

door. This may be highly frustrating for some readers; on the other hand, I learned quite a bit about the culture she is writing about from her unabashed acceptance of things I normally want more distance from, and found myself being better able to understand why so many people stuck it out for so long as the walls came tumbling down.

As a communities movement advocate, I also found it a bit disheartening that we are left with the unfortunate impression that the majority of Christian groups are up to their eyeballs in corruption. While I don't think this was Duin's intent, nor do I think it is true, I found myself wishing once I put the book down for stories of healthy and vibrant Christian community to counter-balance these.

Overall, this was a fascinating and engaging look at a subculture many of us will never touch directly, and—if you either believe in or can hang with the imbedded cultural perspectives—well worth the read.

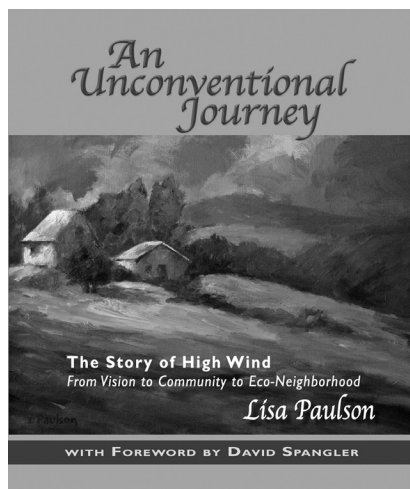
sions very well in the letter she sent with the review copy: “For those already in or aware of the [communities] movement, *Journey* would seem a natural; communitarians will identify with the enormous energy and spirit and imagination it takes to make the dream of community work. Others who are questioning contemporary values might be inspired by the examples of those who dared to step out of the dominant culture to create alternative societal experiments.” Both things ring true for me, and I was indeed inspired by their example.

Paulson has written a balanced, open, and educational book about High Wind, the community in eastern Wisconsin she founded with her husband, Bel. But she has also done something much more precious: she has placed her own experiences—and High Wind's—into context: as a child of the political climate in the '60s and '70s, as a group inspired by Findhorn Community and its prodigious spiritual legacy, and as part of the intentional communities movement in general. In this book, we get a rare glimpse of the seeming inevitability of a culture evolving, led, sometimes, by these odd little outgrowths of experimental living we call intentional communities. It is clear that both of the Paulsons are adventuresome, smart, and willing to take risks, and the resulting experiment (plus the various interesting side stories she includes in the book) are a great example of how to live an engaged, fulfilling life, and the role intentional community can play in that.

One of the things Paulson captures nicely is the cyclical nature of community life. The in- and out-flows of members, the tensions between founders and joiners, the seasons, the focus on community life versus outreach; all of these things come and go and create a kind of rhythm to life that is apparent in this book. Because they were together for a long time, you get to see all of this play out over time in Paulson's narrative.

If you like books with pictures, you will have hit the mother lode with this one. There are a lot of them, and they are informative and interesting, covering everything from the connections with Findhorn and various visiting teachers, to daily community life and the land, to the Paulsons' life before the community that influenced its creation. These pictures are especially fun for anyone who knows the community or knows the players who have bit roles in their story, but they do a good job of communicating visually the richness of community for anyone.

An interesting choice Paulson made in organizing the book is to have sidebar-style sections accompanying each batch of pictures that offer a sort of narrative synopsis of the previous chapter, often with a little more detail or focus on some particular aspect of the story. At first, I found this a little confusing (didn't we just go over this?) but by part way into the book, I found myself looking forward to the slightly different telling of the story, one that felt a little more intimate somehow. It



## An Unconventional Journey: The Story of High Wind, From Vision to Community to Eco-Neighborhood

By Lisa Paulson

Thistlefield Books, 2010, 160 pages

Available through Community Bookshelf

This book is great. Paulson actually summed up my impres-

## REVIEWS

makes me think about how we are almost always forced into a single track of telling our stories, and how much we lose by having to pick a single perspective or focus. Life, after all, is never just about one version of things.

There is a whole chapter dedicated to talking about conflict and tensions, and I appreciated the openness in speaking frankly about it. My only disappointment in this whole text was wishing that she'd been a little more forthcoming about how she and her husband Bel may have actually been less than totally conscious about their role as founders, rather than focusing so much on how others saw them. Still, she describes the typical trap of founders as well as anyone I've seen, and should be applauded for that. And the chapter offers a good list of basic tensions any group might face, and does it in the same matter-of-fact way she handles everything else.

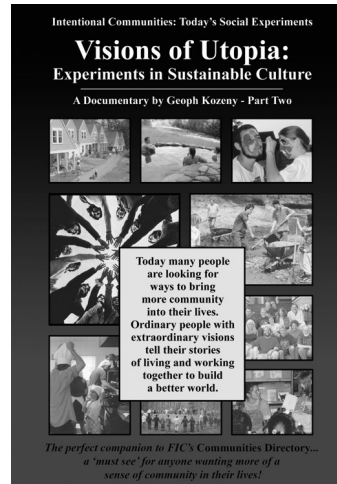
Ultimately, the Paulsons (who retained ownership of most of the land throughout the community's history) are faced with a key question: Is what we are really committed to a residential community, or contributing to a shift in consciousness on the planet? High Wind as a formal residential community comes to an end when they recognize that shifting consciousness is really their highest priority. What remains is an interesting evolution: a neighborhood of similarly committed people, and an ongoing experiment for just how to contribute to that shift most effectively. The communities movement is blessed that, for a while, the Paulsons' answer to that was creating a dynamic and growthful community. 🐰

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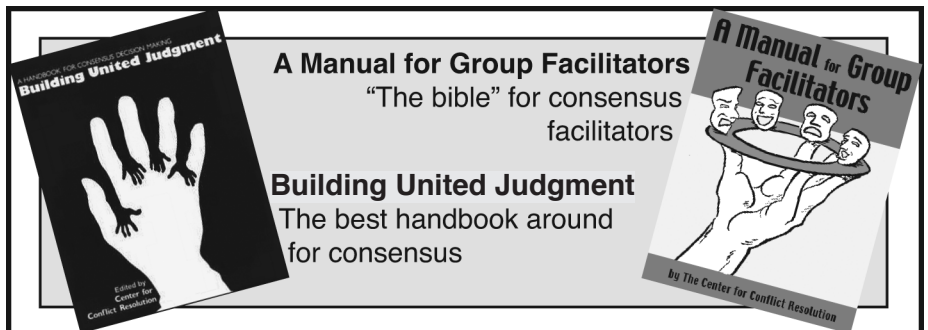


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