

"Concentration Proposal"

"Village Design: Ekistics for the 21st Century"

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## Village Design: Ekistics for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

*Welcome to the future...* - Albert Bates

I have a Utopian vision for the 21st century: Collective humanity undergoes a spiritual awakening and begins its ascent into a Golden Age. In this vision, human beings abandon their reckless linear pursuit of a civilization based on the consolidation of arbitrary power and the divisive hubris of ego exaltation. The structure of that civilization is increasingly realized to be in contradiction with and divergent from the needs and laws of Life. A new civilization begins to emerge, inspired by an inner rekindling of Spirit and an outer expansion of awareness illuminating humanity's interdependence with Nature and Cosmos.

All areas of human life are affected as outworn, abstract conceptual models are discarded and culture evolves into an emulation of patterns and cycles found in Nature. There is a reversion-succession to Organic Order with the intention of restoring and ensuring sustainability. A Great Peace reigns as the human condition advances to an expression of Spirit, and humanity rediscovers its essential role and responsibility in the natural flow.

As part of the organic restructuring process, arbitrary political boundaries are dissolved and replaced by bioregional systems. Without the stress imposed by artificial organization, diverse cultures soon settle into harmonious rhythms with their environments and with each other. Social systems are created reflecting a deeper understanding of the processes of Nature, where each part benefits and contributes to the collective good of the whole, thus ensuring the vitality of all.

From this new synergistic perspective, global society recognizes the immense value of cooperation. Twentieth century myths expounding the virtues of avaricious competition and predatory individualism are dismissed as 'primitive,' and with their passing fade most of the social problems we face today. Humanity is freed in an unparalleled renaissance, and begins to re-evaluate preconceived boundaries to self-actualization and true human potential.

Within the bioregional networks, a pattern of human settlement appears that could properly be termed 'ecovillages.' These villages share the following characteristics: They are

- 1) Human scale
- 2) Full-featured settlements
- 3) In which human activities are harmlessly integrated into the natural world
- 4) In a way that is supportive of healthy human development, and
- 5) Can be successfully continued into the indefinite future<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Gilman, Robert, editor (1991) *The Eco-village Challenge. In Context*, No. 29

Village Design is the comprehensive, conscious creation of sustainable human settlements for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It is a wholistic, multidisciplinary approach to providing a setting where the human spirit can flourish and where human beings can satisfy their needs in an environment that enhances the health of all Life.



Crystal Waters, Queensland, Australia – Photo E.C. Mare, Autumn 1996

There is a nascent moving currently stirring in the world: the emergence of the ‘Ecovillage.’ The Ecovillage is a thoughtful response to addressing the dilemma humanity faces at the close of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In recognition of the futility of attempting to solve intractable problems with the same old unworkable solutions because the foundation of the entire framework is flawed, the ecovillage response proposes to place the situation in a whole new context. By synthesizing the advantages, opportunities, and tremendous potential of 20<sup>th</sup> century life with the long-term viability, social cohesion, and organic order of tribal societies, the ecovillage becomes a testing ground for laying the foundation of a sustainable social order. The ecovillage response is just that: experimentation on models of enlightened 21<sup>st</sup> century living.

“Village Design” as a Concentration for Fairhaven College will be an effort to provide a meaningful contribution to the current stirring of the ecovillage response. As such, it will be an attempt to illuminate the significance of the transition from crystallized 20<sup>th</sup> century belief

structures to new patterns of 21<sup>st</sup> century living. It will focus on providing fundamental principles for the manifestation of the new village; and, this Concentration will demonstrate the immediate, inseparable correlation between human potential and the nature and quality of the environments in which people do their living.

“Village Design” as a multidisciplinary Concentration will be an integration of 1) Human Ecology, with its in-depth understanding of the relationship between human beings and their environment; and 2) Permaculture, or Applied Human Ecology, with its practical application of designing human habitation systems in harmony with the natural world. Within the study of both disciplines, there will be a special emphasis on considering how human life, human culture, is shaped by the environments in which people live: how the thoughtful, wholistic design of human habitats can influence and enhance human life in a sustainable culture. Throughout this educational investigation, there will be a focus on pattern and process so that a living, evolving body of knowledge may be accumulated and applied.

In the interest of analytical clarity, Human Ecology will be further subdivided into Social and Physical components. The Social component will incorporate the headings 1) Spirituality and Religion, 2) Psychology, 3) Anthropology, 4) The Arts, and 5) Human Relationships. By giving attention to each of these important aspects of human social life, I will be able to gain a thorough understanding of human nature and human social needs and so be able to sensitively design systems within villages where these needs may be fulfilled. The Physical component will include the headings Natural Sciences and Natural Processes. In order to be capable of designing human habitation systems in harmony with the natural world, I must have a very good understanding of how the natural world works.





Permaculture Garden, Outback Farm, Fairhaven College, WWU  
Photo E.C. Mare – Spring 1997

Permaculture is a design system working *with* rather than against Nature. It considers such factors as multi-functional elements, placement for beneficial relationships, according with the natural flow of energies, biological solutions, and zone and sector analysis of sites. Permaculture is process-oriented and is best learned experientially, by practice and experimentation. It's goal is to create self-regulating human systems modeled after systems observed in Nature. Permaculture will be an essential approach to designing any sustainable human habitation system, and so it is an integral component of my Village Design Concentration.



Much of my work has already been done. I have taken classes in Human Ecology, Human Ecology/Sustainability, Jungian Psychology, Dream Symbolism, Cultural Anthropology, Indigenous Issues, Humanity & the Expressive Arts, Improv Theatre, Community Living, and Alternative Futures – all providing me with valuable background for understanding human nature and human needs and how they may be fulfilled in potential ecovillage living situations. The classes Science and Our Place on the Planet, Patterns in Nature, and Human Geography have given me a foundation for my exploration of the natural world.

I have devoted much attention to the permaculture component of this Concentration; after all, it was a Permaculture Design Course that first initiated me on this path. My first

quarter at Fairhaven, I took Organic Gardening, then went on to facilitate the class twice afterwards. Through Fairhaven Independent Study Projects (ISPs), I did a Permaculture Design segment on the farm where I live and an Introduction to Village Design class where a group of us worked on creating a hypothetical village in Southeast Alaska – and ended up creating a whole lot of community in the process!

Then things really got going: I took two trips overseas to study with internationally renowned ecovillage designers and to witness for myself a couple of prominent ecovillages-in-process and another just getting underway, This aspect of my education has been invaluable because I have gained an international perspective on the global ecovillage movement and have developed a discriminating appreciation of what it takes for an ecovillage to flourish.

All told, I feel I have developed competence in the Permaculture component of this Concentration. I practice permaculture everywhere I go, I have learned to interpret the world through a permaculture lens, and I have a thriving permaculture system where I live. To become truly proficient (i.e. world class), I would like to add an Advanced Permaculture Design Course, which would qualify me to begin teaching. I also would like to explore a couple of ecovillages getting started in the USA. Additionally, I think that experiencing a traditional, so-called ‘third-world,’ village will be extremely valuable for gaining a more complete comprehension of the nature of Village Design and the solution it posits.

Now that a strong and useful permaculture foundation has been established, and I have a preliminary understanding of the requirements of a successful ecovillage, I would like to devote the remainder of my undergraduate education to focusing on filling in some of the gaps in my understanding of Human Ecology – especially in the fields of natural sciences and natural processes. I know permaculture, I’ve seen ecovillages, I’ve begun to understand the needs of human beings; now I must turn my attention to the context, the natural world.

My intention is to take a series of natural science courses at WWU, notably: Biology, Geology, Environmental Systems, Fundamentals of Ecology, and Landscape Ecology. To these I will add ISPs at Fairhaven exploring natural processes: A Pattern Language, Ecological Design, Geomancy/Feng Shui, and Regional Ecologies (Bioregions). Finally, I will fill in the gaps in my Social Human Ecology component: the titles Traditional Villages, Religion and Culture, Deep Ecology, and Native Peoples of North America all sound especially pertinent. Combined, this further study will reinforce a growing comprehension of the relationship between human beings and their natural environment – particularly in respect to the settlements in which people live – and will pave the way for me to become a meaningful contributor to any future Village Design project.





Unity Festival at The Farm, Tennessee – Photo E.C. Mare, Spring 1997

My intense interest and imaginative curiosity in participating in the manifestation of idyllic, idealistic human living situations derives directly from the life I have been given. Having lived in many places and many social roles, I have consequentially perceived and developed an underlying thread to human existence, an existence not dependent on conditioned cultural expectations or superficially temporal requirements, but rather an existence grounded in timeless principles and a pre-conditioned relationship between human beings and the Source.

In gaining this perspective, I had to abandon my culturally-conditioned, reckless, linear pursuit of avaricious competition and predatory individualism and come to terms with that gnawing vacuity inside, an emptiness demanding the presence of Spirit in my life. As the Spirit was nurtured, I began to see 20<sup>th</sup> century society as increasingly absurd, indeed counter-productive. I began to set my sights on solutions.

I was led to a Permaculture Design Course that showed me how human systems could be designed after Nature, thus ensuring sustainability. I was enthralled and immediately recognized my life's work. I set out to the countryside where I worked on a garlic farm, caretook 30 acres in the hills, and participated in the establishment of a Community Center.

The Community Center project convinced me of the value of higher education, as the complexities and depth of involvement were always a challenge. Fulfilling a life-long dream, I made a conviction to go to university to gain the skills necessary to be able to actively and knowingly participate in projects of this kind. Taking a cue from the last chapter of the

*Permaculture Designer's Manual*, I thought I would structure my education around the concept of "Village Design," and set out laying the groundwork as soon as I got into school. The context of this education has now been greatly expanded with the rise of the international ecovillage movement, and now I can sense the effects and consequences of this education to be truly global in scope.

With the knowledge and skills I gain from my education, I wish to become a meaningful contributor to conceptualization, design, and implementation of new models of human settlement for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. These new models will synergistically integrate the needs of human beings and the natural environments in which they live into a unified expression of Spirit: the underlying harmony and common ground from which all Life originates.

And of course, it is within these primordially patterned, vibrantly fertile wombs that the spiritual regeneration of humanity will be birthed...

The Curriculum Schematic for the Bachelor of Arts degree "Village Design: Ekistics for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century," the world's first effort at organizing the emerging field of Ecovillage Design into a formal degree, follows:

# VILLAGE DESIGN: EXISTICS for the 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY

## HUMAN ECOLOGY

- 1) HUMAN ECOLOGY
- 2) HUMAN ECOLOGY/SUSTAINABILITY
- 3) ADVANCED HUMAN ECOLOGY

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## PHYSICAL HUMAN ECOLOGY

- 1) SCIENCE & OUR PLACE ON THE PLANETS
- 2) BIOLOGY: DIVERSITY & EVOLUTION
- 3) GEOLOGY
- 4) ENVIRONMENTAL SYSTEMS
- 5) FUNDAMENTALS OF ECOLOGY
- 6) LANDSCAPE ECOLOGY
- 7) PHYSICS & NATURAL ORDER
- 8) HUMAN GEOGRAPHY

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## SOCIAL HUMAN ECOLOGY

- 1) JUNGIAN PSYCHOLOGY
- 2) DREAM THEORY: SYMBOLS OF UNIONS
- 3) GESTALT PSYCHOLOGY
- 1) INTRO. to CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY
- 2) INDIGENOUS ISSUES
- 3) NATIVE PEOPLES OF N. AMERICA
- 4) TRADITIONAL VILLAGES

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## PERMACULTURE

- 1) ORGANIC GARDENING
- 2) ORGANIC GREENING PRACTICES
- 3) APPLIED HUMAN ECOLOGY PRACTICE
- 4) PERMACULTURE DESIGN
- 5) PERM. DESIGN - IRELAND
- 6) PERM. DESIGN - AUSTRALIA
- 7) INTRODUCTION to VILLAGE DESIGN
- 8) VILLAGE DESIGN - FINLAND
- 9) VILLAGE DESIGN - AUSTRALIA
- 10) FUND. VILLAGE DESIGN - THE FARM
- 11) PERMACULTURE ADVANCED COURSE
- 12) RENEWABLE ENERGY

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## NATURAL SCIENCES

## NATURAL PROCESSES

- 1) PATTERNS IN NATURE
- 2) REGIONAL ECOLOGIES
- 3) A PATTERN LANGUAGE
- 4) GEOMANCY / FENG SHUI
- 5) ECOLOGICAL DESIGN
- 6) BIO REGIONS
- 7) SACRED GEOMETRY
- 8) SYSTEMS THEORY
- 9) ORGANIC ASTRONOMY
- 10) AWARENESS THROUGH THE BODY

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## ARTS

- 1) HUMANITY & THE EXPRESSIVE ARTS
- 2) IMPROV THEATRE
- 3) DESIGN & COLOR
- 4) 3-DIMENSIONAL DESIGN
- 5) FUNDAMENTALS OF MUSIC
- 6) OPERA PERFORMANCE

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## ANTHRO

- 1) HUMANITY & THE EXPRESSIVE ARTS
- 2) IMPROV THEATRE
- 3) DESIGN & COLOR
- 4) 3-DIMENSIONAL DESIGN
- 5) FUNDAMENTALS OF MUSIC
- 6) OPERA PERFORMANCE

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## PSYCH

- 1) JUNGIAN PSYCHOLOGY
- 2) DREAM THEORY: SYMBOLS OF UNIONS
- 3) GESTALT PSYCHOLOGY

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## RELIGION

- 1) TAOISM
- 2) DEEP ECOLOGY
- 3) RELIGION & CULTURE
- 4) CROSS - CULTURAL SHAMANISM

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## HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS

- 1) COMMUNITY LIVING
- 2) ALTERNATIVE FUTURES
- 3) SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES
- 4) NON-VIOLENT COMMUNICATION
- 5) GROUP MANIFESTATION

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## ECONOMICS

- 1) ALTERNATIVE ECONOMICS
- 2) GRANT WRITING
- 3) VILLAGE-BASED ECONOMIES
- 4) INCORPORATION

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\*) SENIOR PROJECT -  
ECO VILLAGE DESIGN  
TRAINING CENTER  
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