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# Self-Reliance

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## Self-Reliance

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*The Institute for Local Self-Reliance*

# Last Year's Work, This Year's Plans

The primary purpose of SELF-RELIANCE is to report on the efforts and successes of community-based groups around the country that are working toward the devolution of power and control to the local level. Because of this orientation, we have a tendency to down-play our own work and stress the work of others. This may lead to some confusion among our readers, since we have not addressed the "state of the Institute" since the second issue of this newsletter, almost two years ago. We hope that this short sketch of the Institute's current and last year's activities will give readers a fuller sense of the scope and direction of our work.

## The Institute's Vision

Local self-reliance means the control of neighborhood wealth by and for neighborhood residents. It means local production from local resources for local consumption. The goal of the Institute is to encourage self-reliance by demonstrating that human scale is a viable option. We pursue this goal because we believe that human scale is a prerequisite of any equitable and democratic economic and political system.

The staff of the Institute realizes that its work must proceed on a number of different levels if it is to be successful. We provide technical assistance to community groups and municipalities; we conduct research; we do demonstration projects of new and viable energy, waste, and food production technologies; and we provide input into federal policy in an effort to convince the government to encourage self-reliant development at the local level. Last year, as in the past, we focused on developing programs related to small-scale, locally-based urban systems of food production, waste utilization, and energy generation and conservation.

## Last Year's Activities

A few of our major projects were described in past issues of SELF-RELIANCE, including the technical assistance we provided the Bronx Frontier Development Corporation in developing a large-scale composting operation as an economic development venture *(issue #11)* and the design and installation of a solar hot water system for the Tri-City Citizen's Union for Progress in Newark NJ *(issue #9)*. Other projects included:

- **Feasibility study for community-based cellulose insulation factories:** Under contract from the Community Services Administration, we evaluated equipment, plant layout, organization, finance strategies, and business development planning for cellulose fabrication plants. As part of that contract, we are now providing technical assistance to community organizations interested in going into the cellulose business.
- **Establishment of neighborhood development corporations for recycling in the District of Columbia:** Institute staff helped three neighborhood development corporations get off the ground last year. These corporations locate and organize buildings for newspaper recycling. The collected paper wastes generate revenue for the development corporation.
- **Design and construction of solar collectors:** We designed and built a simple kit-type solar collector for easy and inexpensive assembly and installation by individuals or com-

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# Notes

**The coming of spring has brought an explosion of activity. As a result, we have expanded *Notes* to two pages for this issue. This could become a permanent change if the rush of press releases and conference flyers continues.**

**The Institute,** which provides technical assistance and training in the ACORN model of community organizing, will conduct two one-day conferences in the Southwest this month. The first will be in Albuquerque NM on March 27 and the second in Tucson AZ on March 29. The sessions will provide an introduction to the principles of organizing and will also cover fundraising and research skills. The fee is $35 per person. Preregistration is required. Contact: **Lina Newhouser, Conference Coordinator, 523 W. 15th, Little Rock AR 72202. Tel. (501) 376-2615.**

**Build Your Own Greenhouse-Solar Style** is a new, up-beat film that demonstrates the principles of and the building techniques for simple attached solar greenhouses. Documenting a weekend workshop led by Bill Yanda of the Solar Sustenance Project, the 21-minute film successfully demystifies this solar technology and attests to its many benefits. The film can be purchased for $315. Groups interested in using the film as part of their Sun Day activities can rent a print for $55. Contact: **Danamar Film Productions, 275 Kilby, Los Alamos NM 87544.**

**The Iowa Center for Local Self-Reliance** is still looking for a Director. Starting salary has been raised to $450/month or $400 plus housing. Director's responsibilities include research and public consultation on self-reliant technologies, energy conservation, and solar. Write: **Craig Severance, Box 1904, Des Moines IA 50309.**

**The Fall 1977 issue of Wind Power Digest** includes a special 40-page *Wind Power Access Catalog.* The catalog is an important and comprehensive reference source, describing and comparing the various commercial wind energy hardware systems. Because of the size and nature of this special issue, it is available only as the first issue of a year's subscription to *Wind Power Digest* ($6 for four issues). Write to: **Wind Power Digest, 54468 CR 31, Bristol IN 46507.**

When winter ends, Americans seem to celebrate by holding conferences. Here are a few that we have heard about. **The Role of CDC's in Rural Economic Development:** A conference on appropriate technology and economic stabilization in rural areas, to be held at Stevens Point WI on April 28-29. For information, write to: COACT Research, 731 State Street, Madison WI 53703 . . . **Second Annual Prairie Energy Fair:** a fair to educate the public on energy conservation and the availability of renewable energy sources, at the Fargo (ND) Civic Auditorium on April 22-23. Contact: Southeastern North Dakota Community Action Program, 670 4th Avenue North, Fargo ND 58102 . . . **Energy Systems: New Paths for Progress:** an alternate energy fair for Michigan to coincide with nationwide Sun Day activities (May 5-7 at Genesee Valley Mall). Contact: Flint Environmental Action Team, 939 Mott Foundation Building, Flint MI 48502 . . . **The Fourth International Conference on Self-Management** is being planned for June 8-11 in Atlanta. Topics include: neighborhood power, labor strategies for worker-control, political and economic strategies for self-management. Write to: Patsy Reily, c/o E.C.A.E., P.O. Box 8466, Atlanta GA 30306.

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## The March of "Progress" . . .

All too often, the news makes us shake our heads in disbelief—or our fists in anger. Both of these news items reflect the distance that remains to be traveled before we reach a self-reliant society. The first reveals how a seemingly well-intentioned government program suffers because of a lack of vision and a predilection for big business. The second is a sobering but persuasive argument for the imperative of self-reliant development.

**Making Hay for AMF:** The federal government has a two-year experimental program whose aim is to use government procurement incentives to improve existing technologies. The idea itself is a good one. One would think that such a procurement program would be tailor-made for the encouragement of the mass-production of solar cells. One would think so—but that possibility occured neither to the General Services Administration's Federal Supply Service nor to the National Bureau of Standards' Experimental Technology Incentives Program, the co-sponsors of the program.

The experimental program has instead resulted in a $1 million contract to AMF Lawn and Garden Division for 10,000 push-type, four-cycle rotary power lawn mowers for use by federal agencies worldwide. Commercially available mowers were too noisy, so the government decided to help big business make and market quieter models by rewarding prospective suppliers for lower noise levels.

In case the point needs underlining, last year's federal procurement budget for solar cells—which can and will provide the basis for decentralized electricity generation—was only slightly more than the $1 million awarded to AMF for its quieter lawn mowers.

**Town Evicted by Mining Company:** The residents of Lark, Utah, have been given notice that their town will close down as of August 31, 1978. The Kennecott Copper Corp., which just bought the town from the former owner, U.V. Industries, has asked the 591 townspeople to leave. Spokesmen for Kennecott could give no reason why the town was being shut down.

Lark was a mining town until 1972, when the mine was closed by U.V. and the town was sold to Kennecott, a sale that was to become effective in 1992. With this grace period in mind, the residents of Lark worked to improve their town and their homes and to attract business to the area. Then, a month ago, Kennecott and U.V. made a new agreement; the town now belongs to Kennecott.

Kennecott says it may try to help those who have difficulty finding a new home, but Meri Watson, a bartender at Lark's only business, says he feels especially sorry for the "old-timers that are retired and will find moving extremely hard." *Rural America,* February 1978.

# Toward Neighborhood Action on Energy

**With this issue, SELF-RELIANCE initiates a new regular section called *Profiles*. This feature will enable us to present more in-depth looks at the goals and activities of different community groups across the country than is permitted in the shorter *Progress Reports*. The first *Profile* is of Common Ground, a neighborhood-based group working on energy issues in Minneapolis. The following article is excerpted from the Common Ground report, *Home-Built Energy: Neighborhood Energy Project Report—Bloomington to Cedar, 19th to Lake**. Besides being a sensitive account of the group's most recent project, the report addresses several important issues, including the tension between individual and community needs and the tension between reliance upon outside professionals and the development of local human resources. Common Ground believes than an understanding of the tensions and contradictions operating in a given community is the first step in devising a strategy for change.**

It is told that the high-voltage lines feeding into our neighborhood bring us power from distant places. Similarly, it is said of the network of gas pipelines hidden in the earth, that they, too, bring us power. Yet, most of us do not feel very powerful. We receive a computer bill in the mail. We shrug and sign a check. We try not to think about it for thirty days.

We pay our bills quietly, from the solitude of our dining room table. Yet, all of our money, taken together, talks loudly. From one four-block, sixty-home area of Minneapolis, about $16,000 a year is sent to NSP (the electric utility). Another $20,000 a year goes to Minnegasco (the gas company).

Money we pay ends up financing a proposed nuclear plant. Some of our money helps finance a power line through Western Minnesota which will sever farmers from the land they work. Both of these violences are done in our name. The news reports that "people in the city need more energy."

Meanwhile, our prices skyrocket. We expect a 29% jump in the price of natural gas. We know we do not need more energy than we now use. We know we will be using less, at those prices. What we do not know is how we will maintain ourselves when prices are high and fuel is scarce. We do not know who ordered nuclear power, or new high voltage lines, all in our name. We also do not know who *does* get this power that is supposed to be given to us in these wires and pipes. But we are discovering there is a strength we can only grow right here.

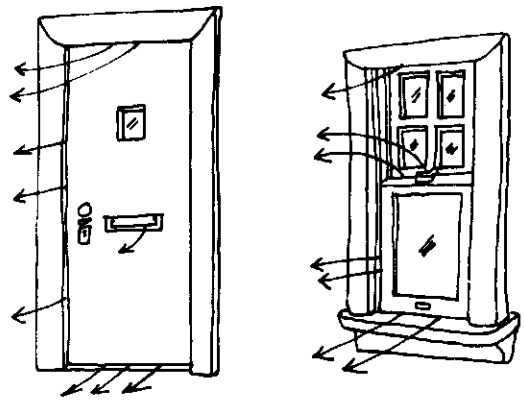
## Who We Are

A group of us in south Minneapolis has been meeting over the last year to see what we can do for ourselves. This is a report from a six-month demonstration project which we ran. We were funded by the Minnesota Energy Agency (MEA) to study energy use in an urban neighborhood and to develop plans for three low-cost alternative energy devices. With help and advice from our neighbors, four of us worked as half-time staff members. Our salaries devoured most of the grant. We were not funded to build any of the devices we designed.

## What Did We Do?

Six months is a short stretch of time. In spite of this, we managed to tackle many different projects. Here is a list of the highlights of what we on the staff did with our neighbors:

- We surveyed the neighborhood's land use and potential. We measured how much land was presently being used for houses, streets, parking areas, gardens, and so on. We also tried to guess how much land could be used for solar collectors, if people wanted them. We also looked for possible sites for greenhouses, individual and group gardens, wind generators, and other energy-saving devices. We drew up several maps with our findings.



- We worked with 16 neighbors in planning and carrying out a study of energy use in the neighborhood. Eight families read their gas, water, and electricity meters every two days for a month. The staff then charted the results on graph paper and gave these charts back to the residents in the study. Four meetings were held with small groups of these people to interpret the findings.
- We designed three low-cost energy-saving devices suited for city living:
  1. a solar heated greenhouse that can help heat a living space, for under $1000.
  2. a small solar greenhouse to allow early planting, for $125.
  3. a bin for composting kitchen and garden wastes quickly and cleanly, for $100.
- We trained ourselves to install all kinds of weatherstrip and caulk.
- We worked beside one neighbor as he insulated his attic. Two-by-two's were attached to the rafters and 6" of fiberglass was stapled in. We also measured and cut glass for replacement storm windows. Materials were provided by federal

*Limited copies of *Home-Built Energy* are available from: Ken Meter, 3205 Columbus Avenue South, Minneapolis MN 55407.

funds through a community weatherization program.

• We helped another family install an outside air duct to their furnace.

• One woman weighed all of her family's garbage every two days for a month. We talked with her and other members of her mother's club to think up productive uses for the garbage.

• We set up simple trials of indoor gardening using sprouting, hydroponic gardening (growing plants in a chemical solution without soil), and gardening in soil.

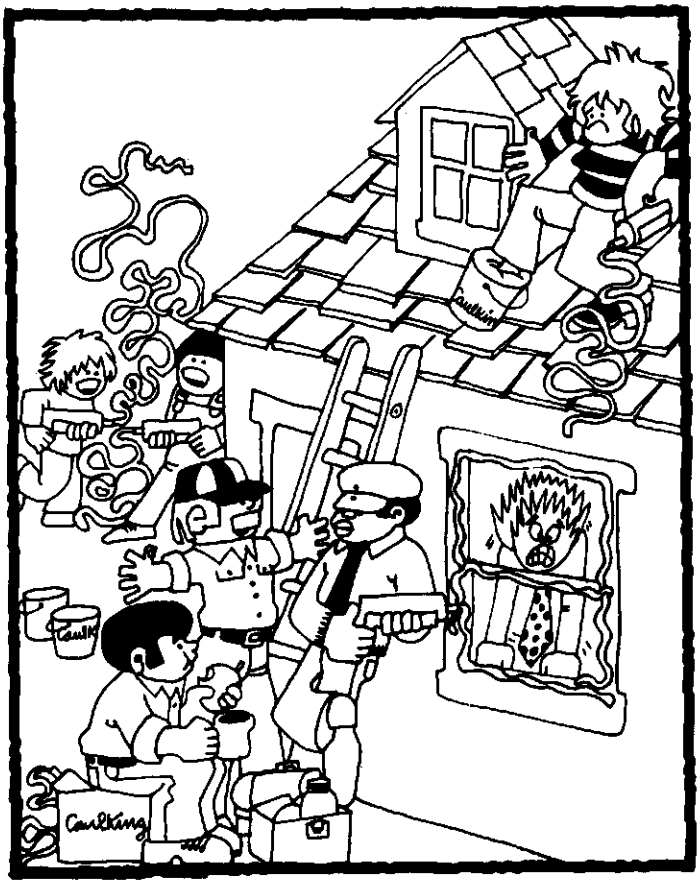
• We examined energy displays at several trade shows, toured an energy-efficient rehab home in St. Paul, toured commercial greenhouses in the Twin Cities, and attended a lecture on greenhouse design.

• A group of us traveled to Chicago to meet with a neighborhood group that is trying to grow as much of their own food as possible right in the neighborhood. We toured a solar-heated greenhouse built on a rooftop in the West Side.

• We worked with one family who were replacing their furnace; they wanted to know if a solar collector would be feasible for their duplex. After reading from several books and pricing available collectors, the family decided not to buy any solar heating devices.

It is easy to list all these projects now. Doing them over the spring and summer was often difficult. We noticed reluctance, even some suspicion among our neighbors as we spoke with them. If we suggested working as a group to insulate houses, we might be told that we were "naive," or that joining with others "takes too much time." More often, we were silently ignored.

Time and again we were met with dulled stares as we threw out facts and figures. We kept trying. Finally, one of our conclusions seemed to spark some excitement in our neighbors.



All were stunned by how much money we pay as a neighborhood, when all our utility bills are added together.

Individually, we pay our bills dutifully. What appears to be a small figure mounts up quickly. Money that all of us worked for gets turned over to control by a few. Together, we could have power. But we are told to sit back and leave the work of making energy to the professionals.

When the utility network functions smoothly, we are isolated by it. Not only do we pay our bills alone, the company separates us physically. We are given individual meters and individual bills, while collectively we contribute capital to a private for-profit utility.

When the utility network fails, as in times of gas shortages, or radioactive releases into the Mississippi River, or blackouts (as happened in New York this summer) we realize how much we are all together.

## What Can Be Done?

Time and again we found that people had skills and resources that could be directed toward controlling their energy supply. Ralph and Mary Rye were using only part of their house during cold winter months. Ken and Marcy Hanson were well aware of the need for insulation in their home, but hadn't been able to install it. Mike Scholtes, a furnace repairman, often tries to keep people from depending on him. "Anyone could learn [my work] in a year. To me, it's fun and challenging to learn with someone, showing them that they can really learn to fix their own furnace. Once I got a lady in Stillwater to take apart her oil burner and fix it, all over the telephone. I feel real good when someone tries."

We contend that the central tension is between private production and consumption. While we think of ourselves as working people, as people who produce, we are seen by the economy mostly as consumers. We are encouraged to buy, to consume, but never to understand, to make. When we do make our own energy, we can't make a living doing it; we become "hobbyists."

The staff believes alternative energy is only important as it helps us reacquaint ourselves with the fact that it is only *we* who will produce our power. No one else will produce it for us.

To share our power, we will need to learn to work together, to take power in our own terms, and to hold our power democratically. Secondly, we will need to develop a technology which is on a scale we can control. The following section outlines some practical ideas that our neighbors have told us they can use.

We have presented only those ideas that we have had some practical experience with. Many more ideas could be described. But our neighbors have gently and persistently reminded us that they want proof, not promises.

We chose these because our neighbors indicated these were ideas they might have time and money and interest enough to use. Some were being tried by our neighbors before we ever came on the scene. Some came from helpful books. We even dreamed up a couple ourselves.

## Seven Practical Suggestions

This is a very select list. In order for us to include a given design in this booklet, some person in the neighborhood had to ask us to print it. Only a system which we design and build for ourselves can offer us any control over energy. Since most of

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# Fighting Youth Crime by Creating New Jobs

One of the guiding principles of the Institute for Local Self-Reliance is that within every city and every neighborhood there are untapped resources that can be used for community development. Vacant lots, empty rooftops, newspapers, other solid waste, and sunlight can all be seen as raw materials for local enterprise. Such resources exist even in the poorest inner-city neighborhoods, as does one other extremely valuable resource—underutilized labor power. Institute staff members have mapped out a development strategy that emphasizes the creation of community-based enterprises that can provide jobs and can operate competitively both in emerging fields—such as energy conservation, decentralized energy production, and waste recycling—and in traditional production and service industries. We have stressed not only the direct benefits that these projects can provide to neighborhoods and communities, but also the indirect benefits of reduced federal outlays for welfare subsidies and bureaucratic expansion.

Nowhere is this perspective on utilizing available local resources more appropriate than in confronting the dual problems of youth unemployment and crime. If we want to preserve and to encourage self-reliant communities, we must address these two problems directly, for both youth unemployment and crime threaten the viability and cohesion of our urban neighborhoods.

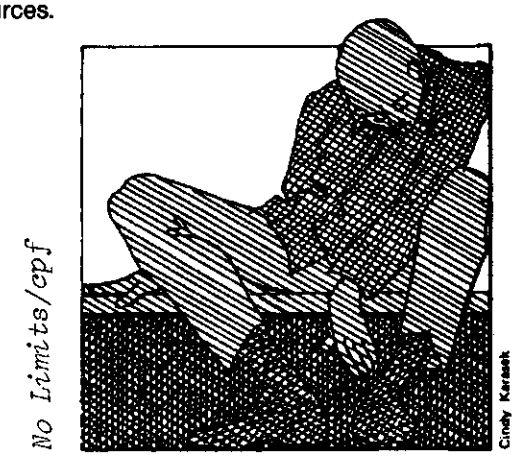
## The High Cost of Unemployment

The national unemployment rate stood at 6.7% in January. Unemployment among youth between the ages of 16 and 21 was 16%, more than double the national average. In 1977, 45% of all unemployed were under 25 years of age. For minority youth in older central cities, the job outlook is particularly bleak. Last year, official unemployment among black and minority youth averaged 28.1%. The Department of Labor estimates that, during the summer months, the percentage is as high as 40% and The National Urban League has estimated that unemployment among black and minority teenagers averaged 53% for the first three quarters of 1977.

The problem is now chronic, due to structural changes in the American job market. Between 1962 and 1972, opportunities for unskilled workers in industry declined from 13 million to 4 million jobs, primarily as a result of automation. Furthermore, the rapid proliferation of self-service gas stations, computerized grocery check-outs, and automated bank tellers is rapidly eliminating jobs that have traditionally employed large numbers of youths.

When overall unemployment is high, young people are forced into direct competition with unemployed adults. Yet, the recent drop in national average unemployment rates, reflecting a general economic upturn, has not been mirrored by a proportionate drop in youth unemployment. The problem remains—and it is taking its toll on inner-city neighborhoods and their residents.

According to the FBI, 50% of those who are arrested for violent crimes are under the age of 18. The best available estimates indicate that, on any given day, 60,000 juveniles are being held in some form of detentive institution. An additional 500,000 are under probationary supervision outside these facilities. Still another 100,000 are on parole. The cost of operating this custodial treadmill is high. As Jerome Skolnick, director of the Center for the Study of Law and Society at Berkeley, has stated, "Police, courts and prisons are expensive. It is cheaper to send a youngster to Harvard than a robber to San Quentin." The cost of maintaining the criminal justice system, added to the cost of squandered human resources and the cost of the crimes themselves, is a serious drain on taxpayer resources.




There is good evidence that unemployment is a significant factor in youth crime. Project New Pride, a job counseling and placement program for ex-offenders in Denver, found that recidivism decreased most sharply among youth in the program who had found jobs. Only 26.8% of these youths were rearrested, compared to a 78.8% rearrest rate for all juvenile repeat offenders in Denver. The cost per participant in Project New Pride was one-third the cost of incarceration. And that is without considering the benefits of salaries earned and crimes not committed.

## The Failure of Traditional Programs

Traditional youth training programs have had little impact on youth unemployment. Many of these programs are conducted at isolated training centers. Youth are trained primarily in menial jobs, such as night watchperson, parking meter attendant, or clerk. Few of those programs train youth for jobs in growth sectors of the economy. As a result, there is little opportunity for professional advancement.

## CETA Title III Youth Programs

• **Youth Community Conservation in Improvement Projects (YCCIP).** This program is meant to assist young people 16 through 19 years old who have had severe difficulties in obtaining employment. The program emphasizes job creation and projects that offer tangible benefits to the community. Jobs should be labor-intensive; at least 65% of the funds must be spent on participant's wages. The preamble to the Department of Labor Regulations states that Congress clearly intended, *to the extent feasible*, that YCCIP be carried out by community-based organizations. Criteria used by prime sponsors in selecting groups to run programs must be applied first to community applicants and only later to others.

• **Youth Employment and Training Programs (YETP).** The purpose of YETP is to enhance job prospects and career opportunities for young people, 16 through 21 years of age, in order to help them secure unsubsidized jobs in the public and private sector. Make-work programs are discouraged. Prime sponsors must give preference to economically disadvantaged youth and must actively involve local community-based organizations in the planning process, submitting their youth plan to community organizations with prior youth program experience at least 15 days before submitting the plan to the regional CETA Administration.

*Economic Development Law Project Report*, November/December 1977.

Moreover, graduates of these programs are expected to find jobs wherever they are available—and jobs are usually *not* available in neighborhoods with severe youth unemployment. The distance factor is itself a serious barrier to youth employment— transportation to work is often too costly or is unavailable and many youth do not know how to look for work beyond their "turf." The dismal record of most youth training programs has led Willard Wirtz, director of the National Manpower Institute, to conclude: "The measurable effect of most such traditional efforts has been so limiting as to rebuke the rhetoric they draw on."

## Toward Neighborhood-based Alternatives

As an alternative to traditional programs, Wirtz recommends the establishment of Community Education Work Councils, composed of community, school, union, and manpower agency representatives. These councils would coordinate the difficult transition from school to the work force by providing youth with counseling, occupational information, placement, and career education services.

Like Wirtz, the federal government now supports the notion that job training for young people can and should take place at the local level. In September of last year, the Department of Labor published regulations for two new youth programs that are components of the Youth Employment and Demonstrations Projects Act of 1977 (YEDPA) and are additions to CETA Title III. Both programs—the Youth Community Conservation in Improvement Projects (YCCIP) and the Youth Employment and Training Programs (YETP) emphasize the participation of economically disadvantaged youths and sponsorship by community-based organizations *(see box)*.

This federal reorientation toward localism is encouraging, for it means that community-based programs aimed at combatting crime through youth training and employment will find it easier to secure funding.* Recent developments are promising. Eight million dollars of YCCIP funds have been transferred from the Department of Labor to the Office of Neighborhood Development at HUD. All but $200,000 of that money will be allocated to Community Development Corporations in ten cities for programs that employ youth between the ages of 16 and 19. The National Economic Development Law Project has proposed the creation of a Corporation for Youth Enterprises, which would establish non-profit, community-based corporations to involve youth in the ownership, management, and staffing of business ventures in their own communities. The Law Project hopes to obtain $3 million from the Department of Labor's Office of Youth Programs for the development of four such demonstration Youth Development Corporations.

In Hartford, Connecticut, a work-places program operated by the school department is already attempting to create locally-based training and employment opportunities for the city's youth. The high school vocational education training programs are being used to start and to underwrite the cost of new enterprises based on public purchasing. One of the first work-places undertakings will be the school food service business. The program's goal is to incubate within the school system new ventures which can be community-owned or owned by the city and which can provide students with jobs.

## Employment in Growth Industries

Not only is there new emphasis on locally-based employment and training programs, but there is also a developing commitment among policymakers to training programs in fields that are expanding and that offer opportunities for advancement. The initial impetus has been at the state and local levels. In California, for example, a program to train low-income minority youth as solar technicians was established last year. The program placed 90% of its trainees in private industry after an eight-week training cycle.

A dramatic example of the potential of such programs to increase employment—and to decrease crime—is a Michigan program involving former juvenile offenders in energy conservation training. Thirty-five hundred youths, including 1000 who were facing court action, received summer jobs under Michigan's $5.2 million youth employment program which was administered locally by twenty-seven Community Action Agencies. By the end of the summer, not only were 282 homes winterized, but court referrals of youths charged with shoplifting dropped to almost zero.

In Grand Rapids, Michigan, a non-profit organization named Recycle Unlimited, which researches methods of recycling glass and metals and which operates an experimental recycling project, has received city funds to provide employment and on-the-job training for inner-city youth. Youth training programs for recyclers have also been implemented by the Dupont Circle Neighborhood Ecology Corporation in Washington DC and by Residents Recycling in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

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*A good example of a successful community-based youth program is Washington DC's Neighborhood Planning Councils (NPCs). These community assemblies, comprised of all neighborhood residents over the age of 13, have allocated over $10 million in local matching federal funds for youth and job training programs. NPCs have funded innovative projects such as recycling systems, community gardens, community historical magazines, and area-sensitive youth employment services. More information can be found in an article on the NPCs by Neil Seldman, reprinted from *Communities*, that is available from ILSR for $1.00 (includes postage).

# Off the Shelf

## Guides to Action:

### Cooperative Housing

Midwest Association of Housing Cooperatives, 527 East Liberty, Ann Arbor MI 48108. $15.

This 262-page book is crammed with information on all phases of co-op membership and administration. It is a valuable tool for board members of housing cooperatives, especially for those working with low-to-middle income co-ops; but it is equally useful for co-op members and for anyone wishing to start a housing cooperative. The handbook, developed from the experience of veteran cooperators from the Midwest Association of Housing Cooperatives, presents information that is simply not available elsewhere. The sixteen chapters deal with: ownership, the role of the board, legal documents, management contracts, budgetary planning, financial evaluations, purchasing, maintenance, resales, committees, new member selection, and community relations both within and outside the co-op. Fifteen appendices cover actual accounting examples, HUD forms, and other specifics.

### Food and Hunger

Media Consultations on Hunger, 1229 Santee Street, Los Angeles CA 90015.

This slim "media resource directory" is a handy guide to resource people working on food and hunger issues. The booklet identifies knowledgeable individuals in the various topic areas, noting their special areas of expertise and providing an address and telephone number for each. Since it was published in Los Angeles, the directory tends to emphasize California resources. People move quickly from place to place and from job to job, so the directory may soon be out-of-date. For now, however, it remains a helpful guide for writers and researchers.

### Funding and Assistance Sources for Massachusetts Community Economic Development Organizations

Massachusetts Department of Community Affairs, 1977.

This useful publication is a must for any Massachusetts-based organization planning an economic development venture. Focusing mainly on relevant governmental funding sources and on technical assistance resource organizations, the directory does an excellent job of ordering the information in a way that is immediately accessible to the reader. We are not aware of other states that have compiled directories of this sort for their citizens, but there should be such a booklet for each and every state. Meant to be a starting point for obtaining government funds, the directory should be used in conjunction with the Center for Community Economic Development's *Sources of Capital for Community Economic Development* and the Massachusetts Executive Office of Economic Affairs' *Directory of State Development Agencies.*

Joan Flanagan

### The Grass Roots Fundraising Book

The Youth Project, 1000 Wisconsin Avenue NW, Washington DC 20007. $4.75.

Joan Flanagan is able to take a fearsome topic—fundraising—and turn it into a subject for accessible and enjoyable reading. Starting from step one and assuming that the reader is a novice, the author explores the whys and the hows of raising money in one's own community. All kinds of grassroots fundraising are discussed, from booksales and holiday parties to telethons and Las Vegas casino nights. The emphasis is on helping community people get over their fears about asking for money and on helping groups to plan their fundraising strategies so that the organization prospers in terms of both money and membership. The book benefits from the author's visits to more than 150 organizations, interviews with over 650 fundraisers, and attendance at 70 events.

### Neighborhood Reinvestment

The National Center for Urban Ethnic Affairs, 1521 16th Street NW, Washington DC 20036. $4.00.

Subtitled *A Citizen's Compendium for Programs and Strategies,* this book surveys neighborhood revitalization strategies that encourage the maintenance and improvement of existing neighborhoods for their current residents. It is divided into several sections: governmental initiatives (federal, state, and local); private initiatives by financial institutions; community initiatives and proposed alternatives (including housing counseling programs, neighborhood preservation and rehabilitation programs, organizing for reinvestment, etc.). The book ends with a listing of national resources that can be helpful for groups organizing around reinvestment. Each specific program outlined in the handbook is described with attention to how it is organized, what range of activities it includes, and what roles community groups might play. Contact persons are included for each.

Glenn Hirsch and Alan Lewis

### Strategies for Access to Public Service Advertising

Public Media Center, 2751 Hyde Street, San Francisco CA 94109.

Given that 96% of American households own at least one television and that American televisions are on for an average of seven hours a day, it makes sense for organizations interested in reaching a broader audience to think about public service announcements (PSAs). This handbook provides a guide to making issue-oriented spot advertising and to the often difficult process of getting on the air. It focuses on which people at a television or radio station should be approached, what should be said to them, and how their various arguments aimed at discouraging PSAs can be countered. The appendix is a reprint from *Access* magazine on the Fairness Doctrine and the process of lodging fairness complaints against broadcast stations. As the title page reminds us, "The people own the airwaves." It is time we began to use them creatively.

# Progress Reports

## A.T. Goes Local

**Lane County OR** has become one of the first localities to establish its own Office of Appropriate Technology. With its two directors and five CETA-paid staff members, the agency serves the ¼ million people living in Eugene and the surrounding area. The Lane County OAT is currently running a residential source-separation recycling program and a small composting pilot project. Other work involves research into the county's needs and the feasibility of using various waste utilization and alternative energy technologies to meet those needs. For more information, contact: **Sam Sadler, Office of Appropriate Technology, Lane County Public Service Building, 125 East 85th Avenue, Eugene OR 97401.**

## Citizens Mobilize in Montreal

**In 1974, a coalition of progressive and radical forces** won one-third of the seats on Montreal's city council. Since then, the new party, called the Montreal Citizen's Movement, has been the vocal opposition at City Hall. In a city where local politics are complicated by the French/English cultural question, by the issue of provincial secession, and by the fact that Canadian cities have less power than U.S. cities, the political developments are anything but dull. Andy Melamed, a Montreal-based member of the *Planners Network,* submitted a report to the Network newsletter from which these excerpts are taken *(Planners Network* is a loosely-structured information and idea exchange for planners working actively for social change. Write c/o Chester Hartman, 360 Elizabeth Street, San Francisco CA 94114):

The Montreal Citizen's Movement has been busy. It predicted the waste of funds for the Olympics; fought for local control of land-use and zoning decisions and the creation of neighborhood councils with planning power; and pushed for free public transportation, enforcement of anti-pollution regulations, promotion of co-ops and public housing, control of demolition, and abolition of the property tax in favor of a municipal income tax.

The thrust of the program is essentially based on the decentralization of power to the neighborhood level. This is logical in response to an all-powerful mayor who operates in the finest style of North American big-city tyrants. It draws heavily on the backlash against bigness: small is beautiful, ecological sensitivity, neighborhood power, cooperation rather than competition. There are enough young professionals in the movement to push for local planning offices in each neighborhood, responsible to the local council which in turn is responsible to various action groups who delegate members to the council.

Inevitably, the shades of political opinion in the new party are varied, becoming progressively more progressive each year, more outspokenly anti-capitalist and openly socialist in orientation. Although this has alienated elements in the well-to-do districts, the party caucus has remained united at City Hall and unanimously agreed upon the program described above. It should be interesting to see what happens in the November municipal elections.

## High Energy Students

**In Salt Lake County, Utah,** fifth and sixth grade students are canvassing their neighborhoods to talk to residents about energy conservation and to provide written booklets of fuel-saving ideas. In the program, over 60 teachers from 25 schools are teaching their students the fundamentals of energy conservation and then sending them out armed with the booklets (10,000 of which will eventually be distributed). A similar program undertaken earlier in Beaverton, Oregon, found that over 85% of the area's residents had read the booklets they were given by students and more than 71% had taken specific steps to reduce energy use. Details from: **Doug Thompson, Utah Energy Office** (801-533-5424). *People and Energy,* Vol. III, No. 6.

## Solar Retrofits Benefit the Poor

**West Side Community Development Corporation** of San Bernardino, California recently completed a project to retrofit ten low-income homes with solar hot water and space heating. The organization, which is a delegate agency of the San Bernardino Community Services Department (the local Community Action Program), was the only community organization awarded a developmental grant by HUD under its residential Solar Demonstration series. The West Side project is noteworthy because it is a central solar-heating system, using elevated solar collectors, a series of interconnected greenhouses, and a four-ton, 5000-gallon storage tank built under a park adjacent to the homes. The tank has enough capacity to heat all ten houses through four sunless days. The solar equipment, together with the insulation that has been added to the buildings, should cut utility bills by 45% or more. And tenants will be able to grow some of their own food in the greenhouses. Conceived and designed by Nate Rekosh, a retired aerospace engineer who now works with the CDC, the project has also provided jobs for unemployed local workers. Based upon Rekosh's design and success, the California state energy commission has approved a $42,000 contract that will enable West Side CDC to retrofit several duplexes in a low-cost public housing project. Insulation and weather-stripping will be introduced into the homes and solar space and/or water heating systems will be installed. For more information, contact: **Valerie Pope, West Side CDC, 1736 West Highland Avenue, San Bernardino CA 92411.**

# A Worker-Owned Furniture Company

**Centennial Furniture** is a worker-owned "producers' cooperative" in Xenia, Ohio. When a tornado destroyed much of Xenia in 1974, it wiped out the Kroehler Furniture Company, one of the country's largest plants. Kroehler refused to rebuild, creating a panic and a crisis for the former employees. With strong support from the Green County administrator and from Xenia city officials, a small group of employees picked up the challenge and decided to start their own company. The city offered places to work and to meet. The county assigned a staff person to work with the employees. The Xenia Chamber of Commerce donated some money and offered other support. Money was finally raised from local banks with the help of a federal guarantee and the company went into business, employing 15 people in a small building in Xenia. Last fall, Centennial moved to a downtown location and began a new line of work—furniture repair—which now accounts for over half of the company's gross sales. Centennial is a good example of how blue-collar workers can form their own enterprise. Jean Scott, Centennial's current manager, was a buttonhole sewer in the old Kroehler plant. For information, contact: **Jean Scott, Centennial Furniture, Xenia OH 45385.** *Self-Management,* Winter 1978.

# Tree Planting Cooperative in Oregon

**Hoedads, a 350-member worker-self-managed tree planting cooperative** centered in Eugene OR, pays its members above-market wages, while channeling extra money and time into a variety of environmental and social causes. The cooperative includes 12 tree-planting crews working throughout the western states, a thinning crew, two firefighting crews, a garage crew, and the beginnings of a medical clinic crew. Workers suffer fewer injuries than employees of private forestry contractors because they set their own pace; yet, they earn more money because the cooperative pays a higher than normal percentage of its revenue in salaries. The Hoedads cooperative has helped support several Eugene health and arts projects and is also fighting to reform forestry practices. *Environmental Action Bulletin,* 10 December 1977.

# Lucas Aerospace Workers Present an Alternate Plan

**The Alternate Corporate Plan** generated by workers at Lucas Aerospace in Great Britain, which we have described in past issues of SELF-RELIANCE, is a proposal aimed at preventing layoffs by shifting production away from aerospace technology and toward more socially useful production. The result of nearly a year of concentrated effort by workers at Lucas Aerospace's seventeen factories around the United Kingdom, the Corporate Plan supports specific technologies that are ecologically sound, that challenge the creativity of the hands and minds of the workers, and that can be produced by non-hierarchical forms of industrial organization. Over 150 products have been proposed at various stages in the Corporate Plan. Alternative energy technologies are among the possibilities, including: heat pumps, fuel cells, wind generators, and solar power systems for low-energy housing. The Plan focuses on medium-scale community systems that would be suited for housing developments or city blocks rather than for individual dwellings. One new prototype built in conjunction with the North Eastern London Polytechnic, is a flexible, lightweight road/rail vehicle that can ride on rails or roads and is capable of climbing a rail incline of one in six. A vehicle of this kind can provide the basis for an integrated transport system with vehicles running through congested cities like trucks and then moving straight onto the railway network. Also in cooperation with the Polytechnic, the Lucas Aerospace Combine Shop Stewards Committee has been instrumental in setting up a research Centre for Alternative Industrial and Technological Systems. *Undercurrents* 26, February-March 1978.

# Housing Aid Center in Baltimore

**The St. Ambrose Housing Aid Center** was founded in 1972 for the purpose of promoting homeownership among Baltimore's working-class families. In its five years of operation, St. Ambrose has successfully housed over 700 families. The average income of those families served was $8000; the average price of homes was $11,000. The St. Ambrose Center provides both pre-purchase housing counseling and default and delinquency counseling, primarily in two target Baltimore neighborhoods. A unique feature of the St. Ambrose Center is its attempt to assist tenant families to buy the homes they rent or other homes in their neighborhood. The Center has its own real estate brokerage service that operates for the exclusive benefit of its target neighborhoods. St. Ambrose has also become a non-profit landlord, buying properties with the help of tax-deductible donations and managing the properties while tenants pay mortgage and maintenance costs. The Center's funding comes primarily from private sources such as Catholic Charities and individual benefactors, but it has also received HUD and Community Development funds. For more information, write: **St. Ambrose Housing Aid Center, 319 East 25th Street, Baltimore MD 21218.**

**When writing to any of the contacts mentioned in SELF-RELIANCE, please send a self-addressed stamped envelope. It will speed the reply and will save these folks some money.**

# Off the Shelf

## Decentralizing City Services:

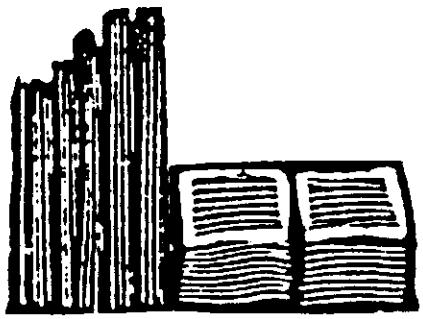
**Historically, the primary function of city government is the delivery of services. Only during periods of extreme fiscal crisis have cities considered economic development as a significant municipal responsibility. Most city governments are judged on their ability to clean the streets, prevent crime, and provide medical care to the indigent and education for the young. In the past ten years, the fiscal crisis of cities and the growing pressure for citizen participation have led to the creation of a variety of innovative service delivery systems for urban areas. The books reviewed below describe and analyze many of those innovations. All five are academic studies and make difficult reading, but a few are helpful starting points for discussions of decentralized service delivery systems.**

Barton, Allen, et. al.

### Decentralizing City Government

Lexington Books, Lexington MA 1977.

This collection of essays analyzes the impact of the creation of district managers for areas of about 130,000 people within New York City. These local administrators were charged with promoting the coordination of service departments at the neighborhood level, better adaptation of services to local needs, and greater responsiveness to citizen requests. The report evaluates the success of the experiment in terms of efficient administration (high marks) and public appreciation of improved services (little or none). The report was written only two years after the project began and describes a one-of-a-kind situation, that of New York City. Too dry and detailed for any but the most active New York City activists, the book does describe the steps by which a downtown bureaucracy decentralizes its authority.



Howard W. Hallman

### The Organization and Operation of Neighborhood Councils

Praeger Publishers, New York NY, 1977.

Written from information collected in mid-1976, this book describes the variety of organizational structures among thirty different neighborhood council programs around the country and suggest steps for the creation and development of successful municipal programs for administrative decentralization. The style and content are overly dry, but there is a good deal of practical information catalogued here.

Nelson, Richard and Douglas Yates (editors)

### Innovation and Implementation in Public Organizations

Lexington Books, Lexington MA, 1978.

These nine essays on municipal innovation are disappointing. Most of them, with the possible exception of those on the New York City Health and Hospitals Corporation and the Connecticut Mental Health Center, are too short and too academic. If the authors had more of the spirit and street-sense of investigative journalists, they may have been able to present their readers with a better sense of the web of external interests that influence the rise and fall of public organizations and programs.

Sonenblum, Sidney, et. al.

### How Cities Provide Services

Ballinger Publishing Company, Cambridge MA, 1977.

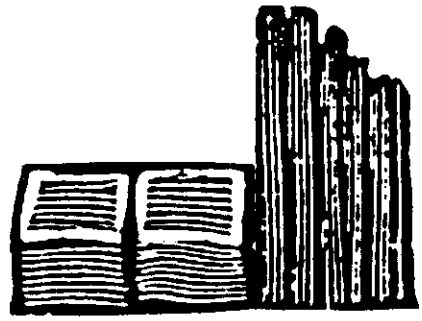
Subtitled "An evaluation of alternative delivery structures," this book details and compares the many possible methods of service delivery. City services can be provided by municipal departments, by contract with other governmental units or with private firms, by overlapping jurisdictions with special districts, by issuing franchises to private firms, or by a hybrid system. Examining law enforcement, refuse collection, fire protection, and other services, the authors assess the advantages and disadvantages of each system and the motivation of city managers in deciding on one over another. For the city resident who is unaware of the wide variety of organizational and institutional mechanisms for service contracting, this is a good place to begin.

Yin, Robert and Douglas Yates

### Street Level Government

Lexington Books, Lexington, MA, 1975.

Of all these books, *Street Level Government* does the best job of defining the elusive concept of decentralization. It is a valuable tool for the layperson working his or her way through the complex maze of decentralist strategies, from those that decentralize administration to those that delegate actual authority and from those that allow for participation to those that provide for neighborhood control. The historical survey of city service delivery systems is helpful as are the detailed analyses of decentralization in health, public safety, education, and economic development. The bibliographies at the end of each chapter are in and of themselves valuable resources.



# Caution Advised in the Use of Initiatives

**In the last issue of SELF-RELIANCE, we carried an article on the use of initiatives and referenda as a tool in the fight for participatory democracy. The article spoke glowingly of the potential impact of initiatives and referenda and downplayed some of the serious problems experienced by organizations that had pushed for statewide initiatives. In this article excerpted from the January 1978 issue of *Just Economics*, Madeleine Adamson warns against too much reckless enthusiasm. Madeleine reports on the specific experiences of Massachusetts Fair Share and ACORN and draws sober conclusions about the use of initiatives by groups dedicated to building the power of low-to-moderate income people.***

A little more than a year ago, a number of citizen action organizations were working feverishly to pass measures they had placed on the ballot through the initiative process. Come Election Day, most suffered stunning defeats at the hands of the voters. Massachusetts Fair Share's staff director, Michael Ansara, called their utility rates initiative "a strategic error of major proportions." The leader of a successful Missouri initiative, which stopped utilities from charging for Construction Work in Progress, said they were simply lucky and she would not recommend the initiative process to anyone. On the other hand, despite losing two out of three votes and being kept off the ballot in several cities by the opposition's legal maneuvers, ACORN's chief organizer Wade Rathke called initiatives "good organizational vehicles for building political power."

## Nature of the beast

Whatever their opinion, both the experienced community organizers who favor initiatives and those who would avoid them agree that a great deal of caution should be exercised before jumping on the bandwagon. The appeal of direct democracy is tempting and for groups that simply want to raise issues or that only work on relatively non-controversial and non-threatening issues, the process may be fine. But for groups dedicated to building the power of low to moderate income people, the initiative process may easily be more problematic than promising. For groups working on redistributive issues, the problems are magnified.

The first problem is that, contrary to generally accepted rules of good organizing, you cannot control the timetable of an initiative campaign. You cannot have an initiative anytime you are ready and the pre-determined process is long, slow and tedious. There are usually many months between the time you collect signatures and election day. In the meantime changes in economic and political situations may seriously affect your initiative's likelihood of passage.

Collecting the signatures to put the issue on the ballot is relatively easy and provides something for everyone to do. In this respect, initiatives can be good organization builders. Steve Kest at ACORN said some members who had never done anything but pay dues became active signature collectors because it is a task even the most timid feel comfortable doing.

However, once the signatures are in hand, it is hard to come up with continuing things for members to do. Initiatives do not lend themselves to direct action. Politicians whose endorsements you seek may provide targets for some action. Or you can go after the opposition, exposing their finances and phony arguments. But it is difficult to formulate any logical demands. The major activities—once the question is on the ballot—are public education and "get out the vote" drives. At this point a new set of problems arise, centered on money and media.

Initiatives are almost always, in the final analysis, fought out with TV, radio and newspaper advertising. Not surprisingly, those with the most money usually win. The Fairness Doctrine helps the side without money get a little air time, but it doesn't provide any slick ads for you to use.

Once election day rolls around, even if you have mobilized an army of poll workers, you still have the problem of the "no" vote to contend with. A lot of people routinely vote no on every ballot question just to be safe. A million people in Massachusetts in 1976 voted against a measure to allow absentee ballots if election day falls on a religious holiday. Unfortunately, initiative laws do not allow you to get around this factor by wording your measure so that a "no" vote is the right vote.

## A glimmer of optimism

Jim Katz at Fair Share said the one good thing about their iniative campaign was the power lesson the organization learned. "People can see the role money and influence play more clearly in an initiative campaign that a legislative fight," he remarked. Wade Rathke agrees, writing in the Institute's Community Organizing Handbook #2 that their Lifeline campaign "documents in a way that words can never pretend to do, the injustice and repression which meet low to moderate income families' efforts to organize and build power in American society."

ACORN also found its initiative campaigns to be good organization builders. Although they lost in Missouri on the repeal of the sales tax on food and drugs, the relatively new organization gained considerable visibility and credibility

*Published by the Movement for Economic Justice Education and Training Center, *Just Economics* is a valuable resource for anyone interested in the organizations, the issues, and the strategies of direct action community organizing for low and moderate income people. Also for anyone looking for a job in organizing. We recommend it highly for all our readers. Individual subscriptions are available for a donation of $1 per $1000 personal income; institutional subscriptions are $15 for citizen groups and $25 for libraries, government agencies and businesses. Write to: *Just Economics*, 1735 T Street NW, Washington, DC 20009.

around the state and solidified relationships with important allies.

About all Fair Share staffers Ansara and Katz could say in respect to organization building and the flat rates initiative was that the organization survived and came back fighting. The defeat forced leaders and staff to take a hard look at priorities and the organization began concentrating its efforts more heavily on chapter development that statewide campaigns.

## Assessments to make

The most important thing Fair Share would do differently would be to define the issue more carefully so that potential allies aren't written off. Last time around Fair Share wound up all alone—even the liberal ADA joined the opposition to flat rates.

Other assessments that should be made in deciding whether to go the initiative route are: Is your base strong enough? If you put an issue on the statewide ballot, do you really have the troops in all the necessary areas to carry the day? Should you focus on local rather than statewide initiatives? Can your organization survive a defeat? And does it have the strength to sustain a long campaign?

Also consider whether the legislature is really a better arena. In Arkansas, ACORN knows that the legislature is very conservative and has a rural bias. With its strength in the larger towns and cities, ACORN assumes it has a better chance on the ballot than in the capitol. Michael Ansara still thinks Fair Share has a better shot at the legislature.

While caution is advised by all, few organizers are ready to write off initiatives entirely. On the contrary, there hasn't really been that much experience with them yet. More creative uses of the process should be explored. Jim Katz, for example, is intrigued with the possibility of using referenda. Whatever your decision about initiatives (or referenda), decide carefully. For all your efforts will hinge on the results of just one vote.

*—Madeleine Adamson*

# Fighting Youth Crime by Creating New Jobs

*continued on p. 6*

The federal government is now following the lead of state and local government and private organizations in encouraging youth training in growth industries. The HUD-sponsored youth employment programs to be run by CDC's will focus on housing rehabilitation, weatherization, and recycling. The Regulations for the Youth Community Conservation in Improvement Projects specify the following as acceptable projects: making neighborhood improvements; weatherizing and making basic repairs to low-income housing; aiding energy conservation (including work on solar energy projects); and maintaining conservation measures or restoring natural resources on non-federal public lands.

Williard Wirtz's recommendation that Community Education Work Councils be established acknowledges the importance of grounding youth programs in the communities where unemployment and crime are high. Wirtz suggests, however, that the Councils concentrate primarily on job counseling and occupational placement. Most of the innovative programs described in this article go much further. They start from the assumption that, since the job market for youth is so limited, youth employment programs must not only train participants but must also create permanent jobs. Youth Development Corporations, CDC-run youth employment programs, and training programs in new energy-related growth industries are all part of the same strategy.

Both the trainees and the community-at-large can benefit from this job creation strategy. Department of Labor youth training programs pay only the minimum wage. A business venture could provide incentives for achievement by offering bonuses to hardworking crews. Moreover, the creation of a viable economic enterprise would assure that federal money pumped into the community would have a lasting effect. Even if federal priorities were to shift and funds for innovative youth programs were to dry up, a successful business venture would be able to continue independently. And it would provide permanent, locally-based employment opportunities and contribute to the wealth of the community.

Neighborhood economic development must be one of the structural keys to any serious crime prevention strategy. We can no longer afford the high cost of the frustration and the rage of young people who are poor and unemployed—and who see no future for themselves. Programs that go beyond job counseling to job creation are a step toward the goal of creating citizens among inner-city youth, of encouraging their active participation in the creation and the distribution of wealth. It is an important step, for the quality of urban life is at stake.

*—Neil Seldman and Margaret McCarthy*

*Margaret McCarthy, a former staff member of the Institute for Local Self-Reliance, is now on the staff of the American Psychological Association.*

*Neil Seldman, Director of Waste Utilization at the Institute, is also on the Board of Officers of Neighborhood Planning Council 8.*

## New ILSR publications

The Institute for Local Self-Reliance has added two new booklets to its ever-growing list of publications. Both are available from: ILSR, 1717 18th Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20009. As always, please add 25¢ for postage and handling.

**Energy Self-Reliance:** This collection of articles on energy issues reprinted from SELF-RELIANCE includes reports on: the economics of solar energy; job creation through energy self-reliance; the decentralizing potential of solar cells for electricity generation; and strategies for municipal and federal energy policies based upon the principles of self-reliance. A convenient guide to ILSR perspectives on energy. **16 pages $1.00**

**Local Responses to Global Problems:** Published as *Worldwatch Paper 17*, this report by Bruce Stokes of the Worldwatch Institute examines locally-based strategies for meeting basic human needs, both in the United States and around the world. The report focuses on local initiatives in food production, housing, health care, and energy development. **64 pages $2.00**

# Co-ops Are Alive and Well in the Twin Cities

**In the July-August issue of SELF-RELIANCE, we published an article on the development and present health of food co-ops and distribution networks around the country. Several subscribers who responded to the article felt that we had paid insufficient attention to the very successful federation of co-ops in the Twin Cities of Minneapolis-St. Paul. Michael McCoy, who recently moved to Washington after four years of involvement with the Minneapolis food network, offered to rectify our oversight. Not being a staff that passes up such offers, we accepted. Here is his report:**

In 1970, the first small buying club was begun in Minneapolis, operating from the front porch of a private home. Since then, 24 storefront food co-ops have been established in Minneapolis-St. Paul. Over 120 storefront co-ops and buying clubs now exist in the Upper Midwest. The annual volume of the largest metropolitan area storefront is close to $900,000. The smallest has a volume of over $100,000 a year. Not a single Twin Cities co-op has had to close its doors.

The past eight years have seen the rapid growth of what are called "new wave" co-ops. These co-ops—and the warehousing, trucking, and production enterprises with which they are usually federated—were quite strong in many college towns in the early 1970's. Berkeley, Boston, Madison, Austin, Washington DC, and Minneapolis all developed co-op networks or federations. As the years have passed, a ripple effect has occured. Buying clubs and food co-ops are now becoming a feature of small town and working class life and less of a college-town phenomenon. Storefronts have spread beyond inner-city neighborhoods to moderate- and middle-income communities. Moreover, several of the older networks, such as those in Austin and Boston, have run out of steam or collapsed. Thus, while the number of co-ops across the country continues to increase, the question of the viability of alternative food networks remains unanswered. It is in this context that the longevity and the viability of the co-op movement in Minneapolis-St. Paul are noteworthy. What is the secret of the Twin Cities' success?

## A Cooperative Tradition

The North Country has a long tradition of active and federated cooperatives. Many of the Finnish immigrants who settled in northern Minnesota, Wisconsin, and the Michigan Peninsula, had been active in social and political movements resisting Czarist Russia's control of Finland before they came to America. This tradition, coupled with the Finns' exploitation by both the mine owners and the local merchants, led to the development of a strong cooperative movement. Iron miners struck in Minnesota in 1907 and again in 1917; Michigan copper miners walked out in 1914. Each series of strikes was accompanied by the formation of cooperative stores, as a way of making strike funds last longer. By 1917, there were 65 co-ops in the three-state region. That year, an open letter was circulated among the isolated co-ops calling for a "joint buying circle" for wholesaling purposes. Representatives of 19 co-ops attended the first meeting. A total of $15.50 was raised as initial capital. The Cooperative Central Exchange was established.

Within ten years time, the CCE had grown to 74 members and had net sales of over one million dollars. It owned and staffed its own warehousing and baking facilities. It operated testing kitchens to insure product quality. CCE even developed its own "Red Star" label of goods. Throughout the Twenties and Thirties, although tried by political dissensions, the Exchange remained economically strong. The organization survived until its 1963 merger with Midland Cooperatives, Inc., but not much longer. Midland, unwilling to provide sufficient capital or support to the consumer cooperative network, let it deteriorate until what remained was sold to a profit-making warehouser.

*Jeanne Weber*

The North Country cooperative tradition was widespread. Farmers banded together to form a wide variety of producer and consumer co-ops. Farm supplies, machinery, oil, and gasoline were all bought cooperatively. In several areas, cooperative grain storage facilities were established. Although the early Finnish co-ops, like Midland and National, have grown large and have lost both their political and their community roots, the memory lingers. The spirit of the early co-ops is now being championed and revived by the "new wave" cooperatives. And this trend is by no means coincidental or unconscious. A detailed history of the Finnish cooperative movement (from which much of the above information has been culled) has recently been published as a special issue of *Scoop*, the voice of "cooperation in the North Country." The new wave wants to learn from their elders' experience.*

*Copies of *Origins and Legacies: The History of a Cooperative Movement* are available for 50¢ from *Scoop*, Box 7271, Powderhorn Station, Minneapolis MN 55407.

## New Wave History

The first storefront co-ops in Minneapolis were all located in neighborhoods with mixed economic and racial composition, neighborhoods where many students lived. The first and, for a long time, largest was North Country Co-op near the University of Minnesota campus. By 1972, there were seven such storefront co-ops.

These co-ops went through many of the same political discussions and confrontations as co-ops in other cities. Most of the early organizers had been active in the anti-war movement and the process of building a cooperative movement was considered part of a broader strategy for change. The struggle within the movement mirrored the ideological struggle between the various factions of the American left. Just as the Cooperative Central Exchange had to develop and defend its political position in the Thirties, so too did Minneapolis' co-op community in the Seventies. In 1975, the conflict came to a head. The Cooperative Organization, a non-democratic left group, seized control of the People's Warehouse, the distribution point for the various co-ops. The upheaval almost led to the end of co-op development in the Twin Cities; but a second warehouse, the Distribution Alliance of the North Country (DANCe), was formed and the People's Warehouse was boycotted until it was forced to close. The volume of DANCe has more than doubled each year since then. Last year, the warehouse grossed $1,250,000 *(see box)*. The end result of the struggle was to force all the co-ops to formalize their legal, financial, and organizational structures and to democratize their decision-making process.

**The first co-op supermarket in Minneapolis, West Bank Market, opened last summer with the help of $30,000 in Block Grant funds.**

Minneapolis-St. Paul cooperators have pursued a conscious policy of decentralization. Instead of there being one or two large co-ops in areas of the city with significant concentrations of students or young working people, there has been a concerted effort to start many mid-sized, neighborhood-oriented storefronts. Each of the 24 metropolitan area co-ops reflects the needs of its residents in its inventory choices. The progression has been from the early inner-city co-ops to co-ops in more residential parts of the city and, most recently, to the suburbs around the Twin Cities. St. Anthony Park Co-op, part of the second wave of Minneapolis co-ops, was one of the first to stock canned goods. One of the most recently formed storefront co-ops is in Northeast Minneapolis, an ethnically-diverse community that many people thought would be among the last to start a co-op. The first co-op supermarket, West Bank Market, opened last summer. Partially financed by $30,000 in Community Development Block Grant monies, the supermarket, which is located quite near the North Country Co-op in-town, was built to serve nearby high-rise dwellers.

The network has spread far beyond the Twin Cities. WESCAP, a Community Action Agency in Western Wisconsin, has been very active in encouraging buying clubs for low-income rural people. Rural buying clubs and co-ops coordinate their deliveries and pick-ups with DANCe's schedule. For example, buying clubs in Northwestern Minnesota and North Dakota coordinate their schedule with DANCe's run to St. Cloud, Minnesota, end of the line for one of the five delivery routes made by the warehouse. Common Health in Duluth is the first spin-off regional warehouse, supplying co-ops and buying clubs in Northwestern Minnesota, Northern Wisconsin, and the Michigan Peninsula. The urban/rural network benefits all concerned. When the DANCe truckers finish their upstate delivery runs, they load up with local grains, beans, flour, maple syrup, dried milk, and honey to bring back to Minneapolis, thereby giving North Country farmers direct access to cooperative markets.

### The Distribution Alliance of the North Country

DANCe was established in September 1975 in response to a crisis in the Twin Cities cooperative movement. The structure and development of the warehouse reflects lessons that the founders learned from the takeover and demise of the People's Warehouse at the hands of the Cooperative Organization. DANCe is controlled by a board of directors composed of representatives of the co-ops and buying clubs that are members of the Alliance. Although day-to-day decisions are made by the thirteen full-time workers, final control rests with the Board. Employees are paid $3.75 an hour and salaries will rise to $4.00 an hour in April. Workers with children receive a bonus of 25¢ an hour and $25 a month. By paying a living wage, DANCe is able to keep turnover relatively low. Member co-ops and buying clubs capitalize the warehouse by buying $25 shares upon joining DANCe and by depositing the cash equivalent of two weeks of orders with the warehouse. This deposit is usually paid on installment: members pay 5% over each order until the deposit is paid in full. In May 1976, DANCe's monthly volume was $40,000. Now it is close to $140,000. For more information, contact: DANCe, 1401 South 5th Street, Minneapolis MN 55454.

## The All Cooperating Assembly

One of the most important factors in the success of the Twin Cities co-op network has been the role played by the All Cooperating Assembly (ACA). Since its creation in July 1975, the Assembly has helped groups throughout the North Country to start buying clubs and storefront co-ops. Members of the Assembly's Outreach Committee travel for no charge (except gas money) to speak to groups, answering their questions and, most importantly, giving them support and encouragement. Requests for outreach presentations average between five and ten a week. Assembly volunteers and staff have gone as far as Western Montana and Cheyenne, Wyoming, to assist new groups. As a result of the visit to Cheyenne, the local Community Action Agency opened a storefront co-op.

The All Cooperating Assembly also helps with the day-to-day problems of running a co-op. The Equipment Committee has identified and developed sources of good used equipment, such as refrigerators, scales, and cash registers. The Legal and Financial Committees answer questions and make suggestions about organizational structure, legal matters, and accounting procedures. The Farm Committee locates regional and local farmers for seasonal supplies of vegetables, grains, and honeys. By retaining one legal counsel for the entire Assembly membership, and by providing useful on-going

assistance, the ACA is able to help lower members overhead. At present, a Co-op Development Fund is being established to provide initial capital to beginning storefronts and to assist financially troubled co-ops. This Fund will replace the informal system now in effect of small co-ops borrowing money from the more successful ones, such as Seward and Wedge.

There are three paid staff members of the All Cooperating Assembly whose salaries and expenses are funded by a $15.00 annual membership fee and a monthly tax of one-fifth of one percent of each member organization's gross sales. ACA membership is not limited to food co-ops and reflects the diversity of cooperative ventures in Minneapolis-St. Paul. Assembly members include: bakeries, restaurants, book stores, printing services, typesetters, architects, notary services, hardware stores, dry good stores, day care centers, a bicycle and winter sports co-op, cooperative schools, and one of the first producer cooperatives in the Twin Cities, a clothing factory.

## Looking to the Future

The Twin Cities co-op movement has grown and continues to grow, but the network does face many of the same problems that plague other metropolitan and regional food distribution systems. More outreach to local residents is needed. Capitalization for new co-ops remains a problem. The issue of worker control versus community control is still being hashed out. What is exciting is that none of these problems threaten the survival of the co-op movement. That hurdle was passed in 1975. High volume and sound management, coupled with the successful use of volunteers, have enabled most co-ops to pay their coordinators living wages. The Twin Cities network —and the spin-off co-ops and buying clubs in Duluth, St. Cloud, and Winona and in rural areas—has developed a stable base. The question now is, "Where do we go from here?".

*—Michael McCoy*

# Toward Neighborhood Action on Energy

*continued from p. 4*

us are run so ragged by work that we don't have the time or the drive to build these for ourselves, most of these suggestions are small and are suitable for building or installing over a span of weekends.*

- *Use only parts of the house* to save on heating bills.
- *Tune your furnace* to improve its efficiency.
- *Insulate or weatherstrip the windows*—caulking, weatherstripping and drapes can cut drafts and save energy.
- *Save on water heating*—wrap insulation around your water heater; install a pre-heater which allows cold water to reach room temperature before it enters the water heater.
- *Save water* by installing restricting washers on faucets and cutting the amount of water used in each toilet flush.
- *Make your own compost*—we used a three bin box that cost $100 to build and produced an excellent fertilizer for the garden.
- *Build and use a solar greenhouse*—we designed two greenhouse models, one that can extend the growing season to ten months and another that costs $125 and allows a month's jump on the season.

*Detailed plans for several of these designs are included in *Home Built Energy.*

## What Next?

Where does this leave us? Certainly, the neighborhood is barely more self-sufficient for its own energy production than before we started. But a strong base has been built. We have more experience working together, and a shrewder way to decide how to apply our energies most effectively. We also have several solid ideas to work with.

We think it is important that more of our neighbors become involved in planning a course of control over our energy before any more proposals are written or new programs started. We are not sure if federal or state money will speed up or slow down our efforts for control. To the extent that outside money is usually given to professionals, or to spokespeople for the neighborhood, it serves to slow down our progress. It keeps us in the role of consumers of energy technology. To the extent that outside help allows us to more easily learn the skills to produce energy we need right here in our backyards as non-professionals, our progress could be speeded.

In any case, the initiative must come from right here in the neighborhood.

# Last Year's Work, This Year's Plans

*continued from p. 1*

munity groups.

• **Publication of *Starting Your Own Energy Business:*** We have just published this book that provides succinct analyses of four energy industries that are potential sources of community-based economic development. The book is a useful first step for people wanting to know the capital investment and start-up problems in business like energy audits, storm window installation, and cellulose manufacture.

## This Year's Goals

In the coming year, the staff of the Institute plans to devote substantial energy to work in the District of Columbia. We are currently examining the District budget with the goal of producing a readable handbook that will tell people where the city's money comes from, where it goes, and what it all means.

The Institute is also examining the potential for energy self-reliance in Washington DC. Our study will focus both on the technical feasibility for energy conservation and the use of renewable energy sources and also on the tools and authority available to the District to move in the direction of self-reliance.

In the coming months, we expect to develop a vital urban agriculture and greening program in the District, to continue our conservation and solar energy workshops, and to expand our information component into non-print media, such as slide and radio presentations.

The motivation of low- and moderate-income community groups toward self-reliance is widespread. The Institute for Local Self-Reliance will continue to encourage and assist the development of the movement through its research, demonstration, and technical assistance projects, so that we can move closer to the goal of aware and productive citizens participating democratically in the decisions that affect the quality of their daily lives.

# Notes

**Who's Who in Solar and Wind Energy 1977** is a directory of Iowans doing alternative energy research, retailing, distribution, and demonstration. Produced by Citizens United for Responsible Energy (CURE), the directory is available for $1.50 from: **CURE, 1342 30th Street, Des Moines IA 50311.**

**Vanderbilt University Center for Health Services** seeks a staff member with three years experience in the health field to introduce medical and other students to rural communities and unmet health needs. Contact: **Center for Health Studies, Station 17, Vanderbilt Medical Center, Nashville TN 37232.**

**The National Seed Order** is now in its third year of providing high-quality low-cost seeds for community and other gardening efforts. National Seed Order buys seeds in bulk, packs them by hand, and passes the savings to customers. Proceeds support the programs of Environmental Response and its two co-sponsors, the Ozarks Organic Growers and Buyers Association and the Farallones Institute Integral Urban House. Seeds cost 25¢ per packet, plus $1.50 postage per order. For a list of the over 100 available packets, write to: **National Seed Order, Environmental Response, Drury, MO 65638.**

**New ACORN-affiliated non-commercial radio station** in Tampa FL has job openings for: station manager, chief engineer, news director, public affairs director, assistant public affairs director, announcers. The pay will be low-to-moderate, but training will be provided for some of the positions. Contact: **Joe Fox, The Nathan B. Stubblefield Foundation, 523 W 15th, Little Rock AR 72202.**

**Appropriate Technology Research** (ATR) is a group of professional scientists committed to developing decentralized technologies for use by individuals and small communities. Formed in 1976, ATR tries to bridge the gap between modern science and the ordinary person. For more information or to receive a list of publications, contact: **ATR, 1938 Hano Road Santa Fe NM 87501.**

**Total Environmental Action Foundation** is awarding limited scholarship aid to persons who want to, but cannot afford to, attend monthly environmental workshops sponsored by the Foundation's parent organization, Total Environmental Action of Harrisville, New Hampshire. Workshops, held the second Saturday of each month, cover topics in the fields of alternate energy systems, energy conservation, and food production. Inquiries should be made to: **TEAF, Church Hill, Harrisville NH 03450.**

**The Texas Register** is an official state publication that everyone involved in local and state affairs in Texas should read—and one that every state should publish for its own citizens. The *Register* covers meetings, hearings, executive orders, new and amended regulations, and the decisions of regulatory boards and agencies. Published by the Office of the Secretary of State, the *Register* is available bi-weekly for $25 a year. Write to: **State of Texas, Office of the Secretary of State, Capitol Station, Austin TX 78711.**

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