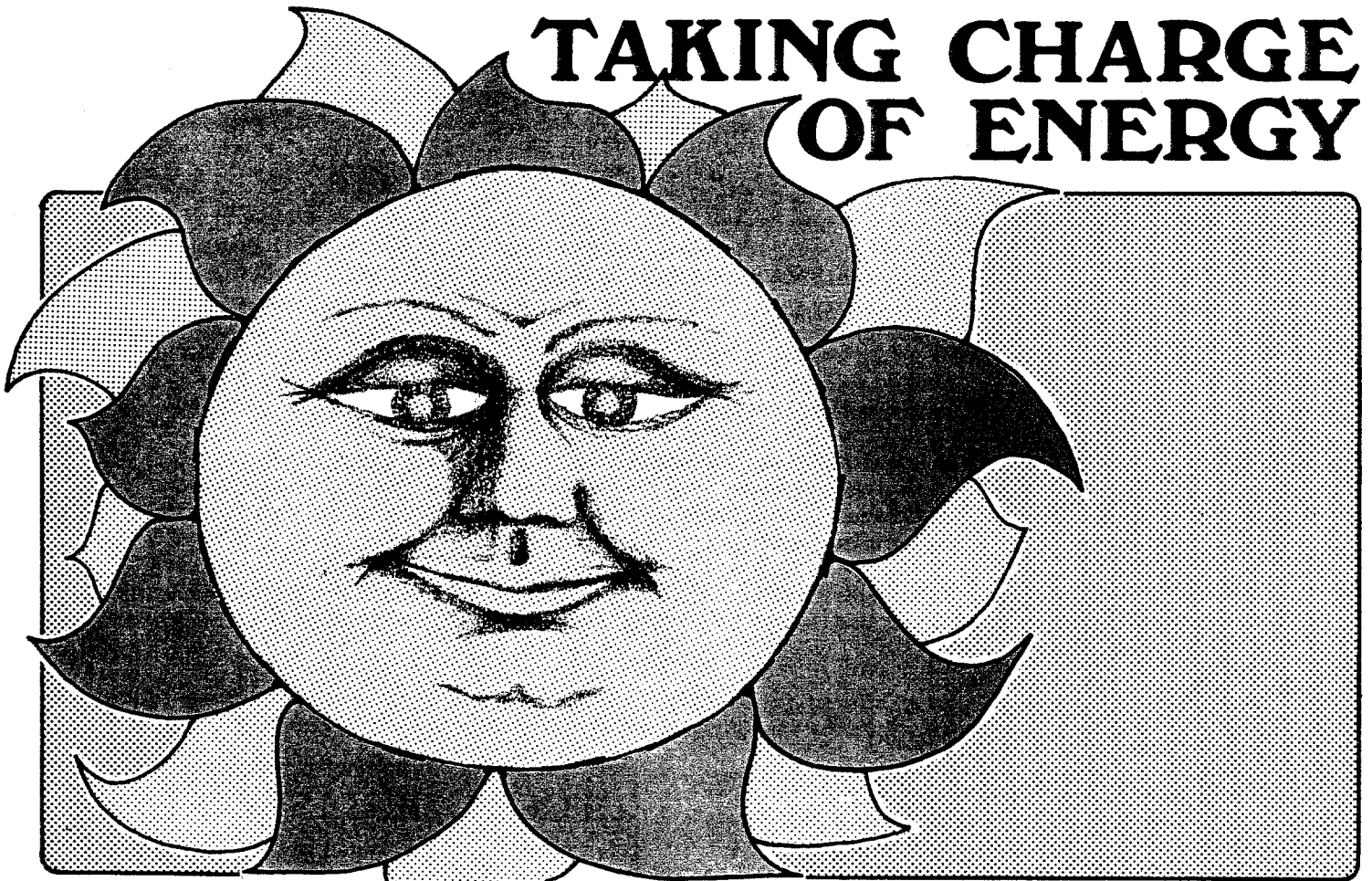

commonground

Winter-Spring, 1976

No. 7

\$1.00

TAKING CHARGE OF ENERGY



**A PEOPLE'S GUIDE TO HOME INSULATION
ALTERNATIVE ENERGY & WHO'S DOING IT**

PLUS: Cabbies' Strike · Neighborhoods & Pornography
General Mills & Stevens Sq. · Grassroots Culture '30's-'70's
Hospital Lay-Offs · Original Art, Poetry, Reviews & More!

taking charge

Is the way we obtain energy going to continue to make us more powerless? Will we be sold the sun's energy in brightly-wrapped packages, with multi-million dollar advertising? Will corporations reap profits by capturing sun rights, as they have with oil rights? Will there be a "sun depletion allowance?" Will nations fight wars over bright desert areas?

Or, will we find a way to develop energy alternatives in a way which empowers us? Will people learn the technology themselves instead of hiring expensive specialists to take care of energy for them? Will we find an ecologically sound way to heat our buildings and our homes? Will communities assert control over their utilities?

If we learn about energy now, we will be able to answer these questions ourselves. "Taking Charge of Energy" is dedicated to introducing Twin City neighbors to the tools and resources that can help us to work together to conserve energy and assert control.

AND MORE: While some of us were learning about energy, many other folks are active in other struggles--to assume more power at work (p. 3, p. 8), to stay on top of neighborhood redevelopment (p. 15), to learn ways culture can be used to help us act together (p. 51), and to gain a voice over pornography in our neighborhoods (p. 56). While our stories are very different, all are important in asserting control.

artwork

ARTISTS IN THIS ISSUE: Nancy Arhelger (p. 19); Lynn Hinkle (cover); Becky LaMothe (back cover); Chuck Logan (p. 15); Sara Porter (p. 60); Seitu (pp 32-33, 42,43); and Marcelle Williams (p. 39).

POETS IN THIS ISSUE: Four new poets are with us, as well as a new editor. JIM DOCHNIAK has become our poetry editor. JIM LENFESTEY ("Energy Saving," p. 21) and LARRY WILLIAMS ("America in Need," p. 7) are introduced on pages 40 and 7, respectively. Other new faces:

MARGARET HASSE moved from California to the Twin Cities two years ago and found work conducting writing workshops in the juvenile institutions and adult prison facilities. The "joint" in her poem is Stillwater State Prison. She is currently living in North Minneapolis and employed as a poet for the Minnesota Poets in the Schools project.

ROY McBRIDE has been a dishwasher, cook, laborer, stockboy, mailclerk, school counselor, telephone operator, minister, and surveyor. He's now writer in residence for the Pillsbury-Waite Cultural Arts Center.

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letters to the editors

Dear Common Ground:

This is to tell you how much I liked the poetry reading on Dec. 5, and also to say a couple of other things.

I had heard some unsavory things about Common Ground people--that you want poets to be "mouthpieces" for a certain political point of view. I went to the reading because several of the poets were friends of mine. I was pretty skeptical. Experience and history should have taught us that any attempt to control artistic communication generally leads to disaster, whether the means of control be by direct force as in Russia, or by the less direct method of economic strangulation as in the United States. Both art and artists usually suffer in such situations. A lot of cheap propaganda is turned out, high in emotional appeal and low in deep quality, smacking of Madison Avenue techniques. It doesn't matter if the cause is a good one. The product is cheap.

I was pretty skeptical. And I have to say now that I was quite pleased with the reading. I enjoyed it very much.

I had been to the Great Firehouse Poetry Reading, with Robert Bly and a dozen local poets, in November. Supposedly the greatest poetry event in this area in the last couple of years.

The reading sponsored by Common Ground was superior in every respect. The poems were better, the performers were more sensitive to their audience, the performance wasn't dominated by one or two personalities, it was skillfully planned and executed. My only criticism of the reading is that it was a bit too long. The maximum should have been about two hours. It seemed more like 2 and a half.

--Lyle Daggett
Minneapolis

Lyle,

You're right, it was entirely too long. We hope to run the event again in other neighborhoods, and we'll be sure to keep it down to a manageable length.

We're glad to have your reactions. We'd hoped we would hear more--especially from

folks who thought we should have done it differently.

We hope it is clear from the reading that we are not looking for people to mouth a certain political line. We do believe that art should be more accessible to all of us, and not just the professionals. We also seek to encourage poets and artists to write and create artwork that reflects the actual lives of common people, rather than art which will sell in the marketplace. We do think that's a political statement, but we don't try to force other people to conform to our ideas in their artwork.

--Common Ground

To the Editor of Common Ground:

It is good to see a new interest in Minnesota's populist culture, Steven Trimble's article, "Grassroots Activism", as a case in point.

While I am enthusiastic about Trimble's observations in general, I do wish to dissent with his treatment of Ignatius Donnelly who did foresee the destruction of capitalism-industrialism in an apocalyptic vision of total destruction of society almost foretelling the kind of atomic annihilation envisaged by some modern observers. However, Donnelly was not a believer in any form of socialism, such as a cooperative commonwealth as Trimble suggests. Donnelly was firmly committed to a vision of agrarian-capitalism as his ideal for the good life. In the last chapter of Caesar's Column, the main character, Gabriel Weltstein, returns to Uganda, Africa where this kind of an agrarian "paradise" presumably existed. In real life, Donnelly did not work with Debs and others who were organizing the Social Democratic Party at the time of Donnelly's death. The "Sage of Ninninger" concerned himself with negative attacks upon industrial-capitalism, often with rhetoric about "money-power" with overt anti-semitism included. Like a lot of other Americans, Donnelly could bitch about concentration of wealth and political power, but he lacked positive alternatives.

--Jim Youngdale
Minneapolis

Cabbies' Strike: Drivers' New Union Works for Them



Strikers and supporters rally at Minneapolis City Hall January 23,

Photo by Ken Meter.

by Larry Wieland

At 5 AM on Friday, December 26th, cab drivers, limosine drivers, dispatchers, order-takers, and other inside workers struck the Minneapolis Yellow, Yellow Suburban, and Blue and White Cab companies, climaxing an organizing drive for better wages, working conditions and effective union representation that began last February.

Wages and working conditions for cab drivers have deteriorated for many years. Drivers receive a percentage, called a commission, of the receipts they turn in each shift. Earnings from commissions have always been low, but in the past business was good and tips were generous, and a decent living could be made. With the expansion of mass transit, increasing fares, and recession, however, business has declined and tips have nearly disappeared.

Minneapolis cab drivers were represented for many years by the Teamsters. Cabbies originally won union representation in 1934 after a prolonged strike. Like the truck drivers' 574, the cab drivers eventually affiliated with the Teamsters' 544, which although purged of many of 574's radical leadership, retained some of 574's militant posture. Cab drivers have been represented by Teamsters Local #978, and then #792.

The Teamsters, however, became more interested in large salaries and protecting their pension funds than in representing their members. Over the last decade, they have signed a series of poor contracts, and hardly pursued grievances. The Teamsters had over the years become top-heavy and bureaucratic.

With no grievance procedure, the companies

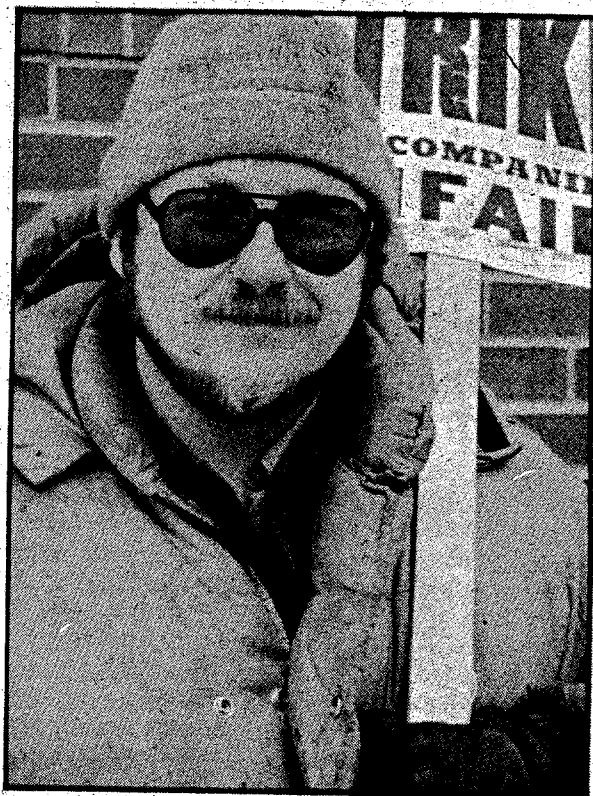
"Drivers grumbled for months, but nearly everyone felt helpless to challenge both the union and the companies."

have thrived on a high turnover, at least 50% each year. Each company has a long list of work rules that are arbitrarily enforced against "troublemakers," and anyone challenging the companies can be fired for not wearing a company hat, doing more than 55 miles per hour on the freeway, or being "discourteous" to a drunken passenger.

In the summer of 1974, resentment against the Teamsters intensified when the union reached a deal with the companies that was never submitted to the membership for ratification. The companies used rising gasoline prices as a pretext to increase the starting rate on the meter from 65¢ to 75¢, and the mileage charge from 45¢ to 50¢ per mile. The Teamsters agreed to allow the

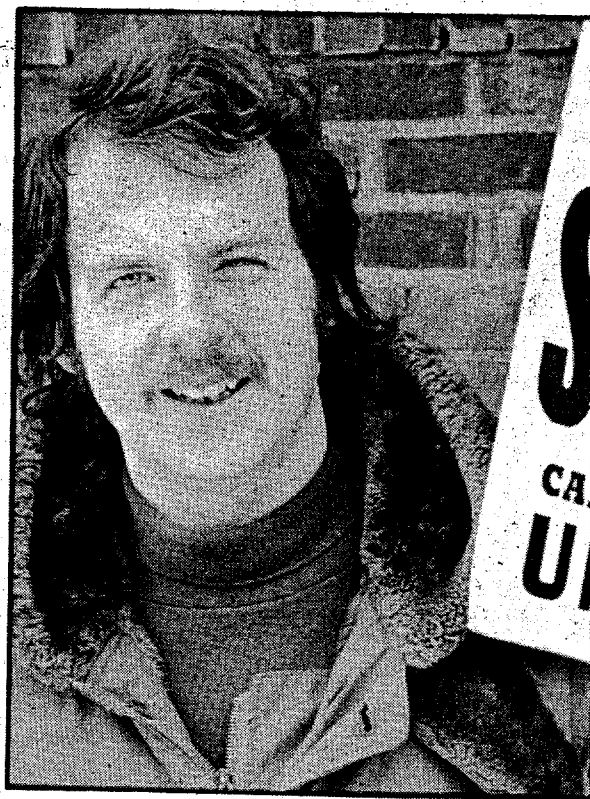
companies to keep the entire 10¢ increase on the starting rate without paying drivers their commission. In an angry meeting, the general membership forced a vote on the agreement, and it was unanimously defeated. The agreement was ultimately taken to arbitration, but it was upheld since the union had made a binding oral agreement.

Drivers grumbled for months, but nearly everyone felt helpless to challenge both the union and the companies. In February, 1975, however, a small group of drivers began to organize to see what could be done to bring about change. Meetings were organized, and about 50 drivers attended. Two main choices were discussed: to organize within the Teamsters to reform the local and elect new officers, or to attempt to or-



Michael Kopp: "I believe this company is unfair to drivers and will continue to be unless there is a strong union with a strong membership. As yet the company hasn't even talked with us. They're not negotiating."

Photos by Ken Meter



Walter Mills: "It's encouraging to see how people are turning out --it's a real grass roots, rank-and-file union. It's not run by the executive board like the Teamsters. I'm getting along all right, but other drivers are hurting more."

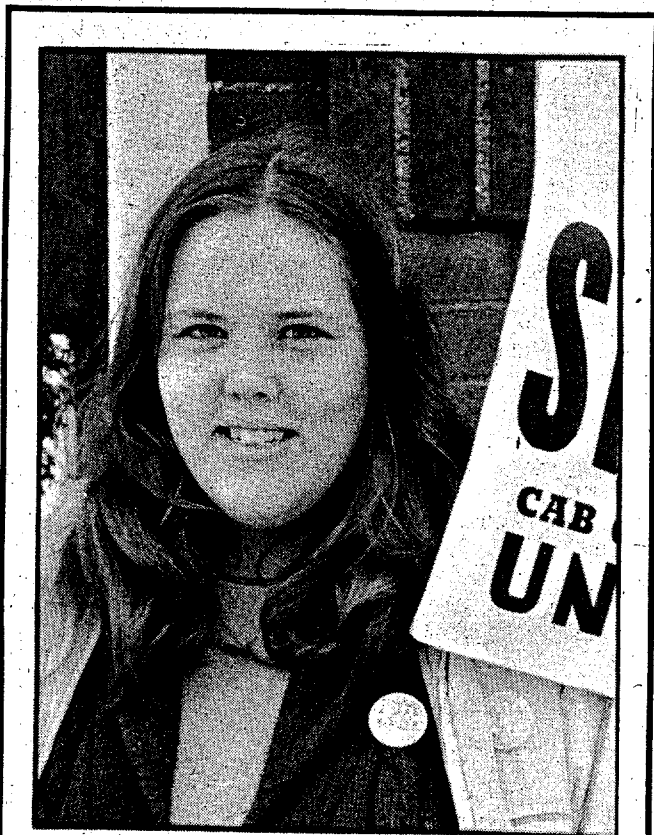
"The Teamsters counterattacked . . . adopting the traditional tactics of the companies of playing the older and younger drivers off against one another . . ."

ganize a completely new union. Ultimately, working within the Teamsters was rejected: a reform movement within the local had elected new officers once before about 5 years ago, and the international responded by throwing the local into trusteeship, and forcing it to merge into another, larger local, thus eliminating the threat. Cab drivers comprised only about 700 out of 2000 members in the local, the chances of organizing in the other shops in the local were slim, and a merger of the local into yet another, even larger local had already been rumored.

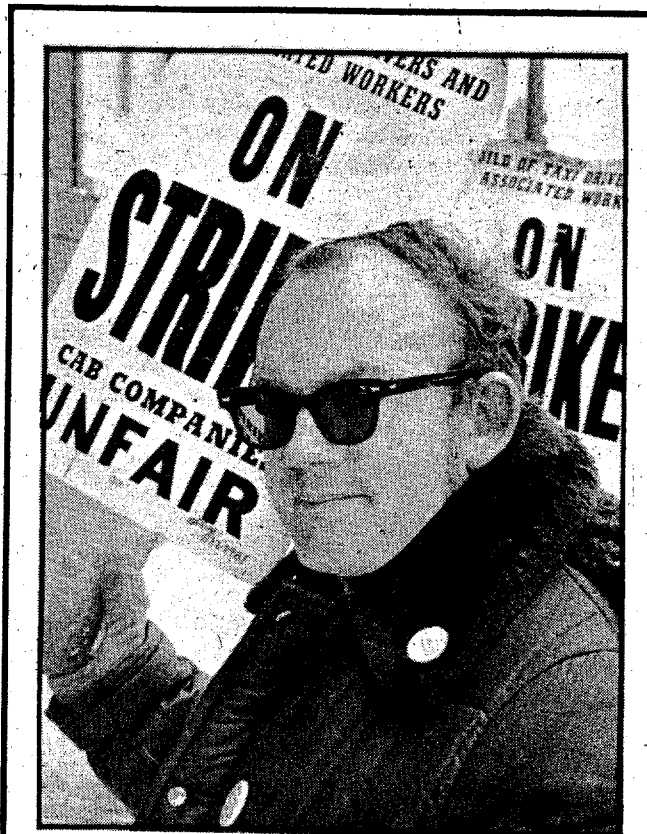
An organizing drive to gain a National Labor Relations Board election began. The Teamsters counterattacked, labelling the organizers young "dissident amateurs", thus

adopting the traditional tactics of the companies of playing the older and younger drivers off against one another, but the necessary number of petition cards to gain the election were easily obtained. The companies responded by stepping up harassment of union organizers, while at the same time claiming to the press that they were impartial, even claiming that they would prefer the new, independent union since it would be weak and have no support from the traditional labor movement.

On the election day, June 27, the new union appeared on the ballot as the Guild of Taxi Drivers and Associated Workers. Balloting took place in all three garages for most of the day. The count was held that evening at the offices of the NLRB.



Joy Peterson: "I've been here everyday since the 29th of December. I didn't get involved at first. But then I decided 'a union has to stick together.' Several who've driven 16-17 years have joined us. I'm trying to convince my dad (a dispatcher) to join."



Walter Coyle: "We all know what we're striking for. We're spending more time with each other now than when we were driving. If we can stay out three more weeks we can stay out indefinitely, because after 6 weeks you can change your lifestyle."

“... the Guild has demonstrated that an active, militant rank-and-file, rather than fat bureaucracies, bring about effective labor action.”

The results were 224 votes for the Guild, 165 votes for the Teamsters, and only 7 votes for no union.

The Teamsters filed a set of objections to the election, which managed to hold up certification of the Guild until August, when the objections were finally thrown out by the NLRB. Meanwhile, the companies refused to enter into contract negotiations until the Guild was certified. The time was used to elect officers for the union, set up an expanded steward system, and draw up a list of contract demands.

The Guild received certification on August 14, one day before the old contract with the Teamsters expired. The next day, with the expiration of the contract, the companies announced a 2% cut in commissions for new drivers, in violation of Federal Law that requires that no changes in wages and working conditions be made without first entering into negotiations with the union. Charges were filed with the NLRB, and an unfair labor practice complaint was issued.

For the next two months, the Guild attempted to begin contract negotiations with the companies, but the companies continually stalled and refused to provide information, resulting in new charges being filed with the NLRB. A session was finally held on September 25, but Jack Daly Jr., attorney for Yellow Cab and negotiator for the companies, spent ten minutes ranting and raving before the company representatives walked out. No more sessions were held for a month, and only after the Guild called in the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service.

A few more sessions were held, but the companies refused even to make a complete contract proposal, other than to propose that the commission cuts be made permanent, and that a cab leasing system be introduced. Under a leasing system, instead of receiving a percentage of receipts, a driver pays a flat amount to lease a cab per shift and then keeps all his receipts, but receives no pension and health and welfare benefits, must pay his own social security tax, and is ineligible for unemployment benefits and workman's compensation. Cab leasing is prohibited by the present city cab ordinance, and in mid-November, the companies had an amendment introduced to

permit leasing. The Guild packed a city council room with over 100 drivers when the amendment came up for a hearing, and the amendment was defeated.

Additional charges were filed with the NLRB for the companies refusal to bargain in good faith, and a complaint was issued on December 2. The next day, the membership of the Guild voted to authorize an unfair labor practice strike against the companies.

Faced with the strike vote, the companies finally made a complete contract proposal, which they labelled their final offer, but it still included the commission cuts and the leasing proposal, and only small increases in benefits and hourly wages for inside employees. On December 16, the membership voted 3-1 to reject the proposal, and a strike deadline of December 26 was established.

As of the writing of this article, the strike has already lasted five weeks, and there is no end in sight. 95% of the employees have honored the picket lines, and the companies are again refusing to negotiate. Picketing is taking place at all 3 garages 24 hours per day, and welfare and public support committees have been established.

As the strike progressed, more and more unions have voiced their support of the Guild, while community organizations and churches have pitched in to help the strikers and their families. In south Minneapolis, residents circulate throughout the community on Wednesdays gathering food for strikers.

The short history of the Guild has demonstrated that an active, militant rank and file, rather than fat bureaucracies, bring about effective labor action. Nevertheless, the strike promises to be lengthy, and any support, in food, money, or calls to your alderman would be appreciated. The Guild office is at 3005 Nicollet, telephone 827-2981.

Larry Wieland, one of the organizers of the Guild, is currently Recording Secretary, picket captain at Blue and White Cab Company, and a member of the Guild's negotiating team. A resident of South Minneapolis, Larry has been a cabbie for over three years.



America in Need

Wanting

two or three, hard hitting,

hard eyed young men,

must love money & be willing

& a mature couple,

beat out old bastards preferred,

to do seven days cleaning,

restaurants

&, of course,

directors, controlers, managers

& their assistants

& one guy with an interest in cows,

for the farm

--Larry Williams

Larry Williams is currently a cabbie for Red and White Cab Company. He was fired by Blue and White during last year's union negotiations. A south Minneapolis resident, he has been a cab driver for over five years.

Hospital Workers Speak Out: Speed-Ups Hurt Patients and Workers

Five U of M hospital workers talk openly about their work and involvement with AFSCME #1164.



Chris Anderson, Richard Flemmons, Betty Hawthorne discuss contract negotiations. Photo: KM

Interviewed by Lynn Hinkle

Lynn: What kind of work do you all do and how do you feel about your work?

Richard: My name is Richard Flemmons and I've worked six years in environmental services, you know, working as a custodian. The work itself, dealing with trash, mopping and so forth is not bad, but there are not enough people to do the work and wages are too low. I'm the chief steward and on the executive board. It's my second term. I kind of enjoy working with the union drawing people closely together. I think we need a union in there. I was in on getting organized in '71 and working for a contract in '73.

Betty: Well, I'm Betty Hawthorne, nursing assistant, and I've been at the hospital a year. Before that I worked for the city health department four years. I'm a steward in the union. And all of us who are talking tonight were (are) on the negotiating committee. We represent several areas in the hospital.

Lynn: What do you do?

Betty: I'm a house orderly. Most nursing assistants are assigned to stations or particular work areas, mostly stations, nursing stations. House orderlies run the extra errands for the same ten stations for a week

and then we rotate. So I get all over the main hospital area, running blood, running people different places, taking them for tests, and I get to talk to people, like the people working there and patients. I get a lot of day-to-day exposure to patients and can sense how the different nursing care is delivered on different stations.

Lynn: How do you feel about your work?

Betty: I really like the job. I think it's an interesting job. But there are problems. For one thing we are not paid enough. And for another thing they've increased our work load. They've about doubled it this last year. There seems to be no way to put the brakes on that. We talk about it with our supervisor, a real nice person, who agrees that they're adding more work. She is real apologetic, but says there is no way she can stop it.

There are times where there are lulls and I don't have much to do. Then there are other times when there is so much to do that I am walking around crying because it's so hard. There is just too much to do and I can't do it all and I feel real frustrated with that because I'm concerned about what happens to the patients. I don't want to make them wait, especially someone who's got gain. I don't want to foul up somebody's lab tests but if we do, the stations act as

"There is just too much to do and I can't do it all and I feel real frustrated . . . because I'm concerned about . . . the patients."

if it's our fault --that we intentionally messed things up. We can't do what we have to do because there aren't enough people to do the work.

Mark: I'm Mark Sonnen and I've worked at the hospital about two years or so. I've worked as a custodian, hospital custodian, as a carrier and I'm presently a senior stores clerk. My present job involves unloading trucks, delivering packages and things like dry ice, liquid nitrogen, deliveries, handling mail, that kind of thing. It's a job I can say in all honesty I don't really like. It pays better than most jobs in the bargaining unit and that's one of the main reasons I'm there. I don't like it because I'm overworked. Five full time employees do all the work on the docks and there are five supervisors. When I get home on a Friday night, it's hard to get up and get moving when my back is sore. I just kind of ache all over.

Chris: I'm Chris Anderson. I'm a nursing assistant that is assigned to a station. I do a lot of the things that Betty was describing. When I was given my new job description, which was written up by my head nurse a few weeks ago, it said that a nursing assistant does pretty much what the head nurse or the charge nurse wants you to do. So like I'm really not in a position to say no to anything. You know... "I'm too busy," or "Find somebody else." I'm also faced with the assumption that you are dumb because you have a low level job. That you are trying to get out of work. That makes me feel real frustrated. For example, I've worked at my job for a year and a half yet people continue to think that they have to tell me to do something which is something that I do routinely every day like pick up lunch trays. Well, somebody thinks they have to tell me to go and pick up lunch trays. I've been doing it every day for the last year and a half. You know, like I don't know that.

Lynn: Could you explain what a double is?

Chris: Well, a double is when you work two shifts in a row. And when you do that you work for probably 16-17 hours. Then you go home and sleep for about 6 and 1/2 hours and come back for your morning shift. There are doubles available almost all the time now because the hospital continues to lay-

off staff. It's crazy because the only reason I work doubles is because I need the money. I would not do it for any other reason. That's a really horrible feeling when you're there and you're working and the only thing you think of is going home because you're tired and you are there because you need the money.

Glen: My name is Glen Boatman and I'm also a custodian. I've only been working at the hospital a little over two months now. We do just as much work as I've done anyplace else. But we receive less wages than private employment for the same kind of work. I've worked other places so I know one of the things that affects all of us is the fact that two and a half years ago when the first contract was signed, there were more than 800, like 840 employees, in the bargaining unit. There are about 740 employees in the bargaining unit now. This means that as people have left they have not filled the jobs. And yet we're not receiving significantly more. We are not getting any of that higher productivity yet hospital costs are going up. We're not responsible for the hospital costs going up, because our number of employees has been going down. And one good example of it is what they are doing to us in the environmental services on the day shift. That is they want to put on a full shift for Saturdays. Now we've had to work two stations on Saturdays. You know, that is a minimum amount of work. But they're not going to hire anybody else extra on to do that. They are just spreading us thinner in order to do that and speeding us up and we're fighting that. Management says that the union's wage proposal would cost \$25 more per day in patient care costs. I would like to see their figures. You know, open the books to the public so that we can see if that's really true. Where is the money really going --into patient care or administration?

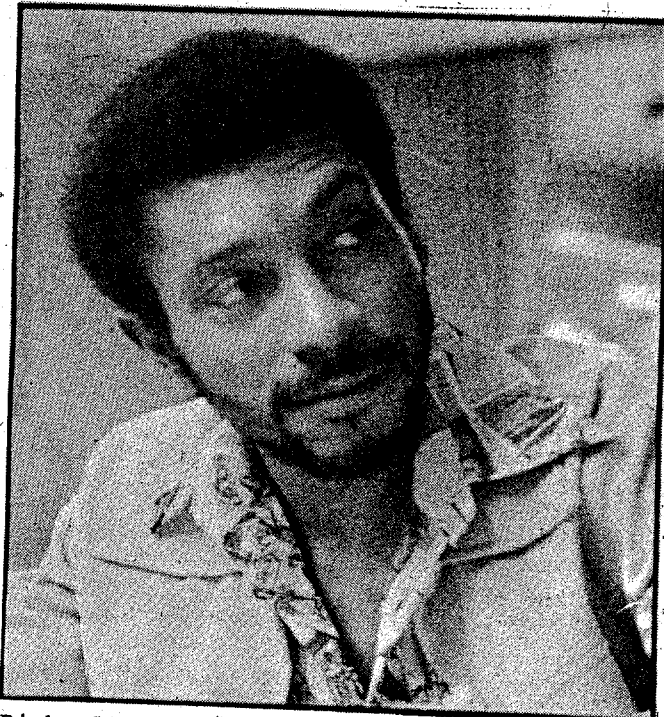
Betty: About people being laid off. There are three full time nursing assistant jobs that have been eliminated in the past year. That probably adds up to \$15,000 the University is saving. Well, last spring, when we started negotiating, we had already put our contract demands together and told the University what we wanted and what we needed. OK, we presented it all to them except for three articles. They sent a survey around to all the employees asking them what atti-

"Our best (negotiating) tool so far has been employee unrest."

tudes they had about work. You had to give opinions in their framework, in their mode. Shortly after that survey was sent out they hired two people to find out the attitudes and opinions of workers. At 15 grand a year --what's really more effecient? Vacating the positions of 3 productive workers and hiring 2 outside "experts" to find out those workers should be kept or keeping the three workers on the staff?

Mark: These efficiency "experts" from an outside firm walk around the hospital and don't do a damn thing except watch people do their jobs, sit and BS with the supervisors then tell the supervisors how many people they should lay off. They did that in Nutrition. The whole process of food storing, preparation, and delivery to patients is presumeably going to be streamlined. In the process several food service employees will be streamlined out of jobs.

Richard: What they do when people leave or retire is hire students, call them temporary-thru-April-employees. Now when April comes they are just going to tell these employees, "Well, you're job is up." They're just going to eliminate the jobs of hundreds of people and a whole lot of students that are working there. We're fighting that.



Richard Flemmons, union steward: "I think we need a union in there." Photo by Ken Meter

Lynn: What is the union doing to deal with some of the concerns that you have raised?

Mark: To begin with we're asking for a pay increase of 75¢ the first year and 50¢ the second.

Betty: But more importantly, we're negotiating the grievance procedure. The contract is just a written thing that says what we'd like, the bare minimum of protection as workers. The contract is a defense against management's doing anything with us they want. And the grievance procedure helps us deal with management when they're arbitrary. If you don't have a grievance procedure there's nothing you can do to protect yourselves as workers when you can't legally strike.

Lynn: Do they do anything they want?

Betty: Oh sure. They violate what they have signed, the legal binding contract, all the time. Which is why we file grievances. Last year we filed over 90 grievances and won all but 4 or 5 of them.

Lynn: What is your best tool to use in negotiating if you don't have the right to strike?

Mark: Our best tool so far has been employee unrest. Before we got a grievance procedure article in the current negotiations, management made the mistake of telling our business agent about layoffs in Nutrition and the next day people were yelling and screaming at their supervisors, "Am I going to get laid off?" Two days later, the union's business agent got a letter from the hospital saying they weren't going to meet with us because we weren't interested in having harmonious relations between employee and employer. Next night they came in--before they had been really hard-nosed--looking real scared after hearing a lot of people talking about a sick out, doing what had to be done. That night they gave into all our demands for grievances. The next day--we got a good safety article. People are beginning to see that a little initiative goes a long way.

Betty: When we sit down to negotiate--one spokesperson for union and one for management; we try to convince each other of various points. When we have a bannering out there and there are 75 people on the line--that's a significant number of the union out

"We wouldn't have a 120% rise in hospital costs over the last 10 years if money spent on 'defense' went instead to provide decent health care."

in the cold on their lunch hour. That was just astounding. They know there's a hell of a lot of dissatisfaction. It wasn't illegal, but we let them know the strength of the union and that's when management begins to move.

Lynn: What kind of opposition do you get from consumers who say this is going to raise health care costs and from taxpayers saying this is going to raise our taxes?

Glen: Well, we start by reminding patients and taxpayers that people, regardless of their work, should not be underpaid for work that they are performing. The thing is a national problem: Teachers all across the country are having the same problem as public employees because they're cutting back funds for social services as the economy slumps. But there is a very simple way that we could deal with the problem of giving the workers who provide services a decent living standard and at the same time cut the costs of health care and that's to lay it on the line: Why do we have a 112 billion dollar "defense" budget? What does the government spend for hospitals as opposed to a new bomber? It is miniscule, a drop in the bucket compared to what we're paying to send arms to Vietnam or Angola or to help support



Betty Hawthorne: "They know there's a hell of a lot of dissatisfaction." Photo: Ken Meter

political factions overthrow governments around the world. That money should be cut from doing those things and should be channeled into providing human resources like decent health care in this country. We wouldn't have 120% rise in hospital costs over the last 10 years if money spent on "defense" went instead to provide decent health care.

Mark: The hospital management is trying to blame rising costs on the working people. Who are the people who do most of the work? The nurses, the assistants, the custodians. The non-professional employees are doing most of the work, have the closest contact with the patients, and get paid the least.

Betty: No one asks a question if a doctor or a surgeon raises his fees. If they say they need more money, they get it.

Glen: Every state has a law against public employees striking, that is in effect taking our rights away from us. And state legislatures are responsible for that. In other parts of the country, public employees have gone out on strike anyway. We do not rule out that possibility but we would have to mobilize public opinion to see that we have a just grievance.

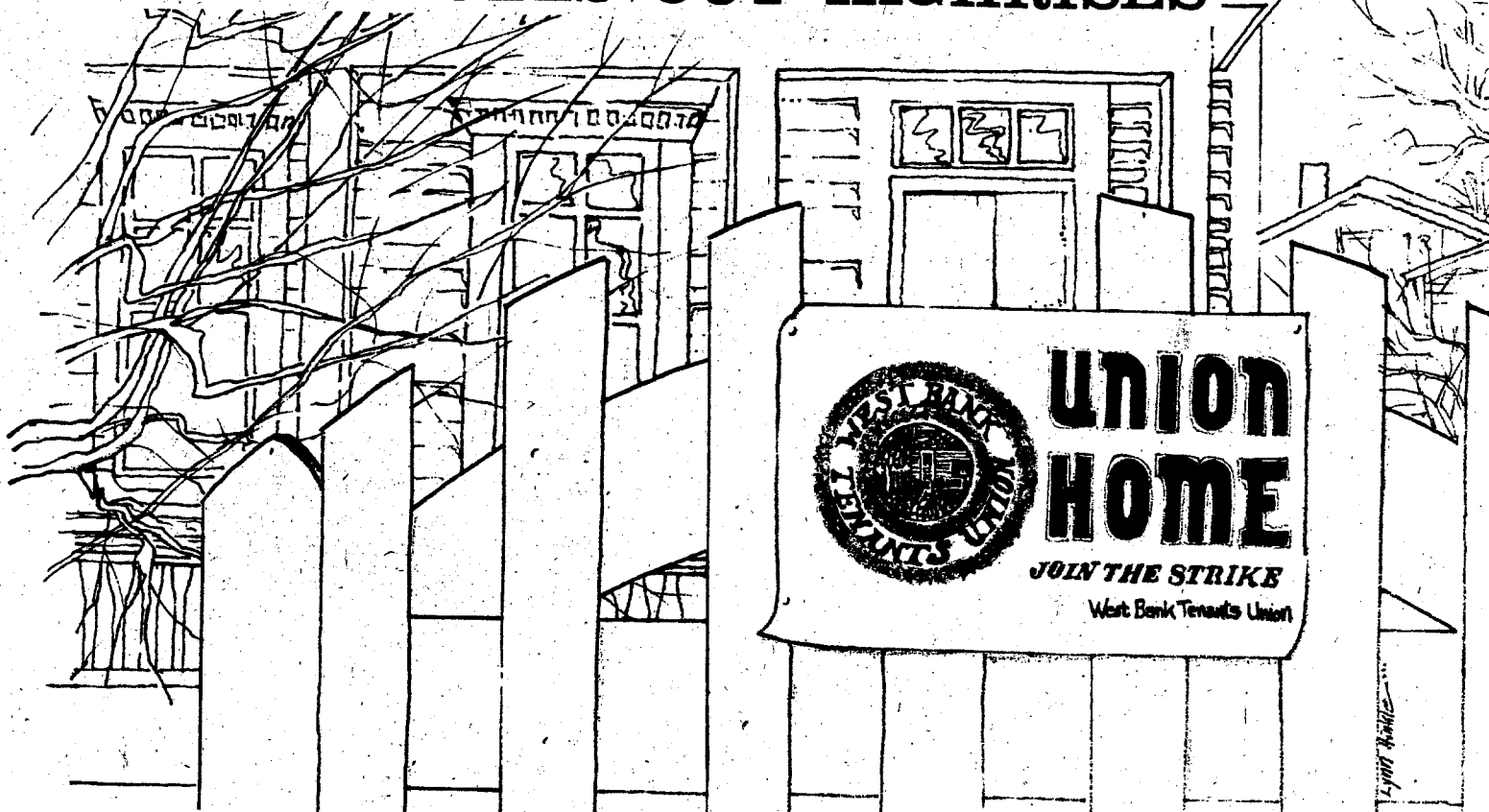
Lynn: How do you do that, though?

Mark: We've been trying to tell people what it is really like in a hospital and tell them just what kind of patient care you're getting, what's really going on. For example, a patient pays \$28 for an ERG test. They do maybe 50/60 tests a day. \$20 out of the \$28 per test goes to some doctor who lives out in Edina to help publish a book and make more money. That's where the money is going. All you have to do is tell the patients that. I think that most of the people that are the broad base of society are behind us. If they knew what we do, what we are getting paid, and what we're up against; they'd support us.

Lynn: What about the other workers?

Mark: One of the things that really hurts me is they come up to me and ask me "Well, what did you get us?" It's not us --it's not the negotiating committee alone. It's not the chairperson or the business representative. It is the whole union. "What are we getting ourselves?" I ask them.

WEST BANK UPDATE: JUDGE RULES OUT HIGHRISES



by Jack Cann

After several years of struggle involving rent strikes, demonstrations, and endless negotiations with CRA and downtown, the residents of Cedar-Riverside have recently gained considerably more control of redevelopment in their neighborhood. These gains are in part the result of a late August decision in the Cedar-Riverside Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) case made by Edward Parker, a Special Master appointed by Federal Judge Miles Lord to hear evidence. Parker found in favor of Cedar-Riverside Environmental Defense Fund (CREDF) on virtually every argument they made. In the process, nationally important precedents were set in both environmental and housing and redevelopment law.

The practical effect of his decision has been to force the Minneapolis Housing and Redevelopment Authority to produce a new urban renewal plan for the West Bank which incorporates Parker's findings. Judge Lord is waiting to see the MHRA's final plan before deciding to sign Parker's findings.

Parker reached several conclusions which have importance for environmental law generally. Among the most important was that

the basic economic principles and assumptions underlying any major plan must be discussed in enough detail to allow an assessment of those interests that run counter to environmental concerns; to provide a basis for the sound evaluation of alternatives; and to allow a full analysis of environmental effects.

The Cedar-Riverside case especially illustrates why this new ruling is important. The position of HUD on the EIS was that high land costs made highrises the only economically feasible housing type in Cedar-Riverside. Thus the EIS focused on trying to show that this type of development had no negative consequences that couldn't be overcome. However, previously suppressed HUD memoranda which came to light at the trial showed that land cost subsidies would have to be provided to make any development feasible.

With public subsidy required for either low or high density development, the need to compare environmental consequences seemed evident, which leads to the question: Why was this information kept from the public for so long?

The reasons why are bluntly summarized by Parker:

"The high densities and highrise construction were dictated only by profit-making and, probably, tax-shelter considerations."

"Here the selective presentation of evidence was accomplished by the...expedient of omitting any discussion of known fallacies in the underlying economic assumptions justifying the proposed high density highrise development at Cedar-Riverside. The study purported to view the possibilities for a residential development on very high cost land which seemingly dictated high densities. It was within the knowledge of HUD that a public subsidy was necessary to 'lower' the cost of the land. The high densities and highrise construction were dictated only by profit-making and, probably, tax-shelter considerations.

Had the environmental effects of medium density low-rise alternatives been compared with the highrise proposal in light of project economics, Parker asks: "Can it be seriously doubted that a vastly different picture of the attractiveness of this project, as compared to various feasible alternatives, would have been presented to the decision makers and the public?" The EIS thus becomes a tool that ensures that all development alternatives receive equal consideration before a final decision about the project is made.

A final precedent in environmental law will be set if Lord signs Parker's proposed order. Parker's order requires not only a new adequate EIS, but also that any future development be in conformance with the new EIS. The National Environmental Protection Act is thus finally held to be a device for forcing environmentally sound decisions, not just a mechanism for exposing unsound ones.

Other major innovations in housing and redevelopment law resulting from Parker's findings include:

1) Failure of a project to meet a city's pressing housing needs (in this case, 12,500 units were proposed, not one of them for larger low income families) is a serious environmental effect and this failure must be adequately considered when weighing alternative proposals.

2) "An FHA memorandum based on the results of this study shows nonresident ownership to result in higher tenant transiency, higher maintenance costs, and a higher default rate. The EIS fails to disclose apparent negative effects of non-resident ownership of the New Town on the human environment." Landlords, in other words, are environmentally unsound.

3) "...full understanding of the problem and the existing research regarding children in highrises could lead only to a recommendation that families with children be housed in lowrise units with associated shared open space easily supervised from apartments."

4) "...significant design elements which encourage responsibility for the environment and social interaction...include: private or semi-private open space, subdivision of the housing into small units, sharing by small numbers of neighbors of common space and private entrances. Such features...encourage proprietary feelings and are reminiscent of important features of the single family home ideal. Testimony contrasted a lowrise cluster development which maximized these features with a highrise project which minimized them."

5) Evidence at the trial disposed of the myth that a study called The Costs of Sprawl showed that highrise high density housing results in a significant reduction in overall energy consumption as compared to lower density alternatives. In fact, the "high density" areas studied in Costs of Sprawl were built at 19 units/acre and closely resembled Cedar-Riverside as it is now. Most energy savings of increased density disappear at about 30 units/acre. Evidence established that the highrise development in Cedar-Riverside was an "inordinately high energy user" in comparison with the typical city single family home neighborhood.

Parker also found that the EIS seriously understated air and noise pollution associated with the highrise development; covered up serious concerns of the Minneapolis Fire Dept. related to highrise fire safety; failed to discuss important open space concerns; and failed to disclose the project's negative esthetic effects on the Mississippi River gorge.

As a result of the findings, the MHRA staff has proposed a dramatically altered urban renewal plan for Cedar-Riverside which stresses rehabilitation of the older neighborhood, low rise medium density new construction, resident ownership, and priority to non-profit and community-based developers.

Active with the Cedar Riverside Environmental Fund and the West Bank Tenants Union, Jack Cann currently staffs the Cedar-Riverside PAC.

Home

Depressed people
live in depressed areas
behind boarded up windows
waiting to be rescued
by Model Cities
(or so they say)

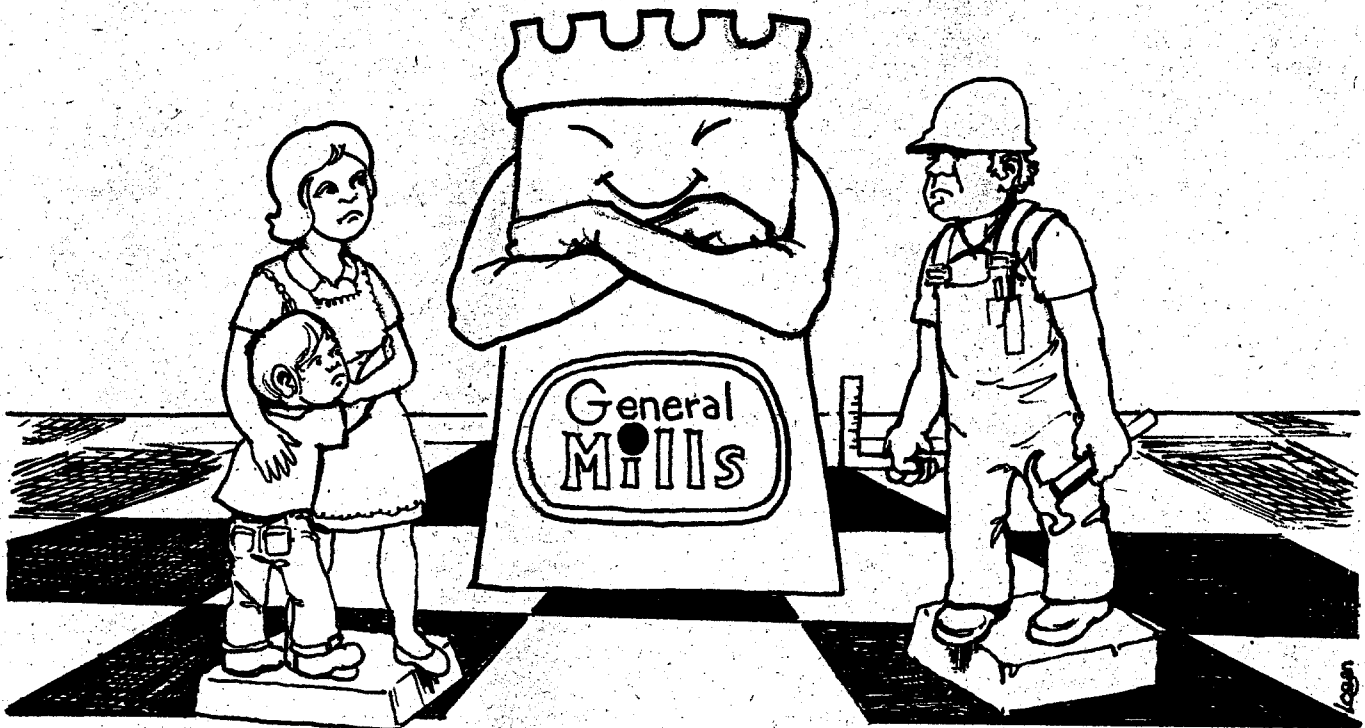
My uncle picked me up
at the bus station
in his new car
We in shiny steel and chrome
drove through
the littered streets
past the rotting
houses and stores

"Aint no work around here
Everybody's on welfare
Your daddy aint changed
Your mama been sick
You shoulde wrote her
Boy you show have changed
How much you weigh now"

Getting out of the car
a pool of blood glows
in the dirty snow
"JD cut Willie last night"
my uncle said

--Roy McBride

Stevens Square Crisis: What Hath General Mills Wrought?



by Karen Branan

Is it right or even necessary to pay workers half of union scale or less to fix up older apartment buildings? That question--and others--is at the heart of the painful showdown between the building trades unions and Stevens Court, Inc.

The Stage is Set

The problems facing the Stevens Square neighborhood --the area south of downtown Minneapolis and between 4th Ave. and LaSalle -- are the same problems attacking neighborhoods in all American cities. The apartment buildings age and slowly rot while landlords, frequently absentee, refuse to invest in maintenance and upkeep. Slowly, but surely, every aspect of neighborhood life begins to deteriorate.

So it happened that General Mills was welcomed like an angel from heaven when they sought out Stevens Court, Inc. This firm, headed by James A Larson, was already buying apartment buildings in the neighborhood and rehabilitating them. Larson and his employees were known as good neighbors. While some people suspected General Mills was in cahoots with the city planning department to turn Stevens Square into an artsy-craftsy, high and middle-income enclave with no room for the old, poor, or transient, most people were

joyful when the company agreed to put up \$2 million over a ten year period in exchange for 65% ownership of Stevens Court.

In their first words about the project, General Mills said they would make no profit; but a short month later, Cyrus Johnson, vice-president of social action, said, "We have to lay to rest the idea that social responsibility is incompatible with profit. We have to begin to seek out new areas of activity where both goals can be met and where there is a happy confluence of profit and principle." General Mills, he added, would not be interested in the project if it did not have controlling interest.

Still General Mills planned to accept no profits for the first ten years and after that would only take 6%. On the other hand, as Dan Gustafson of the Building Trades Council points out, "they'll be in possession of 10 to 15 square blocks of very solid, very prime real estate."

Things went well for awhile. The project pumped energy and hope into the area. Stevens Court people planted trees and flowers, cut grass, helped out with a fair in the park, held spaghetti suppers, and made useful contacts downtown. Larson found that when he called City Hall and said "Stevens Court/General Mills," he got action.

"It seemed that the happy confluence of profit and social responsibility sought by General Mills was impossible. . ."

"We've kept the power right down here in the basement of Stevens Court," he says, "right here on the street. People come to this window and yell at us, tell us their problems. We catch the alxies when they're loaded, helped a gal with emotional problems and helped with cases of child abuse. People have financial problems, we go over their budgets. We're involved in people's private lives. We post jobs. We're involved emotionally. That's a community function."

The Crunch Comes

Then came the crunch. The plasterers, laborers, steamfitters, and other workers who were busy "tastefully restoring" Stevens Ct. were "community labor" (though half lived elsewhere and some of the others moved in to get the work), not union labor. They were making \$3.00 to \$7 an hour with most making \$3.00 to \$4. They were working jobs that pay \$8 to \$18 when unionized. Some of the work, like window repairs, was being done piecemeal, Gustafson maintains, "by guys, their wives, and kids working like coolies in their basements. The unions can't compete with that sort of thing even at \$2 an hour."

The unions picketed Stevens Court, demanding that General Mills unionize the job. When the Minnesota AFL-CIO started to set up the machinery for a national boycott of General Mills products, the company pulled out of Stevens Court, saying if they had to pay union wages they'd probably have to double the rents on the rehabed units.

It seemed that the happy confluence of profit and social responsibility sought by General Mills was impossible unless the AFL-CIO unions agreed to ignore the non-union crews working for Stevens Court. The Building Trades were given sole responsibility for deciding whether General Mills' model for rehabilitating a deteriorating neighborhood would stop or go. Because General Mills had been represented all along as the champion of Stevens Court workers and residents, the Building Trades became Big Labor out to stomp on the Little Guys. Anti-labor sentiment grew. Who could blame General Mills for pulling out?

Jim Larson said, "Somewhere along the line I knew labor would want to participate, but I thought they would have a conscience that

would make room for the economics of rehabilitation and let the labor movement grow a little progressively."

Daniel J. Sheridan, executive director of the Minnesota Society of Architects, writing in Architecture Minnesota, said, "Stevens Court is only one skirmish in a larger encounter which must lead the construction industry labor unions to temper demands into the realm of reason. Unions must be realistic and realize that they too have a social responsibility. After all, it would seem unfortunate to have Wheaties become only the breakfast of NON-union champions."

What Has General Mills Shown Us?

Meantime, however, there has been virtually no public questioning of General Mills' position in this matter. Who is this company that cannot help provide decent, reasonable inner-city housing unless it pays non-union wages to the workers? A closer look at General Mills might give the reader a more balanced view.

This enormous corporation operates on five continents and is growing rapidly. Over the past two fiscal years, while many companies were squeezed and some went under, General Mills' profits increased 18% each year. Last September they reported a 28% jump in first-quarter earnings at 27.3% above those of the previous year, "the highest three-month earnings level in the company's history." Last year their total tax bill was only 4.9% of their income and wages and benefits for employees amounted to only 17.4% of their income. It would take a Stevens Court worker sweating away at \$3 an hour 56 years to earn what General Mills' president earns in one year: \$336,000.

There are a number of different ways that General Mills could help underwrite a program of rehabilitation for the residents of Stevens Square, short of redistributing income. They could use their considerable financial resources and influence to obtain funding from an FHA or HUD program for acquisition and rehabilitation of buildings which would eventually be owned and managed by those who currently live there. Such a program could provide prevailing wages for workers, rents or monthly payments in reach of a low-income family, and resident ownership of improved housing, all of which seem

"If anyone needs an example of why this system doesn't work, this is it."

like desirable objectives if you're willing to use public assistance to make it work.

General Mills, however, has been determined to prove that capitalism, not even that mixed public/private finance variety, can provide decent housing for people. It has taken General Mills with its vast finances and resources to convince many people that it can't. Howard Vogel, a law professor who served on the community negotiating task force, says, "If anyone needs an example of why this system doesn't work, this is it."

The People Speak-Out

Listening to ordinary people involved in the Stevens Square crisis probably gives us all the information we need to understand the situation:

A factory worker and a resident: "A bunch of people are saying we've got to support the union because big business is out to bust the unions. That's true. Look what's going on all over the country. It always happens in hard times. But it's high time we took a look at our unions, too. The AFL-CIO has one helluva long history of sellouts behind it. Look at a lot of those unions in New York City, turning pension funds and strike funds and other employee benefits over to the banks. The folks who're saying

there's not much difference between Big Business and Big Labor aren't too far wrong. But you don't deal with that by joining up with General Mills. Rank and file workers, minorities, unemployed people, community workers, all of us have got to get together and turn this country around. We need a movement that will strike at the heart of this system. And it won't happen as long as people are playing these Big Business/Big Labor/community-control games."

Charlie Ellis, SSCO: "There are two very important questions: why did General Mills get into this knowing unions were going to come down on them? Why did the unions wait so long to step in? Maybe it was because their convention was coming up and they wanted to make a show of strength for their members. Maybe it was because Larson was making it and they were afraid he was going to set a model. But they were so clumsy, so remarkably heavy-handed. They didn't really have to do it that way; they just made people dislike them. The attitude of the public was clearly anti-union and pro-General Mills. That's obviously one reason General Mills got involved in the first place."

Eileen Guthrie, counselor: "Alderman Netwal said General Mills can afford to pay. What are we talking about? They had cut their profit already. They could invent a new cer-



General Mills' partner, Stevens Court, Inc., shares space with tenants in this building. KM

"So I started thinking about this program with all its concessions being required of little people . . ."

eal and make more. That's worth rewarding, not attacking. That's not to say General Mills is a white knight. Given some little shifts in attitude on both sides, they could have worked things out. We're just putting off longer the possibilities of corporate community and people community getting together. The government is getting out of housing and only the corporations and the people can get together.

Del Rayson, property manager, Stevens Court "I always was dubious about the project from the beginning. I don't believe in this capitalist system, so I don't see this as any answer to the urban housing problem. I can see why Jim has run into the problem he has; he thought it would become a national movement. That was naive. It's a class solution. It provides housing for the lower middle class and the poor have to go into more circumscribed housing. That's the way the system encourages every segment to exploit its own self. I'd be supportive of unions if they organized people here, but they didn't and they won't. They have to fight for their existence. That's a reality of the times. A lot of people here feel good about General Mills partly because they feel bad about the union. There's a built-in dimension in the system to pit people against each other on every occasion that presents itself, organized against the nonorganized, black against white, etc. From the beginning corporations have acted to divide labor and keep it weak. I don't know whether they're conscious of that but unconsciously General Mills operates like that, too."

A plasterer: "Jim Larson and some of the others go around talking about the \$20,000 a year construction worker and that gets everybody riled and makes them swing to his side, but that's not the real story by a longshot. Maybe there are some of those guys getting that much, but most of us make about half that and less and when you talk about breaking down those high wages you're talking about doing the same to us."

A union construction worker: "They've got this thing all wrong. It's not Big Business against Big Labor. It's not even a big labor versus unemployed and minorities. People are being used; people are being set against one another. Nobody's talking about why it comes down to decent wages or fair rents. I saw in the paper the other day that General Mills'

net earnings for the first half of the fiscal year were almost \$59 million; but it also said their debt was \$338 million. People have got to start talking about how this system works, why we have to make these choices, why workers are being sacrificed."

A woman who lives in Stevens Square and works in a nursing home: "Lately I've been thinking of factions or programs in terms of what they would mean if they were carried out all over the world. I ask myself "in whose interest is this?" And so I started thinking about this program with all its concessions being required of little people and so little concession required of those who control the money and resources and then I really got scared. Looking at things that way sure changes the complexion of things."

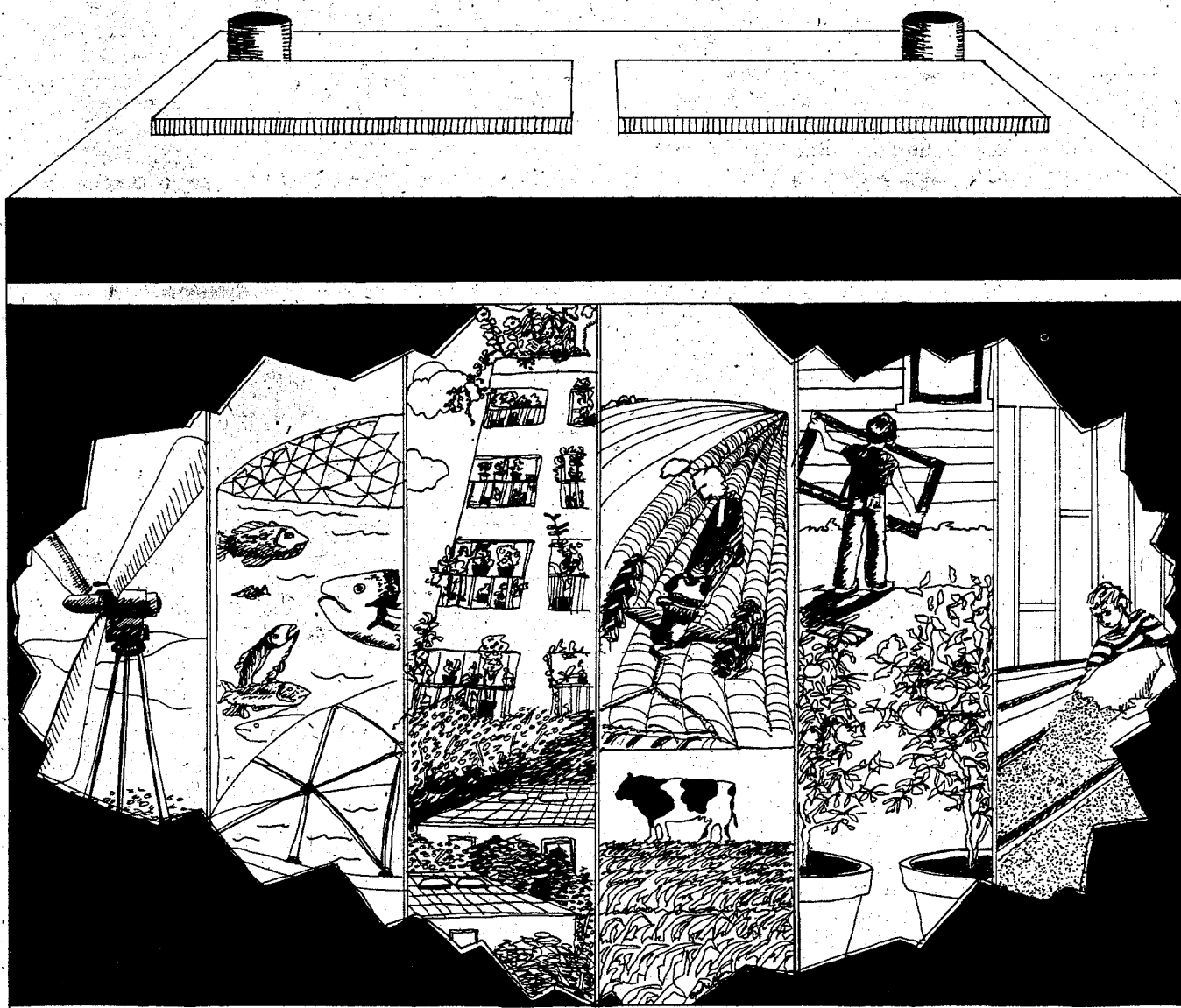
Some Lessons?

Jim Larson believes that ". . .it is very significant to the country that communities organize themselves politically, socially, economically. . .for survival!" He's right. But his and General Mills' attempts to do so raise some crucial issues. (1) Could General Mills, with the use of direct federal housing subsidies, have salvaged its rehab scheme for Stevens Square? Probably, but without substantially more federal money for housing instead of defense, for example, Stevens Court would only have limited nationwide application. Hardly a model. (2) Couldn't organized residents and labor together collaborate to provide reasonable new and rehabed inner-city housing with federal support? Sure, its been done in other parts of the country, but unless residents and workers are willing to push for employing people to rehab houses instead of building bombers not enough federal money will be available to realistically deal with the local, let alone, the national housing problem. If these changes are difficult to imagine, it may be enough for the present to realize that General Mills and Stevens Court, Inc. have helped highlight the need for these changes.

Special thanks to Steve Smith and Larry Dunham for assisting with this article.

Karen Branán, a resident of Powderhorn Park neighborhood and active member of the Twin Cities Women's Union, teaches Women's studies at Experimental College, University of Minn.

TAKING CHARGE OF ENERGY



Taking Charge of Energy

"To develop an energy system that we can control, we must decentralize."

by Ann Waterhouse

The response to the energy crisis has come largely from the highly centralized sources of energy control, namely government and big business.

The government's response includes (1) legislating various conservation measures, (2) increasing the research and development budget to the Federal Energy Administration and (3) programming funds to glean all existing natural resources from within U.S. boundaries.

Big business has chipped in by producing glossy promotionals, lobbying for legislation and developing new commercial products, using our tax dollars to subsidize research that will eventually bring them profits.

These measures may not only be too late to deal realistically with the crisis we have reached, but they also fail to change the way energy is distributed. The same people continue to profit using new technology. New resources like solar energy can be exploited in the same way that coal and oil have been.

To develop an energy system that we can control, we must decentralize. In a decentralized energy system, neighborhoods and communities could work together to provide for their energy needs in a cooperative way. This could mean two households working together to conserve energy, or it could mean an entire community banding together to set up their own power station.

A move toward decentralization will have to come from small local organizations; it certainly won't come from the top. Community groups are increasingly demonstrating their ability to assume control. Along with control comes immediate contact with the technology: the equipment can be understood rather than mystified. Furthermore, smallscale cooperative efforts can allow for experimentation without billions of dollars being spent.

The Winona Project is one example of how decentralization could work. This project, executed by a group of architecture students at the U of M, proposes ways by which the community of 27,000 could help itself become energy self-sufficient by the year 2000. Craft and food cooperatives, integrated

food and waste systems, bio-fuels, recycling, land-intensive gardening, aquatic food production units, wind generators and solar collectors for heating and cooling were among the systems recommended by the study. The project demonstrates that a better quality of life is possible with less energy consumption.

The Winona Project highlighted several advantages of alternate energy sources like the sun and the wind: (1) they are renewable, almost inexhaustible; (2) they are non-polluting and not dangerous, (3) more energy is produced than is used in collecting it (unlike coal gasification and nuclear power which consume more than is produced), and (4) they operate at a scale at which a community itself can control.

The Cedar-Riverside community in Minneapolis intends to utilize energy-efficient systems and design in any new housing development. The community is vying for control of new development through a Community Development Corporation (CDC).

Utilizing present technology could mean designing multiple unit homes, as much as possible, to fit the Minnesota climate, taking into account wind direction, sun radiation and natural environmental protection. Ventilation can be aided by design so that air would circulate naturally in the summer months. Building partially underground and utilizing the ground as insulation, according to Dr. Tom Bligh of the U of M could save 70 to 80% of the heating and cooling energy. Solar and wind generators are also being considered. This project could be the first of its kind in the country and could lead the way for other communities to utilize similar technologies.

Each of us must begin now to make our lives as energy efficient and self-sufficient as possible. Helping to establish community groups that have the ability and the local credibility to organize for decentralized energy control can be a beginning step. If we make this a priority for our community we may live to see new energy priorities begin to improve our quality of life.

Ann is a board member of the West Bank Community Development Corporation

Energy-Saving

Energy-Saving is a corner grocery
which you can walk to
by the places of your friends

and Damn, that's not bad Home Brew,
Lester,

and Look, there's the neighborhood
hundred-year-old Little Old Lady
out with her dog Rat
and here I am Old Bearded Boy Scout
helping her over this snowbank
just like every day,
just like the Funnies

and Say, Louise, your new storm windows
are looking fine
but isn't that my hammer you borrowed
six eight months ago
to kill roaches?

and WoW Buster Brown, where'd you get
those NEW BOOTS shining in the snow!?!
and when you gonna be five? I'll
be there.

and when you get to the store you'd
better be prepared to talk in depth
because a lot's been happening
since you've been gone.

No Question About It,
Energy-Saving
is gonna cost you
a little Time.

--Jim Lenfestey

Energy-Saving: The Cloudy Future of Minnesota

Everybody's pissed off at
South Dakota
because that state's
cloud-seeding program
is shading out
our solar collectors.

The legislature is calling for
an investigation
of the rumored link between
the Gas Company and
the South Dakota Department of Agriculture.

The governor's place
has been without stored heat
for days
and he has to fire up the
old wood stove to heat water
to wash the dishes

It's said he's
thinking of walking up
to the North Shore
and the hell with it.

--Jim Lenfestey

ERDA Research-For Whom?

by Ken Meter

Who is served by the federal grants for energy research? Certainly not the residents of twin city neighborhoods. Although we are 99% of the people in Minneapolis and St. Paul, and although most of us are frugal energy users, and although we are entirely dependent on fossil fuels for heat, we seem to be the last people to benefit from the federal dole.

In fact, federal "energy" money is primarily directed to weapons research. What does trickle out for alternative energy development is mostly a subsidy for large corporations, or is academic research that only the military or a corporation can make use of.

Most, but not all, of the federal money for energy is administered by ERDA (Energy Research and Development Administration), whose stated purpose is to "commercialize" solar energy. That is, "to provide for the development and demonstration of practical means to employ solar energy on a commercial scale." In Fiscal Year 1976, ERDA is authorized to spend \$2.8 Billion, with \$110 Million of that (or not quite 0.4 per cent) directed to solar energy's "commercialization."

"Commercialization" means subsidizing large corporations so they can eventually make a profit producing solar energy equipment. The government pays corporations to research energy systems until they can be

shown to be commercially viable--at that point, the corporations can feel safe gearing up their operations to manufacture energy equipment, and turn a handsome profit, since the trial and error of experimenting, and the marketing studies, will have already been paid for by you and me.

Such corporate welfare has led to the grant of \$8 Million to four companies including Honeywell to develop an electricity generator fueled by the sun (called a "Power Tower"). \$358,000 went to Honeywell for an experimental solar collector (which was set up at Brooklyn Center Jr. High). Another sum has been granted for a traveling solar laboratory which both collects data about the sun and publicizes solar energy. Honeywell also was given \$172,000 to study wind power in Northeastern Minnesota (by making a computer simulation). Faribault's Sheldahl corporation has also been allocated \$340,000 to study solar heating systems.

Those figures are part of ERDA's 1975 expenditures. What is slated for this year? The table below shows ERDA's allocations to Minnesota in FY 1976. As you can see, none of the money labeled "Solar, Geothermal, and Advanced Energy Systems" is really for the development of renewable energy sources. Actually, the money will primarily go for radiation and high energy physics research at the U of M. Of ERDA's Minnesota budget:

- No research is aimed at answering comprehensively a community's energy needs.
- No research is aimed at building models of community-controlled energy.
- No research listed here is directly concerned with alternatives to fossil or nuclear fuels.
- \$9 Million is devoted to weapons research
- \$1 Million is designated directly for nuclear power development.

We end up paying, either way. We pay for research through tax moneys, and we pay for the product once it comes off the assembly line. Why shouldn't that money come directly back to us (via community-run organizations) to plan for our own community's energy needs?

The only excuse for such large federal expenditures is to give us more control over our lives. Right now, just the opposite is happening.

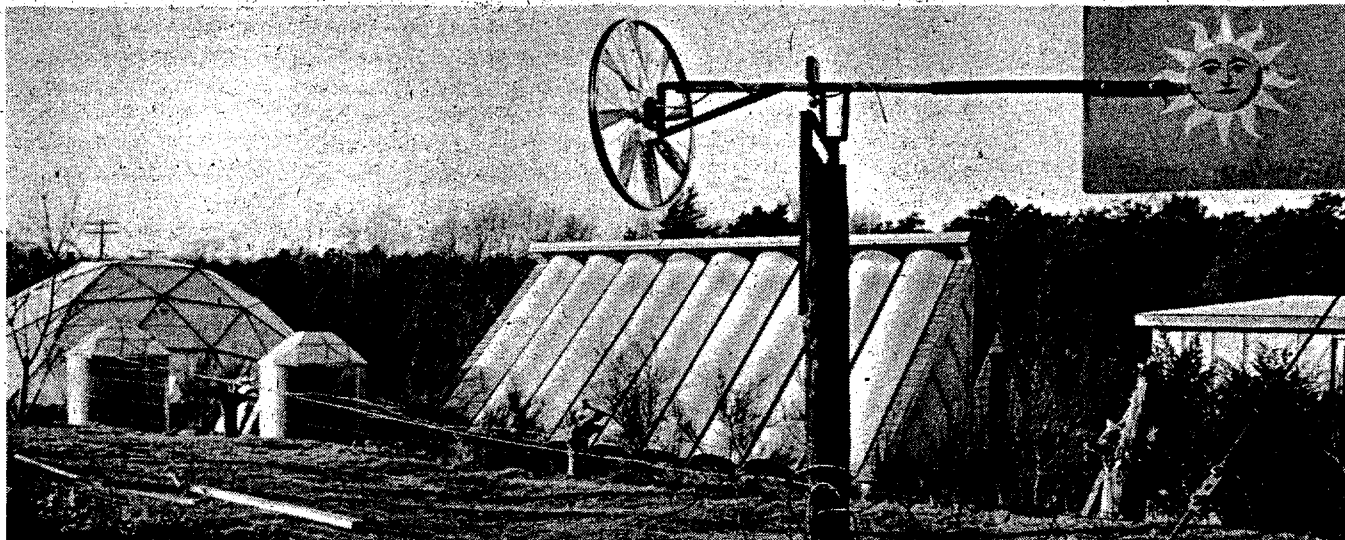
Thanks to Dan Flaherty for research help.

"ESTIMATED AMOUNTS INCLUDED IN THE FY 1976 PRESIDENT'S BUDGET TO THE CONGRESS" (Minn.)

Solar, Geothermal and Advanced Energy Systems Development	\$1,421,000
-Experimental Nuclear Physics	(700,000)
-Theoretical and High Energy Physical Research	(353,000)
-Electronically excited states and radiation chemistry of organic systems	(73,000)
-Chemical radioactivity	(40,000)
-Reactions of ions with atomic and molecular free radicals	(35,000)
-Ductile-Brittle Temperatures in Fe-binary alloys	(43,000)
-Solid state and low temperature physics	(177,000)
Fossil Energy Development	200,000
Nuclear Energy Development	895,000
Environmental and Safety Research	277,000
Space Nuclear Systems	100,000
National Security--Weapons	8,934,000
TOTAL	\$11,727,000

source: Controller's Office, ERDA, Jan 1976

Research on a Small Scale Designing for Self-Sufficiency on Cape Cod



New Alchemists experiment with devices designed for self-sufficiency. Photo by Al Wroblewski
by Al Wroblewski

Empowering neighborhood people to gain a bigger voice in their lives and the lives of their communities is crucial to healthy survival. As important as this is, very few concrete steps have been taken to shift power and control from big government and big business to the neighborhood.

An action which potentially could help in that shift is taking control of energy away from giants like NSP and putting it, instead, in the hands of neighborhood consumers.

One approach might be public ownership of utilities. Another, more radical route, might be to decentralize energy collection. Instead of one giant power plant, sprinkle windmills or solar collectors throughout the city and countryside. So little serious thought has been given to this idea that one has to search far and wide to find experiments that may apply to changing the way energy is controlled and made available here in the Twin Cities.

One project which strives to break down the massiveness of energy collection so that individuals and small groups can use available energy resources is going on in Woods Hole, Massachusetts. While not focusing their efforts on the needs of neighborhoods, the project called the New Alchemy Institute does offer some insights and hopes which you would never get from Northern States Power Company.

The Institute is comprised of 15 or so young scientists and ecologists who experiment with ways to harness free energy, like the wind and

sun rays, to heat rooms full of plants, or tanks of eatable fish.

Quoting from their *Journal*, "The New Alchemy Institute is a small, international organization for research and education on behalf of man and the planet. We seek solutions that can be used by individuals or small groups who are trying to create a greener, kinder world. It is our belief that ecological and social transformations must take place at the lowest levels of society if mankind is to direct his course towards a saner tomorrow."

I expected to see row upon row of domes, windmills, solar disks and cells, green houses, gardens, rectangular ponds, and what have you. Instead, the Institute fills an unassuming white frame farm house and barn. Not far from these two buildings is a modest sized garden, some fields, trees, and a handful of small structures containing various experiments. Dotted the skyline are three or four windmills.

Two experiments caught my attention. The first is an attempt raise fish for the dinner table in cold climates year 'round. After trying several techniques, the one found to be most successful involves plastic drums, 4 feet in diameter by 5 feet high. On top are small geodesic domes for capturing sunlight. Inside are the fish swimming about in water. The water retains the heat collected during the day.

The second experiment permits the growing of plants under excellent growing conditions regardless of the temperature outside. The Institute's newest structure, the solar heated

"Most impressive about the Institute is the high level of expertise and the cooperative work arrangement."

hot house permits light to enter through panels of translucent plastic. A white wall inside reflects light ordinarily lost. A small pond stores some of the heat. Frogs, insects, worms and plants share the interior. Plants are placed in different positions to learn of their reactions to varied conditions. Ultimately, the scientists will gain knowledge about the prospects of raising vegetables and other edible plant products not ordinarily possible or economical.

In warmer months, the Institute studies methods of small scale farming and gardening which do not require chemical fertilizers and pesticides. Given the poor quality soil of the Cape Cod area, the Institute has its work cut out.

At this point, the findings of the Institute do not translate into usable schemes on the neighborhood level. They remain solidly within the realm of research. But the Institute is asking the right questions about energy and breaking down corporations' stranglehold on its control.

Nevertheless, the Institute boasts some remarkable qualities. Workers have impeccable backgrounds in science and research. A cooperative work arrangement has been achieved. A high order of return on dollar invested is evident.

The scientific sophistication does create a problem. It makes it hard to popularize the Institute's work, to make it understandable in simple language. If the Institute is committed to grassroots change, then more attention should be paid to equipping ordinary people with the information accumulated.

Since the thrust of the Institute is educational and research-oriented, the people there do not spend much time marketing or mass producing plans, models, or kits which might be bought up by do-it-yourselfers.

While visiting the Institute's farm, I felt an absence of the stresses, political hassles, confusion, conflict and other burdens weighing heavily on the shoulders of neighborhood dwellers. The farm is a near utopia. One could argue that the Institute's deliberate, steady style presents an answer to the willy-nilly pace of the city. But, is it feasible for the neighborhood to take on the mellow character of the country side? Is the sometimes frantic spirit a fundamental part of the neighborhood fiber? Removing oneself from the neighborhood the Institute has avoided some thorny problems

like what to do with people who are put out of work because of a shift to new energy sources.

The Institute is not geared toward self-reliance itself. Rather it focuses on developing techniques for others to be self-reliant.

Institute workers seem meticulous at record keeping, paying attention to detail, and good, honest monitoring of experiments. Sadly, this rigor is often lacking in many alternative projects. A passage from Barbara and Al Haber's article, "Getting By with a Little Help from our Friends," emphasizes the point, "There is already too much unanalyzed, unshared experience. Projects are carried out without evaluation. Work proceeds on impulse, vague formulations, romantically hopeful projections of the improbable. We are basing too much hope that we will stumble into a revolution, that our intuition will be sufficient to show us the way to a decent world." In answer, the Institute responds with clear, responsible experimentation, evaluation, and effort to share data.

Much of the sharing comes about through the *Journal of the New Alchemists* published sporadically. Outside the *Popular Science* domain and a bit more academic than *Mother Earth News*, the *Journal* appeals to an academic/intellectual audience. Herein lies a dilemma.

On the one hand the Institute needs to make an image of respectability for itself: professional, somewhat mystical, ecological, and eloquent. It has to look bigger than life to get grant money. It must become extraordinary, uncommon, unique. Countering this, is the need to destroy the mystery of science and technology.

If the Institute shook off its cloak of specialness, people might respond with a shrug and a "so what? Another bunch of ecology freaks who have dropped out."

On the other hand, cloaking itself with a veil of mystery and supernatural power, the Institute might strike the fancy of many a curiosity seeker. Certainly an "international institute" which "hopes to help restore the lands, protect the seas, and inform the earth's stewards" must be listened to.

Mystery is tricky business. It can get money and hold people's attention. It can awe the average person into numbness, doing little to enhance the power of that individual to assume more control over his or her life.

"The Institute's casual regard for popularizing its findings makes me question the political philosophy of the program."

A way to overcome some of the mystery while still keeping people's attention is to draw upon traditions. The strongest evidence of this is the Institute's occasional use of poetry and quotes from Shakespeare and modern-day ecologists, none of which dips into the psyche of most people. A much more significant tradition the Institute might tap is the Do-It Yourself theme. A perfect follow-up to their scientific papers would be publication of down to earth practical guides to gardening without chemicals, backyard fish harvesting, windmilling, or hot housing. They have printed a useful guide to their methane work, but I'd like to see more.

By not linking scientific mysteries to the language and traditions of common people, the Institute runs the risk of serving a thin slice of the population, a slice which already has the skills to decipher the Institute's code.

The Institute's casual regard for popularizing its findings makes me question the political philosophy of the program. While there is clearly a concern for global well-being, it is not translated into concrete attempts to alter government policies regarding alternative energy or to organize communities to assume control of energy resources.

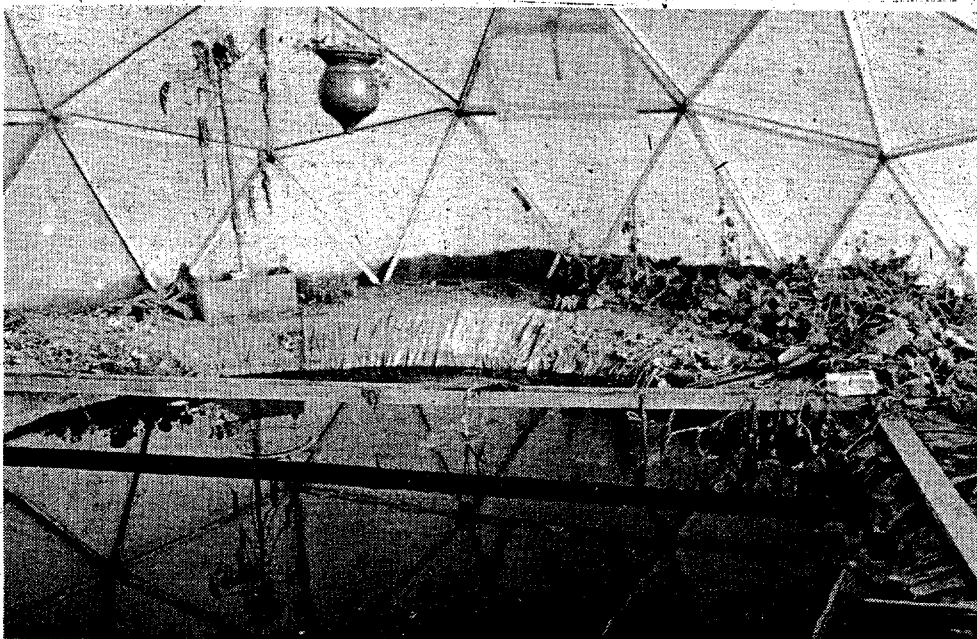
Everything the Institute does has tremendous political content whether it is conscious or

not. Certainly the focus of their research is politically correct, i.e., emphasizing small-scale energy production, decentralization, feedback systems, low cost, self-reliance, low energy usage, cooperation instead of competition. But is it enough to do enjoyable research and present the findings in an attractive package? I believe the link between experiment and widespread changes in the political control of energy must be strengthened.

In spite of my criticisms of the Institute, I find their work refreshing and stimulating. But I am an intellectual and in touch with the academic tradition they draw upon. And perhaps the expectations I place upon them are too great even though they have portrayed themselves as playing a monumental role in the survival of the human race. Perhaps expectations should be placed on others as well.

People like myself, who straddle that fence between the Dreamers and the Doers, maybe must ultimately act to confront inequities which rob people of the right to energy. Make no mistake, the Institute is making an important contribution. And, in a slightly mystical way, is helping close the gap between the Dreams and the Deed. For this it should be commended.

Al publishes the tri-weekly Minnesota Leader



Many layers of plastic on top of this dome trap the sun's heat to create a near-tropical environment inside. Carefully designed so that plants, algae, and water animals all feed each other's growth, this some is one of the food supplies for the New Alchemists' farm. (Note these photos were taken in January) Photo: Al Wroblewski.

Growing Healthy Food Inside Chicago

"Residents view the greenhouses both as a means to year-round quality food, and as a demonstration of the link between food and energy costs."

by Tom Dewar

On the West Side of Chicago a community group is about to harvest its first crop of vegetables grown in a rooftop greenhouse. The group is the Christian Action Ministry (CAM), and the greenhouse is but one of several demonstration projects they have going. CAM sees itself as an educational, health, and family service agency which is trying to demonstrate that neighborhood, human-scale approaches to urban problem-solving can be both practical and effective.

The problems they're tackling are serious, probably as bad in terms of degree, scale and rate of intensification as those in any urban area in the country. In just four square miles there are 160,000 people, mostly black. About one-third of the residents are on some kind of state aid. The buildings in the area are old (built in the 1930's) and worn-out, mostly brick two-flats. The people have been and still are going through a lot, but they persist. Some of them, with CAM support, are digging in, establishing footholds in the climb toward neighborhood renewal.

The greenhouse itself is a prototype, built atop still another CAM project-- a "second chance school" for drop-outs. The school's graduates built the greenhouse themselves. Eventually, CAM hopes to build greenhouses on many more of the area's buildings. Residents view the greenhouses both as a means to year-round quality food, and as a demonstration of the link between food and energy costs. If a future project, possible uses of rooftop solar heating units will be explored. Solar heat seems particularly well-suited to the neighborhood's flat, unused roofs.

Growing nutritious food is only one approach to meeting the neighborhood's health needs. Several years ago a task force of local people, in conjunction with a group from Northwestern University, became so frustrated by existing medical services in the area that they decided to try and completely rethink the problem. They went to local community hospitals and obtained records on the frequency and distribution of

various health conditions in the area. Then after decoding the medical labels, they proceeded to identify the cause of those conditions.

It was determined, for example, that many of the broken bones and lacerations that children received in the neighborhood were related to traffic. Improving the neighborhood's traffic flow thus became more important than bringing in new medical services.

More recently, they found that animal (rodents, dogs) bites were a serious problem in the area. (Had they gone to the Health Department or local hospitals they might have been given inoculations against the effects of the bites or nothing at all.) Instead, they announced they were offering a \$5 reward for every biting animal captured or held. Over a period of a month and a half they brought in 145 stray dogs. In addition, "health clubs" have been formed, through which residents are brought together to deal with some of the chronic problems people in the area have, and to develop strategies for dealing with health that rely increasingly on resources under their own control.

CAM's activities can be viewed as an instance of a growing phenomenon --community problem-solving. Unwilling to take anything for granted about the institutions claiming to help them, they decided instead to define and carry out projects that are direct responses to the problem area in question.

Whereas modern medical therapies tend to isolate individuals as patients, CAM's health programs bring them together to work around a common interest.

In addition, their work relies primarily on available and understandable resources. For CAM and a growing number of urban neighborhoods, it's not just a question of being treated badly by existing institutional arrangements; it's a question of realizing they can struggle against many of their problems better themselves.

Tom Dewar teaches at the School of Public Affairs, University of Minnesota.

Energy for Local Control

Neighborhood Self-Reliance in Washington



Institute for Local Self-Reliance workers bag and weigh sprouts, sold at DC coops. ILSR photo.

by Mike McCoy

For six months out of the year, Minnesota must import all of its fresh produce. Tomatoes, carrots, celery and cabbage--all are available now, but often arrive as tasteless agribusiness products.

Moreover, energy costs are fully one-fourth of the price of food. How much more will the price of food skyrocket as fuel costs for tilling and trucking increase? Will we need to pay outlandish sums for staples? Will citrus fruits, for instance, even be available? Can we protect ourselves by growing some of our own food right here in the city?

A group in Washington, DC is trying. In greenhouses they grow vegetables year round. Sprouts are grown as an urban cottage industry. On a broader scale, the group works with other community groups, and other cities, to examine how a decentralized economy, or decentralized food and energy production, could empower a community.

"When you talk about gardening, people think of victory gardens. When you talk about energy, people think about solar collectors. They don't think about the relationships between food and energy, or of redefining the economy.

"The Institute staff has begun to examine the concept of viable city states. How far can we go toward self-sufficiency? Because by doing this we can measure how lightly we can tread on the natural environment, and how far we can stop living off the rest of the world. Ecology means interdependence, but it also means independence; humans and nature living in harmony, but not necessarily people living in complete interdependence on a global scale. Small is the scale of nature."

-David Morris, ILSR staff

How is the Institute building a local food and energy supply?

Hydroponics — Gardening Without Soil

Hydroponics is growing plants in a medium other than soil. An avocado pit, or a plant rooting in a glass of water is the simplest form of hydroponic culture. Plants can be grown in gravel, sand, or even sawdust. This material, called substrate, supports the root system of the plant and holds moisture. Water and the plants' nutrients are supplied by flooding the bed, usually twice a day. Either chemical or organic materials can be used.

"How many sealed but empty Minnesota porches could be converted into small greenhouses for winter or summer gardens?"

Traditionally flowers and tomatoes have been the choice of large commercial growers (40% of the tomatoes eaten in Tuscon are grown hydroponically), largely because of their high market value. But other produce such as peppers, beans, cucumbers, lettuce, cabbage, carrots and cantelopes have been grown successfully. The produce tastes good, matching the best on the market.

The Institute has begun rooftop gardening on their own four-story townhouse office, as well as in other dwellings in their neighborhood. Hydroponics works particularly well on rooftops and indoors because it does not weigh as much as six or seven inches of soil.

When I visited the Institute this summer the rooftop tomatoes were doing very well. Staff member, Gil Friend, told me of a possible project with the DC housing authority to create a garden/greenhouse on the rooftop of an old folks' highrise in Washington. While the city and the highrise staff see this as an "activities program" for the seniors, Gil and friends see it as an opportunity for residents to supply themselves with cheap, wholesome, and homegrown vegetables.

Washington is densely populated. Most residential areas are two to four-story walkup townhouses with tiny backyards or little or no front yards. Twin City residents are luckier. Even the most inner city neighborhoods have large yard spaces compared to the crowded Eastern cities. Backyard gardens could provide a large part of the summer and fall food needs. Other possibilities exist for the long Minnesota winter.

How many sealed but empty Minnesota porches could be converted to small greenhouses for winter or summer gardens? Or how many large, well-lit south windows could provide a home with a few juicy soft January tomatoes?

The Institute has published useful charts of the various nutrients that certain vegetables require and helpful hints learned through their hydroponic experience.

Sprouts — A Cottage Industry

One interesting ongoing project that is run out of the basement of the Institute is a sprout-growing industry. With a few donated bakers' shelves, some hand made racks, (using

screen mesh to support the growing sprouts), a scale, and a supply of bags, the industry supplies alfalfa and mung sprouts to Washington area food coops.

This operation helps employ people and pay some of the operating costs at the Institute. Some afternoons sprout-bagging and weighing the sprouts makes a real collective effort and a chance for the staff to talk and get away from the phones for awhile. This business along with their rooftop hydroponic garden is a working example of their philosophy that urban folks can supply many of their own needs, in this case food, in their own living space and community.

Energy planning on a community scale

Urban energy production is another crucial thrust for the Institute. From studies they have made of Washington DC's energy needs, they have found that the potential solar collector space on most of DC's rooftops is sufficient to supply heating and cooling energy for the residents inside. (They also discovered that this was not true for high-rise buildings.)

Furthermore, 16% of the land area of the city would be sufficient to supply all of Washington's electricity needs (not just residential, but all needs), if outfitted with solar electric cells.

Currently, the Institute is installing a solar water heating system on the roof of a townhouse. Feasibility studies of manufacturing solar electric cells are being made. David Morris is establishing a Solar Energy Center under the auspices of the cooperatvie extension service in DC.

David is also consulting with a community organization in Newark, NJ to establish an insulation and energy conservation work crew. Next, they hope to form a crew to install solar heat equipment. Depending upon the results of these projects, a solar collector manufacturing operation is slated to start in the next two years.

Along with decentralized energy, the Institute works to help design a decentralized economy. Bill Batko is a staffperson who is pursuing analyses of red-lining, credit allocation, and the feasibility of a municipal bank.

"Centralization . . . has been dominant so long that models and technologies of small scale are not well known to those who would work to create more self-sufficient neighborhoods."

How ILSR is Organized

The Institute for Local Self-Reliance is a non-profit educational and research organization. Operated in a cooperative manner, all staff people receive the same salary. Income made on Institution business goes back into the Institute. The work of the Institute breaks down into five areas:

Research - Investigating the potential for urban self-reliance. Staff members have done research projects on the economics of metropolitan waste treatment systems as compared to neighborhood or in-house systems, the potential for food production inside municipal areas, and a comparison of the economics of solar versus nuclear generated electricity.

Education - The Institute has produced a series of different aspects of the urban problem, em-

The sun beams down on ILSR's office. A sprout industry is run in the basement, and vegetables are grown on the roof. ILSR photo.



phasizing easy-to-read literature that the average person can use. Pamphlets on rooftop vegetable gardening using soilless techniques and how-to pamphlets on compost operations and food delivery systems are among those already published.

Demonstration models - Staff members develop working models of various decentralist and ecologically rational production and service systems in order to test their workability as well as to have more concrete teaching tools for the educational programs. Demonstration models in urban aquaculture, rooftop gardening, cottage industry, and neighborhood recycling and fertilizer production have already been established.

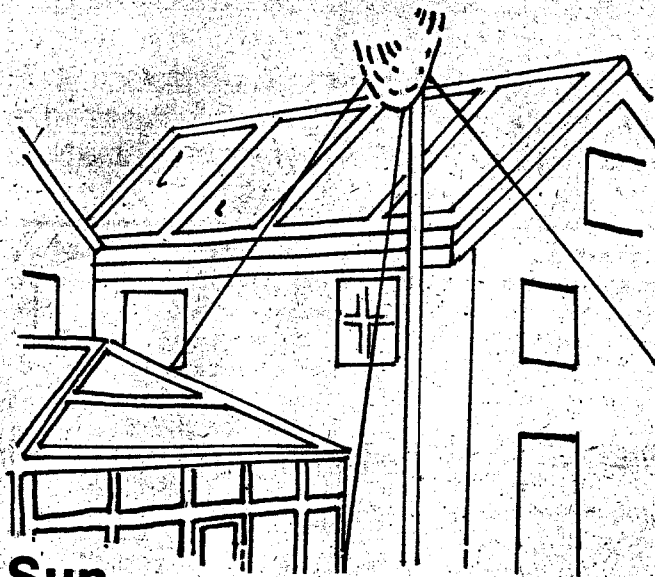
Technical assistance - Where appropriate, the Institute gives technical assistance to communities, cities and organizations which are interested in exploring in practical terms the question of local initiative and independence. Current technical consulting possibilities are a waste/sanitation project in Brooklyn, New York, and a public housing project that incorporates self-sufficient systems in Newark, New Jersey.

Information service - The Institute has an extensive library on urban development, local production systems and appropriate technology and a directory of individuals and organizations working in related fields.

The resurgence of neighborhood self-control is taking place in communities across the country. People are realizing the value of local community controlled businesses, schools, clinics, etc., and how these institutions of smaller scale are a viable and human-scaled alternative to over-centralized and bureaucratic governmental and large-scale production systems.

The mentality of "big is good" and "consolidation is efficient" is beginning to show its weaknesses. This trend toward centralization and bigness in business, government and social planning has been dominant for so long that models and technologies of small scale are not well known to those who would work to create more self-sufficient neighborhoods. The Institute for Local Self-Reliance is a pioneer in making working models that others can use.

Mike is active in the Peace Education Project and in Coop Outreach



Sun

by Darryl Thayer

Solar energy now supplies some of the heat for all of our homes. Each south-facing window brings it in: as long as the sun is shining, more heat is brought into the house than escapes outside.

How could your house use more solar energy? Does solar energy compare well with other fuels? Is it more economical than adding better insulation?

As an energy source that will protect the environment, solar energy could be ideal--especially if you consider the alternatives: fighting wars over oil in the Middle East, the risks of nuclear contamination or the strip mining of South Dakota and Wyoming to generate more electricity for heat, or continuing to raise havoc with our economy as high oil costs contribute to inflationary costs for all products.

However, as an investment, solar is still risky--there is currently no collector which is economical for home heat in Minnesota, if you have to foot the bill yourself and pay interest charges. Neither will solar heat give you enough energy by itself to eliminate the need for your furnace. Solar energy has to be considered a supplement to other fuels.

I'd like to describe how solar energy works, how it might be useful, and then add some basic principles you should keep in mind when considering the use of solar energy.

There are three ways to convert the sun's energy into useful power. One is thermal conversion--to heat water or for space heating. Second, sunlight can be converted directly into electricity by solar ("photo-voltaic") cells. Third, sunlight is changed into chemical energy in green plants by

photosynthesis. Of these, perhaps the best way to use the sun may well be to use photosynthesis. We may also find a way to make thermal conversion practical, as well.

For thermal conversion, two types of collectors are made:

- Flat Plate (see drawing), which basically is a flat box which gathers sunlight over its entire surface, heating the surface.
- Concentrating, which use mirrors or lenses to focus the sun's rays in one place. This means higher temperatures can be reached.

Many collectors are a combination of these two types. Also, some are stationary while others follow the sun as it travels across the sky.

The designs I work on most are concentrating collectors. It was an arbitrary choice that got me started on them, but my work leads me to the opinion they hold more promise than flat plate designs.

Rather than being able to give you clear measurements of how valuable a heat source solar energy is, I can give you some principles to keep in mind as you are planning:

1. The value of a solar collector depends on the value of the fuel you are replacing by using it. If your alternative is burn waste paper for heat, solar energy isn't very economical. If your alternative is to burn oil or electricity, solar is relatively more valuable, but still not competitive. As prices rise in the future, though, solar will look increasingly valuable.
2. Solar heat shouldn't be the only source of heat for your house or apartment. On a collector large enough to heat the entire building, you pay for a large surface area whose full capacity is useful only on a few of the coldest days of the year. In contrast, on a smaller system, all of its surface area can be contributing heat over several months. There will need to be some kind of backup system.
3. Domestic water heating seems to be one of the best uses for solar energy right now. Less collector space is needed than in space heating, and you need the heat all year round (which makes the investment more worthwhile).
4. One square foot of a typical collector can save between 20-40¢ during the heating season. (This is based on a typical collector's performance and an oil price of 40¢.

per gallon--this means that if money is worth 10%, the most you should spend is \$4.00 per square foot, and that is for a very efficient collector.) The cost of fuel is likely to increase, and collectors will become more valuable as the cost of fuel rises.

What all this means is that, in terms of spending your money, the best way for you to spend it is to put 6" of insulation in your walls, and 12" in your ceiling. This works out to be an R-factor of roughly 24 and 40.

I say that because I can in fact predict that you will save a given amount of heat by insulating. As I said, I can't predict as well the savings from solar heat. But I don't mean to be discouraging.

Solar heat is a tool we are probably going to need in order to protect the environment. While it appears expensive now, the alternatives are frightening. We may need to find a way to afford it. And we might as well find that way now because the costs of developing solar energy will only go up.

Darryl is an engineer for Sheldahl Co. in Faribault. He designs solar collectors.

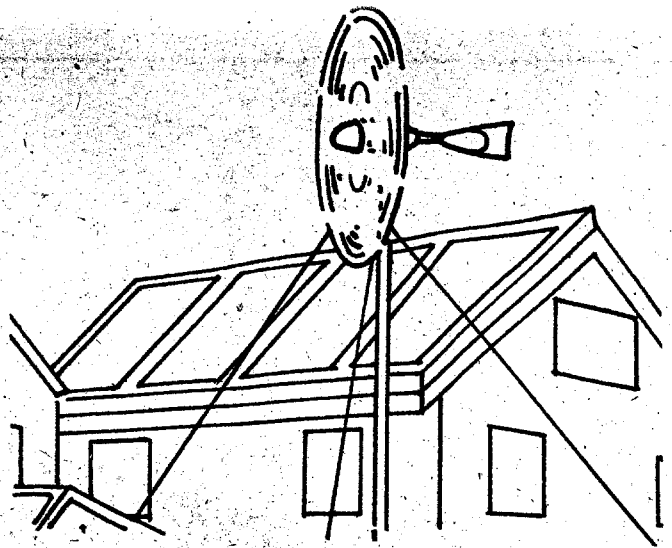
Wind

by Ken Meter

Martin Jopp, of Princeton, Minnesota, has been generating all of his own electricity for some 30 years from wind generators he built himself. He designed them, and built them in his own shop, even casting his own parts with metal from old motors. He has two working windmills, each of which generates 120 volts (DC). His most recent one, built in 1953, has been on the tower generating electricity ever since he put it up --he hasn't even had to oil it.

Back in the thirties, before REA (Rural Electrification Association) came in with utility service, many of the farms in Minnesota had wind generators. They were not often as powerful as Martin's, and usually used to power the barn, a pumping system, or even a radio.

There was enough of a market, though, to support at least two businesses in the midwest: Wincharger, in Sioux City, Iowa, and Jacobs Co., right here in Minneapolis. Even in those days, however, a complete wind system was expensive. But the windmill companies gave way because there was more money to be made in electric utilities. The smaller investment and greater convenience of hooking up to a power line proved persuasive to



most farmers. But we haven't forgotten how to make windmills work.

How do you use wind power? It's fairly straightforward. The wind blows through a rotor mounted high on a tower. The rotor is designed very differently than the bulky, circular set of blades on a water-pumping tower that still stand --typically a wind generator looks more like an airplane propeller.

Newer, fancy models look something like an upside-down eggbeater, but an old 55-gal-long drum can be turned into a rotor, too.

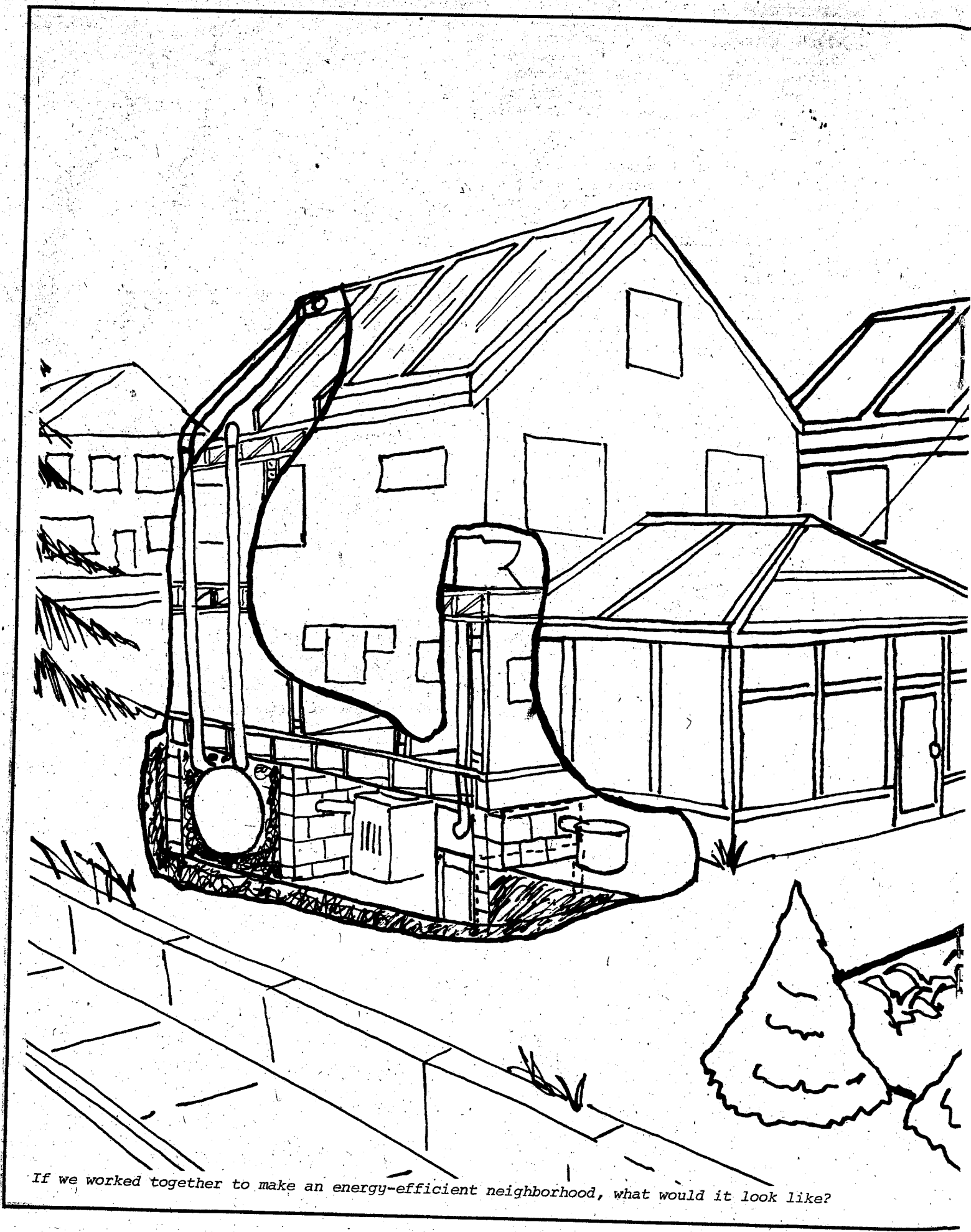
The wind gets the rotor spinning, and the rotor drives a generator. Like a car generator, this changes rotary motion into an electrical current.

Back on the ground, batteries are usually used to store the electricity until its needed. If used sparingly, this supply can last through several days of the doldrums.

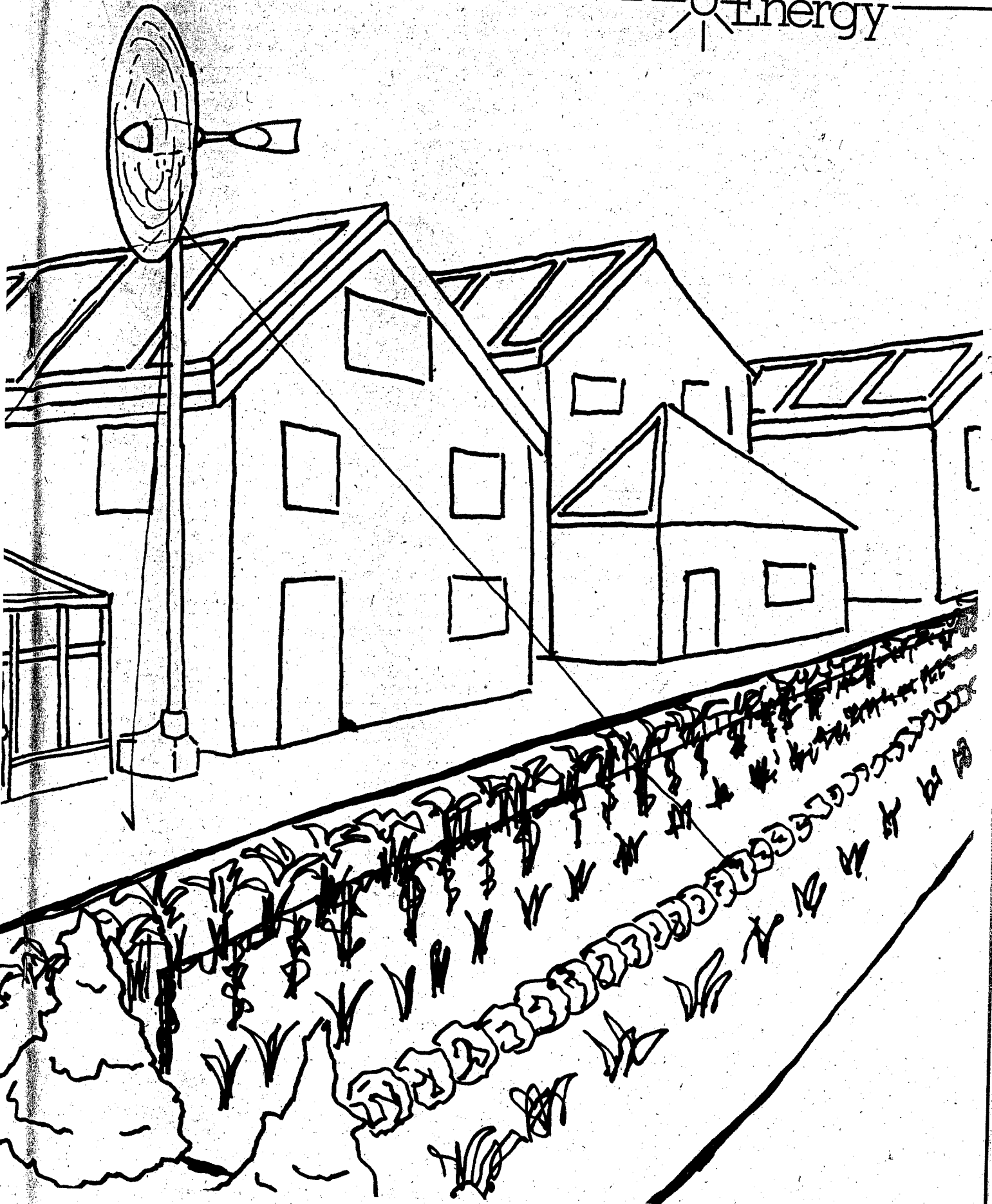
How useful are windmills in the city? I don't believe its been tried much, so we do not really know. We know from a recent ERDA (the Energy Research and Development Agency) study that Minneapolis is one of the windiest major cities in the country, so there is at least a breath of hope.

Tall towers might be impractical because of liability laws --the danger of people climbing them and getting hurt, the consequences of a blow-over during a heavy storm, for example. New tower designs might be made, however. Or, towers might need to be limited to certain areas of the city much as high voltage towers are now.

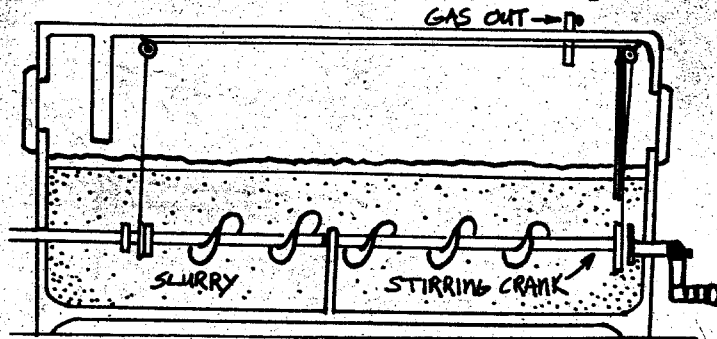
On the other side, some of the new rotor designs require less height on a tower. These could even be feasible for rooftop installation. What is definite is that we need to experiment with designs and plans that could suit our urban area.



If we worked together to make an energy-efficient neighborhood, what would it look like?



A large obstacle is still cost. To have a windmill built for 120 volt power for your house could cost you \$5000. For most of us this is 20-40 years' worth of NSP bills. On the other hand, if you'd put one up when Martin did in 1953, you'd be close to having free electricity without the worries of nuclear radiation. It would provide you with a frugal but adequate power supply. However, if you are willing to take the time you could build a generator yourself for as little as \$200 in parts, a lot of help, much scrounging and months of offhours in the shop. It's exactly the kind of learning I hope will be happening in the self-reliance workshop.



Household Gas

by Al Rutan

Household gas isn't new. But thinking about making it yourself instead of having it supplied by the Gas Company is not yet a very common occurrence. Hopefully, it can become an ordinary procedure, if one so desires. At present if one wants the convenience of gas there is no other choice but to pay the price that the Gas Company demands -- for all practical purposes. Fail to pay and you're cut off.

Almost everybody knows that gas sold by the utility companies comes out of the ground. But that the same kind of gas can be made above ground isn't generally known. Actually, sewage plants around the world have been doing it for the last 80 years. The residue is a rich, fully aged fertilizer.

The tank used for receiving organic waste and converting it into gas and fertilizer is called a digester. Bacteria live there without oxygen and feed on this organic waste, digesting their food to produce gas called methane as an end product. The material that is not converted into gas is soil nutrient that is 6% rich in nitrogen. Plants just spring from the ground when fed with it. The material has the qualities of totally aged compost, so plant life will receive it immediately without any harmful effects.

The whole process sounds almost too good to be true, producing badly needed fuel on the one hand and badly needed plant food on

the other. So the question arises, why isn't this being done generally. And why isn't it being done by individuals specifically. If it works, why don't we know about it?

Rather than a single reason, there are several reasons why the production of household gas is not attempted yet on a small scale basis. While the sewage plants are proof positive that the process works, those plants are not energy efficient. They were not designed to produce energy, only render the handling of waste more practical. So while energy comes about as a by-product, it is relatively insignificant as to the amount of gas possible if the units were insulated to produce the gas abundantly.

Secondly, the energy companies are not about to teach people how they can make energy for themselves and thereby do away with much of the need for the energy companies. Things only occur rapidly in the commercial world when somebody figures out a way to make a fast buck easily. In the case of household gas production, this hasn't occurred yet.

There are potential hazards involved, for with gas production one is dealing with the production of energy that is very powerful. But as with electricity we can build various safeguards into the system and feel relatively comfortable with a potentially dangerous item close at hand.

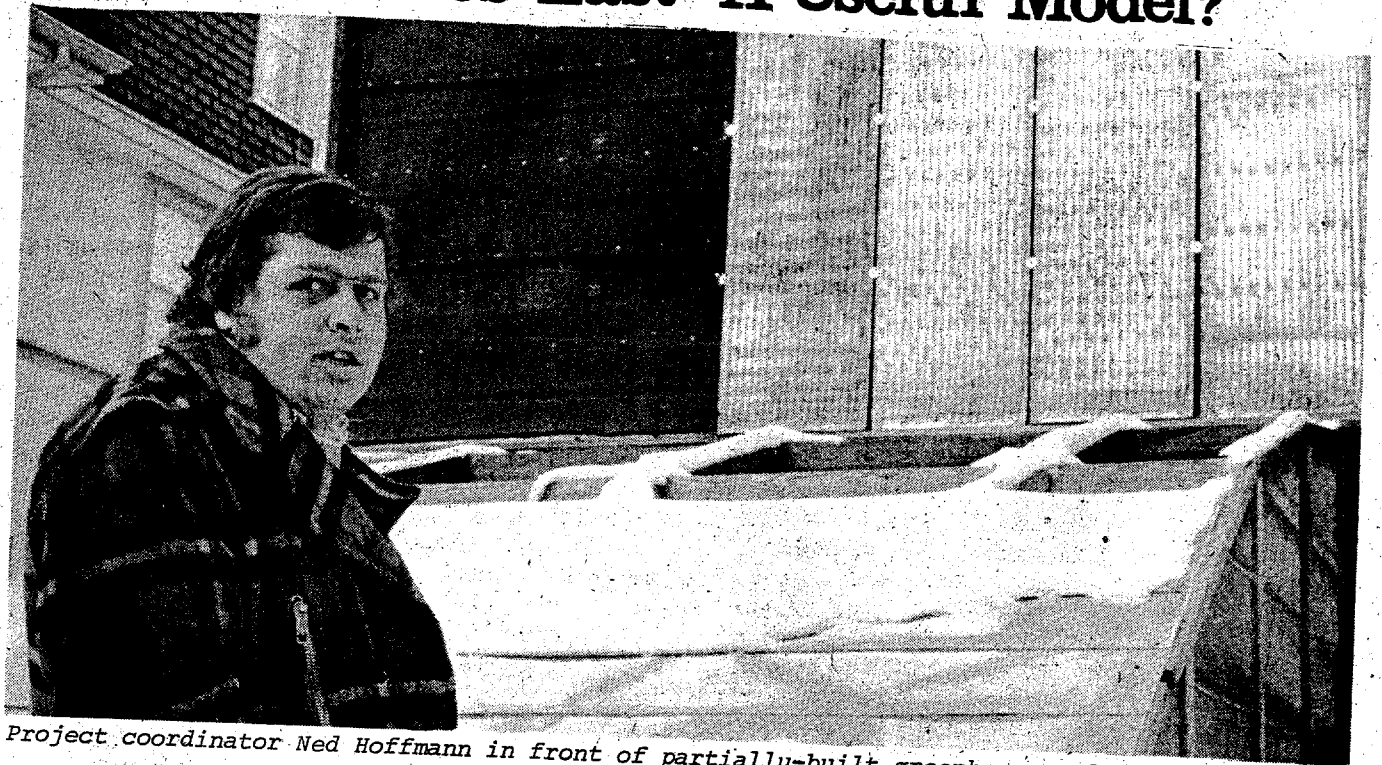
Making household gas can be compared to the making of bread. It's a natural process that takes a little guidance. Making bread is an art that allows leeway to a degree in the governing factors involved. One has to have a reasonable regard for the temperature involved, the material used, and the time consumed. Gas production is much the same. . . not a precise science but one that occurs within limits. The outstanding thing about gas production for organic waste is the large amount of fuel that can be produced from organic waste. Of the solid material used in the process, minus the water, half will be turned into gas. Each pound of completely dry organic material will produce between 7 to 10 cubic feet of gas at 8 oz pressure.

The writer currently has a project underway at Annandale, MN, on the north end of Sugar Lake. A three-bedroom house of 1500 square foot floor area is being equipped with a gas producing unit that will provide for the total needs of the house. Open for public viewing by the end of April, a fee will be charged to visit and learn about how the system works.

Al has been developing his own methane systems for five years, and heads Rutan Research.

Energy-Saving on Laurel Ave

Ouroboros East- A Useful Model?



Project coordinator Ned Hoffmann in front of partially-built greenhouse and solar collector

by Ed Levering

One of the longest and costliest rehab projects in St. Paul is now in progress on Laurel Avenue. A brown, Victorian house that was badly in disrepair just two years ago, it now sports new paint, and a landscaped front.

Instead of being rehabbed by an individual or family, the work has been done by a group which includes many architecture students at the U. of M. Instead of wood siding in the back, there is an immense flat surface--now plywood; it will soon be covered with metal and glass.

Unlike a typical rehab home, this one has applied for \$58,000 of Community Development Block Grant money. (That request was eventually withdrawn, and the search for funding continues.) Beyond that cost are thousands of dollars worth of donated equipment and help.

It is an expensive model of energy self-sufficiency, intended to show how independent a single-family home can be while still meeting state and city code, and while preserving the home's traditional appearance. The house is called "Ouroboros East."

How useful a model is this house for Twin

City neighborhoods? Does it really give us valuable information on how to rehab our own homes for energy conservation? What can we learn about insulation, solar collectors, alternative waste systems, windows, and so on? And, importantly, how does Ouroboros help the surrounding community?

The ideas and inspiration available at Ouroboros are clearly of great value. Seeing the house, even in its early steps of rehab, makes a very tangible and convincing case for energy-saving design. However, the cost of this house is tremendously large making it unlikely that any one could adopt the same planning in their own home-- As far as the community is concerned, while they have been closely consulted in the initial stages of the project, they have not been helped substantially--at least not yet. Here is what we found during our visit:

Practical Rehab Ideas

INSULATION: Existing information about insulation is often not accurate since insulation measurements are laboratory figures, not the results of actual use in houses. Ouroboros has answered this by installing electric measuring devices, called thermocouples, in the walls to make measurements of actual heat loss. Various types of in-

"It is expected that 60% of the heating needs of the house will be provided by solar collectors."

sulation are being used, including foam, batting, mineral wool, and others, so that good comparisons should be possible.

Any homeowner should be able to make more intelligent decisions about insulating their own homes on the basis of Ouroboros' experience. Good, solid information for homeowners should come out of this insulation experiment.

SOLAR COLLECTOR: A major feature of the Ouroboros East project is the construction of solar collector units on the south wall of the house, totalling 1,100 square feet of collector space. The solar collectors, composed of cold-rolled steel and covered by glass sheets, both heat the house and provide hot water. Thus, this demonstration will test the capacity of solar energy to supply basic energy needs; it is expected that 60% of the heating needs of the house will be provided by the solar collectors. Such a high percentage is possible only because of the tight insulation--a backup furnace burning conventional fuel will supply the balance.

COSTS ARE STEEP: How likely is it that another homeowner could install such a solar device? Commercially available collectors run \$5,000 for one-tenth the surface area. Until cheaper production techniques are devised, people will likely need to construct their own solar collectors from inexpensive, recycled materials, doing the work themselves.

WASTE TREATMENT: The Clivus toilet converts human waste and kitchen scraps into garden compost without the use of water for flushing. Its main drawback is the initial cost: \$1700. Once installed, however, there is virtually no cost to operate or maintain it.

The existing health codes make it illegal. There certainly don't appear to be any health hazards from the Clivus, but existing codes were written long before such a device was invented, and don't take anything but traditional plumbing into account. The city has cooperated well by granting a variance for the installation of the unit. They will be monitoring the bacterial levels as the Clivus is used.

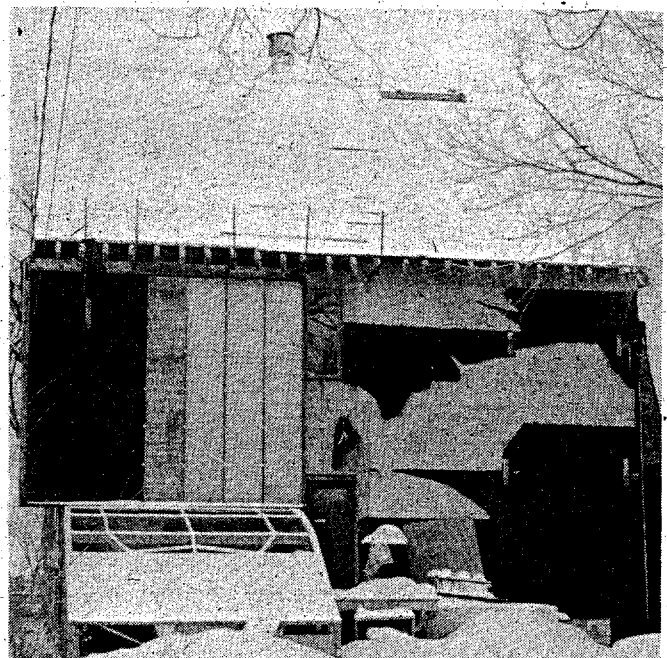
A more traditional answer to waste treatment is a new, small water-closet toilet built by American Standard. This toilet

saves large amounts of water by reducing the amount of water used in flushing--two gallons as opposed to seven gallons for an ordinary toilet. With the increasing demands for water conservation (some experts predict there may be no drinkable water in the Twin Cities by 1985) both the organic Clivus and the small-closet toilet will be increasingly needed alternatives to the wasteful systems now in use.

Several other features are more easily suited to use in other homes: heat-conserving windows (manufactured in Sweden), shutters to prevent heat loss at night. New fireplaces have been installed which help to heat the house. Cold air is caught in the bottom, heated behind the fire, and rises into the living space.

The daily use of the Ouroboros house will not be typical of a single-family house. Being a demonstration project, the home is used for meetings and workshop space as well as living space. Specifically, the first floor will be used for meeting rooms, conference rooms, a library and office space. The second and third floors are living space for people working there. The basement will be used for workshop space. Measurements of energy saved at Ouroboros may not match the savings which a residential house will realize.

Solar collectors will cover a large expanse of the southern wall and roof.



"It is essential . . . that neighbors be intimately involved at every step, and trained at every opportunity along the way."

As discussed in this article, then, the demonstrations at Ouroboros house have varying degrees of accessibility and applicability to the average homeowner. Publications on the project, such as the book Ouroboros East contain a large amount of data and drawings that would ultimately be of value to the individual homeowner.

However, the information is in many cases too technical for the average person, and is not presented in a clear format at all. It is hard to figure out what the charts mean, the printing is spotty, and the layout confusing. If the information could be presented in a concise and understandable form, more people could learn from the house.

Will Neighbors Learn How To Build Their Own?

Moreover, while the house has served exceedingly well in providing hands-on experience to architecture students, there seems to have been no training given directly to residents of the neighborhood. Why did this happen?

Certainly, the project began with close communication with the neighborhood. Nearby residents were invited to an informational session, and told that the project would be stopped if they were opposed to it.

From the front, appearance has been altered only slightly. Photos by Ken Meter.



Some of the objections that were raised by community members at these meetings were safety concerns--would broken glass from the collector endanger children, would the windmill tower be a hazard because of storm damage or children climbing on it? Secondly, preservation of the historic appearance of the block was a major concern of residents. How well were these concerns heard?

Plans for the tower were eventually scrapped because of a combination of resident apprehensions and legal liabilities. Moreover, the exterior of the house was fixed up well, early in the rehab process, even though that meant extra work in finishing the interior. The neighbors seem appropriately pleased:

Ed Knutson said he was "happy to have it on the block." He called it a good experiment in alternative energy sources that he would like to see applied to the community at large. Linda Knutson added that the long construction period has been a little messy, and that she'd like to see the Ouroboros project work more intimately with the neighborhood.

Steve Madole, who has worked at the house, is "anxious to see it finished. I'd like to see more solar collectors in the neighborhood."

Initially skeptical, John Gehan recalled he didn't see at first "how it would fit into my life." He is optimistic now, after watching it develop, but cautioned that the idea needs to be translated into a way to meet community needs, where a specific need can be met by specific action.

In the future, Ouroboros expects to train community members in their workshop. It appears that much closer contact with the neighborhood will be required to make this a reality. It is essential, if the skills to build energy-saving devices and to do energy-wise rehab are to remain in the neighborhoods of the city, that neighbors be intimately involved at every step, and trained at every opportunity along the way. We hope that Ouroboros will seriously follow through on their intentions.

Ed is Resource Director at the Community Design Center.

Building a Center for Local Self-Reliance

by Bill Hatton

The Center For Local Self-Reliance (CLSR) is a group of people who have come together around their concerns about energy. Shortages of fossil fuels (coal, oil and by-products) important in heating and transportation have been evident for the past ten years.

The fact that shortages exist means prices will rise. Since fossil fuels are important in plastics, resins, fibers, electronics, and food, these products will also become more expensive.

In one way or another, we all use these products and expect them to be available. What we pay for them now is relatively little, but how much will we pay in six months? What can we do about all this? What kind of impact will all this have on us? These are the questions that people in the CLSR are trying to find answers for.

First, we are directing ourselves to energy conservation in the home to reduce power costs. There are several approaches to energy conservation. The one chosen by the Self-Reliance Project was that of insulation.

A pilot program to teach ourselves about insulation and to insulate 10 Southside homes is underway with the help of the Minneapolis Housing and Redevelopment Authority. A variety of materials and several methods of installation are being used.

Heating costs for a two year period prior to installation, and a year after, will be evaluated. The results of the project will be recorded and published and made available to interested residents. This project will provide information on insulation efficiency and costs as well as provide a guide to effective energy conservation. The insulation project is only a part of our effort.

What, for instance, are you as a resident going to do if you find out you need your home insulated? What if you can't afford to have it insulated? What if you can't afford to have it installed . . . or don't know what the most efficient materials are . . . or don't know how, or have the tools to install it yourself?

Would it make a difference if you could go to a workshop where you could learn about the kinds of insulation you need and at what cost? A place where you might be able to get the proper insulation materials as well as the tools and instructions on how to install the materials and use the tools yourself? If it would, then you may be in luck.

Several members of the Center have been working on creating a Community Workshop where residents could get information on energy conservation, energy technology, or gardening. There, you could borrow from a tool library, learn to operate tools of all kinds, and observe various forms of alternative technology and how they work. The Community Workshop could also be used for research or projects by residents.

An important way to conserve energy is to move production of food as close as possible to the place where it is consumed. This eliminates huge transportation costs and nutritional loss. The CLSR hopes to help city residents find nearby land to garden and offer technical assistance with organic methods.

Classes in food preservation are planned. The possibility of setting up a community food preservation center is being explored. Growing and preserving our own food are ways we can all work together toward conserving energy. Methods for using what are currently "wastes" as plant nutrient are being developed.

**“What kind of impact will (rising energy costs) have on all of us?
What can we do about all of this?”**

In all projects we are researching and collecting information as well as trying to find the best way to make it available to area residents. We plan to provide information about energy production, conservation, food growing and gardening, waste disposal and anything else that seems important to you.

At first we will provide that information in publications like Common Ground. We are video taping some projects and hope to find a way to make them available to a large audience. Much of what we have already done is rudimentary. We are creating a base for dealing with ongoing solutions to food and energy concerns. Some of these solutions are close to reality but much research and work is needed.

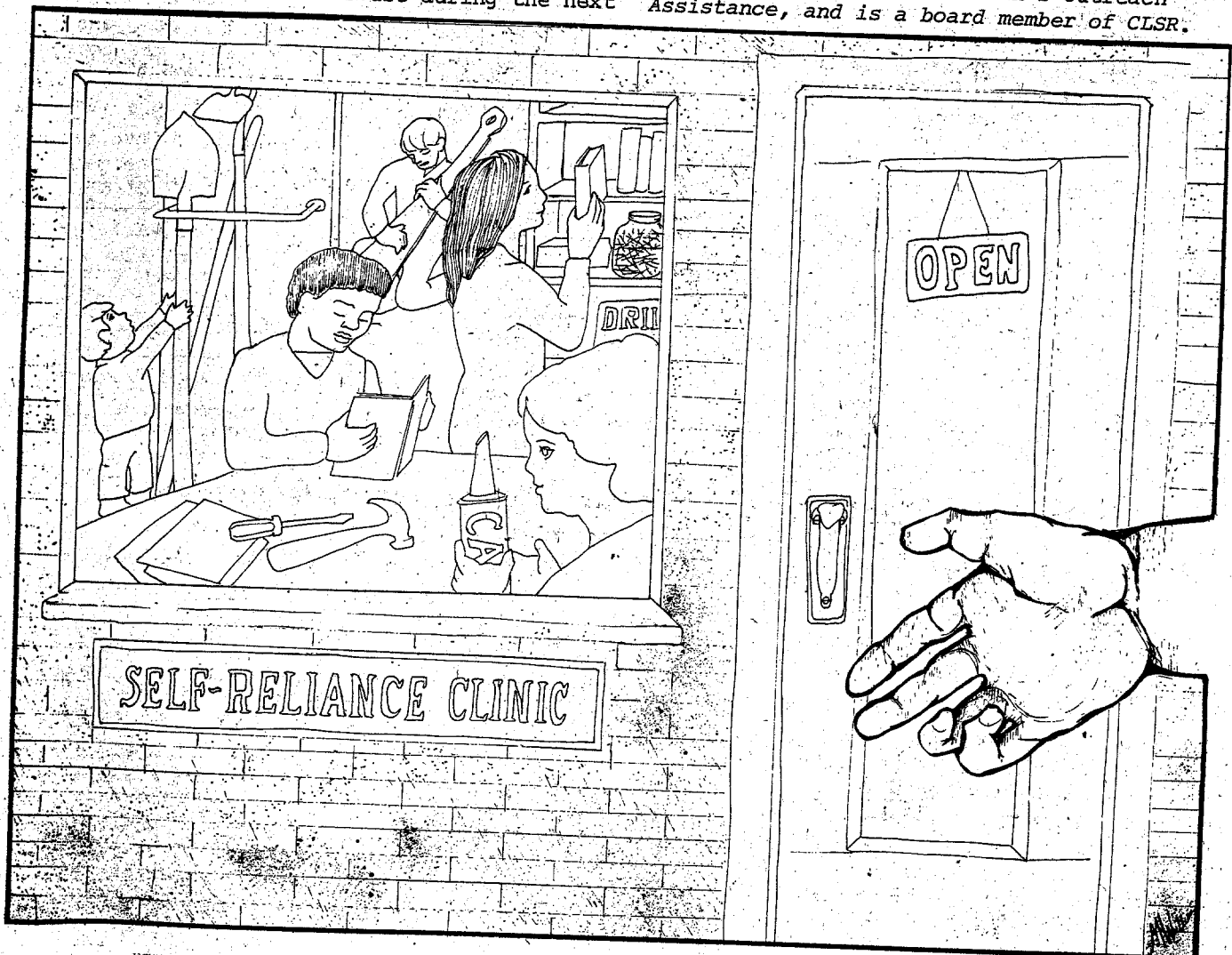
If prices continue to rise we must consider alternatives: Mechanical storage batteries could allow us to store electricity during off peak hours for use during the next

day. As well as saving energy, this could minimize the need for new power plants.

Solar cells, which convert sun energy into electricity, are another possible solution to rising power costs, if they can be produced cheaply enough. This doesn't currently seem feasible for 2 - 5 years. Hydroponic gardening (which is explained in Mike McCoy's article) is another promising area for home production of food.

These are solutions that hold some hope for the future and will require continuing research. In the meantime, you can help us plan by telling us what you'd like to learn about neighborhood food and energy, and how you can help us work on demonstration projects. Call the CLSR temporary phone number: 871-3232.

Bill Hatton works for Veteran's Outreach Assistance, and is a board member of CLSR.



INSULATION: REHAB FOR ENERGY CONSERVATION

by Jim Lenfestey and Warren Wunderlich

Jim and Warren are both volunteers at Community Design Center. Jim teaches American Indian literature and markets environmental products. Warren is a student intern at CDC. This special section on insulation was prepared and printed with the financial assistance of the Minneapolis Housing and Redevelopment Authority (MHRA), as part of the Insulation Program of the Center for Local Self-Reliance.

From an energy point of view, the vast majority of the Twin Cities housing stock is in disastrous shape. Built at a time when energy was cheap and the supply seemed endless, and built under totally inadequate building standards, these houses today present for the homeowner or renter tremendous drains on income in the form of high heating costs. They also represent a needless waste of the earth's non-renewable energy sources. They can also be miserable places to live.

Have you ever lived in an energy-eating house? Chances are you do right now. Note the symptoms: freezing in the winter (along with high heating bills) and roasting in the summer; the "cold well effect" when you can feel the temperature drop as you approach the wall (even though the furnace is humming), the wind blowing right through the walls (the curtains constantly rustling).

Perhaps, of course, your house is not this bad. Nevertheless, the odds are excellent that, unless it has been thoroughly gone over with an energy eye in the last few years, it can profit a good deal from a program of rehabilitation for energy conservation. And you can profit too, in markedly reduced energy costs, increased comfort and in a solid investment made in the future of your house and neighborhood.

There are three main ways to keep your house from squandering energy:

- (1) Insulate the attic, and perhaps the walls**
- (2) Add or replace storm windows and doors**
- (3) Caulk or weatherstrip around windows and doors.**

Insulation: What Is It?

Practically speaking, household insulation is defined by what it does: retard heat flow between the inside and the outside of a house. It is made of a lightweight material which traps air in small, isolated pockets. Since dead air is a poor conductor of heat, the more air that is trapped in this way, the better thermal properties (resistance to heat flow) the

house will have. Although in this article we will be discussing mostly the prevention of winter heat loss, it is important to realize that insulation is also valuable in the summer for the prevention of heat gain, which can often be extraordinary. An attic on a hot day can sometimes superheat to 175° or more and make upstairs rooms intolerable. Basically, insulation gives a house much greater thermal stability and through its resistance to heat flow can save 50% of energy use over an uninsulated house.

“(Good) Insulation can save 50% of energy-use. . .”

What Kind of Insulation is Available?

The insulating material available in the Twin Cities area for use in existing homes are mineral wool (rock or slag wool or fiberglass), cellulose fiber, vermiculite, perlite and urea-formaldehyde (a plastic foam). These are available in the following forms:

Blankets and Batts (mineral wool and fiberglass): blankets are rolls of insulation with vapor barrier (faced) or without (unfaced). Batts are similar to blankets but are cut into 4' or 8' lengths. Both come in various thicknesses from 1" to 6" and in widths to fit between wall studs or ceiling joists on 16" or 24" centers. They are useful for unfinished walls or open joist attic floors and accessible floors over cold spaces.

They are relatively easy to install and are widely available at building material supply centers (e.g. Knox Lumber, Budget Power) and at large retail stores with building material departments (e.g. Sears, Wards).

Pouring Insulation (mineral wool, cellulose, vermiculite, perlite shredded polystyrene): a loose fill type meant to be poured over attic floors. It comes in large bags with the area and depth of coverage indicated and is available at building supply centers.

Blowing Insulation (mineral wool, fiberglass, cellulose): a loose fill type blown into wall

cavities and attic floors with pneumatic equipment. Usually installed by a contractor but individuals or groups can also rent the equipment and do it themselves. Some building supply centers as well as some contractors will rent you the blowers and also will supply you with the required material.

Urea-Formaldehyde (a plastic foam which sprays out of a nozzle like shaving cream, then immediately sets up firm and dry): has the highest insulating value, won't allow the wind to blow through and won't settle. It is also the most expensive.

How Do They Compare? There is one comparative standard common to all insulation: its R value. R stands for resistance to heat flow. Two things you should remember about the R number. First, the higher the R number, the higher the insulating value. Second, you should always find out what the R number is per inch of the material you are considering. That is the basis for comparison. For example, don't confuse the R number for a 6" batt of fiberglass (it may say R-19 on it) with its per inch value.

The following table, taken from the Minnesota Energy Agency's pamphlet, "Ceiling Re-insulation Guidelines," indicates the average thermal resistance numbers for commonly used materials.

R-Values of Different Insulations

(R-Value is a measure of how well insulation will resist heat loss. The better the insulation, the higher the R-Value.)

Insulating Material	R-Value per inch	Thickness needed to get to a given R-Value:		
		R = 11	R = 22	R = 30
Batt and Blanket:				
Mineral Wool	R 3.15 - R 3.85	3 - 3 1/2"	5 3/4 - 7"	7 3/4 - 9 1/2"
Fiberglass	R 3.15 - R 3.85	3 - 3 1/2"	5 3/4 - 7"	7 3/4 - 9 1/2"
Loose Fill Type:				
Mineral Wool (rock, slag or glass)	R 2.88 - R 3.31	5"	10"	13 3/4"
Fiberglass	R 2.88 - R 3.31	5"	10"	13 3/4"
Cellulose Fiber	R 3.70	3"	6"	8 1/8"
Vermiculite (expanded)	R 2.13 - R 2.27			
Shredded Polystyrene	R 4.00			
Perlite (expanded)	R 2.70			
Foam:				
Urea-Formaldehyde	R 5.00	2 1/4"	4 1/2"	6"

"As heating costs rise, heavier insulation will become even more economical."

While the R value is the most important quality of the insulation, there are other considerations. The material should be fire-proof and resistant to vermin and insects. Some insulations are more prone to settling than others, thus lowering their R values over time. Apparently mineral wool (rock wool and slag wool, not fiberglass) has a tendency to settle, as does cellulose. You might also consider whether the insulating material is made from renewable or non-renewable resources.

The U-F foam people claim that their product has the superior characteristics of entirely blocking wind flow through walls. Also U-F foam if properly applied will fill all cracks and not hang up on ridges within the wall cavity, thus insuring that there will be no uninsulated spots. Proper application requires some skill and experience.

How Much Insulation is Enough?

The FHA has established new minimum insulation standards for new construction: R-22 in attics, R-11 in walls and R-11 in floors over unheated spaces. These are also probably the minimum standards that you should consider in the refitting of an existing dwelling, though FHA currently has no standards for them. However, how much insulation you actually install depends upon a wide variety of additional factors.

The North Central Electric League, for example, an association of electric utilities, is currently recommending an R of 36 in ceilings under cold areas, R-14 in walls and R-24 in floors over unheated spaces for electrically heated and cooled homes. They have higher standards because electrical home heating is currently the most expensive per amount of heat delivered. However, as heating costs continue to rise, heavier insulation will become even more economical for all fuels.

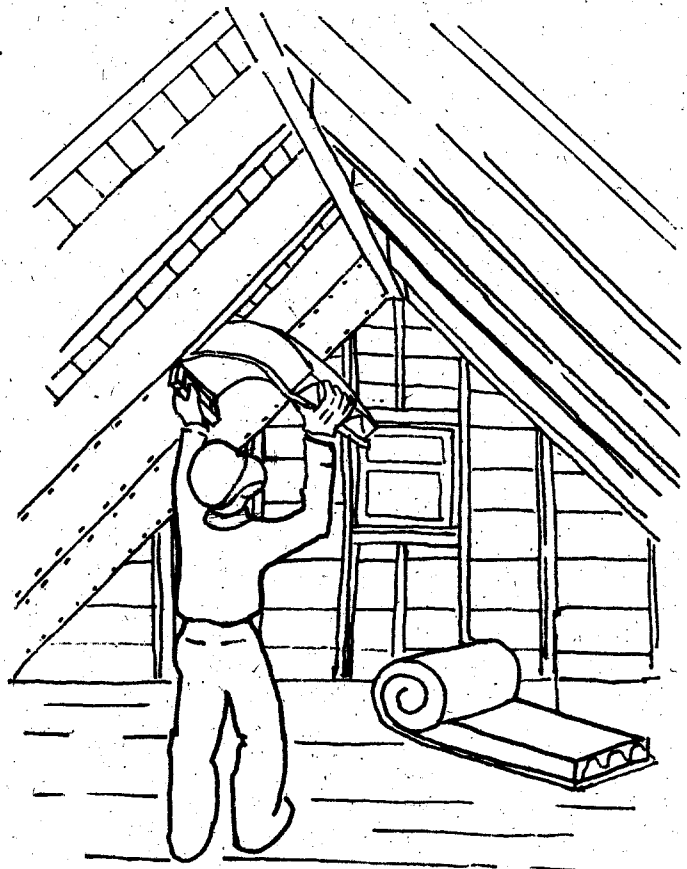
Also, the question of fuel availability should be considered. Both the oil and natural gas situations are uncertain in this area, leaving the average homeowner at the mercy of forces very much beyond his control: everything from international politics to oil and gas company policies to speeches in the US Senate. Not very comforting way down here, particularly when the heat goes off.

How Much Insulation to Buy?

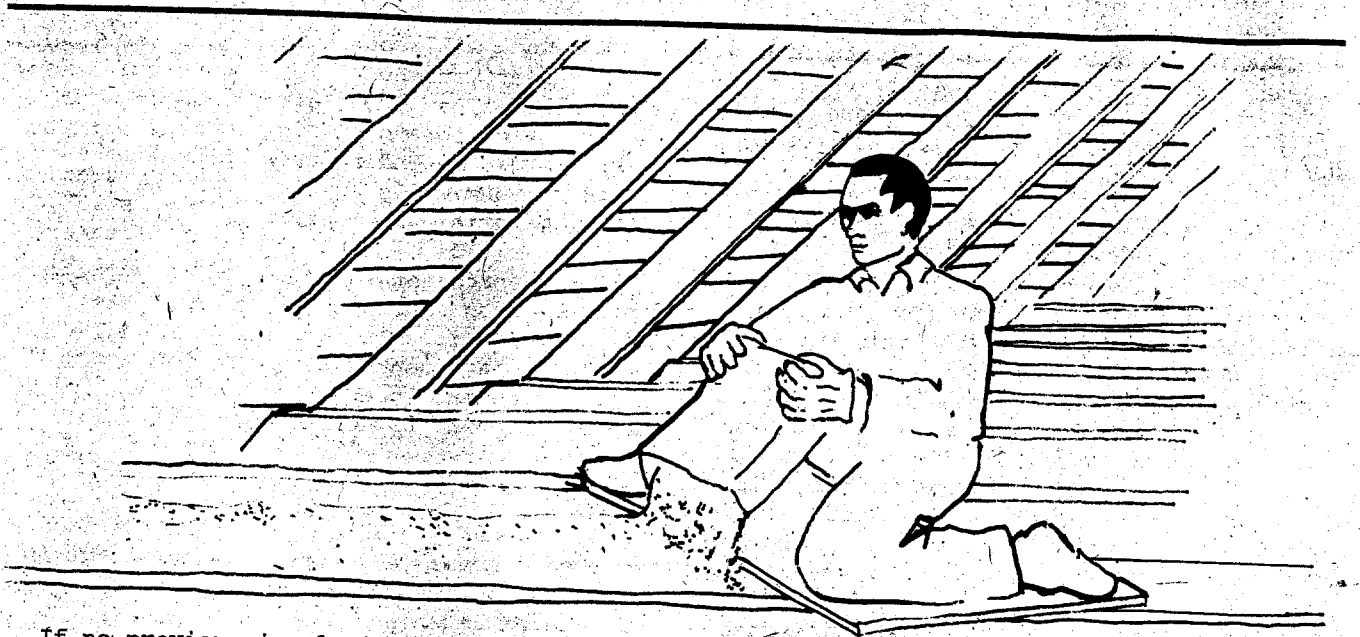
Measure the area (length times width) of the attic. Measure also the space between the floor joists. If the distance is 16", multiply the area by .90. If the distance is 24", multiply the area by .94. This will give you the area requiring insulation.

Next, subtract the depth of the existing insulation (if any) from the total depth needed to achieve your desired R value (unless it is very old and thoroughly compacted, i.e., useless). In all cases, plan to install a minimum of enough insulation to achieve an R of 22 and cover the joists. This will insure you a continuous thermal blanket which won't develop heat leaks.

You can use batts and blankets or pouring or blowing insulation - whatever you prefer. However, a problem with batts is that they may tend in time to pull away from the joists, leaving an uninsulated corridor for heat loss unless the batts have been covered with a layer of loose fill.



"Both the oil and the natural gas supplies are uncertain in this area leaving the average homeowner at the mercy of forces very much beyond his control."



If no previous insulation exists, you'll need to install a vapor barrier. Choose faced batts installed face down, or drape 4 mil polyethylene over the floor before blowing or pouring in loose fill. The vapor barrier prevents moisture, carried up by the heated air, from condensing when it hits the cold attic and soaking the insulation and even the ceiling below.

Wet insulation is useless. Crumbling ceilings are also undesirable. Note: never install a vapor barrier over existing insulation. The moisture will soak it for sure. What you need in this case is superior attic ventilation.

Time to recall the old Boy Scout slogan, "Be Prepared." Here's the simplest rule of thumb of all: The less heat loss a structure has, the less it takes to heat it. The less heat your house requires, the greater the possibility of heating adequately with alternative fuels, e.g. the sun, wood, etc., should it become necessary or practical to do so. In any event, the choice of options becomes a little more yours, a little less someone else's.

On the other hand, however, there is another rule of thumb: the more insulation you install, the more it's going to cost you. Existing structures particularly can create difficulties of installation in some areas. Sometimes solutions are comparatively expensive and may have to wait for governmental support. Ultimately, each house has its own

point of diminishing return on insulation. This point, based upon the cost of insulation, the current or projected cost and availability of fuel, and the savings which insulation will provide should be determined by the residents and owners.

Attics

Attics are the areas of greatest heat loss (40% of the total for the average home) and also are usually the easiest locations to install insulation. An application of attic insulation will provide you with the greatest benefit at the lowest cost.

R U Doing It Yourself, Rachel? If you supply your own labor, you will certainly save in the cost of the job. You will also develop a better understanding of your house and how it works and therefore should be better equipped to deal with problems should they arise. If U R Doing It With Your Neighbors, there are the additional advantages of shared labor and the possible economic benefits of cooperative buying and transporting. However, there are definite health risks (e.g. from breathing fiberglass particles) and possibilities of injury (e.g. swacking your brain-pan on a roofing nail), so take adequate precautions and be careful.

What is the payback time for attic insulation? The Minnesota Energy Agency has evidence that insulating a 1,000 square foot attic should save at least 15% in heating costs. This savings leads to a payback period of 3 -

"The landlord is 'insulated' from the financial effects of his 'heat-eating' building."

6 years if you heat with natural gas or 2 - 4 years for oil, depending on the cost of insulation (from 15¢ to 30¢ per square foot). Under the right conditions, payback could conceivably be within one year.

Walls

If you are totally rehabilitating your house and have taken down the interior walls (or if they have fallen down), then you can install batts in the space between the studs with a vapor barrier over them. Don't miss the opportunity. If the walls are intact, you'll probably need a contractor who will drill through the exterior or interior of the house between each pair of studs and blow in the insulation.

Obviously, the cost of installation rises as the exterior facing gets harder or as the refinishing of the interior walls gets more difficult. In choosing a contractor, try to get at least 3 competitive bids, but consider quality and experience as well as cost. Particularly in the case of U-F foam, the quality of the job can come down to the skill of the person at the nozzle and the skill of the plasterer. If you can do the replastering yourself, so much the better.

How much will you save? Well, about 30% of the heat your house loses goes out through the walls. That translates to savings of 5% to 15% of the total heating bill (or possibly more), depending upon the current state of your walls and the kind of insulating material you choose.

The payback for wall insulation depends entirely upon your house. Check it out. It may be worth it. If not, hang on: Federal subsidies may soon be available for qualified homeowners to upgrade insulation. That may be the time to do the walls.

Floors

If you can get at any uninsulated floor over cold areas (e.g. crawl spaces), put in batts, vapor barrier up. Hold them in with wire laced between nails in the joists. A dirty job, but ultimately good for you.

Storm Windows and Storm Doors

Direct heat loss through doors and windows without storms accounts for 20 - 30% of heating costs for most houses. By installing a storm or covering a window with clear plastic you will save \$4 - \$5 on each average window and about \$3 for each door, over a year.

If You're Renting . . .

If you are a renter, and if you are paying your own heating bill (as a majority probably are), then you are in a bind. There is little in this type of landlord-tenant agreement to give incentive to the owner to reduce the property's heat loss. You pay the rent. You also pay the rapidly escalating heating costs.

The landlord is "insulated" from the financial effects of his "heat-eating" building. Unfortunately, this situation is often the worst in low-rent, older houses, which on the one hand have the highest heat losses and consequently the highest heating costs, burdening those who can least afford it, and yet least inspire the owner to make necessary improvements, especially in non-"cosmetic" areas like insulation. Yet another case of "when you're poor, the world sure gives you plenty of easy opportunities to get poorer."

What You Can Do

-When looking for a place to rent, be sure to ask about insulation and other energy-saving improvements. Best if you can check it out yourself. A little dust on your hands and knees from a trip to the attic may end up saving you a bundle in high heating bills if you find nothing there. Choose only those places which are up to the latest standards or whose owner's agree in writing to make them so in a defined period of time.

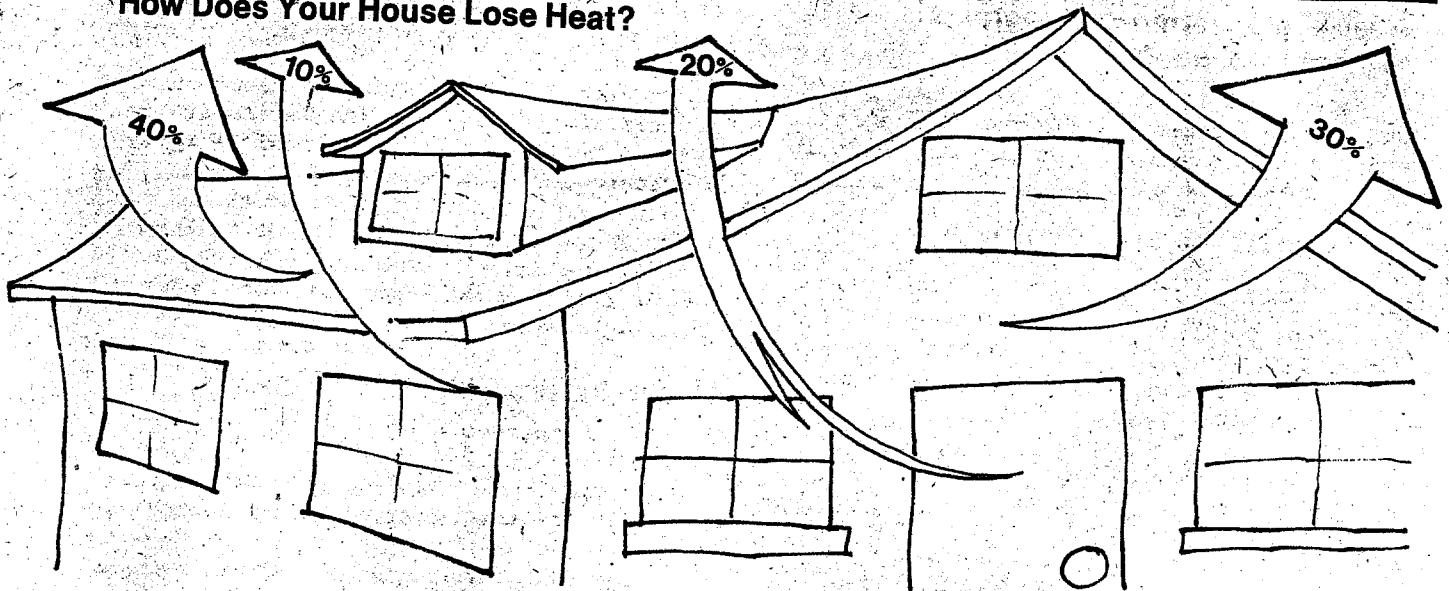
-Seek rental agreements in which the owner provides the heat.

-Talk to the owners about upgrading the heat loss qualities of the building. Do what you can yourself.

-Explore the possibility of cooperative ownership of the property with other renters and members of the community. As both owners and tenants, everyone's interests will be best served by conserving energy in as many ways as possible.

"In the case of U-F Foam, the quality of the job can come down to the skill of the person at the nozzle. . . ."

How Does Your House Lose Heat?



This can amount to as much as a 15% reduction in your annual heating bill. It may seem that paying \$20 - \$30 for each storm window and \$40 - \$75 for each storm door is too costly, but because of the substantial energy savings possible, the cost can be recovered in only 5 - 10 years.

After that, the money you save on heating goes into your pocket. The same savings are possible for much less cost by installing clear plastic with wood battens (less than \$1.00/window). This low cost method may be preferred by renters. Another thing to remember is that storm doors should have a spring closing mechanism. Storm doors won't do any good unless they close tightly.

Caulking and Weatherstripping

The average home loses around 10% and perhaps much more of the heat through crack leakage around doors and windows. This leakage is known as infiltration and a certain amount of it is necessary. But in most houses, especially older ones, infiltration is excessive.

Excessive crack leakage is a result of normal aging of a house and poor quality construction. Window caulking dries out and crumbles. Weatherstripping becomes worn or bent out of shape, or may not even have been installed. Doors and windows lose their tight fit as a house settles over the years. You can locate these heat wasters by feeling for drafts around doors and windows, by checking for rattling or loose fitting window panes and sashes, and looking for light coming in around door frames.

Depending on how bad the caulking and weatherstripping situation is at your house, you could save 5% to 10% or more on your heating bill with a few simple, inexpensive techniques:

Replace missing or crumbling caulk around window panes (25¢/window).

Caulk the frames of metal combination storm windows.

Install or replace metal spring strips around windows (\$2 - 4/window).

Install, replace or re-position metal spring strips, or rubber or felt gaskets around doors (\$4 - 10/door).

Ventilation

Insulated attics need ventilation to remove heat in the summer and moisture in the winter. Eaves vents also help to prevent ice build-up. Talk to a contractor or refer to the pamphlet, "How to Save Money by Insulating Your Own Home," (see resource list) for details on how much vent area you need. This pamphlet also gives detailed instructions for the installation of insulation.

Insulation & Neighbors

Adapting government programs to meet local needs

Homeowners in Northeast Minneapolis buy and contract cooperatively for insulation under a unique program set up with the help of the local HRA office.

The local HRA office had tried to set up workshops and informational sessions to help people in insulating their own homes. But, according to Ellen Pence, HRA staff, "We found that it could cost \$200-300 (per home to insulate the attics). People here don't have that kind of money."

A special problem was venting the attics. Although it was easy for people to consider installing their own insulation, many were wary of the carpentry work required to vent the attics properly. HRA was able to provide assistance for carpentry work.

To further cut costs and alleviate the financial strain, HRA assisted several neighborhood residents in setting up a non-profit corporation, Project Heat. Through this corporation, insulation will be bought

in bulk directly from the manufacturers and re-sold to residents at cost.

Project Heat will also lever loan money to perform painting and insulation on area homes. The corporation will contract for services with local contractors who will bid on homes as a group, cutting overhead costs. To qualify for the program, contractors will be required to hire 2-3 unemployed people from the neighborhood to help do insulation work.

Group Contracting for Insulation

Nine members of the Lexington-Hamline Community Council decided to join together to see what they could do collectively to minimize the energy wasted from their homes.

First, they contacted NSP and the state Energy Agency to determine the alternatives that were available to them. From them, a list of contractors was also obtained.

Bids were solicited for all nine houses as a group, from three contractors. The group saved 15% by working together.

How Much Does It Cost, Roughly?

ATTIC FLOOR: for a 1,000 square foot attic, unfloored, without any previous insulation, to add enough insulation to reach R-22. Savings of \$300 per year.

		Materials only	Contractor Installed
Fiberglass Batt (with vapor barrier)	7"	\$215	\$400
Poured Cellulose	6"	185*	230-260
Poured Fiberglass	7"	270*	300
Poured Mineral Wool	10"	265*	260-300
*Extra for Vapor Barrier (4 mil plastic)		13	
VENTILATION (needed for all types)		100	250

WALLS: Cellulose: materials are relatively inexpensive and you can blow in yourself after drilling holes through outside or inside walls. Cellulose will settle, and you may have to add more insulation after 10 years or so.

3 3/4" R=14 300 1200-1800**

Foam: foaming should definitely be done by an expert.

3 3/4" R=19 - 1500-3000**

**These estimates are very rough, and will depend upon size of house, wall thickness, existing insulation, etc. In our demonstration project, the estimates for larger houses ran as high as \$4700.

THE PRICES ON THIS CHART ARE ONLY MEANT AS A ROUGH GUIDE. CHECK WITH SUPPLIERS YOURSELF.

Insulation & Neighbors

Federal Assistance — How Helpful?

\$800,000 of federal money for insulation will be coming into Minnesota in 1976 through the Community Services Administration. Is this federal money really designed to help solve insulation problems on a local level? To check that out, I talked to RAP (Ramsey Action Program) in St. Paul, who will be administering a "winterization" plan for Ramsey County. We discovered that, although RAP was combining federal funds creatively to build an insulation program, its hands are tied by the strings attached to the federal money.

Of the \$300,000 that RAP is hoping to piece together from several federal sources, \$100,000 is directed to insulation materials and emergency aid (for people who are unable to pay for heat or insulation. With that money, RAP has targeted a goal of 100 homes to be insulated in the year. However, federal guidelines allow them to give a maximum of \$350 per house in materials.

What will \$350 buy? On an average size house, \$350 is good for attic insulation plus some storm window repair. One homeowner I talked to, however, said that he needs \$485 in storm windows alone. While this is a significant help in cutting the heat bill, it is hardly a complete job of insulation--which in many houses would require \$1500 for materials alone.

The real bind, though, is the eligibility criteria. To qualify for the program, you have to both own a home and earn less than 25% above the federal (Dept. of Commerce) poverty limits. That is, a family (sic) of 2 must earn less than \$4262.50; a family of 4 must earn less than \$6312.50. How many

This section on insulation is part of the Center for Local Self-Reliance's insulation program. Formed by a group of Southside residents, the CLSR also represents a collaboration of several community-based organizations: Community Design Center, Common Ground, and Walker Community Video.

Money for a demonstration project was released by the HRA after the Powderhorn Community Council approved funds for the Self-Reliance proposal. Nine houses were

people in St. Paul earn so little yet also own a home?

Roger Hughes, RAP planner, agreed that benefits would go primarily to senior citizens and long-term unemployed people (who owned their houses before their income was cut off). He also assured me that emergency assistance for insulation or for heat bills was available.

But it is clear that there are many more people who need assistance, and federal guidelines just don't account for us. For instance, an AFDC family of 4 receives "too much" in benefits to qualify for these guidelines.

While the program is a weak insulation program, it is strong as a jobs program. The bulk of the money (\$200,000) will go directly into creating jobs for 25 people who will be hired, trained, and paid to insulate and "inventory the energy needs of the city."

But a "winterized" home is not necessarily a "well-insulated" home. With so much money dedicated to jobs, why not use enough insulation to make homes really tight?

The answer is that the federal guidelines don't allow us to solve the problems that we see here on a community level. Another case where local community groups can plan and design a program better for themselves.

If you qualify for insulation assistance, or need emergency aid, you can call the winterization office, 630 Laurel, St. Paul. The office will be open March 1, 1976.

insulated, three by the owners and six by contractors.

Results from this demonstration program will be published in a later issue of Common Ground. A video tape is also being produced to document the program, and it will be available to community groups.

Reviews of neighborhood insulation projects by Ken Meter.

Energy Resources

Resources for Energy Rehab

Operation Button-Up This is a federally funded task force run by the City of Minneapolis. Fill out their detailed questionnaire and, for a fee of \$2 (cheep!), they will send you a computer print-out estimating costs and savings, payback time and percentage yield on investment for ceiling insulation, storm windows and doors, weatherstripping and caulking and lower thermostat settings. Contact Sam Nodland, Operation Button-Up, 301-M City Hall, Minneapolis 55415; 348-8452. Though the funding has technically run out on this project, they will still run the computer program. Responses take 4-5 weeks.

Johns-Manville Insulation Center They too have a questionnaire, similar but less detailed than the one above, from which they will supply you with similar information. FREE. Write Johns-Manville Insulation Center, Drawer 17-1, Denver, Colorado. J-M is one of the largest manufacturers of fiberglass insulation, among other things.

Minnesota Energy Agency It's a fledgling State agency very much eager to help any way it can. Currently there are two pamphlets, "Ceiling Reinsulation" and "Residential Thermal Improvement;" and they have lots of other information if you need it, including "Save Energy, Save Money," an OEO published booklet that is indispensable. Wise, entirely disinterested, down home, with chapters on "Keeping warm," "Using the sun," "Furnaces, stoves and fireplaces" and much more. All solutions are simple, basic and do it yourself. No more than we would expect from the Eccli's of Alternative Sources of Energy magazine fame, who prepared it. FREE. MEA, 740 American Center Bldg, 160 East Kellogg Blvd, St. Paul MN 55101. 296 5120.

Northern States Power Riding the energy conservation bandwagon with a vengeance, they are. They have put out their own very useful pamphlets and have available many others. Seek out especially "How to save money by insulating your home: practical instructions and advice on doing it yourself or hiring a contractor." Limited to product scope (the pamphlet is put out by the National Mineral Wool Insulation Assoc.), it nevertheless is just what

it says, including advice and instructions on insulation, storm windows, weatherstripping, caulking, et al.

Also pick up "The Energy Crisis: What Can We Do?" This one, put out by oil and electric people, is quite comprehensive and is particularly useful as an operation manual for the energy-conscious household. Everything from how to cook food wisely to how to dress warmly. They don't even puff themselves too loudly. Too loudly. NSP also has a list of "qualified" (i.e. bonded, insured, generally experienced and reliable) contractors if you are looking that way (so, by the way, does Operation Button-Up), and they will finance your insulation job through their credit system if you are one of their customers. Energy Conservation = Apple Pie = NSP. Amazing. Particularly when you look at what they were saying 5 years ago.

Minnegasco Ditto.

Community Design Center The real Good Guys and Gals. Selfless, overworked, underpaid (if paid at all), understaffed. A referral service for home energy conservation questions. No special interest. No dark history. Also has the aforementioned pamphlets available. CDC, 118 East 26th Street, Minneapolis. 827-2608.

Resource Groups

Center for Local Self-Reliance, temporary address: 2314 Elliot Ave. So., Mpls. MN 55404. Phone: 871-3232. A group of people in South Minneapolis who are working together to create working demonstration projects in areas of food, energy, and waste systems. Two projects in the works are the home insulation project and a coordinated city effort to locate land for inner city gardening and provide seed, topsoil and how to workshops to those who would like to grow some of their own food this spring. See page 38 for more details.

Organic Growers and Buyers Association, 624 Jefferson St. NE., Mpls. MN 55413. Phone: 338-1354. OGBA's annual spring meeting is the best single "course" you can take to learn about gardening, farming, and small-scale energy. This year's meeting will be held March 27-28, 1976 at Metro Community College, 50 Willow St. OGBA also provides

Energy Resources

a market for the goods that organic farmers produce, and promotes quality control among organic farmers.

The Big Outdoors People, 2201 Kennedy St. NE Mpls. MN 55413. Phone: 331-5430. Tools and equipment for alternative and intermediate technology. They have been building domes over the last few years and have used this experience to create quality housing.

Peace Education Project, 3104 16th Ave. So., Mpls. MN 55407. Phone: 722-6612. A joint effort of the American Friends Service Committee and the Education Exploration Center, PEP will conduct workshops on Energy, Food and Militarism for teachers and students.

Walker Community Video and Walker Energy Group, 3104 16th Ave. So., Mpls. MN. Phone: 722-6612. Video: Access to video production and training as well as other resources for the community. They are currently working on a tape of Martin Jopp who has 30 years of experience with building and repairing wind mills. They are also documenting The Self-Reliance insulation project.

Energy Group:

A study group of neighborhood people in the southside who see the need to create energy alternatives to oil, coal, etc. Work with reading material on solar, wind energy and the possibilities of methane. Also take field trips to see groups and individuals who are working on creating models. Meets on Sunday morning. Contact Brian Peterson at 722-6612 for more information.

Urban Laboratory, 365 City Hall, St. Paul 55102. 298-4928. Resources for community groups who are interested in energy issues.

Ouroboros East, 1020 Laurel, St. Paul 55104. When complete, will have a basement workshop open to community people for information on insulation and alternative energy.

TREE (The Renewable Energy-Environment) Library, in the Center for the Studies of the Physical Environment, Space Science Center, U of M. A small but excellent collection covering energy research and environmental concerns.

BECC (Built Environment Communications Center), Architecture Bldg, U of M. Several video tapes about energy groups, and environmental issues.

ECOL, Minneapolis Public Library, 300 Nicollet Mall, Minneapolis 55401. The special ecology collection, has a fine selection of publications.

Publications

Handbook of Homemade Power Mother Earth News 1974

A selection of articles on small-scale energy production taken from the Mother Earth News. An excellent introduction.

The Energy Primer Portola Institute 558 Santa Cruz Ave., Menlo Park, CA 94025 \$4.95

Brief descriptions of alternative technologies, plus resource listings showing how to find the people who are experimenting.

Alternative Sources of Energy a bimonthly magazine, now 5 years old, with fairly technical and complete descriptions of alternative technologies. International circulation. ASE, Rt 2 Box 90A, Milaca MN 56353 \$5.00/yr

Direct Use of the Sun's Energy by Farrington Daniels. Ballentine, \$1.45

A complete introduction to the uses of the sun, in clear language. The best basic source for an overview of solar energy, written by one of the early experimenters.

Do's and Don'ts of Methane by Al Rutan, Box 69 Annandale, MN 55302. 1975, \$4.25

In very simple terms, Al describes how to build an inexpensive device to convert manure and organic waste into methane gas.

Methane Digesters by John Fry. New Alchemy Institute West, Box 376 Pescadero, CA 94060. 48 pp, \$3.00

The Home Built Wind Energy Handbook Michael Hackleman, Earth Mind, Saugus, CA 91350 1975, \$7.50

A thorough and entertaining book which covers wind power step-by-step; how to find used generators, how to rebuild them, how to set up a tower, and how to make your own circuitry.

Energy Resources

Sources by Eugene and Sandy Eccli, published by Alternative Sources of Energy, Rt 2 Box 90A, Milaca MN 56353 \$5.00.

A large catalog of alternative energy technology, experimenters, and materials, compiled from the first four years of ASE

Energy for Survival by Wilson Clark, Anchor Press, 1974

A very long and comprehensive overview of energy sources: historical, traditional, and future. Difficult to plow through at times, but an excellent overview.

Energy and Equity by Ivan Illich. Harper & Row Perennial Library, 95¢ 1974

A very abstract and thought-provoking suggestion for how to keep technology from dominating us.

Journal of the New Alchemy Institute (yearly) P.O. Box 432, Wood Hole, MA 02543. \$6.00/issue; yearly supporting membership, \$25.00/year.

Informative progress reports on the Institute's attempts to turn poor land in to a life-sustaining, energy-conserving system.

Winona U of M Architecture Dept. \$4.00

A beautifully presented plan for energy self-sufficiency in a small town.

Rain 2270 N.W. Irving, Portland, ORE 97210
subscription: \$5.00/yr

Rain is one of the best directories of energy, food, community and appropriate technology that one could find. Mostly covering the Northwest, the national information network is nonetheless complete.

INSTITUTE FOR LOCAL SELF-RELIANCE PUBLICATIONS: 1717 18th Street NW, Washington, D.C.

Proposal for a Neighborhood Food/Waste/Energy System, 11 pages .75

Proposal for a feasibility study of decentralized urban food systems, with specific emphasis on urban aquaculture,

intensive gardening methods, rooftop hydroponic gardening, and the economic and legal status of new concepts in city food production.

Neighborhood Power: The New Localism, 180pp \$3.45

Shows how a potentially self-sufficient community moves from the initial stages of community awareness and organization, to the creation of service networks, to the development of neighborhood sustaining funds, which serve as seed money for other community enterprises, and finally to the development of neighborhood government. It is both a theoretical and practical book: a working tool for bringing economic and political power down to a workable human scale.

Kilowatt Counter: A Consumer's Guide to Energy Concepts, Quantities and Uses. 36 pages \$2.00

Published as a special issue of Alternative Sources of Energy magazine, this booklet explains how, using simple arithmetic, the average citizen can make energy calculations to learn about the energy efficiency of appliances, as well as energy consumption in different parts of the home or the national economy. Answers such questions as: how many BTU in a kwh? what's the difference between a watt and a watt-hour? how much energy is used to produce a ton of steel vs a ton of aluminum? how big should you build your solar collector? what's the meaning of "exponential growth" and "net energy"? Includes simple conversion tables, formulas, sample problems, and an energy awareness quiz.

The Dawning of Solar Cells, 38pp \$2.00

Large Scale Sprouting: A Cottage Industry, 16 pp. .75

Urban Gardening Chart \$3.00

Gardening for Health and Nutrition \$3.00
(Please include an additional 25¢ for mailing tube for either of these posters)

This resource section was compiled and annotated by Jim Lenfestey (energy rehab), Mike McCoy (groups), and Ken Meter (publications). Descriptions of Institute for Local Self-Reliance publications by ILSR.

Culture for the People

Minnesota Grassroots Activism '30's ~ '70's



1939 Labor Sports League Baseball Champs--Teamsters Local #544. Photo courtesy Harry DeBoer.

"The people are like a story that never ends; the people are like a river that winds and falls, is lost in deep gulleys, is smothered by rocks, but somehow always finds the sea."

Irene Paul

by Steve Trimble

Flipping the channels of their televisions today, people could search for days and never run across examples of culture relating directly to the political struggles going on today. But the answer may be not to develop isolated instances where art carries an ideological message, but to have cultural efforts integrated into a larger political movement. In an effort to figure out how this can be done, a great deal can be learned from the third movements of Minnesota's past.

"These movements all had their culture. They had their songs; they had their theatre," explained Meridel LeSueur, a local activist and writer whose work has spanned the period from the thirties to the present day. Farmers and workers of this state joined together during this period to fight monopolies and to try to develop a democratic culture. Through their struggles, "They all thought they were released into this culture and it was not the bourgeois, the middle class culture that was developing. Much of that has gone underground. This

seeming weakness of a people's art in the face of today's mass media should not cause despair, however. At the very bottom, the American people are anti-monopoly... the democratic root of our people is very strong even though you have this terrible consolidation of power."

During the Depression, anti-monopoly culture reached a peak in Minnesota. Accompanying the rise of unions were hundreds of songs, poems, plays and other art forms that sprang from the people. At one time there was even a strong labor sports league where dozens of union-sponsored teams played each other in baseball and football, and other games. People read more than ever, trying to figure out the economic situation; thousands received their education from the labor press.

In rural areas, farmers continued to get much of their education out of the "Little Blue Books" published in Kansas. Costing only five cents and especially designed to fit into the pocket of a pair of overalls, the Blue Books printed authors like Marx and

**"At the very bottom, the American people are anti-monopoly
... the democratic root of our people is very strong ..."**

Tom Paine, which were otherwise unavailable, and put out contemporary classics like Upton Sinclair's The Jungle (this one took five blue books to complete) and Margaret Sanger's controversial tracts on birth control and sex education.

A focus for much of this political and cultural upsurge culminated in the Farmer-Labor Party and its dues paying grass roots base, the Labor Association. The Farmer-Labor Association was composed of clubs in nearly every city precinct and rural county. It was a grass roots organization dedicated to educating its members, giving them information on current conditions as well as developing a theoretical outlook.

They debated ideology at the lowest levels and sent delegates to district and state conventions where they endorsed Farmer-Labor candidates and formulated party policy. According to old-timers, there were always cultural activities at the Association meetings--movies, speakers, poetry readings, or skits or sing-alongs. Rather than going to political cultural events as is often the case today, they created a strong integration of politics and culture as the very basis of their movement.

The educational committee was a key to the smooth functioning of the Association groups. They planned the monthly club programs, strongly encouraged the use of music and suggested that all meetings should be short, well organized and enjoyable as well as informative. The educational committee of the thirteenth ward in one of its reports mentioned theatre union songs from "Pins and Needles" (a play popular in the thirties), brief dramas, readings, or debates as interesting possibilities. In addition they suggested book reviews, discussion of items appearing in the Minnesota Leader (the official organ of the Farmer-Labor Party), chalk talks on subjects of current interest, or reading and discussion of Consumer's Union Reports.

In 1934 the Bureau owned 32 slide projectors for putting on political and cultural programs in 87 counties. During the highly successful 1936 campaign, they published "The Party Line" (its masthead showed a rural operator at the switchboard) which offered ideas for local supporters. Aware of the appeal of "moving pictures," they suggested, "Local theatre managers can order Paramount Newsreel 'F-L State Convention 1936.' Governor Olson recorded making some emphatic utterances. Good reel. Should be shown now."



From 30's through 50's Farmer-Laborites met weekly in downtown Minneapolis for the "Saturday Lunch Club," to eat, hear speakers, and debate topical issues. Photo courtesy Madge Hawkins.

"The Farmer-Labor Party itself worked hard at developing an educated and culturally aware electorate."

In an attempt to patch up the economic system a little during the Depression, the federal government provided some relief programs. One of these--the Works Progress Administration (WPA) did much to aid the development of Minnesota's left wing culture. One of the widest reaching was the WPA art project started in the fall of 1935. It employed artists, many of whom belonged to the Minnesota Artists' Union, described by a former member as a "militant organization. We boycotted a Minneapolis Institute of Arts exhibition, packed the State WPA headquarters in St. Paul, staged a work stoppage at the WPA art project, etc." Members of this group felt that artists were not special people, but were cultural workers and wanted to be part of the larger fight to change society.

Both Minneapolis and St. Paul had workers' colleges sponsored by WPA writers. Here unemployed workers came to learn about the labor movement and its history, found out how to function in meetings and how to write about their life experiences. Writing was not seen as something done only by a talented few, but as a skill that could be of use to the Labor movement and that could be learned by anyone. As Meridel LeSueur put it in "Worker Writers"--



Rough of 40's Farmer-Labor poster.

MHS

a manual she put together for the Worker's Education program--words are tools which, like hammers and saws, can be mastered with practice.

"Every worker must make this tool his own. He must not be afraid of this tool simply because he has not had a formal training in its use. . The word as a tool is going back to the people. The best of our writers are saying that writing is no use unless it is a tool of defense as well as creation, a tool against barbarism, against hunger and want."

They urged publication of a club bulletin that combined general news of political and social matters with articles of a more technical nature, especially as campaign time drew near. On particularly pressing issues, the educational committee passed resolutions or established groups to study in depth such questions as the creation of publicly owned liquor stores.

The Farmer-Labor Association locals were also involved in cultural outreach programs, trying to use the latest and most effective technology to spread their message. One Association bulletin outlined possible radio shows: "Musical programs (workers' songs), discussion of revolutionary music, use of music as an instrument of propaganda in war time, patriotic songs and their significance, songs of nationality as a basis for the discussion of international brotherhood, songs of trade unions, songs written during the past year or two as a part of labor musical comedies."

The Farmer-Labor Party itself worked hard at developing an educated and culturally aware electorate. Speakers of high quality crisscrossed the State, appearing at county meetings, festivals, picnics and other gatherings. Posters were used not only as notices of meetings, but as educational tools, graphically portraying basic economic and social truths. Like the Grangers and Populists before them, the Farmer-Labor Party produced an avalanche of pamphlets and leaflets to keep people up with the latest controversies or newly discovered information.

The party had a special educational bureau that served as an information center and as a dispenser of Farmer-Labor doctrines. While it sent speakers out on request, it encouraged the use of local talent and tried hard to have groups include women in leadership positions. The Bureau offices stored organizers kits,

“Socialist bookstores were shut down, labor newspapers folded under pressure, university professors voluntarily burned some of their books, and activists were denied employment”

books on how to conduct meetings, speaker's manuals for beginners, bulletins on subjects like taxation and farming, and an eight lesson course on Marxian economics.

Writers such as Irene Paul, who had a regular column in Midwest Labor, a Duluth newspaper, encouraged workers to send in poems they had written. They responded, producing works that clearly expressed the condition of their workplaces and their feelings about organization and struggle.

**The Repression of the '50's:
'Embers of Dissent'**

World War II finally ended the Depression, but the state was set for the "Cold War" and the accompanying rise of domestic cultural and political fascism in the United States. On the national level right-wingers knew that control of the mass media was essential, and they set out to insure that the left was driven out of theatres, movies and the radio. In Minnesota Hubert Humphrey moved in on the newly merged DFL--he was careful to destroy the Farmer Labor Association. Socialist bookstores were shut down, labor newspapers folded under pressure, university professors voluntarily

burned some of their books, and activists were denied employment and hounded by FBI agents.

Still, in the midst of this repression, a few embers of dissent still smouldered. Since no magazines would accept her writings, Meridel LeSueur supported herself by writing children's books. She produced several small volumes that contain interesting and exciting stories for young people as well as anti-monopoly and cooperative values presented in a simple but fundamental manner. Sparrow Hawk is a young Indian who, with his teenage white friend is trying to develop a strain of corn that can give everyone enough to eat. "Corn is like land," Sparrow Hawk says. "It belongs to us all. The Great Spirit gave it to his children to live upon and raise. It belongs to the person who uses it and makes things grow. All red men have equal rights to land and corn."

His friend Huck is in complete agreement. "You see, both our nations got corn democracy. Some hogs want all the land and corn; they want to root everybody out of the trough. Sometimes you got to do away with a hog that makes all the rest thin and wild."

Miner's Song

Lift the Union banner, boys, and join us in the fight!
The C.I.O. has come to town...let's march into the light!
We used to talk in whispers when the evening lights were low
But we're union! Let them hear it! Let the mining bosses know!

We've sweated out their millions from the dark mesaba mines...
They've spied on us and starved us but there's iron in our spines...
Their terror and their blacklist all have played their deadly parts
But they never killed the glory of the Union in their hearts!
We have had a birth of freedom! Let them crack their iron whips!
But they cannot stop the music of the song upon our lips!!
Oh, the mills are running Union and the woods are all awake!
And the Union ships are sailing down the great unsalted lake!
It's a great and happy country when we're not against the wall...
When we're marching with the Union, ALL FOR ONE, AND ONE
FOR ALL!

author unknown

From: We're The People, edited by Irene Paul

"We should learn from rising forces . . . the same way the third party movements of the past drew their organizational and creative forces from the farmers and the workers."

The Present: A New Popular Culture

Recently there have been many successful attempts in our State to use art and culture to support struggles on the left. With rising unemployment, the New American Movement helped sponsor a Worker's Rights Center. One organizing tool was a group they called "The Grievettes," composed of people who would venture down to the unemployment offices, singing, dancing and passing out literature. They tried to entertain at the same time they collected information, and put forth their own ideas. In another case, the entire mood of a zoning meeting in South Minneapolis was changed as members of the Alive and Trucking Theatre (a local theater group) and the Circle of the Witch (a feminist theatre collective) led residents in songs supporting down-zoning, as the City Planning Commissioners watched. They helped rally the crowd to stop the city's zoning measures for the Southside.

One of the most successful third world movements has been the American Indian movement which has linked cultural institutions with their overall determination to achieve self-



Nov, '75: Mankato ceremony honors Sioux hung after 1862 uprising. Photo by Steve Trimble

determination. They have set up survival schools--Heart of the Earth first opened its doors in Minneapolis to deal with the racism encountered in the public schools. These Indian-controlled schools work for the preservation of the physical, mental, moral and cultural well-being of the Native American children who were constantly being subjected to the demoralizing influence of the dominant white society.

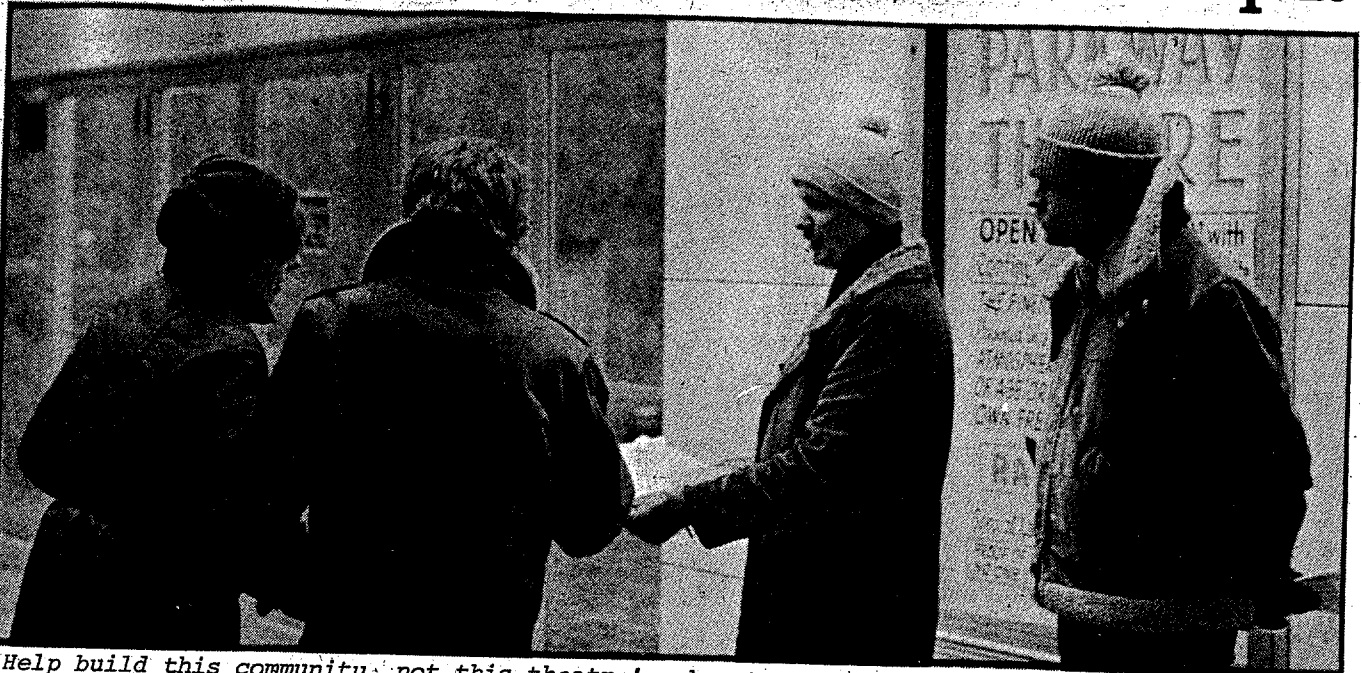
At a recent meeting of students, parents and teachers on the White Earth Reservation, attended by people from 85 bands and 35 Indian nations, one of the spiritual leaders summed up: "For Indian people, our truths come from Nature. We can see it all around us and we can see that it is true...we were born on the earth and of the earth. So long as we are Indian people, we are not lost. Our children's education must be for Indian people, and based on these truths."

Through the ages, some of the State's most dynamic culture has sprung out of the popular political movements. Its images have been those of the struggling farmers, people cooperating to develop institutions, workers joining into unions. What of tomorrow? Meridel LeSueur's words may again provide some direction.

The new images from which she finds strength today come from the youth movements, the women's movements and the extremely strong third world struggles throughout the world. They, Meridel feels, are the groups who "have an image of life instead of death, of creation instead of destruction." We should learn from these rising forces and gain inspiration from them the same way the third party movements of the past drew their organizational and creative forces from the farmers and the workers. "You don't have to bring it down to them from the top," Meridel LeSueur points out, "but you can help. What is the best way for people involved in cultural activities to link up with the ongoing political movements and to get inspiration from the people involved in them. Not in libraries or ivory towers. As Meridel has learned from decades of experience, "The best thing to do is to go where they are."

Steve Trimble, originally from Kansas, has lived in the Summit-University area for seven years. Now teaching at Central High School, Steve works with the Minnesota Peoples History Project

Smut in Our Neighborhoods: What's Pornography? & How Do We Stop It?



"Help build this community, not this theatre's absentee owner's profit," say leaflets. KM

by Brian John Coyle

In the summer of 1973, after the June judgment by the U.S. Supreme Court that the definition of obscenity must be determined according to what is "patently offensive" to local community standards, the Minneapolis Tribune (Jan. 6, 1974) polled Minnesotans about pronography. It found that fifty-eight percent of Minnesotans polled felt that pornography should not be banned completely. But by a narrow margin--50 to 44 percent--the majority tended to agree with the Court about community control while the minority felt it should be up to the individual whose rights must be protected.

Since then, community attitudes have probably changed: by and large, younger people are still tolerant and many middle-aged parents have become more lenient after several years of pornography's existence and availability. But many older citizens have become increasingly critical of what they believe is society's "permissiveness" and signs of "moral decay." And because they are the folks who get out and vote, their pressure is gradually being expressed through conservative politicians like Mayor Stenvig who has promised to crusade against "smut."

While most Minnesotans agree that adults have the right to read or see what they

choose, new questions have arisen recently about pornography, provoking most people to rethink the whole issue. Where does it come from? Who makes a profit from the sale of this product? What effect does its presence have on communities? What needs does it fulfill for the reader or viewer (if it does, in fact)?

Who Profits from Pornography?

Slowly but steadily, so-called "adult" bookstores and theaters have opened up shop in many neighborhoods throughout the south side of Minneapolis. Because the now familiar garish red and yellow lights have appeared gradually during a period of liberalized cultural attitudes, few people have asked where pornography comes from or who profits from it. But a Minneapolis Star series which began last November 17 revealed that most of it is produced in New York and Los Angeles and two men with links to organized crime, Ferris and Edward Alexander, virtually monopolize the porno industry in the Twin Cities. So it is safe to conclude that the "dirty bookstore" on the corner is not merely a small business run by a merchant from the community who couldn't break even selling the usual retail goods and services.

"We are caught . . . between pornography's assault on our moral sensibilities and our own belief in the right of adults to see or read what they choose."

How Does Pornography Effect Our Neighborhoods?

The unseemly come-on of the adult bookstores' flashing lights and demeaning poster advertisements as well as the bawdy marquee announcements of the porno theaters are probably viewed by most southside residents as having a negative impact on our communities. But most of us try to remain blasé about the presence of pornography in the neighborhood. We are caught in the contradiction between its daily assault on our moral sensibilities and our own belief in the right of adults to see or read what they choose.

Some communities, however, have begun to struggle with these tough, contradictory questions. And while it may seem superficially that such residents are parochial and probably prejudiced, their resistance to pornography's presence has often been a progressive experience where those communities gain self-awareness and a sense of their own potential power.

Residents of the Field-Regina neighborhood who unsuccessfully fought the conversion of the Parkway Theater from one of the Twin Cities' best double-feature showhouses to another "adult" theater claim the solidarity generated by their resistance was the most positive aspect of the whole experience. Initially their organizing efforts helped to gather neighbors together to redress their grievances, overcoming the numbness many folks felt when originally confronted by the introduction of pornography into their community. At the outset, acting on their "gut reaction" was essential to cutting through the neighborhood's apathy. But people who led the campaign against the Parkway's conversion like Jean Wagenius insist, "we are not so much morally opposed to pornography as we are critical of its blighting impact on our community."

While the first phase of their struggle failed to stop the Parkway's transformation into a porno theater, the organizers of that resistance are excited about four positive developments which have happened during the current, second phase of their activity.

First, a Chicago Avenue Defense Fund has been formed to continue the resistance to the blighting aspect through legal means and political pressure on City Hall. Second, a business association of nearby merchants was organized to protect the interests of existing indigenous enterprises. Third, a committee has pulled together to study the feasibility of starting a non-profit Community Development Corporation (CDC). Its participants hope to raise broader questions related to neighborhood development. They are concerned, for instance, that instead of spending money on really needed products, thus keeping capital within the community, the consumers of pornography are unwittingly contributing to exportation of monopoly profits out of their neighborhood and even the state. And fourth, another committee maintains a informational picket periodically which leaflets theater-goers at the Parkway.

More Fundamental Questions

Several of the organizers against the Parkway Theater's conversion want to avoid being laughed-off as "little old reactionaries in tennis shoes" and therefore tend to shun the "moral issue," preferring instead to emphasize the "blighting impact on the community." The opinion-shapers such as the Star editors and reporters responsible for November's exposés linking pornography to organized crime likewise seem relieved that this relationship "transcends Stenvig's worries about moral decay." And almost everyone but the industry's managers and the Minnesota Civil Liberties Union seems agreeable to the convenient restriction of the sale of porno to a special entertainment district downtown.

But while such responses are expedient, they tend to beg certain fundamental questions about what constitutes obscenity, what needs pornography fulfills (or does not satisfy), and what its presence means socially.

What Is Obscenity?

Essentially, the Supreme Court copped-out on defining our rights under law and left the question of what obscenity is to be determined by communities and lower courts.

“... others who believe a distinction can be made between exploitative materials and healthy, erotic expression have a point . . .”

On one hand, many would like to see hard core obscenity discouraged and believe local control is a good first step toward its elimination from our communities. But on the other hand, artists, civil libertarians and others who believe a distinction can be made between exploitative materials and healthy, erotic expression have a point; the Court's failure to at least provide some guidelines about our right to free expression is disappointing.

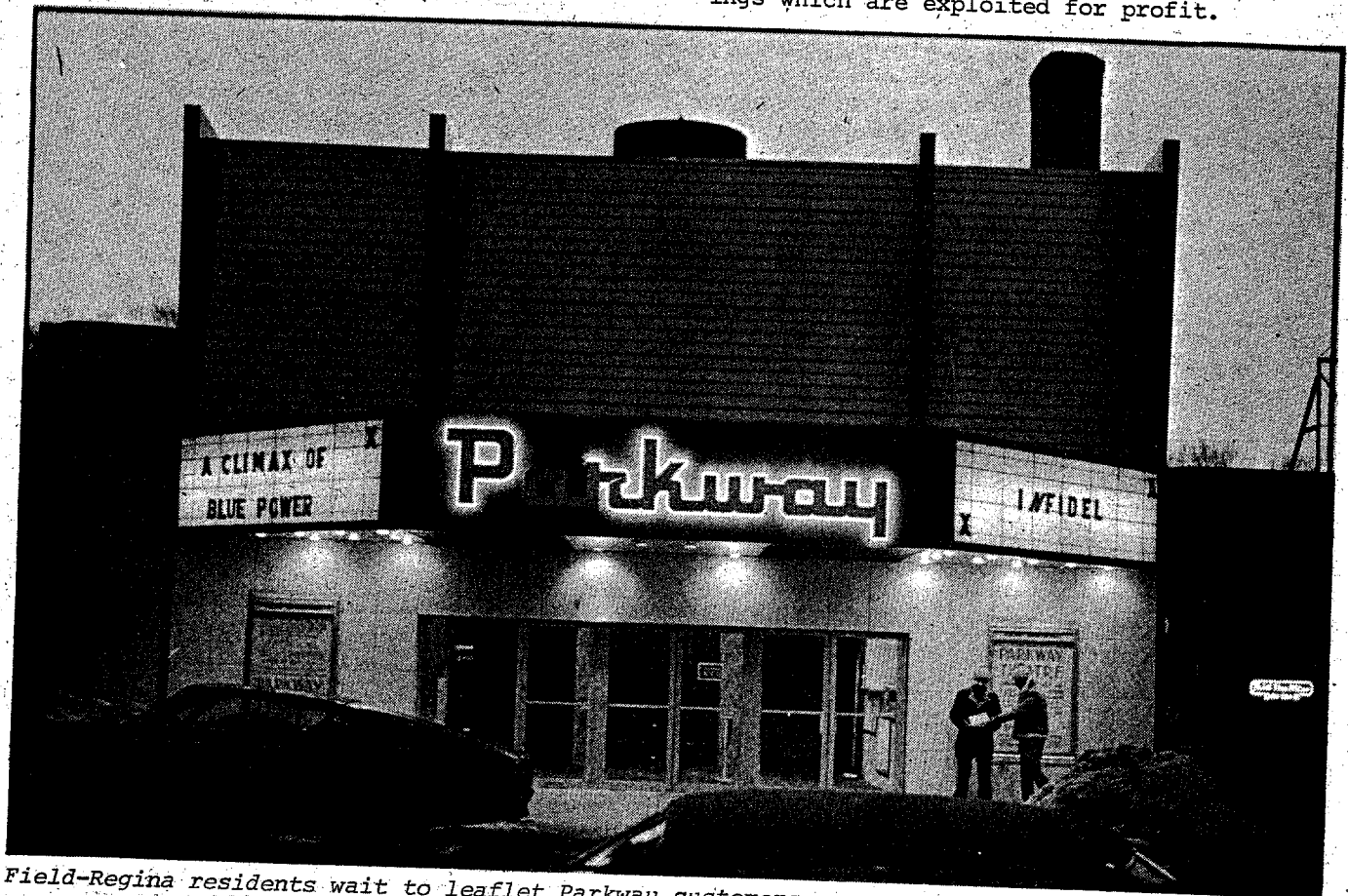
Pornography: Meeting Real Needs?

The press and established social commentators tend to shy away from examining just why people are attracted to porno and what needs it fulfills. True, the pornographers capitalize on peoples' curiosity; even the advertizing come-ons they use play upon our willingness to break taboos, be "hip" to the "kinky scene." "Getting grossed out" seems to be half the thrill of checking out the "kinky scene." But many folks do not return for more after satisfying their natural curiosity.

But does "smut" really satisfy the sexual needs of the frequent consumer of pornography or does it actually substitute partial gratification for genuine orgasmic experience and keep the regular consumer coming back? It is fairly safe to assume the needs aroused by false sexualization cannot be truly satisfied and instead the manipulated consumer is left in a perpetual state of disappointment.

Pornography's Social Importance

Even more importantly, this should lead us to ask what it is about our society that generates such unfulfilled needs? Conservatives refuse to deal with this fundamental question and simply want to first restrict pornography to one area and then try to repress it entirely. Liberals reduce the question to merely one involving legalities and rights, ignoring the larger question why sexuality is suppressed by our society and repressed by the individual-- thus generating inhibition of natural longings which are exploited for profit.



Field-Regina residents wait to leaflet Parkway customers.

Photo by Ken Meter.

"Sex remains so suppressed and separated from many peoples' whole sense of being that it can be de-eroticized, reduced to a commodity and sold."

A thinking person can't help but be concerned about the basic social questions which pornography's presence raises. If pornography is swept back under the rug, chances are its prohibition will not really stop its sale. And simply defending its right to be sold begs the question about its social implications. Does its presence mean our society is becoming increasingly "decadent"? What is the link between the increasing material and spiritual impoverishment of modern life and the lack of community control over local affairs?

Answers to these basic value questions don't come easily, but they are seldom if ever even asked by the courts, media, or politicians. However, some tentative observations come to mind: pornography's presence means ours is --at least partially-- a sick society. Sex remains so suppressed and separated from many peoples' whole sense of being that it can be isolated and de-eroticized, reduced to a commodity and sold. "Smut" deflects the sexual drive from real intimacy and therefore

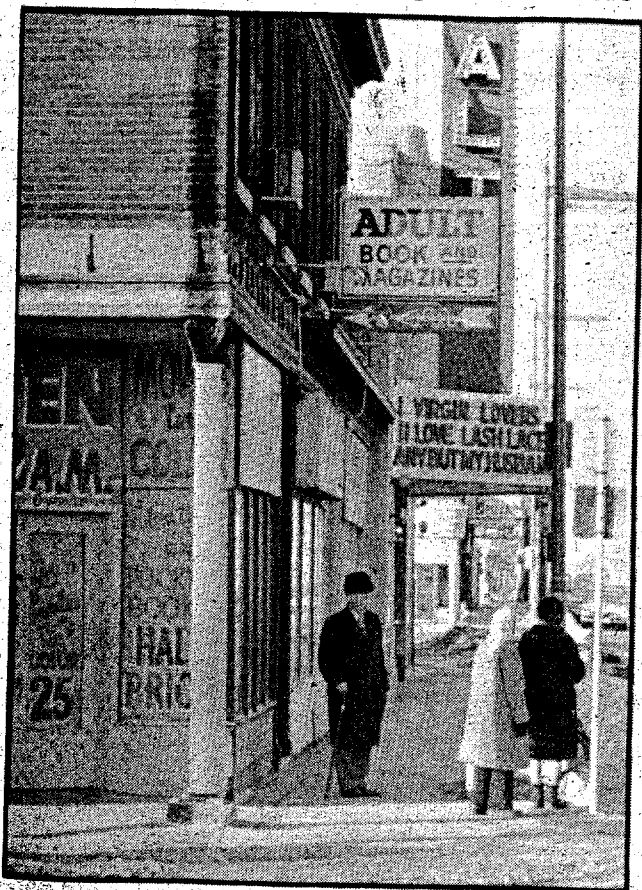
continues the process of repression and sublimation rather than liberating one. In such cases, "sexual liberation" actually encourages people to remove sexuality from their intimate loving relationships or to follow dehumanizing dominant-submissive patterns of sexuality. Instead of being "adult" entertainment, pornography actually appeal to the sexual stereotypes of the consumer and keeps him (or her) in a permanent state of sexual fantasy.

Pornography does not help us to overcome our fettered capacities and make sense of our most intimate feelings, allowing us to connect our sexual needs with our whole existence. Those who depend on it never really grow or realize their capacity to love. In such a condition, we are incapable --psychically or politically-- of making progress, changing ourselves and society so as to provide the basis for individual freedom and social development. If we are to grow, we must struggle to overcome personal feelings of impotence and our public sense of powerlessness, joining together in common cause to realize our potential power and then never let ourselves be deflected from attaining that goal.

If the southside residents' resistance to the conversion of the Parkway Theater is looked to as a concrete experience, for example, we can see that local wisdom and constructive alternatives do develop as a neighborhood gains a collective sense of self-awareness.

Such participation in civic affairs is not exactly encouraged by the corporate system which the pornography industry represents in microcosm. It is ready to provide everything for people willing to pay the price, making it unnecessary for you to bother about anything but consuming --even sex-- just so you do your job and don't ask questions. Consequently, in order to defend and reconstruct our communities, it is going to be up to us to develop our own sense of self-reliance, to use our own good common sense to make the decisions affecting our lives, and to create our own power at the grass roots community level.

Brian John Coyle is a free lance writer interested in community activism and changing political trends. He has recently published a booklet entitled, Hubert Humphrey in '76?



Lake St. and Chicago Avenue.

Photo: KM

Just Out of the Joint

Mac, be careful!
Trouble knows your name and number.
Trouble wears dark glasses
and is ugly as gum wads
under the bar stool.
Trouble is the ashes in the ceramic tray
and the blind man on the street corner
who knows your walk
and begs for money.
Trouble is the bare teeth
of a dog set on you.
It is the ease with which
your fist sinks the stomach of a beer can.

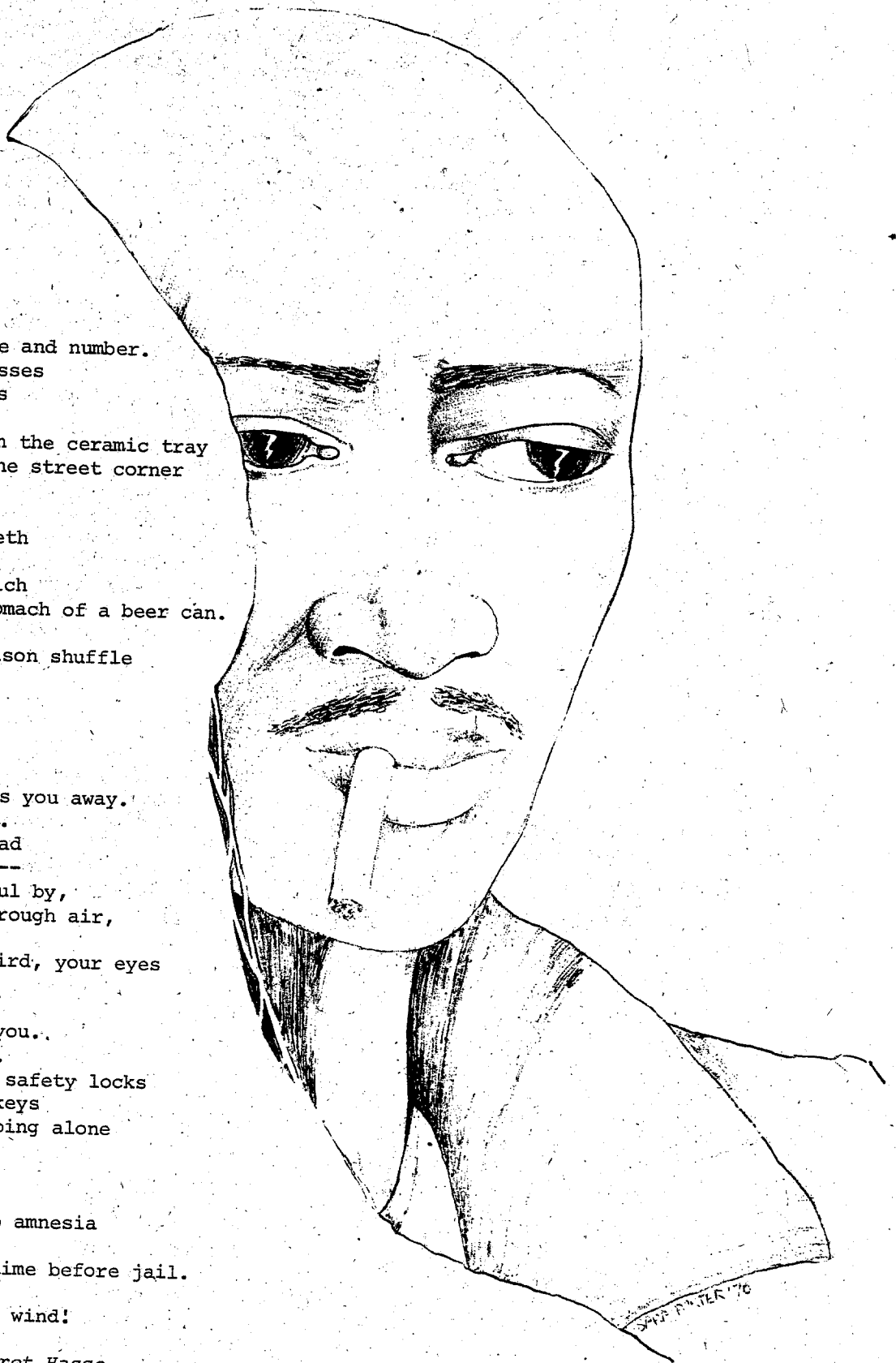
Trouble is the slow prison shuffle
from standing in lines,
being the wall,
grey as that,
inscrutable as that.

And now your tatoo gives you away.
Your breath is tear gas.
You always tilt your head
listening for something--
the bell to set your soul by,
the sound of a knife through air,
a short sob.
Like a nervous hummingbird, your eyes
never linger anywhere.

Venetian blinds remind you..
"Pardon me" reminds you.
Zoos and dog pounds and safety locks
and men who carry many keys
and small beds and sleeping alone
remind you.

Mac, you ache
and desire to drift into amnesia
and forget all.
But memory is also the time before jail.
Cup your hands tightly
around that light in the wind!

--Margaret Hasse



SPRING PETER '76

COMMUNITY BUILDING

in public Schools They
Gave me Too Much Work
I had a desk full of papers
That I couldn't do. here
I can Learn from Work
That I can do.

Mini-School

How is it the Mini-School responds better to Bob Poplinski than the Public Schools?

The Mini-School has functioned in south Minneapolis since May of 1971. Parent participation in the first four years was only slightly different from PTA involvement in the public schools. However, last April a funding crisis brought parents and staff together to look for new funding sources. In the process, control was transferred from the hands of people indirectly involved with the school to the parents; staff and children of the school.

The school is now directed primarily by parents. Hiring, program, funding and environment are all decided by the parents and staff. Committees draw up plans in each of these areas, submit them to the entire group of parents and staff, and they are approved, modified or sent back to the committees for more work. Every family is expected to contribute time and effort to the school in some capacity. Some people work with the students, some type, some clean, but there is work for everyone and everyone pitches in.

We found there were a lot of hassles in changing from a system where decisions about the school were made for us to making the decisions ourselves. Shared decision making among parents and staff is often not easy and there are the usual number of debates, hurt feelings and blow-ups. As an example, we have had a hard time evolving a workable parent cooperative.

Initially the parent cooperative committee decided on an eight hour per month contract with each family. But recently this plan

was dropped because it caused bad feelings between people and towards the school. We are committed to finding ways to share the work that has to be done while recognizing that working parents, especially single working parents, have a limited amount of time to give the school.

We are acutely aware that at present our survival as a school depends upon getting money from larger institutions and governmental agencies. We feel that this dependence on other agencies not only makes our very survival tenuous, but also threatens our control of the school with the possible stipulations of the funding sources.

We are presently working on plans for a business which would be operated by members of the Mini-School community. This business will, hopefully, help support us in years to come, providing employment for parents, funds for the school and also needed products or service to our neighborhood in south Minneapolis.

About 70% of Mini-School students are from low income families, but we do not operate as a social service agency. The Mini-School does not believe that low income children are by definition deprived. The devoted parents at the school are not examples of deprivation. What most low income families lack are real options and the Mini-School provides an educational option for them. But we are not a student recycling center; we do not aim to "readjust" the child to better fit into the larger school system.

The small size of the Mini-School is a powerful tool in itself. For example, every child is guaranteed a very personal relationship with several adults. The small unthreatening environment works against the formation of groups based solely on shared race, sex, age or class. The parents and teachers carefully avoid setting up competitive learning situations. There are no grades; children work at their own rate and are encouraged to help one another rather than to judge their own success or failure by another child's progress. Group projects are encouraged.

Children are encouraged to use the community around them as a learning place. Some kind of trip outside the school is offered on an almost daily basis --whether that means that a few children go across the street to

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Mill City Foods, or that the whole school goes to a performance at Powderhorn Puppet Theater.

We have also put aside some money so that we can pay members of the community to come to us. For example, we have recently benefitted from visits by Sosthenes Nunyakpe from Togo and the Alive and Trucking Theater.

We feel that changing our values to a social or political context is a slow, lifelong process. We try to bring out some of the facts which we feel have been omitted or distorted by history books and newspapers. Adults teach through day-to-day example, through constantly confronting each other and children on the use of sexist, racist or classist terms or attitudes, through small group discussions and role playing in our daily school assemblies.

Recently, for example, one of the adults overheard one of the boys call one of the other boys a girl as a derogatory remark. The adult told the boy that calling someone else a girl as an insult was an insult to women, a sexist remark. The incident prompted the teachers to ask every student to identify over a 2 - 3 day period at least one way that women are presented as inferior to men or treated in a sexist manner on TV, in magazines, etc. and share that image in a small group.

In short, we feel the Mini-School is a genuine learning environment where parents, children, staff and the community share in shaping that environment.

by Barb Bransburger, Dawn Gessner (parents) and Susie and Peter Oppenheim (staff)

Community Cooking

General Mills' Betty Crocker would cringe at the idea of making history an important ingredient of her recipes and the venerable historian, Arnold Toynbee, would probably pooh-poo the historical significance of Auntie Ettie's Pineapple Delight.

But Steve Trimble, Barb Young and Alyce Guilfoile, three St. Paul residents thought neighborhood history and recipes were compatible as well as sellable. They have spent nearly a year compiling a cookbook and history book, "Community Cooking, An Uncommon History of Summit-University," on

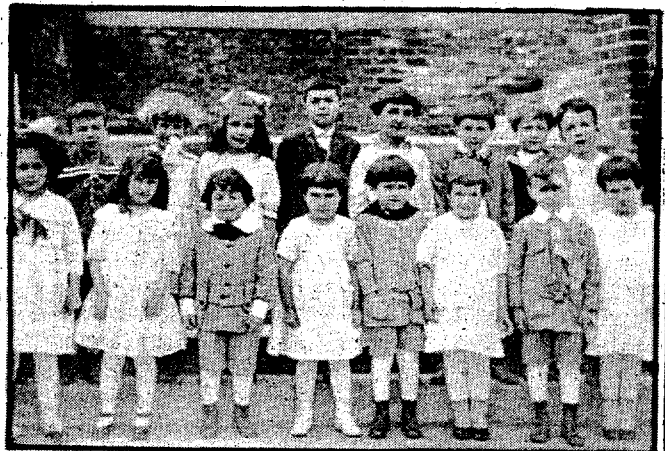
life in the St. Paul neighborhood.

The cookbook is a compilation of recipes from over 100 neighborhood residents, past and present. You can make for yourself a whole menu of dishes served at the Summit Avenue home of railroad magnate James J. Hill. Or for taste buds of the less affluent, there is "The Best-Ever Rice Pudding" and "Brown Beans" and "Pobbs."

Summit-University is somewhat unique as an area in that several different ethnic groups have predominated at one time or another. The book is divided into sections based on the ethnic origins of the neighborhood's people. Included are the Yankees, the Germans, the Irish, the Jews, the Blacks and current Model City residents, with ethnic and class characteristics that might make the original settlers uneasy.

Interspersed among the recipes are recollections of the contributors. Memories from folks who made their homes there at one time or another, or who were associated with the neighborhood in one way or another, provide down-to-earth commentary on the development and activity of a neighborhood. What better way to fix dinner than by reading the story of who first concocted your dinner? What better way of acquainting yourself with the history of a neighborhood than by reading about it while fixing dinner?

Mixed among the home-cooking and home philosophy are old and new photographs, offering a portrait of a community that changes with time, economics and politics.



First Sunday school class at Temple Aaron on Holly Ave. at turn of century.

An example of how "Community Cooking" mixes neighborhood history and recipes follows:

COMMUNITY BUILDING

THE GILMAN FAMILY COD FISH BALLS

Many of the Yankees who migrated into the Summit-University area in the 1880's and 1890's brought New England recipes with them. This recipe was passed down from the Noyes family to their relatives the Gilmans, who continue to serve it as a favorite breakfast treat.

4 cups salt codfish 1/4 tsp pepper
8 heaping cups potatoes 1/4 tsp pepper

Wash fish in cold water and pick into small pieces or cut with scissors. Cut potatoes in cubes of equal size before measuring. Cook fish and potatoes together. Strain after potatoes are soft. Mash and whip for two minutes with a fork. Place back in pan in which they were cooked. Add other ingredients and salt if necessary. Take up by spoonful and fry in hot fat, six balls to one frying basket. Reheat the fat after each frying. Drain on brown paper.

The cookbook sells, at post-publication price, for \$3.50 at your local bookstore. If you wish to order a copy through the mail, address your request to: Community Cooking, 438 Portland Avenue, St. Paul MN 55102. Proceeds from the sale of the cookbook will go to help a non-profit community organization in the Summit-University neighborhood.

by Lynn Hinkle

People's Clothes

People's Clothes is a unique sewing factory whose story is told not by a smooth talking PR man or a boss sitting in an office isolated from his machines and employees, but by the workers themselves. Unlike other sewing factories and most businesses in general it's worker-owned and managed. This means, according to one of the eight women workers, Priscilla, that, "You have almost total responsibility as a worker to determine what the work experience means to you. You, not a boss, control how much you earn, how fast and how long you work, what you produce and even the amount of time you can take to visit with other workers while on the job."

People's Clothes, located in a storefront on Franklin Ave., is central to most of the

workers like Priscilla, and the growing coop community in South Minneapolis. All but one of the workers is white and no one is older than 35.

They used about 20 different, simple designs to produce durable, comfortable clothes, like drawstring skirts and pants. The clothes sell from \$4 to \$20 at North Country Peoples Department Store at 2002 Riverside in Minneapolis, are priced below the same quality dry goods sold at other stores.



Workers at People's Clothes: "You, not a boss, control how much you earn..." Photo KM

The styles sold at the Peoples Department Store on the West Bank are tested by the workers themselves. They wear and experiment with the clothes they sell. This practice has led to a number of consumer-oriented changes in design and marketing, like tucking, cutting scraps from a pair of drawstring pants in the pants pockets, so that if the new pants get torn, they can be patched with like material. Mary, one of the worker/managers summed up the collective attitude toward consumers, "If we find that our styles don't fit a need, we change it. We're trying to serve people the way we like to be served ourselves."

In this factory, every worker has an equal voice in policy, set at monthly meetings. Ann, one of the less experienced seamstresses, described some of the decisions made by the workers as she got up from her stitcher for some coffee. "We decided we could work better if we had more flexibility in setting our work schedules, which is especially im-

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portant to the four mothers in our collective, or even working at home occasionally if need be. We decided to arrange the sewing tables in a circle so we could talk with one another as we work rather than sitting in silent rows of droning machines."

They've also agreed on equal pay at a rate of \$3 per hour (roughly union scale) even though two people, the managers, work at sales, bookkeeping, and payroll along with cutting and sewing. Everyone rotates the janitorial work and profits are distributed according to individual yearly earnings. Mary talked about her position as worker/manager, "If I don't sit right there with the other workers doing the cutting and sewing right along with them, I'll lose the workers viewpoint, which may keep me from spotting solutions to important production problems."

Everyone at People's Clothes agrees that efficiency is currently one of their biggest problems. Unless the workers become more efficient, their piece rate based on \$3 per hour will have to increase and none of the workers feel comfortable raising the piece rate. Susan, the other worker/manager, suggested that the rhythm of work would be more continuous if people avoid looking up from their sewing when they talk with other workers.

She suspects that a regular "efficiency expert" rather than a worker/manager would suggest that people simply not talk with one another while working. Susan concedes that while watching your own work carefully takes a lot of self-discipline and may be burdensome at times, the changes workers make in their own work can make the difference between drudgery and satisfying work. "But for the most part," Susan adds, "day to day it's still like working a regular job."

Susan believes that, "Although we've changed eight peoples' work situation, there's still a lot of work needed to change the society. We can only go so far before we run into the constraints of the system." Up until a year ago one of those constraints was capital. In April the sewing collective was able to secure a loan of \$10,000 from Southside Community Enterprises, a community development corporation interested in worker-owned, community-oriented businesses.

The loan from SCE was used to purchase new machines to help create a safer and

more productive environment for the workers. Although the loan from SCE helped solidify their business, the workers at People's Clothes believe they are responsible for the success or failure of the sewing factory. Would they want to work in an employee-owned sewing factory again? "Oh, God!" says Mary, "I can't imagine working to make money for somebody else again."

by Lynn Hinkle

The Minnesota Homefires Calendar

The Minnesota Homefires Calendar is out. Packed with drawings, photos and information about ordinary Minnesotans' struggle to gain more control of their communities and workplaces, the 1976 Homefires Calendar would be interesting reading any year. The fourth annual Homefires Calendar produced by the Minnesota Peoples History Project has a somewhat altered format. For example the larger size of the calendar --each month consisting of separate 14" X 15" top and bottom sheets-- allows for more pictures and information and hangs better than the earlier models. Each month is highlighted by a feature article or poem on the top with a history packed calendar on the bottom. This years feature articles include a description of a early labor struggle in Minnesota, the 1928 co-op slit, small farming in Minnesota and more. Regular features include the "Recipe of the Month" and "Quote of the Month" by famous and infamous Minnesotans.

For a while there were serious doubts as to whether the calendar would be produced this year. Several members of the original History Project had left, and the remaining people were hesitant to take on the project. But with the energy and enthusiasm of new workers, the reorganized group decided to go ahead with the publication of the calendar. We felt that 1976 with all the flags and fanfare of the "Buy-Centennial" was an especially important year to distribute our calendar.

1974 and 1975 Homefires Calendars are still available in numerous co-ops and bookstores. If you'd like to order a 1976 Calendar, send \$2.50 to Minnesota Peoples History Project, 488 Holly Ave., St. Paul, MN 55102.

by Steve Trimble

BACK ISSUES:

If you've missed any of our back issues, you can still get copies! (See the subscription form below.)

Our first issue, "The Cities' Backyard," examines nine neighborhood histories from the viewpoint of people who work and live in those Twin Cities' neighborhoods. Our second issue, "Playing For Keeps," focuses on neighborhood parks and open space planning and also includes two neighborhood histories. Common Ground #3, "Towards Community Control?" provides background for the current discussion on citizen participation and Community Councils. All the issues feature articles and reviews of new community organizations and businesses that are involved in community building including theatres, restaurants and food coops.

Common Ground #4, "The West Bank: Resident Initiative Takes Root," looks inside the West Bank residents' strategies for control of their community. Included are descriptions of how developers like Cedar-Riverside Associates make large profits at tenants and taxpayers' expenses and how the West Bank experience is helping other communities organize resident controlled development. Reviews of a new women's restaurant, several community-based theatres and a photo history of the Payne-Phalen area of St. Paul round out the issue.

Common Ground #5, "Neighborhood Renewal: Preserving Homes, Creating Jobs" features a special Parade of Neighborhoods section which contains statements from 41 neighborhoods in the Twin Cities. Written by the residents themselves, they express the values, lifestyles, aspirations and struggles which different neighborhoods hold. In doing so, they offer an informative record which marks our progress toward neighborhood self-determination. Also included are four articles dealing with different ways to rehab homes and create economic stability in our neighborhoods--all are aimed at placing the resident and neighborhood's needs first. Our histories take a look at Nicollet Island and Mexican-Americans on the West Side of St. Paul and reviews of child care coops and community restaurants complete the issue.

Common Ground #6. Does art need to be something that only professionals do? How could art build community? "Art For Our Sake: Toward a Culture of Cooperative Action" reports on groups who are trying to bring art back to all of us. 8 pages are original songs, drawings, and poetry. Steve Trimble's first installment of Minnesota Grassroots Culture emerged here, and there's more!

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