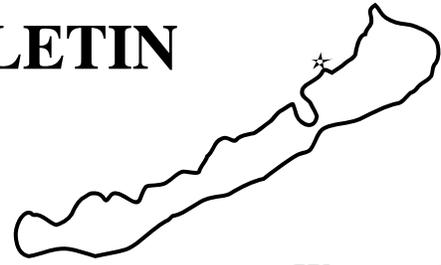


THE BALATON BULLETIN



Newsletter of The Balaton Group

WINTER 1997

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STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING

The annual meeting of the Balaton Group's steering committee was held December 8-9 at **Joan Davis's** house in Zurich. In attendance were **Alan AtKisson, Joan Davis, Joan DuToit, Zoltan Lontay, Dana Meadows, Dennis Meadows, Hermann Knoflacher, Aromar Revi, and Chirapol Sintunawa.**

As always, the group thoroughly inhabited Joan's gracious home, slept in the upstairs "dorms," cooked and washed dishes, and engaged in nonstop discussion. We always appreciate Joan's hospitality (which not only makes the meetings much more pleasant, but also saves the Balaton Group considerable money), but this year, with both health and family situations making Joan's life difficult, we appreciated it all the more. Joan's contributions of many kinds to Balaton are unfailing and they reach far beyond the call of duty. They can only be understood as service that flows out of love. In the space of that service and love, we had our meeting.

The agenda and bottom lines of the discussion follow. As always, since Balaton is a fiercely non-hierarchical organization, comments, corrections, additions, and rebuttals from the members are welcome.

Indicators of Sustainability

We discussed the need to continue the work we started last year with our sustainability indicators meeting in Bilthoven, at least to assemble a small writing group to sit together for a week and write a final publishable report. Joe Alcamo is trying to find some funding to hold that meeting in Kassel. Joan Davis will see if we could convene in a conference center she knows about in Munich. Dennis Meadows offered the services of his center in publishing and distributing the final document.

Regional Meetings

The upcoming regional meeting in Africa was discussed, and also the experience we have had with the three other regional meetings that have taken place so far (in Asia, Latin America, and the Baltics).

All three of the previous meetings were great experiences, they triggered further projects, they highlighted topics that later became central themes of global meet-

ings, they solidified relationships among sustainability workers from those regions. But they didn't start self-sustaining regional networks. There have been no subsequent meetings in those regions. It takes ongoing energy, support and resources to keep a network alive, and it's probably not realistic to ask any of our centers to divert attention from the many worthwhile projects they're already doing in order to serve as coordinators of regional networks. Perhaps regional meetings, if there are to be any, will have to go on being organized (and funded) from our central office.

Aro described another model, however — the Shola Fellowship, which is forming along Balaton lines within India. Organized and supported entirely by its members, it is about to have its second meeting. The secret to its success seems to be its utter simplicity and informality, its operating at a scale where each member can pay for his or her own attendance, and its foundation rests upon a group of people working within a common country who already know each other and feel a sense of partnership.

We discussed whether and to what extent we want to devote our central resources to coordinate and fund regional meetings. We asked if we had learned any lessons from the other regional meetings to pass on to the Africans. (We'd appreciate comments on that point from those who attended those meetings.) We had a strong feeling that at least some of these meetings, particularly in Africa, should encompass people from more than one country — to start larger conversations and get perspectives beyond single national borders.

There was no unanimity, so the question of regional meetings will continue to be one for us all to think about and experiment with. We definitely want the African group to have a chance at a meeting, which we hope will take place in June 1997.

The Future of the Balaton Group (i.e. \$\$money\$\$)

How do we envision the future of the Balaton Group? Should it be financially self-sustaining? Endowed for the long term? A source of funds for other organizations? Or should we just keep going till the day when there isn't enough money, then thank each other for great mutual support and disband?

Alan AtKisson brought this topic up rather insistently, still burning from a back-of-the-bus vision from the last annual meeting. There is tremendous intelligence, expertise, and business savvy in the group, Alan said. Why do we never put it to work to sustain the network to which we owe so much?

Alan's personal response to his own question is a decision to dedicate a part of the earnings from the two CDs of his songs (just about to come out) to the Balaton Group. He envisions a world tour, hosted by Balaton members in many nations, in which he can sing the songs, promote the CDs, and also foster discussions of sustainability — “building the money part into the synergy of the speaking, teaching, writing, research, analysis, and singing that we already offer the world.” (See Alan's announcement later in this *Bulletin*.)

The Balaton Group has survived by hook or by crook (actually, no crook) for fifteen years now, and our demise is not in sight. It costs about \$100,000 a year for us to operate at our present scale. Increasingly that money seems to be coming from individual donations, many from our own members, rather than from foundations or international organizations. We are never sure where next year's money will come from. Our finances are by no means sustainable.

The steering committee considered possible future funding sources. **Hermann Knoflacher** thought we could get support for our annual meetings from the European Union, but to do so we would need to know the meeting topics at least two years in advance. **Aro** suggested that he and others could return to the Balaton Group parts of consulting and lecture fees earned out of Balaton work and contacts. We could also spread the *Bulletin* to a larger audience and charge for it.

As we continued this (annual) discussion, we began to speak of the many ways Balaton members already contribute to the maintenance of the network, by no means all of which involve money. Contributing information to the *Bulletin* or publications to other members. Giving talks at meetings. Helping to organize meetings, or to line up speakers. Paying our own way to meetings. Weighing into the email discussions. Putting each other up at our growing chain of Balaton hotels. And above all sharing generously our experience

in working for sustainability, training each other, supporting each other's work in a hundred ways.

This network holds together only because of these contributions — of money, time, information, and friendship. As **Hermann** said, each of us in his or her own way contributes to maintain our “ice-breathing holes.” Most of the year we feel as if we're swimming under thick ice, he said, but when Balaton folks get together, it's like coming up through a hole for a breath of fresh air.

A Balaton Web Site?

We have never sought visibility for the Balaton Group, only for the work of its members, and therefore we have used the Internet only for our own internal communications. But the time seems to have come when an organization doesn't properly exist unless it has a web site. And of course web sites are opportunities to educate increasing numbers of people. And a Balaton home page could provide a linkage point for the home pages of our members who do want to advertise their works and their wares. For several years now the steering committee has talked about whether we should set up a web site. This year, for the first time, we thought it was a good idea.

As always in Balaton, the clinching argument was the existence of a volunteer. **Dennis Meadows** offered to work with his colleague Amy Seif to organize a home page for us. **He would like members to send him addresses for their home pages**, so he can build in appropriate crosslinks.

(Please send to meadows@unh.edu.)

“Membership”

No, we have no further wisdom about what makes a Balaton member, or who is a Balaton member, or how one becomes a Balaton member. New members come to our meetings through the invitation of old members. They stay active in the group or not as a result of their own interest and their degree of joint activity with others in the group. There seems to be a complete spectrum of “belonging,” from unfailing to very occasional participation. We don't advise putting “member of the Balaton Group” on your resume, because it has no official meaning.

The one time when membership becomes a critical issue is when 75 or so people want to come to the annual meeting, which is limited to 50. The steering committee considered this problem, as usual, and decided that the present system of allocation seems to be working. (If you disagree, we would be delighted to hear alternative proposals.)

The present system is:

- We allocate about 10 spaces to invited speakers and other special guests.
- Ten more spaces are reserved for newcomers recommended by present members, and especially for young people.
- The remaining 30 spaces are for “members.” Steering committee members and network coordinators are automatically invited. Invitations for the other spaces are determined by the steering committee, in a sincere and often painful effort to take into account geographic representation, past participation, connection with the present topic, professional opportunities to “make a difference,” our budget, and other cogent considerations.
- Anyone who very much wants to attend a particular meeting — because of its topic, because of joint work with other members, or because he or she will be somewhere near Hungary at that time anyway — should let us know. We will put you on a waiting list and do our best to fit you in.
- Because of that waiting list, if you receive an invitation and know you can’t attend, please let us know **immediately**, so we can pass on the opportunity to someone else.

Why don’t we just find a larger meeting place where we can fit in more than 50 people? Because the members have decided by overwhelming majorities each time we have considered this option that it’s not possible to interact meaningfully with more than 50 people at one meeting, and that if we can’t live by limits to growth, how can we expect anyone else to?

A Pre-Meeting?

Dennis Meadows suggested an optional “pre-meeting” before the next annual meeting with no purpose other than having a good time together and seeing some of the Central European countryside. It could involve hiking in the Alps, biking from Vienna to Budapest, canoeing down the Danube, horseback riding across the Hungarian plain. **Dennis, Zoltan Lontay,** and **Hermann Knoflacher** constituted themselves a committee to explore the options. If you have opinions or ideas, please communicate with one of them.

The Next Annual Meeting

We’ve been wondering for several years now whether it would be possible to do a Balaton meeting about time. Time as a resource (renewable? nonrenewable?) that can be managed badly or well. Time as a better indicator than money of what we really value (now how, really, do you spend your time?). Time as something some people can command in enormous quantities from other people, setting up the world’s most serious inequities. Time as the central driving factor behind our simulation models (and the world?). Time as what Balaton Group members never, ever have enough of.

Though we’ve been captivated by the thoughts and conversations that arise when we take up the topic of “time,” we’ve been hesitant to make a whole meeting on the subject. It’s a bottomless pit of philosophy — we might drop in and never come out. (Or, if we think of it as a mountain, we might never get to the top, where there’s a clear view.) Time is not a normal category in the language of sustainability — normal categories being things like “water,” “agriculture,” “economics” — so we’re not sure how to structure it. There are no immediately obvious speakers on the subject; the world doesn’t seem to demand or create “time experts.” We’re not sure that examining “time” will help our work in any way — though we suspect that it could, perhaps more than any other topic.

What it took, as always, to push this topic from theoretical to actual was a Balaton Group member foolish or brave enough to volunteer to organize it. That person appeared this year in the form of **Alan AtKisson**. He volunteered, hesitantly, and we assured him he would have plenty of help from his friends. Right, friends?

BALATON '97

ON TIME — THE TEMPORAL DIMENSIONS OF SUSTAINABILITY

When we try to understand what makes systems, economies, and cultures sustainable, time emerges as a critical factor — perhaps **the** critical factor. A dynamic model shows changes over time. Feedback delays and response times are key determinants of whether a system will equilibrate, crash, or spin wildly out of control. And much of our membership's work on models and indicators is driven by a desire to know the answer to a crucial question: How much time have we got?

What is time, anyway? Is it linear, cyclical, helical? Is it a stock or a flow? Is it a renewable or non-renewable resource? Do we really have “all the time in the world?” Or are we “running out of time?”

In the market economy, there is no mystery to time. We treat time as a commodity. We buy and sell our own time, and other people's. (That's called “the job market”.) We pay for everything from internet access to magazine subscriptions in measures of time (“three months for \$59.”). Advertisers buy access to our time by purchasing minutes of TV broadcasts. And when we have nothing important or job-related to do, we call that “free time.”

In short, we see time as money. We spend it, save it, waste it, account for it, value it, and acquire it. When

we buy a pair of shoes from Nike, we aren't just buying the materials or the design or the embodied energy used to manufacture and transport them from Indonesia. We're also buying the embodied time of a 16-year-old Javanese stitcher, a piece of her life.

But time is not just money; time is also life, which brings it back into the realm of mystery. We don't know what life is either, but we know we want more of it. That's why we never have “enough time.” That's why so many of us complain about “burnout,” like a candle kept burning too long, running out of wax.

Sustainability is fundamentally about time, because it's about continuing on successfully into the long-term future. We need to understand a great deal about time to understand sustainability. The way it gets perceived and interpreted by science, by philosophy, and by different cultures. The role it plays in dynamic modeling. The way it gets valued economically and viewed politically. How to manage it better, as societies and as individual human beings.

And finally, there is a spiritual dimension to time. When we love places or people, we want to spend more time with them. This is perhaps the deepest danger in the increasing commodification of time. The rise in

Time-saving appliances have combined with time-passing appliances to remove many communal activities from family life.

Drawing by Claus Deleuran in *Managing Energy — Managing the Home*, by Jorgen S. Norgard and Bente L. Christensen, 1984.

America of the phrase “quality time” — meaning time actually relating to your family, rather than watching TV or working to pay for the TV — is an indicator of the decline in the way we use time, and maybe of a decline in the way we love.

When Tevye (in the musical “Fiddler on the Roof”) asks his wife if she loves him, she’s shocked. “For thirty years I’ve cooked your food, mended your clothes, raised our children,” she says. “If that’s not love, what is?”

It’s time we looked seriously at time — and there’s no time like the present. Here is a tentative schedule for our coming meeting. Comments and suggestions to **Alan AtKisson** (atkisson@aol.com) are very welcome. We would especially welcome suggestions of speakers and points of view that are not from Western cultures or standard disciplines.

Day One (August 30) — From Time to Time (human conceptions and perceptions of time).

- Peter Kafka (astrophysicist from the Max Planck Institute) — the origins of time.
- Donald Worster (cultural historian from the University of Kansas) — a recent history of time.
- Buzz Holling (systems ecologist, University of Florida) — quicktime and slowtime coupling in ecological systems.
- [Biologist/Physiologist] — how humans perceive time.

(We need a southerner’s perspective here, along the lines of what Maika Mason provided on water.)

Day Two (August 31) — Time and System Dynamics (time constants, control loops, and system behavior).

- **Dennis Meadows** — control loops and feedback delays.
- **Bert de Vries** — time in the TARGETS world model.
- **Peter Allen** — time and self-organizing systems.
- **Dana Meadows** — how much time have we actually got?

Day Three (September 1) — The Valuation of Time (wages and human capital).

- **Herman Daly** or **Faye Duchin** — time in economics.
- **Aromar Revi** — accounting for human capital with time as numeraire.
- Juliet Schor (economist, Harvard University) — time, jobs, work, leisure, and - hecticness.
- [European or Southern economist] — time in the global economy.

Day Four (September 2) — Time Management for Sustainability (including our own).

- [workshop person] — time management and the dynamics of burnout.
- **Hermann Knoflacher** — time and transportation.
- Stewart Brand (Global Business Network) — teaching society to perceive longer and longer spans of time.
- Joanna Macy — “Deep Time” personal techniques for motivating activism by expanding awareness of past and future.

NOT SO FAST!

A POLICY RECOMMENDATION FOR A SUSTAINABLE WORLD

by Dana Meadows

This is one of Dana's weekly newspaper columns, which she wrote on November 14, 1996. It generated much more response than other columns, both from the newspapers and from the Balaton Group email list. Some people seem to have taken it personally!

Those of us who think the world needs saving — from environmental destruction, rapacious greed, decaying morals, drugs, crime, racism, whatever — keep very busy crusading for our favorite remedies. School vouchers. Carbon taxes. Campaign reform. The Endangered Species Act. A lower capital gains tax. Strong regulation. No regulation.

You know. That long list of mutually inconsistent Holy Grails with which we like to hit each other over the head.

There's one solution to the world's problems, however, that I never hear the frenzied activists suggest.

Slowing down.

Yes, that's what I said.

Slowing down.

Slowing down could be the single most effective solution to the particular save-the-world struggle I immerse myself in — the struggle for sustainability, for living harmoniously and well within the limits and laws of the earth.

Suppose we weren't in such a hurry. We could take time to walk instead of drive, to sail instead of fly. To clean up our messes. To discuss our plans throughout the whole community before we send in bulldozers to make irreversible changes. To figure out how many fish the ocean can produce before boats race out to beat other boats to whatever fish are left.

Suppose we went at a slow enough pace not only to smell the flowers, but to feel our bodies, play with children, look openly, without agenda or timetable into the faces of loved ones. Suppose we stopped gulping fast food and started savoring slow food, grown, cooked,

served, and eaten with care. Suppose we took time each day to sit in silence.

I think, if we did those things, the world wouldn't need much saving.

We could cut our energy and material use drastically, because we would get the full good out of what we use.

We wouldn't have to buy so many things to save time. (Have you ever wondered, with all our time-saving paraphernalia, what happens to the time we save?)

We wouldn't make so many mistakes. We could listen more and hurt each other less. Maybe we could even take time to reason through our favorite solutions, test them, and learn what their actual effects are.

Said Thomas Merton, who spent his time in a Trappist monastery: "There is a pervasive form of contemporary violence to which the idealist ... most easily succumbs: activism and over-work.... To allow oneself to be carried away by a multitude of conflicting concerns, to surrender to too many demands, to commit oneself to too many people, to want to help everyone in everything, is to succumb to violence. The frenzy of the activist neutralizes his work for peace. It destroys the fruitfulness of his own work, because it kills the root of inner wisdom which makes work fruitful."

A friend in India tells me that the onslaught of Western advertising in his country is a cultural blow, not so much because of the messages of the ads, but because of their pace. The stun-the-senses barrage of all TV programming, especially ads, is antithetical to a thousands-year-old tradition of contemplation. I can imagine that. I have been driven crazy by the somnolent pace at which things get done in India. Don't these people know that time is money?

What they know, actually, is that time is life, and to go zooming through it is to miss living. Psychologist Arno Gruen says our busyness is addictive: "In order to be able to feel alive, we ... need more and more external excitation. The stimuli themselves ... force us into an addictive mode. Since we think that all we require is more of them in order to fill up the emptiness, our need will grow for what actually increases the void. There are numerous stimuli of this sort: loud music, large cars, glittering colors, gleaming machines. What we finally seek for our feeling of aliveness is simply the speed with which a change in stimuli takes place. The form or content of the stimulus will have scarcely any significance. In fact empty forms will be preferred, since those with content and meaning slow down the tempo of change. To find meaning in an experience requires, after all, an act of mental organization, and that takes time."

Slow. Down. Do that first. Then, quietly, carefully, think about what else might need to be done.

The only problem with this cure is that I can't prescribe it for others, because I have such trouble follow-

ing it myself. It's so easy to get swept up in the hurtling pace of the world. Like most of the other world-savers I know, I'm way too busy to eat well, sit quietly, take a vacation, or even, some days, think.

Edward Abbey, the great curmudgeon of environmentalism, knew better: "It is not enough to fight for the land; it is even more important to enjoy it. While you can. While it's still here. So get out there and hunt and fish and mess around with your friends, ramble out yonder and explore the forests, climb the mountains, run the rivers, breathe deep of that yet sweet and lucid air, sit quietly for awhile and contemplate the precious stillness, that lovely, mysterious and awesome space. Enjoy yourselves, keep your brain in your head and your head firmly attached to the body, the body active and alive, and I promise you this much: I promise you this one sweet victory over ... those desk-bound people with their hearts in a safe deposit box and their eyes hypnotized by desk calculators. I promise you this: You will outlive the bastards."

Good advice. Too bad I don't have time to take it. I have to go save the world.

THE PRINCIPLE OF CREATION AND THE GLOBAL ACCELERATION CRISIS

by Peter Kafka

Peter Kafka is an astrophysicist at the Max-Planck-Institute in Munich and a member of Ecoropa. The following is excerpted from a paper he wrote in 1976. It was published in the *Munich Social Science Review* 1978/2,91-99.

Let us go quickly through history. Make the age of the universe 12 billion years (it may in fact be a bit older) and squeeze those into 12 months. Assume the year has just started, on January 1.

The whole universe is extremely near us, perhaps in one point with us, totally structureless, at least orderless, but endowed with the impetus to expand against gravity and with the rules of how to create structure. In a fraction of the first second of the first of January, elementary particles are created in this primeval medium. Matter appears in the form of hydrogen and helium. It becomes dominant after awhile (on January first or second), because expansion thins radiation faster than matter. When the radiation is cool enough to decouple from

hydrogen, matter can follow its tendency to form lumps.

Before the end of January the galaxies and the first generation of stars have formed. From now on stars brew the heavier chemical elements. Dying stars enrich the interstellar gas with such materials. Laws of nuclear physics let carbon become especially abundant. Laws of molecular physics enforce the formation of organic molecules on the surfaces of dust grains in the gas surrounding stars.

By the middle of August, our sun and its planetary system are formed in a contracting cloud of gas and dust. It takes less than a day for the sun to achieve approximately its present properties and supply its plan-

ets with a more or less steady stream of high-temperature radiation. The formation of an atmosphere and oceans on the earth leads to an ideal environment for the kind of chemical evolution that radio astronomers find in irradiated circumstellar clouds. The earth's atmosphere does not yet contain free oxygen, and thus ultraviolet light can reach its surface. Laws of statistics favor the formation of complexity in a system receiving high-temperature radiation and re-radiating the energy at low temperature.

By the middle of September the oldest rocks on the earth's present surface have formed. From the beginning of October we have the first news about organisms: fossils of algae. The first vertebrate fossils date from December 16. On December 19 plants conquer the continents and fish form jaw-bones. On the 20th of December the land is covered with forests and the atmosphere becomes rich in oxygen. (Strong ultraviolet light is no longer desirable. More complexity is allowed with softer radiation!)

On the 22nd and 23rd, when our coal-beds are formed, amphibious quadrupeds originate from lung-fish and conquer the damp lands. From these reptiles evolve and settle on dry land on December 24th. Warm blood is invented on the 25th. Late in the evening of that day there are the first mammals, living beside the dinosaurs over the next two days. On the 27th birds form out of reptiles. On the 28th and 29th mammals and birds take over the power from the dragons. During the night before the 30th, formation of the Alps and other young mountain ranges begins.

Up to now, essentially all biological information is fixed in molecules of nucleic acid. On the 30th of December, storage in large protein structures — brains — begins to supplement genetic information. Learning becomes important. Soul and mind start evolving. In the night before December 31st the human twig shoots off the branch that leads to the present primates.

Now we have one day left to develop ourselves. With about twenty generations per second, this should be easy. But documentation is poor. Only after about ten in the evening we have the relics of the Olduvai Gorge. Five minutes before midnight the Neanderthal people thrive, with brains about as big as ours. Two minutes before twelve, we sit around the fire, shouting and clapping

our hands, paint deer and bison on the wall of our caves, and put weapons or honey and grain in our fathers' tombs.

History has been recorded in China and Egypt for fifteen seconds. At five seconds before twelve Jesus Christ is born. At one second before twelve the Christians start the extermination of the American civilizations.

Gong! Here we are in the new year. What will it bring?

It does not seem possible to find our ends in our origin. The origin was too simple. What matters is the front of evolution, here and now.

In our neighborhood, the time-scale of evolution has become shorter and shorter. Billions of years were needed for physical, chemical and biological selection, until that beautiful organism, the system of life, covered our planet. But a few million years were enough to create man, the latest blossom or organ of that organism. With this new organ, life changes its environment much faster and more radically than before. Technology incorporates more and more matter into the process of life. New and extremely complicated structures develop, such as libraries, or the art of the fugue.

Such structures are not in themselves reproductive, but self-reproduction and hence personal death has gained a new quality. Whereas the essence of plant or an insect lies in its genes and is reproducible, the essence of man is not. In spite of communication and publication, a great person or a loved one seems to take much more with him or her than is left behind. Human death appears as an irretrievable loss. We would like so much to have another world for our souls.

Can we renounce that wish and learn to love ourselves and each other as mortal parts of something unknown beyond us, evolving from us? Can we die in peace, even if we have no biological offspring and we can scarcely discover a trace of our own soul and mind in the world? Our traces *must* be there and must help shape the world, contributing a tiny bit, even after we have disappeared as physical entities. The laws of physics and biology are no longer dominating the fight at the front of evolution. The front has moved through the level of physics through chemistry and biology to technology and noology.

Further than that we can't see. But is there any reason to think that we are the end?

Yes, there is.

As at the last turn of a millennium, but now with far more justification, we may fear that the world's end is near. Within a few generations, science and technology have become rampant like a malignant tumor. Evolution rages toward a singular point in the history of the earth, a crisis that has never before occurred: its time-scale is becoming as short as the life-span of the individuals at its front. Our genetically and traditionally fixed abilities of adaptation, acquired in the course of several hundred thousand generations, will be inadequate or even fatal, if we change our world significantly during our lifetime.

It is not at all clear whether such a critical point can be overcome. As our line of life approaches it, complicated feedback mechanisms seem to force it nearer and nearer, more and more rapidly. With an approximately exponential expansion of population and technology, every finite space will be exhausted very soon. On the other hand, as we hit the walls (or rather our neighbors), socio-economic pressure grows and accelerates technological development even further. The psychological and sociological strain connected with the precipitation in time must coincide with the strains due to lack of space and resources.

Do we have time to find economic, social, and spiritual frames in which humankind can survive? Are we even searching in the right direction?

We certainly cannot learn from the past, for evolution was then sub-critical. The once-useful principles of evolution, our instincts and traditions, together with a degenerating technology, can now lead us only into turmoil and chaos, where we will dissipate all recent achievements of evolution.

Clearly, something new must happen. Evolution must circumvent the critical point by opening another path, bringing in some new laws of interaction. A new level must be climbed. And it is no longer "nature" that is responsible for evolution. It is *us*. We are the front of evolution. *We* have to do it.

Is this the hour of the conservative utopian? Can we reduce the speed of evolution by suppression? Is this, at last, the opportunity to establish the static, perfectly organized state? No! Confinement goes with rigidity. An ordered death is no better than the chaotic one we hope to avoid. And anyhow, a static solution would certainly be unstable and would quickly be driven to the critical point again.

So what we have to find seems to be a self-organization of humankind that provides for a steady non-catastrophic evolution under the conditions of restricted population and consumption. A main prerequisite will be that expansion takes place on a new level with far more diversity that economic, technological, and military competition can offer. Then the speed of evolution may become sub-critical without repression.

There are hints that our present consciousness is but a poor prelude of things to come. Not only great artists or intellectuals make me feel that way, but also the intriguing evidence of extrasensory perception or telepathic communication between minds. One may ask how much space and energy and how many individuals would be needed for further mental evolution. It seems that the earth with its share of solar energy and the present population should be sufficient. This might represent an almost infinite spiritual space, and enough land to live on as gardeners of the world. We could easily fulfill our needs by harvesting solar energy.

Why don't we jump over to that path right now? The problem is that man is still more of a hunter than a gardener. And he loves huge, dangerous machines that make him proud of his power over his progenitor, nature. The dinosaurs with their towers of protein had to vanish, but we are still proud of our infinitely simple concrete towers. Science and technology have brought us to the critical point too early. We want economic, not spiritual growth.

If we fail, it will start again, or be tried elsewhere. If we are alone in our galaxy, there are others. We can't see that far, and it isn't our task. We cannot envisage the essence of structure that will be at the front of evolution after us. We don't know ourselves yet. The world is open and undetermined. It has to be shaped by humanity. *We* have to find a way.

PERSONAL TIME MANAGEMENT: FIRST THINGS FIRST

by Stephen R. Covey

Stephen Covey is a former business professor and founder of the Covey Leadership Center. This is an extract from his best-selling book *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*. Habit 3 has to do with time management. Its title is “Put First Things First..”

Basically, we spend time in one of four ways.

As you can see from the matrix, the two factors that define an activity are *urgent* and *important*. *Urgent* means it requires immediate attention. Urgent matters are usually visible. They press on us; they insist on action. They’re often popular with others. And often they are pleasant, easy, fun to do. but so often they are unimportant!

Important activities have to do with results. If something is important, it contributes to your mission, your values, your high priority goals.

We *react* to urgent matters. Important matter that are not urgent require more initiative, more proactivity. We must *act* to seize the opportunity to make important things happen.

Look for a moment at the four quadrants in the time management matrix. Quadrant I is both urgent and important. We usually call the activities in Quadrant I “crises” or “problems.” We all have some Quadrant I activities in our lives. But Quadrant I consumes many people. They are crisis managers, problem-minded people, deadline-driven producers.

Some people are literally beaten up by problems all day every day. The only relief they have is in escaping to the not important, not urgent activities of Quadrant IV. So when you look at their lives, 90 percent of their time is in Quadrant I and most of the remaining 10 percent is in Quadrant IV, with only negligible attention paid to Quadrants II and III.

There are other people who spend a great deal of time in “urgent but not important” Quadrant III, thinking they’re in Quadrant I. They spend most of their time reacting to things that are urgent, assuming they are also

important. But reality is that the urgency of matters in Quadrant III is often based on the priorities and expectations of others. People who spend time almost exclusively in Quadrants III and IV basically lead irresponsible lives.

Effective people stay out of Quadrants III and IV because, urgent or not, they aren’t important. They also shrink Quadrant I down to size by spending more time in Quadrant II. Quadrant II is the heart of effective personal management. It deals with things like building relationships, writing a personal mission statement, long-range planning, exercising, preventive maintenance, preparation — all those things we know we need to do but somehow seldom get around to doing, because they aren’t urgent.

Effective people are not problem-minded, they’re opportunity-minded. They feed opportunities and starve problems. They think preventively. They have genuine Quadrant I crises and emergencies that require their immediate attention, but the number is comparatively

small, because they focus on the important, but not urgent, high leverage capacity-building activities of Quadrant II.

I once asked a group of shopping center managers, “If you were to do one thing that you know would have enormously positive effects on your work, what would it be?” Their unanimous response was to build helpful personal relationships with the tenants, the owners of the stores inside the shopping centers, which is a Quadrant II activity.

They were spending less than 5 percent of their time on that activity. They had good reasons — problems, one right after another. They had reports to make out, meetings to go to, phone calls to answer, constant interruptions. Quadrant I had consumed them. The only reason they visited the store managers at all was to collect the rent or discuss practices that were out of harmony with center guidelines, or some similar thing.

The owners determined their purpose, their values, their priorities. In harmony with those priorities, they decided to spend more time in helping relationships with the tenants. I saw them climb to around 20 percent, a fourfold increase. The effect was dramatic. The tenants were thrilled, the shopping center managers were more effective and satisfied, lease revenues went up and so did sales by the tenant stores.

The only place to get time for Quadrant II in the beginning is from Quadrants III and IV. You can’t ignore the urgent and important activities of Quadrant I, though it will shrink in size as you spend more time with prevention and preparation in Quadrant II. But the initial time for II has to come out of III and IV. To say “yes” to important Quadrant II priorities, you have to learn to say “no” to other activities.

Some time ago, my wife was invited to serve as chairman of a committee in a community endeavor. She felt pressured into it and finally agreed. Then she called one of her dear friends to ask if she would serve on her committee. Her friend listened and then said, “Sandra, that sounds like a wonderful project, a really worthy undertaking. I appreciate so much your inviting me to be a part of it. I feel honored by it. For a number of reasons, I won’t be participating myself, but I want you to know how much I appreciate your invitation.” Sandra turned to me and sighed, “I wish I’d said that.”

We say “yes” or “no” to things daily, usually many times a day. A center of correct principles and a focus on our personal mission empower us with wisdom to make those judgments effectively. If your priorities are deeply planted in your heart and in your mind, you will see Quadrant II as a natural, exciting place to invest your time.

It’s almost impossible to say “no” to the popularity of Quadrant III or to the pleasure of escape to Quadrant IV if you don’t have a bigger “yes” burning inside. Only when you have the self-awareness to examine your program — and the imagination and conscience to create a new, unique, principle-centered program to which you can say “yes” — only then will you have sufficient independent will power to say “no” to the unimportant with a genuine smile.

If Quadrant II activities are clearly the heart of effective personal management — the “first things” we need to put first — than how do we organize and execute around those things?

Not with notes and “to-do” lists. We can cross those off and feel a temporary sense of accomplishment every time we do, but no priority is attached to the items on the list. There is no correlation between what’s on the list and our ultimate purposes and values in life.

Not even with daily planning, organized around a clarified set of values and goals. Daily planning limits vision — it often misses things that can only be seen from a larger perspective. The very word “daily” focuses on the urgent, the “now.” And it lacks realism, creating the tendency to over-schedule the day, resulting in frustration and the desire to throw away the plan and escape to Quadrant IV. And an over-scheduled super-efficient day can strain relationships rather than build them.

So I suggest that you organize your time around the week. Organizing on a weekly basis provides much greater balance and context than daily planning. **The key is not to prioritize what’s on your schedule, but to schedule your priorities.** This can best be done in the context of the week. It involves four kinds of planning activities.

1. Identifying Roles. The first task is to write down your key roles. You have a role as an

individual. As a family member. You may have several roles in your work, including different areas in which you wish you invest time and energy on a regular basis. You may have roles in spiritual or community affairs. Here are two examples of the way people might list their various roles:

- | | |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Individual | 1. Personal development |
| 2. Spouse | 2. Spouse |
| 3. Parent | 3. Household manager |
| 4. Manager, new products | 4. Community service |
| 5. Manager, research | 5. Symphony board manager |
| 6. Manager, staff development | 6. Musician |
| 7. Chairman, United Way | |

2. Selecting Goals. The next step is to think of one or two important results you feel you should accomplish in each role during the next seven days. Ideally many of these goals should reflect Quadrant II activities.

3. Scheduling. Now you can look at the week ahead with your goals in mind and schedule time to achieve them. For example, if your goal is to produce the first draft of your personal mission statement, you may want to set aside a two-hour block of time on Sunday to work on it. You may want to schedule an hour several times a week for physical or spiritual exercise. Some goals you can only accomplish on Saturday, when your children are home, or only during business hours. Above all, be sure to schedule in Quadrant II activities like preventive maintenance, developing personal skills, maintaining human relationships. These are what will ultimately squeeze down the time you spend in Quadrant I.

You will probably find that with a whole week to work with, there will be significant unscheduled space on your schedule. That will give you the freedom and flexibility to handle unanticipated events, to shift appointments if you need to, to savor interactions with others, to deeply enjoy spontaneous experiences, knowing that you have proactively organized your week to accomplish key goals in every important area of

your life.

4. Daily Adapting. Taking a few minutes each morning to review your schedule can put you in touch with the value-based decisions you made as you organized your week, as well as unanticipated factors that may have come up. As you view the day, you can see that your roles and goals provide a natural prioritization that grows out of your innate sense of balance. It is a softer, more right-brain prioritization that ultimately comes out of your sense of personal mission.

As you go through your week, there will be times when your integrity will be placed on the line. The popu-

larity of reacting to the urgent but unimportant priorities of other people in Quadrant III, or the pleasure of escaping to Quadrant IV will threaten to overpower the important Quadrant II activities you have planned. Your principle center, your self-awareness, and your conscience can provide the security, guidance, and wisdom to empower you to use your independent will to stay in the truly important.

Because you aren't omniscient, you can't always know in advance what is truly important. As carefully as you organize the week, there will be times when you will need to subordinate your schedule to a higher value. Because you are principle-centered, you can do that with an inner sense of peace.

Once one of my sons had a very tight schedule, which included down-to-the-minute time allocations for every activity, which included, among other things, picking up some books, washing his car, and "dropping" his girlfriend Carol.

Everything went according to schedule until it came to Carol. They had been dating a long time, and he had finally decided that a continued relationship would not work out. He had scheduled a fifteen-minute phone call to tell her.

But the news was traumatic to her. One and a half hours later, he was still deeply involved in an intense conversation with her. Even that one talk was not enough.

You can't think efficiency with people. **You think effectiveness with people and efficiency with things.** I've tried to be "efficient" with a disagreeing or disagreeable person, and it simply doesn't work. I've tried to give ten minutes of "quality time" to a child or an employee, only to discover that such "efficiency" creates new problems and seldom resolves the deepest concern. I see many parents, particularly mothers, frustrated in their desire to accomplish a lot because all they seem to do is meet the needs of little children all day. Remember, frustration is a function of our expectations, and our expectations are often a reflection of the social mirror, rather than our own values and priorities.

JOBLESS, RUTHLESS, VOICELESS, ROOTLESS, FUTURELESS GROWTH

by Bishan Singh

The following is an extract from a paper presented by **Bishan Singh** to the Second Annual Sustainable Development Conference in Islamabad, Pakistan, in August 1996. It was reprinted in “Keeping in Touch,” the quarterly newsletter of MINSOC, the Management Institute for Social Change, 2114, 1st Floor, Jalan Merpati, 25300 Kuantan, Pahang Darul Makmur, Malaysia.

Human development is the end — economic growth the means. So the purpose of growth should be to enrich people’s lives. But far too often it does not. The recent decades show too clearly that there is no automatic link between growth and human development.

— UNDP Human Development Report 1996

The basic premise of the UNDP’s Human Development Report of 1996 is that economic growth is the means and human development the goal. It is people and not gross domestic product that matters. But in reality, we know, it is the other way around. Human development is the smoke screen behind which the economic aspirations of the vested interests are fulfilled.

Some of the key findings of the UNDP report are:

- Eighty nine countries are worse off today than they were ten years ago. In seventy developing countries, today’s levels of income are less than those reached in the 1960s or 1970s. In nineteen countries, including not only war-torn Haiti, Liberia, Nicaragua, Rwanda, and Sudan, but also such countries as Ghana and Venezuela, per capita income today is less than it was in 1960 or before.
- Between 1975 and 1985 global GNP grew by 40%, but this growth benefited a minority of countries. Over the same period the number of poor around the world increased by 17%.
- The very rich are getting richer. Today the assets of the world’s 358 billionaires exceed the combined annual incomes of countries accounting for 45% of the world’s people.
- Since 1980 15 countries, mainly Asia, have enjoyed spectacular economic growth at rates higher than any seen during two centuries of industrialization in the West — ranging from 3.5% a year in Malaysia to 8.2% in China and the Republic of Korea.

However, economic decline in other parts of the world has lasted far longer and gone deeper than the Great Depression of the 1930s.

- Unemployment affects 35 million people in the industrial world. In those countries, average unemployment rate was 8.6% in 1993 — ranging from 2.5% in Japan to 23% in Spain. In developing countries official unemployment statistics have limited meaning, but urban youth unemployment has been measured in Kenya at 29% and in Algeria at 21%.

“Policymakers are often mesmerized by the quantity of growth. They need to be more concerned with its quality and to take timely action to prevent growth that is lopsided and flawed,” says Richard Jolly, chief author of the UNDP report. The five types of growth he points out that give people less and not more are:

- *Jobless growth* where the overall economy grows, but does not expand opportunities for employment. In Ghana between 1986 and 1991 GDP grew by 4.8% but employment fell by more than 13%. Spain’s economy grew at the industrialized-country average of 2.4% per year from 1980 to 1993, but employment did not keep up. Its current unemployment rate is 23% — 40% among its youth.
- *Ruthless growth* where the fruits of economic growth mostly benefit the rich. Globalization is creating increasing polarization between the haves and the have-nots, be-

tween countries and within countries.

- *Voiceless growth* where economic growth is not matched by democracy or individual empowerment. “The debate over the choice between economic growth and social participation is dead,” says the Human Development Report. “People want both. But too many people are denied the most basic forms of democracy, and many of the world’s people are in the grip of repressive regimes.”
- *Rootless growth* where people’s cultural identity withers as economies grow. There are thought to be about 10,000 distinct cultures in the world, but many risk being marginalized or eliminated. “This can be dangerous,” warns the Report. “The violence in the former Soviet Union and the states of the former Yugoslavia is a tragic legacy of culturally repressive governance.”
- *Futureless growth* in which economic growth consumes its very foundation, squan-

dering resources needed by future generations. Environmental destruction is often masked by strong economic statistics, except in the poorest countries, where people are all too visibly pushed onto marginal lands, consuming forest for fuel and destroying farmland. Increasingly the costs of environmental degradation are being calculated by the UN and the World Bank to arrive at true economic worth. The costs of turning fertile land into desert are estimated to be \$9 billion a year in Africa alone, and \$42 billion a year globally.

The critical thing to note here is that when such views were expressed a decade ago, it was thought to be the expression of some disgruntled groups and individuals who had no idea whatsoever of economic development. Often such people were ridiculed. Today the UNDP Report moves this view from ridicule to recognition. It has finally given credit to the people-centered development approach advocated by many organizations in the civil society.

BELLAGIO PRINCIPLES ON INDICATORS OF SUSTAINABILITY

The Bellagio Principles were formulated at the Rockefeller Foundation's conference center in Bellagio, Italy in November 1996 by an international group of indicator researchers representing twenty nations. The document is still in draft, and will be preceded by a Preamble describing why, how, by whom and for whom sustainability assessment — including indicators of sustainable development — is recommended to be done. The principles are intended to be used by entities of all kinds (including national governments, community groups, NGOs, corporations and international institutions) engaged in developing assessments and indicators of sustainable development.

The following is a preliminary formulation of the consensus guidelines, as completed on November 8, 1996. It is a very early draft and comments from the Balaton Group are welcome. Please forward comments to Peter Hardi, Director of Measures and Indicators, International Institute for Sustainable Development, 161 Portage Ave. E., 6th Fl., Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada R3B 0Y4. (PHARDI@iisdpost.iisd.ca)

1. VISION AND GOALS

A sustainable development assessment process should be guided by an articulated vision of sustainable development and clear goals that define that vision.

2. HOLISTIC APPROACH

In performing an assessment of sustainable development:

- Look at the whole as well as the parts.
- Cover interactions among the parts. The assessment process should consider the well-being of human, ecological, and economic systems, the direction and rate of change in those systems, and their interlinkages.
- Cover positive and negative consequences of human activity. The indicators should reflect the full costs and benefits for human and ecological systems in monetary and non-monetary terms.

3. SCOPE OF MEASUREMENT

- Adopt a time frame long enough to capture human and ecosystem time scales.
- Define the space large enough to include all affected ecosystems and human systems.
- Anticipate future conditions: Where do we *want* to go? Where *could* we go?

4. ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS

- The assessment should include measures of equity and disparity both among current populations and between current and future generations, including measures of over- and underconsumption, human rights, and access to services, as appropriate.
- The assessment process should include measurement of the ecological conditions on which life depends.
- The assessment process should include measures of economic development and human well-being.

5. FOCUS

- It is often useful to develop an explicit set of categories, or organizing framework, that links vision and goals to measurement tools or indicators.
- Select a limited number of key issues for analysis.
- Consider assessing indicator values in terms of targets, goals, reference values, ranges, thresholds, or direction of trends.
- Standardize whenever possible to permit comparative assessment.
- Limit the number of indicators, or combine them, to provide a clearer signal of progress.

6. OPENNESS

- Make the methods and data used accessible to all.
- Make explicit all judgments, assumptions, interpretations, and uncertainty.

7. EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

- Design the assessment for its audience and users. Good indicators should stimulate interest and engagement.
- Plan for simplification from the outset.
- Document and express everything in clear and simple language.

8. PARTICIPATION

- Obtain broad representation of key social, professional, and technical groups to ensure recognition of diverse and changing values.
- Ensure decision-makers' participation so that the assessment will be linked to decision-making processes and resulting action.

9. INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY

- Assign responsibility and provide support for continuity in the assessment process.
- Provide institutional capacity for data collection, maintenance and documentation.
- Support development of local assessment capacity.

10. ONGOING ASSESSMENT

- Perform repeated measurements to determine trends.
- The assessment must be an iterative and adaptive process to reassess circumstances, recognize uncertainty, and respond to change.
- The assessment should promote collective learning and feedback mechanisms.
- Assessment simplifies a complex system that is constantly changing. Therefore, assessment can never be definitive. We need to recognize uncertainty and learn as we go along, by providing for feedback between action and assessment.

BOOK REVIEWS

The Systems Thinking Playbook, by Linda Booth-Sweeney and Dennis Meadows. (You can get information on purchasing this book directly from Dennis. Fax 603-862-4140. Email meadows@unh.edu.)

Over the past two years Dennis has been working with a number of colleagues to design simple games that can convey subtle insights into the structure and behavior of complex systems. One result of that effort is the four-day workshop on team-building for sustainable development that Dennis has created with several Balaton Group members with the sponsorship of the Sasakawa Peace Foundation. Another result is a one-day workshop “Games for Systems Thinking” that he created with Linda Booth-Sweeney, a colleague from MIT’s Organizational Learning Center.

Dennis and Linda have tested many games with decision-makers and educators from a variety of public and private organizations. From this experience they have identified the 20 best and present them in this nicely illustrated and clearly documented booklet. The games are easy to run, and effective. Most require no special equipment. They take from 60 seconds to 30 minutes. (Maybe longer if you take the time to talk through all their points about paradigms, communication, trust, time horizons, and system structure.)

For example, here is one of the simplest games, which Dennis illustrated for us at the last Balaton meeting. It is called 1-2-3-GO!

Step 1: Ask everyone to stand where they can see you, with about three feet of space between each other.

Step 2: Hold out your hands as if you were going to clap. Ask participants to hold out their hands the same way. Say, “Now I am going to count slowly to three and then say Go! and then everyone should clap their hands together.”

Step 3. Slowly and loudly count 1-2-3, then clap your hands together loudly, pause for one second, then

say “Go!” Almost everyone will clap with you, not waiting until you say “Go!” as they were instructed. Pause a moment and let everyone realize what happened.

Step 4. Repeat your instructions and try the exercise again. Don’t concentrate attention on those individuals who will still clap prematurely — they are usually quite embarrassed.

This exercise is not meant to promote deep learning as much as it is to provide a wake-up call to the brain. The message might be: “Stay alert! (Am I operating on automatic pilot? Have I made an assumption?” The exercise is so simple, yet so effective in many ways. It supports the aphorism “actions speak louder than words.” It emphasizes:

- the speed with which people often move from making assumptions to taking action,
- the importance of listening before acting when working in a team,
- the need to introduce a “space” between thought and action,
- the fact that behavior in a social system depends on more than what is being said. (When developing a system model, don’t just listen to what people say, watch what they do.)

This exercise can fall into the “gotcha” category and cause some participants to feel embarrassed or angry. This is not conducive to learning, so go lightly. Only go through two or three rounds, and laugh along with the group as they find themselves falling into the trap. With caution and a light touch, this simple exercise can help participants focus more attentively on what is being said during the rest of the time together.

Sustainable Industrialization, by David Wallace, 87 pages, published by Earthscan 1996, cost 11.95 UK pounds, ISBN 1 85383 340 1. (This book is published by the Brookings Institution in North America.)

Philip Sutton writes: I recently came across this book. I think it contains a very important idea on how sustainable economies can be triggered most rapidly globally . If you can spare the time I would recommend that you read the book. I have appended the executive summary, which follows:

Worldwide economic liberalization and consequent rapid industrialization will make the coming decades the most critical in the struggle for sustainable development. We have learned how to spread our technological consumer culture to the world's masses before we have learned to make that culture ecologically sustainable for the expected eight billion participants of the next century. I believe this can be done but that conventional political models for doing so are fundamentally flawed.

The Rio Earth Summit and subsequent treaties, programs and negotiations assume that technological fixes will be created and introduced in the advanced countries and then transferred to less developed countries, with financial assistance from the West where necessary. These funds have not been, and are unlikely to be forthcoming; the implicit 'follow-the-leader' mechanism misunderstands both the nature of the challenge and the nature of radical change in industrial organization.

Some governments and many companies in the West are attempting to define and implement sustainable economies and businesses, experimenting with national sustainability plans, life-cycle assessments and industrial ecology. However they face a long and difficult process of transformation, beset by deep social, economic and institutional barriers to the profound changes required. Western economies show no strong signs yet of becoming more sustainable, despite isolated and

sometimes impressive successes which have encouraged soothing but generally overstated talk of 'dematerialization' and 'ecologizing' economies.

Historically, profound change has occurred during rapid industrialization in countries where the economy has not yet matured. America's mass production principles could not have evolved in the mature craft-production society of the UK. Japan's lean production ideas could not have taken root in post-war America. Those developing countries where rapid industrialization is now beginning are the natural location for new principles of sustainable production to take root and evolve. New paths of industrialization can and must be the vehicle for sustainable development. Political will is required to make this happen.

As in the past, a new model of production must build on the best of existing ways of doing things. A rising tide of foreign direct investment is bringing leading-edge management and technologies to developing countries. Some developing countries have the leverage to steer this private investment towards creating a productive sector that is ecologically sustainable. National sustainability policies which - drawing on the best examples in the West - are coherent, long-term and credible have the potential to bring this about. Official development assistance could find an important supporting role and would increase its gearing through close association with larger private flows.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

New Book from David Satterthwaite

The Environment for Children: Understanding and Acting on the Environmental Hazards that Threaten Children and their Parents — by David Satterthwaite, Roger Hart, Caren Levy, Diana Mitlin, David Ross, Jac Smit and Carolyn Stephens, 302 pages, Earthscan, London, 1996. ISBN: 1-85383-326-6. It is distributed in North America by Island Press.

The Balaton Group's Roving (and Singing) Ambassador

Alan AtKisson writes: I've got some big news. In early 1997 I will be releasing three CDs of original songs, and beginning April 1 I'll be heading off on a one-year world tour.

The whole project is called "WORLD on a TIGHT-ROPE: A Global Music and Speaking Tour for Sustainability." It's designed to promote sustainability, and to support both the Balaton Group and local sustainability projects. Wherever I go, I intend to do benefit concerts to support local groups, as well as public talks and workshops. I'll also be collecting songs and stories about sustainability as I go.

I'll be taking a leave of absence from Redefining Progress, after having completed the design and development of both the National Indicators Program and a new Community Indicators Program. We've hired Hal Kane, formerly of Worldwatch Institute and co-author of the "Vital Signs" series, to replace me as head of the National Program. I'll be hiring a director for the Community Program in the coming months.

My consulting company is growing, and creating a record label. I already have most of the money I need — and all of the time. I have enough frequent flyer miles to go around the world twice. Friends and colleagues in both Seattle and San Francisco are offering help to organize logistics. This is all really happening!

So now I'm turning to you, with a request, and an offer.

The offer is, put me to use! I'd love to come to your home city or town, and offer a performance, or workshop, or both. To all the people who've said in the past, "I wish you could come to where I live and talk about indicators, or sing your songs, or do trainings ..." — well, now's your chance!

Put on a benefit concert, mixing me with local talent ... use the event to raise money for a local NGO or volunteer group ... try to get some media attention to your project ... put together a training for your friends and colleagues ... have me give a talk to a professional or business audience ... there are so many possibilities. Let's just use our imaginations, and the luxury of this

wonderful gift of **time**, to create something really exciting together and promote what we all care about.

The request is, help me make connections! Even if you can't see yourself organizing a benefit concert, surely there's somebody you know, in some NGO or volunteer group, who would be perfect for the job. Or maybe you have friends and colleagues in another city, who are also Balatoners in spirit. Please point me in their direction!

I have a vision of the Balaton Group becoming a self-sustaining foundation, giving grants to high-leverage, creative sustainability projects around the world. So I'll be dedicating a big part of whatever revenues I generate to the BG, to start making that vision a reality. I'm hoping to inspire a lot of other people to think this way, so that before too long, the BG will have the problem of too much money, instead of too little.

Here's my rough calendar: April-May, North America. June-Aug, Europe (with a side trip to Cuba and maybe Brazil). September, Africa (especially Kenya and South Africa). October-November, India and SE Asia. December-January, Australia/New Zealand. February-March, To Be Determined (East Asia or Latin America likely, depending on who wants me when).

Please let me know SOON if you would like me to try to include you in my itinerary. (Amazingly, some dates filled up before I even made my announcement.) And if you can make it to Seattle on the 1st of April, there's going to be a HUGE party!

Looking forward to hearing from you — and to seeing you, and to talking with you, and to singing with you!

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NEWS FROM THE MEMBERS

Alan AtKisson has been living and breathing sustainability indicators since the Balaton meeting. His program at Redefining Progress has received some significant grants to further this work on several levels.

On the national level Alan is advising the White House Interagency Working Group on Indicators of Sustainable Development, a Clinton-administration effort to coordinate government indicators. Alan has brought into that discussion ideas from his experience with Sustainable Seattle and from the workshop on indicators held by the Balaton Group last spring. A draft set of national indicators will be issued from the White House early in 1997.

On the corporate level, Alan convened a meeting in Washington in October on corporate assessment and monitoring of sustainability. Some companies, such as Monsanto, are actively seeking to develop for each of their product lines indicators of, for example, social impact and impact on biodiversity.

On the international level Alan attended the conference on sustainable indicators held by the International Institute of Sustainable Development (**Laszlo Pinter**) in Bellagio, Italy. The useful checklist on indicators produced by this group is reproduced in this *Bulletin*.

Alan brought together several indicator levels in November by convening 165 people working on indicators at the community, state, and national level in the U.S. These practitioners exchanged information, encouraged each other, started an important discussion about the integration of community-level and national-level indicators, and started what everyone hopes will be an ongoing network of people working on sustainability indicators. They also began to identify a common agenda for the indicator movement nationally, focusing on things like preserving federal data and raising the visibility of indicator work.

In another dimension entirely, Alan has been stopping in Boston every now and then to work with his sister, who is his production manager for recording two CDs of his songs — one contains his “sustainability songs” such as “Whole Lotta Shoppin Goin On” and “Parachuting Cats” and the “GDP Song” — the other containing his more serious ballads. Alan promises that

the recordings will be available to Balaton members very soon.

* * *

Stephen Boyden writes from Australia:

We have been receiving our copy of the *Bulletin* regularly, and it is much appreciated by myself and other members of the Nature and Society Forum (NSF). We have been especially interested in the discussion about indicators. We have a number of working groups focusing on different aspects of this theme.

The Forum continues to keep me very busy. There have been some interesting developments since last I wrote. We now have the use of some offices and meeting rooms provided by the Australian National University, and this makes an enormous difference to our viability. While we have several projects going fairly well and have received some external funding for them, our weakest area is general administration, for which we are unable to attract funds.

* * *

Milan Caha writes:

First of all the personal news. Our son Jakub was born 31 of December (exactly as planned). I was with my wife Monika all the time and it was the most touching experience and a great gift for me to be with her in such a magic moment. Both Monika and Jakub are OK, the boy is doing well, he is the most noisy child in the hospital and all the time hungry.

And the less interesting news:

We have published a book “Simulation Games and Education for Sustainable Development” in Czech. Part of the publication is the translation and adaptation of games used in our team-building workshop, other parts are original games developed by the co-authors of the publication.

We ran an interesting series of FishBank sessions in December, invited by the local government from the small town of Roztoky near Prague. We ran sessions for all 8 - 9 graders (age 13 - 15) from all schools in the

town. It was done in 5 days. I think this town is now the best FishBanks educated one in the world!

Pavla Polechova is working hard on the Czech version of the team building workshop. She ran two very successful sessions at a major teachers' gathering, and as a result has been invited to run a 3-day teambuilding program for an intact team from one school and has been asked to run workshops in many places all around the Czech Republic.

* * *

Joan Davis is busy in normal fashion lecturing on environmental issues at the Swiss Federal Technical University (ETH) and the University of Basel and the University of Zurich, monitoring water quality in Switzerland for the Federal Institute on Environmental Science and Technology (EAWAG), and participating in several European environmental networks (such as Ecoropa of which she is the recently elected president). She recently hosted a visit by **Amory Lovins** to lecture on the new book *Faktor Vier (Factor Four)*, written with **Hunter Lovins** and Ernst von Weiszacker. The book, full of concrete examples of how energy and other throughputs could be reduced by a factor of four in industrial society, is a best-seller in German. An English version, co-written with Paul Hawken, is in press.

Joan is also working with several members of the Balaton Group (**Wouter Biesiot, Hartmut Bossel, Masayo Hasegawa, Anupam Saraph**) and Swiss colleagues to develop a "user-friendlier" version of the Balaton Group's sustainable development game STRATAGEM. She is building on the interface developed by **Wouter Biesiot** for his students in Holland, an interface that helps get the game's participants up and running faster in the simulation and understanding it better. She is looking for EU seed money to get the game translated and available in all the main European languages.

* * *

A quick note from **Bert de Vries**:

Jan Rotmans and I are finishing the book on the TARGETS project. I received **Hartmut Bossel's** Vision 20/20 report - a great piece of work; I promised Hartmut to send him some comments soon. In April I

will visit China, to work with, among others, **Qi Wenhui**. This work will be embedded in the 2nd Global Environmental Outlook (the first GEO-report is due for publication by UNEP this month) and in the IMAGE-project.

* * *

Email from **Faye Duchin**:

My news is that I have been in Troy, NY, since September as Dean of the School of the Humanities and Social Sciences (H&SS) at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute. I was fortunate to be able to bring with me Dean Button, whom many of our friends and colleagues know from his former role in the International Society for Ecological Economics. In the past Rensselaer has been known mainly for its excellent School of Engineering. My mandate is to create compelling new programs about the societal context for technological development for both engineering students and, increasingly, for our own majors and graduate students. For example, we are offering the first-ever Ph.D. in Ecological Economics within an economics department; an innovative program in Electronic Media, Arts and Communication; and a new program in Mind and Machines.

I hesitated to move into an administrative position but felt (and still feel) that the nature of this particular challenge was more one of vision than of administration. Just before making the move, I completed a manuscript called "Household Lifestyles: the Social Dimension of Structural Economics." After studying technological change for 2 decades, I was led by my work on the environment to recognize the primacy of lifestyle decisions and the small amount of conscious reflection accorded to them. I hope the book can help open up this area to more systematic investigation and fruitful action and that my school may be able to make a particular contribution in conveying this perspective to the next generation.

* * *

Joan DuToit reports that South Africa's National Energy Summit (to which she went right after last year's steering committee meeting) resulted in a final white paper recommending national energy policy as derived from a widespread national-level discussion. The white paper is being circulated now — it's the first time South

Africa has had an energy policy in print. (It says a lot about equity and efficiency and environmental sustainability, says Joan.)

Joan has just finished, with some relief, the annual report on energy futures that the Institute on Futures Research puts out every year for South Africa. And an article on energy in Africa for a children's encyclopedia. And a consultation with the national electricity utility on investment choices for future production capacity.

She also was part of a delegation of three chosen by South Africa's Department of Minerals and Energy to participate in a two-week visit to Washington DC last June. While there, she visited the Energy Information Administration of the US Department of Energy, the Worldwatch Institute, the World Resources Institute, and the American Council for an Energy Efficient Future. She was very impressed by the sophistication of the energy gathering and processing system.

* * *

Tom Fiddaman is seeing some light at the end of the tunnel:

I've spent most of the last two years at MIT working on integrated climate change-economy models. By replicating some of the most influential models (such as the one by Nordhaus), I've come to know their weaknesses intimately - and there are many. For my dissertation, I've constructed a model that embodies a number of alternative assumptions, but still maintains a bridge to the neoclassical economic models. The major finding is (not surprisingly) that "do nothing and wait for more information" is not a robust strategy.

In a month or two, my dissertation work will come to a close, and I'll be moving on to points unknown. Wherever I end up, I'll be teaching system dynamics and supporting research on energy and environment issues. It will be hard to leave the fountainhead of system dynamics at MIT, but I'm sure the world will be better off without my 60-mile commute! Hopefully, I'll be opening a Balaton Hotel wherever I settle.

* * *

Ashok Gadgil is still pioneering the purification of water with UV light (at great energy savings):

I have been working hard on getting the UV Waterworks up and running in the real world. Two companies (one in California the other in Bombay) are gearing up to get it into production this year. After winning the Discover Award for the best environmental technology in June 96, we also won the Popular Science award for "Best of What's New - 1996," and a bit of press attention on CNN, the Discovery channel, NBC, etc.

The current pressure is to get a field trial of the UV Waterworks up and running in South Africa. At long last US Dept of Energy has funded us partially for the first year of the effort, so we are making progress on this work too.

I now have about a hundred people to whom I forward **Dana's** column each week. It is strange to see how a community forms around shared ideas!

Other than the UV Waterworks (for more information check out the web site at <http://eande.lbl.gov/CBS/archive/uv/>), I expect to spend several weeks in India this year and next advising the largest bank in India (the IDBI) on improving their procedures for making loans for energy efficiency and environmental management. I will also work on strengthening the nexus between US and international insurance industry and energy efficiency work (the insurance industry is interested in "loss reduction" which has sparked their interest in environmental sustainability and global climate change and energy efficiency!!)

* * *

Herbie Girardet says:

My news is that I spent all last year working on urban sustainability issues. I was asked by Habitat II to do a special updated version of the *Gaia Atlas of Cities* as well as co-authoring a new book called *Making Cities Work* and doing a film on 'urban best practice.' I have since co-authored a report called "Creating a Sustainable London" and am working on similar projects for Bristol and Vienna. I have been doing much freelance lecturing, writing and consulting. I am just starting work on a new international edition of *Earthrise* for Wesley

Addisson Longman. I have been happy spending much of my time in the garden in the last three weeks getting ready for growing our vegetables when the winter ends.

A serene and joyful 1997 to all Balatoners.

* * *

Marie Haisova reports from Prague:

Last year's Balaton meeting inspired me to organize an international seminar about the consumer way of life and what to do with it, how to solve this problem?

We will look for the answers to these questions on March 21.-23rd, 1997 in Prague. The topics will be:

Who governs the world? with **Freda Meissner Blau** as the main speaker.

The Women's Environmental Network from Great Britain will teach us how to increase environmental awareness of consumers, how to organize campaigns and how to have an environmentally friendly home.

The Permaculture Association of The New Economics Foundation from Great Britain will tell us about alternative economics and permaculture as a way to create a sustainable way of life.

We will have educational programs for public in the supermarket (with a press conference), and a huge exhibition from Germany about cars as the symbol of power of our century.

1996 year was a successful year for our Green Circle.

1. We planted the first trees in the middle of Prague. We inspired the Prague Municipality to have a special grant program for this kind of activities.
2. We analyzed the political parties' approach to the environment and published a book "Who is the prettiest?"
3. We organized a women's international conference with the topic "Women in politics and public life."

At this time we are concentrating much more on the informational and legal center of green activities.

* * *

Dmitri Kavtaradze has news on several fronts:

The International University (**Gennady Yagodin, Dmitri Kavtaradze**) continues to work on the Environmental Program with undergraduates. The main idea is to give birth to a new specialty — organizers of outdoor environmental activity in public schools. The first 23 students are now "armed" with environmental monitoring and simulation game methods. Yagodin is giving lectures on sustainable development, Kavtaradze on simulation and games.

ISAR (Institute of Soviet (Russian)-American Relations) and US AID organized hearings in December '96 on the coming to Russia of a multimillion-dollar project on environmental issues. At the meeting it was possible to understand that the policy of choosing "right guys" and sponsoring them was not clear or systematic, but rather occasional and choosing the less prepared among applicants. Maybe it is a good cultural practice to help beginners while strong professionals are quitting work? Maybe it is deep wisdom to avoid professional applications, to help NGOs to grow and develop? I guess that my experience is still not enough to decide what is good and what is bad.

In the fall I passed my manual "Education and Games" (170 pages with 30 pictures) to the New-Russian Publishing house. In one week I was asked to rewrite it in a way that a "middle level teacher" can use. I was sad, furious, rejecting the idea. Later I caught myself thinking that probably I am truly unable (and for sure strongly against) to simplify complex gaming methods. My students read the manuscript and found that it is difficult. I made edits and decided to publish one of the chapters in the professional magazine "Biology in School."

Very slowly the Russian Ministry of Roads (which was reorganized twice in two years) is digesting the idea of landscape defragmentation and accepting biotic conditions as indicators of environment quality near highways. At the All Russia conference on "Ecology of Auto Roads" (December '96) our (biological faculty Moscow State University) report on what is happening with herbs, vitamins, earthworms, grain quality, fungi melanin, mice and bees beside roads. Our report was as alone as a polar bear on a Boston street. The Dutch video "Badgers

on the safe way” was helpful in connecting ecological details of badgers’ biology and environmental road engineering. We plan to continue participation in the IENE program of European specialists on the environmental impact of roads, railroads, canals and other constructions that cause landscape fragmentation.

This year the World Bank starts a \$26 million project in Russia on biodiversity conservation. The hearings in February ’97 in Moscow and in Ulan-Ude (near Lake Baikal) could be a benchmark in recognizing the philosophy and tactics of this universal issue. The hearings will be governed by the World Bank and the Russian Committee on Ecology. (Since August ’96 we have no more Ministry of Environment, but a “Committee” — one step lower in the government structure. The technical report of the World bank (Report N 15064-RU) consists of a lot of details, plans, numbers and strategic thoughts and maps. Unfortunately there is no single scheme for biodiversity management, not even a determination of what sort of multidisciplinary problem we face. The main efforts are concentrated on the old good system of nature reserves, supporting them by giving equipment and accounting for the value of biological resources. I hope to take part in the hearings.

On 3-5 December ’96 we had in Moscow an All Russia Conference on “Environmental Psychology” that brought together 250 scientists and practitioners from schools and the Miami Marine Center (Russian instructors!) to military psychologists and mass media experts. We organized a section on “Games, simulation milieu, and environment education” to support plans of uniting the efforts of psychologists, environmentalist and educators. We heard at the conference detailed analyses of Russian mass-media brain-washing activity and of the psychological battle trauma of Russian soldiers in local conflicts and the Chechnya war. This report confirms that normal humans are deeply damaged during war activity, even if they are not wounded or taken as hostages.

Best wishes and thanks for the *Bulletin* reports that are always original and “well packed.” The *Bulletin* is very helpful in my lectures and understanding things around me. The discussions of endocrine disruptors and *Our Stolen Future* were absolute news to me and to our biological students.

* * *

Tjamei Lawrence writes from Papua New Guinea:

I have resigned from the Wau Ecology Institute to start a small business for my family in Manus Province. It is a trading service to assist locals to sell their produce. I am also setting up an alternative use of forest products to get people to conserve their forests, rather than log them for quick money.

My new address is:
Tjamei Lawrence
P.O. Box 449
Lorengau
Manus Province 641
Papua New Guinea

* * *

Zoltan Lontay now has 20 people working in his group in Budapest (17 engineers, 2 economists — he didn’t say what the other one was) proving that energy efficiency can be a self-financing, profit-making activity in a free market. Among their many projects are:

- The establishment and ongoing technical support of Hungary’s first Energy Efficiency Agency, founded by four cooperating federal agencies.
- A national awareness program, featuring twenty 5-10-minute TV spots about the “energy alphabet.” (“A is for windows” — in Hungarian.)
- A network of energy advice centers for consumers and a mechanism to provide financing for consumer-level efficiency improvements.
- Technical demonstrations, such as a new cogenerating plant for the Technical University that will supply 1/3 of the university’s energy consumption with 80% efficiency.
- Upgrading of the efficiency of public buildings in two cities.
- Consulting for the food industry on efficient cooling systems.
- Training energy managers — a program they attend for 3 days a week for 6 months, after

which they are certified.

- A study on the externalized costs of energy use (assisted by **Ashok Gadgil**). For example, the study shows that imported energy actually costs Hungary \$1.4 per \$1 of imports, because of the costs of export promotion to raise the international currency.
- A study for UNEP on greenhouse gas abatement possibilities.
- An EU project on the potential for heat pumps.
- Technical advice for various loan programs (from banks, the EBRD, and an EU revolving fund) for energy efficiency.
- An attempt to work with Hungary's electricity regulation authority to encourage it to require demand-side management. (All of Hungary's utilities are now owned by foreign companies that are uninterested in demand side management.)

* * *

John Peet will be taking a Balaton sabbatical:

I've been granted a year's Sabbatical Leave from the middle of next year. I plan to spend the first couple of months (July and August) with **Hartmut Bossel**, then go to Balaton of course (with Katherine, this time!), and then there's the Civicus conference in Budapest at the end of September. After that I hope to spend some time in the Copenhagen area, before going down via the Netherlands to France for a while. All in pursuit of ecological economics etc. I will be in Europe for about 5 months, then come back to New Zealand where I'll spend the remaining time pulling the threads together - hopefully into a rope that will hold up a sustainability policy for NZ. I still have a lot of organizing to do, and will be in touch when plans are firmed up.

* * *

Laszlo Pinter reports:

In November IISD brought together a small group of renowned measurement experts and enthusiasts for a workshop in Bellagio, Italy to come to a consensus on the most important principles for performance measure-

ment on activities leading to sustainable development. Despite our doubts to the contrary after the first day's session, consensus was indeed reached, and now we have the principles, or "practical guidelines for assessment" as we decided to call them in a subtitle (See the list elsewhere in this *Bulletin*). In order to maximize their impact, we are currently compiling ten case studies from around the world to illustrate every principle. The principles will be published by February, a longer report that will also include the case studies will be ready by the middle of this year.

I would also like to share with you information about a rare literary treasure that I had some time to read during the holiday season. The author is Bela Hamvas, a thinker-writer-philosopher who lived most of his life in Hungary. He died more than twenty years ago after a career that started with philology but soon turned into persecution by the regime of the day, which continued until the last day of his life. A literary giant producing many volumes, Hamvas was denied the opportunity of publication after W.W.II. His attention spans "the spiritual legacy of archaic humankind" — the Greeks, Orientals and Europeans, in the tradition of Jacob von Burckhardt, Nietzsche, Goethe and others — but as "a son of the Universe" living in the second half of the 20th Century, Hamvas defines the position of this age, both in its details and in its entirety with a depth and clarity attempted by the fewest. His first book was released in the late eighties in Hungarian, and translations into English and other languages are starting to appear today. I recommend any of Hamvas' works for Balaton friends without reservation. Not having any hope of being published, and indeed not seeking it, he still wrote because he thought that saying a word or thinking a thought was an act of creation, whether it gets heard and printed or not. My impression is that if Hamvas could hope to write for readers at all, he wrote for people like us.

* * *

Dana Meadows has been teaching environmental ethics at Dartmouth and organizing a new institute, called the Sustainability Institute, to do sustainability-related analysis, teaching, writing, and consulting on all levels, local to global. The Institute will operate from the new eco-community she and others are planning, to be located, she hopes, in Vermont.

* * *

Dennis Meadows proudly announces that he has recently stayed home for six weeks in a row — “my longest uninterrupted stretch of concentration in a long time.” (He has recently run all or parts of the seminar, “Creating High Performance Teams for Sustainable Development,” in Bonn, Bergen, Groningen, and Monterrey, Mexico.) The Sasakawa team-building project he is leading, along with many other Balaton members, will soon have its last official workshop in Costa Rica. **Enrique Campos Lopez**, a participant in the first few BG meetings, officially inaugurated his 100 acre campus for teambuilding January 8. He has already organized three full sessions of the Sasakawa workshop.

Plans are to try to raise money for keeping various national teams going separately, rather than funding the whole six-nation effort from one source.

Dennis is building a major addition to his Brown Center building, which will include “wonderful visitor space” for visiting Balaton Group members. One of the first to take advantage of it will be **Tom Ryan** from Capetown, who will be visiting in May and June.

* * *

From **Carlos Quesada**:

First of all, I wish you an all Balatoners a happy and rewarding New Year.

I have to say that this past quarter has been a busy and fulfilling one for the Research Center for Sustainable Development (CIEDES) of the University of Costa Rica. Despite the severe budget limitations of the University, we have managed, mostly by our own means, to keep expanding in equipment, information, publications, the number of short courses, and people linked to the Center.

We have been establishing good international links and we are getting good recognition for the work we do, particularly in remote sensing and geographic information systems dealing with deforestation, land use changes and watershed evaluation and management. The team building component, as part of the group that **Dennis** started, although at a slower pace than I would like, keeps moving forward, and we are planning another workshop with Dennis’s participation for the middle of

the coming March, and I hope to focus more on this direction this year.

Our Center was the co-organizer of the third Meeting of the International Network of Green Planners whose headquarters are based in the Netherlands. Although it was a huge responsibility to be both the host and co-chair of the meeting, the success of it was well worth the effort, thanks to the collaboration of many people who helped in many ways. Practically the whole meeting was organized around working groups rather than speeches. The power of collective thinking and action proved successful. We also had valuable cultural activities and a visit to the rain forest Tramway.

Our Center also participated and helped in the third Panamerican Congress of Environmental Engineering, hosted also by the University of Costa Rica, under the leadership of the Chemical Engineering School.

I have been quite active in organizing round tables and lecturing on globalization issues. The contact with the International Forum on Globalization, which has fed me a great deal of information, has been most valuable.

Also, I have been quite involved on the peace and sustainable development initiatives related to the Millennium Initiative which have been promoted for several years by the Millennium Institute. As part of that, we had a small but rewarding meeting in Ottawa, Canada, sponsored by the IDRC, and a very stimulating Congress on Sustainable Development held in Iceland, organized by the former Prime Minister Steingrimur Hermansson.

Based on many ideas developed by the Sasakawa Team Building Group, I was able to innovate in the engineering course I taught last semester. The aim was better learning through cooperation rather than competition. Through eight teams the students were able to work, relate, discover and prepare reports on natural disasters in Costa Rica in the four geographical regions in which the country is conveniently divided. It was a learning process for all of us, and I enjoyed moving from less teaching to more listening and learning.

Last but not least, was the follow up of the interesting discussions about time going on in the Balaton group, and as always, getting inspired by **Dana’s** column. I regretted I could not be part of the discussions

but I hope that by not “going so fast” and by getting better in defining priorities I may be able to also contribute to the debates.

* * *

Aromar Revi's group in India has been:

- developing new analytical tools for depicting urban metabolism, keeping data bases on infrastructure, and planning environmental services.
- producing a report on the structural impacts of a cyclone in Eastern India.
- working on risk assessment, siting, and planning requests associated with the privatization of the electricity sector.
- redefining indicators of environment and health for the tropics.

In January the “Shola Fellowship,” India's answer to the Balaton Group, will be holding its second meeting.

In his spare time Aro has been taking his final exams for his law degree.

* * *

Gyula Simonyi tells us that there is now a “semi-*Balaton Bulletin*” in Hungarian:

I have started a Hungarian review of English (and German) alternative magazines and newsletters for the movement and media in Hungary and for Hungarian-speakers in the neighboring countries. It is free by e-mail.

Its name is ‘BOCS Fordito’ (translation: service of BOCS Foundation), and those of you who can read Hungarian, can read it on our Homepage: <http://www.rec.hu/bocs>

We could already enjoy some parts of the *Bulletin* in the “Gaia Press Review” of Lajos Gyorgy. From now more parts of the *Bulletin* and also public articles (such as those written by **Dana Meadows**) that come on the Balaton listserver, can be available in Hungarian.

The work of Balaton Group is so important and marvelous, that it is really worthy and joyful to be able to share its news.

* * *

Chirapol Sintunawa was recently honored by the King of Thailand as “environmental man of the year.” There was a three-hour ceremony at the palace to mark the occasion (which also included “men of the year” in other categories), and later there will also be a dinner with the Prime Minister. To add to the accolades, Chirapol's organization ADEQ was named by the Thai Ministry of Science “the most distinguished NGO on the environment.”

In addition to advising the Thai Parliament, Chirapol has also been appointed an advisor to the National Energy Policy Office on the subject of public education about energy. “To broaden the vision” of the Ministry, Chirapol recently escorted a delegation of its staff to the United States to see energy-efficiency projects at the Sacramento Municipal Utility District, Pacific Gas and Electric, Rocky Mountain Institute, and other notable places.

Chirapol's six-*rice-barge* floating exhibit on energy efficiency is currently docked at one of the royal palaces, awaiting financing to keep it going for another year. Chirapol says that this project (and its land-based equivalent, which moves on trucks) is now so well known nationwide that people queue up in long lines to visit the exhibition.

* * *

STORIES, QUOTES, JOKES

*Time exists so that everything doesn't happen at once.
Space exists so that everything doesn't happen to you.*
poster on **Joan Davis's** office wall

Haste makes waste.
old English saying, with great implications for sustainability

Waste makes haste.
Joan Davis — “we have been wasting so much that now we'd better hurry up and do something about it.”

Slow Food

The brochure says, “Slow Food — an International Movement for the Defense of and the Right to Pleasure.” The logo is a beautiful snail.

“The Slow Food Manifesto, approved of in Paris in 1989 during the Founding Congress of this international movement is the theoretical milestone of our association, now gathering members in over 30 countries. Currently almost 50,000 people all over the world make up our ‘slow army,’ which merrily struggles to affirm slow life values, to inform and education the consumer, to highlight quality products, to spur the development of a careful, environment-friendly kind of tourism, to ensure for everybody the right to pleasure.”

The Slow Food organization puts out a magazine called *Slow*, which deals with food and wine traditions in various countries, the history and culture of food, and major international events regarding wine and food. It sets up in many countries groups called *convivia* that organize projects on a local basis. Each convivium selects hotels, restaurants, and shops that are consistent with the ideals of the movement and publishes guidebooks to help tourists find them. They also support international projects in solidarity — such as contributions to a hospital canteen in the Amazon and providing food for the children of a school in Sarajevo.

This is not a joke. If you'd like more information about Slow Food, the international office is at:
Via della Mendicita Istruita 14,
12042 Bra (CN) ITALY
Tel. 39-172-411-273, Fax 39-172-421-293,
email slow.food@areacom.it.

*The discipline of the writer is to learn to be still and listen to what her subject has to tell her...
Don't set up an impossible time schedule.... The important thing is to get underway, to see it
growing and developing in its own way at its own pace, but always going on.*

— Rachel Carson

Now never seems to be the right time to act. Since now is the only time you have in reality, and now will never seem to be the right time to act, one may as well act now. Even though it isn't the right time, given that the right time will never come, acting now is, at the least, powerful (even if you don't get to be right). Most people wait for the decisive moment, whereas people of power are decisive in the moment.

—Werner Erhard

Monks in Overdrive

(This article appeared in the *National Catholic Reporter*, September 6, 1996. It is also not a joke.)

The monastic life of prayer, contemplative reading, and simple work has been a remarkably hardy specimen of social organization. It has lasted nearly two millennia, survived the fall of several empires, broken wave after wave of invading barbaric thugs, turned hatchetmen into Holy Roman emperors, preserved learning through the Dark Ages, and given witness in the teeth of the French Revolution, the industrial revolution, and sundry Marxist revolutions.

But it may at last have met its match.

Work, American style, is destroying Benedictine monastic life.

In ancient times the Benedictines were able to support themselves by farming and by producing simple but high-quality products, like Benedictine brandy. But today the monks and nuns must earn their keep by operating schools and by working outside the monasteries in various academic, government, and ecclesiastical jobs, leaving them with as little time and energy for contemplation as the rest of us seem to have. As Father Terrence Kardong of Assumption Abbey in Richardton, North Dakota, says, “The institutions we work for no longer are satisfied with part of our time and interest: They now want our souls.”

Although the Benedictines aren't the only people to feel that work is consuming too much of their lives, they have a clearer sense than most of us what the balance should be — and just how far out of balance contemporary life is. The Rule of St. Benedict divided the day into periods of work, community prayer, and *lectio divina*, a deeply contemplative reading of scriptures. Ideally three or four hours were allotted to each.

A few communities, like the Monastery of Christ in the Desert, which designs Web pages from its remote location in New Mexico, can manage to live away from the world and survive, but otherwise there is nothing particularly monastic about the monastic life these days. “Monastics have become workaholics, always rushing around. I don't think our life is any different from any else's,” says Father Timothy Joyce of Glastonbury Abbey in Hingham, Massachusetts.

For Benedictines past and present, as for us all, how hard we work may have to do with what kind of life we truly want to lead. “You have an option of being shaped by culture or trying to follow your calling,” says Father Kardong. “Our calling is not to be tossed around by the storms of culture. We can decide our lifestyle. But how poor do we want to be?”

I wanted my work at the head of the country to finally achieve some visible, tangible, undeniable result. It was hard for me to resign myself to the idea that politics, like history, is an endless process. Today, looking back, I'm beginning to understand that I was succumbing to that form of impatience, so destructive in modern technocratic civilization with all its rationality, that is wrongly persuaded that the world is nothing but a crossword puzzle in which there is only a single correct solution to the problem: a solution I felt I alone could find.

I thought time belonged to me. This was a great error. The world and history are ruled by a time of their own, in which we can creatively intervene but never achieve complete control....

I realize with fright that my impatience for the re-establishment of democracy had something almost communist in it; or, more generally, something rationalist. I had wanted to make history move ahead in the same way that a child pulls on a plant to make it grow more quickly.

I believe we must learn to wait as we learn to create. We have to patiently sow the seeds, assiduously water the earth where they are sown and give the plants the time that is their own. One cannot fool a plant any more than one can fool history. But one can water it. Patiently, every day. With understanding, with humility, but also with love.

—Vaclav Havel, from a speech to the Institute of France,
quoted in the *International Herald Tribune*,
November 13, 1992, p. 7.

We know through painful experience that freedom is never voluntarily given by the oppressor; it must be demanded by the oppressed. Frankly, I have never yet engaged in a direct action movement that was "well timed" according to the timetable of those who have not suffered unduly from the disease of segregation. For years now I have heard the word "Wait!" It rings in the ear of every Negro with a piercing familiarity. This "Wait" has almost always meant "Never."

I must confess that over the last few years I have been gravely disappointed with the white moderate. I have almost reached the regrettable conclusion that the Negro's greatest stumbling block in the stride toward freedom is not the White Citizen's Councilor or the Ku Klux Klanner, but the white moderate who is more devoted to "order" than to justice; who prefers a negative peace which is the absence of tension to a positive peace which is the presence of justice; who constantly stays "I agree with you in the goal you seek, but I can't agree with your methods of direct action"; who paternalistically feels that he can set the timetable for another man's freedom.... Shallow understanding from people of goodwill is more frustrating than absolute misunderstanding from people of ill will.

We will have to repent in this generation not merely for the vitriolic words and actions of the bad people, but for the appalling silence of the good people. We must come to see that human progress never rolls on wheels of inevitability. It comes through the tireless efforts and persistent work of men willing to be co-workers with God, and without this hard work time itself becomes an ally of the forces of social stagnation.

— Martin Luther King, from "Letter From Birmingham City Jail," April 12, 1963.

The future is the home of what remains to be done, the home of a multiplicity of possibilities for which we are responsible. It is the home of freedom. Between the closed past and the open future, the present is the time of decision — the time of humanity.

—R. Garaudy, *L'Alternative*, 1972, cited in *Innovation et changement culturel*, Bassand et al., 1989

*Are we too lazy or are we too rich to
sew one bead at a time?*

— Nez Perce woman (American Indian)

Born often under another sky, placed in the middle of an always moving scene, himself driven by the irresistible torrent which draws all about him, the American has no time to tie himself to anything, he grows accustomed only to change, and ends by regarding it as the natural state of man. He feels the need of it, more, he loves it; for the instability, instead of meaning disaster to him, seems to give birth only to miracles all about him.

—Alexis de Toqueville, *Diary*.

*Yesterday is history.
Tomorrow is mystery.
Today is a gift.
That's why we call it "the Present."*

- anonymous