

SANDHILL FARM'S CHILDREN REMEMBER STAN HILDEBRAND

COMMUNITIES

Life in Cooperative Culture

Winter 2021 • Issue #193

A photograph of three children playing in a wooden structure, possibly a playhouse or fort, outdoors. A young girl with long brown hair is on the left, wearing a grey hoodie with a colorful graphic, looking towards the camera with an open mouth. In the center, a young boy with short dark hair, wearing a blue hoodie, is looking back over his shoulder. On the right, another young boy with dark hair, wearing a blue shirt and a green headband, is looking towards the camera. The structure is made of weathered wood, and a red banner with the text 'HAMILTON REGIONAL YMCA BASKETBALL' is visible in the background.

Children in Community

Being a “Commune Kid”

Children and Polyamory

Work and Play at Camphill Copake

Parenting in a Forming Community

Those Who Sow Together Grow Together

CHILDREN IN COMMUNITY

- 4 Letters: Sociocracy: Not How It Works**
Diana Leafe Christian
Hidden agendas, covert plans, holding onto unearned power and privilege, flouting of legal obligations, refusal to address concerns, targeting, and bullying have no place in sociocracy.
- 6 Views from Our Partners: A Context for Hope**
Paul Freundlich
Is there a path that can guide today's children to reach a future worth navigating?
- 8 Sandhill Farm's Children* Remember Stan *(and moms)**
Jo Sandhill, Ceilee Sandhill, Ann Shrader, Renay Friendshuh, Emma Allen-Landwehr, Jay Allen, and Gigi (Root) Wahba
Stan's caring, gentleness, dedication to his values and to his community, and love helped create a foundation, in these children and others, that will live on long beyond his passing.
- 15 Fifty Years of Children in COMMUNITIES**
- 16 Parenting in Los Angeles Eco-Village**
Jessica Ruvalcaba
At LAEV, parents enrich each other's lives by sharing in the act of raising children, while the children have a whole village of adults who love them and look after them.
- 20 Children at Kibbutz Mishol**
Anton Marks
A large urban community undergoes transformation once members start to have children, with new questions, challenges, and rewards from making the choice to prioritize the next generation.
- 22 Growing Up at Heart-Culture Farm Community**
Myriad Huntermoon
A 17-year-old appreciates her upbringing, surrounded by the love of her immediate and extended community families, and granted the freedom to be her own person.
- 24 Raising Kids in a Forming Community: Myriad's Mom Responds**
Kara Huntermoon
Creating community to help raise her child, a mother discovers she has helped form a much-needed place of safety, stability, and connection not only for her daughter, but also for herself.
- 26 Work and Play at Camphill Copake**
Emilie Papas
How to balance commitments to children, to marriage, to community? Joy, laughter, and mutual support in creating beautiful, thriving homes for people with special needs help address one communitarian's doubts.
- 29 Those Who Sow Together Grow Together**
Kim Hunter
Engaging young children in tasks that need doing is both educational and supports them to engage in communal work where their capacities to love their work are enhanced, nourished, and appreciated.
- 31 Intergenerational Ecoliteracy in the 21st Century**
Cara Judea Alhadeff, PhD
Ecoliteracy begins at home; it begins with parenting; in every room of the house; in the classroom, in the media. An ecoliterate mindset inspires us to draw connections as we make sense of our everyday lives.



29



34



31

**34 “Being a Commune Kid”:
Children at the Brotherhood of the
Spirit/Renaissance Community**

Daniel A. Brown

A charismatic leader’s offhand comment during a full-group meeting—“Gee, wouldn’t it be nice to have a couple of kids around here?”—creates a “Baby Boom” that lasts for years and changes the fabric of the community.

**38 Children and Polyamory:
The Kids Are Alright**

Art

Children can add a lot of complexity in communal households and polyamorous relationships, but they also add meaning and opportunities to create new “stories” for ourselves and future generations.

**41 “Come Play on Our Lawn”:
Seniors-Only Communities
and the Generation Gap**

Alan O’Hashi

Even seniors who seek out age-segregated living arrangements, and communities whose population trends older for economic reasons, can benefit from the presence of younger visitors, and often do.

**44 Intergenerational Community:
A Bruderhof Perspective**

Maureen Swinger

A parent recounts her childhood in the Bruderhof, raised among numerous “grandparents” who taught, guided, and loved her, and wishes the same for her own children.

**48 A Culture of Song:
Children and Music in Community**

Esther Keiderling

Communal singing is one way to integrate the smallest children in a community into worship. Singing is fun and can help illustrate important truths and imprint them onto children’s memories.

50 Pioneering Community

Chant Thomas

Four decades ago, Trillium Farm Community helped spawn a whole network of community activity and social change in southwest Oregon’s Applegate Valley. Its cofounder shares stories, lessons, and encouragement for new pioneers.

**54 Working Effectively with
Especially Challenging Behaviors,
Part One**

Diana Leafe Christian

People living in community can be especially vulnerable to the effects of an individual’s narcissistic attitudes and behaviors; developing the ability to recognize these can be the first step to a group’s “waking up” and learning to protect itself.

- **Empowering with Information, NOT Labeling or Diagnosing**

**60 Review:
People in Common: Coates’ Tales**

Bill Metcalf

While falling short of their aspirations, the communitarians portrayed in Chris Coates’ *A Life in Common* still achieved a great deal—and had a lot of fun in doing so.

**62 Review:
Practical Utopianism**

Tim Miller

In *The Utopians: Six Attempts to Build the Perfect Society*, Anna Neima shares stories of experimental new societies that still have relevance a century later.

64 REACH

68 New Back Issue Sets and More

ON THE COVER



“Up in the Playhouse”: children at Rocky Hill Cohousing, Northampton, Massachusetts. Photo by Richard Getler.

Intergenerational Ecoliteracy in the 21st Century

By Cara Judea Alhadeff, PhD



Photos and images courtesy of Cara Judea Alhadeff, PhD

As an eight-year old in 1979, I was confronted with an image that changed my world. It was on the back cover of a magazine in my dad’s kitchen—a photograph taken in the late 1800s. Next to a 30-foot-in-diameter redwood tree, a logger, ax in hand, stood proudly with his foot propped up in a traditional masculine position of conquest. The caption read: “It took 2,000 years for this tree to grow and 20 minutes to be cut down.” I remember the tightening in my throat, rush in my stomach. I felt awe and horror, utter confusion.

As a child who had not yet been inundated with messages of ecological destruction, I didn’t know how to read this image. It felt like both a benediction for Progress and reprehension for its consequences. Today, we are all too familiar with these kinds of disorienting and demoralizing images, but rarely know how to decipher contradictory but seemingly inevitable implications. Too often, mainstream middle-class response is to consume our way “out” of our disorientation¹—numbing ourselves through materialist addictions that then reinforce the very root of our crisis. Through neoliberal globalization, our world mirrors the Titanic cruise ship—the quintessential symbol of the Anthropocene: 1500 people died during the debacle of the Titanic because the ship executives had prioritized lounging space over lifeboats.

My discussion of climate justice education begins with intergenerational ecoliteracy in the realm of parenting. Parenting represents perhaps one of the most contradictory dilemmas of the 21st century, revealing both the possibility for freedom from and adaptation to consumer-waste convenience-culture. J. Krishnamurti’s warning, “It is no measure of health to be well adjusted to a profoundly sick society,” characterizes both our climate crisis and our potential for collective change as ecologically-conscious parents. How we raise our children is critical to environmental

education. The word *educate* means “to draw out.” How can we educate ourselves and our children to take nothing for granted; to unlearn *what we think we know* while not only debating, but embodying differing perspectives? How can we embody an intergenerational ecoliteracy, not through individualized, privatized behaviors, but *in community*—generating collective action as a sustainable movement? How can we learn to *want* to change our daily habits?: “They hear it, they learn from it, they understand it, and they proceed to ignore it.”²

Answering these questions begins with consumer responsibility and corporate accountability through ecoliteracy at *home*. This means parents must go *beyond* nature-based Early Childhood Education.³ We must resist what I call “petroleum parenting”: market-driven choices parents make that contribute to environmental destruction. Petroleum parenting includes how we give birth, how we participate in the medical establishment, how we negotiate circumcision-decisions, breastfeeding, transportation, sleeping, bathing, screen-technology-as-surrogate-parent, and how we choose to feed, diaper, entertain, and, of course, how we educate our infants, toddlers, and children.

In the 2004 documentary film, *The Corporation*, Noam Chomsky describes how profit-driven institutions begin to instill consumer-values at infancy; Ray Anderson, CEO of Interface, the world’s largest commercial carpet manufacturer, calls corporate motivation a form of “intergenerational tyranny.” Since indoctrination of children is at the root of escalating big business, shouldn’t parents, educators, activists, academics, and those who oppose the monoculturalization of our minds⁴ address children directly? Howard Zinn asks, “I wonder why some people think it is all right for adults to hear such a radical, critical point of view, but not teenagers or sub-teenagers? Do they think that young



people are not able to deal with such matters?”⁵

Branding and advertising recognize the potency of early indoctrination. Lucy Hughes, Vice President for Initiative Media and co-creator of The Nag Factor, proudly declares that Initiative spends \$12 billion of media time to encourage children to “nag” their parents into buying products, home videos, fast food and attending movies, theme parks, and “places like Chuck E Cheese.” Initiative Media is the “biggest buyer of advertising time and space in the US and in the world.” She goes on: “You can manipulate consumers into wanting and therefore buying your products—it’s a game... [today’s children are] tomorrow’s adult consumer so start talking with them now, build that relationship with them when they’re younger and you’ve got them as an adult.”⁶

Similarly, “eco-parenting” is equated with consumerism. When I researched eco-parenting online, 99.9 percent of what comes up is *what to buy*. Consumer-focused greenwashing becomes the default of making supposedly ethical parental choices. Greenwashing is a prime example of capitalism dictating the trajectory of our

alleged freedom. The “green-economy has come to mean...the wholesale privatization of nature.”⁷ The sound-bite/aphorism fuels much of the US Green Movement’s misleading activism. There are unfortunately too many examples of this—ranging from federal energy policies to Ben and Jerry’s Buy-Ice-Cream=Save-the-Environment campaign to, of course, eco-parenting. Convenience-consumer culture frames the environment as a desirable product. In a recent Roper poll, 91 percent of new parents claim recycling is critical to their children’s futures. “Eco-parenting” is not about buying “green” products or recycling, which often eases consumer-guilt and gives them the impression they can buy and waste more. It is about intergenerational ecoliteracy.

Ecoliteracy begins at home; it begins with parenting; in every room of the house; in the classroom, in the media. In *The Truman Show*, Ed Harris’ character, the billionaire televisionary, exhorts: “We accept the reality of the world we are presented.” My son, Zazu, is part of the Gen Z (those born 1995-2015). Parents/caregivers are told that this generation is particularly “social and communicative” because they (not my son, and not most of his friends) are growing up with “high-powered communication tools” like Alexa. This is a phenomenally dangerous correlation. Teaching our kids to communicate “verbally” (to machines) does not mean we are teaching them to communicate empathically or relationally. The pernicious illusion that these digital information technologies (online education, “interactive” learning platforms, fully digital classes, Minecraft homeschooling) *increase sociality* misleads us to believe that using “language” is equal to developing social, emotional, and cooperation skills required for resiliency and collaboration.

In contrast with the empire of normalizing media that colonizes our relationships with our own bodies and our earth, *lived* ecoliteracy embodies a decolonizing, liberatory practice of cultivating dynamic interpersonal empathy. In the vein of Toni Morrison whose writings gave children “agency and soul,” this bridge between generations creates deep empathy and relevancy, encouraging children to learn all subjects from multiple perspectives—including activities about racial and health equity, ethnic, sexual, and cultural difference. In their book *Nurture Shock: New Thinking About Children*, Po Bronson and Ashley Merryman investigate the vital consequences of discussing race/ethnicity with children as young as two years old.⁸

What if we created entirely different models that mirror adulthood rooted in reciprocity, co-creativity, and equilibrium? Zinn exhorts, “I believe that history can help us imagine new possibilities for the future. ... Maybe our future can be found in the past’s moments of kindness and courage rather than its centuries of warfare.”

Within the national debate about how to *emotionally* protect our children, many socially-conscious parents conflate “news” about terrorism, mass starvation, police brutality, school shootings, etc. with environmental devastation/ecocide—claiming all as taboo subjects. Histrionic and inaccurate statistics are used to reify the climate of fear prevalent in bearing and raising children in the US. Divide-and-conquer techniques can be inflicted only when individuals do not experience themselves as relational beings. Contrary to such fears, I am suggesting that parents and educators teach our very young children *why* ecologically-conscious

values and behaviors are both nourishing and critical for us all.

Rather than compounding what eco-anxiety, eco-depression, climate grief, or what David Sobel calls “ecophobia” (“a helpless sense of dread about the future”), embodying intergenerational ecoliteracy means co-creating infrastructures in which all sectors of society feel empowered to act individually and collectively. This means redefining resiliency. Throughout the US, city commissions on community resiliency focus their citizen-education programs on *adaptation and preparedness* for climate chaos. We must shift that focus to *prevention* by questioning the *interrelational* roots of each crisis. Only then can we integrate profound, sustainable changes in individual behavior, community action, infrastructural design, corporate accountability, and policy reform.

It’s mid-summer, 2020. COVID-19 social regulation controls are shifting. Zazu is the same age I was when I witnessed the photograph of the logger and tree. My family travels north to visit my mother and stepfather. At a rest stop teeming with squirming, molting cicadas and their eerie precariously perched exoskeletons, Zazu is stunned to see a truck loaded with tires larger than our home. Out of the blue, he starts talking about advertising—as if he is confirming something to himself: “Advertising isn’t true. If you have to sell something you have to advertise. If you have to advertise, you have to exaggerate. Whether you are selling mac and cheese or gargantuan tires...” I respond: “Yeah, and we need to find out where the exaggeration ends and the truth begins.”

In the midst of megatires and the cicadas’ 17-year cycle, Zazu’s reflections on advertising demonstrate an ecoliterate mindset: the inspiration to draw connections as we make sense of our everyday lives. He is unraveling how we deceive ourselves—noting how our obsessive consumption of everything from commercials and free-ways to food, computers, and clothing is made to appear natural, inevitable, and incontestable. He distinguishes between want and need. Although the transportation of megatires from state to state appears to be equally as “real” as the cicadas and their gently clinging exoskeletons, my son is learning to not only decipher the differences among what we regard as normal, he is evolving an ecoliterate wisdom that challenges how consumption-dehumanization is bound to accelerated suffering of all life. No longer deluded by technotopia, we will collectively fulfill our humanity. 🐦

Dr. Cara Judea Albadeff has published dozens of books and essays on environmental justice, spirituality, philosophy, performance studies, and ethnic studies journals/anthologies. In numerous museum

collections, her photographs/performances have been defended by freedom-of-speech organizations. Former professor at UC Santa Cruz and Global Center for Advanced Studies, Albadeff teaches, performs, and parents a creative zero-waste life. She lives with her partner, Rob Mies, and their son, Zazu, in the Love Bus: a biocentric art installation/performance-based tiny home using only repurposed materials and equipment: www.facebook.com/LoveBusFamily. See also www.carajudea.com, www.zazudreams.com, and Menagerie Woodworking at www.facebook.com/menagerie.woodworking.



1. Thomas Berry, *The Great Work: Our Way into the Future*. Bell Tower: New York, NY, 1990.
2. From the 2009 Vietnam War documentary film: *The Most Feared Man in America and The Pentagon Papers*: Daniel Ellsberg.
3. Across the US, nature and forest outdoor preschools recognize the extraordinary individual and community value of outdoor education; however, after the age of five, federal education state standards deny children these critical opportunities.
4. Vandana Shiva, *Monocultures of the Mind: Perspectives on Biodiversity and Biotechnology*. Zed Books: New York, NY, 1993.
5. Howard Zinn, *Young People’s History of the United States: Columbus to the War on Terror*. Seven Stories Press: New York, NY, 2009, 37.
6. Mark Achbar, Jennifer Abbott, and Joel Bakan’s 2003 documentary film, *The Corporation*, cited in the Guide on how to read *Zazu Dreams: Between the Scarab and the Dung Beetle, A Cautionary Fable for the Anthropocene Era*. Eifrig Publishing: Berlin, 2017, 7.
7. Jeff Conant, “Going Against the Green,” *Yes! Magazine*. Fall 2012: 62-64.
8. Similarly, *Zazu Dreams: Between the Scarab and the Dung Beetle, A Cautionary Fable for the Anthropocene Era*, my intergenerational climate justice book, highlights our empathic capacities as communal, co-implicated beings. In the face of cultural extinction of ethnic minorities and global ecological extinction, *Zazu Dreams* explores the beauty of sharing our interconnectedness—the fertile intersections among cross-cultural and natural-world examples of symbiosis and interdependency. In contrast with how our society underestimates children’s aptitude for deep empathy and complex thought, at the root of this project is an understanding of children’s capacity (and adult’s) to harness multiple intelligences (cognitive, intuitive, emotional, corporeal, synesthetic, memory).