dwellers come and go from long interminable slumbers to

frenzied ceremony and song by the dark of the moon!

Now if you perchance, happened by this secluded close in the wee hours of a dark morning sometime soon after midnight when the moon is full, a large and unkempt scattering of banana peels would assault the moonlit eyes, fitful noises of slumber would permeate the mind, the smell of acrid body odour would choke the nostrils. The lunatic fringe at rest!

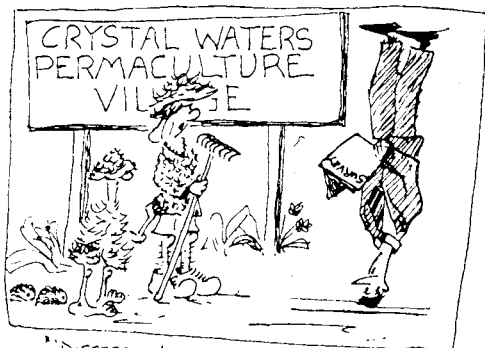
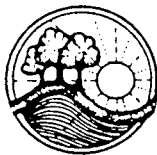
A moment's reflection may give you to wonder why this mob dozes by the energy of the full moon and awakens when the moon is slim. Being on the fringe of lunacy, and with a strong monthly urge for consumption of bananas, is in part, some explanation. Yet, far deeper in the solitude of sleep, beyond the patterns of daily life and the toil of survival, there remains a greater mystery. Simple as it is profound - "of something far deeper interfused" -but that is another story when you next visit THE LUNATIC FRINGE!!

Co-op Secretary: Barry O'Connel

Co-op Treasurer: Kathy Trudgian

Committee Members: Ann Duffy, Patria Cardle, Criss Rew, Denise Soya, Jan Freyee.

Phone: 074 - 944 620



"DIFFERENT 'WHAT MAKES YOU THINK WERE DIFFERENT?'"



The Enterprise Centre Maleny - Standing Alone or Part of The Whole

• Bob Sample

Every now and then I become aware of just how few situations are unique. So often individuals, organisations, communities and nations are working through similar scenarios.

After three years of intense involvement with the Enterprise Centre Maleny project I see it as being very much at a crossroads. It could continue on much as it has, or it could move in other directions.

Since the project was conceived and launched it has been focused on "getting going". From the temporary small home in Maple Street to the refurbished Butter Factory building all sorts of challenges had to be met and dealt with.

Many people have given time and energy to the project and have moved on. The list is a long one.

Now the project is poised as if waiting for something to happen. Several possibilities are there. In some ways changes are taking place; in other ways the project appears stuck in its establishment phase and needs a push to move into operational mode.

We live in a world that demands

adaptive change. Acceptance of, and planning for this can allow creative activity to shape the future. This involves people - key people - in the case of ECM, the seven person Management Committee and the project manager.

As is usual for community based organisations, being on the Board of Directors or a Management Committee involves an often thankless and time consuming commitment. Despite this fact many of us continue being involved. The rewards are there as we work to shape the future of our community.

The aims of the Enterprise Centre Maleny, in their broadest sense, seek to stimulate small business activity in the Maleny district.

The ECM has been "home" for quite a number of small businesses. Some have prospered and moved on to larger premises, some remain secure in the Butter Factory, while some have not prospered and have "moved on".

The project has its strong foundation in its quality building. Refurbishment is almost complete but further investment is needed. Options are being considered.

But perhaps the greatest need is for people to become involved in the project's planning as members of the Management Committee; people who will move the project into maturity; people who will make creative decisions and see them carried out.

The Maleny community is quite large and growing month by month. Many people move to our area attracted by its natural beauty and its friendly people. They bring with them a wealth of experience and skills.

These assets can be made available or remain lost to us. It is very much in the interest of we "old-timers" to welcome the new people and to encourage their involvement in our co-operative organisations.

The challenge of course is to make

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contact with new residents. Most come from conventional suburban environments and don't really understand our "alternative" (and different) organisations.

Perhaps there is a need for our co-ops to undertake a PR campaign. Maybe it could go much further. A 2-day Expo for all community based groups in our area could have information stalls and displays.

To be really successful the event would need to include as many groups as possible. It could provide an all embracing look at the Maleny community.

I have digressed from writing about the ECM project, however I can't help but feel the ECM is linked to all other group initiatives within our community. If the ECM is to have a true purpose in Maleny, then it must be part of a whole, not something in isolation.

LETS, Probus, the Credit Union, Lions, RSL, rotary, Crystal Waters, Frogs Hollow, the Chamber of Commerce, Maple St Co-op, Cedarton, Barung, Wastebusters, Toastmasters and many, many others form the profile of our unique community.

They are all connected and part of the whole. The idea of bringing as many groups as possible together for an Expo is exciting. Perhaps it could be another first for Maleny and could no doubt attract media coverage and probably sponsorship. In the meantime the ECM project will roll on, seemingly in isolation but really connected to the whole.

Yes we do need people to fill vacancies on our Management Committee. Our financial year finishes at the end of March and our AGM will be held late in May or early in June.

President: Bob Sample

Vice President: Judi Body

Secretary: Harry Whitehouse

Treasurer: Giancarlo Molinaro

Committee Members: Ian McDonald, Stan Tosh, Linda James, Cherry Sandvick.

Manager: Judi Body

Phone: 074 - 943 922



LETS Loonies

• Ann Jupp

Once upon a time there was a sleepy little country town up in the hills which was invaded. No troops marched in, but first a trickle, then a flood of world weary folk started to pour in, to escape the cities, the Rat Race and burn out, seeking peace and quiet, clean air and idyllic scenery. The locals viewed this takeover with horror and sometimes downright hostility, all the while thinking among themselves that these invaders were definitely the "Lunatic Fringe" personified. They dressed in strange garments and seemed to be totally disinterested in money and possessions, and what's more were talking about peace and love! The escapees' friends and families back in the cities thought they were crazy too - except for those who secretly envied them.

Then the lunatics and "hippies" began to



get themselves organized and form what is called a Community - a community within an already established community. They started up a shop in the town, selling all manner of odd and healthy looking food. Then a few upstarts thought they could compete with the local bank. Some of them were even mad enough to think that they could supply themselves with most of their daily necessities without the use of MONEY! Dangerous and revolutionary idea that! Bloody New Age nonsense!!!

And so LETS was born, in this little country town in the hills, with all the lunatics ready to embrace it.

Before we go any further, LETS look at the words "Lunatic Fringe".

Lunatic - from the Latin Luna (the Moon) = crazy, reckless, delirious, raving, foolish, eccentric, fanatical, frenzied, odd, demented, and many more

All of these words can be associated with enthusiasm and joy too. Not a dead word among them!

Fringe = edge, brink, brim, margin, (and decoration). All of these suggest pushing past the limits of old ways of thinking to new and exciting possibilities. Fullness and abundance.

Slowly at first LETS has spread to other lunatics around the country. Now in these grim times of recession its growth has accelerated beyond belief. So, the original lunatic idea must have had something in it, or something going for it. The Press still occasionally treat it with suspicion and negativity, as do some bureaucrats, but the numbers are such now that the mainstream can not ignore it or label it "Fringe" any more. Why, even big companies are copying the idea! Imitation being the sincerest form of flattery?

So, are we lunatics? We who work for imaginary nuts - or eggs, or quambies, or clus, or ecos, or keatings. And who get things done and purchase the niceties of life with the same imaginary nonsenses. We feel that we aren't mad, but blessed,

with abundance and quality of life.

The people to run and staff the LETS in Maleny could be seen to be "nutters". There are certainly some "interesting" personalities in and around LETS Maleny, AND Australia - NO! WORLD wide. Folks who are larger than life and sure do answer the previous description of lunatic. We met some wonderful crazies at the LETS Conference last year, too. They're all full of life and enthusiasm and fun, as well as being loonies.

But hang on!! We started with a suspect bunch of radicals and revolutionaries here. And what have we now?? Pillars of society, that's who!! Why, some of us even have "respectable" jobs. We've got computer boffins, university types, even Alderpeople (and friends and relatives of Alderpeople!), nurses and ex-nurses, wives and mothers (bless 'em) And we can all be a little bit mad when we want to be. But we know, in the final analysis, that we're a hell of a lot saner than the wage slaves running on their little rat treadmills, commuting for hours, never seeing the sun (or their children!), breathing carbon monoxide and eating pesticide on their plastic food in their mortgaged-to-the-hilt brick veneer(eal) cages. Who's the lunatic????????????????????

Trustees: Ann Jupp, Peter Pamment, Robin Clayfield, Vicki Potter, Rhonda Barnes.

Advisors: Jane Skrandris, Andru Martin, Jill Jordan, Mohan, Phil Smith, Steve McLeish.

Phone: 074 - 943 113



PROUT

PROUT Community Co-op

• Dada Mayadhiishananda

You're lucky if you can realize a glimmer of your life's vision. It's really satisfying! Beginning in 1959, the founder of Ananda Marga, Shrii Shrii Anandamurti, unveiled a vision of social transformation, termed PROUT, (Progressive Utilization Theory). From coops to bio-gas, afforestation to water conservation and people oriented economics, the vision dazzled us and we dreamt of the planet magically transformed into paradise before our eyes. As we've found out, it's hard work and the real magic comes from firm commitment to the vision. The planet doesn't seem to be getting much better - but that is more reason to work earnestly. I'd like to share with you our social vision and some of our accomplishments around the world and here in Maleny.

PROUT's foundation for social change relies on spiritual values. The primary concept is a reverence for all life, termed Neo-humanism and a society that fosters the physical, mental and spiritual liberation of all beings.

There is another powerful spiritual precept that is as true for our whole society and the environment as it is for the individual: "We are in the process of becoming the object of our thoughts". We shape our lives through our mental "ecology" and our social ecology is a reflection of this. Australian author Judith Wright echoes this concept, when she states:

*"The country grows
into the image of the people,
And the people grow
Into the likeness of the country
Till to the soul's geographer,
each becomes the symbol of the other"*

So a spiritual mind is the prerequisite of social mind that has the potential for developing a harmonious society.

A third significant spiritual precept that has great meaning socially is: "The body is the temple of the spirit". The same is true socially. Society must nurture human relationships, economics, culture and ecological symbiosis - the body of our social well-being.

PROUT (which also means "in proportion according to" in latin) merges the individual spiritual path towards self-realization and the path of transformation of society towards true harmony. PROUT provides a science of economics, ecology and social structure and a practical strategy for social change towards a harmonious equilibrium.

Central to PROUT is regional planning, identifying basic buildings blocks of a sustainable society. There is great utility in considering planning units of nations broken down into composite regions when analyzing resource utilization, issues of equitable economics, and ecological impact. Regions are considered to be vital and sustainable according to their degree of "self-reliance".

Australia is the most urbanized continent in the world, (Australian Bureau of Statistics - ABS, 1992) yet relies on an economically, ecologically and socially stressed rural sector for the bulk of its export earnings. Its urban environment is characterized by a high crime rate, great disparities in wealth, and a commercial sector predominantly oriented to retail trade, its manufacturing small in comparison. The rural sector creates 80% of export earnings, yet rural people are among the poorest in Australia, and its

fragile ecosystems are under great stress. Limited natural resources are shipped overseas in a desperate attempt to make up for the lack of productive industry.

So our focus in Australia is to help develop self-reliant regions that are neither over-urbanized, nor in rural blight. For this PROUT offers tools for planning and strategies for change. These include:

1) Block Level Planning. The basic social unit is a block, which may be equivalent to a shire. This unit must have the greatest self reliance. There should be cooperation and coordination between blocks and in higher levels of planning.

2) All levels of planning, whether block, regional, state or federal incorporate the means to ensure the following:

- * A guaranteed purchasing capacity to provide each individual with at least the minimum requirements of life, including adequate food, housing, health care, clothing and education.

- * Diverse and abundant opportunities for full employment.

- * A progressive incentive system to encourage initiative and creativity. Incentives may be given in kind rather than money. For example, a scientist might receive an electron microscope and factory workers better recreational facilities. Collective incentives (social income) are provided to enhance overall quality of life and include community resource centres, sporting facilities, recreational parks, public concerts and art galleries.

- * A coordinated cooperation amongst all sectors of the economy and continual efforts to increase the standard of living of all the people.

3) Balanced Economics

To ensure a diversified and secure base of productivity, PROUT encourages the adoption of principles of 'balanced economy' for each self-sufficient economic zone. This promotes proportionate employment amongst the

agricultural, industrial, clerical, commercial and service sectors. For example, in developing countries approximately, 30% of people would be employed directly in agricultural production, 20 to 40% of people employed in agricultural related industries, 20 to 30% of people should be employed in non-agricultural industries; not more than 10% of persons engaged in trade and commerce; not more than 10% of persons employed in service professions such as education, law, medicine, public service, clerical administration, etc. In Australia, over 20% of the workforce is employed in retail-related business, which really produces nothing at all.

4) Local resources must be developed before exporting raw materials or importing raw materials or finished products. This policy encourages the growth of a healthy, indigenous manufacturing sector, full employment, and greater security and self-reliance in times of difficulty. Economic units should trade in manufactured products rather than raw materials, as this offers the best economic security.

5) Within each economic zone, PROUT advocates an integrated three-tiered economic structure comprising cooperatives, key industries and private enterprise.

- * Cooperatives constitute the largest sector of a Proutist economy, and include all agricultural and most manufacturing industries structured as producer and consumer coops. They are to be owned and managed by their workers in each industry and should be modern, efficient and profitable enterprises.

- * Key industries, which provide essential resources for economic activity, such as minerals and energy, large scale transport and communications, are best managed as public utilities. Boards of directors should be elected democratically and workers should participate in

management. Banking and financial institutions should also be organised as cooperatives, while the central bank is to be a key industry.

* Private enterprise includes small scale manufacturing, cottage and service industries. Some special industries which cannot be managed efficiently as cooperatives would also function as private enterprise. When a private enterprises develops into a large concern, it will automatically be transformed into a cooperative.

* Emphasis on cooperation in economic activity will unleash a powerful new impetus for growth, which Sarkar terms a "Cooperative Dynamo".

6) Economics and Ecology in Harmony
Proutist economics is fundamentally linked with ecological concerns. PROUT - based economics is geared to meeting both human and environmental needs.

* PROUT's analysis of a region begins with the study of the degeneration of the environment and the means to rectify ecological imbalance. It provides a strategy of reforestation and agriculture that heals damage and provides a nurturing setting for plant, animal and human life for generations to come. The founder of PROUT, P.R. Sarkar, has written detailed plans for saving endangered animal and plant species and specific systems for saving environmentally devastated areas, such as Bangladesh.

* PROUT emphasises self-sufficient economic zones. Each zone must maintain a fertile environment in order to protect its economic prosperity and future productive capacity.

* By balancing the productive sector (the agricultural and industrial) there are inherent controls placed on industrialization, pollution and urban blight. Through cooperative ownership, there are safeguards against over-accumulation of wealth in which vested interests hoard resources and exploit the

environment.

* Animals, plants and the living earth are as much a part of society as human beings; the welfare of all living beings; plants and animals and human beings are inextricably interlinked.

These principles have been put into practice in many regions around the world, working in cooperation with indigenous people.

At Ananda Nagar in Purulia, West Bengal India, we're working on a model for regional development. The area covers 55 villages and some fifty thousand people and includes massive afforestation, water conservation, hundreds of cooperative industries, all levels of education, alternative energy and wildlife sanctuary. Every year a group of university students from our meditation classes visit there.

In Khavrosvk, Eastern Russia, we're working with the Peoples Academy of Sciences and the local council developing model projects for sustainable industry. John Seed of the Rainforest Information Centre has offered to donate two mobile sawmills to us when we begin our project to help indigenous people to develop sustainable forest resources - we're also helping to save the Siberian tiger.

In Togo, West Africa, PROUT has been working alongside AMURT (Ananda Marga Universal Relief Team) to develop a system of village grain coops and model farms, as well as afforestation and water conservation and village education.

The government of Ghana is considering our recommendations for ecological and sustainable economic principles in their constitution.

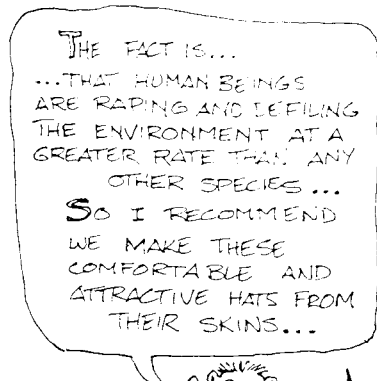
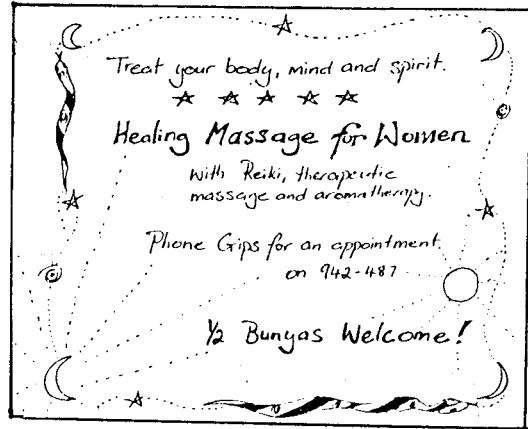
Now where does our Maleny PROUT community fit into all of this? Well, first of all, it's a place to regenerate and wake up spiritually. After some seven years of spiritual chanting and meditation and loving care of the land, the community is becoming a spiritual magnet. Secondly, it's a project offering service to the

surrounding region. For many years we've been experimenting with PROUT's system of land-care which involves water-harvesting (or capturing rainwater wherever possible), intercropping, lush plantation around water sources and experimenting with crops and trees appropriate to the soil and climate. Last year Mahadeva started a children's play group, helping children get in touch with the land and learning through creativity. Manorainjan, formerly head teacher of the Mt Tully School in Stanthorpe, and his family moved onto the land recently to help start an alternative primary school - there seems to be a keen interest in Maleny in a school based on spiritual and ecological principles.

There have been many retreats and seminars, some helping people to renew themselves spiritually, others addressing ecological work and social transformation. There are many problems the Sunshine Coast faces - over-development, abuse of the environment, breakdown of communities, foreign multi-national domination. And there is also a good spirit towards sustainable change. The best way for harmonious change is everyone to join their abilities and visions. We certainly feel a part of that process. We invite everyone to investigate the tools, strategies and projects of PROUT and to visit our Maleny community. Please write or call if you'd like to find out more or to come out for a meeting.

PROUT Maleny Community
(Use what name you like)
PO Box 177
Maleny, Qld 4552
Phone 074-4552

If you are on pegasus you can contact me at pegasus:PROUT
or write to PO Box 713 Burwood, NSW 2134
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