P@tterns

From the Editor:

Having just returned from the **ASCD Annual Conference** in Boston where an estimated 1700 educators gathered to listen to members sharing their expertise and ideas, I am struck by the power of our organization to maintain a sense of order in a turbulent sea of change.

What seems truly amazing is that in spite of the fact that content knowledge is known to be obsolescing at an ever-increasing pace, the dominant focus of participants attending the conference appeared to be assimilation-based learning. There was a scramble to find new techniques, new materials that could be taken home and used in the classroom. The apparent acknowledgment of change in education came from the new technology—the internet and multimedia technology—which is seen as breathing new life into content-assimilation for students who, exposed to MTV and video games, are showing signs of impatience with the slow pace of book-learning.

The STCT Network forum was designed to highlight how high stakes testing perpetuates the myth that the learning objective is knowledge accumulation. The present emphasis is on demonstrating what students *know* even though we are all aware that after the content purge of testing, much of the knowledge is forgotten. Beneath it all we know that the "times they are a-changing" as Bob Dylan reminded us, and our children are being short-changed. Our educational culture seems to be as addicted to knowledge assimilation as our corporate culture would have us be addicted to material consumption—all this to keep the wheels of the machine rolling along.

At the annual meeting of the **Network Facilitators** some of us suggested ways to bring dialogue and collaborative action to the next ASCD Conference in San

Leadership by Design: the Praxis of Intention
by Harold G. Nelson

This article first appeared in the Newsletter of the Advanced Design Institute, Fall/winter 2000

There seems to be a critical stalemate in place. Many if not most organizations, public and private, large and small, are facing dramatically changed social and economic conditions. Forces for even greater change continue building. This may be a good thing, exciting and full of opportunity, or it can be a bad thing, leading to organizational failure and extinction. Which it will be depends on the presence and intervention of good leadership, an organizational capacity that remains elusive for most organizations.

In addition to the rapid pace of change experienced by organizations, it is also becoming clear that this is an age of customization. This means in addition to delivering customized services or products, every organization must be uniquely formed in response to the particular situation it is in; serving a particular purpose, for and with particular people, utilizing particular resources. It is no longer the case that theorists can provide generalized templates of organizational design that can be applied universally to organizations. It is also no longer true that a successful design for one organization can be replicated successfully in other organizations.

Organizations are challenged to change what they produce, how they produce, why they produce and for whom they produce goods or services. At the same time they are trying to transform themselves into organizations that can survive and thrive in ever changing and uniquely defined environments. This double challenge requires the organization to have the capacity to be creative and innovative in multiple dimensions. This is not exactly accurate however since an organization is not a separate entity, but in fact people joined in relationships with each other and their technologies. Therefore it is more accurate to state that it is important for people to be organized in such a way as to be able to think and act in alignment with their individual capacities to be both creative and innovative.

Attempts to respond to the need for effective creativity and innovation results most often in frustration and failure. People within organizations and people who consult or theorize about organizations are saying the same thing i.e. studies of and theories about leadership and change are not relevant in application. This is because creativity and innovation are not possible given the present capacities of the people making up an organization: the command and control relationships, habits and norms of behavior, lack of resources including time and ever present fears concomitant with a lack of courage. But, despite all the reasons that it can't happen or isn't happening, there is a consensus that something different needs to happen and happen fast. The change may need to take place with individuals rather than organizations.

Attempts to evoke creativity and innova-

Antonio, TX. The result was the development of proposals for symposia where Facilitators from a variety of perspectives would come together to explore central issues in education. STCT along with the **Language Varieties Network, the Indigenous Peoples Network, Religion and Public Education Network, Early Childhood Education Network and the Teaching Thinking Network** came together around the subject: of the *"The Achievement Gap: A Variety of Causes Requires a Variety of Responses."* We welcome the participation of anyone interested in continuing the dialogue.

This issue of PATTERNS emphasizes the need for us to understand and to generate insight into how systems at all levels are composed of dynamic interdependent relationships, both helpful and destructive. We must trust our intuition for dynamics. (See PATTERNS, May 1996) We must learn to develop *new capacities*—to see the consequences of our decisions and actions—to understand the short- and long-term tradeoffs in time. It is these new capacities that we must learn ourselves and teach our children. They are necessary in meeting the serious challenges of the 21st century. They will be the tools that will last a lifetime. An understanding of Systems Thinking and Chaos Theory which is the purpose for this ASCD sponsored network of educators and systems scientists will help us in the transformation of our world view from the habit of being "object" oriented which imprisons us as slaves to a system of testing, consumerism and control to a more viable, more life-sustaining orientation and practice of dynamic process.

Transformative learning becomes the challenge for the 21st century. This means that we shall improve our ability to see the second, third and fourth order consequences of our decisions and actions.

As educators, we need to learn the capacity to innovate in our public institutions. I met with **Rick Smyre**, founder of *Communities of the Future*, last summer at the **Community Learning Centers'** meeting at the **Virginia Institute of Technology** in Blacksburg, VA and

tion in organizational settings have been tried in several ways. One of the more common approaches is some variant of the thousand monkeys. The image of a thousand monkeys typing randomly on a thousand typewriters until, by chance, a Stephen King novel emerges (sorry Shakespeare doesn't have the bottom line effect organizations are looking for); is the guiding vision of programs that practice fire-ready-aim approaches to creating the new and novel. There are enough successes by chance that this remains an attractive option for organizations. Put young, fresh eyes together with enough resources and no constraints and something novel is bound to emerge, maybe even something useful.

Some organizations go to other extremes to create a safe place for creative thinking and innovative activity; creating sub-organizations like "skunk works" which are apart from, while still being a part of, an organization. The organizational forces that kill creativity and stop innovation are held at arm length by this slight of hand long enough for new ideas to take shape and change to insinuate itself into the host organization.

In the "new" economy, creativity is bought and sold as a commodity, rather than as a competence. Small dot-coms create a new product or service and wait to be bought by a larger company as a one-shot deal. Larger dot-coms look around for new products or services that will help them stay competitive. Thus gaining by ownership the advantage of being leading edge without the capacity to be leading edge. *(Ed. Note: i.e. Charter Schools)*

I would like to suggest another alternative. That is to create a culture of design within organizations and to create a new leadership competency based on design capacities. Good leaders are designers. Leadership as a designed outcome is a composition of interactions among human beings who are intentional in their approaches to change. This composition is a rich mix of systemic relationships in alignment with guiding purposes, which makes it distinct in every way from the types of leadership that are vision driven.

Something different needs to happen and happen fast.

There are two approaches to vision leadership that appear to be diametrically opposed to each other, yet both are based on the same category of relationship i.e. hierarchy. The traditional top-down form of leadership, from charismatic to command-and-control, is still popular (at least among such leaders), despite a growing dissatisfaction with power-over relationships. The emerging bottom-up form of leadership is another kind of power-over but in the more democratic form of majority rule. Leadership has been studied extensively concerning whether leadership skills are genetic or acquired and what checklist of skills is required to be a leader. Similar lists of qualities of character and leaderly attributes can be created for both top-down and bottom-up types of leadership.

Leadership as a relationship-based attribute is founded on both systems thinking and design action. The term system, used both as a description of an embodied way of thinking and as a description of the thing which is being thought about, is like the term design; both a verb and a noun. As a noun the Greek origin of the term system is sustema, meaning "a composite whole", while the verb is a derivative of the compound term sunistanai which means "to bring together" (sun – "together" + histanai – "to cause to stand"). Thus a systems thinking approach reflects a desire to know how things are caused to stand together as a composition or whole and how to be an agent in that process. Design is a process of creative thinking and innovative action. Leadership based on systems thinking and design action is thus about how people are caused to stand together through an intentional process of creativity and innovation.

It is interesting that people in organizations often report that their leaders stand in their way or leaders stand over them with threats and cajoling, standing behind them pushing and prodding them in predetermined directions toward the leader's vision. Attempts to humanize leaders ask that they stand in the others shoes as a way to empathize with them so that the measures of control used to direct and motivate them are more acceptable and effective. Leadership is about working together systemically but the protocols

defining the relationships from a design perspective based on service is very different from relationships based on hierarchy. Where leaders stand in a design situation is distinctly nonhierarchical neither top down or bottom up.

Where one stands in relationship to other people in a leadership relationship is important both abstractly and concretely. In relationships where people stand or sit across from one another conceptually, as in positional seating arrangements of typical organizational meetings for instance, there is an impulse to confront rather than cooperate. People are encouraged to look in one anther's eyes as part of a face-down or part of a face-off in place of facing forward. This may be appropriate when the intended outcome of the meeting is a solution to a problematic situation, but it is not a successful strategy abstractly or concretely, when the desired outcome is dependent on creativity and innovation. Standing or sitting in front of someone blocks their view and yours as well. Individuals standing next to one another confronting the same opportunity, looking in the same direction at a horizon of possibilities form design teams. Design communication takes on a different quality when the dialogue is with someone - looking into the same unknown as you are - rather than in a face-to-face exchange of data or information.

Leadership is about
working together systemically.

People want leadership to emerge when leaders stand by them, stand with them, stand up for them, stand beside them, stand for something of worth and consequence. They want leaders that can take a stand against habits of manipulation and self serving interests that compromise the potency of outcomes. Outcomes that are not only novel, but are improvements in the quality of life of everyone involved. People on design teams in organizations stand together when leaders take a stand to serve the best intentions of the team members and those being served, as part of the design contract with clients, customers and end users. This is true whether the client is the organization itself, or is external to the organization.

Leaders are designers working in a mutual relationship of service with clients, stake holders, decision makers, customers, end users, and producers. Leaders as designers do need to have design competencies but these are different in quality from the typical checklist of attributes needed for hierarchical authority - charismatic or egalitarian. The designerly stand, as a leadership role, is based on foundations and fundamentals particular to the design tradition. Leadership from this design perspective can be defined as the quality of creativity and innovation aligned through the intentionality of a design contract. The contract is a <u>service contract - to stand on one's own</u> on behalf of another.

Harold Nelson is the present President of the International Society for Systems Sciences and the President of the Advanced Design Institute. Previously he was Designer and Director of the Whole Systems Graduate Program at Antioch West, Seattle WA.
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later at the **Tahoe Center for a Sustainable Future** at the **Sierra Nevada College**. I was impressed with his practical application of systems thinking and the implications of the new sciences in a dynamic that makes change happen. In an article titled: *Beyond the Deck Chairs*, he writes: *"My twenty year journey working in the private sector and with people and organizations in local communities throughout the country has transformed my compass of thinking. I am now convinced that instead of reforming our present local institutions, we need to become facilitators of transformation....The increasing complexity of a society that is constantly changing calls for thinking in a "futures context." No one person or group has enough vision to tell us what needs to be done.....A futures context has two key elements which need to be considered simultaneously. **What are the trends of the future and how will the interactive impact of these trends change the traditional underlying assumptions of how we educate/ learn, how we govern, how we lead, how we do economic development, how we develop a common good in an increasingly diverse society, even how we think?"***

Rick is conducting mentoring sessions, generative dialogue designed to experience the practical needs of building "capacities for transformation" in the longer run as, at the same time, we are dealing with short term needs of our local community. The idea of "parallel processes" is a key part of the new COTF concept of "ecological planning."

He writes: *"It is our intent to build these mentoring sessions as a part of the program of work for the Center for Process Leadership as a part of the Virtual Center for Communities of the Future. The uniqueness of our work is being recognized by many local, state and national groups as the concept of COTF community transformation is accepted. This mentoring event is another part of our attempt to model 21st century research and development ideas to help local communities prepare for a constantly changing, interconnected and*

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In an accompanying article written with **Joseph Kruth, Director of the Tahoe Center,** Rick describes transformation in action *as the act of changing our point of view to be consistent with the needs of a new society.*These community-level conversations echo the work of **Bela H. Banathy, Mathew Shapiro, Alexander and Kathia Laszlo,** and others working in the **International Systems Institute** which meets yearly at Asilomar, CA for a week of concentrated conversations. (see PATTERNS September 1996, November 1997, September 2000).

Learning leadership as a relationship-based attribute is brought out in the lead article by **Harold Nelson, President of the International Society for the Systems Sciences,** which ties the various threads of action and thought together. He suggests that *"People, not just governments, will be the wheels of action in democratic collaboration."* In the process *"a systems thinking approach reflects a desire to know how things are caused to stand together as a composition or whole and how to be an agent in that process. Design is a process of creative thinking and innovative action. Leadership based on systems thinking and design action is thus about how people are caused to stand together through an intentional process of creativity and innovation."*

International Systems Institute Fellow **Alexander Laszlo** sent me a description of a lecture given by **Jerry Brown,** past Governor of California, present Mayor of Oakland, CA and an unsuccessful candidate for the Presidency of the U.S. Brown started off by saying that *"learning is a very individualistic thing, and I'm not here to pour it into your head--you have to encounter it yourself and make it your own--so I want to be active here."* He added, *"none of us really know what the hell is going on, so we are all here to try to figure something out."*

Laszlo wrote these lecture notes in 1997 which seems like a long time ago--in the last century-- but we share them here because he is not so much talking about Colliding World Views at the End of the Millennium which is the title, but "about

Knowledge Democracy

"Our ability to invest in and reap the benefits of technology, science and commerce, are very much greater than our ability to innovate in public institutions."

Charles Leadbeater, The Weightless Society

Amending Democracy

One of the great gifts to political theory by the American crafters of the Constitution was the understanding that the Constitution and the form of governance would have to be amended over time as the nature of the society changed and as the "habits of the people" evolved. Jefferson, though not in Philadelphia, pushed for a Bill of Rights, because he knew that the anti-federalists would never approve the centralized version of the document as originally established... and, thus, the first adaptation was added before state ratification occurred.

Over time, other amendments have been added as necessary, but the basic principle of representation has always remained the cornerstone concept which allows sovereignty to remain with the people without their direct involvement in decisions. That genius of the Constitution allowed representation to take the place of direct involvement because the pace and structure of society in 1787 created a context where checks and balances were, though not always efficient, possible.

The nature of the 21st Century is different. Individuals are no longer seen as self-sufficient... although self-reliant people are needed more than ever. Self-interest does not stand as an independent concept which crashes against other self-contained individuals. The very nature of the society is emerging as a web of interdependent groups and teams, with individuals moving in and out as their interest and requirements demands.

As we innovate institutions, we will need to transform ourselves.

The complexity of life in all ways is disintegrating the previous economic, political and social structures. An individual is faced with the fact that any type of success is now directly related to the ability to connect to other individuals, to groups, to ideas, and to their physical surroundings. The new dance of interaction, synergy and symbiosis requires us to rethink all institutions and basic principles. Nowhere is this more apparent than in our political arena...and the 2000 election reflects the early stages of significant questioning "what is really happening" and "what to do." Most effort will be directed toward reforming change of existing ideas and structures, such as changing the Electoral College, how to pick a President and how to deal with power from a partisan point of view.

Knowledge Democracy and Direct Consensus Democracy

Lost in the storm of present confusion is the need to rethink the very nature of how we deal with decision making in a world of constant change, interdependency and increased complexity. As we observe the increasing conflict among Republicans and Democrats and see the historical gulfs of class, race, and geography emerge again in a competition of narrow values and simplified thinking, it becomes apparent that we must begin the search for ways to connect basic principles with new mechanisms.

Anti-federalist principles of concern for public virtue and the common good , of individual responsibility and restraint, become fundamental needs for a web society. Human nature evolves to meet the needs of survival and, in an interdependent world, collaboration will be a fundamental principal to deal with the complexity of issues and the need to balance economic and environmental needs.

The explosion of knowledge will become a gift to honest transformation and collaboration as individuals come to realize that they can't compete and evolve as independent individuals, but only as connected individuals. The idea of knowledge providing value to all sectors of society will take its turn in our democracy. As we innovate institutions, we will need to transform ourselves. The interaction among new ideas, changing contexts and human evolution will lead to new mechanisms of decision making. Knowledge Democracy will be the next phase beyond Representative Democracy, maintaining the basics of representation, and grafting, in parallel, a new idea of Direct Consensus Democracy. Direct Consensus Democracy is a concept which reintroduces the original anti-federalist principles of direct citizen involvement and the common good in a way that combines existing technology and web-based thinking to transform the mechanism of democratic decision making for the most important issues of a community, state or nation.

The Direct Consensus Democracy idea focuses on three phases:
* identify key issues,
* defining all the factors that need to be considered for the most important issue(s) using teams of diverse people,
* develop strategies to resolve the issues by connecting ideas and suggestions from those involved... then allowing all interested citizens to vote on the best strategy.

A New Mechanism
In this way, the best of the principle of representation and the best of the principle of direct involvement can be blended and integrated in a new mechanism of democracy. The resulting concept of democracy would amend the present system and use parallel processes for different needs, at different times, with different people.

Knowledge Democracy will be the next phase beyond Representative Democracy.

Elected officials would still be chosen, and would still make decisions when short term issues were in crisis or when there was basic public agreement. However, once a year or once every two years, the elected officials would become facilitators of major processes of the common good or, even better as servants and agents of the people, would participate in a structured processes of Direct Consensus Democracy facilitated by a competent staff of process leaders.

This new mechanism of democracy would understand that oversimplification of issues is not appropriate when issues become more complex in a constantly changing society.

Direct Consensus Democracy would be founded on key principles to include:
* *looking for value in what someone says instead of debating what truth is,*
* *connecting ideas and actions in a framework of collaboration,*
* *utilizing the technology to allow people to be involved from any place at any time,*
* *broadening the base of direct involvement for the most important issues of a society,*
* *moving beyond the idea of partisan truth for the most important issues,*
* *looking to see the other person's point of view in a generative dialogue of constant innovation, and*
* *looking to help each other succeed.*

Conclusion
A key impact of the evolving age is a renewed search for meaning. As more and more people come to realize that there is more to life than acquiring wealth, power and distinction, the ideas and principles of 1776 become important in a different way.

how you and I can live our lives better, That's what it's all about--"

STCT Co-facilitator, **Carole Cooper** writes to us that **Barbara Kingsolver**, renowned author of "*The Poisonwood Bible*" and "*Prodigal Summer,*" (and a trained biologist) sends this call-to-action against the threats the new administration poses to the environment. It has been widely circulated by email, proving again the Internet's potential as a method to flex political muscle. *Excerpts from the Kingslover letter can be found on page 9.* Carole adds that in addition to the internet resource Barbara mentions, she recommends for those of you in the NorthWest, <info@nwei.org>. It's the **Northwest Earth Institute** and very informative.

Finally, we express our deep regret at the loss of a dedicated pioneer in the field of dynamic systems. **Donella Meadows** was one of the first systems researchers who helped me understand the importance and practicality of General Systems Theory.

The Editors of *Timeline*, a bimonthly publication of the **Foundation for Global Community**, write ; "*In addition to her many original contributions to systems theory and global trend analysis, she managed a small farm and was a dedicated member of her local New England community.*" She was a beautiful example of the new 21st century citizen.

In her essay, *Polar Bears and Three Year Olds on Thin Ice*, she shares with us "a global view, a connected view, a long-term view, an environmental and compassionate view." Her spirit and voice will be sorely missed.

Those who love and free nature are never alone.

Rachel Carson

Unless we begin to think about strategies which are conceived within a futures context, we will continue to apply obsolete assumptions in ways that are ineffective. If few people trust community leadership, how can the traditional idea of "selling" a solution to the public be accomplished by elected officials? Is there a need to change the way we make local decisions if the traditional underlying assumptions of citizen trust in the process have changed? How will changes in technology impact decisions in a community? What about the impact of major technological changes on the life of a community?

One of the principles of chaos and the new science of complexity emphasizes the need to experiment continuously. Continuous innovation moves too fast for structured strategic planning. Small groups of diverse people are needed to develop "process projects" to introduce new ideas into the life of any local community. "Learning communities" of all types and sizes need to be established throughout the region to work on generating knowledge not presently used by local institutions. "Networks" of diverse people can be developed and facilitated to experiment with new ideas and work in conjunction with existing organizations to develop specific process projects. Once the new ideas are tested, the results can be fed back to interested people and organizations.

The underlying ideas for community transformation based on building "capacities for transformation" will require a network of local citizen leaders that understand and are skilled in leadership based on the new science of complexity. Concepts such as simple principles evolving richness of results, self-organizing, feedback, emergence, bifurcation and fractals will need to become a natural part of any leader's vocabulary. Once such concepts are understood by those aspiring to 21st century leadership, there will be a need to integrate the ideas into the operations of all organizations to help them apply the concepts in different ways to assure that transformational change is able to evolve. 21st century community transformation requires us to leave the world of either/or. In the new century, those involved with community development will need to understand the ideas and mechanisms of both strategic planning and building capacities for transformation.

Just as our forefathers telescoped a change in thinking of their original revolutionary political thought because of what they perceived as practical societal realities, we of the 21st century will recognize the need to co-op the thinking of the anti-federalists in an updated way so that our evolving democracy will reflect the "habits of the people." Human nature and human societies evolve as required.

With appropriate leadership not afraid to introduce new thinking and methods, Knowledge Democracy will be the next stage of the evolution of our democratic republic. It will take positive advantage of our exploding diversity, and minimize fractious gaps that are beginning to appear.

We have our forefathers to thank for understanding that the form and substance of democracy would have to be amended periodically to fit the times. We are at the front gate of one of those times.

Rick Smyre can be reached at <RLSMYRE@aol.com>

Upon this gifted age, in its dark hour
falls from the sky a meteoric shower of facts;
They lie unquestioned, uncombined.
Wisdom enough to leech us of our ill
is daily spun,
But there exists no loom
to weave it into fabric.

Edna St. Vincent Millay

From: Prof. Werner Ulrich
Director, Lugano Summer School
Sichelweg 41
CH-3098 Schliern, Switzerland

Dear friends and colleagues:
I am organizing the first International Summer School of Systems Design at the recently founded University of Italian Switzerland (USI) in Lugano. The Lugano Summer School (LSS) aims to become a unique annual gathering of systems students, researchers, and practitioners. The city of Lugano, with the extraordinary beauty of its Alpine setting and its Mediterranean flair, will provide a stimulating setting for both studying and relaxing.
"Systems Design" stands for the basic idea that we can better understand and solve problems by looking at them in terms of the design of whole systems.
The Summer School will focus each year on a number of selected approaches to Systems Design and will try to build a bridge between them, as well as to help promote reflective systems practice. Specialists with an international reputation as academic teachers and authors will present the selected approaches. Successful participants will be awarded a diploma.
The School's Faculty currently consists of
Peter B. Checkland, UK
Hans G. Daellenbach, New Zealand
Kristo Ivanov, Sweden
Giorgio Tonella, Venezuela/Switzerland
Werner Ulrich, Switzerland
A maximum of 50 participants will be accepted. If you would like to have further information, please see the School's website: www.lu.unisi.ch/lss.
For inquiries, e-mail lugano-summer-school@swissonline.ch or write to me at the address indicated above.
Prof. Werner Ulrich

Transformation in Action: An Emerging Future Framework

by Joseph Kruth and F.L. "Rick" Smyre © 1999

Our rapidly changing world has many self organizing systems which are undergoing transformation. Understanding these changes requires a flexible, evolving framework that supports human evolution. This chapter describes why transforming, not reforming, our societies and its systems is essential. It will consider how we can begin to redefine criteria for success in very practical ways that support individual opportunity and the common good. It will introduce a vision of a future based on human collaboration, a context for that vision, and suggest meta-principles which offer an opportunity for all individuals and organizations to find common ground. It will suggest there are common, core values which may be embraced by anyone interested in creating a better future for themselves and all of our children. It will discuss the need for congruency across levels of complexity, from the local to the international, as a means of ensuring the effectiveness of policy decisions at local levels.

META-PRINCIPLES

Peter Alexander wrote of environmental as well as humanitarian, political and economic principles that provide "content" for future decisions. There are also "meta-principles" which provide a "context" in which to conduct "processes" to evolve that content. Potential meta-principles such as the following will provide congruence at all levels of society, from policy making to implementation:

• Transformation requires a new synthesis of individuality, community and environment based on interdependence - one which transcends all existing definitions

• The difference between reforming and transforming is the difference between doing something more efficiently and rethinking its underlying assumptions in all relationships and larger systems

• Transformational changes occur when parallel processes are utilized (one process addresses immediate issues using the techniques of strategic planning, and at the same time another process builds capacities for transformation for issues at a higher level of complexity

• Iterative problem solving helps build capacities for transformation: try something, learn from it, and continue to evolve

• Accelerate the process of transformation of our societal structures by also evolving the capacity for transformation within ourselves.

These are illustrative of principles to guide the processes by which decisions are made, support transformation and promote evolution.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR TRANSFORMING HUMAN SYSTEMS

Transformation is not an easy process. Change itself is difficult, and virtually all of us have direct experience with how personal behavioral changes can be immense challenges. Transformation requires at least six elements:

1. Awareness of the present situation
2. Recognition of the need for transformation
3. Desire to change (perhaps a crisis?)
4. Building the capacities for transformation
5. Utilizing new skills, tools and techniques
6. Following through with integrity and discipline

These elements apply at both the individual and community levels. At the individual level, awareness begins with effective learning, formal or informal, to understand what is actually happening in our world. As we understand the influences at work, including that we are all interrelated, we have an opportunity for real partnership, which is a close relationship and commitment to common goals.

Community-level "Conversations" can build on generative community consensus processes, as part of a long-term effort to transform our systems to be more rewarding, equitable, and sustainable. The Conversations will use processes to identify what people value most and what they will work to achieve. Communities of place will participate in simultaneous processes, in the U.S. and other countries. The Conversations will create stronger bonds within communities and help link communities together to share progress and learn from each other. Simultaneously, communities of interest will address specific issues, such as the goals of our economic systems, measures of human well being, educational needs and methods, environmental goals, and much more. By identifying what people value, we have the opportunity to encourage public officials to apply these values and create new relationships, among ourselves and with our government. People, not just governments, will be the wheels of action in democratic collaboration.

The Conversations will identify what people are willing to do to align with an evolving set of sustainable values in a constantly changing, interconnected, and increasingly complex world.

Richard Tarnas began by introducing Jerry Brown, mentioning highlights of both his career as a politician and his career as a humanist.

Then Brown told us a bit about the class on World Anthropology he teaches at Berkeley. He said he was disconcerted by the way in which people tend to focus on their immediate concens without looking for ways to tie them into what else is going on around them. This led him to talk about **Gregory Bateson.**

"I had the privilege of working with Gregory Bateson," he said. Much of the readings Jerry had assigned were from Ivan Ilich (on *Deschooling Society*), and he said that he also had the privilege of knowing and working with Ilich.

He told us how he had put together the Board of Regents of California. (*Ed. Note: he appointed Bateson to the Board*) He quoted from Bateson, saying, "All of the many current threats to man's survival are traceable to three root causes:
a) technologicl progress;
b) population growth; and
c) certain errors in occidental ways of thinking."

"For most of human history, religion (morality), politics (state), and economics (business) are all together. The sword and the scepter were together, and then economics develops and unhooks from the state and from morality, because there is one rule: ROI—return on investment. Individualism and ROI are the embodiment of the modern world. Both Adam Smith and Karl Marx present versions of this notion of economics, and this is totally unique in human history. It was tied in with this grand notion of 'development.' And at that moment that it was, 90% of the rest of the world became 'underdeveloped'."

He quoted from Ilich: "The value of institutionalized man depends on his capacity as an incinerator! Institutional value can be defined as the level of output of an institution. The corresponding value of man is measured by his ability to consume these institutional outputs. He has become the furnace that burns up the values produced by his tools." Reflecting on this, Jerry then said, "this is progress."

Next, he considered the state of the provision of education through institutionalized mechanisms. Again, he drew on Ilich: "School combines the expectations of the consumer expressed in its claims linked up with the producer expressed in its economy. It is a liturgical expression of a world-wide cargo cult." He paused and looked up from his notes, "That's what development is--a cargo cult!. we live in a cargo cult!!"

Turning to higher education in the United States, he quoted from Ilich, who observed that "the American university has become the most all encompassing ritualization myth in all of history. Once we have started to need school, all of our relationships become client relationships to other institutions that depend on the school."

Jerry then turned to a consideration of what is driving this deficiency in our educational systems. His conclusion; "quantitative more--that's the problem. The BurgerKing president said that his motto is: 'More, more, and more!' The sick ideology in which this is embedded involves the separation of the individual--a hyperindividualism-- and an economic thing where we live in a world where there's just not enough stuff--business is in the business of producing goods, services, and desires--so we end up with more kinds of stuff and it is always accompanied by more desire....we'll never catch up. It's like the little greyhound who runs around the track and never gets it-- until we weck the world."
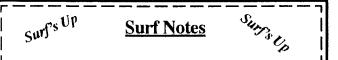
He went on to the consideration of the environment. "There's only one sink--it's called the atmosphere. To make everything work, we need to respect that. But the CO2 emissions are growing faster than the GNP. So how do we get some traction here--what do we do about all this?" This was clearly the question that he wanted us to take home with us that evening.

In conclusion, he pointed out that he thought that "the real issue here is how are you going to suffer? I mean, you are going to die--that's the final answer--and the question is whether an extra utility vehicle in your garage is going to make any difference? Clearly, he didn't think so. "Friendship is the answer. How will you share your life--will you suffer alone or will you have someone to share it with? If you're not poor, old, sick, or abandoned, life's pretty good here in San Francisco. But how are you going to make a difference?" He said that last bit looking into everybody's eyes. Quite a feat. I'm still not sure how he did that...

Question: Is it really that you are against education? It seems more like you are against the process by which education is delivered today, as it has been for the past hundreds of years, than that you are against education, as such.

Answer: Well, if you think you have an "education need" and that there are certain specialists who can satisfy it, then you are constantly looking outside yourself for someone to satisfy it. More and more, we can't do anything except consume--and we can't even really decide what to consume because we are programmed as to what to consume. We have a universally MacDonalized culture, and the world is being flattened by it, and all I am saying is that education is part of the flattening of the world. The idea that we can learn what we want to learn is a very powerful idea, and we need to do more with that...It's not that learning is out, but caring, craft, skill, elegance--is this what the education system is about? Well, that's what we need. Stress the creativity of people and they will create everything else.

Barbara Kingslover writes in part;

... the fact is, we now have a new administration that's hostile to the things I love most: human kindness, the dignity of diversity, and the wild glory of life on earth. It's time to move on from denial to the next stage, which would be bitter cynicism or action.

I'm opting for action, because I don't really have a choice. Looking out my window right now I can see my two girls outside under the mesquite trees in this precious riparian woodland where we live, and my heart starts to break for all the beautiful things they'll never see if I allow unchecked Bushwhacking in the next four years..... So I've taken a vow to spend at least some part of every week protecting the truths and places I treasure.

Part of that commitment involves this letter asking you to do the same. I'm fairly confident you'll agree with my concerns, because we're the majority. Not only did most of us not vote for the guy, we also — by a handy majority, the polls say — oppose the assault he and Gale Norton hope to launch.

To choose an urgent example, their plan to drill for oil in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge is hugely unsupported by U.S. citizens, and has even met some opposition from his fellow Republicans. Most of us want the Arctic Refuge to remain pristine and untouched — and we feel this way in spite of current energy worries and the fact that this magnificent birthing ground for Artic wildlife is, for most of us, a place we've only imagined. The widespread reputation of Americans for selfishness notwithstanding, we are wise and generous enough to care about lives and places beyond our own backyards.

Starting today, if you haven't already, I hope you'll do a handful of concrete things including these: Post the addresses of your legislators somewhere you'll see it, and make a habit of writing them weekly to help guide their decisions about social justice and the environment. Think of the California energy crisis as an opportunity to institute, in your home and your conversations with friends, a policy of conserving resources that will provide the only long-term solution. And get involved with your conservation community, locally and nationally.

A step I recommend is the Internet activist campaign called <www.SaveBioGems.org>. When you visit this site, it will take you only about ten minutes to send faxes to politicians and CEO's to voice your interest in protecting places like the Arctic Refuge, Greater Yellowstone, the Macal Rainforest of Costa Rica and Red Rock Wilderness of Utah.

If you register there, the Natural Resources Defense Council will send you email alerts every so often (while also respecting your privacy) asking you to return to www.SaveBioGems.org to participate in a crucial fax or email campaign.

These things work. Every kind of communication adds up, and web activism is a new force in the political landscape. Lots of effective campaigns have made good use of the internet, such as the one against Nike, and it was web activism that recently helped NRDC to prevent the Mitsubishi corporation from destroying birthing grounds for the Pacific Grey Whale in Mexico.

But it only works if we all care enough to get involved. Please take a minute to visit <*www.SaveBioGems.org*>, and if you agree with me, please extend this invitation to your friends and family. Thanks — our kids ask the world of us, and my greatest hope is to give them one, intact.

Truly yours,

Barbara Kingsolver

Reflections

We asked ourselves, is anything new in what's happening now, as we seek to revive democracy, curtail corporate power, combat racism, promote economic justice, and come to terms with our condition as a species among species on a living planet. Or are our struggles simply part of an eternal, recurrent pattern?

Many of us felt our present context is both ancient and unique. The struggle against the excesses of those who hold power seems eternal. Much of the wisdom from the perennial traditions is as important now as it ever was.

But the global nature of our current predicament is unique. Never before has our entire species been at risk. It seemed just possible that in confronting the enormity of this new challenge, we humans might catapult ourselves to a new level of planetary consciousness and social function.

Can we get beyond the terrible effects of the divisions of race and class? When a society systematically creates winners and losers, it generates an underclass, the existence of which is then justified with racism, sexism, and other "ism schisms."

So, as we tackle the problems of race and class, we come up against an even bigger question. Can we move beyond the dominator model to a world with a place of dignity for all?

Could the global nature of our current environmental and social crisis spur us to create systems that truly embody our growing realization that we are all inter-connected?

Fran Korten
State of the Possible
in Positive Futures Network News Spring 2001

_**There are no passengers
on spaceship earth.
We are all crew.**_

Marshall McLuhan

Donella Meadows

1941-2001

I first knew Donella Meadows as the co-author of The Limits to Growth, published while she was at MIT in 1972. The study struck a universal nerve ending. It was translated into 28 languages and sold more than nine million copies. At the first International Systems Conference I attended as a student in the Cybernetic Systems Graduate program at San Jose State University, she was the only speaker I really understood. She was the only woman speaker and she was talking about practical things like survival of the human species. The follow-up study, Beyond the Limits, published in 1992, demonstrated her many contributions to systems theory and global trend analysis. I think of her as the Rachel Carson of the systems field.

Her life was dedicated to the broader sustainability movement sharing information and collaboration among leading academics world-wide as adjunct professor of environmental sciences at Dartmouth and co-founder/coordinator of the International Network of Resource Information Centers. In 1997 she founded the Sustainability Institute, which she described as a "think-do-tank." True to the ethos of her life, the Institute combines cutting edge research in global systems with pracitical demonstrations of sustainable living. Her love of farming comes through in her weekly syndicated articles presented as "a global view, a connected view, a long-term view, an environmental and compassionate view." To read more of Dr. Meadows' writing, visit the website at <www.sustainer.org>

Her legacy to educators is captured in this article published in The Global Citizen, February 2, 2001.

Polar Bears and Three-Year-Olds on Thin Ice

The place to watch for global warming — the sensitive point, the canary in the coal mine — is the Arctic. If the planet as a whole warms by one degree, the poles will warm by about three degrees. Which is just what is happening.

Ice now covers 15 percent less of the Arctic Ocean than it did 20 years ago. In the 1950s that ice averaged 10 feet thick; now it's less than six feet thick. At the current rate of melting, in 50 years the northern ocean could be ice-free all summer long.

That, says an article in Science of January 19, would be the end of polar bears. In fact many creatures of the Arctic Ocean are already in trouble.

Until recently no one knew that there were many creatures of the Arctic Ocean. In the 1970s a Russian biologist named Melnikov discovered 200 species of tiny organisms, algae and zooplankton, hanging around ice floes in immense numbers, forming slime jungles on the bottoms of bergs and plankton clouds in every break of open water. Their carcasses fall to the bottom to nourish clams, which are eaten by walruses. Arctic cod live on algae scraped off the ice. The cod are eaten by seabirds, whales, and seals. The king of the food chain, hunting mainly seals, is the great white bear.

That was the system until the ice started to thin. In 1997 and 1998 Melnikov returned to the Beaufort Sea and found most of the plankton species, man named by him (and for him), were gone. The ice was nearly gone. Creatures dependent on the plankton (like the cod), or on the ice for dens (seals) or for travel (bears) were gone too.

Many had just moved north, following the ice, but that means moving farther from land, with widening stretches of open water between. Creatures like the black guillemot, a bird that depends on land for shelter and the ice floe for food, can no longer bridge the gap.

The Arctic is changing faster than scientists can document. Inuit hunters report that ivory gulls are disappearing; no one knows why. Mosquitoes are moving north, attacking murres, which will not move from their nests, so they are literally sucked and stung to death. Caribou can no longer count on thick ice to support their island-hopping in search of the lichens that sustain them. One biologist who spots caribou from the air says, "You sometimes see a caribou trail heading across [the ice], then a little wormhole at the end with a bunch of antlers sticking out."

Hudson's Bay polar bears are thinner and are producing fewer cubs. With the ice going out earlier, their seal-hunting season is shrinking. Hungry bears retreat to land and ransack garbage dumps. The town of Churchill in Canada has more jail cells for bears than for people. The bears are also weakened by toxic chemicals that drift north from industrial society and accumulate in the Arctic food chain.

Every five years the world's climatologists assess current knowledge about global warming. Their latest report was just released. It erases any doubt about where this warming is coming from and warns that we ain't seen nothing yet. If we keep spewing out greenhouse gases according to pattern, we will see three to ten times more warming over the 21st century than we saw over the 20th.

Some biologists are saying the polar bear is doomed.

A friend of mine, in response to this news, did the only appropriate thing. She burst out weeping. "What am I going to tell my