

Dear Friends,

The purpose of this letter is to persuade you to join myself and several others in developing a plan for an alternative community life style.

Speaking very generally, I feel this could be accomplished by a small group of people (8-15) living very cheaply (possibly communally) and working at the best paying job each person could find. By making substantial contributions of their earnings to a common fund over an extended period of time (approximately 3 years) and by properly investing the accumulated money the group would attempt to save between \$60,000 and \$100,000. This money would then be used to purchase land for a permanent residence for the group and a small cooperatively operated business to sustain group members.

I have already discussed this outrageous idea with several people. From those discussions and my opinions I will attempt to give you a more specific idea of what this plan is all about. Initially I will describe some basic goals that I feel should be accomplished through the implementation of this plan. I will then try and give you a clearer picture of the three year money raising proposal as I envision it. I will attempt to give an accurate interpretation of my ideas and the ideas of those people I have talked to. I would like to stress, however, that ALL aspects of this plan will be formulated and discussed by everyone who is interested and that ideas and concepts expressed in this letter are temporary conclusions based on limited discussion, and are offered here only in an attempt to give you a feel for the basic idea.

In my estimation there are three rudimentary goals that should be accomplished by the proposed community. First and most basic would be to create a living and working environment where each individual is making an absolute minimum number of sacrifices of personal freedom to the existing social and political system and to the community itself. The objective then would be self-sufficiency on both a personal and communal level. Ideally this could be attained through the cooperative business, where hours of work and vacation time could be loosely structured around everyone's needs. Admittedly there are and will be sacrifices involved in running a business but hopefully the advantages and rewards of working for your own business would outweigh the sacrifices. In addition to the cooperative work situation a simple and comfortable living situation outside the city is in my opinion very desirable. In fact, a casual but responsible integration of home life and work life is an essential objective as I see it.

Another goal which is more practical than idealistic would be to prepare the community in the best way possible for the collapse of the national economy. Again self-sufficiency seems to be the answer. Initially, however, this could be accomplished through the purchase of land as a safe investment. The land, should the economy not fail, could later be sold for a profit, increasing the assets of the community or if desirable used as the eventual place of residence.

There is, of course, a complete category of goals dealing with the physical and intellectual enrichment of each group member and the cultural enrichment of the community as a whole: These goals, it seems, would

differ greatly among different members of the group and I see no point in getting that specific in this letter. I do, however, see the need for a very general goal of having a continual input of new and differing ideas into the community. To be philosophical for a minute ---- I see this goal as essential to save the community from the fatal train of thought which holds "We have THE answer to things" rather than "We have a viable plan for this group of people at this particular time". The former being the downfall of many group efforts in my opinion. Fulfillment of this goal could be as simple as allotting time for each group member to in some way continue his/her education or as complex as trying to persuade educators and/or informed persons from different fields to spend some time at the place of residence.

A fourth objective (and a somewhat sensitive area in discussions to date) would be to structure the plan to include people who are not willing to completely abandon their interests in capitalism. In my opinion people who are interested in making large sums of money or simply interested in following a specific career should not be excluded from the group as long as they contribute an acceptable amount and form of energy to the group effort. I might add that personally I would not consider money alone to be an acceptable form of energy. This goal may sound contradictory to other concepts stated in this letter. My only rebuttal is that it is somewhat contradictory but that it ties directly in with goal number one in that, I feel, the group must not be allowed to place too many restrictions on itself.

These then are some general goals I would hope to accomplish through a community effort. I hasten to add again that they are only opinions and that ultimately all objectives and discussions will be cooperative.

Now back to the hard core problem of raising money. In the case at hand it would seem the philosophy must be "sacrifice now for the good life later". In the beginning I feel all energy must be put into making the largest amount of money in the least amount of time. After you've accepted that brutal axiom it's simply a matter of arithmetic.

If everyone could find a job paying about \$525.00 a month (approx. \$3.00 per hr.) it would make for a very satisfactory minimum income to start from. The break-down of income could be something like this:

\$ 125.00	-----	Taxes, Soc.-.Sec., Health Ins., ect. - per/mo.
200.00	-----	Contribution to common fund per/mo.
100.00	-----	Food and rent per/mo. (Cheap food and rent costs could be obtained by living communally during money raising phase).
100.00	-----	Personal needs, car payments, loans, ect per/mo.
\$ 525.00	- - - - -	MINIMUM GROSS INCOME REQUIRED PER/MO.

\$ 200.00	-----	Each person's monthly contribution
x 10	-----	Aprox, no. of people
2,000.00	-----	Total gp. contribution per/mo.
<u> </u>	x 36MO-----	_Aprox. duration of money raising phas
72,000.00	-----	Principal money saved

I would readily admit that many of these figures could be unrealistic, however, in any case, any additional amount of money could be saved simply by working a few extra months.

I repeat that as money accumulated it could be used to purchase land as a safe and enjoyable investment.

Several real problems exist in the money making plan not the least of which is what to do if someone decides to leave the group after they have contributed a large sum. Another problem could be how to handle couples with children. Should they contribute more or less than group members without children? In both cases I would hesitate to attempt an answer but hope that the group as a whole could deal with these and other serious problems that I'm sure will arise in relation to this subject.

Once the money is raised the labours and boring part of the plan is over and the creative and challenging phase begins.* I feel very strongly, however, that in the beginning, everyone must have a realistic picture of what the end product will be for themselves before making any form of commitment. Hopefully these things will become clearer through discussion. At this point I think the most important thing to ask yourself is whether or not you are in position to and willing, to make the kind of commitment that this entire idea requires. I would certainly discourage anyone who knows they are not willing or able to make that commitment from hindering organizational matters by playing the role of a disinterested contributor of ideas.

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- How the money is permanently invested will be THE MOST CRITICAL decision the community will have to make.