EXCERPTS FROM THE NOVEMBER 1977 RAVEN ROCKS NEWSLETTER
by Warren Stetzel

The Christmas Tree Business

Christmas trees remain a very big part of our efforts here. When we wrote our letter to you in 1976, we thought we might be harvesting some 8,000 trees for that season. As it turned out, we took out a little over 6,000. In response to our experience on the sales stands, where we find that taller trees are more in demand, we decided to hold over more trees in order to increase their average height. Of the 6,000 trees harvested in '76, we sold near 4,000 on our own stands, the other 2,000 wholesale.

A semi-truck load of Raven Rocks trees went to New York City in '76. Some of us had met representatives from the Logos Community at a conference sponsored by Community Service in Yellow Springs, and out of that grew a project on the part of the members of that community to try to earn their own way, and become more independent of government funding. Logos is a community of young people who are extracting themselves from drug addiction and criminal involvement. Now it looks like this year’s harvest will come closer to that 8,000 mark...

We were told when we bought Raven Rocks that our trees would reach marketable size during years of short supply. Tree growers were reacting to some years of glut when our trees were set out. It turns out that this prediction was accurate, and this, along with the Winter '76 damage to so many trees in this part of the country, should produce lively demand this season. We could not have hit a better year for a big harvest. Given these market conditions, we have raised our retail projections to 4,700. Selling that many trees will keep crews on our three stands very busy, indeed, and another crew loading and hauling full time to keep the stands stocked...

The Clivus Multrum Toilet:

The Clivus Multrum composting toilet and garbage disposal unit has been in operation more than two years now. Soon a filtering system, also built by Clivus Multrum, will be installed to handle what is called grey-water—the discharge from sinks, tubs and laundry. With this unit...
installed, we feel we will have an ultra-modern, ultra-simple disposal system which for all practical purposes solves the waste problem by treating wastes as useful resources. Water is saved, and decomposable materials are made into fertilizer—all without any kind of costly processing...

**The Solar-heated Underground House:**

The underground house, the Locust Hill House, has gone through another year of development and refinement. Our excitement about it, along with the excitement of others who have learned about it, has grown by leaps and bounds over the years. That is because of the remarkable evolution of the concept, which has continued to this date. We have been a little surprised to learn how many people, not only in this country but abroad, know about the project, and are following it. What attracts the attention, we guess, is that so many promising approaches are being coordinated in one structure. It is probably safe to say that no other project so far has attempted so many. We will have a lot more to say about the Locust Hill House in our 1978 letter. Meanwhile, if you missed them, you might want to look up several magazines and books which have discussed the house. Among them are Solar Age Magazine, which mentioned the house and showed a drawing in March 1976, and carried a full article in February 1977; Popular Mechanics in March and Popular Science in April of 1977; THE SOLAR HOME BOOK, the best seller now in the solar home field, by Bruce Anderson, our solar engineer; and Malcolm Wells' new book, UNDERGROUND DESIGNS.

Certainly one of the most important developments for the future of Raven Rocks is the decision of Malcolm and Shirley Wells to move their architectural business and their home to our area. They bought a farm about five miles driving distance from Raven Rocks this year, and will make the move to Ohio early in 1978...

**The Purchase of Neighboring Land for Protection of Watersheds:**

Soon after Raven Rocks, Inc., was formed and the original property purchased, we learned that the boundaries follow lines which so far as protection of the land is concerned are not very desirable. Over a large part of our perimeter, streams form the boundary, which means that the watershed on the opposite side is subject to the decisions of others. In most cases, these watershed areas are very steep, so that mismanagement of them can have severe consequences. They need to be in permanent forest. With any other use, erosion and general deterioration are constant and inevitable...

We have, therefore, been watching for opportunities to purchase such watershed areas, with the intent of making them part of the permanently preserved area. So long as those properties did not change hands, this course of events suited our circumstances, as we have not been in a good position while paying for the first property to undertake more.

Then, this Summer, several adjacent properties were offered. We wonder if the reason is that land prices have gone so high, making this a good time to sell—and, of course, a poor time to buy.

Foster and Myrtle Perkins were the first of the neighbors who offered to sell. We negotiated with them in the hope that we might buy just that part of their farm which really concerned us—that is, the steep watershed flowing down into Piney
Creek. They did not want to get involved in a partitioning of their farm. Then, in consultation with Malcolm Wells, we decided that the remainder of the Perkins farm might be useful, in that an exceptional percentage of it is a south sloping hill, ideal for underground and solar buildings. We examined the potential, and on the strength of the overwhelming interest that is developing in both underground and solar architecture, we decided to purchase the whole farm. Raven Rocks, Inc., presently is financing the purchase. A small section of the original property has been mortgaged as collateral. (Mention of this mortgage here reminds us that we were forgetting, in the list of things accomplished in 1977, the fact that we were able to pay off all of our commercial debt this year. Before the Perkins purchase, we had had several months with no mortgage on the property.)

The watershed area of the Perkins farm will be surveyed and separated from the rest, to become a permanent part of Raven Rocks. The house and barn and about five acres surrounding them have been sold already to others, with the proceeds from those sales cutting our cost for the purchase to less than half. Eventually, another organization, involving some Raven Rocks members and the Wellses, will take over the part of the land that is so suitable for underground-solar structures. Under the guidance of Wells, an integrated design for the area will be developed. We have, so far, called the project the Mini-Farms. There is a growing interest in small farms where one can have his home and space sufficient for garden and a few animals or poultry. The mini-farms would be built for sale. The potential of the project as a demonstration of gentle management of the land and of beautiful and resource-saving homes excites us very much.

Before the Perkins arrangements could be completed, other farms or plots adjacent to Raven Rocks were offered to us. We have to date made no arrangements on any of these, but have kept the negotiations open. We hope that some of them may be secured later on, but feel that we must not let them go from their present, older owners, for fear we will not be able to get them at all, or at too high a price.

One of the chief uses we will have for continued lender money is the capacity to purchase land that will establish more useful boundaries for the preservation of Raven Rocks. At any moment, one or more of the persons who have approached us may say that they will sell elsewhere if we are not prepared to buy. We do have the advantage that in every instance, at least so far and with present owners, they prefer to sell to us, because they want to see their places kept by the standards we have set. In many cases, should we have to buy a place, we would as with the Perkins farm separate the watershed lands for attachment to Raven Rocks and sell the rest for the best possible use. We are anxious not to extend our boundaries and responsibility beyond what it takes to secure the watershed areas...

The Decision to Sell Fossil Fuels:

This year we had to make a decision about natural resources and fossil fuels that was not so easy as our initial decision about whether or not Raven Rocks should become prey to the strip-mining hunger. Despite the pressure for energy which is upon us and mounting daily, we have had no second-thoughts about the strip-mining.

The oil and gas folks were making the rounds of these hills this Summer, some trying to renew old leases about to run
out, while others were trying for the first time to get leases. We had inherited one of those old leases when we bought Raven Rocks seven years ago, but early in our management of the property we had an opportunity to let that lease expire, and we let it go. This Summer we were launched into a new round of deliberations about what our policy should be about drilling for oil and gas on this property. Should we take the purist position, that no resources should be taken from this preserved land? Should this land help provide the means required by the earth’s inhabitants? But what means should one consider reasonable and right, and at what cost to the environment does one gain those means?

We finally concluded that it was not the use of fossil fuels per se that we should try to resist or prevent. Rather, we should investigate and promote conservation of them, and alternatives to them. At the same time, we should do what we can to sustain conventional supply through this interim period, so long as we can contribute without doing more damage to the environment than the energy gained warrants, and without cashing in personally on wealth which we in no way created.

So, we did finally sign a lease. But it is no conventional lease. With the help of experienced people in the Ohio Department of Natural Resources, we drew up a lease with our own provisions. It is the kind of lease that a good company would respect and would accept, while a company that meant only to speculate on the resource would turn it down flat.

Our company accepted it, with compliments on the care and the intent of its provisions. The lease will not permit the invasion of the more fragile sections of the property by any part of the drilling or removal operations. We believe that the powers which the lease reserves for us and the limits it puts upon a drilling company will mean that damage to the land will be minimal.

Finally, we are drawing up regulations upon ourselves and Raven Rocks, Inc., to insure that any income that might result from the removal of oil or gas from this property (beyond expense incurred by the corporation for its supervision of the removal and restoration of the land) will be be applied to such ends as resources conservation, alternative energy development, or some other effort which in the long run could result in renewal of the resource-potential which we have removed. We will not extract personal or corporation income from the Natural Resource. That is because we are not comfortable with the assumption that any individual, organization, nation or even a generation of men has the simple right to consume resources that were laid down over the ages for ages of use. Those resources and the wealth which they can generate should be spent in ways that assure opportunity for the future. We have wanted to explore a right use of resources, without which the hallmark of our present civilization will be its unprecedented and unrestrained capacity to rape the Earth, and to execute a disastrous theft upon the birthright of its descendants.

If you are ever in this area, stop by and see what has happened and what is happening at Raven Rocks. We think you will be as pleased as we are.

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Editor's Note for New Readers:

Raven Rocks is approximately 800 beautiful acres near Barnesville, Ohio which was purchased about 6 years ago by 19 teachers and alumni of The Friends Boarding School at Barnesville to save it from strip-mining. About 1/3 of the group live there.
mitraniketan

Jerry Porter is a long-time overseas worker in the Far East with the International Voluntary Service. He also corresponded with Arthur Morgan and Community Service. Following are some excerpts about Mitraniketan from a letter of his dated November 1976:

Last spring, since I was about to leave Asia, presumably for good, I wanted to revisit for the last time Mitraniketan, the school and community in Kerala State in the far south of India in which I have long been interested...

Mitraniketan (Sanskrit: "The Abode of Friends") is a remarkable community, potentially of great significance for India. It is a part of Vellanad, the native village of its founder, K. Viswanathan. As a young man he saw the appalling conditions of village life and the futility of traditional Indian education. After studying at Tagore's school, he traveled in Europe and America, observing... agricultural development in England, folk schools in Denmark, and fishermen's cooperatives in Nova Scotia. Returning to India he turned his back on the prestigious positions his education could have gained him and settled in his village. Here during 20 years he has built, step-by-step as opportunities opened, this remarkable "experiment in education-centered community and community-centered education."

I first visited Mitraniketan in 1966, when it was 10 years old. I went back briefly in 1973, and this spring I spent 3 1/2 weeks sharing in the life of the community. Viswan, whom I have cherished these 10 years as a personal friend, is an impressive man in a gentle and soft-spoken way. He overflows with ideas, all of them practical applications of his basic philosophy of helping people to help themselves and each other. He is totally devoted to persuasion as a way of getting things done, and combines the enthusiasm of the dreamer with a warm and ready skill in human relations. The late Dr. Arthur E. Morgan (who died in 1975 at the age of 97)... met Viswan at a conference in the U. S. and was so impressed by the man and his ideas that he contributed substantial moral and financial support in the early years of Mitraniketan.

At the center of the community is the school, with its nursery, primary, and secondary divisions. Boarding is provided for children aged 11 to 16 who live at a distance, and places are reserved for Harijans (Untouchables) and tribal children from the hills who would not otherwise have a chance to go to school. While meeting state academic requirements, the school is seeking to integrate study with all other sides of individual and community life and work. Thus everyone helps in the farm and gardens and in one or the other of the community production units, such as carpentry, furniture making, spinning and weaving, printing, garment making, leatherwork, wood carving, or pottery. From this work the children get vocational training, the adults get employment, and the community gets income.

The Health Centre is concerned not only with the health of the immediate community but also with extension
programs in nutrition, sanitation, and family planning in surrounding villages. I went one day with the American woman doctor (supported in part by a church in Seattle) and some of the Indian nurses when they conducted a clinic in a very poor hill village. I will remember as long as I live not only the malnourished children, miserable with worms, scabies, and nameless infections, but also the help, even though inadequate, given and received with smiles.

Three years ago, with initial support from the Ford Foundation, a Centre of Educational Research, Innovation, and Development was opened at Mitraniketan. Several doctoral candidates in sociology from Kerala University are now working there on problems of rural education and development, and student groups from elsewhere in India and from abroad come for one or another program. For example, 32 students from the University of Puget Sound came for two months, and some of them went home with radically changed personal philosophies.

This spring Mitraniketan took a step toward fulfilling a long-felt need for an urban base in Trivandrum, the State capital 18 miles away. With the help of a bank loan they bought the palace of the former maharajah of Travancore to serve as a meeting point for the city and the countryside. Viswan has plans for at least a dozen specific projects to be based there. Getting them started will need only time, money, and work. One of them, a hostel for working women to be built in the palace grounds, has already been approved for a subvention by the government. Other ideas include a conference center, adult education classes, a reception center for visitors to Mitraniketan, a library and museum of Kerala antiquities, a sales center for local handicrafts, and a cooperative and health center for the nearby fishing community.

Although some of the operations of the community have become self-supporting, funds are never sufficient for working out new projects and for expanding the influence of the Mitraniketan ideas across the country. It seems a pity that a creative, innovative leader like Viswan, who moreover is not in the best of health, must spend so much of his effort in soliciting money, whereas his talents in human relations could be better devoted to strengthening the life of the community and developing the new projects he is continually thinking about... I suggest that a gift to Mitraniketan would bring you your money's worth in satisfaction... It can be sent earmarked "For Mitraniketan" to Community Service, Inc., Yellow Springs, Ohio 45387 and will be deductible as a contribution for U. S. income tax...

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JOHN C. CAMPBELL FOLK SCHOOL, Brasstown, N.C. 28902 has announced its tentative schedule for 1978 of special classes in blacksmithing, enameling, pottery, woodworking, weaving and other crafts.

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THE SCHOOL OF LIVING, P. O. Box 3233, York, PA 17402 has released its 1978 schedule of conferences and workshops on topics ranging from energy and economics to poetry and herbs.

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EXCERPTS FROM VISWAN'S LETTER OF DECEMBER 15, 1977

Ever since I returned home, we are experiencing all kinds of problems. It seems it is a never ending struggle. Maybe I will not see the fruit of it if at all it bears any. Sometimes I feel I am a lone fighter. I see around a world where things are not done although we hear always what is to be done. Of course one fact is that Mitraniketan will not and cannot stop its activities although it may deviate from its path due to changed circumstances. Changes are inevitable, no doubt. But what we require is a sense of purpose and goodness, which will give a sense of technical stability along with the creation of a sense of fellowship and harmony, which can spare a great deal of our time and energy to see other needy areas and sections of humanity which are to benefit from our own experience...

Though there is an ever growing awareness and recognition to what we are attempting at Central and State Government level, we do not want to surrender ourselves to them. While we associate with all creative forces both governmental and non-governmental, as far as possible we shall have to preserve our independence. Of course it demands quite a bit of hardship, firmness and commitment from everyone who participates in the process. Here again I do not know to what extent their morale will allow them to withstand difficulties. The heartening fact is we have the basic infrastructure to provide basic needs...

Mitraniketan's present resources, however meager they are, are utilized largely to cater to the needs of the lower segments in society, comprising largely tribals (children from hill villages) and scheduled caste groups. There is an increasing demand from all sides, particularly from younger groups, to provide more training opportunities, besides general education. This cannot be done without adequate financial stability which alone can provide the much needed technical viability. The present facilities can be justified as bare minimum requirements to develop basic skills while imparting general education. However, this does not qualify a boy or girl to be fully equipped to start a living, without a considerable period of intensive training in specific trades along with general knowledge and civic training opportunity. With the help of some well-meaning and experienced friends and well-wishers of Mitraniketan, we have taken steps to formulate a scheme to complete the infrastructure to provide training and leadership roles among the weaker sections of society.

We understand that Beila Banerjee is now in the U.S., visiting her friends and well-wishers. We hope she can return as early as possible. Probably, you know Dr. Jean Kohler is still undergoing treatment and it may not be easy for her to come back in the near future. This means our health section is without a doctor and a qualified midwife-cum-nurse. Somehow our health girls carry on the routine work with the help of doctors in the Government Primary Health Centre and also at the Trivandrum Medical College. It is possible for us, because of our good relations. However, we have missed a great opportunity in their absence to continue the community health workers training programme in which both the Central and State Government are interested, just like the bare-foot-doctors in China...

When I consider the unfinished task here to become an effective agent or instrument for socio-economic changes in society, I find it extremely difficult to sit quiet or to be passive. The recent cyclone disaster which has brought untold miseries, loss of life and properties in Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu coastal areas, is also calling our attention to that region in spite of our handicaps; maybe very soon I should go there and assess the situation personally and see whether something tangible in a humble way can be attempted to rehabilitate at least a small segment of displaced population there...

Now we have enough personnel to look after the office and some of the sections of small industry to keep them in proper order... I understand one of my friends and neighbor, Mr. Krishnan Nair, came over to Yellow Springs and as usual all of you have offered him hospitality. He just came back and briefed us all about his visit.

With Christmas greetings and best wishes for a happy New Year.

Viswan
Caroline Balderston Parry worked for two years at Mitraniketan, 1966-68. While there she sent back frequent reports of her work, among them this Christmas poem which we are here reprinting in part from our 1968 Christmas Newsletter:

CHRISTMAS AT MITRANIKETAN

Picture the paddy fields, green in the gloaming, Keralan countryside great with the evening—quiet mists rising, Christmas Day closing, even the coconuts, poised over paddy, perching all perilous over the rice fields, green with the season.

After the midday long feasting, the rice-meal, curries from leaf plates, sweet paisem from glasses, after the waning of tropical heat waves, after the vigilant sun has forsaken its afternoon victory.

Feature the brownness, the smoothness of children laughing and fearless, and catch the small girl-chick unwittingly wearing the berry-red blouse and tree-green skirt, on Christmas Day in the gloaming; children all colored.

See all the children dancing and whirling, hark to the rhythm, the drum and the singsong, winking blue Krishna; and swing with the girlish motions so graceful, the arms arched with flowers, hands filled with lamps lit, all proffered to Krishna, Protector of life.

Picture all this if you will, as the evening comes on and around you; Lord Krishna's Merry Christmas progressing through programs and dramas, drummers and dancers, and think to your ownself, crowded among the mothers and offspring, --it's a real Christmas!

Despite all your heat rash, night dreams of white Christmas of mile-high tree and turkey with dressing, mistletoe kisses and family that misses its Indian correspondent--think oh be glad, it's a real Christmas!!
School for the Young is a book full of hope and optimism for the future. It is a personal report by Warren Stetzel on his thoughts about human potential. Warren, now living at Raven Rocks (see elsewhere in this NEWSLETTER), writes from his experience as a teacher in the School of Organic Education, Fairhope, Alabama, Rose Valley School, Moylan, Pa., the Virginia Beach Friends School and Friends Boarding School at Barnesville, Ohio. Examples both from personal experience and from the work of others present an engaging background for the development of Warren's train of thought. The very richness of example and new insight makes reading School for the Young an adventure in imagination and concentration. Perhaps this style is an expression of the essential theme of the book. Warren sees human consciousness evolving from the age of reason towards a period during which individuals will have re-awakened deeper intuitive faculties in harmony with the intellect.

Central to Warren's thinking is his observation that human consciousness changes. Using illustrations from the past he shows that a mode of consciousness is an adaptation to changing circumstances. New adaptations are more easily made by individuals who have not become narrowly specialized in the currently dominant mode. This concept of the evolution of consciousness is hard to present. Warren leans heavily on the work of Gerald Heard in describing how the rise and decay of various civilizations has been a process of adaptation by human consciousness. To describe this process Warren uses the physical exam-

Now, Warren says, our rational mode is reaching its limits. Our 'reasonable' actions are beginning to pile up in various crises. We will have to adapt our consciousness in preparation for survival in our new situation. Individuals who have specialized for today's narrow success will be less able to adapt.

Warren envisions a new consciousness based on recognition and use of individual spirituality. Schools that recognize this potential could orient themselves towards the new consciousness rather than training for the passing rational age. At this point the reader is left hanging. How could I encourage a new consciousness? Warren offers no formula for a school or for an individual.

Although he offers no method, Warren's view of consciousness and development does provide a framework for further thought. The generous bibliography and frequent references to other literature would be a good start for someone interested in pursuing these ideas. Perhaps Warren will write another book exploring education for a new consciousness.

--Don Hollister

The hardback second edition of School for the Young, 224 pages, is printed by Celco Press and is available from Community Service for $6.00 plus 10% handling and postage.
THE NEIGHBORHOOD ORGANIZER'S HANDBOOK, by Rachel B. Warren and Donald I. Warren

The substance of this book goes much wider and deeper than its somewhat unimaginative title implies. The co-authors take you with them on a research-based walking tour of America's urban communities. They show you people and places as they are, not as they might be--the real and not the ideal. Along the way they analyze with clinical exactness the gossamer threads of neighborliness, the ethics of borrowing, the stepping-stone neighborhood, the anomic neighborhood and the parochial neighborhood where everyone has a "high identity". They give you exact directions on how to go about examining a neighborhood, who to talk to, where to start, when to do all this. It is a little reminiscent of the directions given to a Community Chest collector. If the vocabulary tends at times to be weighty on the sociological side, it is offset by the numerous examples and samples of interviews which keep the study in human perspective. Neighborhoods are after all composed of people as well as buildings and organizers. I would recommend this book for its exact and careful research, depth of wide experience in this field, and helpful practical advice.

--Margot Ensign

This book may be purchased from Community Service Inc., 237 pages, paper, for $4.95 and 10% for postage and handling.

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LAND AVAILABLE for use by a "constructive group"
Seventy-five acres of fine farm land with 8 room house and outbuildings. Twenty-six miles from downtown Madison, Wl. Inquiries should be addressed to William Henry, Franklin Plaza Day Care Center, 2081 Second Avenue, New York, New York 10029; phone 289-2323.

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community service activities

SMALL COMMUNITY CONFERENCE
July 28-30, 1978

"Building Community Where You Are" will be the theme for our 1978 annual Community Service conference. We will gather July 28-30 at the Outdoor Education Center in beautiful Glen Helen forest. Because we are still planning the conference program we welcome your suggestions for substance and format if you can write us right away. We are bringing together resource people from various parts of the country who have been dedicated to serving their town and neighborhood communities in diverse ways -- through business, the arts, community councils, intentional communities, food co-operatives, etc.

July 28-30, 1978. Save that weekend. We will be sending more information in coming months.

WORKSHOP REPORT
Socially Oriented Business
by Don Hollister

Our November workshop on Socially Oriented Business drew 50 people with diverse interests--food coops, unions, community action agencies, Catholic Social Action, small business, industry. Discussion brought out more questions than conclusions. Nevertheless participants were glad to have had a chance to meet new people and look at new ideas. Here is an abstract from our summary session.
Quality of work life. We say that people want security and dignity. Is there a contradiction between "security" and human dignity? Do people want control over their own lives? Over their workplaces? Do workers want participation in decisions? It was said that employees generally would much prefer to take their pay and leave management to someone else. So why do we think self-management or participation improves quality of life? In many cases simply having a job would improve life quality.

Work control. Does this mean self-management? Sharing in decisions? Complete ownership? Our consideration of existing worker-owned companies pointed out three major needs:

1) Long-term survival requires strong overall group philosophy and purpose;

2) Involvement with the surrounding neighborhood and community adds meaning to worklife and provides a wider pool of resources in times of financial crisis;

3) Workers in self-management situations need to learn new skills of communication and initiative while forgetting much that is taught in schools and other job situations.

We have also diminished the distinction between functions, with everyone doing some labor, everyone participating in decisions. But it was the more managerial type who devised this approach among us. They chose to participate in the work, for their own health and growth's sake.

Why shouldn't we, in our appeals, appeal to "managers" to change their motivation along with labor and the rest? I say "along with", because our experience with "labor" would not suggest that labor is any less greedy, any more fair or reasonable, than the capitalist.

--Warren Stetzel, Ohio

Mitraniketan

Thank you for your letter of July 18th about my request for support of the...
INTERN PROJECT.

In researching foundations and associations in the development field, Community Service, Inc. was one of the few I came across which actually had a project of major proportions in progress at a grass-roots level. Mitraniketan seemed to be working along the same lines that I am interested in, therefore I sent you my proposal. It was also encouraging to see that the project has apparently worked.

However, I understand your previous commitments and wish you luck with continued success at Mitraniketan.

--Christopher Deegan, Washington, DC

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STAFF:
Margot Ensign, Don Hollister, Jane Hoover, Griscom Morgan, Jane Morgan, editor.
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