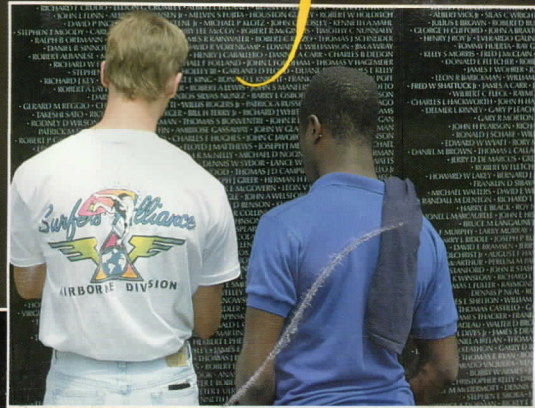


MARGARET MEAD
RHODA METRAUX
JIM HENSON

JOHN DENVER
TOM CRUM
MILTON McCLAREN
DONELLA MEADOWS
JAY HAIR
TONI LILLY
AND MORE

Windstar journal



We have gained insight and a new perspective on our human selves—who we are and what we may become

Margaret Mead

COMMUNITY



FIVE DOLLARS

AUTUMN 1988

welcome to the windstar journal

It is autumn—a time when events cascade into the pronouncements of a new season. School starts, leaves fall, and elections raise the temperature of political blood. Communities of plants begin their dormant season—and animals store acorns, grasses, and body fat for the winter ahead. Autumn is a season of gathering, and an appropriate time to pay attention to the communities within which we live.

Each of us is a member of a variety of communities. Scientists remind us that each person is a community of cells, each of which contains the whispering mass of genetic information that makes us what and who we are.

As a member of the species Homo sapiens, we are endowed with the ability to form communities outside ourselves. We establish relationships with other humans—and other life forms. From ourselves, to our friends and partners, to our families, to our business associates, to the members of the neighborhood in which we live, to the members of the region, to the nation of which we are a part, to the whole of the planet itself and all its cultural and biological systems—we humans are part of many communities, small and large.

This issue of the Windstar Journal is dedicated to exploring the concept of community. These few articles do not provide a comprehensive look at the topic. They are varied—and we hope you will find them stimulating. Some will be nourishing, others provocative. As a whole, they may stretch your thinking about what communities are, why they are important, and how they contribute to a sustainable future—from personal to planetary.

John Denver offers a sincere and personal insight into one of the most intimate forms of community—moving from his own marriage and family to the family of humanity and all life on Earth.

Margaret Mead—one of our era's most provocative thinkers—challenges us to change some of our perspectives and appreciate the possible. Clifford Knapp gives us a few detailed suggestions for ways to foster a sense of com-

munity in relationships. Jim Henson consciously nurtures a sense of community through his work, premised with his belief in the goodness of people.

Tyler Norris describes an inspiring and difficult project that he helped to develop which assists alcoholics and other addicts return to useful lives.

Toni Lilly encourages us to consider interspecies communication. Milton McClaren provides a rich and stimulating description of the characteristics of communities—both natural and cultural. Donella Meadows tells about the actions of one community of people concerning nuclear power, with national and international implications. Kent Smith focuses on ecological communities—with dramatic recommendations for protecting endangered species. Jay Hair challenges us to take responsible action on behalf of the living communities that form our environment—now and in the future.

Kim McMillan offers a personal perspective concerning the kinds of leaders we need today—stressing the leadership capacities within each of us. Tom Crum reminds us that leadership is often simply a matter of choosing higher ground.

Autumn has brought cool mornings to the Rocky Mountains. The next issue of the Windstar Journal will be published when deep drifts of sparkling snow blanket the roots of evergreens and aspen. The theme for the winter issue is Cooperation. Let us hear from you with ideas and suggestions.

We feel our partnership with each of you in creating and sustaining healthy communities. We will continue our efforts—and thank you for yours in contributing constructively to the whole.

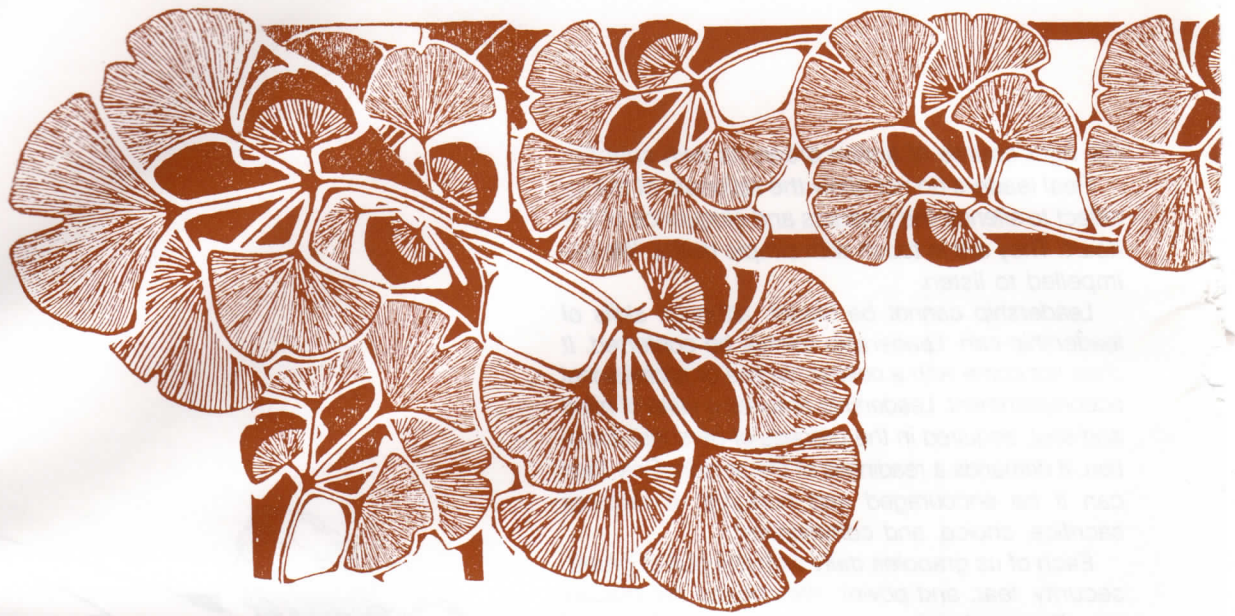
Cheryl Charles and Bob Samples, Editors.

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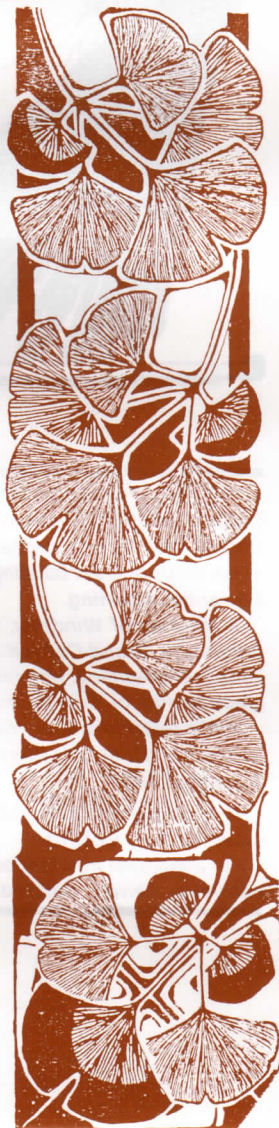


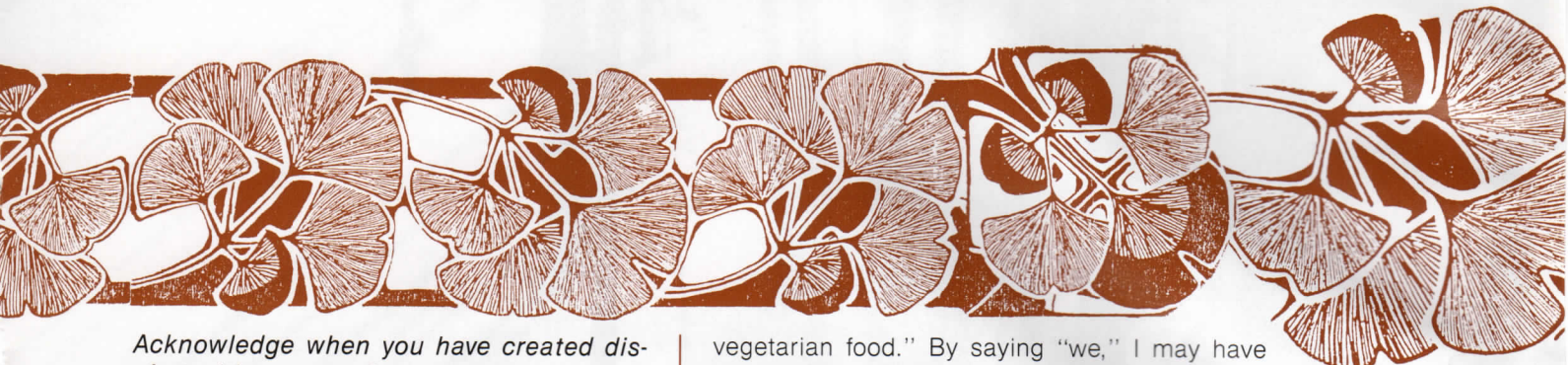
The Metaphorist and the Trees

by Bob Samples

Words often excite the human brain into journeys of exploration that are unusual and never intended by those who utter them. Take for example the kindergartener who, while reciting the pledge of allegiance, was heard to say, "I pitch lizards at the flag. . ." A young anarchist in the making? No. She was just too young to get the drift of, "I pledge allegiance. . ." Or, take the example of the sexist who I once heard say, "I'm not a sexist—I just don't know what you broads want." Or, on another occasion, there was the black scholar I heard in a talk on racist language use the phrase "Indian giver" without hesitation.

The advent of the women's and civil rights movements brought our attention to the presence of maligning metaphors in commonplace language. Major adjustments have since taken place in conscious communication. Now we stand on the threshold of an intentional and joyful commitment to becoming global citizens. This commitment will be a challenge. It will also include an exploration of some of the limitations inherent in current methods of communication. Mistakes of all sorts will be made, and mutual embarrassments will take place. What we each will have the option of doing at these times of awkwardness is to follow a few suggestions as pilgrims into the global community.





Acknowledge when you have created discomfort with your words. At least acknowledge to yourself, if not to others, that something unintentionally awkward has occurred. If the discomfort cannot be reconciled at the moment, promise yourself that you will try to understand what happened and avoid it in the future. Once when I was traveling in the United Kingdom, I noted an unusual kind of animated annoyance and embarrassment at my use of the colloquial Americanism, "stuff." I later found out in a pub that "stuff" was a euphemism for forced intercourse. I have attempted to drop that word from reflexive usage.

Attempt to avoid the interrogative in common discourse. Asking questions is an artform for some people. Many who are subjected to this artform, however, feel as if they have experienced an inquisition or violent cross-examination from a prosecuting attorney. I was amazed to discover that nearly all the tribes of North American native people did not use the interrogative in their languages. The act of questioning arrived with European immigration. A question demands a response from the recipient. It can create a sense of aggression and assault when unrelentingly directed at someone. I think it is far more respectful and healthy to involve oneself by using the declarative. For example, if I say, "I do not know where you live," there is an inherent acknowledgment of my own lack of information rather than an aggressive requirement for you to disclose something that is personal to you. Questions are invasive. Declarative statements leave it up to the discretion of the listener whether or not to respond. Use of declarative statements also tends to create rich and interesting discussions that flow naturally—whereas questions are focused and tend to narrow discussions.

Speak in the first person. Try to avoid the tendency to become spokesperson for your entire community or nation. When I say, "I like vegetarian food," it is quite different than if I say, "We like

vegetarian food." By saying "we," I may have implicated my spouse, family, friends, and all of the United States. Speaking in the first person is a way to take personal responsibility for one's words.

Without necessarily agreeing with the practices, convey a sense of respect for diverse beliefs and customs. Once while I was in Japan, my hosts served me the flesh from a yet living fish that was being fileted at the table. I was informed that this was a revered custom. I was not at all comfortable with this practice, and I knew that—as a guest—I could have confronted it. Instead, I ate one piece of fish. Then I asked if I could share one of my customs with my hosts. They agreed—so I asked for the knife and severed the fish's spine. There was no rejection on anyone's part, and the evening continued in fine form.

It is clear that as we move toward a global community, there will be innumerable cases of our coming into situations that are filled with the possibilities of conflict. It is up to each of us to realize that we have the opportunity to embrace the new, or retreat into the safety and familiarity of isolation.

These are just a few hints for creating more holism in using words and communications. It is clear that all human beings have the capacity to contribute divisive or healing attributes in our roles as global citizens. In a sense, we each possess an unrestricted passport in human consciousness. Each of us who travels in nations throughout the world is met in turn by the knowledge that others are traveling in our homeland. Theme parks, supermarkets, corporate offices, and classrooms are commonplace gathering spots for emerging global citizens. We can each become a voice for harmony on planet Earth.

Editors' Note: If you have anecdotes to share about your communication experiences in diverse cultural settings, let us hear from you at the Windstar Journal, Post Office Box 18060, Boulder, Colorado 80308-8060.

