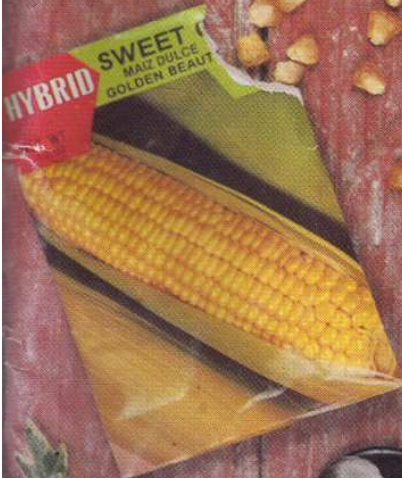
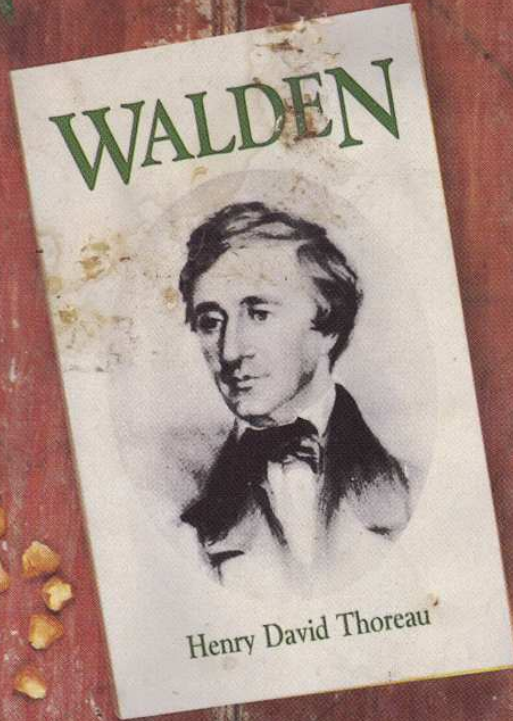


# Harrowsmith

## Homesteading Revisited

Where Have All the  
Back-to-the-Landers  
Gone?



SPECIAL SECTION: Spring Nursery Catalogue Reviews  
Birdhouse Plans • Country Pye • Hardy Nut Trees

# Paddling Into The Mainstream

Where have all the homesteaders gone?

By Craig Canine and Michael McRae

*"Practically, the old have no very important advice to give the young, their own experience has been so partial, and their lives have been such miserable failures. . . . I have lived some thirty years on this planet, and I have yet to hear the first syllable of valuable . . . advice from my seniors."*

WALDEN, Henry David Thoreau

Oh, to be so young again and to know so much. But a dozen or more years ago, a young man or a young woman had reason to dismiss society's elders, who had given their sons and daughters a nation divided over war, race, the sanctity of the environment and the integrity of the President. Casting back, memory can only dimly recapture the turmoil and disaffection of the time—their singular intensity.

*"One generation abandons the enterprises of another, like stranded vessels,"* Thoreau wrote in *Walden*, a book that served both to explain and justify a radical remaking of lives.

*"I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived,"* Thoreau said, in explaining why he decided to move to the shores of Walden Pond and live in a house a mere 10 feet wide by 15 long. Hundreds of thousands chose to follow his example, and the

back-to-the-land movement was reborn.

*"Simplify, simplify,"* Thoreau counseled, and the homesteaders did. Conspicuous frugality became a badge of honor.

Ultimately, moving to the country offered a lesson in humility, if nothing else. The fact is, Thoreau lasted only two years in the cabin by Walden Pond.

And his spiritual heirs, more than a century later—what has become of them? As the profiles that follow suggest, there is no simple answer. Some have endured in ways that put to shame the master's brief fling at self-sufficiency, and some might feel uncomfortable if called to face Thoreau's gaze. Most, of course, now occupy some middle ground between faith and blasphemy.

Thoreau wrote: *"The life in us is like the water in the river."* Eventually, it runs to the sea but some homesteaders still hold to the deep, quiet pools; others, as Jack Lazor, yogurt maker, says, "are paddling into the mainstream."

—The Editors

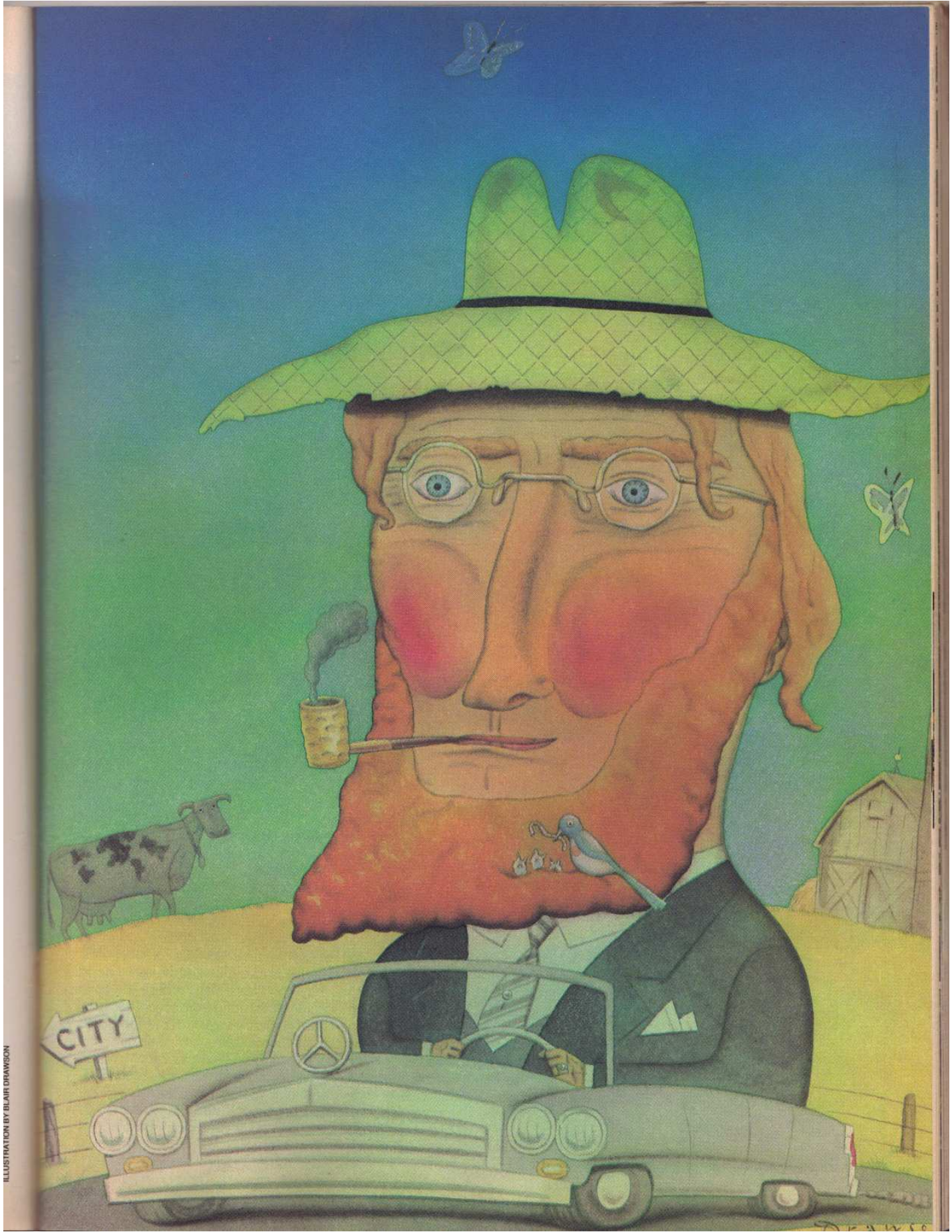


ILLUSTRATION BY BLAIR DRAWSON

## BRUCE & JOANI JOHNSON CUSTOM HARDWOOD SUPPLIERS

**B**ruce Johnson's flight to the Arkansas wilderness got started at rock pianist Leon Russell's compound near Tulsa, Oklahoma. The year was 1970, and Johnson had just returned to his native South after living in British Columbia for two years, avoiding the draft. He didn't have a dime to his name, so he went to Russell's rock-'n'-roll ranch, where a friend of his was painting the bottom of the swimming pool. The friend got him a job as construction foreman for some guest houses Russell was building near his recording studio. Johnson did that for a year and managed to put some money away, but the musicians started getting on his nerves. They held jam sessions all night long, and he couldn't get any sleep. He had heard that there was plenty of cheap land to be had in the mountains of northwest Arkansas and decided to go exploring. "I was up on a mountain one night at sunset, and it felt good," Johnson recalls, "so I made a deal on the land" — 160 acres for \$110 an acre.

Then he began looking for a woman with whom he could share his mountain.

Joani Hudson grew up in Fort Worth, graduated from high school in 1972 and moved to Austin, where she drove an ice cream truck. "I was of the alternative thought," she says. "I was probably the only vegetarian in the cowboy town of Fort Worth." She met Bruce on a trip to Tulsa, and he invited her to spend a few days at his place in the Ozarks. She came, and found that his place consisted of a hole in the ground — an old root cellar — with a roof over it. Joani baked bread and made herself feel at home. During the long drive back to Austin, they talked about karma and the unity of souls. When they arrived in Texas, they decided to get married.

Joani moved to Bruce's place in 1973, joining a small but growing number of other homesteaders who had come to the Ozarks from Texas, California and the Northeast. Joani was soon pregnant with the Johnsons' first child. The nearest hospital was in

Fayetteville, 40 miles distant, but a hospital birth was out of the question anyway. Bruce delivered the baby in their bedroom on a 105-degree July day, with Joani on her hands and knees. They admit now that they were lucky the delivery went smoothly. "We were pretty naive about what could happen," Joani says. "But having babies in our houses was what all of us in our little community expected of each other. It was an elitist thing — to see how close to the earth we could get." The baby was a boy, Jesse. In a nearby creek, Bruce and Joani baptized him in the name of the rocks and the trees.

Obstetrics was not the only kind of medicine the Johnsons preferred to do without. They also avoided antibiotics, preferring herbal remedies and other natural cures as prescribed in the book *Back to Eden*, one of their bibles. When Bruce came down with colitis, Joani prepared an herbal solution and gave him an enema with it, using a length of ¾-inch propane hose. The cure was about 90 percent effective. They supposed that a city doctor would be qualified to treat the remaining 10 percent. The doctor gave Bruce a shot and charged \$5, a sum the Johnsons thought outrageously high.

Their house slowly progressed from a hole in the ground to a sturdy dwelling of about 700 square feet. Three years after they moved in, they got electricity and a telephone. They never had a bathroom in the 10 years they lived there. They bathed under a garden hose fed by a hillside spring. Much of their food came from a large garden, though the land was so wild and lush with growth that keeping it cleared was a constant battle. Neither Joani nor Bruce had spent much time around animals before, but they learned the rudiments of raising pigs, cows and chickens from some Ozark natives. They also kept Nubian goats, milking them in a stanchion that was attached to their outhouse. "Our needs weren't a whole lot," Bruce recalls in his smooth Texas drawl. "We were happy just putting food on the table."

To supplement what they could raise on their own, Bruce worked as a carpenter for \$3 an hour. But, as he says, "you can't get ahead on a wage like that," so he and Joani started a cottage industry making Shaker-style wall sconces, wooden boxes and "pioneer planters" — old-fashioned buckets made of redwood staves — which they sold at craft shows.

Then one day Bruce made a deal at

a local sawmill for a load of hardwood lumber. He put it on his truck and hauled it to Texas, where there was a demand for high-grade hardwood, mainly for use as decorative trim in expensive houses. He sold the load at a tidy profit, turned around, and got some more. Soon he was spending more of his time on the road hauling hardwood to Texas.

Joani was content just keeping the homestead going while Bruce was away. One summer, she put up 500 jars of canned vegetables. In 1976, she had a second child, Ben, this time with the help of a midwife. Sometimes, when the creeks were high, she would go for weeks without seeing anyone except her family.

Things went on this way for years until, in 1981, she decided to go with a friend to the Virgin Islands. She came back with a haircut, contact lenses and an unsettling feeling that her homesteading days were over. "I said to myself, 'This is such a big world. What are we doing staying on this one hillside for 10 years?'"

The spirit that had drawn Joani, Bruce and many others into the hills had disappeared, and not just for Joani. Ironically, marijuana, which had played a part in forging the homesteaders' ethos, also played a part in its undoing. "We had a super community out there, all helping each other," Joani says. "But then a lot of people started growing dope to make money, and some people got real paranoid and protective. I think that played a role in breaking up our social realm."

Other things, too, disrupted the idyllic life the Johnsons had led for nearly a decade. The hardwood business had grown to the point where Bruce had to set up a warehouse in Fayetteville. He hired some helpers and added milling facilities. Joani began working at the warehouse, commuting two hours a day over the mountain roads with her boys. Finally, in 1982, the routine became too much for her: she sold their house in the hills and bought one in Fayetteville, a place where the boys could walk to and from school and take care of themselves until she and Bruce came home from work each day.

Now, the business, called White River Hardwoods, sells more than \$1.5 million a year worth of hardwood lumber products, mostly fancy moldings made of mahogany (from Brazil), oak and cherry. Bruce still spends much of his time in Texas overseeing another branch of the hardwood company. He



MATT BRADLEY, inset: COURTESY BRUCE & JOANI JOHNSON.

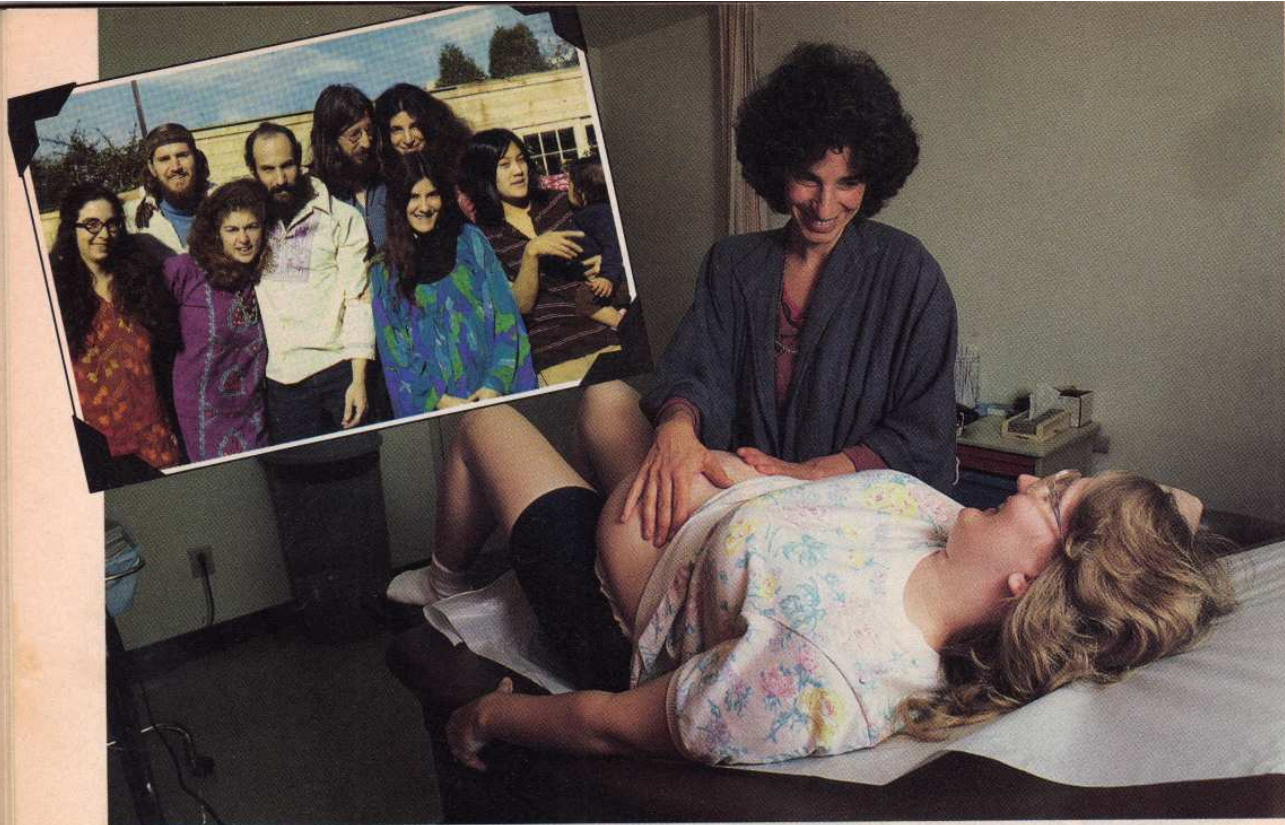
and Joani also own an Exxon service center in Fort Smith, Arkansas, which pumps 80,000 to 100,000 gallons of gasoline a month. Joani is no longer a vegetarian, and neither of the Johnsons has any qualms about taking antibiotics. "We've got a guy named Herb working for us now," Bruce says. "That's as close as we get to herbs."

The Johnsons still remember those years in the mountains with fondness. "It was just a magic deal," Bruce says.

"The people who went through the movement and survived intact emotionally are some of the luckiest people alive, to have that experience within themselves." —C.C.

*The Johnsons on the homestead with their newborn son, Jesse, in 1974 (inset), and today, in the warehouse of their business, White River Hardwoods.*





## YESHI NEUMANN MIDWIFE

In 1974, the members of Black Bear Ranch, a commune in the remote northern California mountains, published an obscure book about living together. Each of the 40-odd members received credit for the collective effort, titled *January Thaw*, and by itself this list of names evokes the era almost as well as the book's contents. A sampling: Amber, Cedar, Cloudburst, Kishwuf, Morning Star, Robadoo, Skylark. . . .

The penultimate name on the list is Yeshi. Leslie Neumann, a bright, attractive civil-rights activist, took that name in 1969 when a friend's child mispronounced her real name. A year later, after having a baby whom she named Rainbow, Yeshi and her husband, Osha (given name, Thomas), moved to Black Bear. There, for four years, she learned to be a midwife.

Many things have changed since then: Yeshi and Osha moved to the Bay Area. Osha got a law degree. Yeshi went to nursing school. They divorced. Rainbow decided at age 14 that she would henceforth be called Rachel. But some things are the same. Black Bear survives. Neumann still goes by her hippie name. She still practices

midwifery, her calling on the commune. And she is as politically active as ever.

One of only several thousand licensed nurse-midwives in the country, Neumann practices at a clinic serving gritty East Oakland. She sees patients 9 to 5, every day, one every 15 to 30 minutes. Since her Black Bear days, she reckons that she has delivered about 1,500 babies. Now, most deliveries are in a hospital. Her activism has twice taken her to Nicaragua, where the Sandinista government recognizes midwives, or *parteras*, as integral to the national health care system. Here in the U.S., she says, midwives are persecuted, and a woman's right to assume responsibility for herself is usurped by a male-dominated, "ever more technologized health care system." Above her desk at the clinic is a button that reads UTERUS POWER.

In the '60s, Neumann worked in a New York City poverty program organizing Puerto Ricans and, later, taught black history at the Tuskegee Institute in Alabama. Osha was part of a radical group called Up Against the Wall Motherf . . . s. The couple fled the political entanglements of the East, briefly found refuge on a commune in New Mexico and, when she got pregnant in 1969, decided to have the baby in Berkeley. They made the pilgrimage to California in a red Volkswagen

*The way we were: Yeshi (inset, back row, right) with other members of Black Bear Ranch. Today, Neumann is a nurse-midwife in East Oakland, California.*

bus. In a snapshot of them at the time, he is wearing an embroidered denim shirt and resembles John Lennon. Her face is painted, and she is wearing a dress imprinted with stars and crescent moons.

Black Bear had come together in 1968, organized by The Diggers, a San Francisco collective, and refugees from Up Against the Wall. The group bought 80 acres in the Klamath National Forest, 10 hours' drive from San Francisco, 90 minutes on torturous roads from the nearest town. Once settled by miners, the land had an old house, two ancient barns, the ruins of a post office and a general store, irrigation ditches, and a junkyard piled with derelict mining equipment. One barn became home to 30 goats. Six acres of gardens were put in. The general store became a woodworking shop; the junkyard, a parts warehouse. There were two trucks, three chain saws, a gasoline-driven flour grinder, a washing machine and a saw mill. Propane supplied light in the main house and milk barn; kerosene lamps lit the many jerry-built huts and sleeping platforms that sprang up like mushrooms.

The commune was not completely

self-sufficient, but nearly so. Income came from the Forest Service, which paid people \$3.50 an hour to fight fires. The approximately \$3,000 yearly income paid the mortgage, bought staples on the annual fall food run to the Bay Area, kept the trucks running.

Neumann and her family arrived about the time all 60 communards decided to move into the main house. "It was one of the experiments in lifestyle," she says. "The idea was sharing space, time, property, feelings, lovers, relationships—just about anything that you could share.

"No experiment lasted a long time. There was constant experimentation: men living with men, women with women, children not living with their biological parents. At the same time, we were learning to live on the land—chopping wood, raising goats—and we were all city people." There was a strong feminist bloc, and male-female roles fell away. Women wielded chain saws on the firelines; men milked goats.

Neumann had no training in midwifery, but was soon drawn to it. The delivery of Rainbow had been a watershed experience. "The lay midwifery movement grew out of the '60s," she explains. "People wanted more say in their lives. They did not want to turn over authority to anyone else, even in much less isolated circumstances than ours. But we had no choice. In winter, we were often snowed in, and it was four hours to the nearest hospital, six in our trucks.

"There was no authority of any sort on the commune; you could tell that from the chaos," she says. "But this had profound effects in forcing us to take responsibility for our own lives. There was no one to run to. We needed to trust ourselves and what we were seeing. It taught me to trust myself and my intuition."

In 1974, Neumann decided to leave the commune and to become licensed. "I did not want to be just a hippie midwife," she says. "I wanted to make changes in the world again." Today, she wears \$100 outfits to work, has testified as an expert witness in a medical malpractice suit, and is about to form a private practice with eight colleagues, four of them obstetricians. As far as she has come since Black Bear, though, she still prizes her internship. "I developed a lot of faith in the natural process," she says. "There was a reverence for it, without imagining that humans needed to intervene."

—M. McR.



## ANNE & JACK LAZOR YOGURT MAKERS

Jack Lazor is performing a yogurt comparison test. Dressed in farmer's dungarees, a plaid flannel shirt and a striped stocking hat, he reaches into the dairy case of a health food store on his delivery route. A sticker on one of the cooler's sliding glass doors says, "Have you rinsed your tofu today?" He removes a container of yogurt made by a New Hampshire dairy—one of Lazor's competitors—and peers under the lid. "Soup!" he says triumphantly. Then he reaches for a quart of Butterworks Farm yogurt, which he and his wife, Anne, made only yesterday. He

*The Lazors harvesting their first wheat crop with a grain binder in 1977 (inset) and today, with Christine, 7.*

opens the container's lid, revealing a smooth white surface with the consistency of well-set custard. "Ah! It hasn't broken down a bit," he says. "That's what we work so hard to do: make the firmest, sweetest yogurt you can get."

The Lazors do indeed work hard, rising at 5 on most mornings and at 3:30 on Thursday, delivery day. But the routine has not dampened their enthusiasm for rural life. They still live on the same land, perched on a windy plateau near Vermont's northern border, that they bought as self-styled "hippie homesteaders" in 1976. In spirit and appearance, they are still anchored firmly in the same brand of 1960s-

inspired idealism that brought them to the country in the first place. They have parlayed that idealism into a successful small-scale dairying and yogurt-making operation. Yet they sometimes wonder if their business has led them to compromise their original vision of agrarian independence. "Once you paddle into the mainstream a little bit," Jack says, "it's easy to get carried away by the current—and it's hard to paddle back."

Neither of the Lazors grew up around farming. Anne comes from an old Boston family. She attended Concord Academy near Boston (Jack calls her an "ex-preppie"), then earned a degree in anthropology at the University of Wisconsin. Jack grew up in suburban Connecticut and graduated from Tufts University. In college, both Anne and Jack became fascinated with nineteenth-century American agriculture—an interest that led them independently to Old Sturbridge Village, a recreated nineteenth-century farm in Massachusetts. They met there in the summer of 1974, when Anne had a job as a milkmaid and Jack was a historical researcher.

Within a few years, they were homesteading together in Vermont. With a small inheritance from Anne's grandfather, they bought 60 acres of woodlot and old, overcropped hay pasture. Their main goal was to "heal the land" by adding rock phosphate, limestone and other natural amendments to the soil while they lived off what they could produce on it. They dreamed of setting up a diversified farmstead with chickens, a pig or two, a few milk cows, and maybe some draft horses for logging. They planned to rejuvenate the old sugarhouse among the maples in their woodlot, to plant a small orchard and a big vegetable garden.

Jack's fondest ambition was to grow and harvest grain crops, a practice that is rare on the dairy farms of New England, though common on dairy farms in Quebec and Ontario. He began collecting old farm equipment, eventually acquiring a cultivator, a combine, a grain cleaner, a grain binder, a threshing machine, three 1954 tractors and an assortment of other machines, working and nonworking. He also bought a small grain mill, which he set up in the "garage," an enclosed shed attached to the house that he and Anne began building with their own hands in 1978.

Today, the house is still unfinished, the sugarhouse sits idle and the orchard has never materialized. Four

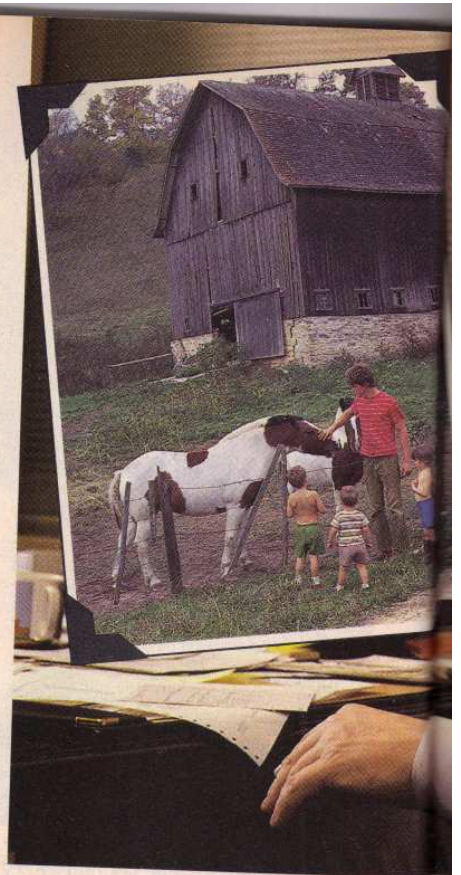
Belgian horses huddle in a pasture near the house, "mostly just burning hay," Anne admits. She also admits that they have not had much of a garden in years. And in the barn, several tons of homegrown grain sit, unground and unmixed, in bags piled high on the floor.

"Here we are with all these dreams," Anne says one evening as she milks the cows. "But the reality is that you've got to make a living."

The Lazors got into the yogurt business almost by accident. The family cows were producing more milk than Anne, Jack and their daughter, Christine, now 7, could drink, so they started making yogurt, butter and soft cheese in their kitchen. Jack peddled their surplus dairy products to a few neighbors and nearby food cooperatives. Butterworks Farm has been expanding ever since. Two cows became four, and four became six—too many to milk by hand in the garage, so they built a big post-and-beam barn in 1982, installing a 1950s vintage Surge bucket milker powered by an ancient motorized pump. The milking parlor in the barn is currently set up for 12 cows, Jerseys with names like Gooseberry, Tinkerbelle, Rosebud and Sundance.

Somewhere along the way, the Lazors gave up making butter and cheese, concentrating on whole yogurt, maple-flavored yogurt, lowfat yogurt and its inevitable by-product, cream. "We'd be selling plain old milk just like everybody else if we could get a decent price for it," Jack says. "But there's no living in selling raw materials to the processors—they're the ones who make all the money, not the poor grunts who actually produce the stuff. So we do the processing ourselves." He figures it costs them about a dollar to produce a gallon of milk. The local milk cooperative would give them around \$1.25 a gallon; instead, they make it into yogurt and clear about \$4 a gallon (excluding the cost of containers). Any profits left over after deducting overhead and living expenses are plowed back into the land in the form of fertilizer. Last year, that amounted to \$12,000-worth of magnesium-rich limestone and rock phosphate.

To keep down distribution costs, Jack delivers the yogurt himself to a network of health-food stores, restaurants and food co-ops spread all over Vermont, plus a few in New Hampshire. In one recent week, he delivered 153 pints of cream and 1,050 quarts of yogurt. Business may be too good: demand for Butterworks Farm yogurt



nearly exceeds the Lazors' capacity to produce it in their meticulous fashion. "The barn chores alone take six hours a day," he says. "Processing yogurt takes another five hours. We're so busy keeping up with the yogurt thing that we don't have time to do the farming we always wanted to do."

Now they face a dilemma. "Sometimes I think we should get bigger and increase our economy of scale," Jack says. "The alternative is to chuck everything and start living closer to our means. We could spend all our time just surviving, and it would be fun."

Having paddled this far into the mainstream, however, Jack would just as soon paddle in a little farther. He has visions of converting the barn to a 20-cow operation, complete with more up-to-date milking equipment (1960s technology, perhaps) and an automatic gutter cleaner. What is his ultimate dream? "Probably to be a big farmer," he confesses. "I love sitting on my tractor, planting and harvesting grain. I could be happy just going round and round in the fields all day."

Anne feels differently. She is nostalgic for the days when Butterworks Farm was a four-cow operation. Life was less dominated by yogurt making. "Sometimes when I'm putting lids on yogurt containers I wonder how many years a person can do this without go-

STEVE LEONARD. (Inset) COURTESY BUD & KATIE LENLEY.





**Bud Lemley in the mid-1970s on Shalom Farm, southwest Wisconsin (inset). Now, in his downtown Chicago office, he manages \$20 million in investors' assets.**

ing crazy," she says. "If the processing part didn't compensate for the low price of milk and make it possible for us to live on a farm, it wouldn't be worth it."

Whether they decide to scale up or down, the Lazors are likely to do things the slow, old-fashioned way. "There must be some reason why I look backward for inspiration instead of forward," Jack says. "Maybe it's because when you do as much as you can for yourself, it's easier to understand your society and where you stand in it. Life wouldn't be very satisfying if you weren't in *some* kind of control."

—C.C.

## BUD & KATIE LEMLEY INVESTMENT ADVISER AND NURSE PRACTITIONER

**I**t was during the blizzard of '73 that Mary Ann took sick. Mary Ann was Bud Lemley's best cow, and he was not about to let her go without a fight. He got on his tractor and drove 12 miles to summon the vet, who came, examined Mary

Ann, and said there wasn't anything he could do for her. Lemley asked the vet to give her all the drugs he had in his bag. The vet shook his head and did as he was bidden. The next morning, Mary Ann was dead. "There went \$1,500—three month's income," Lemley says. "What I'm doing now is *far* simpler and more predictable than what I was doing on the farm."

What Bud Lemley is doing today is managing \$20 million-worth of investment capital for 300 clients. He spends his days glued to the computer screen at his office in Chicago's financial district, watching stock prices scroll by. One afternoon while I am sitting there, the phone rings, and he picks it up. "Okay," he says, then punches a button to dial a preprogrammed number. "Sell 500 CRK at 19¾," he says, and hangs up. Three more similar transactions take place in rapid-fire succession. "Short-term trading is what makes it interesting while we're sitting here," he says, "but it's long-term trading that we're mainly interested in. That's where people make the money."

Lemley, 43, grew up around the ticker-tape machine. His stepfather was a broker with Wayne Hummer & Company, a Chicago trading firm, where Bud started working in the back office when he was 12. He went to Georgetown University, where he met

Katie, who was training to be a nurse. Bud graduated in 1965, after which he immediately went back to work for Hummer & Co. He and Katie were married after her graduation in 1966 and bought a 14-room house in Evanston, a fashionable north-side suburb. Their first child, Lisa, was born in 1967, and their second, Kelle, was born two years later.

Had it been any other decade, Bud and Katie might very well have continued their climb into the upper-middle class without interruption. But the late '60s in Chicago were wrenching times. Many of the Lemley's peers were either going "Loose for Leary" or "Clean for Gene." The watershed year was 1968: first Martin Luther King, Jr. was killed and the whole west side of Chicago went up in flames. Bobby Kennedy was shot in June. Then, in July, Allen Ginsberg led hundreds of "alternate delegates" to the Democratic National Convention in a chant of "Ommm" in Lincoln Park as they lined up against phalanxes of policemen in riot gear. Tear-gas canisters erupted, bones were broken, and seven famous Yuppies got busted for inciting a riot. "I decided I didn't like what was going on in the system," Lemley recalls. "So I decided to get out and see if I could do something better."

He sold the family house in Evanston and went to Crawford County, in southwest Wisconsin, looking for a farm. He looked at three abandoned places in one afternoon and bought the third because his baby daughter was in the car getting fussy. "It was the best one of the three, anyway," Lemley remembers. "The house was still sort of standing up. The real-estate agent told me it was 80 acres of tillable. But it didn't matter, because I didn't know what tillable meant."

When Katie saw the place, she cried. "I knew I wanted to live on a farm someday," she says, "but Buddy was moving too fast." They tried living in the ramshackle house for six months. Bud read Helen and Scott Nearing's book *Living the Good Life* and planted a 1½-acre garden. He planted 150 feet of leaf lettuce, four 50-foot rows of chard and 200 tomato plants. They all froze. Then he and Katie met Barney and Barbara, former missionaries who owned a more promising-looking farm

a few miles away and were looking for some partners. The Lemleys bought a half-interest and moved into a vacant house on the 200-acre spread. They all decided to call it Shalom Farm and painted a brightly colored sign to go by the road. Now Katie laughs, remembering it. "One of our neighbors down the road stopped by and wanted to know who the Shaloms were," she says.

Katie completed her training as a nurse practitioner and began working at low pay to bring services like pre- and postnatal care to one of the poorest counties in Wisconsin. Meanwhile, Bud learned how to bake bread, milk cows and goats and take care of the children. When Barney decided to go into carpentry, Bud took over the dairy business. In 1976, tired of making only \$500 a month, he sold all the livestock and bought the local newspaper, the *Kickapoo Scout*. "I wanted to buy the *Viola News* and the *La Farge Epitaph* and start a newspaper empire," he says, "but it didn't work out. I sold the *Scout* after running it for a year. I slowly realized that there was no way to make it survive financially."

Times were lean in 1977. When the girls needed to have some orthodontic work done, Bud dug in his heels and said no. But Katie had other plans: she put the girls in the car and drove away—for good.

She says she left for several reasons. Professionally, she was tired of working so hard for so little recognition or reward. "But mostly," she says, "I really got tired of the poverty."

Bud thought things over and decided to follow his family back to the city. Soon, they were all living together in Evanston again, and Bud was back in the securities-trading business. Their stint on the farm had lasted six years.

The Lemleys still own the farm, and they still call it home. "We always go home for Thanksgiving and Christmas," Katie says. The family also spends much of each summer there. "Now I'm supporting two teenage daughters, a farm and nine horses," Bud says. He estimates that keeping the farm costs \$20,000 to \$25,000 a year. Their home in Evanston is one story of an unpretentious two-story apartment building in a plain but comfortable neighborhood, and they own a 1984 Buick Park Avenue that they bought, Bud says, "because I didn't want to own a Cadillac."

For all the obvious pleasure Bud Lemley takes in having his own investment advisory firm, which he started

last year, he says that he would still be on the farm if Katie had not wanted to leave. He thinks about moving back to the farm full time, but says he can't afford the luxury. "I wish we could have a quarter-million-dollar income and live on the farm, but we can't," he says. "The choice is to live on the farm and make \$10,000 or live in the city and make a quarter million. So we live in the city and make a quarter million. But no matter how much you make, you spend more."

"Ten years ago, I was making \$500 a month on the farm. Now my overhead alone in this office is \$10,000 a month. But I'm doing what I always wanted to do: I'm running people's money the way I think it should be done. Now I can afford to do and feel the things I want to do and feel. We've made enough jarring decisions in our lives. Now we're just coming to terms with what we are."

—C.C.

## STEVEN & LINDA CONGER ARCHITECT AND NUTRITIONIST

If Steven Conger's face looks familiar, that may be because you saw it several years ago in an advertisement for Johnston & Murphy shoes. The picture of quiet affluence, he was shown in front of a passive solar house he had designed while attending Yale's graduate school of architecture. *Architectural Record* named it House of the Year in 1979, and it was the first solar house to appear in *Architectural Digest*. In case there was any doubt about the intended image, the ad's caption read: "Steven Conger, successful architect."

Conger and his wife, Linda, and 10-year-old daughter, Chloe, live in Aspen, which, for all its Rocky Mountain mellowness, is one of the country's most aggressively chic communities. She carries a fat, multi-tabbed appointment/address book and freelances as a personal nutritionist, teacher and photographer; he heads his own architectural firm and numbers among his clients singer John Denver. But it was a circuitous path that led them to their current incarnation as young professionals, and along the way they traveled as communards, agrarians and

spiritual voyagers. "In some ways," Linda Conger says, "I think of us as the prototypical back-to-the-land hippies who got onto the professional track."

In 1970, he wore a beard; she affected granny glasses, long skirts and sandals. Already married two years, the couple had just graduated from college (he, Amherst; she, Smith) and moved onto a commune in Wendell, Massachusetts, populated by about 15 others, mainly artists from Amherst. "Life consisted of growing food, taking the truck to town to sell vegetables, and every night playing four or five hours of free-form music," Steven recalls with great fondness. To augment the commune's income, the men worked a garbage route, riding in a truck bed knee-deep in coffee grounds and maggots. On a good day, they might score a cast-off mattress for the commune.

Steven relished life on the commune, but Linda found it oppressive and claustrophobic. "I was never gung ho about this commune stuff," she says. "To tell you the truth, I was never even real clear that the Vietnam War was wrong." For her, communal living meant a "tremendous loss of privacy and cleanliness and an abdication of individual responsibility." Whenever she expressed her disgust over the unclean living conditions, the commune's worst offender, Ira the Pig, would eat off the floor to demonstrate that dirt was not unhealthy.

The couple struck out on their own and bought an 85-acre farm on a lake in Nova Scotia for only \$2,500 (borrowed from Steven's father). But for Linda, it was nearly as oppressive there as on the commune. A Colorado native, she hated the muggy weather and bugs. Their first summer, they lived in a renovated 7-by-14-foot chicken coop. There was no electricity or radio, and soon the isolation and sense of cultural deprivation began to wear on her.

"I'd just had a liberal arts education, dealing with lots of abstract ideas, and then went to shoveling manure and watching the plants grow," she explains. "I liked seeing the things come up and grow, and I loved being in contact with nature, but I would find a reason to be in town every day." More Thoreauvian by nature, Steven was content to work in their elaborate gardens and apple orchard. He says, "It was a very peaceful, quiet time for me and very simple."

In truth, the Nova Scotia experiment



DAVID HIBER / PHOTOGRAPHERS ASPEN. Inset: COURTESY STEVEN & LINDA CONGER.

was not exactly exile in Siberia. They escaped to California or Italy or Spain for months-long courses in Transcendental Meditation, which they both had practiced since college. And each October, they moved to Aspen, where her wealthy parents lived, for the ski season. To survive, she catered food, and he built furniture; both taught photography. They wintered-over in a teepee the first year, stayed in her parents' guest house the next. In May, they re-

*The Congers circa 1968 (right), and now, in Aspen, Colorado. "I think of us as prototypical back-to-the-landers who got onto the professional track," Linda says.*

turned to the farm. They built a house without power tools, a truncated icosahedron (15 faces) inspired by Buckminster Fuller's designs. "It was like a crystal on the landscape," Steven says. "It focused energy; the space inside was powerful and moving."



But after two years in Nova Scotia, they reached a "tilt point" and sold the farm impulsively through an advertisement in *Mother Earth News*. They never even met the buyer. "It was like we had created the reality, but we did not have to live it," Linda says. She adds, "We conquered the land, created the gardens . . ."

"We did not conquer the land," Steven interjects.

"All right, we lived in harmony with the land," she corrects herself.

Each had come to separate realizations in Nova Scotia: he, that a phase of his life was over, that it was time to "retreat and reflect"; she, that living in a "peasant culture, where people are very simple and don't spend a lot of time worrying about the meaning of life or cosmic issues" was not for her. Plus, trying to make a farm work as part-time tenants made lousy economic sense. "What were we going to do?" she asks. "Pack the zucchini and move it out to Aspen in our obligatory hippie van?"

The two trekked in Nepal for three months and then returned to Aspen, where Steven entered his "psychic amusement park" period. From John Lilly, the guru of interspecies communication, he learned about isolation tanks and began building elegant models, one of which simulated a sense of infinite free-fall. Ultimately, his inward journey took him away from his wife. He moved into Lilly's Malibu home and began experimenting with altered states. Out-of-body experiences became commonplace, and once, during an entire week of eight-hour days in isolation, he achieved "supermemory," recalling verbatim long speeches he had heard years earlier. He practiced T'ai Chi. He meditated (and still meditates daily). And then, in 1975, he suddenly realized another phase had ended; he reconciled with Linda and enrolled in Yale. After graduation, they liquidated one of her trust funds, and he and his brother built the *Architectural Record* house in Guilford, Connecticut, for \$125,000—a smart investment considering the handsome dividends in recognition it has paid.

If Linda Conger has learned anything, it is that she never wanted to be a back-to-the-land anarchist. "You have to disengage from the system, and I realized I did not want to do that. I wanted to work within the system to make it better. We have more power and leverage now, because we are making more money, and we can con-

tribute to political campaigns and support environmental lobbies. You have a much bigger ripple effect when you're part of the system than outside of it," she says. "Plus, I am not willing to tolerate the isolation of living on a farm. I know there are smaller joys, but I like making money, I like spending it, and I like being involved in political and social relationships."

Steven reached similar conclusions, although he takes a more philosophical view. "A lot of people in the '60s and '70s realized that if the world were to continue operating the way it was, we were headed for physical and spiritual self-destruction," he explains. Being "semi-ordained by the power structure"—getting the Yale degree—and learning the craft of architecture would not only satisfy his artistic yearnings, he realized, but also would give him tools to help transform the world.

Professionally, Steven seems to have made a smooth transition from the Age of Aquarius to the New Age. Among his projects are John Denver's Windstar Institute, a teaching center near Aspen with values of land stewardship, resource management and personal growth that coincide with his own; an institute for the study of information media; and the Stressaway Health and Business Center, a complex in the Denver airport that includes conference rooms, a spa, nap cubicles and space for a stress counselor.

And what of his personal odyssey? "Life is a minute-to-minute integrity search," he says, rubbing his eyes after another long day at the office. "I don't feel like I'm at the end of any process. I'm feeling an increasing sense of wonder and mystery—and the mystery and wonder seem to be increasing faster than the answers."

—M. McR.

## PETER STURGES WILDERNESS GUIDE

In 1959, Walter Jecker, a bass player who once recorded with Tex Ritter and Roy Rogers, had a vision. Jecker's inner voice told him to go to the wilderness "where the tall trees grow and the two rivers meet, and write about the Atomics of Life." Jecker bought land on the Salmon River in northern California. He renamed himself Jo'el of Arcadia and founded the Sacred Society of the Eth (for ether). He wrote long, florid tracts,

hoping to attract a flock. The flock did not gather.

In 1981, Peter Sturges, the drop-out scion of a long line of Rhode Island patricians, drove up to Jecker's house. Sturges had been living in the woods downstream for seven years and had just come into a modest inheritance. "The place was big, pink and run-down, with toilets and sinks and piles of two-by-fours all around it. I thought I saw potential in it, but it took a lot of imagination." After some dickering, Walter Jecker sold his vision and, holding the note, moved to southern California.

Today, Jecker's property has become the Otter Bar Lodge, and Sturges has realized his own vision: creating "the ultimate wilderness retreat," a sportsman's paradise. Sturges and his wife, Kristy, rent the lodge to groups of kayakers and fly-fishermen and import big-name instructors to conduct classes. In



MICHAEL McRAE. Inset: JOCK STURGES



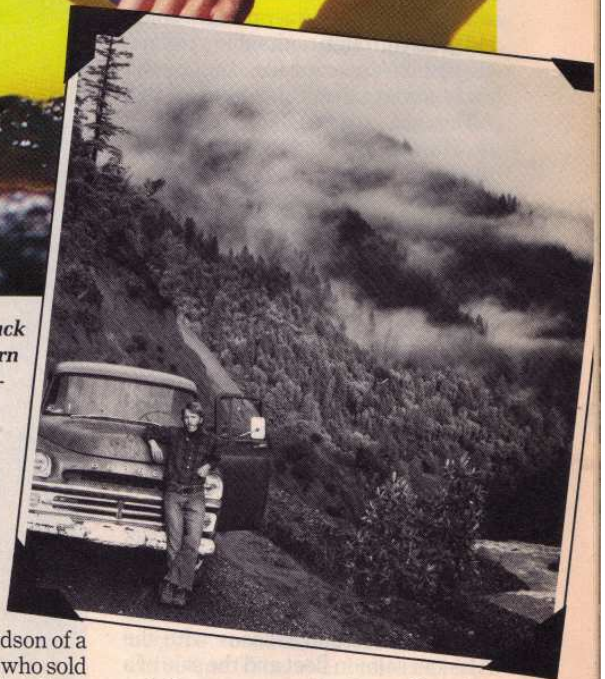
the fall, when the steelhead trout migrate up the Salmon, Sturges himself guides doctors and lawyers downstream in his MacKenzie drift boats. The operation is strictly deluxe, and it is thriving mainly on word of mouth.

Sturges has done most of the work himself. Tons of junk and river cobbles were cleared off (he bought a used dump truck and backhoe for the job), and then the property was landscaped. A lawn of intensely fragrant mint surrounds what was once Jecker's dump, now a shimmering, spring-fed casting pond that doubles as a practice pond for beginning kayakers. The house was gutted and transformed into an airy, homey lodge. A small hydroelectric plant powers lights, and larger appliances run off a propane-fired generator. Solar panels heat a massive hot tub; the sauna and house are wood-heated. There is a piano in the living

***In 1974, Sturges parked his truck by the Salmon River in northern California and never left (inset, 1977). Now, he guides doctors and lawyers downstream.***

room; a good library of books, music and videotapes; fine art on the walls, sterling silver on the dining table.

The amenities give some hint of Sturges's background. He grew up the grandson of a shrewd Yankee textile baron who sold cloth to both the Blue and the Gray in the Civil War. Benjamin Rush, who signed the Declaration of Independence, is a distant relative (and the namesake of his young son, Rush). His uncle is Douglas Dillon, the Dodge Motor Company tycoon and secretary of the treasury under Kennedy and Johnson. Sturges himself had all the



privileges: prep schools, sailing lessons, fast cars. By age 16, he was a regular party boy: "My Nirvana was having drinks at the Plaza," he says, "and then going to P.J. O'Rourke's and having some more."

But somewhere along the way, he began to develop a social conscience. "I started to ask myself, 'Is it right that

we should have it so easy?" As an experiment, he grew his hair long to see how people would treat him. At the U.S.-Mexico border, he found out. Having squandered a small inheritance sailing in the Caribbean and now almost broke, Sturges was on the road in Mexico in 1972, driving a ramshackle, home-built camper. When he came back into the U.S., border guards shook him down and planted a bag of marijuana in the truck. His protests were loud enough that they sent him on his way, but the experience was galvanizing. "I hadn't done anything wrong," he says. "I decided people without money were victims of the [capitalist] system. I became more of a socialist."

Sturges then worked a season as a salmon fisherman in Alaska. When friends wrote in 1974 that they had "discovered paradise" in the California mountains just south of Oregon, he stopped on the way south to see. One look and he parked his truck near the Salmon River and never left.

The area is so remote that some of Sturges's upstream neighbors must communicate by citizen's-band radio, but it was the exceptional beauty that attracted him. The river plunges emerald green through ranks of low, dome-shaped volcanic peaks that march away to the coast, three hours away. All around are great stands of pine and fir. Hawks circle overhead; otters ply the river.

Times were lean when Sturges first arrived. "Basically, I became a mountain man," he says. He built onto his camper and lived as a squatter. A 70-year-old Karok Indian, Johnny Bennett, became his mentor. "He taught me how to approach problems," Sturges says. "Before that, I had a tendency to feel inept, that if I touched something I would break it." Gaining back-country acumen, he became a fishing guide. He lived on nothing, saved his money, and in the winter, traveled widely in Europe, Africa and Central America.

In 1979, he met his wife, who had dropped out and was teaching at the local two-room elementary school. Several successful seasons with the Alaskan salmon fleet and the sale of a Raoul Dufy painting a great-uncle had left him yielded the down payment on Jecker's 40 acres, which included almost a mile of riverfront land.

Since buying the property, he has worked like a man possessed. There is always work in progress—the pond one year, a new kitchen the next—and he seems almost incapable of sitting

down for 10 minutes. He is perpetually jumping up to split wood or futz with the hydro system's storage batteries. "But it's a satisfying kind of work," he says. "For me, part of happiness is being able to see the product of my labor every day, whether it's a wood pile or a waterline. A lot of feeling mentally healthy is expending physical energy."

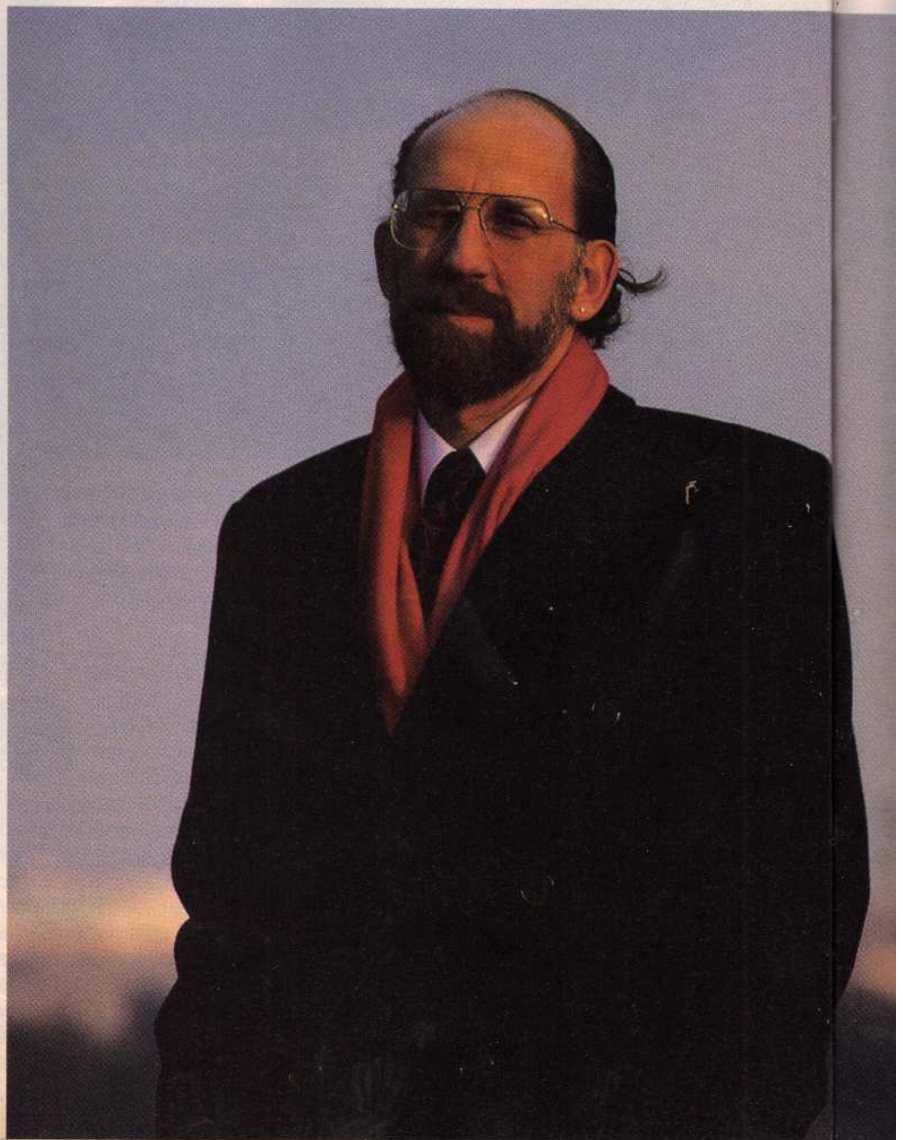
That is quite a change for someone who once aspired to a BMW and Bloody Marys at the Plaza. But if ever there were a reformed dilettante, Sturges is it. His politics, too, have changed and now are more congruent with those of his Yankee forebears than with Karl Marx's. "I have turned 180 degrees on the subject of capitalism," he says, "but I don't feel like I've sold out. I'm committed to being a good capitalist. We treat our employees with respect and have a great sensitivity for the land."

—M.McR.

## VIC SUSSMAN JOURNALIST

Vic Sussman is a man given to epiphanies—sudden rushes of insight that have, more than once, changed the course of his life. One such moment came on a squeaky-cold winter's night in 1982 when he was out walking the family's two dogs. He was on a snow-packed road near the homestead in northeastern Vermont where he, his wife, Betsy, and their two children had been living for a year. During that year, and in the previous 11 years while the Sussmans were homesteaders in Maryland, Vic and Betsy had mastered the finer points of goat keeping, gardening, wood splitting, canning and other assorted country skills. Vic had

CAMERON DAVIDSON. Inset: COURTESY VIC SUSSMAN



even achieved a modest celebrity among some '60s refugees for his books and articles on vegetarianism and organic gardening.

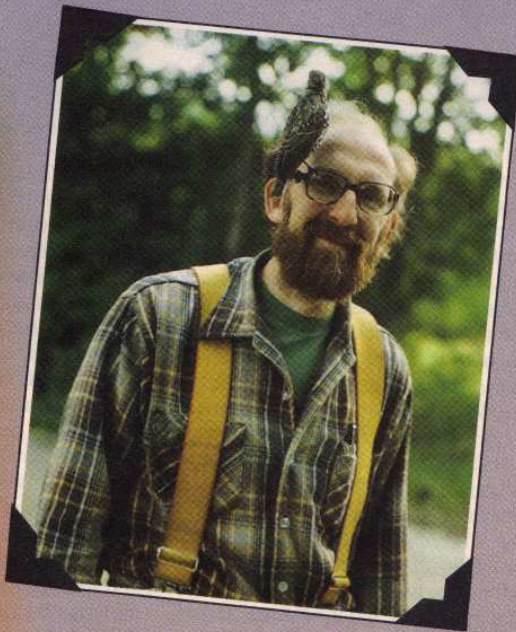
But on that subzero night of revelation in Vermont, under a sky so clear and dark he could see Andromeda, Sussman suddenly had the feeling he was in the wrong place. "I looked up at the stars and began wondering, 'What have I proved living out here?'" he recalls. "I had learned to do all I had set out to do in the country. Big deal. This was the high point of my day: waiting for the dogs to pee. I said out loud, 'I'm meant for more than this.'"

Sussman was born in the city, raised in the city, and now, after 15 years as a back-to-the-lander, he has come back to the city. He suspects that he was never cut out for country living in the first place, and sees his 15 years of rural life as a self-imposed exile, a depar-

ture from his youthful dreams of becoming a comedian and an entertainer. At age 46, he has picked up those ambitions where he left them in his 20s. He writes a weekly column for *The Washington Post* called "Personal Tech," a sometimes whimsical account of the relationship between people and technology. "I've always wanted to perform for a big audience. Now I write for two million people who read the *Post*, and I'm the happiest I've ever been in my life."

His exile from the city got its impetus when he was a graduate student in communications at American University in Washington, D.C., working part-time for NBC news. He read Adelle Davis's book *Let's Eat Right to*

*Peepers, an orphaned starling, perches on Vic's glasses in 1982. Today, Sussman lives and writes in Washington, D.C.*



*Keep Fit* in a single evening in 1964. "I came away thinking I had to change my life," he says. "Suddenly, I wanted to live simply, to grow my own food and be outdoors." His first step was to abandon his habitual diet, which consisted largely of junk food, and "put some thought into what I ate." He planted his first garden in a weed patch at a friend's house. His urban garden, he says, was a disaster—he went to the beach for a week and returned to find that it had reverted to weeds—but the dream of self-sufficient living had taken root.

He was soon married to Betsy, who had grown up in a small New Jersey town about 20 miles from New York. A yearning for a life in the country was the glue that knit them together, but neither of them knew the first thing about surviving outside the city limits. In 1969, they bought their two-acre "suburban homestead" in Potomac, Maryland, to serve as a halfway house between the city and the country, a place where they could learn the skills that would equip them to live on a larger, more rural piece of land someday. Vic chronicled their early years as homesteaders in his book *Never Kiss a Goat on the Lips* (now out of print). The other book he wrote in their Maryland homestead, *The Vegetarian Alternative*, has sold 90,000 copies and been translated into three languages.

The Sussmans spent 11 years in training before they moved to the homestead of their dreams: 23 acres of highland plateau in Vermont's isolated Northeast Kingdom. Betsy was ecstatic, but (at least in retrospect) Vic had moments of doubt. Shortly after they moved, a friend came to visit from New York. "She saw how hard we were working just to keep warm, dry and fed," Vic recalls. "She said, 'Is this how you're going to live when you get old?' That made me think."

Today, Sussman can make light of his constant fight against the elements. "Summer was the worst," he recalls. "The people in our town called it the blackfly capital of the world. One of our neighbors used to say, 'Blackflies don't bother me. Whenever I feel weak from loss of blood, I just lie down.'"

Moments of humor aside, the unrelenting work of homesteading weighed heavily upon him. "I lived in Vermont for five years," he says, "and I realize now that I was angry most of the time. There was always this oppressive sense of being behind—behind in the garden, behind with getting in the

wood supply. And for what? Weeding carrots just wasn't enough for me. I thrive on contact with people, but you don't meet that many people in the woods. And the natives weren't exactly scintillating company: they were all busy stringing barbed wire around their satellite dishes so the cows wouldn't knock them over."

About a year and a half ago, things fell apart. Sussman was exhausted with the hard work and isolation of country life. His marriage suddenly went on the rocks, and he found himself driving southward with all his worldly possessions—a stereo, a computer, an 18-foot kayak and some clothes—in the back of his station wagon. He gravitated back to Washington where, unexpectedly, he landed a steady writing assignment for the *Post*. His daughter, Rachel, stayed with her mother in Vermont. Their son, Noah, who had had enough of the country, accompanied Vic. ("The only outdoor stuff I like," Noah says, "is skiing and sunbathing.") The two of them live in a rented split-level house in Bethesda, Maryland, within a half-hour's commute of downtown D.C.

Sitting on the couch in his living room, Sussman looks like a man in his element. He cranks up the volume of his stereo system, basking in the sound with a look of satisfaction that he may once have felt among his broccoli plants. He is stylishly dressed in pressed khakis and a crew-neck sweater. "When I got back to the city, I didn't own a tie," he says. "I bought an entry-level wardrobe at Sears. Somewhere in there I started reading *GQ* and caring about clothes. Then I began grooming my beard with an electric beard trimmer and getting my hair cut—what hair I have left."

He pauses to take a sip of beer from a tall, fluted glass. "When I lived in the country," he says, "I used to preach about living the simple life, with *Walden* as my text. I took *Walden* at face value—I read it as an exhortation to 'live deliberately' in the woods. What I sometimes forgot was that Henry Thoreau's cabin was only a mile from his mother's house and that he often went home for dinner.

"I think I'm living the simple life right now, in the city. I wake up in the morning and the furnace is running, the pipes aren't freezing. That's simplicity. I love it.

"The other day, I was downtown eating fast Indian food. The Asians were eating fast American food, my girl-

friend was eating fast Chinese food and I was in heaven. In the backwoods of Vermont, people are eating fried dough and Cool Whip.

"I have no illusions about what I'm doing now: it's not inventing a vaccine for AIDS. But I'm tired of playing doctor to the world's ills, thinking that I knew the absolute truth. I don't believe that anymore. The truth, if there is such a thing, is inside each of us, not in the country—or in the city, for that matter."

He pauses, takes another sip of beer. "In a way," he adds, "I'm still gardening—but now I'm cultivating myself instead of the earth."

—C.C.

## DAVID & MICKI COLFAX POLITICAL REFUGEES

When David and Micki Colfax settled in rural Boonville, California, 14 years ago, they were a family on the lam. "We were not motivated by the same concerns that motivated others who moved here," David says. "We came up here as a beleaguered family, as political refugees."

In the heat of the anti-war movement, David was one of academia's most strident activists. Founder of the Union of Radical Sociologists, he ran afoul of the draft laws in 1968. The FBI began investigating him. The right-wing Minutemen threatened to murder his young son. By 1972, driven out of two universities and blacklisted as a troublemaker, he accepted a position to teach in Uganda. With Idi Amin in power, he prudently decided to stop short in North Africa. Finally, holed up in Morocco, with a wife and three sons and a dwindling bank balance, David Colfax needed a port in the storm. Boonville was it.

The town was then a hippie Mecca—"Haight-Ashbury North," David calls it. Only two hours from San Francisco, it lies at the head of the vineyard-and-orchard-studded Anderson Valley in Mendocino County. But the family was less interested in communing with nature than in putting a roof over their heads. With a grubstake of \$25,000, they made a down payment on 47 acres of hilly, logged-over, brush-ridden land and put out the word: "We made it very clear that no one had better come

around unannounced," David says.

For the first winter, the family lived in a trailer and did little else besides clear the land. Huge bonfires of dead-fall and brush blazed day and night. The next spring, a group of hippies celebrating the vernal equinox on a distant ridge saw the fires and assumed the Colfaxes were kindred spirits. When the celebrants arrived, dressed as Indians and chanting, David decided to have a good time of it—but the political rhetoric flowed as fast as the jug wine. "We had a bemused contempt for the people who had dropped out of the politics of the era," he said. "Everybody who came around got stuck in a political dialogue whether they wanted to or not."

The Colfaxes made a snug, comfortable house by trial and error and dug a septic system by hand, a job that still makes David wince. But their major preoccupation was to build an economy that would sustain them. Over the years, they have variously considered contracting, real estate sales, raising rabbits, a printing business, a bookstore-coffeehouse, a cheese factory. He taught briefly at a college in Thunder Bay, Ontario, was a field representative for the National Center for Appropriate Technology, wrote freelance magazine articles.

In the end, though, their mainstay has been raising dairy goats, for which the region is nationally renowned, and registered Suffolk sheep. They have a large garden, raise poultry, tap the local barter economy, rent out a guest cottage, edit a newsletter called *Goat Notes*. "Generally, we're regarded as working all the time and not terribly mellow," David says. "That's been our image from the start."

The other preoccupation, of course, has been their sons. (Two are their offspring: Grant and Drew; two are adopted: Reed, who is racially mixed, and Garth, an Inuit.) In spite of the difficulties of making Shining Moon Ranch work, the couple has insisted on educating their boys at home. David's denunciation of the local schools is blistering, but the reason is mainly pragmatic. "It is simply more efficient to teach them at home," he says. "Two hours a day, six days a week, equals what they would get in school. That means they have five hours to work on other projects."

That logic has turned out to be unarguably sound. Grant and Drew are on full-tuition scholarships at Harvard. Grant, a senior studying pre-med, is





**David Colfax, radical, in 1972 (right) with wife, Micki, and sons Grant, Drew and Reed. Today (above), with Reed and Garth.**

a candidate for Fulbright and Luce scholarships. Drew, who installed the photovoltaic system at the ranch and built his own telescope, is a freshman studying mathematics and chemistry. The two younger boys, still at home, are self-assured beyond their years. "All of my kids, except Garth [who is 11], could build a house from the ground up," David boasts. "That's quite a thing for a boy."

David takes a certain fatherly pride in that knowledge but is quick to point out the larger lesson: "You're less likely to make compromises to keep the house when you can build your own," he tells Garth while cutting studs for an addition to their house. The years have not mellowed David, and his outlook on country living—at least in Boonville—continues to be one of bemused contempt. A year ago, he ran in a school board election, because of what he sees as the board's "outrageous corruption," and he won. His opponent, the incumbent, calls herself Morning Star Little Feather Who Sits Under a Shaft of Light.

David delights in telling that story, but he has little tolerance for what he calls "reentry hippies." "Our orientation is towards the economics and aesthetics of living in the country," he

says, "but when it comes to the social dimension of country living, we've seen people become even more right-wing, more acquiescent, more gray-flannel than anyone in the '50s, when we came out of school and sneered at it [David is 50; Micki, 49]. The first naked woman I saw in Mendocino County is now the superintendent of schools in one of the districts. She went through the whole Mother Earth trip and finally said, 'To hell with it, I want to make \$60,000 a year too.'

"The bureaucracies all over the county are full of ex-hippies, all of them scared shitless when they didn't have any money. One woman lives in splendor and says, 'I've been there, honey. I was a hippie once.' This justifies the most reactionary, acquisitive behavior."

The reentry syndrome is no surprise, David says. "It confirms what we thought when we first came up here, that there wasn't much substance behind this scene." The demise of Boonville's food co-op and child-care collective only fueled the Colfaxes' cynicism

about the local counterculture's commitment to self-sufficiency. "A lot of people have simply not had the motivation to work as hard as we do," he says without sounding smug. "We work hard all the time, and we're constantly shifting gears." Two years ago, for example, an "abortion storm" devastated their goat business. "We were looking at \$600 embryos all over the ground," he says. In four days, they lost about \$4,000-worth of kids.

Why have they survived such calamities when others have given up? "We're not up here as romantic back-to-the-landers," David explains. "We're about as successful as anyone who's tried it. On the one hand we're saying, 'Yeah, you can do it.' But on the other we're saying, 'You're out of your head to try.'"

—M. McR.

Craig Canine is the senior editor of Harrowsmith, The American Edition. Michael McRae wrote about energy expert Amory Lovins in Harrowsmith Number 3 (May/June 1986).