

Community Building in Britain Newsletter

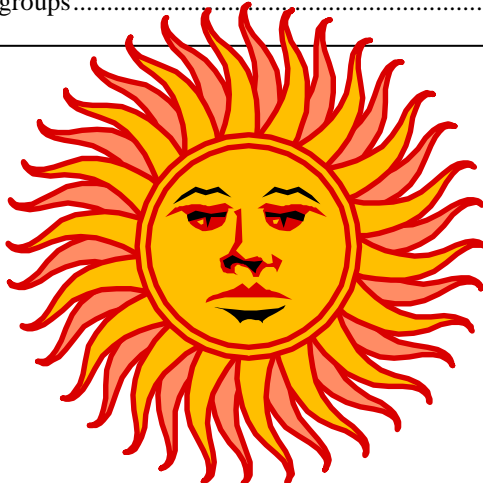
Number 69

May/June 1999

The newsletter is issued by a growing network of people in Britain who are committed to developing community building beyond that originally described in Dr. M. Scott Peck's book, 'The Different Drum', and as further developed by the Foundation for Community Encouragement in the USA (FCE).

In this issue:-

Scheduled Community Building events	page 3
Letters	page 4
Report from the holding group meeting	pages 5-6
A letter from the holding group	page 7
Leaders and visions and other business	pages 7-9
Othona community - summer volunteers	page 10
Community Building for courses	pages 11-12
Community building in the classroom.....	pages 13-14
Meeting for what - Quakers and community builders	pages 15-17
Universal Humans - an invitation.....	pages 18-19
Details of local groups.....	page 20



Editorial

There is something particularly poignant about sitting at home alone, writing about community. I guess the intention is that by spending so much time thinking, writing, focussing on the theory perhaps I will magnetise more of it into my life - the old Law of attraction: like attracts like. I am keenly aware, however it is one thing to think and talk about it and quite another to live it, walk my talk so to speak.

Challenge

Pulling together this issue has been quite a challenge, apologies for it's being late. After the last issues focus on self esteem through the work of Murray White I thought it would be appropriate to include the second part of an article from the FCE Communiqué

(summer/fall 98) entitled "Community Building in the Classroom" (the first half having been published in a previous issue so I hope you've stashed your back copies of the newsletter somewhere safe in case you need to reread the first half!)

There seems to be lots of business news in this issue - a report of the last Holding Group meeting; a letter from the Holding Group inviting interested members of the network to attend two meetings of the HG to explore their possible membership of the group.

Public training

The Design Team also have some news:- They have decided to postpone the public training until the spring of 2000. They were so inspired by the design that they came up with that they felt moved to use the package on themselves to strengthen the Facilitator Training Group. Their hope is that the resulting training will be more powerful as a result.



Those interested in the Training please continue to contact Tracy Barr on 01243 775 745 to reserve a place or express an interest. Bear in mind that places are limited.

Anthony Kirke has come up with a very practical suggestion for approaching businesses or organisations that might be interested in using Community Building to improve the effectiveness of their courses - please get in touch with him if you feel moved or wish to support his endeavour.

Vision

I personally felt moved to share some insights I had through reading a book entitled 'Leading People - The 8 proven principles of success in business. I've basically reviewed the section of the book entitled Vision in the hope of stimulating, inspiring us within CBiB to articulate

our own visions.

ANSWERS ON A POSTCARD PLEASE!

Thanks

A big thank you to all those who sent me cards or little notes of welcome and thanks for being brave/foolish enough to take on the role of editor. I really appreciate personal encouragement and it's so nice to feel wanted!

I would also like to thank Roger Green of Sheffield small group for his article.

The deadline for the next issue is **July 19 1999**. Please send contributions letters or feedback (of the nurturing variety) to:-

*Rachel Castagne
Flat C, 257 Preston Road
Brighton
BN1 6SE65
(Tel: 01273 382 864)
email PeterCBiB@aol.com (via Peter)*

Community Building in Britain Events

<u>Date</u>	<u>Place</u>	<u>Contact</u>	<u>Fee</u>	<u>Notes</u>
29-31 Oct	near Birmingham	Peter Laxton: 01446 711569 Teân Stuttaford: 0121 420 4390	£150 residential	CBW for followers of Jesus/Messiah
11-14 Nov	Othona, Dorset	01308 897130	TBA	CBW

Note: - **CBE** stands for “Community Building Experience”, which provides an opportunity to build community in a large group over two days. In a “Community Building Workshop”, or **CBW**, a third day is added so that not only can participants experience the building of community but they can also learn about the process through discussion and reflection.

FCE stands for the Foundation for Community Encouragement - the companion organisation to CBiB in the USA

There are two other sets of initials you might hear about (although neither types of event has been arranged in the UK for a while). **CBSS** stands for Community Building Skills Seminar, which deepens understanding of community principles and behaviour; it focuses on the skills of facilitation and leadership and teaches how to evaluate and monitor the processes of community building in ongoing groups. **LEP** stands for the Leadership Education Programme.



Attention Londoners

Do you have a room to spare for a Charity worker? Living in Milton Keynes.

I need a place to stay in London for between 1-4 nights a week. I can only offer £5 per night rent but would provide some domestic help.

Please call Andy on 0171 252 7666 Monday, Tuesday and Thursday (daytime) or 01908 222 493 rest of week.

Looking for a home

I have just moved to Bath and I am looking for a new home. Shared with peaceful souls or all on my lonesome would be okay, preferably in a beautiful place.

If you have any ideas I would like to hear them - please. Contact Jonathan Melville-Brown by leaving a message with

- Bath YMCA: 01225 460471
- or with Suzy Adderley : 01491 875986
- or email :jonathan-mb@hotmail.com



A warm welcome from Bath

Dear Rachel, or should I say "Ed" ?

First of all - Congratulations on your new job. I'm really pleased that someone has the courage to take on this mammoth task. Are you mad? Moreover, I'm particularly glad it is you. I look forward to having a sense of you percolating through the pages.

Tacking on to my email in no. 68; I have experienced a sense of community, peace and joy in several settings in Australia, particularly at the Sydney Men's Festival. I will never really get Australia or the people I met there out of my system. I love the land as it loves me, with an intensity and sensuality that defies description.

I have decided to let go of my Australian residency and my intention is to commit to a life in the UK. I sometimes confuse my sadness around this decision with a belief that I made the wrong decision.

I have moved to Bath, and as I write I am still looking for accommodation - it's a bit odd.

Good Luck in your new job, Rachel.

Love
Jonathan Melville-Brown
jonathan_mb@hotmail.com

Volunteer opportunities

Dear Mr Cooper

We are, as you may know, a small ecumenical Christian community, open to people of all faiths and none who want to experience community living for periods ranging from a few hours to several weeks.

This letter concerns the centre in Bradwell, Essex.

Bradwell is run by a group of 'Core' community members who live permanently on site. In addition, the people who come to stay help with day-to-day jobs.

In the summer months, a combination of sunshine and our programme of activities attracts many visitors to Othona including a large proportion of young people, often from the continent.

From July to September, therefore welcome short term volunteers to come and work with us to run the site. Therefore, I am sending you a poster which explains the kind of volunteers we need, and what we can give them in return.

I would be very grateful if you could find some board space for us, and draw our poster to the attention of anyone who has some time to spare in the summer.

Further details can be obtained from Angenita Teekens at the address below. Othona's website (www.nodeknot.demon.co.uk/othona.htm) is also a good source of background information on our 50-year old venture into Christian fellowship.

I hope this is of interest to you, and thank you for your help. With love and fellowship

*Kate Mulkern Chair of Othona, Bradwell
East Hall Farm, East End Road
Bradwell-on-Sea Southminster
Essex CM0 7PN
Tel: 01621 776564*

Report from the Holding Group meeting

The Holding Group met on the weekend of 24/25 April at Douai Abbey in order to build community and attend to any business issues as we saw them.

We welcomed Tracy Barr, who is thinking of joining us, for the Friday night and the whole of Saturday. Present also were Teān Stuttaford (on the Sunday), David Saunders, Gerri Moriarty, Anthony Kirke, Ruth Goffe, Peter Cooper, Richard Benzie and Suzy Adderley. An invitation had been extended to Mal Tanner, who joined us for the Saturday afternoon in order to help us with our desire to think more deeply about our vision for CBiB.

Finance

This subject was tackled first thing on Saturday morning and was briefly picked up again on the Sunday. Gerri circulated some up-to-date figures showing about £1,700 in the main account. The balance had, however, fallen much lower earlier in the year and the fact that CBiB had not been able to discharge its debts promptly in every case was a clear point of concern.

Details of the FTG's account were sketchy, but it was believed that Chrissie Sugden was trying to deal with this, as the present signatories for the account are no longer actively involved. Having taken the finances over from Erica, Gerri made it clear that she is holding this responsibility for the current year only.

CB events

We reviewed what we knew of recent and forthcoming events.

Edinburgh CBE. About 18 participants had attended this event, which took place in a rural setting about two miles from Musselburgh. We recognised that this had been on the edge of viability. This is at least the fourth event arranged by the Edinburgh team and they may be taking stock at this point.

Sutton Courtney. This had been attended by about 50 people and had been very actively supported by the community there. Suzy had received some feedback from Sharon Usher

and we agreed that if possible she and Ruth would work to strengthen CBiB's links with Sutton Courtney. There was considerable excitement in the group about this idea.

CBWs for Christians and Othona CBW. Peter Cooper is taking the link role for the Holding Group for the Christian event. It was understood that a budget had been agreed.

With the next two events both due in the autumn - and one of them being an event for Christians in which not all might feel able to participate - there is a lack of events in the coming few months which Anthony, who receives telephone enquiries, is particularly conscious of.

Vision

Some of Saturday morning and all of the afternoon were spent on the subject of a vision for CBiB. Yvonne Poulson, whose community building activities in her own life prevented her from joining us for the weekend, had written a letter drawing our attention to the FCE mission statement and the inspiration that she felt lay behind it. We had also received a letter from Christopher Cooke, who is interested in doing some work that would be related to having a vision. Gerri undertook to contact Christopher about this.

An early note of caution was sounded in the discussion on having a vision, and we recognised the painful fact that those doing voluntary work for CBiB have sometimes been faced with a big task and little support.

We spent some time during the first Saturday afternoon session listening to Mal Tanner and his experiences of introducing community building tools at the company Do It All. Mal described how part of this work involved a 2-day Search Conference, an event that was carefully prepared by a Design Team representative of all employees at Do It All. At present, Mal is studying part-time with the Human Potential Research Group at Surrey University. It was thought-provoking to hear that his course has ten five-day periods devoted to circle time.

Wisdom and inspiration

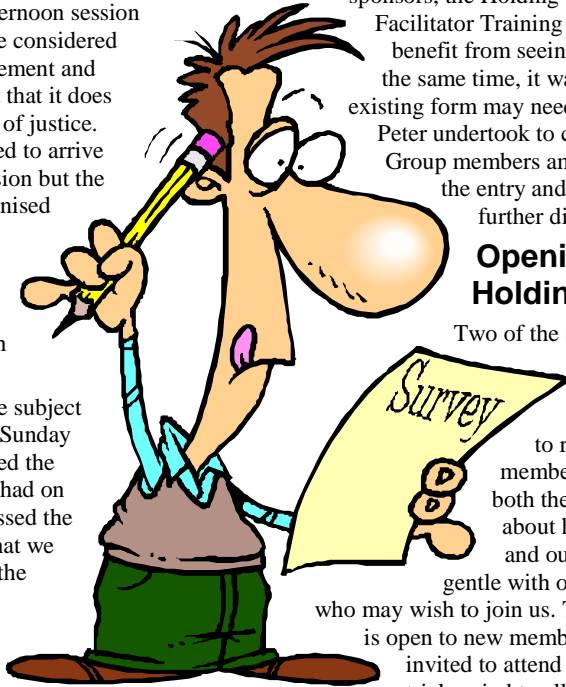
During the second afternoon session Mal listened to us. We considered the FCE Mission Statement and thought about the fact that it does not deal with the idea of justice. We did not feel pressed to arrive at any particular decision but the point was again recognised that a vision can only develop with the wisdom and inspiration of other people connected with CBiB.

We returned to the subject of having a vision on Sunday morning. Gerri outlined the thoughts that she had had on the subject. We discussed the kind of information that we wanted to gather and the idea of a survey was mooted.

The Community Building experience

At several points during the weekend we found ourselves coming back to our own experiences at community building events and the significance they held for us. There have been glimpses, moments of grace at these events.

We recognised that there is considerable diversity within the Holding Group as to how much we have learnt at the events themselves, how much we have learnt in on-going groups (of which the Holding Group is one) and the extent to which these experiences have influenced our lives outside CBiB. There is a strong desire to do what we can to monitor and nurture the quality of these experiences, and we discussed how the feedback received from participants, in the form of exit surveys, is dealt with.



The view was expressed that event sponsors, the Holding Group and the Facilitator Training Group may all benefit from seeing these surveys. At the same time, it was felt that the existing form may need some editing. Peter undertook to circulate to Holding Group members amended versions of the entry and exit forms for further discussion.

Opening up the Holding Group

Two of the sessions on Sunday were spent discussing how we could be open to receive new members, recognising both the need to be clear about how this can happen and our desire to be gentle with ourselves and those who may wish to join us. The Holding Group is open to new members, who are invited to attend for a two meeting trial period to allow mutual- and self-discernment. We agreed to place a notice for the newsletter explaining this in more detail (*see below*).

Facilitation training

On the following Monday and Tuesday Cliff Jordan, Mike Roth and Tracy Barr were going to have a two-day meeting to discuss plans for the training event, which has been pencilled in for September. Peter Cooper has agreed to be the link between Cliff, Mike and Tracy and the Holding Group on this matter.

Richard Benzie

Future meeting dates

- June 19th and 20th
- July 17th and 18th (joint with FTG)
- October 9th and 10th
- December 11th and 12th
- February 12th and 13th

A letter from the holding group

We are inviting interested members of the network to attend two meetings of the holding group to explore their possible membership of the group. The group at present has 10 members and we extend an invitation to contact us to discuss joining. Depending on the number of potential new members we may decide that assimilation of new members will take place over a period of time. We hope that new members will have experience of the community building model in on-going groups or CBiB events as we feel that this will facilitate our group work.

The holding group works with the community building model and uses consensual decision making processes to work with a complex and full agenda and simultaneously build community among us.

We are committed to the ongoing support of the network, to supporting events, public workshops, ongoing groups, and new initiatives within and outside CBiB.

The holding group meets 4-5 times a year, at present at Douai Abbey near Reading. We meet on a Friday evening and work through until Sunday afternoon. We self-cater in chaos and community and have walks, pub visits, swim and meditate as moved. We are committed to attending all meetings as far as we are able.

On contacting us a member of the holding group will become your contact to support and inform the process of joining the group.

If you are interested please telephone 07071 880858.

Ruth Goffe and Suzy Adderley.



Leaders and visions and other business

All this talk of a vision for CBiB in the longer term has inspired me to do some deep reflection and thinking and I've come to the conclusion that in a network of over 200 people it is possible that CBiB could find itself with almost as many visions. Rachel.

I was in the local library looking for a course book, when a book called 'Leading People - The 8 proven principles for success in business' sort of jumped off the shelf. It smelt good and off I toddled, happy to have to have found food for my 'visionary thinking'.

Power of community

In between the covers I read, 'successful leaders are community builders - they understand why people need community; they know how to tap into the power of community; and they know how to build community by inspiring commitment'.

I wouldn't go so far as to say that Robert Rosen's definition of community is how we in CBiB might define it, however he does say that, "Healthy Communities are networks of relationships of diverse people who come together to form common bonds" he even goes on to say that we look for opportunities to belong, achieve and learn and that community helps us to feel safe and hopeful and gives us a sense of pride - allowing us to live and work in harmony with each other.

Stimulating thoughts

Being that CBiB is considering how we might package our skills and experience in order to venture forth into the 'world out there', I took notes in the hope of inspiring and stimulating thoughts and feelings and debate on 'Vision' in the wider network.

The author, Robert Rosen founded the Healthy Companies Institute - a 'not for profit research and educational organisation committed to under-standing and promoting a new vision of healthy leadership as a key to realizing greater social and economic success'.

I was impressed. I found that in a curious way, much of what he was talking about reminded me of Scott Peck. In fact the Washington Post describes his book as 'an antidote for managers conditioned to neglect the soft side of business.'

Of interest

Rosen has studied enterprises across the board from multi-nationals to small family businesses including government and the non-profit sector. Bearing in mind that Rosen is primarily studying the dominant philosophies and practices of American management I still feel that his work is of great interest to us. Especially so with all this talk around 'visioning'.

Healthy leadership

Apparently there are 8 criteria that the successful organisations of Rosen's study have in common for healthy leadership. (I am conscious that he operates within a paradigm of leaders and followers i.e. management and workers, whereas within the Community Building paradigm everyone within the group is considered responsible for leading.) These principles are: Vision, Trust, Participation, Learning, Diversity, Creativity, Integrity, and Community.

Crisis of commitment

In his studies it became clear that American organisations are facing a profound crisis of commitment - i.e. people are not working at their full -potential- often because they don't feel valued. Workers were cynical of new

management techniques, viewing them as fads; they perceived them as a ploy to raise short term profits, "They felt that their leaders were merely tinkering with rhetoric and style but that deep down they were still operating from the same old assumption; namely that work is something to be extracted from people - as though employees were some kind of fuel to be burned up and reduced to waste."

Human values

Rosen feels that beneath the complaints of these workers lies a buried message: they want leaders with deeply held human values who respect people's unique talents and contributions; they want leaders who will create an environment that nurtures excellence, risk-taking, and creativity.

A healthy organisation

Some of the more obvious nuggets that I gained from Rosen's lessons in new leadership were: PROFITS FOLLOW PRINCIPLES and SUCCESS DEPENDS ON PEOPLE. He proposes the concept of a healthy organisation as a "high performance enterprise that nurtures and taps the talents and ideas and energy of its people".

Healthy enterprises begin with CORE VALUES such as TRUST, INTEGRITY TEANWORK and they balance the needs of all their stakeholders: employees, customers, shareholders and the wider community.

The leaders of successful organisations defined success broadly; it included making a profit and making the enterprise valuable to the wider society through producing quality goods and services, healthy, challenged employees and environmental stewardship.

Information shared

In such organisations he found labour-management relations marked by honesty and mutual responsibility and work cultures in which information was shared instead of hoarded and learning and development highly valued, with management structures flexible and responsive.

"Profit was a result of creating an environment that liberated peoples creativity,

nurtured their commitment and inspired their discretionary effort." (the latter is defined as the extra effort made by employees such as suggesting creative ideas for re-using resources etc. It's called discretionary because it can't be forced.)

The book is laid out as chapters for each aspect of healthy leadership; within the chapter several organisations are studied in depth so one gains a birds-eye view of what is currently working for them.

Something to believe in

In the chapter on vision he tells us that 'people are not inspired by profits or returns, they are inspired by something to believe in. Key questions for any organisation are:-

- What does this enterprise stand for?
- What does it believe in?
- Where is it going?

The next step is to share the vision across the organisation enlisting the input and participation of all employees (or members in our case). It is in the sharing of the vision that people are inspired and commitment is built.

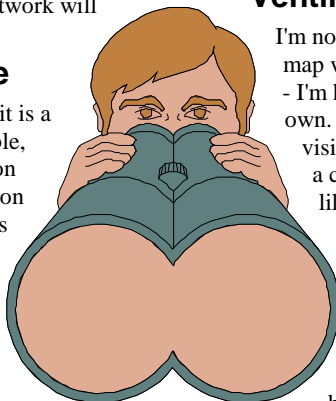
The vision is the 'guiding light' of the network. The essential at this stage is that the leaders be very clear in their own mind what they believe because it is this clarity of purpose and principles which will lay the foundation on which the network will build.

Common purpose

Vision is like a blue print - it is a mental picture of the possible, therefore it clarifies direction and instils a sense of common purpose and clearly presents an ideal to strive towards.

Translation into reality

The next stage is to 'engage in outcome thinking', i.e. what will it take to translate this vision into a reality. Outcome thinking becomes a rallying point.



Having articulated a mission - it is vital to keep the enterprise moving forward. Rosen states "It is a leader's job to navigate the organisation through chaos and unpredictability - a solid vision will keep pulling in the same direction and get individuals to focus on outcomes, imagine the doable and create results."

He points out that in the change process it is a leaders job to assess the emotional climate of the organisation and deal with the complex emotions that change triggers, otherwise employees either consciously or not will shut the change process. Dealing with the human side of change includes the leader him/herself - they must be aware of their own feelings or reactions to change and act to facilitate not sabotage the change process.

The final step is to link the vision to 'performance measures' and monitor performance constantly.

In a nutshell, after studying successful enterprises, Vision according to Rosen involves:-

- Painting the whole picture
- Creating a common purpose
- Engaging in outcome thinking
- Navigating the change process
- Building a high performance culture

Venting visions

I'm not suggesting that we follow Rosen's map which is born of American experience - I'm hoping it will inspire us to create our own. I feel we need to share our personal visions for CBiB and out of this perhaps a common purpose will be born. Rather like, in order to form community, it is often necessary to 'vent feelings' first - maybe we could have a venting visions session. I wonder what it might look like?

For the organisation to be truly successful we need to celebrate and balance diverse voices within the network. 'Creating harmony is the challenge of any leader'...in Community Building we're all leaders - a call to come into our potential.

Rachel Castagne

The Othona Community

**Ecumenical Christian Community
in South East England**

SUMMER VOLUNTEERS

OTHONA ...

- Is a Christian Community which is genuinely open to people of all faiths (and none), all backgrounds, all ages, and all nationalities.
- Aims to teach people how to work, worship, study and play together.
- Has been in existence for 50 years.
- Runs a packed summer programme of themes, events and activities.

WE OFFER ...

- A beautiful location next to the sea.
- The chance to meet people of all nationalities and ages.
- Full board and lodging with simple, home-cooked food.
- Opportunities to learn a wide range of new skills and brush up on languages.
- Real work responsibilities.

WE WANT ...

- You to help run our large centre.
- Energy and enthusiasm for this challenging, but rewarding, work.
- Friendly, lively people who know how to work as a team.
- Your ability to use initiative, and a keen sense of humour!
- To teach you new skills, and to learn those which you bring to us.

Curious?

Contact The Warden at Othona, East Hall Farm, East End Road,
Bradwell-on-Sea, Southminster, Essex CM07PN

Tel: + 44 (0) 1621 776 564

E-Mail: OthonaBoS@AOL.com

www.nodeknot.demon.co.uk/othona.htm

Community Building for courses

In order to try to galvanise my thoughts on this subject I have composed a letter to an imaginary course director. The result is below. I hope you who are reading it now might find it an exciting prospect.

If so, I would very much like to hear your thoughts. Please phone or write. I would particularly like to hear that you are prepared to help me launch the idea.

A new start

Dear Course Director,

I am writing to you presuming that you are open to hear suggestions for improving the effectiveness of your courses.

The suggestion I would like to put to you is most applicable for courses in which participants are expected to interact with each other; where, indeed, such interaction may be an essential part of the course.

If this applies to the courses which you run, then I humbly recommend you give the suggestion your careful consideration.

Basis

The suggestion is based on the work of Dr M Scott Peck, an American psychologist, author of the best-seller "The Road Less Travelled". Dr Peck went on to write "The Different Drum", and it was as a result of this work that the Foundation for Community Encouragement Inc. was born in the USA. Community Building in Britain (CBiB) is the official companion organisation in Britain.

CBiB runs weekend workshops which experientially teach participants group dynamics encouraging them to progress rapidly through the stages of group formation and to learn what each person needs in order to communicate effectively. The concept of 'emptiness' uniquely postulated by Dr Peck is the most important aspect enabling important learnings in a remarkably short time.

As a result of participating in one of these workshops with up to fifty people I find that after only two days I have built such a good relationship with most of the group that my

inhibitions and fears about interacting are gone and barriers to communication amazingly diminished.

Working together

My suggestion is that you could begin your courses with one of our Community Building Workshops (CBW), This will not only get the participants working together as a group but will give you and your staff deeper insight into the character and personality of the participants.

It should result in more effective interaction and participation right from the word go on your subsequent course; at the sort of level which you may have come to expect well into the duration of the course when participants have had time to get to know each other.

Challenge

There is also a challenge for you in this: If you work from hierarchical perspectives, if you need to dominate or manipulate the students, then this process may find you out! If on the other hand you promote servant leadership and character ethic, you should find the process helping to create real relationships between staff and between staff and students as well as between the students.

CBiB now has a strong team of facilitators available for this work; enough to move beyond workshops for the public. We are therefore offering this facility to you. I have no hesitation in recommending the process: It is a natural progression from our successful public workshops.

Practicalities

Since our CBW requires a minimum of two full days, preferably three, I imagine it would be economic for any course of over a fortnight's duration. Not only is the CBW a valuable experience in itself, but it improves the effectiveness of the subsequent course so as to make up for any time lost.

The workshop requires a room large enough for all participants to sit in a circle

with the three CBiB facilitators. After the completion of the workshop the facilitators would make themselves available to the course for refresher or follow-up sessions which could be beneficial occasionally through the course.

Process

The process which we use aims to move groups rapidly through the stages of group formation culminating in 'Community', a state in which members can celebrate their differences, in which they respect and accept the infinite complexity and profound mystery of what it is to be human. This Community has the potential to release a collective energy within the group; an intelligence which is beyond the sum of the individual intelligences, which can be rewarding in accomplishing group tasks.

This being a self-learning process without coercion, and human beings being what they are, not all participants will experience the feeling of community simultaneously, and the state of community will be transient. However all will experience a great learning of communication skills which will have beneficial effects far beyond the end of the course.

Synergy

The encouragement to share feelings and expose vulnerability makes fertile ground for participants to become open to new ideas and, as Stephen Covey suggests in his "Seven Habits of Highly Effective People" (page 265),

a spirit of creativity. Synergy grows and encourages the group to collectively write a new script.

The spirit of synergy which he cites occurred in a final semester of a college course. The Community Building process will encourage this exciting synergy to occur right from the beginning of the course, and be the norm rather than an occasional exception.

The subsequent course will benefit both from the improved communication skills which should be practised and honed throughout the course, and from the bonding of participants by the feeling of community and in hope of even deeper community resulting from them cycling through the various stages.

Moving forward

The work is not all complete at the end of the initial CBW. All will need to take responsibility for maintaining the initial momentum throughout the course if maximum benefit is to be obtained. The Workshop contains all the necessary teaching but constant effort is needed to keep the group moving forward.

It will be to provide a boost or refresher if spirits are lagging, for which the facilitators will make themselves available on occasion as needed during the course.

Anthony Kirke,
125 Greenham Road, Newbury, RG14 7JE.
01635-47377
a.kirke@cwcom.net

CB in Bath (and beyond)

I would like to sponsor a CBE in the Bath area.

I would like to hear from anyone who would like to form a group, whose task is (in the long run) to organise and sponsor a Bath CBE.

Contact Jonathan Melville-Brown by leaving a message with

- Bath YMCA: 01225 460471
- or with Suzy Adderley : 01491 875986
- or email :jonathan-mb@hotmail.com

Community building in the classroom (continued)

Ralph Wells is an electrical engineer. He teaches in the Architectural Major of the Civil Engineering Technology Department at Cincinnati State Technical and Community College.

This is the second part of an article that appeared in the Summer 1998 Communiqué (FCE's publication).

The first part appeared on page 16 of the newsletter issue number 68.

Starting

Normally I start the first day of class for students who will be graduating within the next two academic terms by reading to the class the story "The Rabbi Who Was Lost in the Woods" (*He says that he is as lost as the others, but with his experience can tell the group a thousand ways not to get out!* ed). The purpose is to introduce the concept that learning new skills is a never-ending journey, not a destination. And in this journey the entire group is responsible for its success, not just the teacher.

Exquisite uniqueness

I share with them that, just like Tigger, they each have an exquisite uniqueness that is to be savored and cherished.

Part of the class effort will be in learning how to apply their unique gifts in a group setting to solve technical problems. The importance of this ability to potential employers is explained.

Practice

I start the group work with some simple group tasks then expand to a series of ever increasingly difficult labs to give them the opportunity to acquire the expected technical skills in a group setting.

These labs practice directly related marketable job skills, both technical and inter-personal.

As appropriate, I share group process observations to help the groups successfully solve the technical problems presented. This includes sharing my observations of any task

avoidance I see occurring. I also require that the group delegate tasks only; the group can not delegate roles (i.e. they are not to appoint one member as the leader).

Chaos

All are responsible for the accuracy of their technical solution. If the group wants to come to a technically weak or improper solution I will keep them in chaos, while strongly assuring them they know how to solve the technical problem if they will only listen to the wisdom of the group.

Random methods are used to ensure the individual members of the groups vary from lab to lab. In this manner the individuals become skilled in changing work communities quickly and efficiently.

Presentation

As the labs increase in difficulty the next to last lab requires the students to create a written report presenting their work. The presentation is to be at a professional level, appropriate for an architectural or engineering consulting firm.

The final lab requires a very high level of group problem solving skills, and both a written and verbal presentation. The verbal presentation is

to be done in a work environment setting (appropriate dress, etc.) and is videotaped so the students can review their performance. Volunteers are brought in the day of the presentations to be the "clients". The students do not know who the clients are ahead of time.



Interwoven observations

As pertinent, concepts such as being moved to speak, the strength of diversity, bracketing, emptying, and being fully present, both emotionally as well as physically, are introduced to the class.

These concepts are not given in lecture format, but rather are interwoven with observations about the small groups as they perform their assigned design task. Quite often, with a little practice the students become quite proficient with these concepts, and will actually start holding each other accountable to meeting them.

Final project

As their final project before graduating the students have a major design project they must complete. The individual students then present their designs to architects and engineers from the Cincinnati area Building Design Community. This project in conjunction with their co-operative education experience, introduces the students to the work community that they will be a part of

A traditional circle

At the point of the student's graduation there is only one community building task left to complete: how to end the learning community with grace and respect for the group. This is the only time I have the students gather in the traditional Community Building circle.

I start by sharing with them that up to this point in time the primary emphasis in the class, as it should be, was on meeting their needs to learn certain skills. However, the next few minutes are to meet my need to say goodbye. I share with them that I have grown to know them, to be quite fond of them, and I will miss them. I thank them for their time in my class, and for all they have taught me.

We will be peers

I encourage them to use their new skills to give back to the larger community that had supported their education through taxes (such as volunteering for Habitat for Humanity). I share that at the end of class I will no longer

be their teacher, and they no longer my students, but now we will be peers in the community.

I also suggest that someone in their personal community sacrificed so they could go to school. I suggest they find that person and thank them. And I say good-bye. They are then given the time they need to say whatever they feel moved to share. The students always share something important to them.

The learning is increased

I wish to finish with two important points. The purpose of my classes is to teach specific technical skills to enable my students to be successful in their careers. The only way the energy used to create a learning community in class can be justified is if the student's learning and application of the academic material is significantly improved.

In my experience the learning in my learning community classrooms is greatly increased. In addition, the students also learn a tremendous amount about themselves, and others. This self-knowledge will have a tremendous impact on their ability to be successfully interactive and fully human in their chosen careers.

Safety

The second point is the necessity of people feeling safe in the classroom. Much attention has been given recently in our society to making sure students feel safe. The fact is learning is also inhibited if the teacher does not feel safe.

Facilitating a learning community requires a teacher to be comfortable with watching pseudo-community, chaos, emptiness and community unfold in their classroom. This can be a very scary experience for a teacher, especially when dealing with students of other cultures or races. In my experience, to learn to teach within a learning community requires experiencing community. The Community Building Workshops offered by the FCE furnish an excellent opportunity to experience community.

Meeting for what?

Are Quakers and Community Builders doing the same thing?

How and why do they differ?

Three talks given by Rachel Britton at a weekend for Norwich & Lynn elders were printed in the Quaker Monthly and reprinted in the CBiB newsletter in 1998. The following is the response to those letters of Roger Green a member of the Sheffield ongoing group, which may be of interest to Quakers and Community Builders alike.

It has been no surprise to me to find Quakers are attracted to Community Building disproportionately to their numbers, because CB circle and the Quaker Meeting for Worship have a lot in common. But how do they differ and why?

The inclusion of Rachel Britton's three talks in CB newsletters last year made interesting reading (thank you Peter). They were about the Quaker Circle, Meeting for Worship and the Quaker Meeting as Community. It was valuable to compare what they are about with what Community Builders are about.

Precious

With the assumption that you have read the three talks (or know about Quaker Worship) the Quaker Meeting is described as "strange"- which CB participators will recognise - sitting in a circle of people - mainly in silence, waiting for something to happen. But 'how precious'.

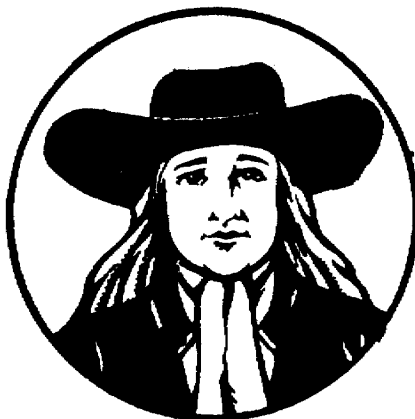
Yes, CB circle time can be precious too - but always given more time than the fixed one hour allows to the Quaker Meeting. Why is it so short? - and always so. If so precious, why don't the Quakers extend it? One can imagine all sorts of practical reasons for it not being longer - and also (and this is a pointer) because other things have to be done such as business and administrative matters, and it is important to have an informal social time over coffee and biscuits. However, CB would maintain that because circle time is/or can be so precious, it

should be longer than one hour. Better to extend it so that it increases and becomes the source of vitality of the group as a whole.

Counselling

A Quaker Meeting for Worship is not a counselling group meeting - yet there is a similarity between the two. They are different because a counselling group is about how to get on in life - and not recognising the 'why' - or God's intention for the world.

A CB meeting would not necessarily draw such distinctions. Rather, so long as the rules of operating are agreed by members of the group, the subjects and focus of the group are the concerns of the members, and almost always when community is reached, will extend from the 'now' issues of individuals to the 'now' issues of the group - and in part, to issues outside the group.



Guidelines

The guidelines of the CB group are:

- that individuals speak for themselves using I statements
- that only issues important to the individual at the current moment are spoken about or acted on (one must really want to say or do something before getting the groups attention - and to shut up if there is no driving emotion pushing one to say something)
- that members respect each other equally

- that anything said in the group is treated as confidential

Following these guidelines helps a group develop "Community", a state of togetherness that overcomes differences of sex, race or religion.

Yet many use their faith in the group - and speak of God. Others, equally accepted in the group may speak of their problem using religious terms. But most, if not all, will experience something greater than the individual members' inputs. By whatever other name the sacredness of life is spoken about and felt.

Silence

Rachel Britton in the Quaker talk goes on to speak about silence as the only method Quakers have of "lifting themselves out of normal preoccupations". Other churches have icons or music etc. Quakers have only silence. So it's difficult for most people without guidance and help.

It may be said that often the dominance of silence changes the Meeting for Worship into more of a contemplative prayer group meeting - or a Julian group meeting. I think this is good in itself - and what some members choose to make it. But it happens at the expense of sharing what individuals have to offer in an explicit form. George Fox laid emphasis on believing that "there is something of God in all of us." At quiet meetings maybe there is a lack of sharing what God has to offer the group?

Wrong

In a CB meeting great emphasis is laid on it being wrong for anyone to withhold something from the group - if he or she wants to say it.

Similarly it is wrong to say something which is not personally felt at that moment as something of importance, when it is not.

A person is important in her own right. At best Community builders - as with Quakers, "join the great company of praise and wonder, and in their own way reach or are reached by joy."

Discernment

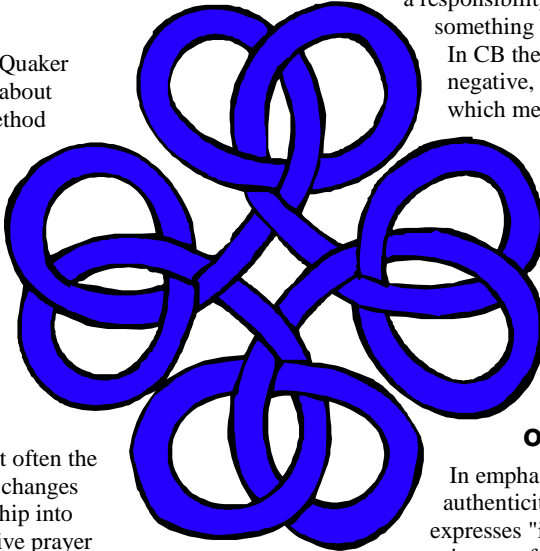
Both Quakers and CB participants in their respective circles discern the quality of individuals' contributions to the group (Quakers use the word 'ministry' which places a responsibility on the speaker to say something uplifting to the group.)

In CB the inputs may be negative, painful or disturbing, which members may be wanting to say. In a Quaker Meeting, loving discernment is exercised by the group but as with CB, authentic communication is keenly sought and recognised.

Love from our hearts

In emphasising her love of authenticity, Rachel Britton expresses "if we ever have experiences of that when we love from our hearts, with the assent of our whole being, we have to remember such experiences and cherish them." And "Love collects the attention effortlessly" and CB would say "Yeah to that'.

But with CB circles, more than with Quaker Meetings, members speak of their vulnerability and risk - speaking of things that are of burning issues, sometimes negative or shameful, that would not be considered as sufficient 'testimony' for Quakers. So it could be that a lot of truth is missed out from Quaker Meetings and since love follows truth, the flow of love is less than it might have been?



Meeting weekly

An 'on-going' group in CB is one that meets regularly to develop a community for longer than a weekend (which is the normal time for a CB event). The Quaker Meeting for Worship meets weekly and is open to anyone who wants to come, but would have a permanent core that normally attend each week. It's not a club or a campaign group - but a community of faith. Justice and care come from this grounding in faith.

In CB somewhat the opposite happens. Love, justice and caring for the wider world come from experiencing community building. Participants may have faith as individuals, but a successful CB group begins to demonstrate and show faith as a group -and this becomes the base for loving others - not only others in the group but also outside it.

Differences

Group members in CB respect their differences and sometimes come to love their differences. They come to see they are 'good' in themselves. Quakers in contrast love each other in their Godlikeness - and love their capacity for God. "God in me is my reality, is what in truth I am."

In CB a member of the circle is given a lot of freedom to say what she/he thinks or feels constrained only by the basic guidelines eg one speaks in personal terms not in generalisations. A large group of 30 to 50 encourages real communication and discourages trivia. It also discourages 'fixing', 'healing' and 'converting'.

Uplifting

For those attending a Quaker circle (Meeting for Worship), a deal of constraint is imposed by the expectation that those speaking will 'minister' to the group and possibly to the

outside world in a positive, uplifting way. A small number of 'ministerings' in the hour long meeting allows more time for contemplation.

After this a time discussing business matters gives members the opportunity to speak to the group in a way they may have thought inappropriate for the Worship Meeting. Sometimes, after the coffee and biscuits time which follows the business meeting, an open meeting may take place, which can be a further opportunity for individuals to speak to the group (though no doubt small in number by this time).

Withholding

A CB participant might say that a Quaker with something to say or express, would do well to say it in the Worship Group. Withholding from the group -maybe something painful or negative - withholds something from the group that it needs to become a Community (in Quaker terms -

withholding something of God that is in the speaker, depriving the group of the Spirit).

Community Building is more than for circle time and community building. It has its application in prisons, organisations and in deprived communities such as Bosnia.

Quakers likewise reach out in social work and education. Nevertheless, the key 'symbol' for Quakers is the act of worship, in a circle. The spiritual heart is the empty space and the silence. It holds the community together and carries the power of God into it. Then it lives. Just as with a CB group.

Roger Green

*45c Moorhall, Bakewell, DE45 1FP
Tel 01629 814404*



Universal Humans - an invitation from America

Dear Family,

April 1, 1999

Our retreats this year (*see the advertisement below*) are especially exciting to me because, for the first time, they are projects of Genesis: The Foundation for the Universal Human. Genesis is our new, nonprofit foundation. At present, it is staffed by volunteers, all of whom have attended Universal Family retreats, and been changed for the better by them. I expect it to grow, and the Universal Family retreats are a part of that. The hard work that Linda has done over the years has now been taken over by a team, and the first result is that this year we have two retreats.

Each year I have learned more about spiritual partnership, and I do not think that this learning will ever stop. Spiritual partnership is partnership between equals for the purpose of spiritual growth. That is what we do at our retreats, to the best of our ability. It is not a process that can be preplanned, and the results are what we create together. We invoke the sacred and open our hearts. We do our best to speak with emotional integrity and kindness. We ask nature spirits to welcome us, and nonphysical Teachers to assist us. We laugh and we play. Sometimes we cry, too.

I believe that a new human species is being born - a species of Universal Humans.

This species is not confined to the perceptions of the five senses. It strives for harmony, cooperation, sharing, and reverence for Life. It perceives power as the alignment of the personality with the soul. It is continually creative, and sees itself as responsible for what it creates. Each person in this species looks at himself or herself in this way.

We are those people. The new species is being born in us. I am being called to my highest potential, and so are you. So is everyone. The Universal Family retreats are for those who have felt that call, or think that they have. They are times to relax in nature, open, and experiment with a good heart. They are opportunities to learn how to cocreate with others who want to do the same thing.

I am honored to be a part of them, and to be cocreating them with you. If you are drawn, please register early. We expect both of our retreats to be filled quickly. If you are not, find what draws your heart, and register in your own way for that experience. That is how the Universal Family comes into being.

*Love,
Gary Zukav*

P.O. Box 1333 Mount Shasta CA USA

(An advertisement from the USA)

Universal Family is a Cocreative Adventure

Join us in living authentic empowerment as we align personality with soul and cocreate Community in the deepest, most joyful and caring sense. Universal Family is a fully alive expression of our universal humanity and a collective invitation from the heart to: Grow spiritually, Explore spiritual growth with others, Find your unique expression and voice your truth, Experience deep community, Contribute creatively and meaningfully, and Commune with Mother Earth.

If you are drawn, follow the invitation of your heart and soul. Join us in a spiritual partnership between equals that invites us all into the profound spiritual growth that Community and cocreation offers.

Embraced by the circle

The main core of each gathering is enlivening daily circles -- a non-judgmental space that nurtures love, truth and openness, inviting spiritual partnership with other individuals who have awakened to themselves as living eternal essence in physical bodies. Universal Family will gather in 1999 at two special retreat locations:

Mount Shasta, one of the world's most holy mountains, is a power center of extraordinary beauty and energy. Our gathering is cradled in the serene seclusion of historic Stewart Mineral Springs amidst ancient pines, mountain creeks, and purifying baths.

Mount Madonna Center is a nurturing retreat location set among mountain-top redwood forests and grasslands with a magnificent view of Monterey Bay. The center's staff live together here, and our gathering is nestled in inspiring and peaceful nature as well as in the supportive atmosphere of an established spiritual community.

Each day begins with stretching, moving and meditating in an atmosphere of play and exploration, while evenings open up to ceremony, dance, or quiet reflection. To this flexible cocreation of shared gifts that is Universal Family, please bring: An open heart, Integrity, Courage, Willingness to participate, and Willingness to laugh

Retreat Faculty

- Gary Zukav is the author of the New York Times #1 Best Seller, *The Seat of the Soul*, and the American Book Award winning, *The Dancing Wu Li Masters*. His gentle humor and spiritual insights have delighted and nurtured millions of readers. He is the spiritual partner of Linda Francis.
- Linda Francis is a co-founder of *Genesis: The Foundation for the Universal Human*. She created the Universal Family gathering that she co-presents with Gary, her spiritual partner. Linda facilitates workshops and retreats internationally. Her passion is living in spiritual partnership and encouraging community.
- Glenn Francis has been teaching body-centered awareness for 20 years. He is a personal and business coach whose passion is awakening the living mystic in us all. He is a movement and meditation teacher, writer, healer and facilitator of workshops in self esteem, conscious relationship and lifepath visioning.
- Premisiri Lewen has been teaching yoga, meditation and body awareness for 25 years and is a licensed psychotherapist in northern California, specializing in eating disorders and body image issues. In facilitating groups nationwide, she brings insight and compassion to exploring the relationship between food and what we are truly hungry for.
- Robert Reusing has been the program director for the Foundation for Community Encouragement for the past six years. He has created numerous community building workshops worldwide, and facilitated many of them. He is committed to building community and helping people to find their "original medicine."
- Rusty Myers is a senior facilitator and trainer of facilitators for the Foundation for Community Encouragement. He has facilitated community building workshops around the world including South Africa, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and China. He brings intimacy with Spirit, Native American cultures and gentleness into every forum.

Universal Family retreats are presented by *Genesis: The Foundation for the Universal Human*. (USA) 1-800-454-SOUL(7685) / 703 771-7620 email: retreats@zukav.com

Local ongoing Community Building groups

Some groups are open to anyone interested in experiencing Community Building, some are open to you only if you have already attended a CB event, some are open all the time to new members, some may not be open to newcomers just now; some build community as in the CB events, some are support groups based on The Road Less Travelled... Check with the local contact person.

Brighton: Meets on the second Saturday of the month. Contact Tracy on 01243 775745

Central & North London: if you are interested please contact Margaret C. Walsh on 0171 794 9158

Leamington Spa: First Wednesday of each month, 8pm. New members welcome. Prior attendance at a CB event is not necessary. Contact Debbie or Armando on 01926 337 409

Malvern Hills: Meets fortnightly on Thursday evenings. Contact Susie on 01684 540138

Oxfordshire: Currently not open to new members. Contact Sharon on 01235 848132

Sheffield: Meets monthly. Contact Alison 0114 263 0177

Other groups exist but are not currently publicised. If you are interested in joining, or forming, a group please feel free to contact Peter Cooper (address below) for information and help.



General enquiries

*about Community Building in Britain, or events: Tel **07071 880858** (premium rate), write to 1 Evergreen Close, Woolmer Green, Herts SG3 6JN, email to PeterCBIB@aol.com, or see the Web page: <http://members.aol.com/petercbib>*

Newsletter contributions

*Please send items for inclusion in the next issue to the editor Rachel Castagne at Flat C 257 Preston Road, Brighton, BN1 6SE by **19th July 1999** (Tel: 01273 382 864).*

For convenience of personal contact, the address and telephone number of letter-writers will normally be published, unless other instructions are given. Contributions of any sort (articles, pictures, poems, letters etc.), and of any length, are welcome from all involved in any way with the CBiB network. While every effort will be made to reproduce items in full, please realise that the editor may have to shorten or alter them for publication.

Subscriptions and mailings

Subscription rate [UK] to March 1999: (Apr-Jun) £10; (Jul-Sep) £7.50; (Oct-Dec) £5; (Jan-Mar) £2.50. Please send cheques (payable to "Community Building in Britain") and any address changes to: Peter Cooper, 1 Evergreen Close, Woolmer Green, Herts SG3 6JN Tel: 01438 813765