



RADIO SHOW ABOUT COMMUNITIES WINS AWARD

A series of radio programmes and an associated website on the subject of intentional communities in Australia have recently been awarded the Southern Cross University's Vice Chancellor's award for excellence in research and scholarship.

The series was aired by Radio National, a subsidiary of the national broadcaster ABC (the Australian Broadcasting Corporation), which broadcasts throughout Australia and into SE Asia. The series included a number of interviews with community residents (including GENOA folk, Max Lindegger and Val Oliver). It also created a fascinating educational web

resource, where visitors could get involved in various forums discussing the thorny problems encountered by a hypothetical community, 'Paradiso Falls'.

Just under half of the AUS\$10,000 prize money will go towards helping to set up the 'Rainbow Archives', an attempt to collect, study and catalogue materials relating to post-Aquarian social movements in the Northern Rivers region of Australia. The rest will be spent on further research projects, books, conference fees, etc for the team members who pulled this together.

For more information, check out <http://www.abc.net.au/rn/utopias/>

ECOVILLAGE AND PERMACULTURE CLANS GATHER UNDER CONDOR'S WING

October 2003 saw a huge gathering of ecovillagers and Permaculturists from across the Americas and beyond, under the banner 'The Call of the Condor'. Over 500 people set up a temporary camp at the foot of Mount Veronica in the Sacred Valley of the Incas to share a week of workshops, music, meditation and dance. The gathering, organised by 'mobile ecovillage', La Caravanna, was one in a series of Vision Councils, the next of which will be held in Mexico in April 2004.

principles to support the sustainable production of food on smallholdings nationwide. The farm where Veronica works, at the Pontific Catholic University of Peru, is a laboratory for Permaculture and sustainable development, as



In addition to the rich educational, networking and cultural experience at the Condor, the gathering provided an opportunity for visitors to see some of the many exciting developments in Peru. Among these is the work of Veronica Vinas' 'Grupo de Apoyo al Sector Rural' initiative, which makes use of permaculture

well as renewable energy, appropriate technology and natural building. It also serves as the Peruvian office for ENA (the Ecovillage Network of the Americas). For further details, please contact Giovanni Ciarlo at giovanni@ecovillage.org

For more on La Caravanna mobile ecovillage, please visit www.lacaravana.org/condor

European Ecovillage Bridge-Building

Ecovillage bridges are being built between western and eastern Europe. In the first leg of an exchange programme, part-funded by GEN-Europe, six people who are actively engaged in ecovillage projects in Croatia and Bosnia have visited the Ecovillage Torri Superiore in Ventimiglia, Italy.

In Torri, the group received training in various dimensions of ecovillage life, including ecological planning and design, ecovillage economics, conflict resolution, permaculture and more. It is hoped that these skills will be of great use to the participants, and

will help them to rebuild a culture of peace and well-being on their return home.

The second part of the exchange, when Torri residents have the opportunity to travel to the former Yugoslavia, is due to take place in autumn 2004 and will involve further training courses.



EARTHSONG RISING

Earthsong Eco-Neighbourhood, Auckland, New Zealand, has received a major boost with the announcement by its local council of a NZ\$300,000 loan to help build their new "Earthsong Centre". As well as being a meeting place for Earthsong residents, the Centre will provide a unique venue for small specialised conferences and seminars on a range of sustainability issues, and for art shows, literature and music performances. The loan will allow construction to commence in 2004, two years earlier than otherwise planned.

Earthsong is a sustainable co-housing neighbourhood of 32 rammed earth and timber terrace houses, apartments and common facilities, set amidst three acres of organic orchards.

As well as the Earthsong Centre, construction will also shortly be underway on the next stage of the community's housing. For more information, see www.echousing.pl.net or email earthsong@xtra.co.nz

ECOVILLAGE AT ITHACA 'LEARNS HOW TO WALK'

EcoVillage at Ithaca (EVI) has recently passed a threshold as dramatic as a child suddenly learning to walk: it has become a village. After over two years of building, all thirty homes in the second neighbourhood, 'SONG', are nearly complete and members are beginning to forge a common identity. In addition, EVI is on the point of paying off its entire mortgage that, as recently as January 2003, stood at US\$242,700.

There are smaller, yet equally significant signs of community development: a group led by resident builder Rob Champion has almost completed a beautiful sauna, and farmers Jen and John Bokaer-Smith are building a greenhouse to complete the farm. Another side of EVI is also thriving as courses on all aspects of the "Science of Sustainability" draw in students, eager to learn both practical and theoretical skills from the EVI "faculty".

NEWS IN BRIEF

ECOVILLAGE TOURISM TO SUPPORT THAI MINORITIES
Chiangmai Green Alternative Tours, in northern Thailand, run cultural and agricultural tours to Karen and other minority villages. This is an opportunity to observe traditional 'ecovillages' in action, taking only photos, and leaving only footprints. www.chiangmaigreen.com

TAJIKISTAN VILLAGE VISION
Swedish NGO, CANHELP, has initiated discussions about the creation of an ecovillage in Tajikistan using traditional architecture along with new technology. GEN representatives have been invited as speakers to a conference in Tajikistan to discuss the possibilities. Contact Ingemar Warnstrom, ingemar.wrnstrm@telia.com

CHINA
The EcoEarth Alliance have been active in China, discussing a range of proposals including an official curriculum entitled 'Education for Sustainable Development', an Eco-Expo and Green Forum in 2005 and the construction of a prototype ecovillage. Contact Rob Wheeler at robineagle@worldcitiz.en.org

ECOVILLAGE, BANGLADESH
The Bangladesh Association for Sustainable Development (BASD) has launched a programme to form an ecovillage in Gazipur District, Bangladesh. The aim is to train and assist the villagers in the use of environmentally friendly agricultural practices. Email: basd@pradeshta.net

FIREFLIES TAKE OFF
Fireflies, an Ashram outside Bangalore, India, is expanding. The Learning Centre recently acquired eight acres of land and plans to become a fully fledged ecovillage. Contact John, Email c/o Siddhartha:sidd@vsnl.com

JARLANBAH CELEBRATES 10TH ANNIVERSARY

Jarlanbah, the 'eco-hamlet' in sub-tropical NSW, Australia, designed along permaculture principles, celebrated its 10th anniversary in February '04. Jarlanbah (meaning 'place of the rainbow' in the local Bundjalung language) is a compact rural residential settlement on 22 hectares (55 acres) of former grazing, subdivided into 43 small allotments and 13 hectares (33 acres) of communal land which includes rainforest, waterfall, woodlots, agriculture reserves and community centre.

The community has been helped by by-laws that actively promote energy efficient housing, permaculture design, sustainable waste treatment and land management practices.

Jarlanbah has played a

key role in revolutionising NSW state planning guidelines for rural settlement and strategic planning. The community's designer, Robyn Francis, with permaculture colleague and planner, Peter Cuming, were engaged by the State Planning Department to develop these new guidelines which received state and national planning awards for excellence and best practice ESD (Ecologically Sustainable Development).

Many of the physical and social design aspects of Jarlanbah have inspired local government initiatives both in Australia and New Zealand, in terms of planning policy and energy efficient housing guidelines. For more details visit www.earthwise.org.au

ECOVILLAGES AT UN WATER DAY

"What is needed, along with fresh water, is fresh thinking... We need to learn how to value water." Kofi Annan

As a contribution to the UN's Year of Freshwater in 2003, the Earth Values Caucus offered a day of events, attended by around 300 people, at the UN Headquarters in New York City in October. Prominent among the organisers of the event, named " 'Water of Life: Fresh Perspectives on the World's Water Crisis', were John Clausen and Frances Edwards, ambassadors for GEN and fellows of the Findhorn Foundation. Both Findhorn and GEN were among the co-sponsors of the event. The aim was to emphasize the intrinsic value of

water as part of the inter-dependent web of life and to give inspiring examples of new approaches and solutions to the global water management crisis. In addition to formal presentations and debates, the day also included art, music and ceremony.

Among the highlights, John Todd, co-founder of Ocean

Arks International, gave a presentation of his approach to freshwater management, giving beautiful examples of using plants and fish to clean sewage and polluted water, including some ecovillage case studies. Findhorn's May East also spoke about the relevance of the ecovillage model to proper water management.

The UN General Assembly has just proclaimed the period



from 2005 to 2015 as the International Decade for Action, christened 'Water for Life', commencing on World Water Day, 22 March 2005. This project has the target of halving by the year 2015 the proportion of people unable to reach or to afford safe drinking water and those who have no access to basic sanitation.

BASQUE ECOVILLAGE THREATENED BY DAM

After 24 years of existence the Spanish ecovillage, Lakabe, is facing a difficult moment in its history as the Government of the Province of Navarra has decided to go ahead with building a dam, despite the fact that this contravenes three national laws and one EU regulation. Already, eight villages neighbouring Lakabe have been totally demolished to make way for the dam and Lakabe itself has lost property due to inundation and the construction of a road and a tunnel next to the village.

Founded in 1980, Lakabe has been participating in the dam's planning process since 1983, and has contributed much to raising environmental awareness among inhabitants of the valley. Fighting the dam has cost the community dearly and it is asking for donations to help members to write the history of the community, describing 20 years of struggle, resistance and community life. For more details, please contact Mabel Cañada, +34 948 39 2002 (in Spanish or French).

Bioregional Campus

In its tenth anniversary year, permaculture training centre Djanbung Gardens (NSW, Australia) is launching a new Bioregional Campus. This is a purpose designed permaculture education centre with a 2 hectare (5 acre) 'living classroom' of working permaculture systems, run by permaculture designer Robyn Francis. Over the past few years, Robyn has been part of a national reference group that has been working with the national educational authorities to have permaculture training formally accredited. The new Accredited Permaculture Training (APT) that has emerged from this process offers five levels of qualifications in permaculture, Certificates 1-4 and Diploma, all of which will be taught at the new centre. For details contact robyn@permaculture.com.au