

INSIGHT



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Thoughts on Community

First, Build a Great Community; Prosperity Will Follow

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Perhaps no idea or word other than *Community* has been so muddled or borrowed by so many and used to present such diverse opinions. Writers, televangelists, politicians and promoters of special interests have adopted the word usually in a context of us vs. them paradigms or some similar value-based inclusive/exclusive models. Definitions of community likewise cover a broad surface, ranging from simple concordance on loosely associated beliefs or attitudes to highly interdependent networks, neighborhoods and relationships.

Community is the stuff of emotions, attachments and actions. The degree to which we are willing to defend the associations we call community may be an effective measure of their strength. Today much is said about the electronic community – the Internet community. Yet

few of us may be willing to commit much energy or personal resources to enhance that “community.” If we adopt the ideal of a community to be those relationships where people care about one another and are mutually interdependent on numerous levels, then many groups or activities billed as “community” become what they really are – special interest groups.

I believe community involves place, history, shared vision, acknowledged common ground and a commitment to a future. Community does not achieve members’ consent to that status without civic and civil debate. Rather, a strong community provokes attachment and commitment of its members who debate routinely and without rancor what makes up a desired future

**Robert
Becker**



concerned about the absence of debate in our civic arena. Speaking to this, Christopher Lasch wrote, “it is the decline of those communities, more than anything else, that calls the future of democracy into question.”

The Strom Thurmond Institute is extensively involved in COMMUNITY and ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT. We are often asked to assist with community development issues for specific towns or places. While the city leaders’ first interest is usually around economic enhancement, we usually find the required first step is strengthening COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT. So we begin with the idea that – **FIRST, WE WILL BUILD A GREAT COMMUNITY - IF WE DO, WE BELIEVE ECONOMIC PROSPERITY WILL FOLLOW - BUT FIRST WE WILL BUILD A GREAT COMMUNITY.**

While there may be many paths to building a great community, and we always recite the mantra of no quick fix, I have found successful community development has three principle elements:

1. Diverse participation - not just coming to meetings but doing something, and more than just the same old crowd in attendance.
2. Development of COMMON GROUND - and believing that what brings us together is at least as strong as our differences.
3. Success on short term, community identity projects. - A GOOD FIRST STEP.

Strategies also differ by the economic life cycle of the community. By that I mean whether we are experiencing a boom, bust or stagnant economy. But, at the root of building great community is lots of people coming together to do something for the common good.

Historical preservation economist, Donovan Rypkema summarized this nicely: “Once understood in this context, many things make sense. Our deeply felt anger when a neighborhood landmark is razed isn’t because of the building – it was only stone and wood after all. It was because a piece of our community was taken away.” The intertwining of people, place and time is a foundation for strong community development. The Quicky Marts and strip shopping centers may be part of our daily landscape, but they rarely ascend to be part of our community or to capture our emotional attachment.

The articles in this summer issue present a sample of current projects at the Strom Thurmond Institute dealing with this idea of community. In previous issues and publications we have presented a number of our community economic assessment projects. This collection presents the spatial and temporal context of community, which may be the bedrock of community development.

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In Search of Common Ground

Greenwood County Seeks Community through Camera's Lens

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In America, and elsewhere, the connection and concern among people for each other and their places — that strength called “community” — is in a state of decline. Some scholars view this as representing a deterioration of our society and a threat to individual and collective well-being.

The problem is easier to diagnose than to treat. Sometimes “productivity” stands accused of taking priority over the lives of the producers, when people see their individual lives fragmented into “work” and “rest” periods with no time left to realize the collective experience of community. Economic development and industrial productivity have come to dominate our notion of “progress.” Yet in a very real sense true progress will reflect, and satisfy, the common need of people to share their lives, to share the meaning of being alive at a particular time in a particular place. This article discusses one approach to satisfying the longing people have for community, a way to use the camera lens to illuminate the connection of person to place and to restore sense of community.

Sense of Community/Loss of Community

Sense of community is often associated with scenes and settings like those we see on *Little House on the Prairie*, 19th Century rural contexts in which women’s quilting bees, men’s barn raisings, and gatherings at local churches

**Gregory
Hawkins**



and stores provided forums for discussing and settling community affairs. A sense of community is not only revelry in the “community good,” but also collective concern and efforts to solve the “community bad.”

The loss of community orientation has been described as “the most destructive dynamic in the lives of people in our society.”

Unfortunately, the transition into the more complex 20th Century has weakened community orientation. Renowned scholars Emile Durkheim and Ferdinand Tonnies observed that the 20th Century brought changes in the nature of community relationships, from one founded upon shared interests and values to one characterized by functionality, productivity, and impersonal relations. The loss of community orientation has been described by social scientists and commentators as a manifestation of profound disconnection from traditional institutions, such as family, church, and neighborhood. Seymour Sarason described this loss as “the most destructive dynamic in the lives of people in our society.”

Some may be tempted to dismiss Sarason’s doomsday absoluteness, or to consider lamentations about the loss of traditional community orientation as mere nostalgia, simple anecdotal observations of the loss of bygone ways of life. However, anyone who has ever felt an emotional

tug listening to Bruce Springsteen's "My Hometown" will understand something more about sense of community. Childhood memories of driving down Main Street with Daddy, social issues creating a fuss among neighbors, and the feelings of being a big fish in a little pond (or little fish in a big pond) all embody subtle but powerful relationships between people and places.

Communities are not only physical and social phenomena, they are also ideas — always invested with meanings which relate physical landscapes and social histories to our feelings (good, bad, or indifferent) about our experiences. We apprehend space not only through our senses; we live in it, we project into it, and we ascribe meaning to it as "unfamiliar space" is transformed into "experienced place." Individual and collective meaning defines what a place is, what it has been, and what it can become.

Modernization ...created a new phenomenon of community in abstraction – functional "near-living"– centered around nuclei of production... referred to as "communities of limited liability."

So, too, places exert influences on people. Places help shape our systems of norms, values, and symbols which help define for us the "rightness" and "wrongness" of our deeds. The community, as a meaningful place, contributes to psychological well-being and social organization and functioning. Community may function as a context of security, as a medium for expressing self and sentiment, and as a forum of reciprocity. The community helps to let us know who we are, who we have been, and who we may become.

Modernization, fueled by increased dependence on technology and industrialization, created a new phenomenon of community in abstraction – functional "near-living"– centered around nuclei of production. These abstractions, referred to as "communities of limited liability,"

typically serve as extensions of the employment setting, reducing the experience of community to a place where people eat, sleep, and get ready for the next work day. Shared responsibility, or the "liability" of these community members to each other, is limited to that which fulfills the individual's functional needs.

This is not only a metropolitan problem. Rural areas increasingly experience pressures from urban expansion. In this era of unprecedented technological advance, the model of the rural, self-contained, secluded community, along with its highly intimate social organization and communal ties, has been challenged by the "communities of limited liability" model, with its more densely populated urban and sub-urban centers and emphasis on industrial productivity. The phenomenon of American suburbia has been described as the response of society seeking escape from the stresses and perceived woes of the urban environment. The result is a fragmentation of life places where settings or "places" are dichotomized into "work places" and "home places," each understood and experienced from highly functional perspectives. Many family farms, which surrounded and supported rural communities, have become subdivisions designed and developed to accommodate the urban escapees.

Accelerated urbanization and related sub-urban development have resulted in increased numbers of people adopting roles less concerned with community life and more oriented toward goals and policies external to the community. Such a change in community structure and meaning has the capacity to stifle meaningful interaction within the community setting. Some argue that fewer decisions relevant to the community are being made at the community level – a loss of communality, autonomy, and belonging, a loss of the essential nature of the community.

Re-Thinking Community: Recent Trends

Still, the ideal of the localized, intimate community persists as a symbol of people's

hopes for a collectivity in which they can be rather than merely seem, where their presence carries meaning beyond mere functional value. A grassroots recognition of the effects of a post-modern, corporate emphasis in planning occurred in the 1960s, and quickly spread throughout American society. Beginning with the working class sectors of American society, citizens groups began resisting community and urban development schemes which they believed would alter or destroy either the physical or symbolic character of their communities — a movement which soon after received grant funds in excess of \$1 billion.

In the 1970s, the American middle class recognized the successes of the working class community preservation efforts and began to exert political influence to gain support for community preservation. Ultimately, the preservation of community became a national agenda, categorized as a “national priority” in a 1976 presidential report. In the late 1970s, the \$4 billion Community Block Grant Program and the Office of Neighborhoods and Voluntary Associations were established, representing a national commitment to community preservation efforts and community-level decision making.

The restoration, creation and maintenance of sense of community may be, as Dennis Poplin states, “the answer to many of our deepest problems.”

A 1981 national survey found that nearly half of all Americans were “deeply” involved in a search for a sense of community in response to living in a post-modern, highly urbanized mass society. The commonality of Americans’ search for a sense of community can be, in part, explained by the number of associated benefits. Research has shown that a sense of community is strongly associated with community development processes and voluntary participation in community action such as urban service delivery, health promotion and disease prevention,

crime and drug abuse prevention, welfare reform, mental health service delivery, and neighborhooding. The stronger the sense of community, the more influence the members will believe themselves to possess in shaping their physical and social environment, and more likely is their participation in community action. The building of a sense of community constitutes the empowerment of members, it is the creation of a mechanism for the stimulation of healthy community development.

A sense of community is founded upon an awareness of one’s environment, including both positive and negative attributes, coupled with feelings of connection with both the physical and social environment and a belief that one’s actions indeed matter. Perhaps the worst possible state of affairs for a community is when its members show no awareness of its conditions and no ability for collective action. Void of a sense of community, members are typically alienated and lonely, having no connection to each other and little motivation to act on behalf of the community. The result is a lack of social organization from which to engage self and others in community action. Citizens feel a lack of belonging, shared values, influence, communication, interaction, safety and support.

The Sense of Community Solution

Sense of community is a special relationship between people and their social milieu, it is a condition of awareness and a feeling of empowerment which is desirable and beneficial for society. The restoration, creation and maintenance of sense of community may be, as Dennis Poplin states, “the answer to many of our deepest problems,” the path toward “salvation and redemption” from a modern climate of impersonal relationships and a lack of concern for community affairs.

A 1981 study by Thomas Glynn concluded that sense of community is far more than a simple, subjective feeling, that it may be under-

stood as behaviors and attitudes that are both measurable and manipulable. Conceived in this manner, particular attitudes and behaviors can be identified and nurtured by researchers and community leaders to enhance members' sense of community and bring about more desirable and beneficial conditions within the community. Especially significant is the notion that certain tangible, observable, and measurable behaviors can be encouraged as a treatment to elevate members' sense of community. Such efforts will yield immense community benefits.

The measurement of sense of community provides important information about satisfaction with community conditions, members' feelings of empowerment toward community action, and

Community participation in photographic research has been utilized extensively to effectively engage members in the documentation of aesthetic qualities of places, and has been applied in community development and planning processes.

identifies components of community life which stand in need of attention from policy makers. Such information is directly applicable in community development programming and planning.

Sense of community plays a critical role in grassroots neighborhood restoration and revitalization efforts, providing much of the insight and initiative which fuels these movements. Urban policy and community development efforts would be significantly enhanced if levels of sense of community were to be assessed and maintained or elevated. A major element of sense of community is members' awareness of and involvement in their environment. Abraham Wandersman found that people lacking awareness of their community environment, both the good and bad qualities, are as unlikely to participate in community action efforts as those with highly negative impressions of the community. It appears likely that a manipulation of behavior, in the form of encouraging attention to community

features, could enhance members' sense of community and possibly increase the likelihood of participation in community action. Through directing member attention toward both positive and negative community features, sense of community may be enhanced.

The Greenwood County Community Assessment Project

Participation by community members is essential in order to integrate shared meaning, values, and community processes in the planning of their physical and social environment and to stimulate involvement in community actions. Community participation in photographic research has been utilized extensively to effectively engage members in the documentation of aesthetic qualities of places, and has been applied in community development and planning processes.

The Resident Employed Photography (REP) process usually involves equipping participants from the community with cameras and directing them to photograph those components of the community that they "like" or "dislike," and find "attractive" or "unattractive." The photographers provide detailed journals describing their intentions and assessment of the recorded feature. By identifying the most frequently photographed likes and dislikes, planners gain insight into the qualities and features valued by community members. Recreation resource managers, urban planners, and civil engineers have made the identification and documentation of landscape preferences an explicit goal and have found REP to be an effective technique for participatory planning.

However, one subtle effect of the REP process remains unexamined. Both theory and applied research suggest that by changing the focus of people's attention they can be alerted to things such as their environmental condition. For example, sightseers are "looking for" pleasurable visual stimulation and will, therefore, be propelled by their expectations beyond simple acceptable perceptions; they will seek

and find things that they like. This type of relationship between social systems and cues to place perception is of natural interest to policy makers, who often concern themselves with anticipating the results of some treatment or stimulus on behavior.

The Greenwood County Community Assessment Project is utilizing the REP process to identify specific or types of landscape features which are commonly laden with meaning and valued by community members, and is evaluating the REP process to determine if it, as an experimental treatment, has a measurably significant effect in enhancing sense of community. A sample of residents from the county's five census divisions are providing pre- and post-test data on sense of community levels, and half of the sample will also participate in the REP process.

The survey will provide data on sense of community levels, including perceptions of community functioning, resident intimacy, and opinions on the role of members in the community, and will allow for comparisons between divisions and specific groups. For example, the survey data will provide insights into the similarities and differences in community orientation of the relatively new Hispanic population compared to the general population in the county.

From the REP process, planners will gain valuable information about community landscape preferences and "common ground" concerns related to community development. Documentation of community landscape preferences will direct development planning activities in such a way as to maintain and enhance those qualities valued by community members, thereby protecting the unique character of the community as recognized by its members. Likewise, the identification of common ground concerns

related to development will prove useful in community focus group activities by providing a framework for discussions, and will engage community members in processes of planning their physical and social environment.

REP may invoke to participants a form of cueing, creating within them initiative to enter and experience their community. By asking participants to seek out and photograph those community features that they like or dislike, find attractive or unattractive, researchers are in effect sensitizing them to their environmental conditions. This may have profound implications for community development. The valuable information regarding preferred landscape features aside, the event of actively engaging members in the evaluation of their community may function as a stimulus toward a sense of community. Additional analyses will be performed to determine if participation in the REP process is a viable means of enhancing environmental awareness and, therefore, elevating sense of community.

Conclusion

These efforts represent one attempt toward remedying the social dilemma of community decline and social disconnection. By assessing community orientation and engaging members in defining the direction they wish their community to progress, and by stimulating an enhanced awareness of the community environment, it is expected that better decision making, that which more accurately reflects the values of the community's citizens, will follow. This study will be completed in the Fall of 1998, and the findings will be disseminated in the Spring of 1999.

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Students Merge with Community in Schools of Appalachia

'I'll be living around here. I love it here. I'll always be here.'
— Dana Bryant, Student, Hiwassee Dam Union School

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**Chris
Benson**



In the spring of 1998, I traveled through Southern Appalachia, criss-crossing the mountains and borders of North Carolina, Georgia, and Tennessee and stopping to visit three of the few very tiny rural schools that have resisted the pressure to consolidate into large, centralized school systems. Hiwassee Dam Union School (HDUS), in the mountains of southwestern North Carolina, is one such school. While I was there, I met Dana Bryant, a member of the class of '98. Dana is living proof that rural communities and schools working together can produce remarkable people.

Dana has lived in these Carolina mountains her whole life, and her family has been here for more generations than she can reckon: "My family has been here a long time. I really don't know how long, but a long time. We just always lived here."

Like high school students everywhere, Dana was looking forward to graduating, visiting faraway places, meeting different people, and learning new things. These are the prospects of kids all across America, common rites of pas-

sage. But in another way, Dana is unlike kids who might live, say, on the east shore of the Chesapeake, or in the high desert of New Mexico, or in the cities of the Midwest.

Dana is of Southern Appalachia, and she knows it, not just because she and her family have lived here for so long but also because her school capitalizes on the advantages of living and learning in a rural place. One way the school does this is through a curriculum that celebrates and reinforces the local Appalachian culture. Through this curriculum, students understand they are beneficiaries of a heritage that will some day be entrusted to them. Someday they will be benefactors to the next generation.

The students at HDUS understand this responsibility. Dana told me, "In our Appalachian Studies class we study our culture. We study the mountains around here, the history of them. We visit people's farms. We went to my grandfather's farm to study the old tools they used to farm with. We looked at plows, for example, that he had used when he was a boy. . . The barn my grandfather has is over a hundred

years old, and it's always been in the family. We went to another farm and helped them make syrup from sorghum. They grew the sorghum – it looks a little like corn stalks – then cut it. Then we ground it to make the syrup and boiled the syrup. . . . This class helps me understand that these things and this lifestyle are special to this place.”

Such field trips are a key part of the learning where schools and communities view themselves as partners. Since some of the knowledge and skill in traditional Appalachian culture is not available in books, or is more easily apprehended through observing and imitating, the community is a resource; students go into the community to learn from the people.

The awareness of the importance of place in learning is increasing in rural public schools. In fact, Hiwassee Dam Union School has joined a five-school consortium (four schools in Southern Appalachia and one located in the hills of the Cumberland Plateau) that is emphasizing the value of place and local culture in the curriculum. The consortium – called Tenngalina because it links schools in Tennessee, Georgia, and North Carolina – is supported by the Rural Challenge, a private foundation endowed by Ambassador Walter Annenberg to support “genuinely good, genuinely rural schools” and increase their usefulness to their communities. These schools include Hiwassee Dam Union School (NC); Van Buren County High School, Ducktown Elementary, and Copper Basin High School (TN); and Woody Gap School (GA), and have finished their first year of collaboration.

Why are rural schools focusing on the importance of place and why is the Rural Challenge supporting this interest? One big reason for this new focus is to counter the damaging effects of a 60-year national trend to consolidate and centralize school systems. On the surface, consolidation of schools appears to have economic benefits. There's no doubt it's cheaper to educate large numbers of students in a central place: consolidation lowers building and physical plant costs; transportation of students is more

efficient; acquiring and distributing teaching supplies are cheaper. The economy of scale would seem to lower costs for almost any school operation, but what we are seeing is the Wal-Mart-ization of education.

Employing an economy of scale in education is an urban or suburban concept of schooling, and many policymakers erroneously assume it should work as well in rural communities. But economies of scale serve urban and suburban communities because those places contain large numbers of students in relatively small geographic areas.

The disadvantages of school consolidation in rural places, however, are apparent. Some children must ride buses for three hours a day to attend “centrally located” schools, creating a 10-hour work day for a six-year-old. Is this reasonable?

Consolidation also denies small rural communities the opportunity to place their distinctive local cultures and local values at the center of their children's education. Communities located just across the county from each other may possess rural subcultures that are quite distinct. For example, Tamasee and Westminster, two communities in Oconee County, South Carolina, are only 20 miles apart, yet the former has its roots in subsistence farming and hunting; the latter is an archetypal textile mill town. As little as 40 years ago, such communities would have their own local schoolhouses where distinctive local culture was a positive unifying concept in the education of children.

Nowadays, those small schoolhouses are abandoned, and if rural subcultures exist in the larger consolidated school, they tend to be fractious, segregating into the “mill kids,” the “rednecks,” the “hicks,” and so on. Though large schools may be more cost-efficient (this point is certainly debatable), they are not necessarily more successful in terms of serving students and small communities.

Consolidated schooling, the practice of passing on important indigenous knowledge and know-how is hindered: local history, crafts, art

and music, botany, even survival skills have been lost. These areas of knowledge should not crowd out academic learning, but neither should academic pursuits exclude these areas merely because they are inherently rural, hands-on, or experiential.

The Rural Challenge is interested in reinvigorating rural ways of knowing in all rural

Genuinely good, genuinely rural schools encourage a give-and-take between schools and communities, creating interdependence.

communities, from American Indian communities such as the Laguna Pueblo to the Southern Appalachian communities such as those of the Tenngalina Consortium. Genuinely good, genuinely rural schools encourage a give-and-take between schools and communities, creating interdependence. Conversely, when there is a disconnection between school and community, students begin to understand the community has no stake in their education, and they begin to think of the community as something that they will one day “graduate” from, just as they will graduate from high school.

What passes for curriculum also influences the way children view their communities. If the curriculum communicates implicitly to students that culture and economic opportunity are found only in urban and suburban settings, should we wonder that rural communities are losing the best and brightest young people to those other places? If rural communities are to survive as places with cultural and economic opportunities, they ought to work with schools to nurture, train, and educate each succeeding generation to appreciate and develop the local culture and economy. A curriculum that links the community and the school helps ensure that smart kids like Dana Bryant understand that their rural homes are places to cultivate not flee.

Teachers at Hiwassee Dam Union School are aware of the benefits of rural schools and communities working together. In addition to

their core academic subjects, these students have studied raising sheep, spinning wool, natural dyeing, food production, blacksmithing, woodcrafting, woodmilling, leathercrafts, soapmaking, and other skills related to Southern Appalachian culture. Students study these subjects with knowledgeable folks in the community, but there is another important source of knowledge in rural communities.

Rural students themselves are valuable resources for local knowledge. Suzanne DesLauriers, who teaches art and Appalachian Studies at Hiwassee Dam Union School, is not native to the mountains of western Carolina, and she told me when she first began to teach at HDUS, “There were many kids who were talented in crafts, so I started incorporating more crafts into the arts program. I noticed that a lot of these kids who were extremely bright with their hands were having trouble in some of their classes. So I thought that creating an Appalachian Studies class would be a great way to tie in appreciation for their culture and history.” Students in Ms. DesLauriers’ Appalachian Studies class already know a lot when they enter the course: they know about deer hunting, bear hunting, making soap, identifying plants and trees, raising horses and cattle, putting up hay. In this regard, Ms. DesLauriers was quick to admit that the students teach her, and these areas of knowledge and skill thus become incorporated into her curriculum for future classes. She is tapping the local culture as a source of knowledge and helping to sustain it.

Limited space in this article prevents me from giving all the schools in the Tenngalina Consortium equal attention, but each is finding ways to link community and school in interdependent work. For example, students at Van Buren High School are raising and selling poinsettias to sell to a Tennessee state park. They also raise honey on the school grounds and sell it in the community. They operate a greenhouse at the school where they cultivate indigenous plants for the community in an effort to raise tourists’ (and community members’)

awareness of the diversity and beauty of the local environment.

Another example: students at Copper Basin High School in Copper Hill, Tennessee, are photographing, sketching, and documenting old structures in nearby Ducktown, Tennessee. Students are interviewing knowledgeable residents in the community to acquire background information on the structures. The photos and sketches are organized with captions and complemented with short historical articles. A bound copy of this work will soon become an important historical document in the community.

As schools in rural communities increasingly use local culture as a foundation on which to build curriculum, there is the danger that teachers and students may feel isolated from what's happening not just in faraway urban schools but also from what may be happening in rural schools on the other side of the county. But this isolation doesn't have to be the case. The

growing use of telecomputing in schools now allows teachers and students in remote places like Ketchikan, Alaska, and Vermont to talk with each other about the kind of curriculum that sustains rural people and places. Even schools that lie within a relatively small radius, such as those in the Tenngalina Consortium, can use telecomputing to swap curricular ideas, collaborate on research, engage in writing projects, communicate goals, address problems together, and share resources. This kind of cross-school interaction has two positive effects for rural students: it enables them to learn about other places similar to theirs and "borrow" the best that each such place and its people have to offer; and, at the same time, students discover the diversity of American rural communities, locating their particular community in the patchwork quilt that makes up American rural culture.

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Intergenerational Programs:

Help for the Nation's Dissolving Communities

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**Melissa
Hawkins**



Why is it that the small communities of our grandparent's childhood seem to be things of the past, nostalgic memories for some and a way of life that never was for younger citizens? Our modern society has little time left for sharing hobbies with our neighbors, hosting community potluck dinners, or participating in volunteer organizations designed to aid schools, local government or churches. There is adequate time to pick up a paycheck, but no time to help improve the institutions that make up community. Worst of all, in "Small Community USA" there are several distinct segments of society that coexist without any contact, and the dividing lines between them are becoming more and more distinct. This is the hazard that the Strom Thurmond Institute's Intergenerational and Retirement Studies Lab seeks to address.

Here is an example of those who live on different sides of the dividing line. The names are fictional, but the groups they represent are very real.

John and Beth are young professionals in their mid-thirties. He is an engineer and she is in computer programming. They live in Small Community USA because it offers a slower pace of life than the neighboring city where they both work, and they found they could buy a home for what they considered very little money. The

home they bought is large and beautifully decorated. John and Beth know a few of their neighbors, but since they both work so much, they don't have many friends outside of work. They have put off having children for now since neither can take time away from their careers.

Sharon lives in Small Community USA, about eight blocks from John and Beth. She's never met them and rarely visits the neighboring city where they work. She has seen computers and other technologies on television but has never used any. She, too, is in her thirties but is a single mother trying to raise two children with the help of her part-time job at the local grocery store and nearby relatives who are also struggling. In the past she has been dependent on government programs to support her children, but now that her children are in school she can work days and care for them at night.

One of Sharon's children has been a discipline problem at school. He has been caught stealing from other children and has occasionally been disrespectful to his teachers. Sharon has little time to handle her son. When she confronts him, he won't say anything. Lately, however, his negative behaviors have begun to moderate. For the past six weeks, he has been involved in an intergenerational mentoring program at school. A retired man is his mentor, and he visits the boy twice a week. Sometimes

the two go on outings with others involved in the program. They participate in service activities such as planting gardens and repairing broken playground equipment. To Sharon, the service activities of the program reminded her of stories about Small Community that she heard as a little girl from her grandmother. Her grandparents always helped others in the community when they needed it. When Sharon thought about it, helping others used to be more common when her grandmother was alive, and so was knowing one's neighbors and, more importantly, caring about them.

Since her son has been staying out of trouble, Sharon wonders if a restoration of the old days might be the best thing that could happen in her community. Too bad she doesn't have a whole lot of time to devote to community service. Maybe her children will be different when they grow up because they are learning such things from people who have time to work with them. Or maybe the program is a Band-Aid. Either way, Sharon hopes for the best, most of all for her son, but also for her community.

These two scenarios exist in one town, Small Community USA. What if John and Beth had children? Would their children be any better off than Sharon's? Surely they would have more material resources than do Sharon's children, but would their behavior be better? Would they too benefit from such a mentoring program?

Statistically, South Carolina ranks among the lowest in educational performance of its students. Discipline problems are common. In many school systems a great number of students score below the national average on achievement and other standardized tests.

It would appear that many communities could use some help with their children, both with their discipline in school and their knowledge of how to contribute to the community. Many adults in the middle generation are too busy to work with their children in these capacities. Intergenerational programs can offer solutions. Such interactions can temporarily

provide children with what they need to improve their behavior. In the long term, many programs strive to ingrain a service ethic into the children involved.

The leaders of many small communities have begun to realize that parts of their communities are more technology oriented and acquisitive while other segments simply can't compete and often find themselves dependent on service agencies or government support. Though advances in technology and acquisition of quality material goods enhance the lives of many people, it can be argued that computers and the like can not replace connections between people and traditional styles of community living. Likewise, dependence on service agencies and "big brother" do not build meaningful connections, either.

Important life skills and lessons have traditionally taken place through a process of enculturation of the young by their elders.

Intergenerational partnerships involve placing youth and older adults in meaningful endeavors. The young people need the guidance of older individuals who can share wisdom gathered from a lifetime of experiences, and the older adults often need a new role for their later years. Working with youth can fill the voids of an empty nest or the loss of friends and assist in the transition to being without a paying job. There are several ways to work intergenerationally — young serving old, old serving young, and old and young serving together. All of these models are beneficial, both to participants and to the community. However, only one, old and young serving together, is truly reciprocal.

In seven communities across South Carolina, an intergenerational project called LINC (Linking Intergenerational Networks in Communities), is bringing the generations together to

build a sense of community and truly improve the community as well. LINC projects are taking place in Aiken, Belton, Florence, Greenwood, Irmo, Kershaw, and Sumter. Managed by a state partnership between Clemson University, the South Carolina Department of Health and Human Services Office on Aging, the South Carolina Department of Education, and the United Way of South Carolina, LINC is in its fourth year of operation.

The project has been a great success. In one LINC community the youth, who are primarily from low socioeconomic levels, have become quite close with their mentors. Through their work together delivering meals and gift baskets to shut-ins, the generations have united. Relationships have extended beyond LINC, with the youth and their mentors going to movies and visiting each other's homes. Through these intense interactions, the youth are exposed to a different way of life, one that gives them hope for their futures. In school, behavior has improved and grades are also on their way up. Mentors take great pride in the success of their young friends and want to continue working with them as long as they can. Participants are encouraged to learn a lifestyle of service to their communities.

In all LINC communities, older adults and youth work together in community service projects. The needs in their communities determine which project is chosen. Some of the projects have included winterizing homes, Meals on Wheels delivery, community gardens, accessible nature paths, and composting. All of the projects are intended to benefit the community in some way, teach youth the value of service to their community, and give the older adults meaningful opportunities to share themselves with fellow community members.

Isolation and alienation are likely to persist in some areas, but through projects such as LINC, communities are rebuilding themselves. Creating intergenerational partnerships is a viable solution for battling the crumbling of community. History has proven it and now LINC is too. Important life skills and lessons have traditionally taken place through a process of enculturation of the young by their elders. Communities need to remember their past, consider their present, and take action for their future. Revisiting the traditions of communities past is a good place to start.

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The SC Design Arts Partnership

Bringing Quality Design to the Communities of the State

Robert Bainbridge is Director of the SC Design Arts Partnership and a Lecturer in Planning and Landscape Architecture at Clemson University

Looking for an inexpensive way to redesign your community's downtown? Need a new cultural center? How about some fresh ideas on landscaping the airport or a park?

The opportunity for all of these and more is available through the South Carolina Design Arts Partnership. Since Spring 1995, the partnership has completed more than 50 design projects in 32 South Carolina counties.

The partnership, founded in 1994, provides design assistance to South Carolina communities at Clemson University through student projects in architecture, landscape architecture and city planning and by direct assistance through Clemson's Cooperative Extension Service offices.

The partnership takes on five to seven classroom projects each semester at Clemson's College of Architecture, Arts and Humanities. The projects range from downtown revitalization to scenic entryway and highway beautification, rehabilitation of historic structures, and campus master plans. The projects help local governments or nonprofit organizations create a physical vision of their future, and provide the basis for raising money or seeking grants to implement the projects. Usually, local architects or landscape architects are needed to bring specific projects to completion.

The scope of the partnership's efforts can be illustrated through recently completed projects. In May, designs were presented in Barnwell for downtown revitalization, a cultural arts complex, and landscaping at the Barnwell County Airport Industrial Park. Also in May,

**Robert
Bainbridge**



designs for total facade improvements for Cleveland Street were presented in Elloree. In Lancaster a proposal provided for reuse of the historic Leroy Springs House as the new center for the Lancaster County Council of the Arts. In the Upstate, designs were prepared for the beautification of the Poinsett Highway in Greenville, and for the town of Travelers Rest, together encompassing almost 15 miles of US 25. Landscape designs were prepared for the Greenwood city /county government complex, and a downtown revitalization plan was finished for the town of Fairfax in Allendale County.

Projects approved for fall 1998 include Kalmia Gardens in Hartsville, Morris College in Sumter, downtown Loris in Horry County, Lowcountry Technical College in Beaufort, and designs for a Pleasant Valley Community Center in Greenville.

Smaller projects carried out through the Extension Service have included downtown landscaping recommendations for the Town of Clio in Marlboro County and a town square landscape design for Hodges in Greenwood County.

In order to build more public support for quality design, the partnership has recently hired Irene Dumas Tyson as Director of Outreach Programs. She is currently finalizing a Mayors' Design Institute to be held in Charleston this September. Ms. Dumas Tyson will also assist communities with graphic design and community visioning.

The partnership was formed by three organizations with a shared interest in quality design: the South Carolina Arts Commission, the South Carolina Downtown Development Association, and Clemson University's College of Architecture, Arts and Humanities.

The partnership is one of four organizations that constitute Clemson's newly approved Economic and Community Development Initiative, a consortium formed under the university's Public Service Activities. The other partners are Palmetto Leadership, the Regional Community and Economic Development Research Laboratory, and the Community and Economic Development program at the Strom Thurmond Institute of Government and Public Affairs. The organizations were merged into the initiative as the need developed for a field network to help with implementation of projects.

For more information on the Design Arts

Partnership, contact Robert W. Bainbridge, Director, 129 Lee Hall, Clemson, SC, 29634-0511 or by e-mail at:

bainbrr@clemson.edu.

Robert W. Bainbridge, AIA, operates a private practice in architecture and urban design in Greenville. He has over eight years of experience in downtown revitalization in Greenville, Houston, and as a national consultant out of Boston. He is a licensed architect in South Carolina and served for three years as President of the Palmetto Trust for Historic Preservation. He holds a Bachelor of Architecture degree from the University of California, Berkeley, and a Masters of Architecture in Urban Design from Rice University. He is a member of the American Institute of Architects, American Planning Association and an associate member of the American Society of Landscape Architects.

Events at the Strom Thurmond Institute

SC Cultural Resources Development Institute

Date: August 16-19, 1998

Place: Madren Center

Whither Nuclear Weapons in the 21st Century?

Date: September 2, 1998

Panel: Clint Whitehurst, Professor Emeritus Mgt. And Economics

Ed Hamilton, Retired US Army

Jay Hetherington, Retired CIA

Peter Sederberg, Dean, SC Honors College (Moderator)

Time: 7:30 PM

Place: Self Auditorium, STI

Calhoun Lecture Series

TV and Politics: Campaign Ads that Shaped Our History

Speaker: Larry Sabato, Election Analyst and University of VA Professor

Date: September 30, 1998

Time: 7:30 PM

Place: Self Auditorium, STI

Booksigning

Scots-Irish in the Carolinas

Speaker: Billy Kennedy, Northern Ireland journalist

Date: October 8, 1998

Time: 7:30 PM

Place: Self Auditorium

Booksigning

Horse Trail Symposium

Date: October 18-21, 1998

Place: Madren Center

Contact: Free event—contact Donna Arterburn 656-0605

Against the Tide: One Woman's Political Struggle

Speaker: Harriett Keyserling, author and former State Legislature

Date: October 22, 1998

Time: 7:30 PM

Place: Self Auditorium

Booksigning

Festival and Event Managers' Workshop

Date: November 4-6, 1998

Contact: Fee event—contact Jean Martin 656-0208