ISSN 0362-8566

Self-Reliance

Number 18 March-April 1979

INSIDE:

3 Unplugging the Utilities

Cogeneration systems allow large consumers of electricity to make their own. The process reverses a 100-year trend towards centralized electrical energy systems and has exciting possibilities for neighborhoods.

4 A Caveat on the Coop Bank

In stressing the Coop Bank's potential, advocates have overlooked or downplayed its significant limitations.

6 Progress Reports

New Haven Food Coop demonstrates the secret of successful grassroots fundraising . . . Grand Rapids Michigan plans to turn garbage into jobs . . . East Harlem launches New York City's largest recycling program.

11 Resources

Investigative tools: A score of resources for investigating the power structure and power relationships that shape our neighborhoods, cities and regions.

Regular Features

2 Notes
2 March of "Progress"
15 Off the Shelf

ILSR Study Explains How

Energy Self-Reliance for Washington, DC

To what extent can a large American city become energy self-reliant? The Institute has done an extensive study of this question, using Washington DC as a model. In Self-Reliance #16, we reported that the nation's capital, like most cities, is extremely dependent on outside sources for its energy supply. Figures show that for every dollar spent on energy, about 85 cents is lost from the District's local economy. The money retained (nine cents on the dollar) is mostly in the form of local taxes. Only four cents comprises wages to local residents. Energy conservation and solar energy can significantly reduce this "balance of payments" deficit.

This will only be brought about, however, when the metaphor of cities as nations is translated into local officials' perception of "economics". When we hear the phrases, "solar energy is uneconomical," or "It is most economical to install 10 inches of insulation in the attic in this climate," we are hearing conclusions based on a variety of hidden assumptions. The economics of energy, as of most anything, depends, to a great extent, on who is doing the evaluating, and the method used.

For individual consumers, the attractiveness of an investment in energy conservation or solar systems depends on the payback period, or more likely, the impact of the investment on his or her monthly payments for energy plus the loan. The goal in enticing the individual consumer to energy conservation or solar energy is to develop financing mechanisms that permit most, or all, of the investment to be repaid through energy savings. Such financing schemes have already been developed by institutions such as the San Diego Federal Savings and Loan Association, and the Tennessee Valley Authority.

Public utility companies have different priorities than individual consumers. They are looking for investments which contribute to their rate of return, guaranteed by law. A utility could decide, for example, to invest $1 billion in a new power plant, with a 9 percent return on investment. Or it could spend $1 billion on energy conservation, with no guaranteed return. The former option is obviously more attractive to the utility, not necessarily because it is more beneficial, but because accounting procedures and rate-making structures make it so.

The Greatest Public Good

One of the disheartening features of the energy problem is the dichotomy between what the business sector views as economical, and what the utility sector does. Businesses will tend to require a 20 to 30 percent return on their investment for conservation or solar. A utility currently requires about a 9 percent return on its investment for building new power plants. Such a contradiction tends to be at the root of our energy dilemma.

Local governments, however, do not have the same constraints as individual consumers, public utilities, or commercial enterprises. They can evaluate energy investments from the perspective of the greatest public good. Their goal is not to maximize profit, but to maximize the benefits of an investment to their citizens. In this sense, energy conservation and solar (continued on page 6)

Notes

Anyone growing food in urban gardens should read *Toxic Element Studies—Food Crops and Urban Vegetable Gardens.* This is one of the most detailed reports to date on the dangers of lead and cadmium accumulation in produce grown in polluted air and soil. Most of the material is from a symposium on "heavy metals" held last summer by the Cooperative Extension of Cornell University. Because of a lack of hard data, the danger of heavy metals in urban gardens has been largely speculation. But in a study submitted shortly after the symposium and included in this report, a Cornell toxicologist now specifically recommends that cabbage and other leafy vegetables not be grown in inner-city gardens. This will hardly end the heavy metals debate, but it is something for urban gardeners to consider. Limited quantities of this free report are available from: **Cooperative Extension, Cornell University, N 132A Van Rensselaer Hall, Ithaca NY 14853.**

Federal land for community gardens is now available through the General Services Administration. The sites are all over the country and range from 963 square feet to 20 acres. Organized community groups should contact: **Paul Winkeller or Ligeia Fontaine, Roon 6323, GSA, 18th and F Streets NW, Washington DC 20405.**

The March of "Progress"

Locking Up the Airwaves: The only access many communities get to their local radio and television airwaves are the public service announcements required by federal law. But that may change for the worse if Congress passes proposed revisions of the 45-year-old Communications Act. Out would go the clause saying "controversial issues of public importance" must be aired. And broadcasters wouldn't have to run those 15 and 30 second announcements for community services such as crisis intervention or alcoholism counseling. In fact, the amount of time allotted to public service broadcasting would become optional. Forget challenging a radio or tv license on public interest grounds; proposed regulation changes mention only fraud and serious technical difficulties. Fortunately, none of these revisions has yet to be drafted in the form of a bill. But citizen groups expect a tough fight against the broadcasting industry and say public ignorance of the proposals will make it harder. To find out the status of the proposed revisions, contact the National Citizens Communications Lobby, 1028 Connecticut Avenue NW, #918, Washington DC 20036.

—Information from the *Unicorn Times*

Freedom of Choice: A woman in Hawaii filed suit against a developer to stop construction of an apartment building next to her home, charging that the building would block the sunlight needed for her home's solar heating system. A judge refused to rule on the case, however, saying that the state legislature, not the courts, was the proper place to "establish the right of direct access to the sun." The developer's attorney argued in court that the woman had alternatives to her solar heating system: "If she doesn't get the sun, she can go to Hawaiian Electric, can't she?"

—Information from the *DC Gazette*

Kill Them With Logic: While anti-nuclear activists are beginning to make the case for small-scale, decentralized energy systems, the nuclear industry may have come up with an effective counter-argument: fear. The strategy was outlined recently in a *Public Relations Journal* article written by Frank Shants, special projects manager for the Public Service Company, owners of the Seabrook, New Hampshire nuclear power plant. "The maddening thing about the campaigns of the anti-nuclear power activists is that they are working," writes Shants, "Instead of trying to arouse the public *for* nuclear power (Shants' emphasis) we should change course and try to arouse the public *against* anti-nuclear groups and what they advocate . . . The nuclear debate isn't over whose facts are correct, but instead, who can come up with the greatest hazard and have it successfully perceived so by the people. So forget the facts one in awhile. Counter the activists not with the facts, but with closed factory gates, empty schools, cold and dark homes, and sad children . . . If the people are to choose a much different lifestyle and social order, they should be aware of exactly what it is they are choosing. So far they aren't aware that social change is what the nuclear power and energy debate is all about."

—Information from the Shugah River Energy Alliance

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Self-Reliance

Published bi-monthly by the Institute for Local Self-Reliance, at 1717 18th Street NW, Washington DC 20009
(202) 232-4108

Subscriptions:
Individuals, $8; Institutions, $15

Cogeneration Reversing 100-Year Trend Toward Centralized Electric Systems

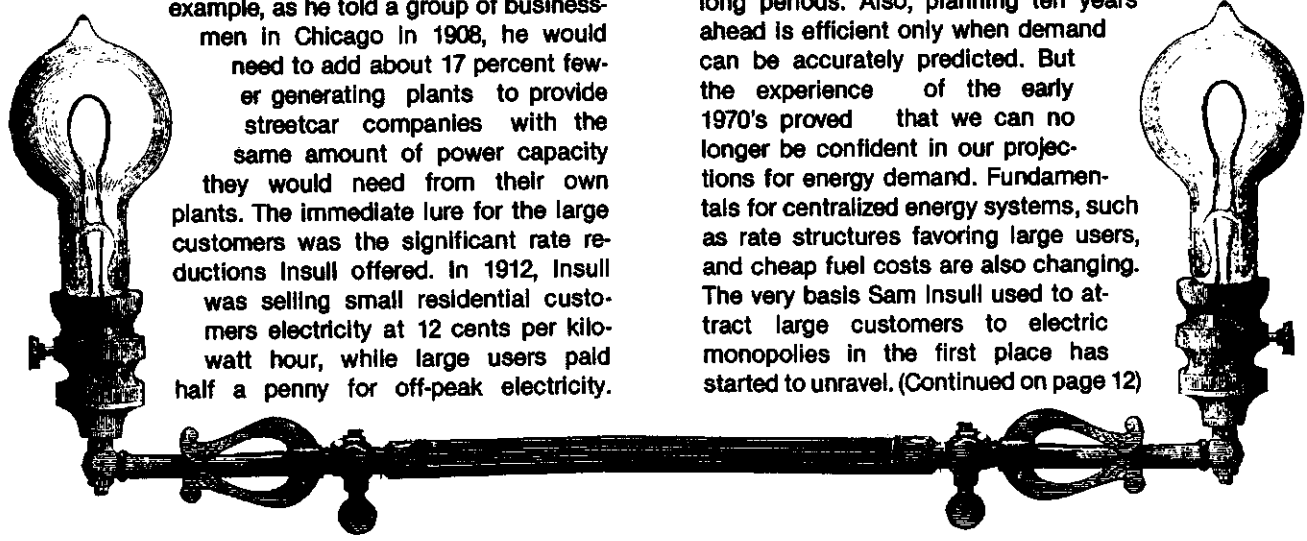
Although many neighborhood and decentralist supporters focus on the potential of solar energy for on-site power production, the struggle between on-site *fossil fueled* energy generation and centralized utilities is now a major theme in the United States. Initially it is the larger, industrial and commercial users who are waging the battle, but the dynamics, and results of this era may set the legal and economic framework for later neighborhood-based, and household energy systems.

The push to centralize electrical production and distribution is almost as old as the light bulb. In 1880, Thomas Edison designed a system using four steam-powered reciprocating engines to produce electricity form six dynamos. Power would have been distributed through a transmission network capable of supplying light bulbs across a one-half mile square area.

Edison's plan seemed ambitious at the time, but it was Samuel Insull, an Edison protege who later became president of Chicago Electric Company, who turned the idea of centralization into reality. At the turn of the century, the country's budding electrical system was largely decentralized. Industry, streetcar companies and large buildings had their own power plants. In Chicago between 1882 and 1905, a total of 29 electric utility franchises were granted.

Insull had a formidable job. He wanted not only to promote the use of electricity, but to encourage those then generating their own power to discard their plants. He was quite candid. His speeches, such as one titled "Sell Your Product at a Price Which Will Enable You to Get a Monopoly," were meant quite literally.

In his sales pitches, Insull convinced large electric consumers that they could buy power more cheaply from a central plant than they could through on-site generators. Lower prices would result from economies of scale and the load diversity factor (because several customers will use electricity at different times, one need not scale up the generating facility proportionately to the total use). For example, as he told a group of businessmen in Chicago in 1908, he would need to add about 17 percent fewer generating plants to provide streetcar companies with the same amount of power capacity they would need from their own plants. The immediate lure for the large customers was the significant rate reductions Insull offered. In 1912, Insull was selling small residential customers electricity at 12 cents per kilowatt hour, while large users paid half a penny for off-peak electricity.



The increased efficiency of large plants and the lower rates to large electric users brought dramatic results. In 1900, 60 percent of all electricity was generated on-site. Twenty years later, this figure had been cut in half. Regions which once had fiercely competing utility companies soon had only one or two.

At the same time, power plants grew larger and service areas expanded. In 1930, the largest steam turbine in existence had a capacity of 200 megawatts. In 1970, the *largest* plant could produce 1000 megawatts, and today, an *average-size* nuclear power plant can produce almost that amount. Energy planners began to look at combinations of power plants, such as one proposed for Pennsylvania, capable of producing up to 20,000 megawatts of electricity, enough to serve 10 million people.

As the generating units and power plants grew larger, the number of systems, and the number of people who owned them, declined. From 6,500 electric systems in 1917, the number dropped to 233 in 1977. The average size of an investor-owned generating company increased from 177,000 megawatts in 1965 to 399,000 megawatts in 1975.

These giant companies have formed power pools, linking in regional networks so that one company could borrow electricity from another when the need arose. By 1960, there were nine power pools, representing 23 percent of the nation's installed capacity. By 1970, there were 22 power pools, representing 60 percent of the nation's installed generating capacity. But in many ways, 1970 represents the apogee of the pendulum's swing toward centralization. Although the dynamics of centralization and large scale have continued on for several years, forces are undermining their original justification, causing a variety of energy supply and demand problems.

Siting and engineering difficulties, for example, are often producing eight to ten year lead times before new power plants can come on-line. As plant costs skyrocket, tight capital markets are reluctant to tie up so much money for such long periods. Also, planning ten years ahead is efficient only when demand can be accurately predicted. But the experience of the early 1970's proved that we can no longer be confident in our projections for energy demand. Fundamentals for centralized energy systems, such as rate structures favoring large users, and cheap fuel costs are also changing. The very basis Sam Insull used to attract large customers to electric monopolies in the first place has started to unravel. (Continued on page 12)

Low-income help doubtful

A Closer Look at the Consumer Cooperative Bank

The National Consumer Cooperative Bank, signed into law last August and scheduled to open for business this summer, has been widely praised by advocates of so-called "new wave" coops—those with direct decision making by members, or run by low-income people, or distributing or producing goods for "alternative" markets. The Bank is also backed by more traditional cooperatives, typified by the multi-million dollar Midwest agricultural coops, but the consensus has been that the Coop Bank will have enough money for both groups. This may not be true, as the following report on the major shortcomings of the Bank explains.

People looking to the National Consumer Cooperative Bank to help their struggling cooperative or to give them a boost in starting a new cooperative are probably in for a big disappointment. The chances are good that the coops with the greatest need for capital, as well as most new coops, will never get a loan from the Coop Bank. In fact, even though the Bank has been publicized as a wonderful opportunity for these kinds of coops, it was not really designed for them at all.

The Coop Bank is the result of an almost decade long fight by leaders of the consumer and cooperative movements. Last year Congress finally approved the Bank—in a close vote—after killing the idea several times. The victory looked substantial. The bank will start with a $300 million loan from the federal government, and it can eventually loan up to ten times that amount. In addition, there are specific provisions for low-income cooperatives, including a $75 million Self-Help Development Fund and $2 million in technical assistance to help low-income coops get loans and put them to good use.

The problem is that by selling potential benefits, Bank advocates have overlooked or downplayed real limitations. The fact that the program is a bank, for example, and not a government social or economic development program, has been all but ignored.

Loans at near market rates

Like any bank, the Coop Bank will not only want to protect its investments, it will want to make money on them. Because of the way the Coop Bank is designed, it will be forced to be very careful about who it gives its money to and on what terms. Money invested by the federal government must be repaid, along with interest. New money will have to be acquired in order to stay in business. Operating costs for managing the money must be paid for. All of these factors mean that Coop Bank loans will be at or near market rates, hardly a break for most coops.

There is also the consideration of risk. Like any bank, the Coop Bank will not be able to afford making loans to marginal businesses. The risk is simply too great. So coops which are not already financially secure should not expect to get a loan that will help stabilize their operations. At best, a successful coop might expect to get a loan to help it expand. In a sense, it often boils down to that old joke about banks: the only way to get a loan is to prove you don't need one.

Assuming that the Coop Bank will be willing to take at least a few more risks than a traditional bank, it will be looking for two things: equity and strict terms. But the problem with most small coops is the lack of equity, and strict terms obviously benefit the bank, not the coop. So the prospects for innovative lending are not bright.

Self-Help Development Fund

In fact, Harvard economist Beldon Daniels, instrumental in popularizing the national Coop bank idea years ago, says that low-income coops should completely forget about the $300 million part of the coop bank. The only chance low-income coops have, Daniels says, is with the special $75 million Self-Help Development Fund.

This Fund, along with the $2 million earmarked for technical assistance to low-income coops, has been the focus for most of the controversy surrounding bank regulations, which are now being written. Even though the law sets aside this money for low-income coops, there is no guarantee it will actually help them grow or start new ones.

Some of the problem seems to be one of attitude, no small factor in questions of finance. According to one White House observer of the bank regulation process, the Self-Help Development Fund is in real danger of being compromised or misused by traditional banking interests.

"There is a strong feeling that the Bank itself must be run as much as possible like any other bank," he said. "If this attitude carries over to the Self-Help Development Fund. it's dead as far as low-income coops are concerned."

There are three specific problem areas with the Self-Help Fund: the terms of the loans, the definition of low-income, and the possibility that money intended for capitalization purposes may get siphoned off for technical assistance.

With loan terms, the Bank's board of directors could decide to be lenient or tough, depending on how the regulations are written. "Right now people are talking about Self-Help loans

at seven percent and calling that a bargain," says one person involved in the regulation writing, "but I don't." Also, much will depend on how the bank defines default. Banks can be very flexible when their clients get into financial trouble, and many banks, particularly with large or otherwise valued customers, can refinance or "rollover" a loan rather than foreclose and put someone out of business. But if the Bank adopts a "get tough" policy, many coops that might otherwise make it will fail.

"Low-income" is the other term that has regulation writers fighting. One might assume that "low-income" means people who don't have much money, but the government has a history of proving this isn't necessarily so. Consider HUD programs intended to make homeowners out of poor people. Because so many of these programs have failed, definitions of who is poor have simply been revised upward.

The same thing may happen with the Coop Bank. One compromise already written into the law says that only "a majority" of coop members must be low-income to be considered a low-income cooperative. Specific dollar figures and definitions of "majority" are now being hammered out, but advocates of low-income interests are reportedly divided, with some willing to define "low-income" loosely, while others maintain that truly low-income people are being written out of the law.

The technical assistance question is even cloudier. For many low-income and alternative coops, financial problems are the result of a lack of knowledge about what to do about them. Because financing and technical assistance are often closely linked, much of the $75 million may actually go to technical assistance rather than pure capitalization.

Technical Assistance 'Laughably Small'

The $2 million technical assistance fund has many more problems. Mitch Rosenburg, who prepared a study on the Coop Bank for the Technical Development Corporation in Boston, says the technical assistance fund is "laughably small." Because of the tight budget, only 33 staff positions have been allotted for direct assistance. Rosenburg notes that 16 of these positions are for loan officers, who will have to do much more than provide technical assistance and should not even be counted in this category. That leaves 17 people to run a national program which almost all observers agree is the key to making the bank work for low-income and alternative coops.

Rosenburg says there are other problems besides a lack of staff. The technical assistance that most coops need, he says, involves on-site involvement over several days. A centralized system will be all but worthless. This means the Bank should subcontract much of its work, but this leads to another

The Consumer Cooperative Bank has tremendous potential, but it has some significant limitations as well.

kind of battle: will the subcontracting go to people who are knowledgeable and sensitive to the particular needs of low-income and alternative coops, or will it go to high-priced, politically connected consulting firms?

Some people are more optimistic about the Bank than others. Staff members at ACTION and the Community Service Administration, the two federal agencies most closely tied to the interests of low-income people, are fighting hard for good regulations, and still insist that the Bank will help many low-income and alternative coops. Mitch Rosenberg agrees with Beldon Daniels that the only battle worth fighting now is the Self-Help Development Fund, but that this Fund still has considerable potential. David Smith of the Technical Development Corporation in Boston, a key low-income advocate in the regulation fight, says that the people currently seen most likely to become directors of the bank "could have been a lot worse." The actual names, to be chosen by President Carter, won't be known for perhaps another month. Beldon Daniels says that, judging from all the good publicity the Bank has received, it has become "a hoax" on low-income people. Some observers in Washington, in fact, say that the Treasury Department, representing traditional banking interests and playing a major role in the regulation writing, has "pulled the wool over the eyes" of agencies like ACTION and CSA.

Formal regulations will not be approved for several months, and there are still a number of hearings scheduled related to the Bank. But the chance for public input is just about over. A task force of representatives from various federal agencies, formed to make recommendations for the bank to the eventual board of directors, will complete its work this month. One task force member said that where differences in policy exist, a majority and minority report will be given to the directors. But the effect that local groups can have on the politicking at this date is minimal.

Those who want to keep in touch with the progress of the

The New Harbinger

Bank should contact **Coop Bank Group, ACTION, Room 203, 806 Connecticut Avenue NW, Washington DC 20525.** As *Self-Reliance* went to press, a report on the bank prepared by Mitch Rosenburg was not available to the public. To inquire about it, contact: **Technical Development Corporation, 11 Beacon Street, Boston MA 02109.**

Measuring Potential for Energy Self-Reliance

(Continued from page one)

energy not only save energy; they save money, and this money multiplies its beneficial impact in the local economy. In addition, conservation and solar also create jobs oriented to locally-based, small businesses. Finally, local government can, and should take into account qualitative measure of self-confidence and self-reliance, which can result when a local area begins to use its own resources to supply its own needs.

Nowhere is the tension between private economics and social economics more apparent than in the "economics" of solar energy. One study relating to jobs and energy, for example, found that, although solar applications create many more jobs, liquified natural gas and conventional power plants are still "cheaper" than solar. That is, from the perspective of the individual solar would not be economical. But that conclusion might change when evaluated by a local government. Assume, for instance, that Washington DC assists its citizens in installing $100 million of solar systems and that over 20 years the systems repay only $60 million in displaced fuel. Let us assume, however, that under current arrangements, only 20 cents on the dollar spent for conventional energy returns to the city.

Let us assume further that 50 cents on the dollar invested in solar returns to the city to pay for the installation by local firms, or manufacturing or assembly in local factories. Thus, of the $60 million that would have been spent had not the solar installations occurred, only $12 million returns to the city. In the case of solar, 50 percent of the $100 million, or $50 million, returns.

This retained money has multiple benefits. Local wages purchase local goods. Local businesspeople in turn purchase local goods. People deposit money in a local financial institution, and bankers loan it out to other consumers or businesspeople. There are no very accurate estimates of this multiplier effect for small areas. Roughly, however, according to federal computer models, Washington DC has a multiplier of 2.5 to 1. Thus, $2.50 in local economic activity is generated for every $1 of additional income to local residents. When this multiplier is added to the equation, the $60 million investment in conventional fuel "returns" $30. The $100 million solar investment "returns" $125 million making solar much more attractive (the figure would be reduced if financing charges are considered).

The Conservation Potential

Given this approach to economics, can local governments produce significant energy conservation and solar development? Indications are that they can. Washington DC, for example, has already reduced its energy consumption by almost 17 percent since 1972, without any formal conservation program at all.

Much greater conservation efforts are possible, even though without adequate energy audit information, it is difficult to measure the exact potential of energy conservation in a city.

To estimate the energy conservation potential for Washington DC, the Institute surveyed housing and building stock, current conservation efforts, energy consumption by sector, and case studies of conservation potential in similar structures and climates. Based on this information, we conclude that between 1977 and 1990, the District, including the federal government, could reduce end-use consumption by one third, from 109 trillion BTU's to 74 trillion BTU's, even as it adds tens of million square feet of new office space and residential units. This does not represent the technically possible maximum conservation, but rather, that conservation which is economically feasible. (For example, we assumed an auto fleet average of 25 mpg by 1990, when the technical feasibility is more than twice that.) Economically feasible conservation is defined as that investment which would repay itself in less than seven years from energy savings.

Conservation, however, only speaks to the demand side of the energy picture. Self-reliance means being able to generate a significant portion of energy needs from within city boundaries. The two energy sources that would be significant in the District of Columbia are solid waste conversion and direct solar energy use.

Even if the major portion of the solid waste stream were to be recycled, the remaining unrecyclable waste can be burned in resource recovery plants to create energy, amounting to about 5 percent of the city's post-conservation energy needs.

Conservation Creates Jobs

Such a conservation effort would create an estimated 8500 years of new work. This is equivalent to seven years work for the entire energy related contractor work force of the District. Five percent of those on the unemployment rolls could find work for seven years.

Solar energy, depending on the technology used, can generate between 30 and 50 percent of the total energy required, including that used by the federal government and by the transportation sector. The District has several advantages for solar conversion: a city height limitation on buildings considerably reduces shadow effects and makes solar collection, at least for hot water heating, feasible even in office buildings; most of the buildings in the denser portions of the District have flat rooftops. The estimate of 30 to 50 percent solar, however, assumes that all rooftop space is covered with solar technologies optimally titled for solar conversion. So even though this estimate does not assume the use of sides of buildings, open space, parking lots or streets, it might be considered an outside estimate.

Cogeneration Potential

Energy self-reliance could also be defined as reducing the outflow of energy related dollars. In this sense, on-site cogeneration facilities*, even though they use fossil fuels, could reduce energy consumption by as much as 15 to 20 percent and could be owned and operated by businesses or neighborhoods, thus recycling energy payments. In the peripheral neighborhoods, where cogeneration would be less economical because of the long distances between buildings, solar could generate sufficient energy to meet all building requirements, plus enough remaining to power a family electric vehicle. In denser downtown residences or commercial areas, where solar could generate only a small portion of overall energy needs, the density itself makes cogeneration more economical.

*An article on cogeneration begins on page 3 of this issue.

What steps can a local government take to realize this local energy potential? A number of legislative and financial mechanisms are already in operation in various parts of the country which can be adapted to the needs of the District. A solar tax credit, like those issued in California and elsewhere, would reduce the payback period for solar systems and make them economical for more individual households*. The city could offer long-term loans so that monthly payments would be lowered. The city could also improve the economics of solar by purchasing solar systems in bulk, as has been done by the Tennessee Valley Authority, forming cooperatives for this purpose. This would lower the price of installed systems to below $2000, and reduce the payback period to approximately seven years.

The city and its local utility could develop a pricing mechanism that would encourage the use of solar energy by developing methods for solar to displace the need for future peaking-capacity. A large backup storage tank which can only be linked to off-peak electricity could permit the resident to take advantage of the low costs of off-peak power, and in addition, could save the utility from the necessity to add peaking capacity. The savings could be split between the residents and the utility in rate-structure mechanisms.

The city can also use federal funds as a leverage for comprehensive energy programming. For example, Washington DC will receive $32 million in fiscal year 1979 for Community Development Block Grants. Cambridge, Massachusetts has used some of its CDBG funds to provide rebates to people who rehabilitate their homes, depending on income levels. Dayton, Ohio has a CDBG funded revolving-loan fund for conservation efforts. A new regulation which took effect in January 1978 permits a city to borrow up to three years of CDBG money for approved investments. These must be repaid within 6 years, and although not originally designed for energy loans, they appear to be quite feasible.

Energy self-reliance can be an important motivating theme for the city of Washington. The transformation of its buildings and residences into producers of energy—not merely consumers—is an exciting, powerful, and realistic concept.

The best argument for developing an awareness of, and demonstration of, community-based energy systems, is that they can build self-confidence and a renewed sense of citizenship and participation. Not only would the process familiarize citizens with one of the more important issues of our times, but it can prove to be an important educational and experiential base for their work in other planning areas. Too often, neighborhoods still become involved in planning efforts only after the fact, in response to a city initiative or plans of a private developer. Most of these decisions relate to zoning and land-use planning, which often cause neighborhoods to react in a defensive manner.

Nowhere is the tension between private economics and social economics more apparent than in the "economics" of solar energy.

Beyond Energy Planning

In the process, the concepts mastered can be transferred to other planning and policy efforts. The concepts of off-peak and peak energy, of the individual's actions and their impact on total systems costs of the trade-off between reliability and cost, of economies of scale in energy generation and storage, of the different definitions of "efficiency" and "economics" — these are all concepts that can be transferred to almost any planning process. Transportation planning, air pollution planning and medical facility planning rely on similar concepts.

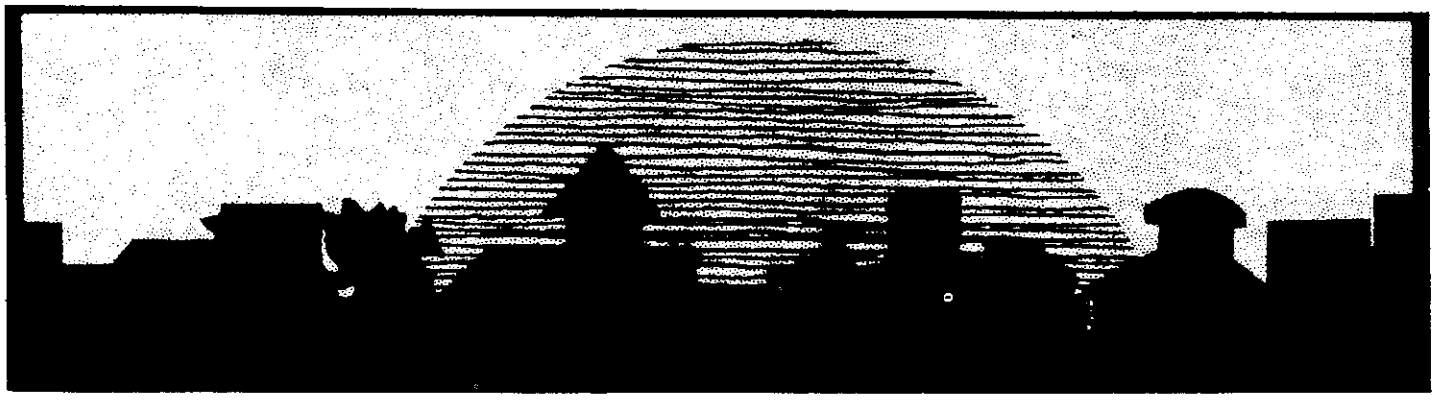
By initating neighborhood-based energy planning, the city will be educating its citizens to deal with a host of planning issues. During this planning process, the people of Washington would not only evaluate the technical aspects of energy systems and their economics, but must also develop a set of ethical criteria upon which to base their evaluations. What is the objective of an energy system? Clearly it must be reliable and economical—but there may be other equally important values.

For example, what value do we place on the issue of scale? What value do we place on the issue of equity? How do we treat the most needy in our energy plans? What value do we place on the environment? On flexibility in the face of changing realities? Once the technical issues are mastered, these will become the focus of our pending public debate on energy systems.

—David Morris

*From an individual's perspective, solar systems are economical for only 4000 District families who live in homes with electric hot water systems, given the relative high cost of electricty compared to natural gas. This, however, could be significant in establishing an initial market. It is important for the city to encourage solar now, in order to demonstrate its utility, even though the economics of solar for individual homeowners is still marginal. We also need predictable measures for the interrelationship to backup systems and a work force with expertise in installing solar. With the deregulation of natural gas and possibly substantial increases in the price of fuel oil, solar will become economical for many more homeowners in the near future.

The 241-page preliminary report on planning for energy self-reliance in the District of Columbia is available from the Institute for $13.



Progress Reports

The Secret to Grassroots Fundraising

Can a local organization raise as much as $100,000 from individuals in its own community? The New Haven Food Coop has proved it can, if the organization is sound and fundraising strategies are meticulously planned.

After the 3000-member cooperative voted last November to move into a new building, it faced expansion costs upward of $200,000. A $96,000 grant from the Campaign for Human Development, earmarked for training additional staff, defrayed some of the capital needed. But the coop still had to come up with a substantial amount to cover the downpayment for a building once occupied by the Food Fair Chain. (The coop would have preferred to lease the building, but because Food Fair has declared bankruptcy and is selling off its assets to pay debts, the coop must buy the property outright. Food Fair and the coop are now negotiating a price.)

When the coop board and membership assessed its financial situation, it decided to launch an internal fundraising campaign. "We'd been thinking about and planning this expansion for two-and-a-half years," said board chairperson Gail Eierweiss, "and the members really wanted to do it. When we decided to borrow from members, a number of people put up on the spot."

The coop used its well maintained files of supporters and contacts to find potential lenders. One staff member allotted 15 hours a week for several weeks to the fundraising campaign. The letters sent and the phone calls which followed produced, Eierweiss said, an 80 percent return rate.

The predominantly low-income members lent the coop loans of $500 or more for six-month and one-year terms. The loans pay six percent interest, which Eierweiss admitted is far below market rate. The trade-off is that the members who loan to the coop are "preferred lenders." If the coop happened to go bankrupt, the member lenders would be paid back before anyone else.

The coop won't say exactly how much money it's raised from members, except that the amount is substantial. Any financial disclosures at this time, Eierweiss said, would tip the coop's hand in negotiations with Food Fair.

The old Food Fair building is two-and-a-half times the size of the coop's present location. When expansion is completed, the coop will be one of the largest in the country that requires all of its members to work at the store. The growth, however, is seen as inevitable for a store that intends to be the prime or sole source of food for family shoppers. "The fixed costs for this kind of operation mean we have to grow or decline," said Eierweiss, "we couldn't stand still."

Running the coop as a real business has been the key to the fundraising success. "We presented people with a workable plan first," said Eierweiss, "then we went out and worked for the financial support." For more information, contact: **New Haven Food Coop, 490 Greenwich Avenue, New Haven CT 06519.**

Non-Profit Housing

Mountain Housing, Inc., is a non-profit building corporation formed in 1969 to help meet the need for affordable housing in Dickenson County Virginia. In the past ten years, Mountain Housing has built 50 to 60 houses and rehabilitated approximately 300 more. Sixty percent of the families assisted are low-income.

The corporation got a financial start from the Office of Economic Opportunity (now Community Services Administration). OEO funds were used for office expenses and salaries. The houses are built or rehabilitated by Mountain Housing's own crew, and workers are paid with the proceeds made from the previous house. The corporation, run by an eleven-member board made up of local townspeople, is now entirely self-supporting.

Mountain Housing relies heavily on financing homes through the Farmer's Home Administration. According to director Wright Carter, there is no lack of buyers. If money were available, he says, he could sell 100 homes a year instead of the dozen or so he does now.

Carter, who have been with Mountain Housing from the start and is an experienced contractor, said the program's success rests on two principles: "steering clear of politics and good management."

For more information, contact: **Wright Carter, Mountain Housing, Route 3, Clintwood VA 24228.**

Women rehab East Harlem house

Four women ex-offenders are rebuilding a delapidated abandoned East Harlem, New York, house into a home in a project called "Building for Women." Sponsored by Project Green Hope, which provides women recently out of prison with work counseling, temporary housing, and work experience through an $80,000 CETA contract, the rehabilitation project will teach the women light construction work, weatherization techniques, and building management.

In addition to the CETA grant, Green Hope's "Building for Women" received a rehabilitation "sweat equity" loan from the city's Department of Housing Preservation and Development, construction loans from the Chemical Bank, technical assistance from the Urban Homesteading Assistance Board (UHAB), and a seed money loan from the Fund for the City of New York.

For more information contact: **Sr. Mary Nerney, Project Green Hope, 448 East 119 Street, New York NY 10035.**

—information from *City Limits*, November 1978

Turning Garbage Into Jobs

An ambitious plan to recycle 30 percent of the waste generated in the Grand Rapids, Michigan area could make this industrialized region a model for turning garbage into economic development. Not only would recycling go a long way toward solving disposal problems, it could become an important source for jobs and growth in local businesses.

The program is being developed by Kent County, an area with just over 400,000 people living in 35 different jurisdictions. About half of the county's population lives in the Grand Rapids metropolitan area.

A number of factors make the Grand Rapids area particularly suitable for a comprehensive recycling project. A considerable amount of recycling is already being done, and there is an unusual degree of support for increased recycling efforts among private business, government and community groups. The area also has a relatively stable and diverse manufacturing base—a key factor in developing markets for recycled goods.

Taking advantage of this potential, the Institute for Local Self-Reliance has developed several recycling alternatives for the county involving a variety of pick-up and processing methods. The plans are based on estimates of revenue produced by selling recycled material and show a break-even operation with approximately 70 percent commercial participation and 25 percent participation by residents. As participation increases and markets develop, the Institute estimates that the county could recycle up to 80 percent of its total waste stream.

If the proposal is approved by Kent County officials, detailed planning will be needed before operations can begin. Using funds from a number of state and federal sources, planners will gather data on everything from the composition of the county waste stream to the thickness required for plastic recycling bags. While the figures will be specific for the Grand Rapids area, the questions studied will provide a useful model for coordinated recycling efforts in other parts of the country.

Once the program is underway, Grand Rapids can begin to look at processing and final fabrication of recycled goods for local and regional markets. These "closed loop" systems include using newspaper to make cellulose insulation, turning mixed paper into egg cartons, detinning metal cans, and using glass cullet for glass blowing manufacturing. These operations already exist in isolated parts of the country. As a system, they would allow a local economy to tap the maximum value added on materials. Closed-loop systems also protect against erratic markets for recycled goods.

For more information on the Grand Rapids plan, contact: **Jeff Dauphin, West Michigan Environmental Action Council, 1324 Lake Drive SE, Grand Rapids MI 49506.**

Mesa Project, Santa Barbara

Hands-on energy in Evanston

The Ecology Center in Evanston, Illinois, does more than lecture on energy conservation and alternative sources; it has mobilized community residents to construct six-foot insulation walls, two flat plate solar collectors, and a 200-watt wind charged generator on the Ecology Center's building.

Epoch B, the title of the Center's project, educates people about conservation and alternative energy sources through its ambitious demonstration laboratory at the Center.

The Center has prepared a booklet explaining its project—*A Community Project In Alternative Energy*—which is available for $3.50. For further details, contact: **Evanston Energy Center, 2024 McCormick Boulevard, Evanston, IL 60201.**

Small-Scale In a Big Way

The Mesa Project in Santa Barbara, California has been teaching small-scale organic gardening techniques to scores of local residents. Now it is about to become one of the country's most comprehensive demonstration projects for appropriate technology.

The Community Environmental Council, an eight year-old conservation group, plans to expand the gardens at Mesa Project and add a $72,000 home and solar-garden center complex. The design will include solar heat and hot water systems, greenhouses, and waste recycling systems. The Council intends to use the 5.5 acre site as an educational and demonstration center. Skills in managing the systems will be taught, as well as social issues related to the use of appropriate technologies and larger applications of appropriate technology.

The Council recently finished costly preparation work, including an access road and underground lines for utilities. Now construction of the home, greenhouses and various systems can begin. The Council is hoping to raise enough money from individuals to demonstrate popular support for the project to foundations and businesses. For more information on the project contact: **CEC, 924 Anacapa Street, Suite B4, Santa Barbara CA 93101.**

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.

Progress Reports

Woodstock Dumps Sewers

Woodstock, New York has joined the growing list of communities rejecting costly central sewer systems in favor of small-scale alternatives and water conservation.

As they have in many communities, Woodstock's sewage problems have increased along with its population. Last fall the town held a referendum on a proposed sewage treatment plant, and at first, it looked like the plan would win easily. Town officials and private engineers hired to study the problem said sewer lines were the only possible solution.

Just before the vote, however, Bette Denich, a town environmental commissioner, stumbled across some amendments to the 1977 Federal Clean Water Act. These new regulations offer federal funds, under certain conditions, for up to 85 percent of the cost of alternatives to traditional sewage systems. Many of these alternatives, including septic tank maintenance programs and other work on private property, had up until now been ineligible for any federal reimbursement. As a result, heavily subsidized centralized systems and treatment plants have been built, even when simpler solutions would make much more sense.

Once they knew sewage alternatives were economically feasible, a group of Woodstock residents went to work convincing voters to turn down the sewer system proposal. It wasn't all that difficult. Sewage disposal was a real problem in only one of five Woodstock homes, so a sizeable majority had no self-interest in the project. And despite federal and state reimbursements for construction, homeowners would still be saddled with annual fees of at least $200, and, in some cases, $400 to $500. On election day, the sewer project was voted down three to one.

That left the residents backing alternatives with the job of developing a specific plan, something which has been much harder than winning the referendum. Although federal officials report that over 100 communities have, like Woodstock, expressed interest in funds for sewage treatment alternatives, no plans have been approved yet. Without any models, Woodstock is not sure what is possible and what isn't.

Town officials are now looking for engineers familiar with alternative designs to help them plan a system that will work.

For more information on the Woodstock alternatives, contact: **Bette Denich, 13 Tannery Brook Road, Woodstock NY 12498.**

* * *

A striking example of water conservation potential can be found in Elmhurst Illinois, a town of 50,000 people. Projections of water use indicated that a larger treatment plant would be needed in Elmhurst within a few years. So the town developed a plan to cut water consumption instead. It included a public education campaign, changes in rates that encouraged conservation and put more of the burden on large water users, and modifications in the town plumbing code requiring minimum water use in toilets, showers and sinks. All toilets, where possible, were retrofitted with displacement dams, paid for and distributed to residents by the city. As a result, Elmhurst cut water use an estimated 15 percent, increased existing sewage capacity by 4,800 people and saved itself an estimated $400,000 by not having to expand its treatment plant. A report on the program originally appeared in the January 1978 issue of *Innovations,* published by the Illinois Department of Local Government Affairs. A good summary of that report appears in the November issue of *Acorn,* **Governor's State University, Park Forest South, IL 60466.**

Recycling in East Harlem

The largest recycling project in New York City is about to get underway in East Harlem. Designers of the system estimate a potential haul of 190 tons per month of newsprint, glass, tin, steel and aluminum that could produce about $5000 a month.

Members of the East Harlem Council for Community Improvement, with training assistance from the Environmental Action Coalition and about $75,000 from the City of New York, designed the program and will run it themselves.

The recycling system will emphasize collection sites in schools, near restaurants, and apartment buildings.

The East Harlem school district, according to Council director Raoul Rodriguez, has already agreed to let the Council explain to East Harlem school children what recycling can mean for their neighborhood's environment and how they could help collect the trash. The Council has also met with community management and tenants' groups to arrange collections at apartment buildings, political offices, businesses and restaurants. The program will probably start with four or five local collection sites.

The garbage collected at the neighborhood sites will be brought to the central recycling center—built on a parking lot leased from the city—next to the Council's headquarters. At the central site, the garbage will be hand sorted, and higher grade materials will be sold to commercial users such as smelters and bottlers. The Council expects the higher grade recyclables to average about $35 a ton, and the lower grade about $18.

"Recycling is still considered a middle class activity," said Rodriguez. "People don't think that the poor are conscientious enough to sort out their garbage. But we think it's going to work. With the sanitation cuts (in the city's budget), people are aware of the filth around them. It's a new concept that can take hold, and then go beyond recycling."

For more information, write Raoul Rodriguez at: **East Harlem Council for Community Improvement, 1680 Lexington Avenue, New York NY 10019.**

Resources

Sharpening Your Investigative Tools:

In a recent issue of *Acorn*, a regional appropriate technology newsletter published in Illinois, Frank Popper complained of the lack of concern among A.T. groups for questions of power and ownership. Not enough attention is being given, he noted, to investigations of the power structure and power relationships that shape our neighborhoods, cities, and regions.

In the past ten years, a number of excellent guides to investigative research have become available. Here are a few of the best. You should become familiar with them all.

Dan Noyes

Raising Hell

Mother Jones, 607 Market Street, San Francisco CA, 1978. 32 pp. $2.25.

Raising Hell, is a superb guide to "the fine art of investigation," covers tactics for researching individuals, corporations, government and property. It is especially strong in pointing the reader to those sources that are available at large public libraries (some of which are noted at the end of this resource list) and in suggesting books that are essential reference works for investigative reporters. *Raising Hell* has the most complete bibliography of any investigative guide this staff has seen.

People Before Property

Midwest Academy, 600 W. Fullerton, Chicago IL, 60614 1972. 169 pp. $5.90.

Like its companion volume, *Open the Books,* this research guide was originally prepared and published by Urban Planning Aid. It is a thorough guide to real estate research, using specific case studies to help the reader understand the research the problems and the investigative solutions. It remains the investigative bible for tenant and housing organizations across the country.

Community Research and Publications Group,

Open the Books: How to Research a Corporation

Midwest Academy, 600 W. Fullerton, Chicago IL 60614, 1974. 100 pp. $4.40.

Originally published in 1974 by Urban Planning Aid in Boston, this is a basic guide to researching a corporation. Included are sections on: researching a multinational corporation's overseas investments; determining who owns and controls a corporation; researching a large corporation's local subsidiary; researching a real estate company; and researching a small, non-real estate company. Each section is illustrated with step-by-step case histories of research on actual corporations. The focus is on multinationals, but many of the suggestions are also helpful in gathering information on smaller firms. And the final chapter on how to read financial statements is quite useful.

William Batko

How to Research Your Local Bank (or Savings and Loan)

Institute for Local Self-Reliance, Washington DC, 1976. 32 pp. $2.00.

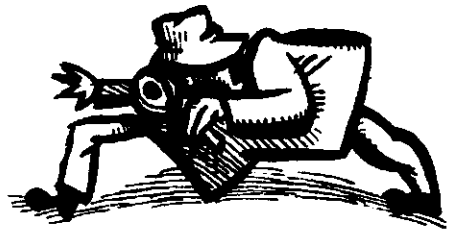
This Institute publication is an introduction to bank research, useful for groups interested in investigating redlining and other bank practices. Using bank financial statements from the South Shore National Bank as examples, the booklet explains bank terminology and outlines what kind of information is available from financial institutions and how that information can be useful to community investigators.

Barry Greever

Tactical Investigations for People's Struggles

The Youth Project, Washington DC, 1976. 16 pp. $.25

This short pamphlet is an introduction to investigative resources. Greever, an organizer with years of research experience, provides a theoretical basis for investigative work, emphasizing that researchers should consider their work as "political and economic intelligence," not simply as "research." Greever's point is that intelligence is research done in anticipation of action; it is not "knowledge for knowledge's sake."



Federal Documents

Researchers should be familiar with several federal information sources. Three of the most useful, all of which are mentioned in *Raising Hell,* are: *US Government Manual,* ($6.50) *A Citizen's Guide on How to Use the Freedom of Information Act* ($2.00), and *Directory of Companies Required to File Annual Reports* ($4.75) available from the Superintendent of Documents, US Government Printing Office, Washington DC 20402. The *Manual,* updated annually, is the official organization handbook of the federal government, with detailed information on personnel, publications and programs for most agencies. The *Citizen's Guide* is useful for people and groups who must resort to using their rights under the Freedom of Information Act in order to get governmental information to which they are entitled. And the *Directory of Companies* will tell you which companies must file their annual reports with the Securities and Exchange Commission.

The Public Library

The library contains a treasure trove of helpful information. Starting with the many shelves of out-of-city phone books and the various *Who's Who* guides, a good researcher will be able to find much ammunition at the public library. Here are a few important titles: Klein's *Guide to American Directories,* a listing of over 5000 major business directories in the US; *Polk's City Directory,* which, for many cities, lists individuals' occupation and home or business ownership; *Martindale and Hubbell Law Directory,* which lists lawyers by states, cities and firms; and two books that reference librarians swear by—*Finding Facts* and *Finding Facts Fast,* published by William Morrow and Company in New York.

Decentralizing electric energy systems

(Continued from page 3)

Some have argued that small power plants, which can come on-line quickly, provide flexibility to match demand and supply most effectively. Others have argued that energy systems should be increasingly matched to the end users' requirements, and that this could be accomplished best by moving the generating units closer to the places where energy is used.

The increasing attractiveness of cogeneration has led to some fascinating interrelationships between utilities and on-site producers.

While these theoretical debates go on, hundreds of commercial and industrial facilities have begun moving into the decentralized energy generation era, using cogeneration plants. Cogeneration is the name given to energy systems which produce heat and electricity. This can be done in two ways. Excess heat produced by industrial processes can be captured and converted to electricity; or heat normally wasted in the process of generating electricity can be converted for useful applications.

The nation's utilities, for the most part, have refused to adjust to new realities. They see a potentially nasty dynamic unfolding. Residents in Washington DC, for example, currently purchase all their electricity from the Potomac Electric Power Company (PEPCO), primarily from power plants located outside the District. PEPCO, in turn, is linked into the regional power grid, sellings its excess and using the grid as a backup. Utilities recognize that decentralized power systems would transform them into the same relationship to the small power producer as the regional power pool is now to them. Even worse, these small systems could become autonomous, with their own nearby backup systems. As a result, many utilities have not only refused to encourage cogeneration facilities, they have often either refused to purchase the excess electricity or charged very high prices for backup power. In most cases, this makes cogeneration uneconomical.

Ironically, the refusal of utilities to pay a reasonable price to small producers of energy has made totally independent systems more economically attractive. Even though a stand-alone power producer needs to develop excess capacity and multiple units, disconnection saves the *entire* utility electric bill, including fuel charges, energy charges and capacity charges. One Massachusetts study lamented the fact that utilities, by being shortsighted, were, in fact, encouraging uncoupling.

Recently, however, the increasing attractiveness of cogeneration has led to some fascinating interrelationships between utilities and on-site producers. For example, some utilities are beginning to form partnerships with industrial users. The publically owned Eugene Water and Electric Board contracted the Weyerhauser timber company to install, own and operate a turbine generator on leased land within a Weyerhauser mill site. The utility also paid for certain modifications to the existing boiler facilities. The utility buys excess heat generated in the timber mill, thereby providing an important cash flow for Weyerhauser, and low-cost energy generation capacity for the utility. In Pampa, Texas, the Celanese Corporation will install coal-fired high-pressure boilers to steam power a turbine generator constructed on the plant grounds by Southwestern Public Service Corp. The electricity will go into the utility's distribution system, and the steam will go back to Celanese. The cooperative project will mean lower energy costs for both companies.

Other relationships have not gone so well, and point to potential problems in developing cogeneration. In Boston, a consortium of twelve medical, educational and charitable institutions, led by Harvard University, could not work out an agreement for a cogenerating plant with Boston Edison. As a result, the consortium plans to build its own facility, but has been stalled by nearby residents who object on the grounds of increased pollution from the new plant.

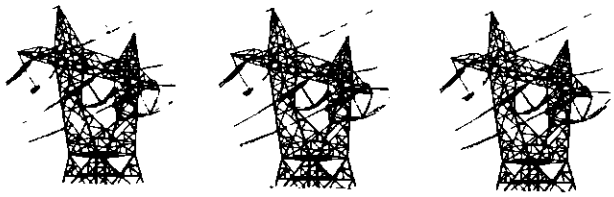
In Manhattan, a 50-year old office building has uncoupled from Consolidated Edison. The utility says that one third of Manhattan's office buildings could do the same and save money, reducing by 5 percent the overall power demands on Con Ed and necessitating a three percent overall rate increase to make up for lost revenues.

Energy Act Boosts Cogeneration

In the midst of this confusion, complicated by law suits and changing organizational structures, the National Energy Act of 1978 became law. It requires utilities to provide backup services to small energy producers and to pay fair prices for decentralized energy. An extra ten percent investment tax credit is provided for cogeneration facilities. The prohibition against the use of natural gas or petroleum for new boilers provides for an exemption for cogeneration facilities. The Act also requires the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission to study the reliability of power production versus centralized generation.

The very rationale for centralized electric generation at the turn of the century has become a reason for decentralization now.

As cogeneration becomes more economically attractive, the scale at which the units can be effectively used may decline as well. One simulated study was done in 1977 of a 50-house neighborhood in Ames, Iowa. The average residence was 1200 square feet. The power plant was located in the center of the block. Using a diesel generator, the total cost of the system, including piping, was about $8,500 per dwelling. The estimated annual fuel savings were more than fifteen percent. The total energy system was slightly less expensive to



the customer when compared to the customer using only electricity.

System Powers Four Homes

There are new concepts and new technologies which might lower economies of scale still further. The Total Energy Module System of FIAT Motors is a converted 124 auto engine which will provide heat and electricity for four houses. It is not marketed as a stand-alone system, but there are some who are trying to modify it so that, with adequate storage capacity, it can become a very small cogenerating total energy system. It is so heavily insulated against noise that its sellers say it is no more noisy than a gas furnace.

Although cogeneration uses a fossil fuel base, there are many who are viewing it as a possible transitional technology until total solar energy systems become economical. Solar energy systems, using cogeneration facilities as backup, appear promising. The legal and organizational structures that are being developed as a result of the proliferation of on-site cogeneration facilities will be useful in defining the relationship of solar energy systems to larger backup facilities.

We have come full circle. The very rationale for centralized electric generation at the turn of the century has become a reason for decentralization now. The long lead times, uncertain future demand projections, reliability factors of a large number of small power producers, and the linking of end-use consumption to energy generation make decentralized energy systems quite feasible. The antiquated rate-making structures of utility companies are undergoing rapid changes. These changes and the national interest will encourage small power producers linked into utility systems as backup.

Nothing occurs overnight, and even with the rapidity of these changes, we will find an enormous diversity of rate structures, organizational abilities, and regulatory patterns governing decentalized energy generation. The transfer of information related to such developments, so that practical experience can be analyzed and built upon, is extremely important as we enter a new era of energy generation.

—David Morris

This article is an abbreviated version of a chapter in an upcoming book tentatively titled *Decentralizing Electric Production,* edited by Howard Brown and Tom Stumolo, to be published by Yale University Press in the fall, 1979.

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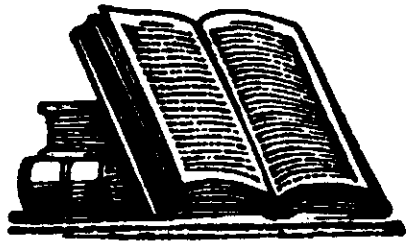
Notes

WASTE WATCH is a new national organization specializing in waste disposal and hazardous waste problems, as well as national waste policy. It is a Washington DC-based network of over 800 citizens in 41 states, Canada and Mexico who are concerned with waste issues. For details, contact: **Technical Information Project, 1346 Connecticut Avenue, NW, Suite 217, Washington DC 20036.**

* * *

A variety of worthwhile periodicals have surfaced recently. *In Business* features commercial opportunities for community groups and individuals emphasizing low-technology and a sound environment (no fried chicken franchises). Published by Jerome Goldstein (formerly of Rodale Press), *In Business* promises a rare commodity: detailed advice on financing, marketing and managing small businesses. Subscriptions to this bi-monthly are $10. Write to: **In Business, Box 323, Emmaus PA 18049.** *The Grants Newsletter* publishes funding sources for low-technology, community-based waste treatment, energy and food projects in California. A description of each project, who's eligible, how much money is available and the source—public or private—are listed. Every state should have one of these newsletters. For a sample copy, write: **California Office of Appropriate Technology, 1530 10th Street, Sacramento CA 95814.** *Alternate Currents* covers appropriate technology projects in New York City. It's free to non-profit organizations. Write to: **Alternate Currents, 156 Fifth Avenue, Room 619, New York NY 10010.** *Groundswell,* subtitled *A Resource Journal for Energy Activists,* concentrates on anti-nuclear information and is already doing just about the best job of any publication on this subject. Subscriptions to this monthly are $12. Write to: **Nuclear Information and Resource Service, 1536 16th Street NW, Washington DC 20036.** Another new energy publication, *Readers Energy Media Service,* is directed primarily at newspaper and newsletter editors. For subscription information, write: **REMS, Box 6, Turners Fall MA 01376.** A fledgling newsletter mentioned in our last issue, *City Farmer,* has already changed its address. The new one is: **Number 801, 318 Homer Street, Vancouver BC V6B 2V3.**

Off the Shelf



Reviews by Richard Kazis

Greg Speeter

Power: A Repossession Manual

Citizen Involvement Training Project, 138 Hasbrouck, University of Massachusetts, Amherst MA, 1978. 121 pp. $5.00.

When I first glanced at the title and the somewhat slick layout of this book, subtitled "organizing strategies for citizens," I was skeptical. What could an overview manual provide in the way of useful information? But, as I read through the book, I was impressed by the clarity of the presentation and by the amount of helpful material that could be gleaned from it. The strength of this manual is the author's ability to lead the reader through the various decisions organizers must make in dealing with a specific community problem. The manual is a self-learning workbook, helping the reader to break a problem into smaller pieces and then develop a strategy for each piece, such as deciding on an issue, developing structure and leadership and deciding on campaign strategies. The author also does a good job of differentiating among various organizing styles and the implications of each.

Rem Koolhaas

Delirious New York

Oxford University Press, New York NY 1978. 263 pages. $35.00.

A strange yet wonderful book, *Delirious New York* is part coffee-table oddity, part serious "retroactive manifesto for Manhattan." Written by an architect, this book argues for the visual excitement and "culture of congestion" that is New York.

Both the original illustrations and the archival designs and photographs will thrill any New York-lover. And the text, written in the rapid-fire machine gun style of artistic manifestos, carries one along. But, as in most architectural treatises, one nagging question persists. Where are the people? All we see are buildings, plans, plazas and designs. If this is the culture of congestion, then where are the people who contribute to and define that culture. Koolhaas extols the man-made environment—and then ignores those who use and survive in that environment.

Paul Boyer

Urban Masses and Moral Order in America

Harvard University Press, Cambridge MA, 1978. 387 pp. $18.50.

Industrialization and urbanization go hand in hand, bringing with them a fundamental transformation in the life of a nation. The traditional rural values and means of social control give way under new conditions of anonymous, high-density urban living and strict industrial regimen. In America, this transition began in earnest in the Jacksonian era; and, for over a century thereafter, popular fears and concern focused on the city, on the ever-present danger of urban chaos and anarchy replacing the time-honored cohesive moral order of the village. The activities of reformers, from the Jacksonians through the Progressives, were aimed at encouraging forms of moral control that would preserve village life in an urban setting. Although by the 1920's and 1930's, the diversity and liveliness of the city were recognized as positive features, the old attitude dies hard. Contemporary films like *Taxi Driver* and *Hardcore* continue the portrayal of the city as moral battleground.

In this book, Paul Boyer provides a detailed history of 100 years of urban moral control efforts, from evangelicism in the 1820's through the creation of the YMCA and similar organizations to the two-pronged attack of early 1900's reformers; the one an attempt to crack down on moral outrages like the saloon and the brothel, the other an attempt to create positive environments for the development of the moral sense of the urban masses. Boyer's account is thorough, but remains readable throughout. A good background and companion piece to *The Slum and the Ghetto,* reviewed in *Self-Reliance* #15.

Paul Wellstone

How the Rural Poor Got Power

University of Massachusetts Press, Amherst MA, 1978. 240 pp. $12.50.

Paul Wellstone, a professor of political science at Carleton College in Minnesota, was actively engaged in the early 1970's in founding the Organization for a Better Rice County (OBRC), a grassroots coalition of rural poor in southern Minnesota. This book is a narrative of his experience: the growth of the organization, its leadership, its campaigns and their outcomes, its problems. The book is full of interesting interviews with and statements by members and leaders of OBRC. The final chapter is a helpful discussion of the issue of leadership and the inevitable difficulties involved in simultaneously trying to build leadership among the members and an organization that has momentum and wins victories. Few histories or case studies of poor people's movements have been written; yet, these studies are critically important. For people who have not themselves been organizers, these narratives and critiques are the only way to become exposed to and to assimilate the lessons of organizing being learned every day in rural and urban communities across America.

Goldian VandenBroeck (editor)

Less is More: The Art of Voluntary Poverty

Harper Colophon Books, New York NY 1978. 316 pp. $4.95.

This is a good example of a bad book. It makes clear the *danger* of pushing "voluntary simplicity" without maintaining a perspective on the causes of inequality and poverty. A collection of moralistic quotations on the folly of wealth and accumulation and the virtues of living lightly, *Less is More* leads one to believe that simply by changing your own life you can change the world. And, to the editor, changing your life means giving up material needs and wants ("material simplicity, visionary abundance"). That might be fine for those who already *have*; but try to tell people who have never had a color television that not only don't they need one, they shouldn't waste their time watching black and white television either. It's an argument that most poor people would understandably resent.

Notes

Insurance redlining—the refusal to provide property insurance based on the age or location of a property—will be the subject of a conference organized by the National Training and Information Center, the country's leading organization on the insurance redlining issue. *Self-Reliance* readers may not learn about the conference, beginning March 22 in Chicago, in time to attend. But proceedings will be available afterward from NTIC. Those interested in insurance redlining, discussed in *Self-Reliance #17,* should also know about *Profits vs. Policyholders,* an 86-page booklet on the subject prepared by NTIC. Copies are $4 for individuals and non-profit organizations and $5 for profit groups. Contact: **NTIC, 1123 W. Washington Boulevard, Chicago IL 60607.**

Many local energy projects have gotten a boost from the Comprehensive Employment Training Act (CETA), which can provide salaried staff for ventures that would otherwise not be feasible. A booklet explaining how CETA funds can be used for neighborhood energy audits, weatherization programs, oil burner servicing, and wood and solar energy projects has been produced by the Massachusetts Department of Manpower Development. Some of this information is specific to Massachusetts, but most of it would be helpful to community and local government groups anywhere. For a free copy, contact: **State Employment and Training Council, Public Service Employment Unit, Hurley Building, Fourth Floor, Boston MA 02114.**

Two worthwhile reports on alternative waste treatment methods were released this fall by the Government Accounting Office. *Community-Managed Septic Systems—A Viable Alternative to Sewage Treatment Plants,* (28 pp.) documents the federal bias towards central waste treatment facilities and shows how community-managed septic systems not only encourage local control but save money. *Sewage Sludge—How Do We Cope With It]* (38 pp.) provides a good overview of processing methods that turn sludge into a resource. Single copies of both reports are available for free from: **GAO, Distribution Section, Room 1518, 441 G Street NW, Washington DC 20548.**

Should school children in New Haven Connecticut eat local food or frozen pack lunches imported from Virginia? That is a question a group of parents and school administrators in New Haven have studied since last August. The study began when parents complained that their children were not eating the prepared lunches, purchased in bulk from Morton's a national distributer of institutional foods. Parents said the food is unappetizing and questioned its nutritional value. Some school administrators were sympathetic (they had to admit that kids dumped a considerable amount of food in the garbage) but claimed that the current food system was cheaper. Parents challenged school administrators to prove that claim, however, and now a study shows it isn't true. Preparing food right in the school kitchens would cost slightly less than buying from Morton's, according to the study, and would also create extra jobs for local residents. Armed with the facts, parents successfully pushed the New Haven School Board to drop the Morton's contract and adopt a system for locally prepared school lunches. For more information on the New Haven study, contact: **Majorie Holgate, 200 Orange Street, New Haven CT 06510.**

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The Institute for Local Self-Reliance
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