

11. The Communities Movement

In the early 2020s, people started coming together as communities of individuals who personally knew, supported and cared for each other in what became a communities' movement. We pooled interests to realize economies of scale. It was daft inefficiency for each to have to personally earn all the money to personally own everything needed in our lives: energy, ICT, water, sewage, vehicles, tools, supplies and spaces to meet each of our needs. Sharing models grew, like *Share-It* and tool lending libraries.

Communities banded together for neighborhood information and communication technologies (ICT) networks connecting all, allowing us to buy and manage much less paid services at much less cost to serve all better than old models of each having to buy expensive and underutilized ICT services.

Communities banded together to create electricity micro-grids, which balanced loads from green solar and wind electricity production and electricity storage in neighborhoods to serve all, with a single interconnection point to regional electricity grids for sharing surpluses and buying electricity only when they could not produce enough of their own. That lowered costs and improved reliability for all.

Communities shared gardens to produce and share healthy, fresh, local, organic foods. We shared vehicles, in the early days, so not everyone had to buy, insure and maintain expensive cars and trucks. We shared meals, which, along with other shared efforts and experiences, created connections and relationships between people and saved all money versus expensive restaurants. In communities, we shared child, sick and elderly care, giving opportunities to youth. We conspired to cultivate good health.

Communities provided various "commons", gyms, pools, play fields and other healthy exercise opportunities which individuals had previously struggled to afford or have time for, improving health. Communities created home-grown entertainments, lowering expenses for outside entertainments.

Common people continued to participate in government, voting and providing input to elected officials, and through political actions, but we didn't put all of our hopes and power into far-away governments and the corrupt centrally controlled and manipulated corporate profit seeking solutions they imposed. Rather, we primarily focused on efforts and relationships in the communities where we had influence. Government officials, policies and activities were increasingly evaluated based on how they reflected shared Earth Citizen Principles and Values. As more and more people did that, politicians changed to better reflect that. They still needed public votes to gain and stay in power.

Generally, this resulted in a shift of power, control and influence from power and money centers toward the edges, where we live, work and play, giving us chances to shape local environments and systems to optimally benefit people in communities we work to cultivate. That appeals to traditional conservative values originating in desires to prevent concentrations of power, so nobody could gain the power and control abused by fascists in World War 2, and it appeals to traditional liberal values, that society and social systems should be optimized to improve the lives of all people, no matter our differences.

We realized we could get together and buy whole towns in "Middle America", abandoned or neglected and decaying, because local livelihoods had been exported or stolen by corporations. For a fraction of the costs of city living, we could own land, homes, barns, business and other structures, connect with

modern information and knowledge economy opportunities, grow good food and create great lifestyles. People desperately trying to hang on in those towns prospered, along with new residents.

Others bought raw or abused land and built new kinds of communities, with lovely common structures we gather and bond in, for meals and work, and simple, non-traditional structures, like tiny homes, yurts, luxury tents, treehouses and other eclectic setups we live in. It's fine to have very simple homes, if we have good common structures and facilities to share. We grew and shared good food and built cottage industries to provide money needed for what we couldn't produce ourselves. In these settings, we have fun making unique living environments we enjoy with like-minded friends and family.

Some banded together to buy or organize suburban neighborhood communities, others apartment and condominium buildings. That gave us control over our environments, allowing us to do things like dedicate homes or building floors as community centers, gyms, social settings, indoor farms or workspaces, and share vehicles, utility and other services more efficiently.

Communities developed with all kinds of unique identities, goals and aspirations. Some were based on religious or other beliefs; some on shared interests in ways of living or making livings; others on keeping ethnic or other traditions alive. Some were survivalists. Others were based on varied spiritual practices. These living experiments provide fascinating stories. They also created strong new forms of diversity, folks living by different intentions and ways, with cities, towns and land more interesting and engaging. We don't all have to be and live the same ways. There's freedom to create and be as we wish.

In the same ways tourists enjoy visiting Chinatowns in cities, people began enjoying visiting all kinds of different communities: kibbutz-like, ethnic, high-tech, religious, artist, farming, musician, austere, and event producing communities, work collectives, ashrams, camps, highly functional communities of disabled people, hospitality services communities, and many others.

We began wearing distinctive clothing, some beautiful traditional wear, others beautiful new styles, many just for fun. Guest workers flowed through communities, exchanging expertise and efforts for housing, food and companionship, like woofers do in farming. Woofing experienced terrific growth, especially with youngsters exploring and finding ourselves. Communities developed exchange programs between themselves, to provide new perspectives and experiences and learn from each other.

The Communities Movement was a ground zero for people making change in our beliefs, values, ways and behaviors. We banded together, found commonality, and worked together to remake ourselves and our environments into something sustainable and worth caring about. We took care of each other. We learned to work out interpersonal and other social problems, often the hardest part, but also the most rewarding. We figured out ways to govern ourselves and felt empowered and fulfilled doing so. Focus shifted from what was wrong in the world we were frustrated by being unable to affect, to creating something right in the world we could make happen. In the process, there was a shift in power, from centralized governments, corporations and systems to people in communities, where we thrived. Humans evolved in close caring communities, and we're again evolving in close caring communities.